Comité International
d'Histoire de l'Art
CIHA Italia

MOTION: TRANSFORMATION

35th Congress of the International Committee
of the History of Arts
Florence, 1-6 September 2019

Congress Proceedings

– Part 1 –

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edited by Marzia Faietti and Gerhard Wolf

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BANCA D'ITALIA

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Preface
Florence 2019 and Beyond

For the first time in the history of the CIHA Congresses, two countries have collaborated to organise a single Congress, divided into two parts. If one asks for the reason, the first answer may be that it has happened by chance: since Brazil and Italy simultaneously offered to host the 35th CIHA Congress. However, this is hardly a sufficient reply. In the current historical situation, such a close cooperation between two apparently distant countries has gained an increasingly high value. The return of nationalism, oblivious to the tragedies of the past, is spreading extensively in many parts of the world. By creating a model of collaboration that transcends national borders and narratives, the CIHA shows the ability of art history and that of scholars from highly diverse cultural backgrounds to develop innovative perspectives and discuss the contributions the field can provide for a sustainable future for the planet.

The decision to realize the 35th CIHA Congress in two parts based on the suggestion of the two committees was a creative decision by the CIHA board and general assembly, but also a challenge for the organisers, starting with searching for a topic. Looking at the themes of the CIHA Congresses that have taken place since 2000, one can notice a certain thematic continuity. A quick look at the titles proves this: *Time* (London 2000), *Sites and Territories of Art History* (Montréal 2004), *Crossing Cultures* (Melbourne 2008), *The Challenge of the Object* (Nuremberg 2012), and *Terms* (Beijing 2016). The theme for the 35th Congress, chosen with our Brazilian colleagues, is in line with this sequence but pushes the focus further in the direction of a transcultural or global art history, so strongly debated in recent years. Rather than adopting the recurrent terms "mobility" or "exchange", we decided on *Motion* as the main concept: a term, which puts the focus on processes, dynamics and trajectories in time and space, embracing movement between places, without being reduced to it. Motion was to

be addressed in two different, but interconnected perspectives: *Transformation* and *Migrations*, discussed in the two respective venues. Thus the title *Motion: Transformation* was given to the event in Florence in 2019 and *Motion: Migrations* to the one in São Paulo, which was originally meant to take place in 2020 and is now postponed to January 2022. The link between the two parts of the Congress was ensured by the last session at the venue in Florence, which focused on a theme, involving both transformation and migration, the *Voyage*. By adopting the general theme of *Motion*, the Congress undertook a metaphorical voyage that involved travelling through time and space – both geographically and intellectually – encompassing not only sites and places, but also paths and (related) fields of art history. It inevitably crossed numerous cultures and 'stumbled' upon a wide range of issues or problems that were often developed through a process of transformation that defies any attempt to create a plain and reassuring ekphrasis, forcing us to work on and discuss vocabulary and terminology, related to the theoretical premises and methodological concerns of the nine sessions at the Florentine venue, published here.

Even though many Italian cities, with their complex history and artistic heritage, could have been selected to host the first part of the 35th CIHA Congress, Florence was chosen. Obviously, practical considerations dictate to a certain degree this kind of decision. In 2019, the headquarters of CIHA Italy were in the Gallerie degli Uffizi in Florence and the Kunsthistorisches Institut – Max-Planck-Institut, the main partner for the organisation of the Congress, is located there. As a side note, it is worth mentioning that in the meantime this has changed and the headquarters of CIHA Italy have currently been relocated to Raphael's House (Casa Raffaello) in Urbino.

Returning to the motives that led to selecting Florence as the host city of the Congress, it

should be noted that from the very beginning of the event's preparations, additional and much more profound reasons overtook the practical ones. They were discussed on 1 July 2019, in Villa Vittoria (Firenze Fiera), during a press conference to present the venue. We were optimistic that Florence could serve as an emblematic place to reflect upon major concepts and objectives of art history and looked forward to the discussion regarding its future by the international community of scholars who were to arrive. As in all other CIHA congresses, visits to museums, sites and institutions in and around the city were an integral part of the conference.

The basic idea for the Florentine venue was to rethink the figure of the artist and of artistic agency under the premises of a global, or rather transcultural art history. Regarding Florence, we certainly did not want to celebrate it as the city, which stands for an exclusive myth of the Renaissance, as mass media and mass tourism often do, but we thought that two interconnected aspects of its history and art could relate well to this choice and might be briefly elucidated here.

The first is the intense writing about artists and art from the 14th century onwards, in particular the biographies of Italian artists by Giorgio Vasari (1550/1568). This is not the place to elaborate on this thoroughly and critically studied early modern "history of art" with a clear Florentino-centric perspective and concept of historical development etc., but it is also interesting for its considerations on artistic agency, aesthetic concerns and sometimes counter-narratives. To the second aspect we dedicate a few more lines here; 'Global Florence', from the medieval trade to global tourism. One could talk about it in four chapters:

- The first concerns the commercial networks and material culture of the 13th to the 15th century and beyond, for example the import of woven textiles and carpets from Central or Western Asia (soon also inspiring textile production and export) or African gold; the interest in Mameluke metalwork and also in ceramics; the travel accounts of Tuscan pilgrims, missionaries and merchants reaching up to China; the study of geography, languages and cultures.

- The second is the Florence of the Medici, in particular the practice of collecting precious objects from other cultures, starting with Lorenzo il Magnifico (and later the art industry), while Florentine travelers were among the first Europeans to reach the continent, then called after Amerigo Vespucci. During The Grand Duchy, collecting and displaying artefacts (and a great number of natural devices) from Africa, India, China, Persia, Japan, Mexico, etc. were part of the Medicean global interests and activities – political, commercial, artistic or scientific as they may be – taking advantage of the rising colonial infrastructures of Spain and Portugal, compensating so to speak for their own lack of power, but also engaging with other empires, as for example the Ottoman. Many of these artefacts are still kept in Florentine museums (the Museo Nazionale del Bargello; the Gallerie degli Uffizi, Tesoro dei Granduchi; the Museo Archeologico Nazionale; the Museo di Antropologia), which were enriched later by other collections, in particular of Islamic art. In 1608, Grand Duke Ferdinando financed an expedition to Brazil with the plan to set up a Medicean colony in the Amazonas region, mostly for the export of wood from northern Brazil to Tuscany. The expedition was "successful"; it also brought some indigenous people to Florence (most of them died of disease), but the project failed because of the death of Ferdinando. In the same period, the art industry of the *pietre dure* (stone inlay work) was set up, with the need for precious or semi-precious stones as raw material, for example lapis lazuli, stones imported from India, Afghanistan and other places. In the opposite direction, the *pietre dure* artefacts were exported as gifts or goods, to be installed in a fort in Delhi, a church in Goa or the Golgotha chapel in Jerusalem. The Opificio delle Pietre Dure survived over centuries and was transformed in the 20th century into a globally connected restoration institute.

- The third Florence represents the period between the later nineteenth and the early twentieth century (ca. 1860 to 1930). At the beginning of that period, Florence was the capital of Italy for six years (1865-1871); it was over that time that the city's population grew considerably and the urban structure profoundly changed. The city was full of foreigners, many of them were residents, many of them artists and writers, mostly Europeans or North Americans. Florence and its surrounding area also became home to scholars, collectors and art dealers such as Bernhard Berenson, Stefano Bardini, Aby Warburg and Vittoria Contini Bonacossi (the congress took place in the Villa Vittoria, once owned by the Contini Bonacossi family). If, on the one hand, they contributed to the vitalisa-

tion of the myth of Renaissance Florence, on the other, they helped enrich the city's cultural heritage by leaving numerous palazzi and villas behind with their eclectic art collections. These include, for example, the Horne Museum (founded thanks to the bequest of the English art historian Herbert Percy Horne), the Stibbert Museum (established through the collections of the Englishman Frederick Stibbert, with his Japanese, Islamic and European armouries), and Villa La Pietra (purchased by the Acton family, now home to the campus of New York University). It is also worth mentioning the establishment of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence in 1897 and of Villa Romana in 1905, whereas the Institut français de Florence, the first French institute in the world, was founded in 1907 and the British Institute of Florence, the first British institute globally, ten years later. Berenson left Villa I Tatti to Harvard University only many years later, in 1936. Harvard's decision to turn it into a centre for Italian Renaissance Studies (active since 1961) was a further, important step in creating the international "campus" Florence offers, another was the foundation of the European University Institute in 1972. Interacting with museums, libraries and other cultural institutions in Florence and elsewhere, today many of these institutes work in a global perspective and no longer invite fellows and students according to a national scheme.

With this, we have already entered the fourth dimension, namely the city of the third millennium, which is characterised by another aspect: the myth created at the beginning of the previous century continues to attract tourists from virtually all around the world, or at least this could be said in autumn 2019. The presence of Russian, Chinese, Indian and Japanese tourists has indeed become significant, and the number of North American, Australian and European ones has not diminished. South American tourists have been less numerous but they are still present. Faced with this situation, we thought that many questions relating to tourism should be asked, and it is interesting to note that art history has hardly addressed or engaged with tourism studies at all, as if the encounter of tourists and art historians would be one of mutual disturbance, for example in front of monuments, whereas in reality the connections are obvious and certainly an important field for future research. There is no doubt that mass tourism has created serious problems to the city, its population and its artistic heritage (as it has done to other cities

such as Venice), while offering hurried itineraries destined to be consumed rapidly and flat, stereotyped, narratives which ignore the potential and 'global' heritage of the place.

The pandemic, which completely stopped tourism from spring 2020 for nearly a year, has changed the situation dramatically, the city was unbelievably empty and sometimes one could be alone when visiting a monument. Virtual seminars including many art historians have discussed the prospects of more sustainable tourism in the post pandemic future, which has at least partially begun already, and one must see what will be realised and what kind of changes there will be *à la longue*. It is clear, however, that the questions to be addressed do not just concern one city and its relationship to the "world". What is at stake, also in the prospect of climate change and other ecological concerns, is the future of travelling, new creative ways of interacting, globe-spanning communication and cooperation between people and cultures, and, before that, the concern that only by overcoming the unequal distribution of respective means can all countries share the same standards with regard to health care and the physical safety of their inhabitants. Certainly, while the impact of the pandemic on research and research practices will be an issue in the Brazilian venue *Motion: Migration* (and has already affected its planning and execution), in conclusion we want to return to the thematic layout of *Motion: Transformation* in the nine sections of the Florentine Congress.

Transformation is at the base of artistic creation, it means the entanglement of materials, techniques and forms, it involves the lives or biographies of artefacts, and in fact it concerns their material, environmental, institutional, social, political, and religious transformations over time and regarding all kinds of itineraries. To explore this, nine sections have been created, which were redefined, partly renamed and further elaborated by the session chairs and then the speakers, as this volume demonstrates and thus they must not be discussed further here: 1) The Divine Artist; 2) Matter and Materiality: from removal to re-enactment; 3) Art and Nature; 4) Art and Religions; 5) Sign and Writing; 6) The Eye and the Hand: from the project to the product; 7) Artist, Power, Public; 8) Artists, Critics, and Viewers: overlapping of roles?; 9) the Italo-Brazilian co-curated section "Voyage".

"Motion" embraces all of that in all scales and more than that, as will be discussed in São Paulo. It also refers to the emotional sphere and the inner turmoil of feelings, that may be taken into account.

We would like to especially thank the members of the Scientific Committee of the Florence Congress, namely Claudia Cieri Via, Marco Collareta, Claudia Conforti, Giuliana Ericani, Maria Grazia Messina, Antonio Pinelli, Massimiliano Rossi, and the Authors. We would also like to mention the CIHA Italy Board during the preparation for the Congress (Elena Fumagalli, Treasurer; Giovanni Maria Fara, Secretary; Tommaso Casini, Vice President; Massimiliano Rossi, Vice President) and the current one (Maria Giulia Aurigemma, Treasurer; Sandra Costa, Secretary; Tommaso Casini, Vice President). We must not forget our youngest assistants who were present during the final stages to set up and execute the Congress. We mention them through their representative, Guicciardo Maria Sassoli de' Bianchi Strozzi. We also want to thank those who helped us revise the final draft of the volume, namely Ester Fasino, Davide Ferri, Camilla Musci, and Eva Mussotter. Special appreciation is due to Fabio Roversi Monaco for his generous support which made the Italian presence possible at the 2008 Melbourne Congress, thus launching an ongoing commitment from CIHA Italy within CIHA International. Naturally, this list cannot fail to include our Brazilian colleagues and friends with whom it has been a real pleasure to work; to remember them all, here, we give mention to Claudia Mattos.

Finally, we would like to thank the International CIHA Board for its continued attention towards our work and express our special gratitude to LaoZhu (ZHU Qingsheng), President, Tristan Weddigen, Treasurer, and Jean-Marie Guillouët, Scientific secretary.

Marzia Faietti, Gerhard Wolf
Florence, July 2021

SESSION 1

The Mystical Mind as a Divine Artist: Visions, Artistic Production, Creation of Images through Empathy

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Philippe Morel
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The "Represented" World of Colomba da Rieti and Domenica da Paradiso

Introduction to Session 1

In August 1888, Paul Gauguin painted the *Vision after the Sermon*, an image depicting a vision. After the Mass, thanks to the intensity of the words of the sermon declaimed by the cleric at the bottom right of the picture, the Breton women receive the vision of the subject of the sermon, that is, the struggle between Jacob and the angel, represented on the right top.[1] Regarding this painting, on September 26, 1888, Gauguin wrote to Vincent van Gogh:

> Je crois avoir atteint dans les figures une grande simplicité rustique et superstitieuse [...]. Pour moi, dans ce tableau le paysage et la lutte n'existent que dans l'imagination des gens en prière, par suite du sermon, c'est pourquoi il y a contraste entre les gens nature et la lutte dans son paysage non nature et disproportionnée.[2]

For Gauguin, Brittany was the land of an archaic religious dimension, as he stated in a letter written to van Gogh in 1889:

> Ici en Bretagne les paysans ont un air du moyen âge et n'ont pas l'air de penser un instant que Paris existe et qu'on soit en 1889 [...] Encore craintifs du seigneur et du curé les bretons tiennent leurs chapeaux et tous leurs ustensiles comme s'ils étaient dans une église.[3]

In Brittany, Gauguin goes back to an original religious dimension, in the so-called primitive mentality:[4] Breton women do not discern between the sensory experience of reality and personal imagination, that is, their vision as a psychic reaction to an effective sermon.

If the connection between sermon and vision could seem to Gauguin, in 1888, a sort of superstitious archaic and medieval practice, it was actually the folkloric remnant of a very refined religious practice widespread between the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era in Europe. The aim of this session is to investigate, in a comparative perspective, the figure of the mystic as a 'divine' artist, able to produce mental images as a result of specific religious practices. Descriptions of mystical experiences (often depicted in devotional writings) have been mostly analyzed to highlight the relationship between visions and real images: as Chiara Frugoni has well shown, in recounting their visions, female mystics let their visual heritage emerge, that is, the images they love to use in their private meditation and the popular iconography of their territory: they see with their minds what they have already seen with their eyes.[5]

By thinking in the context of two keywords, *motion* and *transformation*, the mystical mind will be analyzed not only as a receiver of real works of art, but more properly as an inspired artist, able to model and build his own work of art by empathizing with his visual heritage: just as a painter or a sculptor, to create his work of art, selects literary sources and stylistic and iconographic models, so the mystical mind builds the mental image on the basis of its visual and intellectual heritage. The mystical mind is infected with real images that live empathically in the body of the devotee and can be recalled and reactivated in the vision.[6] Such experiences could be interpreted as the extreme outcome of an ability to look deep within, learned through practice, through an educated way of looking at the use of images and a mind skilled in 'inner visualization'.[7] Lastly, such inclinations could be interpreted, in the wake of the ethnologist and sociologist Marcel Mauss, as 'techniques of the body', specific of the first technical instrument (the body) that is available to humankind to achieve practical purposes and desired effects, including the mystical experience.[8] Going beyond this perspective and analyzing the production of images through empathy, it should also be possible to verify if and how the 'embodied simulation' (studied by David Freedberg and Vittorio Gallese)

works not only in the fruition of a work of art, but also in the field of the production of images originated from the mystical experience.[9]

The mechanism of 'embodied simulation', following the recollection of a well-known image, would seem to be operating in a mystical experience narrated by Sister Battista da Varano in her *Vita Spirituale* (*Spiritual Life*, a sort of autobiography).[10] The woman feels like she is living through her own body the experiences previously lived by Mary Magdalen: Battista feels her body levitate, taken to heaven by two angels with golden wings and dressed in white robes: the nun is evidently 're-living' in her flesh the iconographic scheme of the Magdalen brought to heaven by the angels, common in her area. Thanks to her mental archive of images, Battista is able to shape her visions on the basis of familiar paintings, and then present the experiences in bodily terms, as if she had experienced them firsthand.

The appearance of certain types of visions, that is, the use of iconographic motifs in the visions, as well as the transformation of the religious mystical experience from the visual to mental images and vice versa, always reveals a particular historical and religious context.[11] The mendicant devotional practice especially emphasized a strong link and mutual correlation between visual and mental images. In *Opera a ben vivere* and *Summa theologica*, Antonino Pierozzi instructs women (that are more sensitive than men, according to mendicant writers) on how to create mental images using the mechanism of 'embodied simulation'. In his treatise, Pierozzi did not describe real, visual images of the Passion, but rather he insisted on their role in the practice of piety and prayer. A similar situation occurs in the case of the depictions of visions of female saints in their *vita*, in which there was a focus on the bodily and sensual responses to visual stimuli. Antonino's teaching is equally addressed to religious women as well as laywomen. The model is the same – the presence of an actual image (at the time of the Dominican Observant reform, the basic demand of lay devotion was the *Meditazione della croce di Cristo*) which must be viewed by the eyes of the body (the sensory perception) to initiate an internal visualization by the eyes of the mind in order to inspire devotion and stimulate mental images and visions.[12] Just like with similar works – the Franciscan *Meditationes vitae Christi* or Heinrich Suso's *Exempla* – Antonino set

up the process of using visual imagery in the creation of mental images by the use of the senses (but only protected and controlled), as well as by way of emotion and intellect. Along with the role of the mental image for the contemplation – seeing with the mind – the Florentine archbishop insists on another relevant process, that being memory as a storage of experiences, the memory that stores the 'likenesses' of things as they were when they appeared to us and affected us. As Mary Carruthers denoted in precise detail in her books – In the words can be found many pictures – in the pictures many words.[13] Memory, as an integral part of the creation of mental images, stresses the need to interpret these topics in a historical context, affirming the strength of the cultural, visual, and spiritual heritage that shapes visions. In visions themselves new memories are created, often stimulated by paintings that had occurred much earlier, changing the iconography and gaining smaller or larger transformations in that process. The visual heritage was the foundation that had an impact not only on Antonino, but also on other Dominican writers. One of them is Serafino Razzi who, in the second half of the Cinquecento, in his manuscripts – *Scala del paradiso*, *Il Rosario* and *Vite dei santi e beati* – stressed the role of the real images in contemplation. In that context, he describes visions of Caterina de' Ricci in front of the Crucifixion, or the vision of the blood of the crucified Christ by the less known local *santa viva*, Osanna da Cattaro, or the extremely interesting vision by suor Maria di Reggio from the monastery of San Vincenzo in Prato. Namely, after suor Maria came to the garden to pray before the large wooden Crucifixion, she saw *"a occhi aperti in estasi di spirito, il Giesu cosi pieno e ricoperto di sangue, che era una compassione a vederlo e se lo impresse tanto fissamente nel cuore quella sembianza, che poi lo dipinse di propria mano"*.[14]

By documenting the empathic fruition of a work of art, some accounts of visions show the specific ability of some images to stick in the mind of the devotee, which works as a site of storage for mental images that can be reactivated and revitalized during the mystical experience. Although our aim is to analyze the relationship between the images and visions, we would like to point out the need to complement this area with the other senses (especially sound) which are also stored in memory, thus enabling imagination to construct or recon-

struct the visions. We can find a clear relationship between the literary depictions of visions and music in laude singing, for example in the vision of Caterina de' Ricci or Domenica da Paradiso and the story of the miraculous holy doll of the Christ Child when Domenica began singing laude with the other nuns.[15]

Sister Battista says she fell into a trance after singing a *lauda* with lyrics that encouraged the listener to take an in-depth look at Christ's wounds. The nun attends as a participating spectator to the moment in which the Virgin Mary is holding the dead body of her son, retrieving the extra-evangelical iconography of the German *Vesperbild* during the vision. The vision then expands, including the Lamentation over the Dead Christ surrounded by mourners, and comprises also the sound, because the nun hears the cries of the Magdalen, John, and the other women. In this case, it is very likely that the mind of the mystic recalled the semi-ritual dramas of Holy Friday, frozen in the production of paintings with screaming figures, which, for their intrinsic ability to activate the mechanism of 'embodied simulation', remain easily imprinted in the minds of the devotees and re-emerge during private meditation or visions.[16]

The images produced in these visions evoke pictures intentionally conceived by the artist to catch the eye of the devotee and to elicit the empathy of the observer, strengthening his feelings of fear, compassion, and pity.[17] The awful suffering showed, exhibited, and paraded, in a collection of sample gestures to be observed and imitated, has an effect on a mnemonic level, sticking in the mind of the devotee in the form of long-lasting mental images which can be reactivated by bodies that are exceptionally skilled in the mystical experience. If we single out as key words: the meditation upon real images or the meditation of the invisible through the visualization, the formation of mental images, the spiritual, cultural, and historical context in which visions are described in the iconography and written words, we reach a concept which is very familiar to art historians. This is an attempt to rediscover a cultural code in which words are translated into visible images. This is what we do in front of visual imagery, frequently incorporating in the interpretation of the work of art our own vision, induced by the power of the images. The concept of inspiration, which is interpreted as divine (and a mystic's vision is

only one of the possible expressions) is a universal code that is present in a global art history.

In order to relativize our topic to some extent, it is worth mentioning some cases in another religious culture. In Japanese or East Asian religious cultures, the dream played a great role, just like the vision in Europe. As Macrobius classified the dream in five categories: *somnium*, *visio*, *oraculum*, *insomnium*, *phantasma/visum*,[18] this means that the notion of dream included a wider range of meanings than it does today. It was a higher concept than the vision but, in East Asian Buddhist cultures, there was no categorical difference between vision and dream until the Early Modern era.

There are many records of dreams with rich visual elements which were influenced by religious paintings or statues. There are legends about the origin of many paintings or statues that narrate that priests or monks saw images in their dreams or visions and had them painted or sculpted as holy images afterward. This kind of experience of a mystical person, in medieval Japan, is called *Kantoku* or *Muchū-kantoku*, which means: 'feel and gain a form in a dream'.[19] For example, a painting of the Pure Land, Chikō-mandala, whose copies are preserved in the Gangō-ji temple, in Nara and elsewhere, was made according to the memory of priest Chikō (ca. 709-ca. 780), who saw the real landscape of the Pure Land in his dream. According to the established theory today, this type of painting is a modified and simplified version of Jōdo-mandala, the typical painting which depicts heaven and hell. A similar legend surrounds the origin of Ki-fudō, a 9th century painting of yellow Acalanatha, of the Onjō-ji temple, Shiga. Priest Enchin (814-891) saw a golden deity in his dream and had its figure painted after waking up. This painting also has some unusual characteristics which deviated from the iconographic tradition. As in Europe, there must have been an interrelation between dreams of mystical persons and real images.

For our topic, one of the most intriguing figures in Medieval Japanese Buddhist culture to be considered is Myōe (1173-1232), a priest and ascetic practitioner who recorded his dreams and visions in many manuscripts, called *Yumenoki* ('Records of Dreams' or 'Dream Diary'), from 1191 to 1231, so for about 40 years.[20] He was also well known as the eccentric mystic who cut his right ear by himself during his ascetic training as an ascetic practice of sacrifice imitating Buddha. Many of his dreams or

visions have a strongly visual character. When he saw a Buddhist deity in his dreams, he often described its figure in detail visually and sometimes even sketched it. In his dreams, not only deities but also their statues or paintings appeared, and sometimes they were suddenly animated and established an interactive relationship with him. We would like to describe a dream of Myōe in 1206 which shows a striking similarity with a European vision. After visiting a Buddhist hall and worshipping in front of a statue of Marishiten (Marici), a female Buddhist deity, he had a dream in which "a statue of a heavenly lady turned smiling" to him. Then, he embraced the statue and kissed it. Each loved each other and they both thought it was sweet.[21]

This dream reminds us of a visionary experience of Rupert of Deutz (1070/80-1129), abbot of the Abbey in Siegburg, near Cologne, in the early 12th century. He had had a dream when he was still in his youth in Liège, ca. 1108, and wrote about it in 1127. He had showed deep reverence and veneration to a crucifixion sculpture every day and sometimes even embraced it. One day he saw a 'sweet' vision during his sleep:

> I was not satisfied unless I might seize him with my hands, and I might kiss affectionately the embraced one. But what could I do? He was too high on the altar for me to reach. But as he saw this thought or desire of mine, he, too, desired it for himself. I sensed indeed that he desired it, and at the nod of his will, the altar opened in the middle and received me running inside it. When I had quickly entered, I seized him "whom my soul loves" (Cant.1.6), I held him, I embraced him, and I kissed him for a long while. I sensed how joyfully he received this gesture of love since as him was being kissed he opened his mouth, that I might kiss him more deeply.[22]

Both Myōe and Rupert interacted with a statue in a similar way in a dream and stressed the reciprocity of the encounter afterward. In both cases, the monk and the statue both mutually expressed their desire. The only great difference is that Myōe embraced a female deity and Rupert did so with Christ. However, Rupert's reference to the Song of Songs made understandable that this scene incorporated "the love dialogue between the bride and her heavenly bridegroom".[23]

The last case we would like to consider is Myōe's dreams of ascending a pagoda to heav-en. In his dreams, he once saw a pagoda that had many stories and tried to climb it but awoke before he reached the top. He deeply regretted that he did not complete his climb. Then, about twenty days after, he dreamt another dream:

> I ascended just as I had done before and reached the streaming jewel-star. This time I climbed atop the star whereupon I could see the entire universe in all ten directions right before my eyes. The sun, moon, stars, and houses were far below me, and I felt that I had gone beyond the Akanistha Heaven. Then I descended back down to earth.[24]

Not all, but some of the dreams of Myōe were shared with his disciples, just like visions were shared among nuns in European convents during the late Middle Ages, and this kind of dream of ascending a pagoda was well known by them. On 3 January 1223, a priest named Jōshun, a former disciple of Myōe, dreamt that three priests were trying to climb to the top of a high pagoda. Two of them were still at the first or second story, while the third had already climbed to a much higher level. Then, Jōshun realized that the man was Myōe, and recognized in this dream a sign of his mentor's coming death, which occurred on 11 February of that same year. This kind of dream of ascending a pagoda to heaven recalls the Christian iconography of a heavenly ladder, like the ladder of divine ascent depicted in the 12th century icon in the collection of the St. Catherine Monastery in Sinai, in which monks are ascending a ladder to Christ in heaven and John Climakos is depicted at the top of the ladder. Although it is a ladder in Christian iconography and a pagoda in Buddhism, its basic principle and composition is quite similar. While the 30 steps of the ladder correspond to 30 chapters of a sort of guidebook for Orthodox monks written in the 7th century, and the icon is in a sense an advertisement of the book,[25] the many stories of the pagoda of Myōe's dreams reflect the 52 stages of ascetic practices that a Bodhisattva must engage in in order to attain the Buddhahood in Kegon (Huayan)-sutra. While in Christianity a motif like the ladder is neutral in contrast to the tower, which was easily associated with the tower of Babel, in East Asian Buddhism cosmology was sometimes represented as a tall pagoda with many stories, as in an example from Dunhuang now in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris.[26] Because no painting or drawing of Myōe's

dream of ascending the pagoda is known to date, the ladder of Climakos could perhaps help visually reconstruct Myōe's dream to some extent.

Based on our comparative approach on these few case studies, we are convinced that our introduction proves that there is a rich field of research on this topic ahead of us that deserves to be further studied.

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Notes

[1] On the making of the painting see B. Thomson (with F. Fowle and L. Stevenson), *Gauguin's Vision* (Edinburgh: Trustees of the National Gallery of Scotland, 2005).

[2] V. Merlhès, ed., *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin: documents, témoignages* (Paris: Foundation Singer-Polignac, 1984), pp. 230-232.

[3] D. Cooper, ed., *Paul Gauguin: 45 lettres à Vincent, Théo et Jo van Gogh* (Lausanne: La Bibliothèque des arts, 1983), p. 36.

[4] On Gauguin's artistic research in Brittany, as a land of archaic traditions, see in particular M.G. Messina, *Le muse d'Oltremare. Esotismo e primitivismo nell'arte contemporanea* (Torino: Einaudi, 1993), pp. 85-119.

[5] C. Frugoni, "Le mistiche, le visioni e l'iconografia: rapporti ed influssi", in *Temi e problemi nella mistica femminile trecentesca* (Todi: Accademia Tudertina, 1983), pp. 5-45. Similar phenomena are attested also in other geographical areas: J.F. Hamburger, *The visual and the visionary. Art and female spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998); C. Harbison, "Visions and meditations in early Flemish painting", *Simiolus* 15, no. 1 (1985): pp. 87-118.

[6] For the body as a special *medium* for images see: H. Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie: Entwurfe fur eine Bildwissenschaft* (München: Fink, 2001).

[7] On the importance of the very well-known practice of 'inner visualization' in the fruition of works of art during the Renaissance, see: M. Baxandall, *Painting and experience in fifteenth century Italy. A primer in the social history of pictorial style* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

[8] M. Mauss, "Les techniques du corps" (1936), in Id., *Sociologie et anthropologie* (Paris: Quadrige/PUF, 1950), pp. 365-386.

[9] D. Feedberg, V. Gallese, "Empathy, motion, emotion in esthetic experience", *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 26-103 (2008): pp. 52-59.

[10] As well as modeling her visions on known images, in many cases Sister Battista comes to internalize the role played by some characters in the iconography, to such an extent that she replaces them; in other cases, she also describes her bodily sensations, indirectly illustrating their emotional, tactile, or motor reaction in front of a previously seen work of art, reactivated by the vision. Cfr. G. Capriotti, "Visions, mental images, real pictures: the mystical experience and the artistic patronage of Sister Battista da Varano", *Ikon* 6 (2013): pp. 213-224.

[11] Some significant contributions that have shed light on how mystical visions were manipulated for religious or some other political reasons, in regard to Italian female mystics and prophets, were made by Italian authors (Gabriella Zarri, Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli, Anna Scattigno, Ottavia Niccoli), generating renewed interest in the vision and images in the context of the society.

[12] B. Newman, "The Visionary Texts and Visual Worlds of Religious Women", in J.F. Hamburger, S. Marti, eds., *Crown and Veil. Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 151-171; T. Flanigan, "Art, Memory, and the Cultivation of Virtue: The Ethical Function of Images in Antoninus's Opera a ben vivere", *Gesta* 53, no. 2 (2014): pp. 175-195; C. Lawless, "Sensing the image: gender, piety and images in late medieval Tuscany", *Open Arts Journal* 8 (2014-2015).

[13] M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); M. Carruthers, J.M. Ziolkowski, eds., *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). See also: L. Bolzoni, *La stanza della memoria. Modelli letterari e iconografici nell'età della stampa* (Torino: Einaudi, 1995).

[14] S. Razzi, *Vita della reverenda serva di Dio, la Madre Suor Caterina de' Ricci, Monaca del Monastero di San Vincenzo di Prato*, Lucca 1594, in *Collana Ricciana, Fonti III*, ed. G.M. Agresti (Firenze: Olschki, 1963), pp. 47-48; A. Sarti, "Caterina de' Ricci e le consorelle pittrici nel monastero di San Vincenzo Ferreri", *Prato, Storia e Arte* 120 (2016): p. 36.

[15] A. Scattigno, "Le visioni di suor Caterina de' Ricci", in M. Modica Casta, ed., *Esperienza religiosa e scritture femminili tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Acireale: Bonanno, 1992), pp. 43-75; M. Callahan, "Suor Domenica da Paradiso as alter Christus: Portraits of a Renaissance mystic", *The Sixteenth century journal* (2012): pp. 323-350; V. Živković, "Visions of Blessed Osanna of Kotor (Cattaro)", *Ikon* 6 (2013): pp. 225-236.

[16] G. Capriotti, "Un corpo infetto di immagini e suoni: lamentazioni rituali, statue urlanti e visioni uditive nel Rinascimento", in I. Baglioni, ed., *Ascoltare gli Dèi / Divos Audire. Costruzione e percezione della dimensione sonora nelle religioni del Mediterraneo antico* (Roma: Quasar, 2015), pp. 129-139.

[17] D. Freedberg, "Immagini e risposta emotiva: la prospettiva neuroscientifica", in A. Ottani Cavina, ed., *Prospettiva Zeri* (Torino: Allemandi, 2009), pp. 85-105.

[18] Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, tr. W. Harris Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 87-92.

[19] Masahide Mori, "Kantoku-zō to Seinaru-mono ni kansuru Ichi-Kōsatsu", in *Bukkyō-bunka to Rekishi-bunka* (Kyoto 2005), pp. 27-46.

[20] On Myōe and his dream diary in European languages see: G.J. Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1992); F. Girard, *Un moine de la secte Kegon à l'époque de Kamakura, Myōe (1173-1232) et le "Journal de ses rêves"* (Paris: Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1990).

[21] From a manuscript from autumn 1206, preserved in the Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka. See Isao Okuda, et al., eds., *Myōe Shōnin Yumeno-ki Yakuchū* (Tōkyō: Benseishuppan, 2015), pp. 179-181.

[22] S. Lipton, "'The Sweet Lean of His Head': Writing about Looking at the Crucifix in the High Middle Ages", *Speculum* 80, no. 4 (2005): pp. 1175-1176; R. Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 309-311.

[23] L. Smits, "Wounding, Sealing, and Kissing: Bridal Imagery and the Image of Christ", *Medium Aevum* 88, no. 1 (2019): p. 13.

[24] *Myōe Shōnin Gyōjō-ki* (Tōkyō 1931), pp. 27-28; English translation from: Hayao Kawai, *A Buddhist priest Myōe: A Life of Dreams* (Venice, CA: The Lapis Press, 1992), p. 85.

[25] R. Cormack, *Icons* (London: BMP, 2007), pp. 18-20.

[26] Kimi Sakai, *Yume no Nihon-shi* (Tōkyō 2017), pp. 77-79, fig. 13.

The Painted Word: Forms of Mystical Language in the 13th Century

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Introduction

Since the beginning of the 13th century, which anticipated the age of Western modernity, a new epistemological form appeared. Before it acquired the status of *scientia*, and as such be endowed with its own statutes, technical vocabulary, and specific *modus loquendi*, it was hagiography that told the medieval history of a new discipline, *mystical science*, or *science of the saints*, as it would be named in the 17th century. In this literature, the facts of life, the virtues, and even the miracles are less important than the illuminations, the heavenly talks with God, with the angels and saints. Visions, ecstasies, revelations: the ancient and venerable literary genre of the *Vitae* has given room to stories of personal experiences, and this has allowed the traditional linguistic and textual structures to explode from within. This relevant change has been described as a passage from hagiography to auto-hagiography, where the saint engages in the writing of his own hagiography. This transition is rather quick: as early as the end of the century, the *Memoriale* of Angela of Foligno (d. 1309) marked this emancipation from traditional hagiography. Angela's *Liber* represents one of the first attempts to organize a primitive and originally unidentifiable orality in scientific writing: the text is the outcome of the (female) orality and the (male) systematic knowledge. The theme of the *itinerarium* stands because the story is organized into a sequence of scenes, in the actuality of a place, following a theatrical structure rather than the typical hagiographical narrative.

These tales of the soul, much like voice-overs which seem to come out of the world, date back to the collective history of the *Christianitas* decline. The mystical 'constellation' began to shine in the 13th century in the context of the Lateran reform and the ecclesiastical reconquest. The 14th century witnessed the explosion of the ancient religion of unity. It culminated in the 17th century and disappeared with the rise of the Enlightenment.

A Female Knowledge

In a classic essay of the 13th century, Herbert Grundmann (1935) was among the first to associate the rise of the German mysticism with the development of the female religious movement in Europe. This association was also recognized by James of Vitry, the *inceptor* of the new literary genre of mystical hagiography. In the second decade of the century – in the prologue of the Life of Mary of Oignies (d. 1213), aimed at celebrating the heroic devotion of the beguines of the diocese of Liège – he coined the paradigm of the 'religion of mothers'. Mary of Oignies, almost as a new Antony, leads the crowd of ascetic women that populates the modern urban deserts, opening a new and higher season of sanctity in the history of the Church. In his book, James of Vitry does not indicate a program of reform but rather represents it, perfectly accomplished and incarnated, in the figure of Mary. She is the icon, the model of what, in the eyes of the hagiographer, 'the new Church', namely the true Catholic Church, was to become.

However, while recognizing the relevance of gender history, we should perhaps adopt a different and broader point of view. The historiographical attention to the female issues has indeed left a different and more serious problem in the shadows. The 'mystical invasion' represented a decisive turning point in the European intellectual self-consciousness and contributed to a re-invention of the language of faith itself, constituting a radical alternative to the discourses inherited from the tradition. Similarly, the paradigm of spiritual marginalisms and deviances seems inadequate to explain this literature: for some time, before the mystic experience was located and isolated inside the cloisters, before the rising tide of suspicion, the modern language of ecstasy

had occupied an important place in the religious scene, despite its often elitist character. These words that break the silence have a truly winning power, as they took on, from time to time, literary, pictorial, political and social values. They focused on texts, images, meditative paths, they reshaped liturgical and devotional practices, established new rituals and sealed social pacts. The issue that is discussed in all these mystical texts is the relationship between the Christian experience and history. The theme of the body is central throughout. The anthropological modification is made evident by the different functions of ecstasy, which, from this period on, fully takes on its Catholic and Pentecostal form, different by other religious systems. In ancient and early medieval times, the vision had been a journey of the soul that had been freed from the burdens of the body and was able to circulate through cosmic spaces. After, the inert matter abandoned by ancient explorers played a decisive role in the spiritual experience, which is inseparable from it and necessary, and provided it with its own vocabulary. The new phenomenology of ecstasy did not lie in the invention of a body language, but of a body as a language which, in theological terms, would be called the incarnation of the Spirit, following the model of the Annunciation. Two examples give an insight into the magnitude of the change that occurred and allow to date it approximately in the first decades of the 13th century. One of them is very well known, the other more obscure, but both refer to two privileged areas of the great mystical wave that invested Europe: they come from Brabant and Umbria. In 1232, the Dominican scholar Thomas of Cantimpré wrote *The Life of Christine the Astonishing* (d. 1224). The hagiographer apparently resumes the ancient journey of the afterlife and reversed it: he does not describe a departure, but a return. When, already in heaven, this woman sees God face to face, the Lord asks her if she wants to stay with him to enjoy the heavenly joys or return to the body and to the world to atone, with her own suffering, for the sins of men, and thus save them. Christine chooses to return without hesitation. The *exemplum* of the Dominican writer introduces us to a different way of practicing the absolute: as a matter of fact, her contract with God does not deal with her personal salvation, but with the redemption of men. Early medieval journeys were the result of an inherent contractual code, tied to a debt to

be paid. In this case, the return-descent to earth of the holy woman is a service of love, recalling the model of Christ. The overall meaning of this incredible story is unveiled by Thomas in the epilogue: it is not the soul to be the prisoner of the body, rather the opposite. Christine the Astonishing's tale has the value of an epitaph at its heart: it marks the end of an era. The tradition of afterlife visions will have a long and celebrated literary posterity, though working on other registers besides the one of ecstasy. As they are no longer a *miraculum*, as Bede the Venerable thought of them, afterlife visions are moved to the fields of allegory and poetic narrative. They came back towards the end of the Middle Ages, within a parenetic and didactic framework, and became an instrument to a sort of 'pastoral of fear'.

One particular date seems to mark the historical beginning of the great modern development of ecstasy: in 1224, on the sacred mountain called La Verna, a Seraph appeared, "marking the flesh of Francis", according to a living portrait of the Crucifix. "A mystery unknown to the previous centuries", as the disciples of the saint hastened to rightly point out, that gave rise to endless and unresolved debates and discussions. More essential, perhaps, is the meaning to be attributed to this angelic writing. However, this is a really foundational experience. While the ancient visionary crossed the regions of cosmic space, here it is the law of time that creates an insurmountable frontier between the visible and the invisible. When the vision is over, it leaves the sign of a presence like a relic.

In the new religious discourse, the task of witnessing a vanishing truth, of saying what cannot be uttered in words, is also delegated to the body. Later, more and more often, it was also called to respond to concerns and doubts as they arose. At the end of the 13th century, the friar Petrus de Dacia explicitly declared this in front of the writing-desk-like body of a stigmatized virgin, Christine of Stommeln (d. 1312): "I wanted facts, not words, *signa*, not *verba*". Here, the spirit that tattoos the woman's body is the devil, and it does not matter that the Truth shows itself with inverted and different signs, through the devil, the greatest Liar. What matters to the scholars of the Koln *Studium*, passionate witnesses of this diabolical scene, is the explosion of a spiritual energy that breaks up the lock of natural laws, freeing indefinite hidden powers.

As a matter of fact, in order to understand the establishment of the new spiritual discourse, it is necessary, first of all, to analyze a crisis of the religious thought concerning whether and how God is knowable, how to connect what is finite or infinite: then, the invasion of mysticism and scholastic rationalism appear to us as two sides of the same problem.

Even though the development of a new metaphysical language had marked the end of the ontological link between words and things, the mystics did not give up. Faced with the apophatism of the philosophical God, confined within himself and inaccessible – Peter Abelard perfected, on a speculative level, the theme of divine unity – they still believed that God spoke to them.

On this essential debate, a conflict opens up, marking deeply the Western culture divided between faith and reason, between the language of logic and the one of the symbol. Thus, it was precisely to defend the possibility of a direct communication with God that, as early as in the 12th century, Bernard of Clairvaux and William of Saint-Thierry transformed the religious scene into a love scene. One century later, Thomas Aquinas tried to reconcile the two forms of knowledge, namely the discursive-rational one and the illumination-revelation, the sapience that the Pseudo-Dionysius, the *doctor angelicus*, qualifies, in the Commentary to the *De divinis nominibus*, as "indocibilem, idest occultam, quia excedit naturalem cognitionem" (c. 2, l. 4, 192). It is a perfect knowledge because it comes directly from God, an unfathomable gift of his grace. Strictly speaking, even the statute of this literature remains uncertain, because the narrative of ecstasy does not let itself be categorized into in a specialized genre, as it works on different narrative and linguistic levels, at the crossing of Latin and the new vernacular languages. At the beginning, it finds its place in the ancient and venerable tradition of the *Lives*, and then it becomes progressively autonomous, however without supplanting hagiography.

Perhaps, it is then possible to isolate, as the only common feature of an impressive textual panorama, a theory of the speech act which paves the way for new ways of speaking. On the female form, a sort of *ars dictandi* is at the start of a modern literary structure with moving boundaries open to a plurality of expressive codes – *legendae*, memorials, epistolaries, inquiries – which draws the fullness of the discourses from the same source.

At the beginning, there is in fact a speech-act, a locution, or a vision. It has an essentially epiphanic character, it is an event, it works on the model of the Annunciation because it 'crosses over', and thus re-establishes a direct communication between different orders: the human and the divine. Its highest ambition is to fill the gap between words and things, or, in different terms, to mend the division between the visible and the invisible. The space between the two worlds, the celestial and the worldly ones, is filled up with women, to safeguard a symbolism that theology tends, at this point, to consider culturally incorrect. For the man, there is nothing left to do but to listen, even though the woman hides herself in the words that she speaks because the Ego who speaks is not her own, but God's one. However, two people are to be there for the new language to be born. Therefore, the new spiritual literature gives priority to the relationship. As a matter of fact, the mystical language does not stand alone like the theological and clerical ones, and its development is tied to the male-female duality. In this case, though, the mother prevails on the father, also in the name of an ancient cultural tradition that maintains the principle of a female divine presence in the world (*Shekinah*). It is therefore through the mother that the word arrives and becomes speech and body, while the task assigned to the father is to deliver and make a memory of it.

This structure can be clearly seen in Angela of Foligno's *Memoriale*, which allows us to analyze more closely the relationship between the mystic woman and the spiritual father, in the combination of two asymmetric positions. So, on the one hand, there is the woman: her speech is not legitimized by an academic knowledge or by an institutional position (she is neither a professor nor a preacher). Her reputation depends on the fact that the mystic woman is the place of inspired utterance, she is the medium of the speech-act. The work of the friar, on the other hand, is to give intelligibility and legitimacy to Angela's words. His own knowledge invests him with the power of naming and classifying: in fact this is the task of writing in Western culture.

And yet, there is a third, invisible entity to summon them and He is also the true author and director of the event. The scheme is basically ternary rather than binary. We observe here that hagiography is also a literary and essentially theophanic

genre, but while a sequence of events organizes a story, mysticism is a scene, a representation.

The Flanders and the Rhine Valley

Let us now go back to the time of the origins. The earliest records are to be found in the more developed and urbanized environments of Flanders and Brabant, where a small movement of clerics and scholars emerged. They came from the intellectual elites of those regions. Among them, we find James of Vitry and Thomas of Cantimpré, who were in search of an else illumination. They listened to voices which humiliated their theological competence and gave rise to an alliance between women and priests, a model destined to have a long spiritual posterity. Their heroines were predominantly lay women. The practice of the spiritual guidance and of the auricular confession left the cloisters and drew from the social opacities the materials with which it was possible to compose the new edifying literature made of experimental writings, marked by the common need to re-articulate private experiences within the ecclesial framework. As a corollary to his warlike commitment in the crusade, the open aim of James of Vitry was also to protect the faithful people from the call of the great popular heresies and heterodox movements. The words of ecstasy fill the gaps of ecclesial discourse and offer a rich repertoire of *exempla* to preaching. These stories which come from 'elsewhere' have also a political function, a militant one.

In the same years of the Fourth Lateran Council, the spiritual eyes of Mary of Oignies, *veracissima prophetissa*, raise the veil over the Eucharistic mystery: at the moment of elevation, they see the shining Child Jesus revealing Himself over the chalice. Thus, the vision of the incarnate host testifies to the truth of the contested dogma. The holy penitents belong to all population segments, both urban and suburban. Christine the Astonishing is a shepherdess, Margaret of Ypres (d. 1237) an orphan, whereas Mary of Oignies and Yvette of Huy (d. 1228) come from dynamic and wealthy social groups. They are women who make their own choice of chastity and voluntary poverty, in open dispute with the values of a rising bourgeoisie and with the secular ways of living and thinking. Often, by doing so, they endure violent conflicts with their families. In her biography by Hug of Floreffe, Yvette harshly rebels to the marriage imposed by her father. Thus, these new Christian women engage in charity and as-

sistance activities inside the hospitals and for the benefit of lepers, they give aid to the poors and seek to repair the injuries and the injustices of society. However, their complex penitential process finds almost always its way out inside the solitude of the cell. In monastic hagiographies, elaborated in the *scriptoria* of the great Cistercian abbeys, the authors' personalities are weaker and the models of perfection are more homogeneous. However, in these cloistered visions too, the Eucharistic themes are dominant, as it is witnessed by the two nuns of La Ramée, Ida of Nivelles (d. 1231/1232) and Ida of Gorsleeuw (d. 1262), who describe the Gospels of Christ's Infancy in bright and rarefied scripts.

The code changes completely when the writer is a Dominican friar. With the *Life of Lutgard of Tongeren* (d. 1246), a Cistercian nun whom Thomas of Cantimpré selects as *mater et nutrix* of the Preachers Friars, the author concludes his *florilegium* of the holy women of the diocese of Liège, thus delivering the great masterpiece of the mystical hagiography of the 13th century. In the portrait of this old, blind, and silent Sybille, the Lady of the Purgatory, the constituent elements of the Dominican hagiographic proposal are fixed: the exchange of hearts, sores, blood, tears, the reparation and redemption of the suffering and fasting. The emphasis is no longer placed on the mystery of Incarnation, but on that of the Passion: to appear in the host is not the smiling Child, but the crucified Christ, an *Imago Pietatis*. Lutgard does not eat the heavenly bread, but the flesh and blood of God. The erotic language of the Cistercian tradition is enriched with new themes which belong to the new mendicant pastoral care. The blessed Lutgard inaugurates the long gallery of the women of the Passion of the Middle Ages: Alice of Schaarbeek (d. 1250), the leper, Elisabeth of Spalbeek (d. 1316), Ida of Leuven (d. 1290/1300), Lukardis of Oberweimar (d. 1309). The language of the nuns is different from that employed by the Beguines. The same is also true with regard to their lifestyle, though their religious or social status is less important than their belonging to the movements of the Spirit. These environments are indeed permeable and communicative, informal networks of friends of God, where an exchange of messages and revelations takes place, together with assistance and mutual support. In her life crucial choices, Juliana of Mont-Cornillon (d. 1258) resorts to the charisma of the recluse Eve, a hermit of the city, as her own spiritual guidance, who

supports her in the task of introducing the festivity of Corpus Christi in the liturgical calendar of the diocese. Mechtilde of Magdeburg (d. 1283) writes a poem, according to Henry of Nordlingen, in the most marvelous German, even if she considers herself only the copyist of a book 'fully flown' from God. Even her poetical activity raises slanders and suspicions on her, so much is that Mechtild is accepted in the monastery of Helfta. Here, in the affectionate and maternal womb of a cultured circle and of enlightened spiritual friends, she continues to write for them the scripts of delicate sacred dramas, finally enjoying "the inestimable value of serenity". It is precisely in the claustral context that the most suitable conditions, from a cultural, but also from a vital point of view, are created for the important achievement of writing. Initially, this practice is limited to the copying of illuminated codes for the internal use of the communities, as in the case of the monastery of La Ramée, where Beatrijs of Nazareth (d. 1268) was sent to learn the art of illuminating the manuscripts. She soon became a *magistra* and the most important author of the Flemish canon, together with the mysterious Hadewijch of Antwerp (d. 1235/1238). In the Rhine Valley, however, Mechtild of Hackeborn (d. 1299) and Gertrud the Great (d. 1301/1302) stood out. They were perfectly able to write in the cultured language of the clergymen. Helfta inaugurated a new type of cloister writing, where the whole community collaborated in the construction of memory, and it was an important connecting link which prepared the great literary flourishment in the German monasteries in the following century. In these environments of the 14th century, the literary genre of the *Nonnenbucher*, 'the books of the sisters', was formed, a reflection of the communities educated by masters of excellence such as Eckhart, Tauler, Suso. In this case, we can speak of collective self-hagiographies.

Some Reflections for a Comparison

In the space of fifty years, in the heart of Europe, a corpus of female writings was therefore composed; they were among the highest testimonies of the Christian literature. Here we have only summarily mentioned them, but these brief notes are perhaps sufficient to open a reflection that concerns the cultural difference between the experiences of Northern and Mediterranean women, a fracture destined to affect, even in the long run, the role and position of the women in society and in the Church. The Italian landscape, as a matter of fact, has different traits: in the face of an undeniable vivacity of the penitential movement, the cultural scene appears much narrower. Perhaps the texts that can stand on equal terms with the mystical Nordic scriptures are the *Memoriale* of Angela of Foligno and the Life of Margaret of Cortona. We should inquire about the reasons for these limitations and delays. They are probably related to the conditions of religious life in Italy, where female monasticism was only barely affected by the reforming experiments of the 12th century. This was not the main concern of Clare of Assisi (d. 1253). She was the first woman in the history of the Church to write a rule for religious women and, consistently with her pauperistic perspective, did not encourage the study activities. On the other hand, the mendicant neo-Monachism seems too absorbed in the clarification of its institutional and spiritual identity, while in a difficult confrontation with the Apostolic See and the male orders. These problems may explain the slower development of their cultural initiatives vis-à-vis those of the monastic foundations of the Flanders and of the Rhine Valley, which operated in greater autonomy. Even the local bizzocal experience, although an active one, remained dispersed and fragmented into micro-groups. It is not able to evolve into highly organized structures such as the great Nordic beguinages, true 'cities of ladies', entities characterized by a strong political self-consciousness and a working and patrimonial independence unknown to the contemporary experiences of Tuscany and Umbria.

While it is true that these regions of central Italy represented an exceptional chronotope of the new female holiness – the Italian mystic women – in general, these figures seemed more isolated, at the periphery of convents that protected and controlled them. Moreover, if in the Northern regions the Dominican predominance is overwhelming, in the Italian ones the most prominent figures wear the gray bandages of the minor penitents. Among them, we find the Florentine Umiliana dei Cerchi (d. 1246), and then Margaret of Cortona (d. 1297) and Angela of Foligno. On the other hand, saint Clare of the Cross (d. 1308) had an uncertain position between the Hermit and Franciscan orders, since she lived in a little community of Montefalco, under the Augustinian rule, though she was not formally a member of the Hermit Order.

The Preacher Friars too produce valuable texts: in the important town of Cividale del Friuli, Corrado of Castellerio wrote about the Life of the blessed Benvenuta Boiani (d. 1292), a suffering girl devoted to God and the Virgin. In Umbria, on the other hand, an uncertain author writes that the *mantellate* of Orvieto chose, as their banner, Vanna (d. 1306), an embroiderer whose mimetic and plastic body reproduced the spasms of the Passion. A little further away, in Città di Castello, another uncertain author describes the short life of the blessed Margaret of the Metola (d. 1320), a blind orphan. A sort of less known version of the more famous nun of Montefalco, this ill-fated girl carries a small Nativity scene in her heart, a mystical icon of the family that she never had. These are interesting writings, even though it is still difficult to clarify the relationship between the lived experience and the hagiographic narration. The Dominican friars had to wait some time before the great Catherine of Siena (d. 1380), the second foundress of the Order and symbol of the reform after the crisis of the Schism, took the whole scene.

The Franciscan ecstatic women also documented a new phase in the history of female mysticism: the spiritual experience now needs to defend itself. This problem is added to the trace left in these works by the difficult situation of the Order, internally divided by a lacerating conflict on the theme of poverty. The hagiographer of Margaret of Cortona, following the example of Bonaventura, tries to find a solution to the internal divisions precisely in the ascetic and mystical proposal represented by this poor, humble, but also obedient heroine, a true heir of Francis. The most serious problem concerns the beatific vision. At the height of her research, Angela, completely transformed, says that she had reached the mystical state of supreme freedom, *absolutus*, freed from any external and contingent determination. An unprecedented experience which seems to place the soul, now united with God, beyond all limits, both moral and religious, above the Church and the Scriptures, beyond the ecclesiastical mediation.

Faced with the appearance, in central Italy, of a new category of heretics, those of the 'Free Spirit', a new task is undertaken by these women and their scribes aimed to clarify what *amor perfectus* means, while reaffirming that the mystical experience does not separate the *purus amor* from the processes of knowledge and action. It is a matter of demonstrating that there is no separation between inner inspiration and the example of life and good works, between spiritual experience and the work of penance, between charisma and hierarchy. In 1310, with Marguerite Porete sent to her death on a pyre in a square of Paris, the gap between the Church of the mystics and the Church as an institution seemed to widen. From that moment on, the defenders of the mystics had to face this very problem. After all, it was the same problem that, in the 17th century, condensed into the quietist formula and caused the decline of the time of the mystics.

Notes

[1] M. de Certeau, *La Fable mystique, XVIᵉ-XVIIᵉ siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982).

[2] A. Degl'Innocenti, "La mistica femminile tra agiografia e auto-agiografia", in *L'autobiografia nel Medioevo*. Atti dell'Accademia Tudertina. Nuova Serie. 11 (Spoleto: CISAM, 1998), pp. 188-209.

[3] On the women's religious movement, see H. Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter. Untersuchungen über die geschichtlichen Zusammenhänge zwischen der Ketzerei, den Bettelorden und der religiösen Frauenbewegung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert und über die geschichtlichen Grundlagen der deutschen Mystik* (Berlin 1935, Darmstadt 1961); A. Benvenuti Papi, *«In castro poenitentiae». Santità e società femminile nell'Italia medievale* (Roma: Herder, 1990); W. Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1265* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

[4] For a bibliography on the mystical women in northern Europe, see A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, A. Degl'Innocenti, F. Santi, eds., *Scrittrici mistiche europee. Secoli XII-XV* (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2015 and 2018), with indications of the manuscripts and editions of reference and an updated overview of the studies. For an introduction to the mystical literature of the 13th century: K. Ruh, *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik*, II, *Frauenmystik und Franziskanische Mystik der Frühzeit* (München: Beck 1993); B. McGinn, *The Presence of God. A History of Western Christian Mysticism,* III*, The Flowering of Mysticism. Men and Women in the New Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 1998); W. Simons, "Holy Women of the Low Countries: A Survey", in A. Minnis, R. Voaden, eds., *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 625-662; C. Leonardi, *Agiografie medievali* (Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2011); A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, *Santità e mistica femminile nel Medioevo* (Spoleto: CISAM, 2013); W. Simons, "Beginnings: Naming Beguines in the Southern Low Countries, 1200-50", in L. Böhringer, J. Kolpacoff Deane, H. van Engen, eds., *Labels and Libels: Naming Beguines in Northern Medieval Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 9-52.

[5] C. Carozzi, *Le voyage de l'âme dans l'Au-delà d'après la littérature latine* (Roma: École française de Rome, 1994).

[6] C. Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate. Una storia per parole e immagini fino a Bonaventura e Giotto* (Torino: Einaudi, 1993).

[7] A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, "Il diavolo nella letteratura mistica del Duecento", in *Il diavolo nel Medioevo*. Atti del XLIX Convegno storico internazionale (Todi, 14-17 ottobre 2012) (Spoleto: CISAM, 2013), pp. 265-305.

[8] On the Eucharistic devotion see M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi. The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); C. Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987); A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, "Eucaristia ed estasi: propaganda clericale e visioni nel XIII secolo", in L. Andreani, A. Paravicini Bagliani, eds., *Il «Corpus Domini». Teologia, antropologia e politica* (Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2015), pp. 73-100.

[9] S. Roisin, *L'hagiographie cistercienne dans le diocèse de Liège au XIIIe siècle* (Louvain-Brussels: Université de Louvain, 1947).

[10] J. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary. Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998); J. Hamburger, E. Schlotheuber, "Books in Women's Hands: Liturgy, Learning and Libraries of Dominicans Nuns in Westphalia", in N. Bériou, M. Morard, D. Nebbiai, eds., *Entre stabilité et itinérance. Livres et culture des ordres mendiants, XIIIe-XVe siècles* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 129-160.

[11] For an introduction to the Italian female mystics, see C. Leonardi, G. Pozzi, eds., *Scrittrici mistiche italiane* (Genova: Marietti, 1988).

[12] See R. Guarnieri, "Il movimento del Libero Spirito dalle origini al secolo XVI", *Archivio per la storia della pietà* 4 (1965): pp. 350-708.

Beyond the Visible: Aby Warburg and His Final Reflections on Images

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In opening the first session of the 35th International Congress of Art History here in Florence, dedicated to *The Mystical Mind as a Divine Artist: Visions, Artistic Production, Creation of Images Through Empathy*, I would like to introduce my speech by quoting some verses from the canto XXVII of Dante's *Paradiso*, concerning the visible and the invisible.

> "...e se natura o arte fé pasture
> da pigliare occhi, per aver la mente,
> in carne umana o ne le sue pitture...".

Dante, Commedia, *Paradiso*, XXVII, vv. 91-93

Is it possible to paint the invisible? This is a question of great interest because it deals with the concept of image, of how it is represented and how intelligible it is, going beyond mimetic representation and introducing a polarity between visible and invisible, image and figure, of a theoretical, theological, artistic, and philosophical nature.

Aby Warburg's reflection on the image was central to his speculations as an art historian who paid attention to the empathetic nature of images and who, during the last years of his life, focused on the fundamental aspects of human existence, on the biological cycle of inhaling and exhaling, as can be seen in the conclusion to his 1926 essay on Rembrandt.[1]

These reflections were linked to an interest in mystery religions, such as the Mithraic cult, which were in fact connected to the opposing issues of death and resurrection, fall and ascension. Such aspects implied a philosophical reflection, for example on Giordano Bruno,[2] and on the role of images in Saint Augustine's thinking, through the sensitive and the intelligible, the visible and the invisible.[3]

The publication of the volume of the *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg* in 1928-29 as a collection of essays by scholars reflecting on, but not limited to, some aspects regarding ancient religions. It started with the essay by Hermann Kees, *Die Himmelreise im ägyptischen Totenglauben*, and included others such as *Die Himmelreise Muhammeds und ihre Bedeutung in der Religion des Islam*, by Richard Hartmann, *Zur Ikonographie der Himmelfahrt Christi*, by Hubert Schrade, and Arturo Farinella's *Der Aufstieg der Seele bei Dante*.

Aby Warburg established relationships with these scholars during those years, as can be seen from the correspondence between them, on aspects and themes identified in the meanderings of his notes and visual projects, those plates of images that, from 1924, became his favourite means of expression and communication in his research.

In particular, there is an entry in Aby Warburg's *Tagebuch* (his diary), dated 12-14 July 1927, documenting a seminar on these themes, which was coordinated by Fritz Saxl, and in which a number of young researchers participated, including Kurt Sternelle. This promising scholar was entrusted with a project referring to this particular seminar, composed of five pencil sketches for plates, hand drawn by Aby Warburg, of which four were reproduced by Kurt Sternelle as pen drawings with some variations, in collaboration with Fritz Saxl, whose handwriting is recognizable, dated July 13, 1927.

This is a preparatory project for a series of four plates with photographs mounted on black canvas, according to a system used by Warburg for other projects in preparation for the *Mnemosyne Atlas*. These are preserved and kept in the Warburg Archive in London, with other material that is still unpublished.

The images arranged on the four plates are linked in various ways to the themes of death and resurrection, sacrifice, but also triumph and its polarities.

On this occasion, I would like to focus on the first plate in the 'Sternelle' series (fig. 1), where there are photographs of works by Italian and

Fig. 1. Aby Warburg, *Sternelle's Panel 1*. London, Warburg Institute Archive, III.95.3.1.3.2 Sternelle.

Flemish artists, focusing on the vision and mystery of the incarnation of Christ as a plan for the salvation of mankind that manifests itself in the *Last Judgement*. Hans Memling's triptych, which opens the theoretical path followed in this plate, introduces the debate on images between the visible and the invisible (fig. 2).

At the end of time, in fact, the vision of God is manifested in the Last Judgement, when the Blessed will come to contemplate what the angels already contemplate, that is, divine nature as it truly is. "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God", states Saint Augustine, quoting the Gospel of Saint Matthew (5:8) in his writings *De videndo Deo*, and adds, "...we shall see him as he is, ...and we shall contemplate the glory of the Word, vidimus gloriam eius", that is, the Incarnation of the invisible Divine Word in the visible Son. At the end of time, therefore, Theophany is mediation: the figuration of the inconceivable.[4]

Aby Warburg's interest in Saint Augustine and in the theme of vision dates back to the 1920s. Gustave Pauli had invited the Scholar to give a lecture on 31 July 1924, for friends from the Kunsthalle of Hamburg. The lecture was on Saint Augustine's vision, which was the subject of Botticelli's painting in the Ognissanti church in Florence. That same year, Richard Reitzenstein published his study on Saint Augustine in the *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, which had already been the subject of a lecture he had given in 1922 at the Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg, entitled *Augustin als antiker und als mittelalterlicher Mensch*. Again, on the theme of vision, Hans Liebeschütz book on Saint Hildegard, *Das allegorische Weltbild der heiligen Hildegard von Bingen*, in the *Studien der Bibliothek Warburg*, was published a few years later in 1930.

Augustine's reflections on the artistic image are of particular interest because they pose a problem that is as relevant today as ever in highlighting the relationship between the painting, as an object, and the image, namely between "*picture and image*", as argued by W.T.J. Mitchel in the Nineties regarding the notion of the *pictorial turn*.[5]

"Just as both the panel, and the picture painted on it, are at the same time called an image"

Fig. 2. Hans Memling, *Last Judgment Triptych*, 1467-1471. Gdansk, Muzeum Narodowe.

wrote Augustine in *De Trinitate* "but by reason of the picture painted on it, the panel also is called by the name of image".[6]

The image, in the sense of painting and image, has therefore a dual dimension: it is image and object, which refers back to something else. This means that it also belongs to the sphere of intentional forms. The table or canvas is to be considered, in addition to its physical aspects, in a form that is not its own, but that gives the object the status of image.

For Saint Augustine, art imitates Nature and originates from the divine thought that created it. Artistic production differ from divine creation as the latter creates from nothing, but within their works and through intellectual contemplation, artists find the beauty of forms such as proportions and the harmony of lines.

In *Quaestiones*, a work written immediately after his conversion, Augustine addresses the issue of images and thus, the relationship between likeness (*similitudo*), image (*imago*), and equality (*aequalitas*), also in relation to Platonic tradition,

which denied the possibility that an image could be the same as the original. Augustine, therefore, in interrogating himself about what an image is, was particularly inspired by the passage from Letter of Paul to the Colossians (1:15), which reads "in what sense is the son the image of the invisible God?". The answer he gave was that the son is similar to the Father, he is the image of the Father, he is equal to the Father.[7]

In referring to Saint Ambrose, in *De videndo Deo*, Augustine wrote: "No one has ever seen God… (John, 1:18) His only Son narrated him (enarravit), according to a vision of the spirit and not of the eye. In fact, the form (species) is seen, the power (virtus) is told. Form is understood through the eyes, power through the spirit".[8]

To produce mental images does not mean to passively receive them but to actively elaborate them – it is the soul of the very act of expressing itself.

The theme of vision is of great interest because it focuses on the theme of the image, on representation and intelligibility, introducing the polar

concepts of the corporeal and the incorporeal, the visible and the invisible, with particular reference to Saint Augustine and the issue of the image which repeats in his thinking from his early works.

Some of the images in the 'Sternelle' plates focus on intellectual vision as an insight into intelligible forms, starting with the paintings dedicated to the theme of the Adoration of the Child, as vision of the Divinity produced before bystanders: from the Portinari triptych by Hugo van der Goes in the Uffizi, to Domenico Ghirlandaio's altarpiece in the Sassetti chapel of the Santa Trinita church in Florence, to the painting by Benedetto Ghirlandaio in the church of Notre-Dame in Aigueperse.

Spiritual contemplation is the subject of a painting by Rogier van der Weyden and two works by Cosmè Tura, the cymatium of the Roverella polyptych and a small panel by the artist made in collaboration with Pietro Fiorentini and Rubinetto di Francia, dedicated to the Lamentation over the Dead Christ by Mary and John, as well as the pious women of Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and the angels.

Immediately below and on the right-hand side of the 'Sternelle' table, there is a small tablet by Botticelli, part of the predella of the altarpiece of Saint Barnabas which is preserved in the Uffizi (fig. 3) and beside the painting by Rubens in the Naròdni Galerie in Prague both depict the Vision of the Child Jesus on the seashore appearing to Saint Augustine. It is an image "*in aenigma*", as Saint Paul wrote (Letter to the Corinthians, 1, 13, 12), which aims to demonstrate by means of a touching episode – narrating of the attempt to empty the ocean with a shell – how impossible it is for the saint from Tagaste to explain the mystery of the Trinity. God cannot be seen because he is intelligible, the essence of God is totally invisible; but God is free to make himself visible through visions and apparitions in the forms he chooses. Theophanies are unpredictable, they are free manifestations and do not show God in his essence but only under certain aspects. Through the invisible, it is possible to speak of vision because the vision of God will be the intellectual contemplation of an intelligible form.

The portrayal of the mystery of the Trinity as an enigma is connected to the perceptive impression of images, which therefore concerns the realm of the vegetative and the sensory, in the sense of receiving an impression of the objects in the form of a mental apparition. Augustine takes the term *phantasia* from the Stoics, meaning an alteration of the soul that gives rise to an image under the influence of feeling, with which Augustine interprets the vision as the imaginative power of the spirit acting as an intermediary between the corporeal and the intelligible.

This type of awareness as sensitive perception is also referred to in the reproduction of another small panel in the same predella, beneath the Saint Barnabas altarpiece, showing the extraction of the heart of Saint Ignatius to prove the presence of the letters of the name of Christ engraved

Fig. 3. Sandro Botticelli, *Vision of St. Augustine*, in *San Barnaba Altarpiece*, 1488, detail. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi.

on it (fig. 4). Botticelli's two images, namely, the vision of the Child appearing to Saint Augustine and the extraction of the heart of Saint Ignatius, are the two most important ones. Ignatius would seem to respond to two forms of perception, one being the invisible – the mystery of the Trinity – and the other the visible, the tangible, a polar opposite in the relationship with the intangible nature of the enigma. Warburg was experimenting with such polarity in those years as a result of his research on Sacrifice and Divination, as well as with reference to the famous episode of Hippocrates and Democritus as represented in Nicolas Moeyaert's painting dated 1636 (The Hague, Mauritshuis), which marks the transition from Haruspicy to Anatomic medicine (fig. 4).

Phantasia makes it possible for visions of absent things to be present so that we appear to see them with our own eyes as if they were present. *Phantasia* refers to past perception, preserved in memory and present in the imagination. The term 'vision' used by Saint Augustine is therefore a synonym of the stoic *phantasia*, meaning perceptive representation, which differs from *phantasma*, that is, from fantasies, the representation of a sensitive abstract nature, dream, images, sensory illusions, hallucinations, ecstasy. This is the *phantasma* vision which another painting in the 'Sternelle' table refers to: the triptych of Saint Ildefonsus by Rubens in Vienna. In the centre, the vision of the Virgin is depicted giving the Saint a precious chasuble (a liturgical vestment), a heavenly gift,

as a sign of gratitude for the battles fought by the bishop in defence of the dogma of the virginity of the mother of God (Mar L8v) (fig. 5).

Although the invisible cannot be portrayed, it can nevertheless be represented figuratively.[9] As a matter of fact, according to Saint Augustine, the image is *signum proprium*, while the figure is *signum translatum*.[10]

In the transition from the visible to the visual, from image to shape, the visual intensity of the intuition of an invisible image is favoured instead of a figurative story: therefore, from representation to presence, to figurability, a pictorial place for contemplation, from the icon, as divine power, to the pictorial act that awakens the memory of the invisible.[11]

Augustine ultimately perceives a type of vision according to our bodily eyes, a second vision according to what we imagine or feel through the body, and then a third type of vision linked to the intuition of the mind through which non-corporeal objects of thought are considered, that is, the intuition of the intelligible, devoid of images.[12]

So how does the invisible become visible? The invisible is expressed in words, not visibly, it addresses the spirit, not the eye. Divine essence can only be expressed in a Word, a conceptual form that goes beyond any visible form.

Intellectual vision is the ineffable vision of Truth, evidence without image; it is therefore possible to see the invisible through purely intellectual vision, as Aby Warburg intended by in-

Fig. 4. Sandro Botticelli, *Extraction of St. Ignatius' Heart*, in *San Barnaba Altarpiece*, 1488, detail. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi.

Fig. 5. Pieter Paul Rubens, *Altarpiece of St. Ildefonso*, 1639. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. The central panel shows the vision of St. Ildefonso.

serting two paintings at the bottom of the 'Ster-nelle' panel, placing them side by side to create a kind of diptych. Both panels are dedicated to intellectual vision. In particular, the panel on the right with the portrait of Caterina Tanagli, kneel-ing in devotion, occupies the external door of the *Last Judgement* by Hans Memling and thus refers to intellectual vision, devoid of image, the one of the Theophany of the Divinity in the triptych and therefore not visible to Caterina and her husband Angelo Tani, placed on the two external doors that close the triptych. The panel on the left, part of a diptych in tempera on canvas by Hugo van der Goes, kept at the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, shows Mary, John, and the holy women in pa-thetic contemplation before an intelligible vision. The vision is that of the dead Christ in the arms of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, which actually occupies the left section of the diptych, from a private collection in New York, but it was

not included in the 'Sternelle' table and therefore is not visible.

The composition of the two panels, therefore, show figures in contemplation expressing the po-larity between the pathetic nature of the figures in the panel by Hugo van der Goes, as do those in Rogier van der Weyden's *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* and the devotional composure of Ca-terina Tanagli in the Memling panel, comparable to that of the shepherds in the Portinari triptych, highlighting by the very absence of the image of Christ, the invisibility of the Divinity that belongs to intelligible vision. It is therefore possible to see the invisible through intellectual vision.

This state envisages a long noetic path through which the soul detaches itself from images and concentrates on its most internal, most intelligible activity.

In the central, lower half of the 'Sternelle' plate is the reproduction of the painting by Domenico

and Benedetto Ghirlandaio showing the Resurrection of Christ, who is invisible to the soldiers as they are flooded with divine light. This concludes the thematic layout of Warburg's panel on the polarity between the visible and the invisible.

The invisible indeed expresses itself in the word, in the *verbum* and not in the image, it addresses the spirit and not the eye. Returning to God means going towards thought, towards the Word, moving from the visual to the concept. Warburg's interest in this form of polarity between the visible and the invisible, which also introduces a polarity between the *Nachleben* of ancient pagan images and the invisibility of images typical of Jewish tradition, sees a *Zwischenraum*, a space for thought from visible to visual, typical of the intelligible vision of Saint Augustine, which ultimately implies an opening in art history towards Iconology.

Notes

[1] A. Warburg, "L'Antico italiano nell'epoca di Rembrandt, 1926", in Id., *Opere II, La Rinascita del paganesimo antico e altri scritti (1917-1029)* (Torino: Nino Aragno Editore, 2008), p. 632. Cf. C. Cieri Via, "Warburg, Rembrandt e il 'percorso dei salti del pensiero'", *Schifanoia* 42-43 (2012): pp. 35-56.

[2] N. Mann, "Denkenenergetische Inversion: Aby Warburg and Giordano Bruno", *English Goethe Society* LXXII (2003): pp. 25-37; A. Warburg, *Diario romano (1928-1929)*, ed. it. M. Ghelardi (Torino: Nino Aragno Editore, 2008); C. Cieri Via, "Perseo o l'estetica energetica': il tema dell'ascesa da Alessandro Magno a Giordano Bruno", in C. Cieri Via, M. Forti, eds., *Aby Warburg e la cultura italiana* (Milano-Roma: Mondadori, 2009), pp. 77-89. In this regard, the role of diviners that Warburg and Gertrud Bing took on is interesting. The scholar writes in his *Tagebuch*: "...in the sphere of images we perceive an inevitable impulse to descend into the depth, '*ad inferos*', or we are abducted to heaven, '*raptus in coelum*'", cf. M. Colella, "Luce interna (Mitra) e esterna (Bruno). Il viaggio bruniano di Aby Warburg", *Intersezioni* 39, no. 2 (2020): pp. 33-56.

[3] Cf. A. Beyer, P. Morel, A. Nova, eds., *Voir au delà. L'expérience visionnaire et sa représentation dans l'art italien de la Renaissance* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017).

[4] Sant'Agostino, *De videndo Deo*, n. 18, 13. 45, 59. (Sources Chrétiennes, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf).

[5] W.J.T. Mitchel, *Pictorial Turn. Saggi di cultura visuale*, ed. M. Cometa (Palermo: Due punti edizioni, 2008).

[6] Sant'Agostino, *De Trinitate*, 15, 23, 43 (BA 16, 535), cf. O. Boulnois, *Au delà de l'image. Une archéologie du visuel au Moyen Age (Ve-XVIe siècle)* (Paris: Seuil, 2008).

[7] Sant'Agostino, *Quaestiones*, 83 q. 46; cf. I. Bochet, "Le statut de l'image dans la pensée augustinienne", *Archives de Philosophie. Recherches et documentation* 72, no. 2 (2009): pp. 249-269.

[8] Sant'Agostino, *De videndo Deo*, cit., n. 18, 13. 45, 59.

[9] Cf. E. Auerbach, *Figura* (1938) (Firenze: Olschki, 1939); J. Porter, "Disfiguration. Erich Auerbach's theory of Figura", *Critical Inquiry* 44, no. 1 (Autumn 2017): pp. 80-113.

[10] Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana*, I, 10, 15, in *I quattro libri della dottrina cristiana*, ed. M. Belli (Milano, 1919).

[11] G. Didi-Huberman, "Puissance de la figure. Exégèse et visualité dans l'art chrétien", in *Enciclopedia Universalis*. Symposium (Paris 1990), pp. 608-619: "Nous disons le visuel, et nous l'opposons au visible, pour exprimer cette hypothèse que la prise en consideration du mystère de l'Incarnation visait pour l'effet de perturber l'ordre visible et l'ordre classique de l'imitation. Elle devait perturber comme un miracle (dirait Augustin) perturbe l'ordre normale des choses".

[12] Cf. O. Boulnois, "L'image intelligible. Augustin et l'origine des doctrines médiévales de l'image", *Archives Philosophique. Recherches et documentation* 72, no. 2 (2009): pp. 271 ff.

Holy Sites, Ecstatic Experience, and Icon-Generating Visions

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In 1372, Saint Birgitta of Sweden visited the Bethlehem cave and, in the very moment of her contemplation of the *locus sanctus* – the niche framing the hole on the pavement that had been sanctified by the contact with Christ's body – she received from the Virgin herself the true revelation of the way in which the delivery of the Son of God had taken place. Largely, this vision was informed by her physical experience of the site, as Mary was attributed the kneeling position and penitential attitude of pilgrims. Indeed, she had taken off her mantle and was wearing a simple white tunic. She was meditating on the mystery of Incarnation when she suddenly felt that her womb had been relieved from its burden and saw her divine son on the ground, in front of her: he was bathed in supernatural light and, in heaven, angels were singing his glory. Touched by a strong feeling of compunction, she started adoring him, followed almost immediately by her spouse Joseph. A little later, the couple put the baby in the holy manger.[1]

Clearly enough, the content of this vision contradicted the message conveyed by the 12th century mosaic in the eastern niche, whose appearance in the late 14th century is admittedly hard to imagine, as it had been exposed to the darkening effects of candles for two hundred years. But this is not the point: Birgitta was certainly not unaware that traditional images of the *Nativity* had laid strong emphasis on the effects of the delivery on Mary's body by representing her having a rest on a red mattress and on Christ's fully human birth, by including the iconographic detail of his first bath.[2] Her vision revealed something that uncompromisingly contradicted what the iconographic tradition had clearly denied: namely, that the delivery of the Son of God may have occurred in a miraculous, supernatural way.

On the contrary, her ecstatic experience seemed to support the arguments developed in the 5th century by Saint Jerome in his *Letter to Elvidius*. According to the church father – who had spent

a long time in Bethlehem and whose memory was venerated, in Birgitta's times, in the underground grottoes below the Franciscan convent – the apocryphal traditions (reflected in the *Protoevangelium of James* and the *Arab Gospel of Infancy*) that mentioned the involvement of nurses in the Nativity events were to be rejected. As a matter of fact, the presence of the latter would have implied that the newborn Jesus may have needed the same

Fig. 1. View of the Nativity Cave in the Bethlehem Chapel, c. 1493-1514 with later additions. Varallo Sesia, Sacro Monte. (Figs. 1-4 © Author).

Fig. 2. Greek artist, *Nativity and Infancy Scenes*, 2nd half of the 18th century. Bethlehem, Nativity Church.

treatment reserved to all other human babies, and, consequently, that his body may have been dirtied by filthy substances, such as blood or the placenta. In this, he was probably influenced by late antique medical notions about the fluids expelled by women's bodies during delivery, interpreted as the results of sexual activity: in other terms, claiming that the newborn Jesus needed a bath was perhaps as blasphemous as saying that he had been conceived through physical intercourse. This position was frequently echoed by medieval Western theologians such as Adam of Saint-Victor and Arnauld of Bonneval in the 12th century and was shared by Franciscan thinkers until very later on.[3]

It is more than possible that Birgitta's revelation may have been at least partly inspired by the Friars, who, since 1347, had obtained hegemonic rights on the holy sites of Bethlehem. Certainly, the theme of Mary and Joseph adoring the Child already existed before her trip to the Holy Land and had been developed in both texts and images. The German scholar Fabian Wolf has suggested that, at least to some extent, the saint's vision may have been inspired by representations such as the one displayed in a painting by the Sienese artist Ambrogio Lorenzetti, now in Frankfurt, where the parents' act of worship of a baby laying on the ground is given a strong visual emphasis.[4] Incidentally, the latter could be a visual interpretation of a motif that had been made popular by the early 14th century *Meditationes vitae Christi*, a sort of Franciscan handbook advising the religious and the laity on the right use of *vis imaginativa* in the meditational practice on events from the New Testament.[5]

This very text reports that, before Birgitta, an anonymous friar had been able, in an ecstatic ex-

perience, to witness the exact moment of Christ's birth. According to this version, as soon as Mary felt that Jesus was going to quickly come to life, she stood up and leant against a column. Joseph realized that the delivery was imminent, so he threw some straw at the Virgin's feet and turned away. Then the Child came to life "without any trouble nor injury" and rested on the straw bed. Mary took off her veil, wrapped him in it, and placed him in the manger between the ox and the donkey. At this point, she got down on her knees, worshipped the Child, and was joined shorty after by Joseph, who also brought the donkey's saddle to use as a seat for his wife.[6] This story had an impact on some 14th century Italian images of the *Nativity*.[7]

Birgitta's revelation may therefore have been influenced by some stories already circulating in Franciscan contexts, but her version of the story stands out for several details which were prompted by her direct experience in the Nativity cave. Consequently, the pilgrim lady's prayer on her knees and her worship of the cave of Christ's birth were transfigured into the Virgin Mary's delivery in a kneeling position and the adoration of the Child laying on the bare ground. This was the beginning of an iconographic revolution that led, as is known, to the emergence of a thoroughly new scheme, originally produced in Naples in the late 1370s, where Mary was shown wearing a simple tunic and kneeling with Joseph in front of the Child laying on the ground, naked and bathed in light, with a choir of angels singing to the sky and Birgitta herself witnessing the scene from aside. In the 15th century, the traditional *Nativity* was transformed into a distinctive *Adoration of the Child*, consistently with Birgitta's vision but without the saint's image.[8] At the same time, the old-fashioned representations of Joseph in a melancholic attitude and the two nurses washing the Child were harshly criticized by members of the Mendicant orders, such as the Franciscan Bernardino of Siena and the Dominican Antonino of Florence.[9]

In other terms, Birgitta's revelation came to be regarded as especially trustworthy, despite the absence, in the Holy Scriptures, of any reference to the exceptionality of Christ's delivery and the centuries-old, opposite message conveyed by Byzantine iconographic tradition, which the West had long regarded as normative. The new narrative of the birth had an impact also on the pilgrimage to Bethlehem. The Friars came soon to the decision of concealing the old 12th century mosaic with a

Fig. 3. Russian artist, *Nativity and Infancy Scenes*, icon, c. 1860. Bethlehem, Nativity Church.

painted panel, which was described by the pilgrim Nicolò de' Martoni, in 1394-95, as "a very beautiful icon of the Nativity".[10] The latter was filled with hints at Birgitta's vision, as is witnessed by its reproductions in Natale Bonifacio's engravings for Jan Zvallart's travelogue, published in 1587, and in Sebastian Werro's *View of the Nativity Cave* in his handwritten diary from 1581. It looked like a lunette-shaped image where the Child, laying on the ground, was adored by the kneeling figures of Mary and Joseph on both sides, with a supernatural light radiating from the star upwards: visitors were therefore encouraged to mentally reconstruct the event in its material scenario by imitating the worshipping attitude of the holy family, and by acknowledging the miraculous nature of the birth of Jesus.[11] Its appearance is echoed by the terracotta images of the *Adoration of the Child* from the 1520s, displayed in the corresponding place within the architectural copy of the Nativity cave in the Franciscan *Sacro Monte* in Varallo Sesia.[12]

Meanwhile, the reformulated scheme of the Nativity had become widespread also in the Venetian-ruled countries of the Eastern Mediterranean and had been integrated into the repertory of Cretan icon painting, though in a variant showing the *Adoration* taking place in front of Christ laying in the manger. This probably explains why the scheme, if not the original image that went probably destroyed in the 17th century with the Franciscans losing their hegemonic role, kept being used in the decoration of the niche of Christ's birth. Sometimes after 1757, when the Greek Orthodox were granted exclusive rights over the holy spot, they covered the niche with a hanging fabric whose central scene was an adaptation of

Fig. 4. Icon workshop of the Holy Monastery of the Virgin Panachrantos in Megara, *Nativity*, icon, 2013. Bethlehem, Nativity Church.

the scheme marking the old Franciscan panel (fig. 1). A similar solution appeared again in the lunette-shaped icon made in 1860 by a Russian artist in the Westernized style of the period, where emphasis is laid also on the epiphany of light and the glory of angels singing *Glory to the God in the highest*, as reported in the accompanying inscription (fig. 2).[13] In the 1950s, the latter was substituted with a new one made in a neo-Byzantine style, with a composition limited to the main events of the Nativity, though without renouncing to display Mary in a kneeling position before the Manger and the luminous appearance of the star (fig. 3). Finally, a further icon made in 2013 was even more accurate in simulating a Byzantine image, but even in this case emphasis was laid on the adoring attitudes of both the Virgin and Joseph (fig. 4).

We can interpret such developments as bearing witness to a phenomenon that could be described as the visual 'resilience' of site-bound images: as prominent manifestations of the staging strategy orientating the experience of a *locus sanctus*, icons contribute so strongly to its visual physiognomy that they tend to persist in their publicly acknowledged, both material and visual, association with the cultic focus, in spite of destructions and renovations. I think this is enough to conclude that the figurative *mise-en-scène* of the Nativity scene in the Bethlehem cave created by the Franciscans on the model of Birgitta's vision had such a strong an impact on the visitors' imagination and devotional experience that it came to be unproblematically appropriated even by the most implacable adversaries of the friars.

Notes

[1] Birgitta of Sweden, *Revelaciones*, VII, 21-22, ed. C.-G. Undhagen, B. Bergh (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967-1991), VII, pp. 187-90. Cf. M. Dzon, *The Quest for the Christ Child in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), pp. 192-200.

[2] V. Juhel, "Le bain de l'Enfant-Jésus. Des origines à la fin du douzième siècle", *Cahiers archéologiques* 39 (1991): pp. 111-132.

[3] M. Bacci, "Water in the Making of Memorial Sites: The Wall of the Star, the Bath Grotto and Other Cisterns of Bethlehem", in A.M. Lidov, ed., *Holy Water in the Hierotopy and Iconography of the Christian World* (Moscow: Feoriya, 2017), pp. 262-277.

[4] F. Wolf, "Die Geburt Christi als Ereignisbild. Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Bildtradition und der Vision der heiligen Birgitta von Schweden", in D.E. Delarue, J. Schulz, L. Sobez, eds., *Das Bild als Ereignis. Zur Lesbarkeit spätmittelalterlicher Kunst mit Hans-Georg Gadamer* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2012), pp. 209-233, here 218.

[5] On the text and its dating cf. P. Tóth, D. Falvay, "New Light on the Date and Authorship of the Meditationes Vitae Christi", in S. Kelly, R. Perry, eds., *Devotional Culture in Late Medieval England and Europe. Diverse Imaginations of Christ's Life* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 17-105.

[6] *Meditationes vitae Christi*, VII, ed. M. Stallings-Taney (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997) [*Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis* 153], pp. 31-32.

[7] H. Flora, *The Devout Belief of Imagination: The Paris Meditationes Vitae Christi and Female Franciscan Spirituality in Trecento Italy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 76, 194-96; K. Blair Moore, *The Architecture of the Christian Holy Land. Reception from Late Antiquity through the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 140-141; G. Puma, *Les Nativités italiennes (1250-1450). Une histoire d'adoration* (Roma: École française de Rome, 2019), pp. 79-116.

[8] K. Kup, "Bene veneris... filius meus. An Early Example of St. Bridget's Influence on the Iconography of the Nativity", *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 61, no. 7 (1957): pp. 583-589; G. Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1966-1991), pp. 86-95; H. Cornell, "Saint Bridget and the Changing Ideas of Her Time. Her Visions in the Holy Land", in *Brigitta.*

Una santa svedese. Celebrazioni in occasione del sesto centenario della morte, 1373-1973 (Roma: Bulzoni, 1974), pp. 180-201; B.-A. Kéry, "Über die Veränderung der ikonographischen Typen der Geburt Christi in der österreichischen Malerei der Internationalen Gotik", in G. Pochat, B. Wagner, eds., *Internationale Gotik in Mitteleuropa* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1991), pp. 103-113; H. Aili, J. Svanberg, *Imagines sanctae Birgittae: The Earliest Illuminated Manuscripts and Panel Paintings Related to the Revelations of St. Bridget of Sweden* (Stockholm: Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, 2003), pp. 93-101; A. Franco, "Santa Brígida y la iconografía evangélica", in A.C. Borgenstierna, I. Attrache, eds., *VII Centenario. Santa Brígida, patrona de Europa* (Madrid: Fundación Wistedt, 2005), pp. 83-111; A. Gottdang, "*... und auf Knien beteten Sie ihn mit unermesslicher Freude an*. Die Geburt Christi in der Malerei um 1400", in A. Schneider, M. Neumann, eds., *Mythen Europas. Schlüsselfiguren der Imagination. Zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2005), pp. 100-127; F. Wolf, "Die Geburt Christi", cit., pp. 222-223; A. Creutzburg, *Die heilige Birgitta von Schweden. Bildliche Darstellungen und theologische Kontroversen im Vorfeld ihrer Kanonisation (1373-1391)* (Kiel: Ludwig, 2011), pp. 75-78; M.H. Oen, "Iconography and Visions: St. Birgitta's Revelation of the Nativity of Christ", in L. Liepe, ed., *The Locus of Meaning in Medieval Art: Iconography, Iconology, and Interpreting the Visual Imagery of the Middle Ages* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2018), pp. 212-237; G. Puma, *Les Nativités*, cit., pp. 117-156.

[9] C. Gilbert, "The Archbishop on the Painters", *The Art Bulletin* 41, no. 1 (1959): pp. 75-87; M. Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 43.

[10] Nicola de' Martoni, *Libro d'Oltremare*, ed. L. Le Grand, "Relation du pèlerinage à Jérusalem de Nicolas de Martoni, notaire italien (1394-1395)", *Revue de l'Orient latin* 3 (1895): pp. 566-669, here 611.

[11] M. Bacci, *The Mystic Cave. A History of the Nativity Church in Bethlehem* (Brno-Roma: Masaryk University Press-Viella, 2017), p. 235.

[12] K. Blair Moore, *The Architecture*, cit., p. 214.

[13] M. Bacci, *The Mystic Cave*, cit., p. 256.

Picturing the Trinity: Vision, Iconography, and Theology in Béatrice of Ornacieux (d. 1303)

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The phenomenon of spiritual vision in the Middle Ages perfectly illustrates the tension inherent in Christian thought between the ineffable nature of mystical experiences and the willingness to express what the mind's eye has seen. Medieval visionaries had to deal with the ineffable nature of revelations: the 'syllables of time' or the worldly paintings could provide only a glimpse of what they saw. This obstacle pushed them to use a wide variety of rhetorical and visual strategies in order to stimulate the viewers/reader's mind.[1]

In this short paper, I aim to analyse a trinitarian vision found in the *Vita* of Béatrice d'Orancieux (d. 1303) with the goal of examining the construction of a complex literary picture,[2] and finding out the references that a historical reader could have had for reconstructing it in his or her mind.

The vision in question is contained in a 14th century manuscript that brings together all the currently known works of Marguerite d'Oingt (1310), a Carthusian nun and writer from the Dauphiné area.[3] Marguerite wrote some letters and, at least, three works: the *Pagina Meditationum*, the *Speculum*, and the *Li via Seiti Biatrix Virgina de Ornaciu*.[4] The latter provides us with information about Béatrice d'Ornacieux, who was also a Carthusian nun from a nearby monastery, Parménie. The text describes different experiences of this religious woman, following the commonplaces of hagiographic accounts. Practices of mortification and meditation in her initiation phase give way to visionary phenomena, which I would divide into three themes: experiences related to the host (*elevatio* and *manducatio*), a quasi-theatrical scene of the *depositio sepulchri*, and finally, the animated icon of the Virgin.[5]

I am going to focus here on the first vision, related to the elevation of the host. In this vision, Marguerite describes Béatrice attending the mass in the church or chapel. Then, we are told that, for some time, at the moment of the elevation of the host, she had been seeing a likeness in the shape of a little child. One day, she saw even more: a big, bright light made of three different lights.[6]

The motif of the child as a host at the moment of elevation is common in spiritual literature and art from the Middle Ages. For instance, in a 14th century initial from a Cistercian gradual, we can see how the elevation of the child in the hands of the priest is emphasised firstly, by the liturgical gesture of the priest in front of the altar; secondly, by the tree structure growing from the child's head; and, finally, by the liturgical text. As a matter of fact, this is the capital A of the *introitus* "Ad te levavit" of Psalm 25 (24), used in the Advent, therefore also related to the preparation of Nativity (fig. 1).

Many images representing this motif have been preserved and they clearly stress the visual power of the elevation of the host in the medieval drama of liturgy. The host was made conspicuously visible at the most important point of the mass and was raised so that everyone could have a direct view of it.[7] Why did the Christ Child appear in those visions and not the Christ of the Passion, as it happens in the motif of the Mass of St. Gregory? There are various explanations. From a practical point of view, as Kieckhefer stresses, the Christ Child is smaller and fits better into the priest's hands.[8] From a historical perspective, Kirakosian points out that devotional practices may have reinforced the wish for material manifestation, as for the theological dimension, we should consider that the sacramental presence of Christ liturgically reminds us of the mystery of the incarnation.[9] Indeed, the image of the Christ Child appears abundantly in popular piety and in mystical literature, in many cases related to the sacrifice of the Passion: Mechtilde von Hackeborn (1298), Gertrude of Helfta (1302), Angela of Foligno (1309), and Christina Ebner (1366) are just some of the many examples of

Fig. 1. Initial 'A' from the *introitus* for the first Sunday in advent "Ad te levavi", Netherlands, 1300-1320. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, nº9005A. © London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Fig. 2. Heavenly vision of St. Bridget of Sweden. Miscellany containing St. Bridget's *Revelationes* (ff. 8-327), Naples, last quarter of 14th c. New York, J. Pierpont Morgan's Library, Ms M.498, f. 4v. © New York, The Morgan Library & Museum.

this. Among them, we can look at one in particular, namely the illumination picturing Bridget of Sweden's (1373) vision of Heaven (fig. 2). In the upper part, we find groups of angels flanking a mandorla of cherubs inside of which Christ and the Virgin are seated. Christ projects rays downwards, towards Bridget's senses. In the middle section there are different biblical figures, while in the lower one Bridget is portrayed attending the mass. What seems to cause the whole vision is precisely the figure of the child that the priest is depicted in the act of raising. This rather big illumination appears as a frontispiece to Book I of Bridget's *Revelations*, but the image does not refer to a specific vision. It rather alludes to different iconographies linked to some Eucharistic visions from Book VI, in which the complexity of the trinitarian mystery is revealed to Bridget.[10]

Such a gap between representation and divine mystery may also be found in the historical reception of Beatrice's *Vita* since, as we will see be-

low, the trinitarian image does not seem to have a possible representation but alludes to several well known motifs. Now, returning to Beatrice's vision, we are told that she saw many lights of great complexity:

It seemed to her that this brightness had a circular shape, and that in the brightness there appeared a great red brightness, so red, so resplendent, and so beautiful that it illuminated with its great beauty all of the white brightness. And this brightness radiated such a great splendour that it illuminated all of the redness so that each of these beauties illuminated the other so brightly that they radiated such a marvelous beauty and such a great splendour that one saw all of the beauty of the white brightness in the red brightness and the beauty of the red brightness in the beauty of the white brightness. And in that white brightness appeared a little child; she could not describe nor make anyone understand the

great beauty of this child. Above this child and everywhere there appeared a great brightness which looked like gold; it gave off such a vivid brilliance that it attracted all the other brightnesses into itself and entered itself into the other brightnesses. And the other brightnesses attracted that last one, while they themselves entered into it. These four visions manifested themselves in the same shape and with the same beauty and splendour. And it seemed to her that the beauty and splendour they had in common appeared inside that child. And the child appeared in the midst of this splendour.[11]

Therefore, the three lights share common qualities: they are big, radiant, rounded, and beautiful. The only differentiating feature among them is the colour. With this, Marguerite is telling us that they are not only alike, but indistinguishable, since she makes a particular effort in expressing the intertwined nature of such colours.[12] However, what seems important to me, even more than chromatic difference, is the rounded quality, for it is the device that Marguerite uses to give a *likeness* to what does not have one. Except for the figure of the Christ Child, the author describes a rather abstract or schematic vision using lights as moving geometric figures. As a matter of fact, geometrical shapes such as circles, squares or triangles embodied the *via media* of languages of representation. That is, a way of picturing something that represents the impossibility of divine representation and, at the same time, provides a *language* of expression. Geometry was often, throughout the Middle Ages, the resource that solved this impasse since it was considered a less figurative form and avoided mutism or apophatic language. The Trinity, as a representation of divinity and as a divine mystery, was suitable for adapting to this type of depiction.[13] Such a link between geometric and mystical discourse is clearly displayed in the Rothschild Canticles, a very close example to Marguerite and Béatrice. This tiny devotional volume from around 1300 was made to become a tool to lead the reader towards the phenomenon of contemplation. The images are structured in such a way that, as the pages go by, they gradually lose figuration and come closer to geometry. It is certainly a process that emulates the visionary experience and tries to provide the reader with a rhetoric and iconographic apparatus for shaping the Trinity[14] (fig. 3).

Fig. 3. Apophatic Trinity. *Rothschild Canticles*, northern France, turn of the 14th c. New Haven, Yale University Library, Beinecke ms 404, fol. 106r. © New Haven, Beinecke Library.

Marguerite's description of Béatrice's vision is detailed and precise. Yet, it is paradoxical that she does not seek clarification but rather the opposite – indistinction and confusion. Therefore, the reader cannot easily picture a clear shape for those circles. How should one lay them out?

For instance, concentric and intertwined circles have a well-known tradition in the West. If we focus on the first, we find very early examples such as the baptistery of Albenga, whose mosaic of the Trinity dates back to the 5th century. Later on, Hildegard von Bingen (d. 1179) also reported a similar vision of the Trinity in the *Scivias*.[15] As for the intertwined circles, it is a motif that was used in different contexts, both secular and theological. Perhaps the clearest example is Gioacchino da Fiore (d. 1202)'s *IEUE tavola*.[16] Likewise, we can find also many other written examples close to Marguerite d'Oingt's context. Yet, the most well-known vision of divinity in the form of circles is provided by Dante Alighieri (d. 1321) in his *Commedia*.[17] At the end of *Paradiso* 33, the author describes three lit circles of different colours. These have the same *contenenza*, that is, the same dimension, and the radiance of one colour is mixed and reflected in the other, a very similar descrip-

tion to Béatrice's.[18] It is, in this case, also a para-doxical image: if the three circles have the same dimensions, how could one see three colours without one circle overshadowing the other? How do the three colours mix as "*iri da iri*" and, at the same time, remain distinguishable?

Therefore, in addition to the similarities with Béatrice's narration, both cases refer to an inconceivable image. It is a vision impossible to capture on parchment, paper, wood, or glass. It is even unlikely to picture it in the mind. The accumulation of iconographic and literary motifs provides an approximation to the pristine vision the author intends to evoke, but in no case will a mental reconstruction

have a clear shape. The medieval illuminators were inclined to give a reliable drawing of such passage, such as the celestial spheres, the choir of angels, a circle with chromatic variations, or even chained circles (fig. 4). However, I would tend to see Béatrice's and Dante's visions as Hildegard's one, that is to say, as a dynamic image with kinetic potentiality and no real figuration outside the reader's mind.[19] Iconography is, indeed, a keystone for understanding the descriptions of spiritual visions from this period, but we should not neglect the anthropological and theological dimensions of the medieval *imago*, a very complex term encompassing mental, written, and graphical representations.[20]

Fig. 4. Dante's last vision of concentric circles in *Paradiso* 33. *Divina Commedia* with a commentary in Latin, detail. Unknown place, 1st half of the 14th c. London, British Library, Egerton 943, f. 186r. © London, British Library.

Notes

[1] The bibliography on this subject is very extensive. See M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); J. Hamburger, A.-M. Bouché, *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[2] M. Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought. Meditation, Rhetoric and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 122.

[3] Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 5785R. From now on, Ms. A.

[4] See S. Sancho Fibla, *Escribir y meditar. La obra de Marguerite d'Oingt, cartuja del siglo XIII* (Madrid: Siruela, 2018).

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 274-279.

[6] Ms. A, f. 23r.

[7] The elevation emphasised the corporeal presence of Christ, an aspect further developed by Caroline W. Bynum. See her pioneer study in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious*

Significance of Food to Medieval Women (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 203 ff.

[8] R. Kiekhefer, ""Ihesus ist unser!" The Christ Child in the German Sister Books", in T. Kenney, M. Dzon, eds., *The Christ Child in Medieval Culture: Alpha Es Et O!* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2012), pp. 167-198: 176.

[9] R. Kirakosian, "Bodleian Library, MS. Germ. E. 22. The Christ Child in the Host", *Oxford German Studies* 46, no. 2 (2017): pp. 180-184.

[10] See V. Germanier, "Les visions de la cour céleste dans le *Liber Celestium Revelationum* de Brigitte de Suède", in F. Dunand, F. Boespflug, eds., *Voir les dieux, voir Dieu* (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2002), pp. 143-157.

[11] I slightly modify Blumenfeld-Kosinski's translation. Her version is economical in some passages, and it frequently omits details and simplifies the bilingual articulation of the text. R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *The Writings of Margaret of Oingt, Medieval Prioress and Mystic (d. 1310)* (Newsburyport: Focus Information Group, 1990), pp. 54-55. "Icilli clarta li eret vyaires q*ue* fut tota rionda, *et* dedenz la clarta apparisseyt una granz v*er*melia si tras resplandenz *et* si bela q*ue* da sa grant beuta, illi enlumi*n*avet tota la clarta blanchi. Et cilli clarta gitavet si grant resplandour q*ue* illi fayseit resplandir tota la v*er*melia si q*ue* li una beuta enluminavet si l'aut*ra et* si ytiant li una en l'aut*ra* que eles rendiant si m*e*ravillousa beuta *et* si grant respla*n*dour q*ue* una veet tota la beuta de la blanci clarta dedenz la v*er*meli *et* la beuta de la v*er*meli veet hon dedenz la beuta vl'clarta blanci. Et dedenz la clarta blanchi apparisseyt huns petit enfes, la t*ra*s grant beuta de cel enfant illi ne puyt dire ne fayre entendre. Desus cel enfant et de totes p*ar*s apparisseyt una granz clarta semblanz a or qui rendeit si grant illum*inati*on q*ue* illi trahit totes les autres a ssi *et* tota s'en entravet dedenz lour. Et les autres t*r*aïant tota cela a lour, *et* totes s'en entravo*n*t dedenz liey. Ycetes quatro divisions se appareyssant en una mema semblanci *et* beuta *et* replandour. Et li eret viaires que cilli comunauz beuta et resplandors apparissit tota dedenz cel enfant. Et li enfes apparisseyt toz dedenz cela respla*n*dour". Ms. A, 23v.

[12] Obviously, the colours have an allegorical dimension too: presumably, white could refer to Jesus, red to the Holy Spirit, and the Golden light to God the Father. However, such allegorical meanings are not of much interest here.

[13] See some examples, with illustrations, in S. Sancho Fibla, *Escribir y meditar*, cit., pp. 191-199.

[14] See J. Hamburger, "Revelation and Concealment: Apophatic Imagery in the Trinitarian Miniatures of the "Rothschild Canticles"", *The Yale University Library Gazette* 66, Suppl. (1991): pp. 134-158.

[15] Hildegard von Bingen, *Scivias. Ken de wegen* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2015), II, p. 66. See P. Dronke, "Tradition and Innovation in Medieval Western Colour-Imagery", in *The Realms of Colour*. Eranos Conference (Ascona, August 23-31 1972) (Leiden: Brill, 1974), pp. 51-107: 100.

[16] Oxford, Corpus Christi College Library, Ms 255A, f. 7v.

[17] Diego Zorzi had already pointed out the striking similarity between Béatrice's and Dante's accounts: D. Zorzi, "La spiritualità e le visioni di due certosine lionesi contemporanee di Dante", *Aevum* 27 (1953): pp. 510-531.

[18] See *Paradiso* 33, 115-120. Furthermore, just as in Béatrice's vision, as Christ Child appears in the middle of the circles, Dante sees the *nostra effige*, that is, the human likeness.

[19] P. Dronke, "Tradition and Innovation", cit. p. 101. See also Attilio Momigliano's interpretation: "che tale figurazione sfugga ad una traduzione grafica, è proprio questa la ragione per cui essa risponde". Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia commentata da Attilio Momigliano* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1947), p. 853.

[20] See J. Hamburger, *St. John the Divine. The Deified Evangelist in Medieval Art and Theology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 186.

Kakezukuri: A Japanese Architectural Style for the Mystical Experience of the Mountain Religion

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The Three Categories of Japan's Religious Architecture

Surrounded by sea on all sides and with approximately 70% of its total land area covered by mountains and forests, most religious architecture in Japan has been built with timber structures in which wooden pillars are joined to wooden beams.

Japan's religious architecture is broadly classified into three categories depending on its location:

1. architecture built on flat land;
2. architecture built on the sea;
3. (architecture built in) the mountains.

Religious architecture, related to the mystical experience, is generally different from ordinary architecture, but it is also able to be classified into these three categories.

On the flatlands or urban areas, architecture for the mystical experience usually consists either of a polygonal building or of a slender and elongated one. When it is built on the sea, it is called often 'Floating Hall', *Ukiden* 浮殿 in Japanese, because it seems to float on the water. In the mountains, *Kakezukuri* 懸造 (fig. 1) is the typical form of architecture for the mystical experience. Kakezukuri means a 'suspended' form or a 'building of suspension'. This form refers to an architecture that was built against rock walls on the sides of rocks or caves and by extending the pillars under the floor to match the natural terrain.[1]

In this paper, I would like to concentrate on this last type, Kakezuruki, which was created for ascetic priest or monks, nobility, and commoners since the late 9th century in order to obtain mystical experiences.

History of *Kakezukuri*

Judging from the descriptions of the oldest chronicles, compiled in the early 8th century, it seems that there was still no long-term ascetic training in the mountains before Buddhism was brought to Japan from the Chinese mainland or Korea in the middle of the 6th century.

From that moment on, Buddhist monks/priests began to enter the mountain temples and practice ascetic trainings. From the beginning of the 8th century, the monks at Kofuku-ji temple 興福寺 in Nara, which was the temple of the most power-

Fig. 1. Okuno-in Zaodo, the so-called Nageiredo Hall, Sanbutsuji Temple, Tottori, Japan.

ful noble Fujiwara clan, entered and practiced an incubation ritual in a mountain temple for about half a month and began to practice the mountain ascetic training.

The emperors and aristocrats called on the monks to treat illnesses, pray for rain or solve other problems in their society. These monks were called 'pure monks' and trained in a clean place on the mountain, called 'pure place' and were believed to have some miraculous powers. The nobility built a small hall for these monks in the mountain where they could pray for remedy, recovery, or peace.

The Todaiji Hokke-do 東大寺法華堂 temple (built in 733), which was constructed on the orders of the emperor Shomu for the Buddhist monk Roben, was built on a flat area on a slight slope of a mountain, but it was still not 'suspended'. When Esoteric Buddhism (*Mikkyo*) was introduced from the mainland of China to Japan in the early 9th century in the Heian period and settled in Japan, a temple site called *Reijyo* 霊場, or *Reigen-jiin* 霊験寺院, a temple of miraculous signs, began to be built. These buildings were mainly built in the very place where the great masters practiced their ascetic trainings. In the Koyasan mountain 高野山, the Kongobuji-temple 金剛峯寺 stands still where the famous priest Kukai 空海 used to train. The priest had brought authentic Esoteric Buddhism from the continent and founded Shingon Buddhism. In addition, the place where the Enryakuji temple is located on the Hieizan mountain is where Saicyo 最澄 trained. He had brought four types of training of Esoteric Buddhism from Tendaizan, Tiantai Mountain 天台山, in China and founded Tendai Buddhism in Japan. However, these temples were still not built in Kakezukuri style.

This situation changed significantly in the second half of the 9th century. The common practice in mountainous training since the Nara period was principally to repeat the same actions, such as fasting, insomnia, obtaining either a vison or a dream vision, or reading sutras or mantras to keep pushing the body to the limit. An architectural form called Kakezukuri came to be gradually regarded as a symbol of these ascetic practices and a clear procedure or way for the mystical or miraculous experience within a Kakezukuri building was constructed.

Until then, only the monks trained in ascetic practices in temples in the mountains. Now, the faithful, normally court nobility and their wives, tried to pilgrimage to a main statue of the temples in the mountain where the ascetic monks had practiced ascetic training. The initial temple where the monks practiced ascetic trainings was a small building built on a flat area in the mountains, and the main statue that the monks used for their ritual had its own characteristics. Namely, the statue was normally placed on a large natural rock. As a result, partly because it was not possible to move the main statue from its rock basement, a large-scale 'suspended' building in Kakezukuri was additionally built as a worship hall (*Raido* 礼堂) for the gathered faithful on a cliff on the mountain. The representative example of this is the Main Hall of Ishiyamadera-temple 石山寺.[2]

Subsequently, in the 11th century, the religious interest of the pious nobility and noble ladies moved to reputable monks or practitioners who had undergone strict trainings in the mountains and allegedly acquired supernatural powers through mystical experiences. Correspondingly, buildings in Kakezukuri style, which started to symbolize the strict training of the monks, began to be built in front of the caves of the mountain cliffs or on the top or sides of huge rocks, many of which were thought to be the places where deities had landed. Kakezukuri buildings were also located in local venues called *Yomo no reigenjyo* 四方霊験所 ('regional temples where miracles have occurred') and spread gradually throughout the country.[3]

Case Studies and the Mystical Experience

The oldest surviving example of Kakezukuri is Okuno-in Zao-do in the Sanbutsu-ji temple 三仏寺奥之院蔵王堂 （fig. 1). According to a legend, this hall was made and thrown into the cave of the cliff by *En-no-Ozunu* 役小角, who was believed to be the legendary founder of the *Shugendo* 修験道 mountain ascetism. In this hall, there were seven statues of *Zao Gongen* 蔵王権現, made between the end of the 10th century and the 12th century, and some of them are thought to have been carved by ascetic monks. Judging from a document which was found inside the main statue of Zao Gongen in the hall (fig. 2), the building was completed already before 1168. The date mentioned in this document is also supported by the estimation of the age of the annual rings on the most ancient wooden parts of the building.[4] By the way, Zao Gongen is a wrathful deity which was unique to Japan and, according to a legend,

En-no-ozunu saw its image in his vision.[5] One of the characteristics of this type of Kakezukuri building is that the floor plan is matched harmoniously to rocks or rock caves. Only the part where the pillars are built and the part where the foundation is installed are cut flat in order to reduce as much as possible the risk of destroying the rock, which was the object of the faith. Since in the Shugendo mountain asceticism, secrets were handed down not by documents but only orally, there is almost no detailed data on how a local Kakezukuri building such as this was used. However, the monks who trained in such a place and building were believed to acquire miraculous powers, which were described in different narratives and represented in many painted scrolls, such as *Hokkegenki* (around 1040) and *Shigisan Engi Emaki* (late 12th century).[6] Records on pilgrimages of the nobility to the main temples or sites of the Kannon (*Avalokiteśvara*) cult around the capital city, Kyoto, are easy to be found in the novels or diaries of court ladies in 10th or 11th century (*Genji-monogatari*, *Makurano-soshi*, *Kagero-nikki*, etc.).[7] There was a regulated method to visit and perform incubation rituals at these pilgrimage sites. Even the nobles or the highest ranks of society had to enter the temple barefoot, clean themselves in a bath in the evening, and then they were allowed to go up to the worship hall, and to select a place around the main hall in order to practice incubation through the nights. Normally, noble pilgrims hired a priest as their mentor already before their pilgrimage, and the priest read their supplications and wishes in front of the main Kannon statue. In order to get Buddha to manifest himself either in a vision or dream, pilgrims read, worshipped and prayed usually throughout seven days and seven nights, in some cases throughout ten, a hundred or even a thousand days.

In a sacred place a little far from Kyoto like the Hasedera temple 長谷寺, there were some cases in which an envoy, rather than the court noble himself or his wife, attended the pilgrimage.[8] In that case, the client asked the envoy to take a mirror on which his or her supplications or wishes had been inscribed to the temple, and the envoy waited performing a hard penance such as the 'five-throwing' ritual until he obtained a dream-vision. It was believed that mystical experiences or dream visions were obtained principally at dawn, after the envoy continued to pray for insomnia. The content of the dream-vision was interpreted by a person called

Yumetoki 夢解, who was a professional whose role was to solve the dream or the vision. In these temples, a special space, *Tsubone* 局, was set up especially for the court noblemen and women in order to listen to the rituals of the priests at the main hall and to get closer to the statue of the temple, that was considered to be auspicious. In the Ishiyamadera temple, there is a place called *Genji no Ma* where the famous female author and court lady Murasaki Shikibu is said to have drawn inspiration for the *Tale of Genji*. It is known that the place was established already before 1143.[9]

A large number of people from the lower classes also pilgrimaged to these sites and practiced the incubation ritual there. This is the Hachioji-sha building at Hiyoshi Taisha shrine 日吉大社八王

Fig. 2. Statue of Zao-gongen, end of the 10th century. Sanbutsuji Temple.

Fig. 3. Hachiojisha Hietaisha shrine. Shiga, Japan.

子社 (fig. 3), where you can see a special space under the basement floor which was created for low-ranking people in order to obtain a mystical or miraculous experience.[10] Even people of the higher ranks, if they really wanted their wishes to come true, had to practice incubation in the space under the floor of the main hall called *Geden* 下殿, 'the underfloor space', where normally only the people from the low ranks performed the ritual. In addition to the Hachiojisha building, the Hiyoshi Taisha shrine has six buildings with an underfloor space. Since the 17th century, these lower spaces enshrined the statue of a deity of the main hall, and unofficial monks seem to have performed a ritual called Goma Retreat. Since Kakezukuri buildings have always had a large underfloor space, I am inclined to assume that many people practiced the incubation rituals also in these spaces, although we have not found concrete documents supporting this hypothesis yet.

In concluding this paper, I would like to show an example which perhaps supports my hypothesis. This is a 14th century painted map of three

Fig. 4. A section of *Mandala of the Three Shrines at Kumano*, 1300s. Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art.

shrines at Kumano, the so-called *Mandala of Three Shrines at Kumano*,[11] one of the oldest pilgrimage sites in Japan, where I brought Prof. Gerhard Wolf and Akira Akiyama in April 2018. In a section of this painted map (fig. 4), three figures are depicted exactly in the underfloor space of the Kakezukuri shrine: one of them looks like En-no-ozunu, legendary founder of the Shugendo mountain ascetism, and the others are probably his two disciples, Zenki 前鬼 and Goki 後鬼.

Notes

[1] T. Matsuzaki, "On the Naming of Kakezukuri: A Study on the Style of Kakezukuri in Japan", *Transactions of the Architectural Institute of Japan* 406 (1989): pp. 141-151; Id., "On the Kakezukuri in the Edo period: A Study on the Style of Kakezukuri in Japan", *Transactions of the Architectural Institute of Japan* 485 (1996): pp. 193-199.

[2] T. Matsuzaki, "On the Kakezukuri in the Ancient and the Middle Ages: A Study on the Style of Kakezukuri in Japan II", *Transactions of the Architectural Institute of Japan* 419 (1991): pp. 89-98.

[3] *Ivi.*

[4] T. Matsuzaki, *Yama ni tatu Kami to Hotoke – Hasiratate to Kakezukuri no sinseisi* (*God and buddha appearing in the*

mountain – History of Mentalities of Pillars and Kakezukuri (Tōkyō: Koudansya, 2020).

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 131-135.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 76-78, 124-126.

[7] See n. 1.

[8] T. Matsuzaki, *Yama ni tatsu Kami to Hotoke*, cit., pp. 109-114.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

[11] On this painting, *Mandala of Three Shrines at Kumano*, Cleveland Museum, see https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1953.16.

An Introduction to Spiritual Contemplation: The *Vision of Saint Bernard* from Filippo Lippi to Fra Bartolomeo*

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At the beginning of the *Secretum*, completed in 1353, Francesco Petrarca introduces his imaginary dialogue with Saint Augustine by relating a visionary experience of which he imagined to be the subject. Well awake, he was surprised by the apparition of a woman of dazzling splendour whose gaze he could not sustain. After declaring that she had come to help him with his errors, she presented herself as the one he had already spoken of in his *Africa*, namely the Truth, with whom he finally engaged in a conversation. This short passage is very instructive regarding the intellectual context of emergence and the humanistic modalities of reception of an iconographic theme that had just appeared in Tuscan and Florentine painting: that of the vision of Saint Bernard, otherwise known as *Doctrina sancti Bernardi*, which was to spread significantly until the early 17th century, both in easel paintings and in miniatures. One of its particularities lies in the fact that it is not the artistic interpretation of a miraculous vision told by the saint's hagiographers, and that it is not included in the canonical Bernardian iconography, as evidenced by its absence in the illustrated volume *Vita et miracula divi Bernardi*, published in 1582 with engravings by Antonio Tempesta, and by its subsequent radical disappearance, unlike the scenes of the *amplexus* or the *lactatio*.[1]

The first artistic expressions of this vision suggest that the Virgin Mary would have appeared to the saint, could have provoked his surprise and that she would have dictated or explained to him what he should write about her. They were depicted face to face, exchanging glances, with a suggested dialogue sometimes transcribed by the painter, with Mary dictating to saint Bernard but also, in some cases, with Mary's weightlessness and angelic entourage: all these elements suggest an apparition that is both tangible and miraculous, a character that the artists first sought to give to this theme, as we can see in the Trecento with Giovanni da Milano

and the Master of the Rinuccini Chapel. The recurrent peripheral presence of two other monks who witness this encounter seems to be an adaptation of the iconography of the stigmata of Saint Francis in the presence of Frate Leone. At most, we observe two different solutions for this pseudo-apparition: a direct and physical relationship between Bernard and Mary and a celestial distance of Mary.

In a painting dated 1447 for the Palazzo della Signoria (fig. 1), Filippo Lippi introduces a decisive variant, although somewhat unnoticed: we observe a close relationship between the protagonists, as in Giovanni da Milano's panel but, although the Virgin does a gesture with her right hand, she no longer looks at the saint and her mouth is closed, so it is difficult to know if she is speaking or if she is immersed into a kind of meditation. Likewise, the angels seem distracted, as they are not looking at the saint. Therefore, it looks as if the latter is not really present in front of them. As for Bernard, he vaguely directs his gaze in the direction of Mary but, if we pay a little more attention to it, we notice that his gaze is parallel to the surface of the painting, while the Virgin is clearly set back in the spatial depth suggested by the composition. Thus, Bernard is not really looking at her, which means that he does not see her with the eyes of the body.[2] The figure of the Virgin functions in this case as a projection of his imagination, so we are not confronted to a physical vision of a miraculous and auditory apparition anymore, but rather to a spiritual vision and a silent contemplation, according to a distinction that has become perfectly common since saint Augustine between physical, spiritual, and intellectual vision. And although the two companions are still present in the background, they do not look in the direction of the protagonists, they no longer appear as witnesses, but rather embody a purely physical, blind, or objectless gaze, metaphorically directed towards this world, towards the earth, as opposed to Bernard's gaze.

Fig. 1. Filippo Lippi, *Vision of Saint Bernard*, 1447. Tempera on panel, 94x106 cm. London, National Gallery. (Photo Scala, Florence).

Two later works testify to Fra Filippo's interest in compositions where the Virgin looks like a mental image for a saint totally immersed in his prayer or meditation, where there is no physical relationship between the figures. This is particularly striking in the *Adoration of the Child* of the Medici Chapel, now in Berlin, with a holy hermit far in the background. This distance is less marked in the version made for the Camaldolese hermitage, with a Saint Romuald placed 'irrationally', as Jeffrey Ruda writes, in the foreground, which prefigures the *figura in abisso* studied by André Chastel.

This device, used persistently in other compositions by the same artist, is an adaptation of a solution that was spreading in Flemish painting after Van Eyck's first experiments, that of an inner gaze that expresses the principle of a vision that is more mental than physical. The orientation of the profiles, the positioning of the figures in the foreground, the spatial disjunctions and the interplay of the levels of depth, all these carefully elaborated solutions suggest that the worshipper's gaze, even if it seems plastically oriented towards the object of his prayer or meditation, cannot physically see it.[3] Inspired by the *devotio moderna*, this device became very popular in Flemish painting as in the Italian one, one of its most symptomatic cases being the *Baptism of Christ with a donor* by Giovanni Battista Moroni (1550). Finally, it should be noted that the solu-

Fig. 2. Filippino Lippi, *Vision of Saint Bernard*, c. 1480. Tempera on panel, 210x195 cm. Florence, Badia. (Photo Scala, Florence).

tion invented by Filippo Lippi for saint Bernard can be compared to some miniatures or historiated lettrins in contemporary manuscripts, where his relationship with Mary seems to be relativized by a similar shift or spatial distortion that corresponds to the suggestion of an inner gaze.

The *Vision of Saint Bernard*, painted around 1480 by Filippino Lippi (fig. 2) is quite more complex insofar it plays on a spiritual hierarchy of gazes.[4] It was elaborated at the request of Pier Francesco del Pugliese for the Benedictine Florentine monastery of the Campora at Marignole, near Porta Romana, where it was placed above the altar of the family chapel until 1529, when it was transferred to another Benedictine church, the one of the Badia of Florence. Although Filippo

Lippi suggests, as others before him, that Bernard was writing a comment of a text at the moment of his Marian vision, his son indicates precisely the source text and its commentary. As a matter of fact, the painter juxtaposed, between the saint and the Virgin, an open Bible leaning against a rock on the one hand, where one can decipher the words beginning with "Missus est angelus Gabriel" on the left and "Ave gratia plena" on the right, which introduce the account of the Annunciation by Luke and, on the other hand, another manuscript on which the saint has just finished writing the first part of the last chapter of the second of his four homilies to the glory of Mary, which are a commentary on the first words of the Annunciation narrative included in the Bible, which can be found near him.[5] Since the Virgin is often compared to a star, a clearly visible astral symbol is depicted on her right shoulder, this famous chapter of Bernard's homily is sometimes referred to or summarized by the invocation repeated in it: "Respice stellam, voca Mariam".

It should be first noted that the manuscript page referring to the second homily was not easy to see for the simple faithful, impossible to read in this very syncopated form (since one can only guess the beginning of each line) and difficult to identify, unlike the evangelical passage. Only a well-educated monk who could get close to the painting would be able, from the decipherable fragments, to recall the text or at least the general meaning of the famous homily with which he was familiar. It should be noted, moreover, that the very clearly legible inscription at the base of the current framework, which must be a faithful copy of the original one, serves as an additional and more easily perceptible clue for the identification of the text, its recollection, and its connection with the image through the ideas of invocation and meditation. This is an excerpt from the same chapter in which Bernard exhorts the faithful to think of the Virgin and to invoke her in the midst of doubts and dangers: "in rebus dubiis Mariam cogita Mariam invoca". After exalting the Marian figure through the metaphor of the star, Bernard invites the reader to pray and think of Mary, to invoke her, to look at her on every occasion so as to escape temptations, to overcome the tribulations of existence and despair, and to find the true path that leads to God.

But looking at Mary does not mean seeing her with the eyes of the body, especially since the homily cited by the artist in such an insistent and reserved way, in the following passage (not retained by the artist), ends in this way: "But let us stop a little, lest we also see only in passing the beautiful clarity of this star. For […] it is a joy to be able to *contemplate in silence* what a long speech would be unable to explain well. But in the meantime, the pious contemplation of this sparkling star will give us a new zeal for what remains to be said". The *Respice stellam* thus ends precisely with an inner and silent contemplation having Mary as its object and the astral metaphor as its sign. It is precisely this experience where contemplation follows meditation and writing, and transcends both speech and sight that Filippino Lippi's painting attempts to suggest.

However, as in Giovanni da Milano's predella and unlike Filippo Lippi's painting, Mary actually stands before Bernard and close to him, the shadows cast by her hand and body insist on her physical presence. Nevertheless, there is no exchange, no communication between them, her mouth is closed and she is not looking at him, she is not dictating what he should write but seems to be meditating or immersed in his memories. Moreover, they are not really face to face, since Bernard's bust and head are still leaning towards the desk, and while his hands, detached from the manuscript, and the raised plume reveal his surprise, only his gaze rises towards Mary. We therefore have the impression that the painter chose a mixed solution between the earthly exchange according to Giovanni da Milano and the spiritual vision with which Filippo Lippi had traced the path in Italian painting and whose partially decipherable homily gives us a model and a guide.

In other words, Filippino mixed the clues of a miraculous Marian apparition with those of a spiritual vision or silent contemplation, which is the fruit of asceticism and prayer, intellectual labor and meditation, to which the surrounding details refer. It is therefore as if he had sought to address two audiences: firstly, a lay or popular public, more sensitive to empirical facts and to the language of miracles, to apparitions and physical visions, and, secondly, a religious and cultivated public, the Benedictines of the Campora but also the Florentine humanist milieu to which the patron belonged and which could be aware and receptive of the writings and example of saint Bernard that Dante and Petrarch had taken as a model, as well as of a more personal and internalized approach to vision.

This second audience was able to recognize the homily on the Annunciation, which is indicated by the relationship between the evangelical passage in the open book and the inscription on the frame, and to guess its traces on the manuscript, especially if it was informed of their presence as the local monks should be, to remember it and to apply its lesson to the interpretation of the painting. They could thus recognize an extrapolation from this homily in which Bernard does not speak of a Marian apparition, but develops a meditation on the mysteries or glories of the Virgin Mary, before suspending his work in a state of contemplation, inviting the reader to do the same. Filippino offers to this second audience both the representation of a spiritual vision and a model towards which to strive and which he inserts into a much more ambitious, rich, and articulated composition than those of his predecessors on the same theme. The painting thus offers two readings of Saint Bernard's attitude that can be part of a visionary propaedeutic and hierarchy that develop around the central couple.

The donor is inscribed in the foreground, *in abisso*, superimposed to an embankment that isolates the figure and underlines its belonging to another level of depth than the two holy figures. Thus, as we regularly see in Flemish art, in some Filippo Lippi's paintings or in Masaccio's *Trinity*, although Piero del Pugliese's gaze seems to be directed towards Mary, it is not really turned towards her. His gaze glides on the surface of the painting, to suggest that even if he addresses his prayer to the Virgin, he can neither see her physically, nor contemplate her spiritually as saint Bernard does.

What about the two Cistercian monks in the background, above Bernard and on a spiritual path? They remind us of the companions who sometimes witness Bernard's vision in 14th and 15th-centuries images, but they are not looking at the saint, the Virgin, nor the ground. The younger one looks with surprise or ecstasy towards a luminous section in the sky, which has an uncertain status between natural and supernatural, while the other, who bears the radial halo of a blessed man, seems to pray, reflect or meditate. I would be tempted to see here an allusion to what Bernard said at the end of his second homily: "But let us stop a little, lest we also see only by passing the beautiful clarity of this star", as the two monks perhaps do, if we consider that light is closely associated with the Virgin in the Cistercian tradition,

where it is a metaphor and a natural sign of Mary.[6] If we consider that the saint contemplates Mary, he probably has reached a higher degree of perfection compared to the monks who only perceive her signs in the sky and, a fortiori, compared to the donor who simply prays to her. So, in these four characters we find the difference and spiritual hierarchy, well codified at the time, between prayer, meditation or speculation, and contemplation.

After Filippino Lippi, we see that the relationship and the face-to-face relationship between the two protagonists are sometimes relativized or broken, to better suggest the more spiritual than physical nature of Saint Bernard's vision, which thus appears as a true artistic laboratory of visionary experience. In the painting for the Cistercian monastery of Santa Maria Maddalena di Cestello, still in Florence (fig. 3), Perugino renounces to an eremitical staging by bringing us back to an ideal convent building open on the countryside. There is nothing to decipher in the book, nor any reference to an act of writing. Also, the physical presence of Mary is discernable by the weight of her feet on the ground, as well as by her deictic gesture addressed to the saint, but the great opening on the landscape creates a spatial void and a physical hiatus between the two characters. Bernard contemplates her with a gesture of admiration accompanied by a very serene expression,

Fig. 3. Pietro Perugino, *Vision of Saint Bernard*, c. 1489-1490. Tempera on panel, 160x173 cm. Munich, Alte Pinakothek. (Photo by the Author).

nevertheless, it is very difficult to say if their gazes cross and communicate, because they seem in both cases directed a little too low. Finally, the two Cistercian companions were replaced by two holy apostles, John and Bartholomew, who do not act here as witnesses of a miraculous event. There is therefore no dialogue, dictating act or surprise in Perugino's interpretation, who tried to suggest, differently from Filippino Lippi, a contemplative attitude.

In his 1507 pala for the florentine Badia (fig. 4), Fra Bartolomeo goes even further along the path traced by his predecessors by reinforcing the visionary quality of the image, as Vasari well pointed out: "Nel vedere la Nostra Donna [...] sta tanto contemplativo, che bene si conosce in lui un non so che di celeste, che resplende in quella opera *a chi la considera attentamente*".[7] The now somewhat archaic choice of this theme of a Virgin in weightlessness and the presence of the Child probably results from the contract which seems to refer to a Virgin in glory. Neither Mary nor her child communicate with their gaze nor gestures with the saint, whose attitude expresses particularly well a state of contemplative rapture: without any allusion to a Marian dictation or reaction of surprise, detached from the concerns and

Fig. 4. Fra Bartolomeo, *Vision of Saint Bernard*, 1507. Oil on panel, 203x220 cm. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi. (Photo Scala, Florence).

tribulations of this world that the distant urban landscape summarizes, and also totally distinct from the prayer of the simple devout to whom the small Crucifixion panel in the foreground is specifically addressed.

Notes

* This text is an abbreviated version of: Ph. Morel, "Introduction à la contemplation spirituelle: la vision de saint Bernard par Filippino Lippi et Fra Bartolomeo", in *Voir l'au-delà. L'expérience visionnaire et sa représentation dans l'art italien de la Renaissance*. Conference proceedings (Paris, INHA & DFK, 3-5 juin 2013), ed. A. Beyer, Ph. Morel, A. Nova, with the collab. of C. Gerbron (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), pp. 113-134. The author refers to this article for an in-depth set of notes.

[1] M.K. Lesher, *The Vision of saint Bernard and the Chapel of the Priors: private and public images of Bernard of Clairvaux in Renaissance Florence* (Ann Arbor: Univ. Microfilms, 1979); L. dal Prà, *Bernardo di Chiaravalle nell'arte italiana dal XIV al XVIII secolo* (Milano: Electa, 1990); J. France, *Medieval Images of saint Bernard of Clairvaux* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2007); L. dal Prà, "Bernardo di Clairvaux. Un santo e la sua immagine", in I. Biffi, et al., eds, *Bernardo di Clairvaux. Epifania di Dio e parabola dell'uomo*, exh. cat. (Milano: Jaca Book, 2007), pp. 61-103.

[2] Jeffrey Ruda speaks rightly of a 'visionary mode', but his conclusion is more confusing: "The Virgin and angels are certainly an apparition within the picture". J. Ruda, *Fra Filippo Lippi. Life and Works* (London: Phaidon, 1993), p. 169.

[3] S. Ringbom, *Les images de dévotion XIIe-XVe siècle* (Paris: Gérard Monfort, 1995 [1969]), pp. 27-28; C.H. Harbison, "Visions and meditations in early Flemish painting", *Simiolus* XVI (1985): pp. 87-118; B.L. Rothstein, *Sight and spirituality in early Netherlandish painting* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), ch. 2.

[4] P. Zambrano, J. Katz Nelson, *Filippino Lippi* (Milano: Electa, 2004), pp. 256-261, pp. 346-348.

[5] D.L. Clark, "Filippino Lippi's *The Virgin Inspiring St. Bernard* and Florentine Humanism", *Studies in Iconography* 7/8 (1982): pp. 177-178.

[6] S. Barnay, *Specchio del Cielo. Le apparizioni della Vergine nel Medioevo* (Genova: Marietti 1820, 1999).

[7] G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1906 [1568]), IV, p. 183.

The "Represented" World of Colomba da Rieti and Domenica da Paradiso

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By reading the hagiographic sources of Colomba da Rieti (1467-1501) and Domenica Narducci da Paradiso (1473-1553), besides learning about their devotion to the Dominican Tertiary Caterina da Siena, we also learn that they are two of the many examples of mystics who, between the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the following one, had a very particular relationship with the figurative world they frequented. As a matter of fact, from Colomba's hagiographic sources,[1] the great influence of sacred images on her visions emerges, so much so that they seem like real *tableaux vivants*, animated by those 'saint' characters who populated the churches and streets of Rieti and Perugia in painting and sculpture.[2] On the other hand, for Domenica da Paradiso, it is even possible to show how the figurative production of Florence at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries allowed Narducci to identify herself with the images of Christ, so much so that she was portrayed by Francesco Onesti da Castiglione, her biographer, crucified like Christ.[3]

While analysing the mystical manifestations of Colomba and Domenica, we must also consider how the model of Caterina has influenced their lives as women and mystics.

The *Vita* of Sister Colomba is full of references to figurative facts and the traces of Colomba's piety emerge from this 'chaos' always aimed at a precise object both in painting and sculpture, so much so that her visions are always concretely figurative.[4] For this kind of manifestation, an important role must also be recognised to her biographer, the Dominican Friar Sebastiano Angeli, who had a strong sense of figurativeness and also emphasised interpretation, so as to influence the figurative world of Colomba. In fact, the visions of the virgin from Rieti are full of references to the figurative production of the late 15th century as well as to that of previous centuries.

By reading Colomba's biographies, the context and intellectual breadth of Sebastiano Angeli emerge, imbued not only with ecclesiastical culture, but also with that popular devotion so dear to him, because it is effective and preparatory to Colomba's Christomimetic behaviour.[5] We know that, because of her social and cultural background, the young Tertiary from Rieti did not stand out for intelligence and critical skills before

Fig. 1. Sebastiano Angeli, *Model of Mount Calvary*, 1501. Perugia, monastery of Beata Colomba, chamber of Beata Colomba da Rieti.

the facts of which she was the protagonist. And yet it is precisely this aspect that will allow us to make some considerations on the role played by Sebastiano in the life of Colomba, especially towards a figurativeness that she herself had not chosen, but that had been imposed on her by her biographer, as in the case of the *simulacrum Calvarii Montis* (fig. 1), still preserved today in her cell in the monastery of Santa Caterina in Perugia.[6]

Father Sebastiano undertook to 'reorganise', or rather 'redesign' and build the space of a familiar place for Colomba, i.e*.,* that of her "cell", in order to assign it to the new perceptions of the virgin from Rieti. Thus, Sebastian's choice, marked by his desire to replicate a precise place like Mount Calvary, would have worked through that *exemplum* as a pivot for that apparatus and for that liturgy which would have allowed, through imagination, the full mimesis of the events of the Holy Week, but also those of the salvation of humanity. This 'mobile apparatus' made of cloth and coloured paper by the Dominican friar in 1501 to facilitate the prayer and meditation of the Dominican tertiary who, at that time, was already in very poor health,[7] would have allowed Colomba, as already said, to identify herself mentally not only with the events of the life, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ, but also with the most important episodes of the redemption of humanity. We know that it was Sebastiano himself, in the last moments of Colomba's life, who read the Passion of Christ at her bedside, in the presence of some sisters and Father Michele da Genova, who acted as Colomba's official confessor until May 20th, 1501.[8]

And still in Rieti, she was an actress when she played in the cathedral, on the basis of what she saw painted on the walls and panels, but also of what she heard during her liturgical visits, the characters of the most important episodes of the Passion of Christ.[9]

But going back to her stay in Perugia, we must remember that the model of the Sacred Mount, which Colomba had under her eyes at the end of her earthly life and which, especially during Holy Week, she brought to life by populating it with her own presence and that of the characters who lived in her mind, was also intended to allow her to take a 'mental' journey to the Holy Land.[10] The desire to pilgrimage to sacred places, for some of these holy women, had already originated in the early 14th century. As a matter of fact, in the biography of the Dominican 'saccata' Agnese da Mon-

tepulciano (1268-1317), we read that she had even received from a celestial messenger some relics from those faraway places.[11]

Colomba had no such gifts, but the model of Golgotha on which Sebastiano Angeli glued 30 small prints with scenes from the creation and salvation of mankind and episodes illustrating the *Via Dolorosa* is just as exceptional: the first were placed on the plinth, the others were glued by the Dominican friar onto the reproduction of Golgotha itself.[12]

In these three scenes, the text was engraved, partly in Latin and partly in German, and can only be read if the print is turned upside down: in the first with the *Annunciazione*, the words "AVE MARIA PLE" are reproduced upside down; in the first one with the *Crocifissione*, the *Titulus Crucis* reads IRNI because it is turned upside down; and also in the *Noli me tangere* scene (fig. 2), the words "MARIN ICH DIN HERE", meaning "Mary I am

Fig. 2. Maestro della cornice con i Padri della Chiesa, *Noli me tangere*, 1460-1470. Perugia, monastery of Beata Colomba, chamber of Beata Colomba da Rieti.

Fig. 3. Anonymous artist, *Suor Domenica da Paradiso*, 1553-1555. Painted terracotta bust, inv. n. 1796. Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André.

your Lord", in the title block above the head of Christ dressed as a gardener, can only be read if the print is turned upside-down. In the latter case, the language used by the printer, as just said, seems to be a German dialect of the Lower Rhine on the border between Holland and Belgium, not so common at that time and in the geographical context from which our small *corpus* of prints must have come.[13]

If we now analyse the suggestion of the figurative world on the visionary Domenica da Paradiso, we realise that it is just as strong and incisive as for Colomba da Rieti.

The foundress of the convent of the Crocetta in Florence, Domenica di Francesco di Leonardo Narducci, was born in Paradiso, near Florence on September 9th, 1473.

From Domenica's prosopographical production, as Francesco Onesti informs us, both the reference to the hagiographic topos of Caterina and the importance of the figurative world for his visionary nature emerge.[14] In this regard, I would like to show you an exceptionally important piece of figurative evidence, which is also the oldest sculpted image of Domenica wearing the habit of the Dominican tertiaries with the red cross on her cloak: it is the painted terracotta bust (fig. 3) made by an anonymous Florentine sculptor, probably between 1553 and 1555 and now kept in the Jacquemart-André Museum in

Paris.[15] There is a 19th-century copy of this sculpture in painted papier-mâché, probably made in 1893, when the bust was bought in Florence by the banker Edouard André and his wife Nélie Jacquemart from the antique dealer and restorer Elia Volpi, for the sum of 1,000 liras.[16] The comparison between the two objects is striking because it testifies not the value of the object itself, since the Parisian sculpture is qualitatively much more refined and of greater stylistic interest, but the importance that the portrait of a saint or a beatified person had for the nuns at the end of the 19th century, because it allowed the worshippers to immediately establish a private dialogue with their 'intercessor'.

And again to emphasise the importance of the figurative world on Domenica's visionary work, her biographer and spiritual father reproduces the drawing showing the "Forma in qua Venerabilis Sponsa Christi iacebat in me conspiciente Passionis Domini cruciatus passa est die 16 martii anno 1506 in quadragesima".[17] This exceptional figurative testimony (fig. 4), contained in the *Vita* preserved today in the Archive of the Convent of the Crocetta in Florence, shows Domenica bearing on her body the wounds and nails inflicted on Christ during the Passion. As a matter of fact, the venerable woman is seen with her arms outstretched, with the nails pierced into her hands, her eyes closed, and her head reclined on her right shoulder, just like the iconographic model of the *Cristo patiens* reproduced by Onesti on the previous page.[18]

The biographer himself does not hesitate to explain the content of this representation in the papers preceding it.[19] This image is emblematic, as it makes visible that mimetic empathy that highlights the excess of imagination of the venerable "in forma di Crocifisso che così si vedeva lei" and of her biographer, in the assimilation of her own sufferings with those of Christ. The desire of many mystics was precisely to be united with the contemplated 'object', to the point of conferring its own figurative autonomy on it. For artists, and as in this case of biographers, depicting a stigmatised body meant depicting a medium, i.e., succeeding in bringing together a painted or sculpted image, body and expressive medium. And, if we are looking for a prototype for this 'Dominican' iconography, we have to find it in the figure of Caterina da Siena, about whom Domenica indirectly recalled episodes from the *Vita* and towards whom she had a particular devotion. We

Fig. 4. Francesco Onesti da Castiglione, *Annalium Vitae Beatae Matris Dominicae de Paradiso*, c. 113r, *Domenica da Paradiso*, 1507, ms. 2 [D], Archive of the Monastery, Ink on paper. Florence, Via Aretina, Monastery of the Crocetta.

must say, however, that for the Sienese virgin the iconographic model of stigmatisation was that of Saint Francis.

For Domenica, it is not the event of the stigmatisation that prevails, as it does for Caterina, but the image of Christ, who becomes one with the protagonist.

Testifying to the fervour for Christ that inflamed Domenica's heart and mind, and to the importance of the 'representations' of her visions, the painted terracotta of the Child Jesus, probably dating from the first half of the 16th century, is also emblematic. In this terracotta, Christ himself became incarnate, taking on such a bodily con-

sistency as to prevent Domenica from walking easily during the Christmas procession of 1515.[20] We know, as a matter of fact, that this fervour led her to receive the Child Jesus from the arms of the Virgin Mary, whom she had placed in the 'little hut' of the Crib set up in her room, as shown in a painting preserved in the Convent of the Crocetta, painted by an anonymous Florentine painter between 1631 and 1635.

These brief notes show the importance of images in the figurative world of these two holy women. This world with its colours and variety of subjects nourished their desire for redemption. Colomba and Domenica had succeeded in entering, albeit with the help of preaching, the sacred scene, partly fulfilling the intention of those who had commissioned and produced the images. Although a distinction must be made between painting and sculpture, they contributed, by integrating each other, to facilitate the process of mimesis and asceticism of these mystics. Reading their *Vite*, one can distinguish various levels of dramatisation suggested by sermons, liturgical offices, sacred representations, but also by the vision of paintings and sculptures both in church and in their 'small bedrooms', as is the case of the model of Mount Calvary for Colomba da Rieti. We must say that images, together with meditation, inspired by medieval treatises on the *ars memorativa*, allowed the mental reconstruction of events in both the spatial and figurative dimensions. In this way, the iconographic customs of religious painting exerted a substantial impact on the way in which those sacred events were imagined and, not surprisingly, images could be used as visual counterparts both in the practice of meditation and in the physical experience of holy places. Moreover, in some cases, such as that of Colomba da Rieti, their contemplation could be interpreted as a substitute for pilgrimage.

In any case, a powerful stimulus must have come to them from the representations they followed and observed especially during the liturgical rite of the Passion of Christ during Holy Week. That apparatus made of images and sounds was somehow repeated in a sort of *tableau vivant* in the presence of a real audience or in the privacy of their dark dwellings.

Notes

[1] About *legenda latina* of Colomba da Rieti see, E. Menestò, "La *legenda* della beata Colomba e il suo biografo", in *Una santa, una città*. Atti del Convegno storico nel V centenario della venuta a Perugia di Colomba da Rieti (10-12 novembre 1989), ed. G. Casagrande, E. Menestò (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM, 1991), pp. 161-175; about *legenda volgare* of Colomba da Rieti see, Sebastiano Angeli O. P., *Legenda volgare di Colomba da Rieti*, ed. G. Casagrande (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM, 2002).

[2] About the iconography of Colomba da Rieti see, R. Argenziano, "Iconografia della beata Colomba a Perugia", in *Una Santa, una città*, cit., pp. 253-289.

[3] About hagiography see, I. Gagliardi, *Sola con Dio. La missione di Domenica da Paradiso nella Firenze del primo Cinquecento* (Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2007); about the iconography of Domenica da Paradiso see, R. Argenziano, *Domenica da Paradiso e la fortuna figurativa di una mistica di primo Cinquecento* (Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2020).

[4] About father Sebastiano Angeli see, G. Casagrande, "Introduzione", in Sebastiano Angeli O. P., *Legenda volgare di Colomba da Rieti*, cit., pp. 8-31.

[5] See F. Santi, "Mistica e immagini", in *Dal visibile all'indicibile*. *Crocifissi ed esperienza mistica in Angela da Foligno*. Comitato Nazionale per le Celebrazioni del VII Centenario della Morte della Beata Angela da Foligno (1309-2009) (Foligno, 6 ottobre 2012-6 gennaio 2013), ed. M. Bassetti, B. Toscano (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM, 2012), pp. 83-94; B. Commodi, "Cristo nell'esperienza mistica di sant'Angela da Foligno", *Miscellanea Francescana* 115, no. 1/2 (2015): pp. 213-234.

[6] R. Argenziano, *Il Monte Calvario di Colomba da Rieti. Immagini a stampa e legno dipinto a Perugia (1501)* (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM, 2019).

[7] *Acta Sanctorum, Maii V* (Antverpiae 1685), p. 381, par. 195; Sebastiano Angeli O. P., *Legenda volgare di Colomba da Rieti*, cit., p. 260, ch. 55.

[8] *Acta Sanctorum, Maii V*, cit., pp. 327, 387, par. 13, 211, 212; T. Herzig, *Le donne di Savonarola. Spiritualità e devozione nell'Italia del Rinascimento* (Roma: Carocci, 2014), p. 57.

[9] *Acta Sanctorum, Maii V*, cit., p. 338, par. 63.

[10] M. Bacci, "Performed Topographies and Topomimetic Piety. Imaginative Sacred Spaces in Medieval Italy", in A.M. Lidov, ed., *New Jerusalem. Hierotopy ad Iconography of Sacred Spaces* (Moscow 2009), p. 101.

[11] *Acta Sanctorum Aprilis II* (Antverpiae 1675), p. 798, par. 27.

[12] See, W.L. Schreiber, *Handbuch der Holzschnitte und Metalschnitte des XV Jahrhunderts*, band V (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1928), p. 46 nn. 2296x, 2297, 2297a, 2297b; pp. 79-82, nn. 2388a, 2388b, 2389, 2389a, 2392b.

[13] See, U. Weekes, *Early Engravers and their Public. The Master of the Berlin Passion and Manuscripts from Convents in the Rhine-Maas Region, ca. 1450-1500* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), p. 42.

[14] Francesco Onesti da Castiglione, *Annalium Vitae Beatae Matris Dominicae de Paradiso*, ms. 2, vol. I, Archive of the Convent of Crocetta, c. 113r.

[15] F. de la Moureyre-Gavoty, *Institut de France. Paris. Musée Jacquemart-André. Sculpture italienne* (Paris: Musée Jacquemart-André, 1975), n. 153, inv. n. 1796.

[16] *Ivi*; R. Argenziano, *Domenica da Paradiso*, cit., p. 38.

[17] Francesco Onesti da Castiglione, *Annalium Vitae Beatae Matris*, cit., c. 113r.

[18] *Ibid.*, c. 112r.

[19] *Ibid.*, c. 110v.

[20] G. Antignani, *Scritti spirituali della venerabile suor Domenica dal Paradiso* (Siena: Cantagalli, 1985), pp. 357-358.

SESSION 2

Artist, Power, Public

CHAIRS

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CONTRIBUTORS

Gaetano Curzi
*The Power of Images and Images of Power: The Replicas of the Lateran Saviour
in Central Italy*

Hannah Baader
The King's Finger, the Mermaid's Body and the Power of the Sea

Carlotta Paltrinieri
Social and Spatial Dimensions of the Florentine Accademia delle Arti del Disegno*:
The Spaces of the Florentine Art Academy*

Priyani Roy Choudhury
The Mughal Simulacra: Architecture as Visual Language of Imperial Identity in Fatehpur Sikri

Friederike Weis
Confident Women in Indo-Persianate Albums: Visual Metaphors or Ethnography?

Marco Folin / Monica Preti
The Wonders of the Ancient World: Western Imagery in Translation

Stefano Cracolici
"Para hacer honor a su patria y al gobierno": Mexican Artists in Rome (1825-1835)

Leonardo Santamaría-Montero
From Colony to Republic: Political Images and Ceremonies in Costa Rica (1809-1858)

G. A. Bremner
*Propagating Power: Gender, Language, and Empire in the Edwardian Baroque Revival
(1885-1920)*

Giulia Murace
*"Engaged in an Undertaking of the Highest Artistic Culture": Two Projects
for a South American Academy in Rome (1897-1911)*

Yi Zhuge
An Overview of Contemporary New Media Art in China

Katarzyna Jagodzińska
*Between Museum as a Symbol and Museum as a Forum: Power Relations in Building a
Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw*
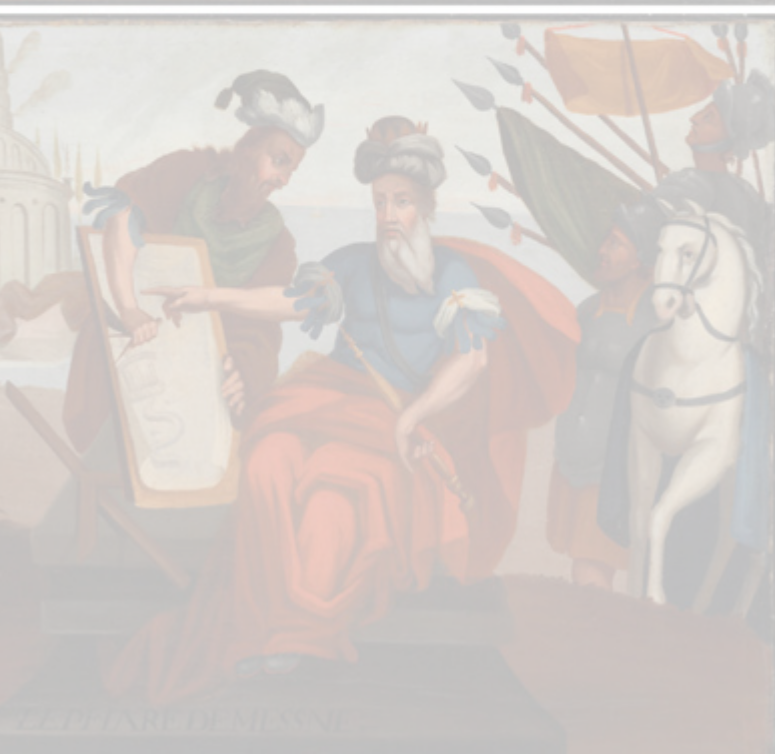
Introduction to Session 2
Artist, Power, Public

Although art may be created in a process of introspection in which an artist privately reflects on his or her current preoccupations, the majority of artworks address a larger audience, for instance a circle of connoisseurs, a royal court, members of a political party or the clients of a specific gallery. By addressing "the public" in its various forms, artists may exercise power through persuasive visual messages. Consequently, our panel explores the relationship between artist, power, and public.

If "motion" and "transformation", the key concepts of the Florentine CIHA Congress, are interpreted as the effects of a work of art, it follows that the interaction between artist and public needs to be analysed. How does the artist move and transform his audience? And what are the underlying intentions and power structures? In this section of the conference proceedings, we aim to embed the notion of the "agency" of the image in a broader methodological framework, drawing on ideas from the spatial and translational turns that have changed our understanding of the dynamics of transformation in historical and modern societies.

Works of art and architecture have always been used to establish and maintain power, on behalf of either an individual or a group or party, in political as well as religious contexts. In accordance with the general theme of the CIHA meeting, "Transformation", this chapter focuses on moments of crisis and change. How did the creations of artists help transform inadequate systems or traditional views by positing new ideals or even utopias? The session brings together a group of scholars who address the role of the arts in the transformation of societal structures, including political systems or power relations between distinct social groups. In this context, the empowerment of women and ethnic minorities deserves special attention. The following papers analyse the artistic strategies that engage with power structures (in terms of social class, gender, foreign/local identities, minority/majority status, religious/lay society, etc.): how do artists create, enforce, or challenge them?

Works of art have the potential to make intellectual concepts "come alive". In the most successful examples, they not only visualize, but vivify ideas. Therefore, the papers study the artistic means through which artists give shape to their concepts of power and communicate them to the beholder: how do they involve and attempt to persuade the public? How are works of art turned into agents of transformation?

The participants of our CIHA panel were invited to consider these questions within the theoretical framework provided by the spatial and translational turns. The "spatial turn" has not only shifted the attention to regions and topics previously regarded as marginal, but it has also stressed the necessity of focusing on the interaction between human and non-human "agents". Social space is created via the interaction of people, objects, and social goods that are present at a given site. In sociological studies, this approach has yielded important results regarding power relations within cities, but it can also be employed to analyse larger or smaller spatial entities from an art-historical point of view. Questions to be considered are: with what intentions did patrons and artists place buildings or works of art at specific sites? How do these works condition social interactions that take place with, within, or around them? In what ways do they contribute to the dissemination or deconstruction of ideas, political ideologies, or religious beliefs?

In discussing these questions, it is useful to draw on some key concepts developed by the proponents of a "translational turn". Historians like Peter Burke and Peter Burschel have underlined the fact that power is the result of inter-cultural negotiations in which acts of translation occur on numerous levels (not least via artistic "translations" and

visualizations of concepts of rulership). Further inspiration may be derived from postcolonial theory to which such positions are closely linked. Homi K. Bhabha highlights the "third space" of negotiation in between cultures, while Gayatri Spivak focuses particularly on women's role and the "female subaltern". Their ideas served as a starting point to rethink the session topic from a global perspective. How do artists make certain more or less powerful persons or groups "speak out" in public?

The session intended to create a productive dialogue between scholars working on similar questions, but with reference to different countries and epochs. The contribution of old and new visual media to the analysis, questioning, subversion, and perhaps even destruction of established power structures was highlighted from many different angles. The participants elucidated visualisations of concepts of rulership, and they addressed the role of artists and their public in the transformation of societal structures. As our call for papers received a very positive response, this section of the conference proceedings features 12 papers covering a broad chronological and geographical range.

The first two essays present different views of the concept of "agency". Gaetano Curzi studies the power of images with reference to an intensely venerated Christian icon, the Lateran "Saviour", and its replicas. Such cult images can be linked to Alfred Gell's notion of "agency" which attributes almost life-like qualities to a work of art. But precisely through their enormous religious appeal, the replicas of the Lateran "Saviour" also had a political function and reaffirmed papal power especially in the border regions of the papal state.

Hannah Baader deals with the imperial regalia that were used in the coronation ceremonies of the Holy Roman Emperors. The emperor wore textiles decorated with images, and it can be argued that these images assumed "agency" in the context of his ritual actions, underlining his claim for power even beyond the boundaries of Europe.

The next paper concentrates on power relations and the early modern court. Carlotta Paltrinieri investigates the networks of power through which the Medici Grand Dukes controlled the Florentine Academy and thus streamlined artistic production in Tuscany. At the CIHA conference, Paltrinieri's talk was complemented by Guido Rebecchini's paper on the artistic policy of pope Paul III, who, after the humiliating Sack of Rome, managed to reas-

sert his papal supremacy by way of a persuasive visual language. Both papers formed a "diptych" on power relations in the secular and religious spheres. As Guido Rebecchini has since published his monograph *The Rome of Paul III*, he opted not to repeat himself in our publication – a regrettable, though of course understandable decision.

Both case studies focused on the 16th century and thus on an age in which rhetoric provided a key framework of reference for literature as well as for the visual arts. Rhetoric was regarded as the art of persuasion, and it achieved its desired effects mainly through the vividness of representation. As Caroline van Eck has shown, rhetorical devices in art were therefore responsible for the perceived "agency" of the early modern image. Thus, the second couple of papers is complementary to the first one in exploring different concepts of "agency" in the Middle Ages and the early modern period respectively.

While the first four papers have a Eurocentric focus, the following seven essays consider our topic "Artist, power, public" from a global context and present case studies on African, Asian and American topics. Chronologically, they span the period from the 16th century to the present day and are linked by a common interest in the theme "Negotiation and Translation". Processes of negotiation and translation can occur either within a largely homogeneous culture or between several distinct cultures. For example, Monica Preti and Marco Folin trace the reception of the iconography of the Wonders of the Ancient World in China, Japan and the viceregal Andes (what is today Peru).

Architecture plays a central role in the negotiation of power structures as it shapes the environment in which society can unfold. Priyani Roy Choudhury discusses the case of Fatehpur Sikri, built during the 1570s and 1580s as the new capital of the Mughal emperor Akbar. Her paper intends to show how dynastic and cultural change brings about a new visual language of power. In a similar vein, Alex Bremner interprets the English Baroque Revival in the British dominions of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa as a prominent material culture expression of Britain's claim to global power. In doing so, he pays particular attention to the impact of language and rhetoric which makes an interesting comparison with the 16th century "art of persuasion" analysed by Guido Rebecchini.

While Choudhury's and Bremner's case studies focus on the consolidation of power, Leonardo Santamaría-Montero studies the period of transition between two regimes, namely the transformation of Costa Rica from Spanish colony to republic. He investigates the ways in which Republican cults gradually replaced Christian symbolism in government rituals, following the model of French and American Republican iconography. Similarly, Stefano Cracolici explores artistic policies in Mexico after the nation gained its independence in 1821. He foregrounds the first Republican artists sent to study in Europe by the Mexican government with the specific task of creating art for the new nation.

Both Stefano Cracolici and Giulia Murace concentrate on the training of Latin American artists in Europe. Thereby they address the interrelation of political transformation and artistic translation (from Europe to Latin America). Giulia Murace discusses the projects for the foundation of a South American Academy in Rome, a plan jointly pursued by Argentina, Chile, and Brazil around 1900. Her paper aims to elucidate the integration of national identities into a larger South American identity that came to be propagated during this period.

There are many ways in which art can bring about transformation in society. As we have seen, it can seek to establish new regimes, new values, new perceptions of cultural identity. Last but not least, the visual arts can contribute to the rethinking of gender roles. Friederike Weis presents unprecedented images of self-confident women which were produced in Mughal India in the second half of the 18th century. She points out how gender roles began to change precisely during a period of political transition from the Mughal empire to the British rule. This opens up interesting points of comparison with Choudhury's and Bremner's papers and introduces us to artistic means of expressing the empowerment of women in Indian society.

The two final papers are dedicated to contemporary art and the role of museums as sites of cultural negotiation. Yi Zhuge reflects on the relationship between traditional Chinese art and Western trends in exhibitions, museums and in the international artistic scene, while Katarzyna Jagodzińska studies the conflicts of interests surrounding the creation of a new museum of modern art in Poland, to be opened in Warsaw's city centre in 2023, that will reconfigure the whole area around the Palace of Culture and Science, a symbolic site for the history of socialist Poland. Her paper focuses on the power relations between the investors, architects, museum officials, and the general public, thus pointing to the current relevance of our session topic *Artist, Power, Public.*

Giovanna Capitelli, Christina Strunck

The Power of Images and Images of Power: The Replicas of the Lateran Saviour in Central Italy

Gaetano Curzi

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Every year in Rome, for the feast of the Assumption, the icon depicting the Saviour kept in the *Sancta Sanctorum* left the Lateran accompanied by a crowd praising Christ and the Virgin.[1] Walking along roads cleaned and illuminated for the occasion, the procession moved towards the Colosseum, crossed the Forum and then reached Santa Maria Maggiore where, at dawn, the Saviour met the Virgin, represented by the venerated icon known as *Salus Populi Romani*, and then returned to the papal palace. The procession was characterised by numerous stations, such as the one on the steps of Santa Maria Nova, at the heart of the ancient pagan city. Here, the icon was washed with ointments and flanked by an image of Mary – probably the one from Santa Maria Antiqua or from the *Monasterium Tempuli* – with which it established a dialogue, staged by the faithful reciting texts that contained heartfelt requests for the salvation of the city.[2]

The root of this dramatic liturgy dates back to Sergius II, who instituted litanies for the Marian feasts of the Annunciation, Assumption, Nativity, and Purification. Even if the *Liber pontificalis* does not indicate that the Lateran icon was present at that time, it is possible that it was already the protagonist of the procession. As a matter of fact, from the end of the 4th century, venerated images of the Saviour were included in the processions in Constantinople and, in case of danger, were brought along the walls of the city to encourage the soldiers.[3] On these occasions, the portrait of Christ replaced that of the emperors and, even in Rome, the affirmation of the processional use of the icon of the *Sancta Sanctorum* coincides with the decline of the apotheosis of imperial portraits still celebrated in the early Middle Ages.[4]

The Roman icon is explicitly mentioned for the first time in the biography of Stephen II[5] who, barefoot, carried it on his shoulders during the siege by the Lombard king Aistulf; in this context, it was defined for the first time as *acheropita*[6] ('not made by human hand') while the word *solite* suggests, I believe – but it is a matter of dispute – that even this procession took place during the feast of Assumption.[7]

A century later, the detailed report contained in the biography of Leo IV[8] confirms, with the expression *sicut mos est*, that everything took place according to an already established ritual which lasted until 1566.[9]

In addition to this public occasion, the popes met the icon after their election, when they gathered in prayer in the *Sancta Sanctorum* and, annually, on Easter morning. After having celebrated mass in the Lateran basilica, accompanied by the cardinals, the pope did in fact enter the chapel, removed the cover that prevented the image from being looked at, kissed the feet of Christ and exclaimed: "The Lord has risen". The cardinals replied: "He who was put on the cross for us", and then the pope concluded: "He appeared to Peter". The act of removing the panel covering was a metaphor for the liberation from the tomb and, therefore, for the resurrection. The image of Christ, which became visible, constituted an evidence which transformed the icon's figurative dimension into a concrete one, while the pope became a witness to the event, as Peter had originally been himself.[10] So, in this ceremony, the pope and the cardinals are not only the public – even if an elite one – of the image but also the witnesses who authenticate it and who are authenticated themselves by the reference to Peter.

It is significant that this intimate relationship with the icon developed since the 12th century, when the procession through the city showed more municipal traits with a growing role of civil authorities, so much so that the popes began to wait for the icon in Santa Maria Maggiore.

The stratification on a collective rite aimed at the protection of the city and of a strong feeling

of identity then favoured the spread of the procession through Lazio with the consent of the popes, who thus affirmed their priestly and regal power over the *Patrimonium Petri*.[11]

This celebration, however, required the presence of icons inspired by Roman prototypes, leading to a process of multiplication of the latter, as attested by the almost one hundred remaining replicas of the Saviour. They were all painted on wood, dating from the 12th to the 19th centuries,[12] and went to form a sort of belt of protection around the papal domains, just as the original protected the walls of the city. I am carrying out systematic research on these works and I am presenting here the preliminary results.

Almost all the replicas are in the form of a triptych, with the Saviour flanked by Maria *advocata* and John the Evangelist, suggesting that these figures were also added to the Roman prototype, probably in the 11th century;[13] their role of intercession stressed the salvific value of the icon and the expiation value of the rite.

The oldest example, kept in the Tivoli cathedral,[14] is dominated by the gold of the background surface, on which a texture of red and black lines outlines Christ's robes, adorned by a precious border that recalls the throne. A limited number of pure colours are enhanced by references that suggest semantic links between the various parts of the painting, such as the white of the face of Christ, significantly brighter than the faces of the other figures, which we find equally intense in the parchment of the open book on a page that brings Christ closer to light.

Comparisons with Roman wall paintings, icons, and manuscripts suggest that the work dates back to the second or third decades of the 12th century, a date that coincides with the reconstruction of the cathedral and the episcopal palace and, above all, with the rise of the bishop Guido, who tried to pacify the relations between the popes and the city of Tivoli. The institution of the Feast of the Assumption, which fostered social cohesion and, at the same time, established a link with Rome, also fits into this perspective.[15] The name of the local version of the procession, *Inchinata*, refers precisely to the movement the icons make in the form of mutual greeting at the time of their meeting, that in Tivoli too takes place at the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. During the middle of the 12th century, the church was oriented towards the opposite side, so that the facade faced the square

where the procession arrived in; however, the use of the urban space as a stage characterized all the cities where this rite took place.

The triptych of Tivoli, reproducing a venerated Roman icon, is in line with the revival of the Early Christian Age, which was one of the cultural traits of the Gregorian Reform and, above all, inaugurates a phenomenon of replica of very long duration. Within such a phenomenon, nevertheless, we can identify moments of greater intensity of the cult that also takes on different nuances, adapted to the historical context.

At the end of the 12th century, for example, the fall of the imperial power allowed the Roman Church to regain control of central Italy, a success that was celebrated by the popes through the construction of churches and the promotion of roman cults. In 1207, Innocent III inaugurated the cathedral of Sutri, which was endowed with an extraordinary panel (fig. 1) depicting the Saviour, originally flanked by wings, which was shortly after replicated in Capranica and Tarquinia.[16]

This group is characterised by the presence of a relic, in some cases inserted in an encolpion at the centre of the chest, which gave the replicas a *status* similar to the one of the Roman prototype, considered both an image and a relic at the same time because of its supernatural origin.

This function is confirmed by the triptych painted in the early 13th century for the church of Trevignano,[17] which depicts Christ between Mary and John, with Peter and Paul on the wings, and, above all, contained the relics of fifteen saints, and fragments of the stone of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Holy Cross. The presence of this treasure is certified by a long inscription that runs between the feet of Christ. This singular position is explained by recalling that the 11th-century *Descriptio Lateranensis ecclesiae* explicitly states that the image of Christ in the *Sancta Sanctorum* stood on the altar and that "the relics of this shrine are gathered below Christ's feet".[18] I have examined the panel closely but, apart from a pectoral cross, I was unable to identify the points where these relics had been inserted; some scholars suggest they could be hidden under the painting, but I think they were probably fitted in the frame, as in some later portable altars, or in the altar below, as in the *Sancta Sanctorum*.

The reconstruction of the chapel by Nicholas III[19] also determined a revival of the cult of the Saviour in the years around the first Jubilee, attested

Fig. 1. *Saviour*. Sutri, Cathedral (Figs. 1-4 © Author).

veloped and the bust of the Saviour became the insignia of the *Confraternita dei Raccomandati del Salvatore*, an institution with a very important charitable function.[21]

The poor condition of the original, repainted several times and protected from view by the metal leaf, paradoxically did not constitute an obstacle to its multiplication but guaranteed a certain freedom in reinventing a type of devotional image that is each time an expression of the sensitivity of the period that produced it, while always maintaining some distinctive elements. These copies are not, therefore, imprecise reproductions of an original that changes or hides its appearance, but replicas that seek to perpetuate the devotional value of the prototype more than its shapes.[22]

These dynamics can be observed between the end of the 14th and the first half of the 15th century, when the devotion to the Saviour was relaunched during the Schism, to evoke the relation between Rome and the Pope, by Boniface IX, and, after the final return, by Martin V, Eugene IV and their successors. This is testified by a large group of panels: for example, the almost unknown one of San Gregorio da Sassola[23] (fig. 2) which reveals a late Gothic taste, perhaps due to the massive presence of foreigners during the jubilee of 1390; the panel of San Giuliano at Faleria,[24] by a Roman painter influenced by Bartolomeo di Tommaso; and, in the second half of the century, the original interpretations by two painters from Viterbo in Capena[25] and Chia.[26]

The image of the Saviour was later drastically updated by Antoniazzo Romano, whose workshop produced at least seven triptychs of the Saviour, such as the one of Zagarolo, commissioned by Francesco Colonna in 1497.[27]

In the mid-16th century, Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta adapted this image of worship, of which he produced different versions, to the demands of the Counter-Reformation church, as suggested by the recently restored triptych in San Nicola at Mazzano Romano.[28] At the end of the century, the triptych in the Santa Maria Assunta church in Barbarano Romano, attributed to the Sienese painter Ventura Salimbeni, was also painted.[29]

Starting from the following century, the rigour shown by the papacy's supervision was more relaxed and the numerous paintings preserved can be included in a series of devotional paintings, often of modest quality, representing an expres-

at the beginning of the 14th century by the painting in the San Biagio church in Palombara Sabina, the only one which, with a surprising translation turn, does not replicate the image of the Saviour but rather reproduces his condition of partial visibility. This is determined by the precious metal leaf made by Innocent III, reproduced in this case with an illusionistic layer of golden stucco, which replaces the body of Christ.[20] In the same years, the tradition of replicating only what was seen de-

Fig. 2. *Saviour*. San Gregorio da Sassola, San Gregorio Magno.

Although these images can often be traced back to provincial folklore, they still maintain a form of power of which the communities, rather than the elites, are the mediators. One case in particular, I believe, demonstrates this effectively.

In 1948, the American art historian Edward Garrison came to Casape, which he described as a remote corner on the Monti Prenestini mountain range.[32] In the parish church, he unexpectedly found two medieval panels, a painted cross dating back to the first half of the 13th century formerly in a small country church and, inside, what he called a "*monstrous gold baroque macchina*", a blessing Christ on a throne which he recognized as being a replica of the Lateran Saviour.

Both paintings were still the subject of a faith that made them part of the life of the community, as described with an ethnographer's satisfaction by the scholar, who had also underscored the hostile welcome he received from the population.

He then learned with amazement that the cross had been destroyed by the habit of the women of the village of scratching off fragments of the pictorial surface with their nails to deliver them as a talisman to soldiers who went to fight during the First and Second World Wars; a fetishistic devotion that, in a meaningful way, spared the face of Christ and the figure of Mary, thus keeping intact the relationship between Christ and his Mother. The women clearly identified themselves in this relationship and turned to it for intercession, while the male component, embodied by

sion of local cults that copied each other or were inspired by previous works, in order to keep the processional tradition alive or spread it.

For example, dating back to 1612 is the triptych of Monterosi[30] (fig. 3), a work of *retro* taste probably inspired by an older object, inaugurating a long series of replicas of replicas which reaches the 19th century, as evidenced by the case of the church of Santa Maria Assunta in Cielo in Rocca di Papa. Here, in 1828, the painter Domenico Tojetti signed a faithful copy (fig. 4) of a panel dated 1543 kept in the same church, traditionally attributed to Perin del Vaga and originally flanked by wings, which were sold in 1814 to finance the reconstruction of the building.[31]

Fig. 3. *Triptych*. Monterosi, Santa Croce.

Fig. 4. *Saviour*. Rocca di Papa, Santa Maria Assunta in Cielo.

the bodies of Christ and St. John, were materially entrusted with the task of protecting the bodies of the men at the front. Fortunately, a fresco found in the presbytery of the church where it was kept reproduces the medieval cross faithfully, thus recording its appearance before that kind of pious iconoclasm damaged it.

The cult of the second panel was less destructive but no less intense: it became the protagonist during a procession in August but was also periodically exposed outdoors for its ability to propitiate rainfall in periods of drought: for this reason, the Christ was called *acquaiolo*. A confidential, almost personal, relationship with the sacred image was formed, which led the inhabitants to try to prevent Garrison from photographing the painting by force, as they interpreted a previous failure to take a photo – due to a technical problem – as an explicit sign that Christ himself did not like to be photographed. The painting, in this context, is not only an image but almost a personification that expresses the will not to be reproduced. So, the image has become so powerful as to achieve self-destruction or prevent itself from becoming a reproduced image. Consequently, we can assume that this phenomenon is a final translational turn of the power of these images.

Notes

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The King's Finger, the Mermaid's Body and the Power of the Sea

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This paper discusses aspects of the transformative power of art and the relation between artists, power and public, by looking at a pair of medieval gloves. In the digital age, gloves can be instruments of data transmission, both from and to the body, with the fingers as operators or receptors. Digital gloves stand for agentive transformations of the human body and the hand for an instrument of craftmanship and making, as well as an instrument of cognition. Medieval gloves had certainly other functions. They worked as signs of social, political, or religious power. Nevertheless, in interesting ways they similarly functioned as instruments of transformation.

The *Weltliche Schatzkammer* in Vienna, among its particularly rare and precious items, holds a pair of gloves that is generally dated to the second decade of the 13th century, and presumably was used and perhaps also produced for the coronation of Frederick II as Emperor in Rome in 1220.[1] The gloves are made from a very thick red silk (*shamit*) and are adorned with gems, small pearls, several enamels, as well as elaborate embroidery with gold threads. On the back of the gloves, the silk is decorated with foliage scrolls, lilies and birds in enamel. On the palms, hallowed eagles adorn the surface. Both gloves show signs of use and mending. Especially on the palm of the right hand, the golden thread is leveled. On the back, one of the larger enamels is partly broken, whereas on the left hand it was replaced by an angel in *niello* technique dating from the early 15th century.

The gloves belong to a larger group of textiles from Norman Sicily. The well-studied pieces have been produced in Palermo between 1134 and 1220,[2] in a workshop often identified with "nobiles officinae" in the royal palace in Palermo, described in a letter by the Pseudo-Hugo Falcandus after 1189.[3] The textiles left Sicily and crossed the Alps already in the 13th century. In the 1420s, together with the crown of Otto III and other objects, they were transported to Nuremberg, disguised as a fish transport. They were venerated as relics of Charles the Great and used in imperial coronation rituals. During the Napoleonic wars, the textiles and *insignia* were brought to Vienna, where they are currently located, with a brief interruption during the Nazi regime.[4]

Among the group of textiles there is a pair of elegant socks in red silk with an inscription in Arabic letters celebrating the Norman King Wilhelm II, a pair of *sandalia* with a complicated history of repairs and interventions; a long shirt (alba) in white silk and with pearl and gold ornaments, again with Arabic inscriptions celebrating Wilhelm II.[5] The earliest textile of this group is the so-called mantle of Roger II, an outstanding piece in red *shamit*, again with thousands of pearls and gold embroidery, displaying an elaborate inscription in Arabic letters with a long and elegant blessing, a palm tree and two symmetrically arranged camels attacked by lions, dating from 528 H (1134).

The pieces document a luxurious textile production by Mediterranean courtly artists, based on the material culture, technologies and skills from and in the Mediterranean *koiné*, as well as on the literateness of chancelleries and *diwans*, as studied by Oleg Grabar, Maria Andaloro, Jeremy Johns and others.[6]

Even if the textiles from Palermo share several elements, like the small pearls, golden thread and thick silk, they were not produced as a coherent ensemble or an "ornatus" for coronations.[7] The pair of gloves is among the last objects produced in the royal Palermo workshops, but despite its peculiarity, it has drawn less attention from scholars.

The gloves appear in print in 1487, as part of the Nuremberg "Heiltumsweisung". A few years later, they were drawn by Albrecht Dürer. The original is lost but known through a copy.[8] It shows the right glove with its rubies and sapphires, as well as em-

eralds, set in a symmetrical order. On the drawing, Dürer has added the observation: "Sie sind sehr gross", meaning 'They are very large'. In fact, the pieces measure 28 cm in length, huge even for the hands of a large man.

In the following, I would like to argue that the gloves were made to function as highly significant and powerful agents of and on the royal-imperial body. They react to and act on the specific social and political dynamics in a moment of transition and embody concepts of rulership.[9] The form, material and decoration of the gloves mediate between the king's body, his claims of naturalized power (devoid as they are of any explicit Christian content) and an elite as "public". They do so in a material and visual vocabulary created by a group of cooperating artists and courtiers with various expertise, working *with* and *on* the power of imagination and the agency of things.

The gloves are each made from three pieces of textile, one for the palm, one for the back, and a third piece for the thumb. As far as we know, medieval gloves were rather rarely used for protection by those working manually. They are documented in specialized courtly practices like falconry, which is clearly not the case here. They were made to protect hands that were *not* consumed by manual labor. Gloves were used in ecclesiastical as well as in courtly and chivalric contexts, and often had legal connotations.[10] Since the 10th century, bishops used them as a sign of authority. Gloves duplicate the shape of the hands and consequently could substitute a person. They were used as legal instruments, served as tokens, gauntlets, gifts, in love affairs, or even for murder.

Surprisingly, as royal *insignia*, gloves are less common than one might expect; they were not part of the imperial apparatus in Byzantium, nor were they used by the Norman kings of Sicily.[11] Even the Roman emperors did not use gloves as tokens of their authority.[12] When the grave of Frederick II was opened, his vestments were preserved, but his hands were naked. A pair of much simpler gloves was found in the tomb of Frederick's father, Henry VI, documented by an engraving of the 18th century[13] (fig. 2). Thus, the gloves today kept in Vienna were rather exceptional pieces. Their rarity as elements of royal or imperial representation was even more highlighted by the abundance of their materials: the red silk, the gems, sapphires and rubies, the rich gold thread and overwhelming use of small pearls, the birds made of enamel and embroidered, together with the foliage scrolls and lilies, again of shiny enamel (fig. 1). They can be seen as both an aesthetic and a political experiment within a complex field of representations.

Fig. 1. Glove, right hand, royal workshop, Palermo, before 1220, 26.3x27.7 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Secular Treasury, Inv.-Nr. XIII 11. © KHM-Museumsverband.

Fig. 2. Glove of Henry VI. (F. Daniele: *I regali sepolcri del duomo di Palermo riconosciuti e illustrati*, Napoli: Stamperia Reale, 1784, plate G, p. 153).

It may seem surprising that on their backs, the gloves show pairs of roundels with naked sirens in *cloisonée* (fig. 3). The tiny mermaids have large naked breasts with accentuated nipples. Long, wet, black hair falls over their shoulders in accentuated curls. With their left hands, they touch their tails, while their right seems to greet the beholder. Their eyes are widely open, and their fish tails are dynamically curved, taking up the circular forms of the plates. Their bodies are elaborately structured by blue scales of decreasing size, formed by the golden partitions of the enamel work.

In the case of the left glove, the mermaids are symmetrically arranged on the *dorsum*, below the ring and the index finger. They form a pair, with the two sea creatures gazing at each other. On the right glove, a mermaid is placed below the index finger. The study of the silk reveals a preparatory drawing in black ink just below the ring finger. The shape precisely corresponds to that of the left hand, and in all likelihood indicates the position of a lost enamel, which was replaced by a sapphire. If this is correct, the gloves in the time of their making showed two pairs of symmetrically arranged mermaids. Similar arrangements of specular symmetry can be found on the mantle of Roger II or in the mosaics of the *Camera di Ruggero*, where pairs of centaurs or leopards face each other on the walls.

The sirens on the royal gloves have been hardly addressed by scholars. Joseph Deer argued that they could not have been made for the gloves but were used simply as an ornamentation without any meaning. He considered the roundels as random leftovers available in the workshop.[14] This assumption seems hardly convincing, given the prominence of the enamels on the royal hands, though tiny in scale. They sit on the royal fingers almost like rings, and would move and 'act' together with them.

But how to explain the naked mermaids on the surface of such an ambitious royal textile? What kind of social, political, economic, ecological and aesthetic practices generated such objects and for what purposes? Only some of these questions can be answered here. While the medium as such, *cloisonée*, is well established in the artistic production of the period, comparable objects are hard to find. A pair of pendants of byzantine production in the Metropolitan Museum with bird-shaped sirens may be considered.

In the medieval *Physiologus* or in *Bestiaria*, sirens are described as "girls of the sea, who deceive sailors with their most beautiful form and the sweetness of their singing; and from the head to the navel they have the body of maiden and resemble the human species; however, they have the scaly tails of fish".[15] In a Christian reading of the myth of Ulysses, sirens are interpreted as a warning against the dangers of sexual desires. A siren with a double tail is represented in one of the capitals in Monreale, as in many Romanesque churches, read by scholars as a visual display of a vulva-like shape as well as an invitation to de-

Fig. 3. Glove, right hand, royal workshop, Palermo, before 1220, detail. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Secular Treasury, Inv.-Nr. XIII 11. © KHM-Museumsverband.
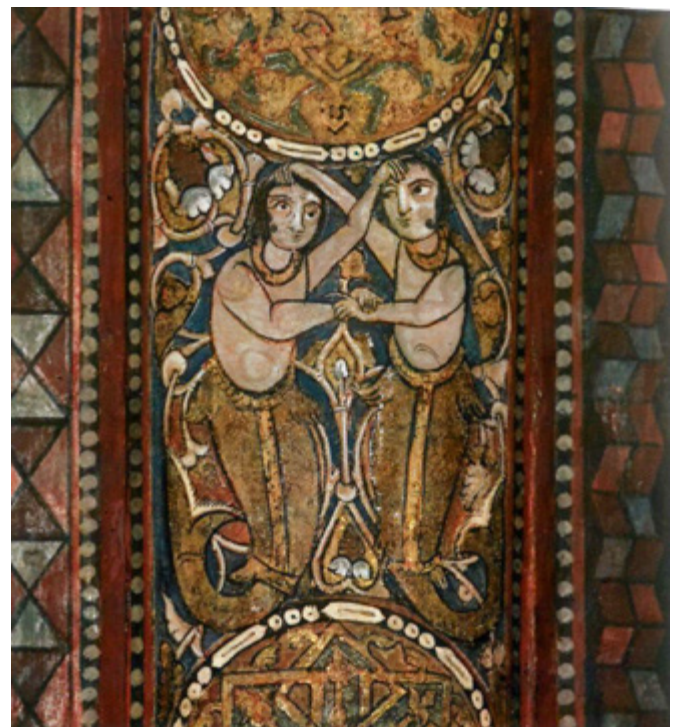
Fig. 4. Mermaids wrestling, north aisle, ceiling. Palermo, Cappella Palatina. (B. Brenk, *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo, Mirabilia Italiae*, 2 vols., Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2010, I, p. 142).

cide between the good and the bad. On the heavily reworked *sandalia* of Wilhelm II, a siren with two tails is repeatedly woven into the fabric. Pairs of mermaids in symmetrical arrangement can be found on the ceiling at the Palatine Chapel in Palermo (fig. 4) and in the cathedral of Cefalù.[16]

Jacques Le Goff and Emanuel Le Roy Ladurie in their famous study of the aquatic serpent-woman Melusine and her appearance around the year 1200 in relation to the royal house of Lusignan have classified her as a contaminated figure, and as the embodiment of transgression of a taboo.[17] The mermaid in the form of Melusine, as they see her, is a magical being and a fatal promise of prosperity. They argue that the mermaid integrates the wonderful into reality. Her genealogy is popular, as was emphasized by the contemporary author Gervase of Tilbury: "Tradunt vulgares". She is regressive and utopian at the same time.[18] She stands for collective phantasies, medieval as well as modern. In fact, mermaids lend themselves as powerful figures of individual and collective imaginations until today. This is evident in spectacles like the Florida *Mermaid Shows*, developed in the late 1940s, or in 21st century sequels. The importance of the figure for contemporary practices and dreams is described in the documentary by Ali Weinstein (2018), with her strong sensibility for notions of gender, trauma and the desire – or need – to transform or transcend the body.

Beyond all other connotations, the mermaids on Frederick's gloves also represent the vast realm of the sea. As such, a mermaid appears on the waters on the Hereford map from the end of the 13th century. There, she is placed in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. With her mirror, she has been interpreted as an invitation to self-reflexivity.[19]

On the gloves of the king and emperor, the mermaids, in line with transgressive transforma-tion, could thus stand for the dominion of the sea. The achievement of maritime power in the Mediterranean was part of Frederick's political agenda and the mermaids could reflect and confirm such an ambition. More in general, the sirens could be elements in a larger visual and material argument about royal-imperial power, embodied by the gloves. Together with the pearls – products of the sea – the enamel birds and lilies – creatures inhabiting land and air – they can represent the dominion over and the interaction with the realms of nature: earth, sea and sky (fig. 1). As universal ruler, Frederick II was in fact celebrated by his courtiers.[20] In this sense, the gloves could be seen as a kind of blessing of the king, stating his majesty, his power, his wisdom, his desires, his splendor, and work almost like an inscription, but by means of material and visual rhetoric, including the agentive powers of the gems.

The gloves in Vienna were therefore products, but also transgressive agents of royal power. We do not know if they were made for Frederick's coronation as emperor in Rome in November 1220. But they were certainly created as much for an audience of a politically conscious elite, as for a larger public in royal or imperial appearances. And at first instance, they were made for the king himself.

In their multi-material form, the gloves had the potential to transform the royal body, by evoking universality, comparable to the transformations of human bodies in the digital age. This powerful potential was created by the collaboration of a group of craftsmen, and by their practices, technologies and aesthetic intelligence. Through their making and their use, the gloves exhibit, claim and embody both political and aesthetic sovereignty. It is a sovereignty of calculated transgression – like a mermaid acting on the king's most powerful index finger.

Notes

[1] K. Schmitz-von Ledebur, "Die Krönungsgewänder aus den palermitanischen Hofwerkstätten. Zu den jüngsten epigraphischen und naturwissenschaftlichen Untersuchungen", in I. Siede, A. Stauffer, eds., *Textile Kostbarkeiten Staufischer Herrscher. Werkstätten, Bilder, Funktionen* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2014), pp. 12-25; also B. Pferschy-Maleczek, "Zu den Krönungsinsignien Kaiser Friedrichs II: Herkunft und Bedeutung der nimbierten Adler auf den Krönungshandschuhen und der Metzer „Chape de Charlemagne"", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 100 (1992): pp. 214-236.

[2] W. Seipel, ed., *Nobiles Officinae. Die Königlichen Hofwerkstätten zu Palermo zur Zeit der Normannen und Staufer im 12. Und 13. Jahrhundert*, exh. cat. (Milano: Skira, 2004); M. Andaloro, ed., *Nobiles Officinae. Perle, filigrane e trame di seta dal Palazzo Reale di Palermo*, exh. cat., 2 vols. (Catania: Maimone, 2006).

[3] "Praefatio ad Petrum Ponarmitanae Ecclesiae Thesaurium de calamitate Siciliae Epistola", see: H. Falcandus, *De rebus circa Siciliae curiam gesti*, critical ed., translation, and commentary by E. D'Angelo (Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2014), p. 20.

[4] W. Seipel, ed., *Nobiles Officinae*, cit.

[5] I. Dolezalek, *Arabic Script on Christian Kings: Textile Inscriptions on Royal Garments from Norman Sicily* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017).

⁶ O. Grabar, "The Experience of Islamic Art", in I.A. Bierman, ed., *The experience of Islamic art on the margins of Islam* (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 2005), pp. 11-60; J. Johns, "Die arabischen Inschriften der Normanenkönige Siziliens: Eine Neuinterpretation", in W. Seipel, ed., *Nobiles Officinae*, cit., pp. 36-59; J. Johns, *Arabic Administration in Norman Sicily. The Royal Diwan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). See also T. Dittelbach, "Sizilisches Kunsthandwerk zur Zeit Friedrichs II", in M. Fansa, K. Ermete, eds., *Kaiser Friedrich II (1194-1250). Welt und Kultur des Mittelmeerraums; Oldenburg*, exh. cat. (Mainz am Rhein: Zabern, 2008), pp. 167-187; D. Jacoby, "Silk Economics and Cross-Cultural Artistic Interaction: Byzantium, the Muslim World, and the Christian West", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004): pp. 197-240; F. Gabrieli, U. Scerrato, eds., *Gli Arabi in Italia. Cultura, contatti e tradizioni* (Milano: Schweiwiller, 1979).

⁷ An attempt to reconstruct an *ornatus* was made by P.E. Schramm, *Kaiser Friedrich II. Herrschaftszeichen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955).

⁸ S. Bodnar, cat. I. 12, in: M. Andaloro, ed., *Nobiles Officinae*, cit., vol. I, p. 83.

⁹ O.B. Rader, *Friedrich II. Der Sizilianer auf dem Kaiserthron. Eine Biographie* (München: Beck, 2010).

¹⁰ B. Schwineköper, *Der Handschuh im Recht, Ämterwesen, Brauch und Volksglauben* (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt Verlag, 1938 [reprint, Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1981]; M. Pastoureau, "Le gant médiéval. Jalons pour l'histoire d'un objet symbolique", in *Les signes et les songes.* Études *sur la symbolique et la sensibilité médiévales* (Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2013), pp. 327-342.

¹¹ See, e.g., the coronation of Roggero II in Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio.

¹² See A. Alföldi, *Die monarchische Repräsentation im römischen Kaiserreiche* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977).

¹³ F. Daniele, *I regali sepolcri del duomo di Palermo riconosciuti e illustrati* (Napoli: Stamperia Reale, 1859), second ed., plate, "Guanti di seta di Arrigo VI".

¹⁴ J. Deer, *Das Kaiserornat Friedrichs II* (Bern: Francke, 1952).

¹⁵ *Liber Monstrorum*, Book I, see also M.J. Curley, ed., *Physiologus* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 23-24.

¹⁶ F. Gabrieli, U. Scerrato, eds., *Gli Arabi in Italia*, cit.; B. Brenk, "La Cappella Palatina a Palermo", *Mirabilia Italiae*, 2 vols. (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2010), pp. 449-451.

¹⁷ J. Le Goff, E. Le Roy Ladurie, "Mélusine maternelle et défricheuse", *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 26 (1981): pp. 587-622. See also B. Lundt, *Melusine und Merlin im Mittelalter* (München: Fink, 1991).

¹⁸ S. Bovenschen, *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit. Exemplarische Untersuchungen zu kulturgeschichtlichen und literarischen Präsentationsformen des Weiblichen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), p. 364.

¹⁹ M.A. Kupfer, *Art and Optics in the Hereford Map. An English Mappa Mundi, ca. 1300* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), p. 47.

²⁰ See O.B. Rader, *Friedrich II. Der Sizilianer auf dem Kaiserthron*, cit., p. 131.

Social and Spatial Dimensions of the Florentine *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno*: The Spaces of the Florentine Art Academy

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'Academies of State' and Their Spaces

The *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno* (1562-63)[1] was one of the three 'academies of state', together with the *Accademia Fiorentina* (1540-41)[2] and the later *Accademia della Crusca* (1583-85):[3] these academies were institutionalized and considered part of the political and cultural agenda envisaged by Cosimo I de' Medici and his successors. The shared traits of these academies were the social mobility and intellectual networks that they fostered, and the interference of the private and public dimensions within such an institutionalized context.[4]

In exploring said networks, physical and spatial mobility are not always considered, failing to address the question: does motion in space correspond to motion in the broader social and political context? Jean Boutier and Michel Plaisance were the first – to my knowledge – to consider the meeting places of the Florentine academies in relation to their social dynamism.[5] Specifically, in the case of the *Accademia Fiorentina* – the literary academy of Florence – Plaisance emphasizes the mixture of private and public spaces, from the homes of patricians and intellectuals, to the *Studio Fiorentino*.[6] This shift in location coincided with the gradual institutionalization of the academy, previously known as the *Accademia degli Umidi*. They also make a similar claim concerning the *Accademia della Crusca* – which transformed from the 'Brigata dei crusconi' into an instrument of Medicean politics. This academy also moved from the private homes of its members – in the 16th century mainly in the home of Giovanni de' Bardi – to the *Canto al Magistrato* in the early 17th century, to the same *Studio Fiorentino* starting from the 1650s.[7] Nothing has been said about this shift regarding the *Accademia del Disegno* – which was also transformed from a guild into a Medicean organization. As a matter of fact, the study of the spaces of this academy has mainly concerned its official meeting places.

The *Accademia del Disegno* and its spaces are normally considered either from the point of view of Cosimo I's political propaganda or for their artistic and architectural history. I would like to propose a reading of the archival sources that bridges the gap between these two understandings of the spaces of the *Accademia del Disegno*, by exploring its shifting spatial and social networks.

The *Accademia del Disegno* and Its Official Meeting Places[8]

As pointed out by many previous studies and described in the academy's statutes,[9] since its 'rebirth' in 1563, the *Accademia* embarked in a restless quest for an official headquarter, moving swiftly from one place to another. All places either had strong ties with the Medici family (e.g., the Basilica of the Santissima Annunziata[10] and the New Sacristy in San Lorenzo),[11] were paid for by the Grand Duke, or were donated as a favor to him (e.g., the Monastero di Santa Maria degli Angeli or Tempio di Pippo Spano;[12] Por San Piero;[13] the Convento del 'Cestello';[14] and the Casa della Crocetta).[15] While the academicians managed to find one official headquarter after another, from 1629 – when they were removed from the Cestello – to 1637, – when they acquired the Crocetta – they were forced to wander around, of no fixed abode. They reunited in the Santissima Annunziata, and once or twice in the Cappella degli Spagnuoli in Santa Maria Novella.[16] Tracking the academy through these 'wandering years' has led me to notice a subtle but steady transition from meeting in public places to meeting in private spaces, specifically in the homes of its *Luogotenenti*.[17]

An Unconventional Shift: from the Medici to the Patriciate

The *Luogotenente* was the highest rank in the *Accademia*, the representative of the Medici power both in the decision-making process and in ex-

ecuting the Medici's will. The peculiar aspect of this figure is that by regulation, he could not be a professional artist, but rather a man who *si diletta delle arti*.[18] By regulation, he also had to be a member of the Florentine Senate or *Gentiluomo,* enforcing a strong connection with the Grand Duke, who had the prerogative over his nomination. Whilst other members of the academy could come from anywhere, the *Luogotenente* had to be Florentine. This specific profile made the *Luogotenente* the bridge between the Medici court and the artists of the *Accademia*. He represented the Grand Duke within the academy in all decisions, and conversely, represented the academy and its members at the Medici court. This double role made the *Luogotenente* an important central node in the social, artistic, and intellectual networks in Florence.

As mentioned earlier, meeting in the homes of the head of the academy was hardly an unusual practice: all members of the academies, before they were 'institutionalized', used to gather in the patricians' palaces. In the case of the newly founded *Accademia del Disegno*, however, meetings started to take place in private homes almost a decade after its institutionalization. The first instance was the meeting that took place in 1571, in the palace of Jacopo Pitti,[19] *Luogotenente* of the academy from 1571 to 1573, and again in 1578. This meeting was surely worthy of mention for the *Provveditore*, as it was when the academy discussed a new design for its *impresa*. In 1576, the academy met in the home of Carlo Spini, *Luogotenente* from 1575 to 1576.[20] It is worth noticing that these were the transitioning years between the rule of Cosimo I and Francesco I de' Medici. Later on, another *Luogotenente*, Baccio Valori,[21] hosted a meeting at his palace on 14th of July 1599.[22] Starting from 1629 – the year of the removal from the Cestello – the *Luogotenente* Niccolò dell'Antella provided the academy with what the Grand Duke was not able to (or rather, not willing to) provide: a room in his palace.[23] Dell'Antella held the position of *Luogotenente* for more than twenty

years, ten times more than what the statutes formally allowed.

Future Directions

When studying the locations of the *Accademia del Disegno*, it is clear that the choice of specific spaces is never arbitrary. Rather, it is the result of a cautious, calculated decision that necessarily reflected on the academy itself, on its members, and above all, on its rulers. Although the politically charged decision-making process surrounding the official locations of the *Accademia* has been explored in depth – for the greatest part, they belonged to religious institutions that could not refuse a request from the Grand Duke – the private spatial dimensions of the art academy have not been studied in the same way as other contemporary Florentine academies. Archival sources and the secondary literature show that – unlike the *Accademia Fiorentina* and the *Accademia della Crusca* – this institutionalized art academy saw a transformation from a public to a more private dimension, peaking in the Seicento. This shift is reflected in the increasing importance of the role of the *Luogotenente*: from a mere representative of the grand ducal will, to the person in charge of supervising the didactic program of the academy, then to being responsible for evaluating works of art and managing their import and export in and out of Florence.[24] This change is directly proportional to the Grand Duke's gradual loss of interest in the affairs of the academy throughout the 17th century; a unique opportunity for the Florentine patricians – who made up the majority of the *Luogotenenti* – to affirm their position in the Florentine society.

The archival sources I have consulted thus far clearly indicate that this phenomenon coincides with an increased number of gatherings in the private homes of the *Luogotenenti.* The next step will be to dig deeper in the personal correspondence of each *Luogotenente* to understand to what extent these social networks uprooted the Florentine intellectual milieu.

Notes

[1] On the *Accademia del Disegno*: C. Cavallucci, *Notizie storiche intorno alla R. Accademia delle Arti del Disegno in Firenze* (Firenze: Topografia del Vocabolario, 1873); G. Ticciati, "Storia della Accademia del Disegno", in *Spigolatura michelangiolesca*, ed. P. Fanfani (Pistoia: Fratelli Bracali, 1876), pp. 191-307; N. Pevsner, *Academies of Art: Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940); A. Nocentini, *Cenni storici sull'Accademia delle arti del disegno* (Firenze: Industria Tipografica Fiorentina, 1963); D. Heikamp, "Appunti sull'Accademia del Disegno", *Arte Illustrata* V (1972): pp. 298-304; S. Bracciali, A. D'Alessandro, "L'Accademia dell'Arte del Disegno di Firenze: prime ipotesi di ricerca", in M. Tarassi, ed., *La nascita della Toscana* (Firenze: Olschki, 1980), pp. 129-158; Z. Ważbiński, *L'Accademia del Disegno a Firenze nel Cinquecento. Idea e istituzione*, 2 vols. (Firenze: Olschki, 1987); K.-E. Barzman, *The Florentine Academy and the Early Modern State: The Discipline of "disegno"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); B.W. Meijer, L. Zangheri, eds., *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno: studi, fonti e interpretazioni di 450 anni di storia* (Firenze: Olschki, 2015), I-II; C. Paltrinieri, "Cosimo I, l'Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, e il 'beneficio pubblico'", in M. Cantini, ed., *Nel segno di Cosimo: Viaggio intorno all'uomo che divenne primo Granduca di Toscana* (Firenze: Pontecorboli Editore, 2019).

[2] The most recent studies on the *Accademia Fiorentina* include: S. Lo Re, *Politica e cultura nella Firenze cosimiana. Studi su Benedetto Varchi* (Roma: Vecchiarelli, 2008); M. Plaisance, *L'accademia e il suo Principe. Cultura e politica a Firenze al tempo di Cosimo I e di Francesco de' Medici* (Roma: Vecchiarelli, 2004); C. Vasoli, "Considerazioni sull'«Accademia fiorentina»", *Revue des Études italiennes* XXV (1979): pp. 41-73; M. Firpo, "L'Accademia fiorentina. Conflitti culturali e fermenti religiosi", in Id., ed., *Gli affreschi del Pontormo a San Lorenzo. Eresia, politica e cultura nella Firenze di Cosimo I* (Torino: Einaudi, 1997), pp. 155-217. For a history of the academy, see also S. Salvini, *Fasti consolari dell'Accademia Fiorentina* (Firenze: Tartini e Franchi, 1717); J. Rilli, *Notizie letterarie ed istoriche intorno agli uomini illustri dell'Accademia fiorentina di Jacopo Rilli* (Firenze, 1700).

[3] See S. Parodi, *Quattro secoli di Crusca: 1583-1983* (Firenze: presso l'Accademia, 1983). G.B. Zannoni, *Storia della Accademia della Crusca e rapporti ed elogi editi ed inediti detti in varie adunanze solenni della medesima* (Firenze: Tipografia del Giglio, 1848).

[4] On the social and intellectual role of the academies, see: C. Tarallo, ed., *Le accademie toscane del Seicento fra arti, lettere e reti epistolari* (Siena: Edizioni Università per Stranieri di Siena, 2020); C. Chiummo, A. Geremicca, P. Tosini, eds., *Intrecci virtuosi: letterati, artisti e accademie tra Cinque e Seicento* (Roma: De Luca, 2017); J. Everson, D. Reidy, L. Sampson, eds., *The Italian Academies 1525-1700: Networks of Culture, Innovation and Dissent* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016); M. Fumaroli, *La repubblica delle lettere* (Milano: Adelphi, 2016); I. Bianchi, C. Gurreri, eds., *Le virtuose adunanze. La cultura accademica tra XVI e XVIII secolo* (Avellino: Edizioni Sinestesie, 2015); S. Testa, *Italian Academies and their Networks 1525-1700: from Local to Global* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); M. Deramaix, et al., eds., *Les Académies dans l'Europe Humaniste: idéaux et pratiques* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2008); M. Rinaldi, "Le accademie del Cinquecento", in G. Belloni, R. Drusi, eds., *Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa, II: Umanesimo ed educazione* (Treviso: Angelo Colla, 2007), pp. 337-359; M. Fumaroli, *Il salotto, l'Accademia, la lingua: tre istituzioni letterarie* (Milano: Adelphi, 2001); A. Quondam, "L'Accademia", in *Letteratura italiana*, ed. A. Asor Rosa (Torino: Einaudi, 1982), I, pp. 823-898; D. Chambers, F. Quiviger, eds., *Italian Academies of the 16th century* (London: Warburg Institute, 1995); F. Adorno, ed.,

Accademie e istituzioni culturali a Firenze (Firenze: Olschki, 1983); E. Cochrane, "Le accademie", in G. Garfagnini, ed., *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del '500* (Firenze: Olschki, 1983), I, pp. 3-17.

[5] J. Boutier, M.P. Paoli, "Letterati cittadini e principi filosofi. I *milieux* intellettuali fiorentini tra Cinque e Settecento", in J. Boutier, B. Marin, A. Romano, eds., *Naples, Rome, Florence. Une histoire comparée des milieux intellectuels italiens (XVIIe -XVIIIe siècles)* (Roma: École française de Rome, 2013), pp. 331-413.

[6] M. Plaisance, "Le Prince et les «lettrés»: les académies florentines au XVIe siècle", in *Florence et la Toscane, XIVe-XIXe siècles: Les dynamiques d'un* État *italien* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2004), pp. 365-379.

[7] On the shifting locations of the Accademia della Crusca, see the forthcoming *scheda* by Giovanna Frosini in the *Dictionary of Tuscan Academies*, eds. J. Boutier, M.P. Paoli, C. Tarallo (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2022).

[8] On the official meeting places of the academy: Z. Ważbiński, *L'Accademia del Disegno a Firenze nel Cinquecento*, cit., II; pp. 75-154, 267-304; P. Ircani, Menichini, *L'"infinito amore" alle arti e agli artisti: la cappella dei Pittori e il p. Montorsoli nel 450° anniversario della morte (1563-2013)* (Firenze: Convento della SS. Annunziata, 2014); P. Pacini, "Le sedi dalle origini al Novecento", in W. Meijer, L. Zangheri, eds., *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno: studi, fonti e interpretazioni di 450 anni di storia* (2015), I, pp. 139-151; D. Gamberini, "Benedetto Varchi, Giovann'Angelo Montorsoli e il Tempio dei 'Pippi': un inedito dialogo in versi agli albori dell'Accademia Fiorentina del Disegno", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 57, no. 1 (2015): pp. 139-144; M. Jonker, *The Academization of Art. A Practice Approach to the Early Histories of the Accademia del Disegno and the Accademia di San Luca*, PhD. dissertation (University of Amsterdam, 2017), pp. 94-125; M. Jonker, "The Cappella di San Luca: a crossing point of religious and professional activities of artists in pre-modern Florence", *Material Culture* (2018): pp. 280-299.

[9] The statutes are held both in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASF, Acc, f. 5) and in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (Magli. II. I. 399). A full transcription can be found in Z. Ważbiński, *L'Accademia del Disegno a Firenze nel Cinquecento*, cit., II; see also E. Sartoni, "Gli Statuti tra Accademia del Disegno e Accademia di Belle Arti (1563-1873)", in B.W. Meijer, L. Zangheri, eds., *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno*, cit., pp. 55-103; N. Pevsner, *Academies of Art: Past and Present*, cit., pp. 296-304.

[10] Regular meeting place from 1560 to 1565, then used as a burial site for members of the academy and artists, and to host the academy's holy celebrations, e.g., the Feast of Saint Luke (BNCF, Magl. II.I.399; ASF, *Acc*, v. 10; v. 156).

[11] BNCF, Magl. II.I.399: C.II: "[…] Debbasi la Compagnia et Academia radunarsi ogni mese una volta, cioè la seconda domenica di ciascun mese et oltracciò nel giorno della solennità della Santa Trinità nella nostra Cappella del Convento della Annunziata e il giorno della festa di Santo Luca in San Lorenzo, o dove da Sua Eccellenza Illustrissima sarà ordinato che dobbiamo stare". On the function of the New Sacristy, see M. Jonker, *The Academization of Art*, cit., pp. 100-103.

[12] BNCF, Magl. II.I.399: C. III: "[…] dona liberamente a tutti questi Artefici di Disegno, cioè Architetti, Scultori, et Pittori, che saranno di questa compagnia, l'Oratorio del Tempio degli Angeli, già cominciato di muraglia da Ms. Filippo Spano degli Scolari con tutte le sue ragioni […]"; C.XII: "Inoltre che si confessino dove vogliono, ma si comunichino in quel luogo"; C.XXX: "Che si faccia col tempo un luogo murato accanto a detto oratorio per metterci dentro l'opere imperfette e perfette di quei maestri i quali volessino lasciare a detto oratorio"; C.XXXI: "Appresso ci si faccia una libreria per chi dell'Arti volessi

alla morte sua lasciare disegni, modelli di statue, piante di edifici, ingegni da fabbricare o altri cose attenenti a dett'Arti".

[13] After 1584, when the academy became a *magistratura*. ASF, *Acc.*, vv. 8-9.

[14] BNCF, Magl. II.I.399: C.XI: "[...] et vogliano ancora che quando sarà finito il luogo di Cestello donato ultimamente all'Accademia [da Giulio Scala et fabricato per liberalità di] Sua Eccellenza Illustrissima et che gli Accademici si saranno accomodati in esso, e cominciato a dar forma allo studio sopradetto [la libreria] si debba trovare un huomo il quale legga in quel luogo Euclide, Vitruvio e le altre Matematiche [...]". ASF, Acc., v. 26: on July 15, 1582, the *Luogotenente* Vincenzo Alamanni pays a visit to the Cestello to estimate where to build the separating walls, but he is not able to because the friars are eating and cannot be bothered. In ASF, *Acc.*, v. 9, ff. 44r-48v. there is the copy of a letter to the Grand Duke regarding the removal of the academy from the Cestello in 1629.

[15] The home of Gherardo Salviati in via Laura 66, where the academy met starting from 1637. ASF, *Acc.*, v. 10. See also P. Pacini, *Le sedi dell'Accademia del disegno al «Cestello» e alla «Crocetta»* (Firenze: Olschki, 2001).

[16] ASF, *Acc.*, v. 8, f. 66v.

[17] For a study of the Luogotenenti and their networks in and outside the academy, see: C. Paltrinieri, "Alla riscoperta della sociabilité dell'Accademia del Disegno: i luogotenenti", in C. Tarallo, ed., *Le accademie toscane del Seicento*, cit., pp. 3-20. On the Luogotenenti and their role within the academy: L. Zangheri, *I luogotenenti e i presidenti*, in W. Meijer, L. Zangheri, eds., *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno: studi, fonti e interpretazioni di 450 anni di storia*, cit., I, pp. 115-119; K.-E. Barzman, *The Florentine Academy and the Early Modern State*, cit., pp. 63-64; M. Jonker, *The Academization of Art*, cit., pp. 395-405.

[18] The verb *dilettarsi* hints at the phenomenon that would later proliferate within the academy, the *dilettantismo*.

[19] ASF, *Acc.*, v. 24.

[20] *Ibid.*, v. 25.

[21] *Luogotenente* from 1598 to 1606.

[22] ASF, *Acc.*, v. 8.

[23] *Ibid.*, v. 9.

[24] K.-E. Barzman, *The Florentine Academy and the Early Modern State*, cit., pp. 63-64.

The Mughal Simulacra: Architecture as Visual Language of Imperial Identity in Fatehpur Sikri

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In the palace complex at Fatehpur Sikri, stands a double storied apartment, locally called the *Sunhera Makan* or the 'Golden House'. Several gilded wall paintings once distinguished this building. Most of them have completely disappeared, leaving behind faint flecks of blue, gold and red. Some, however, retain a faded tracery of sumptuous scenes that appear to have leapt from the pages of early Mughal manuscript paintings. Among them, one flanks a window niche on one of the three outer galleries of the building. It depicts an imperial party, apparent from the standards held by attendant figures, returning to the city from a hunt. The party can be seen moving past crenelated fortifications, slowly making their way into the city. A figure on horseback, riding up on the winding path, leads the way. As he passes under the arched gateway of a *Naubat Khana* or 'Drum House', crowned with domed kiosks, the figures who sit atop the gateway raise their hands in cheer, as they repeatedly strike their drums, their mouths open in shouts of welcome. This suggests that the figure might be a preeminent personage, perhaps the emperor. The similarity between the Naubat Khana depicted here and the one that still stands within the actual city of Fatehpur Sikri suggests that the scene documents a day in the life of the latter. One can easily imagine the raucous entry of the hunting party being subsumed by the chaotic energy of the city itself. In the painting, people peep out from buildings, stand on balconies, and seem to be shouting, anticipating, gazing, and noisily partaking in a single exciting event.[1] This wall painting, expertly executed with all the minutiae that resemble manuscript paintings, presents a physical testament to the urbane energy of the space it documented, and offers us a tantalising glimpse into the city life of Fatehpur Sikri, which marked a singular but brief chapter in the Mughal emperor Akbar's nearly fifty-year-long reign.

Fatehpur Sikri was built in 1571 under the orders of Akbar, who chose it as new capital of the empire. Initially called *Fathpur*, or the 'City of Victory', it was established in the neighbourhood of the village of Sikri. The construction of this new city was occasioned by the reputedly 'miraculous' birth of his male heir under the auspices of the local Sufi Sheikh Salim Chishti. Simultaneously, its founding celebrated the conquest of the region of Gujarat, which marked Mughal's dominion over the greater part of Northern and Western India. Fatehpur Sikri quickly became the site of self-conscious experiments with a new civilisational ethos and urban living. As an imperial centre, the city witnessed the beginning of an organised and systematic effort to archive and reproduce, in a sense of continuum, the past and the present of the fledgling empire. Innovations in administrative practices unveiled attempts aimed at the centralisation of power. Famous for its multi-religious debates at the *Ibadat Khana* or the 'House of Worship', the city hosted complex theological and epistemological dialogues. The setting up of the imperial library and workshops on calligraphy, paintings, carpets, stone, metal, and jewellery works amongst others, created a rich treasury of brilliant manuscripts and *objets d'art*.[2] However, the city's material and social evolution came to an abrupt end as Akbar abandoned it within fourteen years of its founding, and moved the imperial court to Lahore in order to supervise his northwestern dominions.

Fatehpur Sikri was born, as Muhammad Arif Qandahari – one of the earliest chroniclers of Akbar's reign – tells us, when the emperor issued an order to build the *dar al-mulk*, namely the 'seat of the kingdom' on a barren and empty red sandstone ridge.[3] According to Qandahari, Akbar himself delineated its foundation (*khatt-i asas*) on the 'sheet of imagination' (*ruq'at-i mutakhaiyila*) and ordered for it to have a four to six miles-long cir-

cumference.[4] He decreed that the top of the hill should be employed for houses and other edifices, while orchards and gardens were to be laid out along its perimeter as well as at the centre. It was almost as if Akbar had already possessed a vivid layout in his head as an *a priori* reality and ordered it to be made manifest. Almost immediately, stonecutters set out to literally transform the rocky outcrop into an imperial city. This is exemplified by a series of cells at the base of the city's magnificent congregational mosque which forms part of an enclosure known as the *Langar Khana* or 'Alms' House'. The cells are built out of dressed stones and exclusively house the surface of the ridge itself, thus preserving in perpetuity the builders' intention to visually retain a sense of continuity between rock face and edifice (fig. 1). On the walls of the gallery in front of these cells, a similar continuity is framed by blind arches. Considered together, they visually and architectonically underscore the seamless transformation of nature into artifice at the grandiose moment of the city's creation.

Years later in Lahore, Akbar's official historian and confidant Abul Fazl would record this moment of creation in his *Akbarnama* or *The History of Akbar* as following:

> Among the dominion-increasing events was the making of Sikri… into a great city. As the Khedive of the world is an architect of the spiritual and physical world, …[he] *cherishes every place in accordance with its condition*. Inasmuch as his exalted sons had taken their birth in Sikri and the God-knowing spirit of Shaikh Selim had taken possession thereof, *his holy heart desired to give outward splendour to this spot which possessed spiritual grandeur (italics mine)*.[5]

In other words, according to Fazl, the pre-existing condition of the ridge was its spiritual grandeur. Abul Fazl came from a lineage of Ishraqi traditions of a Persian branch of Neo-Platonism, primarily that of Surhawardi, which saw the sovereign as the earthly recipient of divine illumination and the sole illuminator of divine truth. It is not surprising therefore that Fazl projected Fatehpur Sikri as an almost instantaneous materialisation of a purer truth, the glimpse of which could only be captured by Akbar. In Fazl's train of thought, the imagination of the city already existed as a closed and internally consistent set of ideas at that very mo-

Fig. 1. Cell at the base of the Jami Mosque.

ment and preceded the material transformation of the rocky outcrop into the city. Visually, the material city was meant to guide the seeker's gaze towards that inner, supreme form of the city. *Inter alia*, the city is made to architecturally and visually unfold like a preconceived text, thus aggrandising Akbar's spiritual authority.[6] The creation of Fatehpur Sikri – built from scratch – as opposed to other palimpsest royal structures in Delhi or Agra, built upon pre-existing structures, thus opened up possible ways of signifying new realities that had hitherto not been attempted.

The court at Fatehpur Sikri famously collected people of different religions, nationalities, regional lineages, and talents. While one can say that people from various parts of the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, Iran, and Europe gathered at the court in Fatehpur Sikri, it is important to note that such gathering became itself an object on display, as portrayed in the famous painting of the *Ibadat Khana* debates, by Nar Singh, now at the Chester

Fig. 2. Panels in 'Turkish Sultana's Pavilion'.

Beatty Library in Dublin.[7] The compositional act of bringing together disparate groups at customised sites within the city and visually framing them together through images or with words invests Akbar with the powers of both spiritual authority and political patronage. However, stylistically, it does not so much *represent* a reality as it strategically creates one, subsuming the empirical under aesthetic and ideological signs.

Akbar's ambition to articulate an imperial vision is intricately woven into the scale, design, architecture, and ornamentation of Fatehpur Sikri. For instance, the garden-metaphor, a sign invested with the composite nature of the imperial milieu, finds a visual expression in a small square pavilion inside the royal quarters known as the 'Turkish Sultana's Pavilion'. Both the main structure and the porch in front are covered by sloping stone roofs that simulate clay tiles. The outer facade of the building is exquisitely chiselled in a zigzag pattern that adds a matted texture to the stone. Pillars with grape and pomegranate vines run around the verandas that surround it. The building itself is placed next to a water tank, creating an impression of a garden pavilion. As one enters the room, eight dado panels, each with separate content, extend the garden metaphor to become a temporal map of Akbar's empire, both real as well as subjunctive (fig. 2). Here one encounters peacocks and pomegranates, animals grazing under a Banyan tree, palm tree, cypress, narcissus, carnations, betel nut trees, mango, chinar or plane tree and the banana. The diverse range of vegetation depicted in these panels is clearly an assemblage of the geographical reach of Akbar's Empire

– the cypress and the chinar were native to the regions of Afghanistan and Kashmir, along with pomegranate and grapes and were equally symbolic of the dynasty's ancestral affiliations with central Asia. The mango, the banana, the banyan, betel nuts, and the various species of palm tree are all, of course, the most visible plants of the tropical Indian plains. Here, a skilful artifice gathers and binds the distinctive natural wealth of diverse regions to establish a subjunctive territorial continuity and thereby create the simulacra of a new geographical identity for the empire. The empirically discontinuous geography is transformed into an ideologically continuous and coherent sign of Akbar's Hindustan. The simulacra are not a representation or an imitation, as there is nothing empirically real to represent; the incremental acquisition of new territories was an ongoing pursuit. However, like the dado panels of the 'Turkish Sulatana's Pavilion', the simulacra produce meanings that construct the real.

Another structure worth considering is one that is locally called 'Jodha Bai's Kitchen'. Long, overhanging eaves or *chajjas* mounted on carved brackets guard red sandstone panels which are almost entirely covered in a zigzag chevron pattern in a manner similar to the 'Turkish Sultana's Pavilion', here in an identifiable simulation of a matted hut found all over the subcontinent (fig. 3). Carved tassels, each different, imitate real ones that were and still are hung over doorways and entrances of homes, and accentuate the humble decorations of the kind of dwelling it pretends to be. In actual use, the building was probably an office. But just like a part of a stage set, it becomes a visual prop in the tableau of Akbar's dominion. The materially occurring domestic architecture is transformed into an aesthetic style; material elements are transformed into stylistic elements, reaffirmed in their repetition in the other structures, just like the simulated tiled roof, which becomes an aesthetic template as well.

The same impulse extends to the use of so-called regional aesthetic motifs. The notion that buildings – or what appears on them – can be utilized to form an argument of territoriality is found in Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama*. He describes the new Mughal palaces of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri as bringing together the styles of Gujarat and Bengal. Bengal, which formed the easternmost boundary of the Mughal Empire, was not entirely conquered at the time Fatehpur Sikri was built. But one may

Fig. 3. Facade of 'Jodha Bai's Kitchen'.

find certain stylistic resonances: for instance, the sloping simulated clay tiled roof possibly drew inspiration from a variant of traditional domestic architecture in Bengal. But the artistic styles of Gujarat abounded noticeably. The conquest of Gujarat by the Mughals ensured an extensive availability of highly skilled Gujarati craftsmen who brought the aesthetic idiom of the region with them. For example, a standalone kiosk at the corner of the royal complex references a similar but much older kiosk that stands at the centre of the Jami Mosque at Cambay, in Gujarat. Thus, the independent styles of erstwhile sultanates, each with its long history of development, become representational styles once associated to the imperial centre.

Finally, in the *Diwan-i- Khas* or the 'Hall of Special Audience', thickly ornamented pillar brackets of Gujarat appear in the central pillar, celebrated in popular culture as Akbar's royal seat (fig. 4). It comprises a single circular seat for the emperor, on top of the pillar, with four pathways radiating from the centre to connect to an upper gallery which runs all around the upper part of the chamber. Here, presumably the select few stood, separated from the emperor by an empty space, yet connected through radiating bridges. In Fatehpur Sikri, perhaps nothing carried a signification of Akbar's spiritual, ideological, and temporal power better than this structure. Heavy tiers of serpentine brackets are superimposed on a chevron pattern, in a symphony of excess which becomes a way a drawing attention to itself, as though acknowledging its Gujarati origins, but also declaring to be much more. Nowhere in Gujarat was there anything quite like this. The chevron pat-

tern was indeed rare in the subcontinent. However, it emerged as an identifiable Mughal element around this time, along with the use of serpentine brackets, but never again are the two conjoined together as they are here, at least in nothing that has survived. While the chevron pattern makes its way into later Mughal architecture, especially that of Shah Jahan, the baroque excess of the pillar brackets used here seemed to have little stylistic appeal after this moment.

It is important to note that the simulacra can continue to produce meanings that constitute the real only as long as people subscribe to it. The moment its bare materiality starts to assert itself, it fails. There are many available speculations regarding the cause behind Fatehpur Sikri's end, ranging from the unusable brackish groundwater of the ridge to Akbar's campaigns in the northwest. What is clear is that Akbar did not return to Fatehpur Sikri for any long period of stay after he left in 1584. And it is telling that the same Abul Fazl who had previously lauded the inner 'spiritual grandeur' of the city, later, in his defence of Akbar's departure, reduces it to its stark materiality even

Fig. 4. Central Pillar of 'Diwan-i Khas'.

as it had caused some consternation amongst nobles who had spent substantial amounts of money building their own residences according to Akbar's orders and directions. Fazl derides such irrelevant preoccupations with the city's "delightsome palaces, enchanting gardens, ear-rejoicing fountains, noble temples of worship and beneficent harbourages" describing them as mere superficialities, and extols Akbar's new higher purpose of "comforting the Kabulis".[8] Thus, almost as soon as the city was beginning to settle into its rocky foundations, as the bright pinkness of the newly quarried stone was beginning to take on a darker, redder, richer hue, the city stopped being a city at all. Many have wondered if it ever really was a city. But one cannot ignore the frequent reiterations of it being a city, as asserted in chronicles, manuscript paint-

ings and even the wall painting mentioned at the beginning of this paper. In fact, even as Abul Fazl laments Akbar's departure from the city, he underscores its urbanity in his portrayal, thereby allowing us to access the imaginary of the city beyond the many descriptions that either eulogize it using dense poetic tropes and metaphors or represent it as the debris of a lived past. By the 17th century, Fatehpur Sikri was considered to be ruins by travellers. Yet, in its brief history, and perhaps because it remained frozen in the moment of its creation, it offers us an 'arche-text' of styles and signs that telescope time, places, and cultural idioms, and dominate the functional programme of the city while enveloping its collective life in a set of affects that repeatedly refer to the luminous greatness of the Emperor.

Notes

[1] The description of the painting has been gleaned from 19th century line drawings prepared by a team from the Archaeological Survey of India, headed by Edmund Smith, who conducted the first scientific survey of the city. E.W. Smith, *Archaeological Survey of India. The Moghul Architecture of Fatehpur-Sikri: Described and Illustrated by Edmund W. Smith*, *Part I* (Allahabad: Supdt., Govt. Press, N-W.P. and Oudh, 1894), plates cxiii, cxiv.

[2] For a comprehensive account of the rich cultural heritage of Fatehpur Sikri, see M. Brand, G.D. Lowry, *Akbar's India, Art from the Mughal City of Victory (Catalogue of an exhibition organized by the Asia Society in celebration of the Festival of India, 1985-86)* (New York: The Asia Society Galleries, 1985).

[3] Muhammad Arif Qandahari, *Tarikh-i-Akbari*, ed. Muin ud-Din Nadwi, Azhar Ali Dihlawi, and Imtiyaz Ali Arshi (Rampur: Rampur Raza Library, 1962) p. 150.

[4] *Ivi*.

[5] Abul Fazl Allami, *Akbarnama*, II, tr. H. Beveridge (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1902), pp. 530-531.

[6] The Fatehpur Sikri years saw the dramatic escalation of the fractious relationship between Akbar and the religious orthodox elite, which culminated in 1579 with Akbar issuing a decree through which he subsumed all civil and religious authority within his person. That such a move was resented is but obvious, but Abul Fazl and his brother, the poet Faizi, and father Sheikh Mubarak, all followers of the Ishraqi tradition, had inserted themselves in the middle of this controversy, defining and shaping Akbar's new sovereignty and political ideology with their words.

[7] 'Akbar presiding over religious discussions in the Ibadat-khana', from the History of Akbar (Akbarnama), by Abu'l-Fazl', Object no: In 03.263, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

[8] Abul Fazl Allami, *Akbarnama*, III, cit., pp. 702-705.

Confident Women in Indo-Persianate Albums: Visual Metaphors or Ethnography?

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More than a hundred Indo-Persianate albums dating to the 18th century are preserved in museums and libraries worldwide, primarily in Europe. Most of these albums were acquired – and, in some cases, even commissioned – by Europeans who resided in India when the British East India Company rose to significant power, especially between ca. 1750 and 1790. While portraits of Mughal rulers, princes and male courtiers had constituted the prevalent subject of 17th-century imperial albums, an increasing number of women, either single or in groups, began to appear in albums compiled for the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah (r. 1719-1748).[1] In the latter half of the 18th century, representations of women then became a constant feature in albums made for Shuja' al-Daula (r. 1754-1775),[2] the Mughal governor of Awadh, and also for Europeans (figs. 1-4). Under what circumstances did this increase in the representation of women in album paintings occur, and what are we to make of this phenomenon?

Soon after Muhammad Shah – an avid patron of art, poetry, and music – died in 1748, successive unstable reigns prompted many court artists to migrate to the Mughal provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Awadh (today Uttar Pradesh, in Northern India), where they developed regional styles and new pictorial genres.[3] These 'provincial' albums are still strongly related to the imperial Indo-Persianate tradition in that they usually contain an equal number of paintings and calligraphies. Among the most remarkable contents of these albums are scenes of leisure in the harem, often set on a terrace overlooking a river. This genre had been known on a more modest scale in earlier Mughal paintings and had already included a wide range of varying motives under Muhammad Shah.[4] Unlike traditional group portrayals, which often bear inscriptions identifying the main male protagonists, the courtly ladies of the terrace scenes look quite generic and are rarely named.[5]

Another innovative subject consists of Indian heroines on horseback, depicting the Rajput (Hindu) princess Rupmati (16th century)[6] and the Deccan (Muslim) queen Chand Bibi, who ruled first in Bijapur and later in Ahmadnagar, until her assassination in 1600.[7] However, the bulk of female representations shows anonymous ladies at their toilette, relaxing or feasting in the harem – playing instruments, enjoying fireworks, *huqqa* pipes or wine (usually when the emperor is absent; figs. 2 and 3), – as well as women living as wandering ascetics (*yoginīs*) (fig. 4). The overall impression of these paintings is that these women are self-determined and confident. In the case of noble heroines and harem ladies, the women's confidence seems to derive not only from their high status, but also from their feminine beauty (which is often stressed by long, loose hair, hardly covered by a transparent veil or a turban), while in the case of the equally young and beautiful *yoginīs*, their confidence appears to be based on their choice of an austere ascetic life and on the respect that visitors pay to them.

The desire for a greater visibility of female characters in Indo-Persianate albums might be partly explained by the increasingly important role that women of the imperial and provincial Mughal courts played as patrons of such paintings in the 18th century (which, for lack of textual evidence, remains speculation), and partly by the growing demands of European patrons and collectors. During the European Enlightenment, public life had become more heterosocial, as men and women increasingly sought conversation with each other. This altered the social visibility and cultural role of women, who consequently began to defy fixed gender roles. It was also accompanied by a reconsideration of feminity and feminine beauty in the visual arts.[8] In this regard, it would be interesting to examine whether the wives of British East India Company officials were involved

in the patronage of paintings. Prominent personalities included Lady Mary Impey (1749-1818),[9] wife of Sir Elijah Impey (1732-1809) – the British Chief Justice of Bengal from 1774 to 1783 – and Marian Hastings (1747-1837), second wife of the first Governor-General of Bengal, Warren Hastings (1732-1818). Warren Hastings was an avid collector of Indian albums[10] and an eager promoter of British Indological interests. Marian (Anna Maria Apollonia von Chapsuet) came to India in 1769 with her first husband, from whom she divorced to marry Warren Hastings in August 1777. Warren's letters and two portraits painted by Johan Zoffany testify to her striking personality and social status.[11] The point I would like to make here is that Europeans – both men and women – who lived in India at that time were certainly interested in the major societal roles assigned to Indian women, due to their own experiences with issues of female empowerment.

The Burning of the Satī Depicted for Europeans

Gayatri Spivak's much-quoted dictum "White men are saving brown women from brown men" highlights yet another major interest that the British Company servants took in Indian women. Spivak discusses this notion in regard to the voluntary practice of the *satī* (meaning 'virtuous wife') immolating herself on her dead husband's pyre. The sacrificial suicide of a widow, albeit a rare practice, was sanctioned by orthodox Hinduism. According to Spivak, British colonisers, who saw themselves as "establisher[s] of the good society", considered the *satī* willing to sacrifice herself as an "*object* of protection from her own kind".[12] By finally outlawing the ritual in 1829, the colonisers spoke *for* the *satī*, but not *to* her, which debunks British imperialism as a 'civilising mission' to justify colonial control.[13]

The Indo-Persianate albums collected by Europeans in the second half of the 18th century do not include a single image of a widow sacrifice, even though they did indeed commission coloured drawings of this practice (fig. 1). These drawings were designed to be mounted into a different type of album of large, oblong format, usually referred to as a 'Customs and Manners' album. One such drawing is signed by Bahadur Singh (fig. 1) and was probably made for Richard Johnson (1753-1807), a Company servant and Resident in Calcutta, Lucknow, and Hyderabad from 1770 to 1790.[14] Another

coloured *satī* drawing was made by an Indian artist for an album (measuring 37x53.5 cm) which was compiled for and annotated in 1774 by Jean-Baptiste Gentil (1726-1799),[15] who began his career as an officer of the French *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*. As a matter of fact, both drawings represent the *satī* not as someone pleading for help but, on the contrary, as a confident woman sure of her choice. In Bahadur Singh's drawing (fig. 1), it seems as if the flames are enveloping her in a protective manner, rather than consuming her in a threatening way. The Sanskrit lines beneath the picture are exerpts from a treatise on Hindu religious duties and its commentary.[16] The commentary mentions the two choices that a woman has after the death of her husband – self-immolation or widowhood – but eventually recommends the sacrifice because it entails a liberation from the female body in the cycle of rebirth, and would allow the woman to "excel in heavenly regions".[17] Interestingly, the pro-sacrifice message of the drawing is in keeping with what the British surgeon John Zephaniah Holwell wrote about this practice in his book *On the Religious Tenets of the Gentoos* (1767): he considered it – from the Hindu perspective – as a heroic act.[18] The two drawings made for Gentil and (presumably) Johnson are replete with detailed records of the spectators, their dress, their ritual haircuts, the musical instruments and so on; thus, they are far from offering a sensational, voyeuristic polemic against the widow sacrifice.

This brings us to the question of whether such an ethnographic approach might not also have

Fig. 1. *Burning of the Virtuous Wife (satī)*, signed by Bahadur Singh, India, Awadh (Uttar Pradesh), Lucknow, c. 1780. Brush drawing with ink and watercolour, 34.5x44 cm. London, British Library, Add.Or.24. © The British Library Board.

constituted one of the motivations for collecting images of confident women in Indo-Persianate albums. When one compares the plain drawings in the style of 'Customs and Manners' – which are devoid of decorative margins (fig. 1) – with the elaborately painted and artfully framed compositions in Indo-Persianate albums of the 18th century (figs. 2-4), one immediately realises that the intention behind the latter must have been a different one. Perhaps one should thus interpret the harem princess and the *yoginī* not as mere social types, but as visual metaphors. In doing so, we might find a key to understanding the surprising phenomenon of increased female visibility in Indian album paintings collected by Europeans, which is in stark contrast not only to the actual invisibility of high-status Indian women, who lived a secluded life at court, but also to the rare sight of a female ascetic in public.[19]

From Serving to Drinking Wine

In Persian classical poetry, the serving and drinking of wine is often used as a trope expressing the mystical relationship between the 'two worlds' of earthly and divine love. This is why Persian and Mughal albums feature numerous images depicting a male or female wine server (*sāqī*) along with a wine drinker of the opposite sex – often in an amorous context – or two men. These paintings carry two levels of meaning since the portrayal of the earthly (young and beautiful) beloved may allude to the immortal beauty of the divine.[20] Seen in this light, the wine drinker (the lover) represents the Sufi seeking union with God, symbolised by the *sāqī* (the beloved).

A notable transformation of this topic occurred in 18th-century paintings, where wine-serving and -drinking became an almost exclusively female activity.[21] A painting from an album compiled for the Franco-Swiss officer and engineer-architect Antoine Polier (1741-1795) (fig. 2) was originally made either for Shujaʿ al-Daula, or for an album of Sir Elijah Impey and his wife, since a characteristic cartouche placed above the painting reads: "Depiction of beauty – Having wine" (*taṣvīr-i ḥusn mashghūl-i sharāb*).[22] There are two possible modes of reading this image, the one not necessarily excluding the other: set in an Europeanised oval frame, this image depicts female friendship, maybe homoerotically in tone, or even a fantasy of the sexually subservient foreign female, accentuated by the erotic exposure of the breasts

visible beneath diaphanous fabric. But when the image is seen through the lens of a viewer who is familiar with Persian love poems, a more spiritual conception of love may be understood as the dominant message.
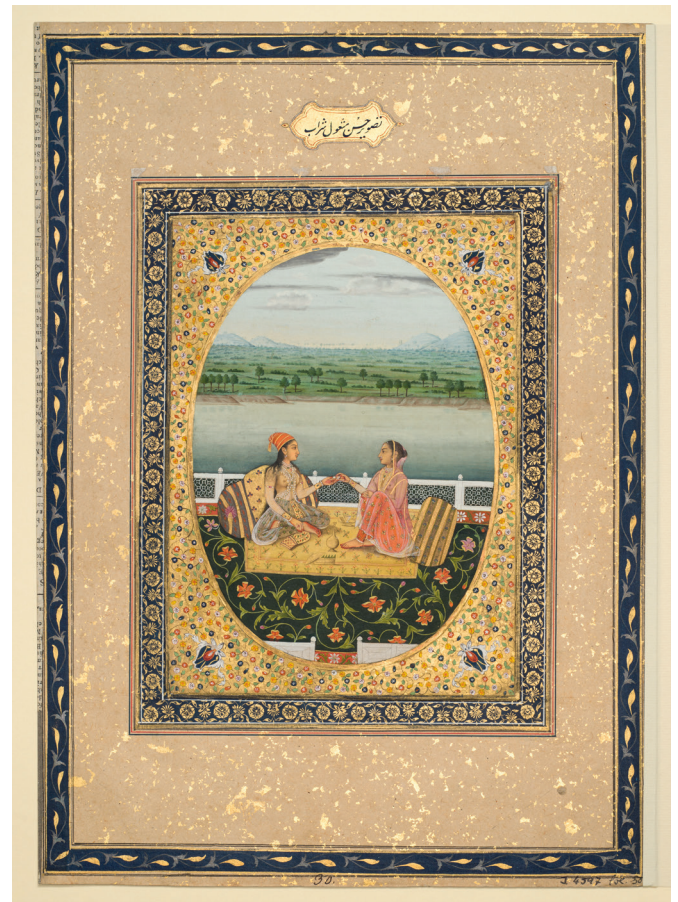
Fig. 2. "*Depiction of beauty – Having wine*", page from an album perhaps made for Sir Elijah Impey, India, c. 1750-1780. Bound into an album assembled for Antoine Polier, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 39.5x28 cm. © Museum für Islamische Kunst - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv.no. I 4597, fol. 30r. (Photo by Johannes Kramer).

A further transformation can be observed in images of a female *sāqī* serving herself, such as the one seen on the left page of a double-page spread (fig. 3) that is part of an album collected by the Scottish Company officer and Persian interpreter Archibald Swinton (1731-1804). It goes without saying that the wine-server serving herself represents a decidedly unmystical activity. These two album folios were originally made for Bairam Khan (presumably a Mughal officer in the service of ʿAlamgir II), since both bear his seal impression dated 1754/55 on the reverse.[23] However, the verses written directly on the left painting seem to

be a later, unconventional addition. Perhaps they were even composed by Swinton, who was fluent in Persian:

> One may call your mouth the bud of a tulip thanks to its colour of betel (*pān*) and wine. With wine and betel she is colouring her lips; in so doing, she challenges the reddish glow of the sunset.[24]

These verses celebrate worldly feminine beauty with an erotic undertone, avoiding any obvious intimation of a divine beloved.

Female Ascetics: Exceptional Hindu Women

Representations of gatherings of wandering male ascetics have a long tradition in Mughal painting. While gatherings of female Hindu ascetics started to appear in album paintings during the reign of Muhammad Shah, as exemplified by two images now preserved in the St. Petersburg Album,[25] single images of *yoginīs* were frequently painted in Bijapur (Deccan) already around 1700. Deborah Hutton has convincingly interpreted these Bijapuri *yoginīs* as type-portraits based on Sufi love poetry, representing not only the *lover* in search of the beloved (God), but also the young and beautiful *beloved* of the viewer.[26] As Sunil Sharma has pointed out, in 17th-century Mughal painting images of single male *yogī*s (spelled *jogī* or *jūkī* in Persian) also proliferated, sometimes accompanied by verses that "refer to the ash-smeared body of the ascetic and the lover [i.e., the viewer] who has been annihilated by love of the *jogī*".[27] He also makes clear that ascetics of both Muslim and Hindu creed are described in the same poetic idiom.[28]

Although in real life female ascetics (called *saṃnyāsinīs* or *yoginīs*) were always very few in number,[29] they were considered a challenge to society: since they had renounced social norms,

Fig. 3. *Wine-Server Serving Herself* (left page) and *another wine server* (right page), reconstructed double-page spread from an album collected by Archibald Swinton, India, mid-18th century. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 32.5x21.5 cm (each page). ©Museum für Islamische Kunst - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv.no. I 4591, fols. 10v-11r. (Photo by Johannes Kramer).

Fig. 4. *Two Female Ascetics (yoginīs) Advising a Mother with Her Child*, signed by Mihr Chand, from an album assembled for Antoine Polier, India, before 1777. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 41.0x29.0 cm. © Museum für Islamische Kunst - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv.no. I 4594, fol. 6r. (Photo by Johannes Kramer).

they did not fulfill the role of 'virtuous wives' (*satīs*). From an orthodox point of view, a female ascetic illicitly adopts a behaviour exclu-

sively designed for 'twice-born' males in their fourth Hindu stage of life (*saṃnyāsa* = renunciation).[30] In an image painted by the Indian artist Mihr Chand for an album for Antoine Polier (fig. 4), there are two female wandering ascetics represented within a typical Hindu setting, a Shivaite shrine on a riverbank, populated by four devotees. They are both depicted as respected outsiders, based on their ash-smeared skin, elaborately patched clothes and matted hair sharply contrasting with the secular dress and hairstyle of the wealthy mother sitting in front of them. Apart from functioning as an ethnographic record of their appearance and activities as spiritual guides, the depiction of the two *yoginīs* can thus also be read – in the spirit of Persian poetry – as conveying a transcendental truth.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have aimed to show how images of confident women in Indo-Persianate albums – who took on habits and behaviours previously intended for men only – can reflect the women's empowerment on the one hand, while also conveying a spiritual meaning based on a feminised interpretation of Indo-Persian love lyric on the other. In contrast to the allegedly objective capture of the widow sacrifice, representations of these confident women might thus be understood as poetic rather than ethnographic imagery. Future research will hopefully broaden and deepen our understanding of the mindsets and motivations of the artists, patrons and intended audiences – both women and men – who were involved in the production of these peculiar images.[31]

Notes

[1] For an album compiled for Muhammad Shah in ca. 1740, now in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle (RCIN 1005068), see E. Hannam, ed., *Eastern Encounters: Four Centuries of Paintings and Manuscripts from the Indian Subcontinent*, exh. cat. (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2018), cat. nos. 37-43, and https://tinyurl.com/yygwtjcb. Another album in the Hermitage State Museum in St. Petersburg (E-14) was mainly assembled from works that Nadir Shah had looted from Muhammad Shah's treasury in Delhi in 1739. See E. Kostioukovitch, ed., *The St. Petersburg Muraqqa': Album of Indian and Persian Miniatures from the 16th through the 18th Century and Specimens of Persian Calligraphy by 'Imād al-Ḥasanī* (Milano: Leonardo Arte, 1996).

[2] Only a few single paintings suggest, based on their subjects and inscriptions, that they were produced at the request of Shuja' al-Daula (cf. M. Roy, "Origins of the Late Mughal Painting Tradition in Awadh," in S. Markel, T. Bindu Gude, eds., *India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow*,

exh. cat. [München: Prestel, 2010], pp. 165-185, p. 167). Scholars have so far assigned two albums to his patronage: the *Small Clive Album* (Victoria & Albert Museum, IS 48-1956) and a partial album consisting of eighteen miniatures, which is now in the Chester Beatty Library (henceforth CBL, see L.Y. Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, 2 vols. [London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995], II, pp. 654-664).

[3] On the well-known artists Chitarman, Nidha Mal, and Hunhar, who had worked for Muhammad Shah before resettling in Bengal, Bihar, and Awadh, see T. McInerney, "Mughal Painting during the Reign of Muhammad Shah", in B. Schmitz, ed., *After the Great Mughals: Painting in Delhi and the Regional Courts in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Mumbai: Mārg, 2002), pp. 13-33.

[4] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 14.

[5] See, e.g., a scene with firework entertainment showing Zib an-Nissa', one of the daughters of Aurangzeb (r. 1658-

1707), at *Shab-i Barāt* (a Muslim holiday) according to the inscription below the painting (Polier album I 4596, fol. 23r, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin [henceforth ISL], published in M. Roy, "Origins of the Late Mughal Painting Tradition", cit., fig. 22).

⁶ Rupmati is a Hindu heroine praised for maintaining her chastity after the flight of her beloved husband Bahadur during the invasion of Malwa (today part of Madhya Pradesh) by the Mughal general Adham Khan (1531-1562). See A. al-'Umrī, *The Lady of the Lotus: Rup Mati, Queen of Māndu: A Strange Tale of Faithfulness* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926); for an image, see, e.g., L.Y. Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings*, cit., II, no. 6.241 (In 11B.18).

⁷ For Chand Bibi as historical figure and images showing her hawking, see D. Hutton, "Portraits of 'A Noble Queen': Chand Bibi in the Historical Imaginary", in M.E. Aitken, ed., *A Magic World: New Visions of Indian Painting* (Mumbai: Mārg, 2016), pp. 50-63, esp. p. 52 and figs. 1-2 and 6-11.

⁸ Cf. R. Jones, *Gender and the Formation of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 79-116.

⁹ Lady Impey commissioned a famous series of natural history paintings from local Indian artists (cf. A. Topsfield, "The natural history paintings of Shaikh Zain ud-Din, Bhawani Das and Ram Das", in W. Dalrymple, ed., *Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East Indian Company*, exh. cat. [London: Philip Wilson, 2019], pp. 40-47). Her patronage can also be connected to a *Rāgamālā* set housed in the CBL (In 65.12, see L.Y. Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings*, cit., II, pp. 671-679). It is thus not unlikely that she also commissioned paintings suitable for albums.

¹⁰ Three albums from Warren Hastings' possession were sold at Sotheby's, London, 26 November 1968, lots 367-407; 27 November 1974, lots 790-813 and 11 October 1982, lots 30-37; another album is in the Freer Gallery of Art (F1907.276).

¹¹ Cf. M. Webster, *Johan Zoffany: 1733-1810* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 464-472; for the letters, see S.C. Grier, ed., *The Letters of Warren Hastings to his Wife* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1905).

¹² G. Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in P. Williams, L. Chrisman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994 [1993]), pp. 66-111, here pp. 92-103.

¹³ For a summary of Spivak's analysis of the widow sacrifice and the British imperialist view, see M. do Mar Castro Varela, N. Dhawan, *Postkoloniale Theorie: Ein kritische Einführung* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015), pp. 196-199.

¹⁴ The drawing can be ascribed to Johnson's patronage, since very similar large tinted drawings illustrating religious ceremonies and Hindu customs were made for him by Sital Dal. Cf. T. Falk, M. Archer, eds., *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library* (London: Philip Wilson, 1981), cat. nos. 252 and 354 (Johnson album 5, no. 10-24).

¹⁵ For the entire album page (Victoria & Albert Museum, IS 25:42-1980), see http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O405288/. On the facing page (fol. 41v), Gentil describes the burning and its preparations.

¹⁶ *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, 86 ("The Duties of a Widow"), commented by the *Mitākṣarā* of Vijñaneshvara. See the English translation by Rai Bahadur Śriśa Chandra Vidyârṇava, ed. and trans., *Yajnavalkya Smriti with the Comm. of Vijnaneśvara*

called *Mitaksara and Notes from the Gloss of Bâlambhaṭṭa* (Allahabad: Pânini Off. 1918), pp. 166-168. I wish to thank Siegfried Schmitt for identifying the excerpts in the quotation appearing beneath the drawing.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

¹⁸ See the original text in A. Major, ed., *Sati: A Historial Anthology* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 44-61. For the context of Holwell's sympathetic understanding, which was soon followed by the general British disapprobation of the practice in the early 19th century, see *ibid.*, pp. xv-lv, esp. xxx-xxxiv.

¹⁹ See note 29.

²⁰ Cf. A. Welch, "Wordly and Otherwordly Love in Safavi Painting", in R. Hillenbrand, ed., *Persian Painting: From the Mongols to the Qajars* (London: Tauris, 2000), pp. 301-317, esp. pp. 301-304.

²¹ This type proliferates in 18th-century albums; see, e.g., A. v. Gladiß, *Albumblätter: Miniaturen aus den Sammlungen indo-islamischer Herrscherhöfe* (München: Edition Minerva, 2010), no. 31 (ISL, I 4594, fol. 33), and J.P. Losty, M. Roy, eds., *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire: Manuscripts and Paintings in the British Library*, exh. cat. (London: British Library, 2012), fig. 123. An early example can also be found in Muhammad Shah's album: RCIN 1005068, fol. 6v.

²² The cartouche as well as the characteristic decorative border of the page are typical of album pages prepared for Shuja' al-Daula (see the CBL album pages mentioned in note 2) and also of those owned by the Impeys; see, e.g., three pages that bear Impey's seal on the reverse in the Freer Gallery of Art, in G.D. Lowry, M.C. Beach, eds., *An Annotated and Illustrated Checklist of the Vever Collection* (Washington, DC: University of Washington Press, 1988), nos. 346-348.

²³ However, the decorative borders bear dedications to the Shaybanid Uzbek ruler 'Abd al-'Aziz Khan (r. 1539-1550/51). It thus seems that they came from a dismantled Uzbek manuscript and were re-used by artists working for Bairam Khan. I wish to thank Will Kwiatkowski for pointing this out to me.

²⁴ Translated with the kind assistance of Farifteh Tavakoli.

²⁵ See E. Kostioukovitch, ed., *The St. Petersburg Muraqqa'*, cit., pls. 12 (E-14, fol. 60r) and 13 (fol. 61r).

²⁶ D. Hutton, *Art of the Court of Bijapur* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 83-96, esp. 91-92, and figs. 3.4-3.6 and pls. 16-18.

²⁷ S. Sharma, "Representation of Social Groups in Mughal Art and Literature: Ethnography or Trope?", in A. Patel, K. Leonard, eds., *Indo-Muslim Cultures im Transition* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 17-36, esp. pp. 22-29 (quote from p. 25) and figs. 2.3 and 2.4. I am indebted to Sunil Sharma whose inspiring essay prompted me to reflect on paintings of female social types as visual metaphors.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁹ D. Bevilacqua, "Are Women Entitled to Become Ascetics? An Historical and Ethnographic Glimpse on Female Asceticism in Hindu Religions", *Kervan: International Journal of Afro-Asiatic Studies* 21 (2017): pp. 51-79, esp. pp. 60-63, and C. Clementin-Ohja, "Outside the Norms: Women Ascetics in Hindu Society", *Economic and Political Weekly* 23, no. 18 (April 30, 1988): pp. WS34-WS36, esp. p. WS34.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. WS35.

The Wonders of the Ancient World: Western Imagery in Translation*

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The Wonders of the World are one of the great architectural myths of ancient times: in some ways, they were the first recognized *repertoire* of monuments mythicized for their architectural qualities, canonized in the third century BC in the shadow of the library of Alexandria to symbolize the superiority of Hellenistic culture. Our paper focuses on a much later period, though, when – about a thousand years after the fall of the Roman Empire – some humanists set out to reconstruct the appearance of those lost marvels. Some of the Wonders stood for centuries, until the end of the Middle Ages, and had been seen and described by generations of travellers; others were still visible on the other side of the sea. Renaissance scholars, however, aimed to reconstruct them on the basis of classical sources, according to the descriptions by Vitruvius and, above all, Pliny. We know that these first attempts were known to a few architects, and sometimes fuelled their projects, but they generally remained in manuscript form and never extended beyond a relatively narrow circle of scholars.

In fact, the modern imagination of the Seven Wonders was shaped not so much by those antiquarian endeavours as it was by a quite different and slightly later work: namely, a series of engravings – the *Octo mundi miracula* – drawn by Maarten van Heemskerck and printed in 1572 by Philips Galle, one of the most prolific Netherlandish publishers of his time (fig. 1). *Octo miracula*, *eight* wonders: that is the seven canonical ones – the pyramids and Lighthouse of Alexandria, the Zeus of Olympia and the Colossus of Rhodes, the Arthemision of Ephesus, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus and the Walls of Babylon – to which Heemskerck added the Colosseum as an emblem of the great undertakings of Roman architecture. While antiquarian reconstructions do not seem to have spread beyond Vitruvian entourages, the prints published by Heemskerck and Galle were

remarkably successful: in just a few years, not only were they reissued several times but they were also imitated, emulated, and reproduced in an astounding number of versions and media (paintings, tapestries, book illustrations, etc.), intended for different aims and audiences.

We have already had the opportunity to question the reasons of this success: in our opinion, it derived not so much from the qualities of the images or reconstructions as from their metaphorical significance and the richness of the meanings they could easily represent, thanks to the iconographic structure of the plates invented by Heemskerck.[1] This is quite repetitive: the patron (or sometimes the architect) is emphatically represented in the foreground, visiting the building site during construction, which was still in progress. It was a pattern that referred – clearly, in the eyes of Heemskerck's contemporaries – to the traditional iconography of the Tower of Babel: an iconography that for centuries had been so burdened with moral significance that it became completely inseparable from it (fig. 2). By using this scheme, therefore, Heemskerck showed a tendency to characterize the Wonders in a fairly negative way: not as masterpieces of ancient creativity, but as monuments built by human pride, if not as emblems of Vanity: the vanity of a civilization that had not yet been illuminated by true faith.

From that point of view, to paraphrase Warburg, we could consider Heemskerck's inventions as a sort of *architektonisch Pathosformeln*: architectural patterns with an inherent moral (or metaphorical) *pathos*, due to the fact that their structure was shaped around the traditional paradigms of Christian iconography. The question we would like to briefly answer to in this paper is another, although directly related to these issues: if the success of the imagery we just evoked came indeed from its metaphorical significance, how could

Fig. 1. Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Octo mundi miracula*, 1572 (series of 8 plates). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

Fig. 2. Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck, *The Tower of Babel*, 1569 (*Iudaeae gentis clades, plate 3*). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

these images be understood, interpreted, and reworked in different cultural contexts, far from Judeo-Christian tradition? For what aims, with what functions, could the image of the Wonders be recycled outside the Western civilization? To answer to these questions, we will briefly present three case studies, quite distant from one another in time and space.

Our first example comes from China: a cultural context with which the Western world came into contact in the 17th century, especially through the mediation of Jesuits. It is therefore not by coincidence that the Jesuits were indeed among the first, at the time, to consciously question how they could interact with cultures completely different from their own, and to claim the usefulness of images as an instrument of evangelization (as Matteo Ricci put it, images "can place right in front of potential converts things that, with words alone, we would not be able to make clear").[2] It was in this spirit that, over the century,

many Jesuit Fathers devoted themselves to the work of visual translation not only of the basic principles of Christianity, but also, more generally, of the main foundations of Western civilization. We have an example of those practices in the new world map made by the Jesuit Father Ferdinand Verbiest in 1674 in Beijing to introduce Chinese people to the richness of Western encyclopaedic culture.[3] Verbiest's map was full of texts not always easy to read: therefore, the author thought of bringing them together in a separate booklet where they could be neatly read along with a brief commentary on the exotic animals depicted in the map, followed by some descriptions (and illustrations) of our Wonders, presented as magnificent examples of the old and commendable European architectural tradition (fig. 3).[4] Under their Chinese disguise, it is not difficult to recognize the original 'Heemskerckian' style of these images (confirmed by the presence of the Colosseum, listed as the Eighth Wonder) –
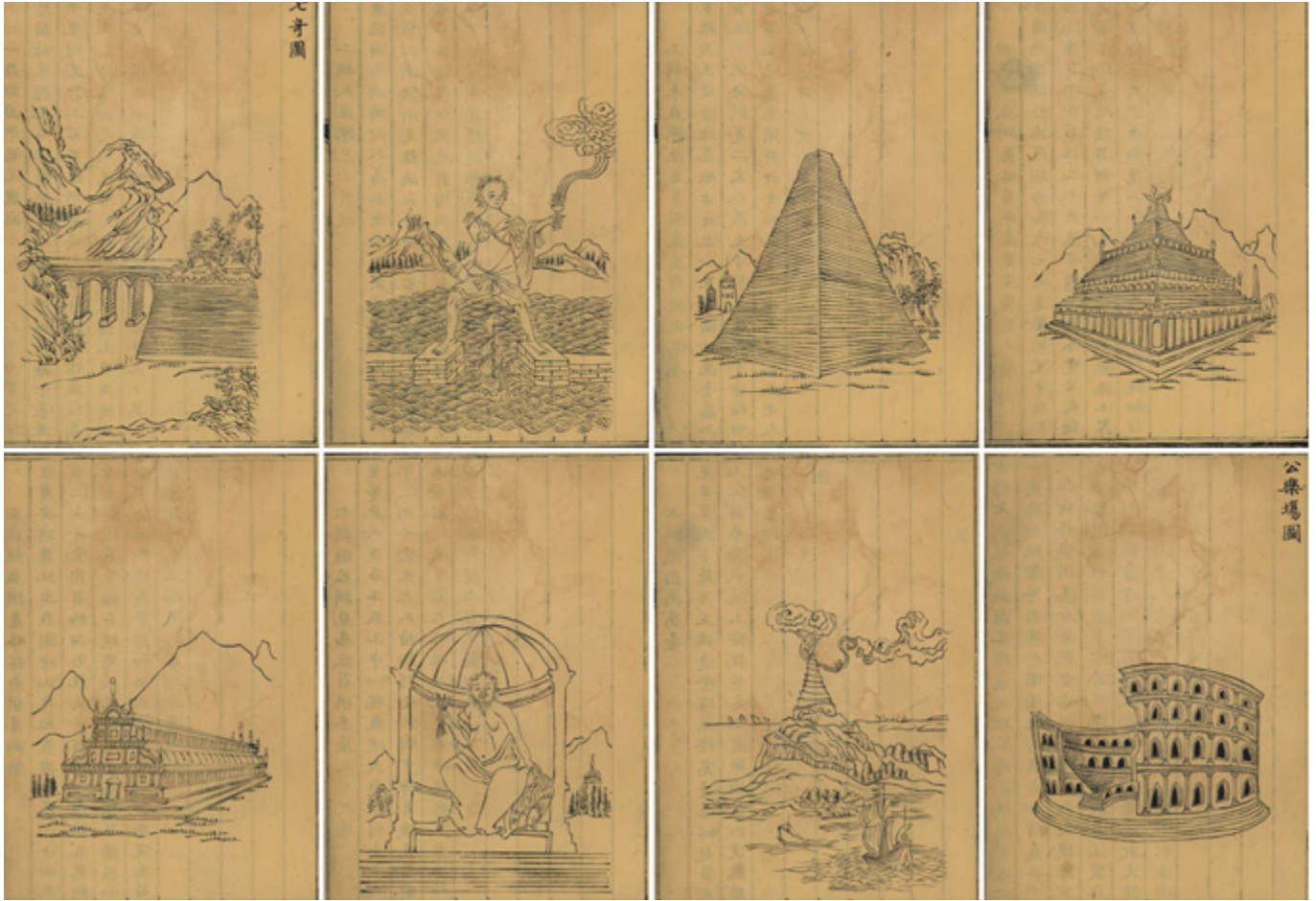
Fig. 3. Ferdinand Verbiest, *Kun yu tu shuo* (Illustrated account of the world), 1841 (1674). World Digital Library/National Library of China.

even if Verbiest's actual source of inspiration was probably one of the most popular world maps of the time, published by Willem Blaeu in 1606 and then reprinted in his *Atlas Maior* in 1635. The aim of the endeavor undertaken by Verbiest – and, in all likelihood, entrusted to Chinese artists, left free (if not encouraged) to use their own style – is extremely clear: the original iconography is *simplified*, all the features of the environment are removed, in order to transform the disembodied shapes of ancient buildings (not by chance emptied of any human presence) into distinctive emblems of Western identity.

Our second example takes us to the other side of the world, about a century later: that is, in colonial Peru around the middle of the 18th century, after the expulsion of the Indian-Quechua and Mestizo painters from the local painters' guilds. Scholars have often pointed out the importance of this event as a prompt to the rise of the so-called 'Mestizo style': a tendency within the Cuzco School to develop the canonical subjects proposed by missionaries in more free and autonomous ways, recovering customs, settings, and references to local traditions, adopting what we could call a sort of 'crypto-nationalistic' attitude.[5] It is in this context that we find our Wonders depicted under a new guise: the anonymous Mestizo painter does not refer to the original plates, but to a later series released in 1614 by Marten de Vos (fig. 4).[6] In this case – without the Jesuits' mediation – we are confronted with a completely different challenge from the one we came across in China: if, in that case, we saw a process of *simplification* of Western models, now we face a process of *assimilation* of the images formerly drawn by Marten de Vos. This aspect is particularly evident in the depictions of living figures, who, in this case, are not ignored, but rather extensively included in the foreground, dressed in traditional Indian-Quechua clothes: the sovereigns carry gold scepters and crowns

ornamented by plumes, the traditional (and by then mythized) insignia of the Inca past. From the original, very rich, plates by Marten de Vos, only a few elements are extrapolated, selected according to their conformity to local customs: so, for example, the feather umbrella under which Artemisia is depicted, as corresponding to the typical attribute of the Inca *Coya* (queen); as well as Semiramis' hunt, which should have been familiar to Cuzco artists since one of the prerogatives of the Coya was precisely to participate in ritual hunts. The buildings too were adapted to Peruvian visual imagery: as a matter of fact, the walls of Babylon follow the essential geometries of the local stone architecture; the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus is transformed into a sort of pyramid; and the marine background added in all pictures is clearly inspired to the sacred lake of the Quechua religion, Lake Titicaca. Vice versa, the toponyms – devoid of any actual meaning – were easily misunderstood: the Lighthouse of Alexandria becomes *Le phare de Messine*.

Our third example concerns Japan in the early 19th century, at the height of the Edo period: a period of strict isolationism, when relations with foreigners (and in particular, with Europeans) were severely forbidden and punishable by death. The only exception to this embargo were Chinese merchants and the Netherlandish ones of the Dutch East India Company, who were allowed to trade in the port of Nagasaki; that is why a number of engravings, illustrated books and even paintings could enter Japan, fostering the emulation of local artists. This can be seen especially in the production of woodblock prints, the so-called *Ukyio-e* (literally 'pictures of the floating world'), and above all in a particular kind of *Ukyio-e*, the *Uki-e*. They are what we would call 'perspective views of urban scenes', among which we find some depictions of European cities and architectures, often completely misinterpreted by artists who did not have the slightest idea of the actual reality of the original subjects. Among these *disiecta membra* of the Western civilization, we also encounter our Wonders, sometimes easily recognizable, other times so thoroughly reshaped that it is almost impossible to identify them.

Particularly meaningful for our discussion is a series of plates drawn by the painter Utagawa Kuninaga in the 1820s and titled *New Western Perspectives*, in which we find depicted five of

Fig. 4. Cuzco School, *The Wonders of the Ancient World*, 18th century. Private Collection.

our Wonders (fig. 5). As usual, it is not easy to identify the sources that Kuninaga may have employed: among them, there must certainly have been Verbiest's booklet (translated and published in Japan in 1789 and then in 1805) – as we can infer by the plate dedicated to Babylon, among others, – even if there are other plates that seem to derive from other sources. What is certain is that the original images are here completely *reinvented*, without understanding them at all. Thus, the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus is mistaken for the Mausoleum; the statue of Zeus in the temple of Olympia is surprisingly transformed into the interior of a traditional Japanese villa where we can see a kind of 'Westernish' banquet taking place in front of our eyes – notice the clothes, the seats, the grotesque features of the characters depicted as *Tojins* (Japanese word for 'foreigners', typically represented in the guise of subhuman beings). Another interesting case is the plate depicting the pyramids, in which Kuninaga combines different visual hints, apparently taken from a book just published in Paris: *Voyage à Méroé* by Frédéric Cailliaud (1823), from which some otherwise inexplicable details seem to come.[7]

Fig. 5. Utagawa Kuninaga, *The Tomb of King Mausolus in Asia / The Stone Edifice and Figure of Jupiter in Europe*, c. 1824-1829. Chicago, Art Institute.

It is time to conclude. The three cases we have presented here highlight, it seems to us, three completely different forms of appropriation of the imagery of the Wonders: we have an example of *simplification* in the case of Verbiest; of *assimilation* in the case of the paintings of the Cuzco school; and of complete *reinvention* in the Japanese *Uki-e*. In addition to being objectified as emblems of Western civilization, the original images were thoroughly reworked through patterns that have nothing to do with 'imitations'. These were rather 'free reinterpretations', leading the artists to change not only the original shapes, but also their meanings, disguised – when not actively distorted – in order to adapt them to the new audiences they were addressing. The aim was to make them more understandable, or acceptable (in the case of the Jesuits), to adjust them according to their very aims, when the translation was the work of non-European artists.

To come back to our initial question, may we still talk – dealing with these kinds of practices – of architectural *Pathosformeln*? To what extent does the transmission of 'pathos' depend, as a precondition of possibility, on the existence of a common cultural matrix? We were wondering about this issue when we happened upon this extraordinary picture, which we will conclude with (fig. 6). It can be found in an illustrated journal published in Shanghai between 1884 and 1898: the *Dianshizhai huabao* (literally *Illustrated News of the Dianshizhai Lithographic Studio*).[8] With the stated purpose of competing with contemporary Western magazines, the *Dianshizhai huabao* presented reports from all over the world, with a special interest in the latest discoveries in the fields of science and technology, sometimes illustrated in so to say, 'conventional' journalistic terms, some other times evoked through fanciful tales instead. The latter included sightings of gigantic birds, so big that they could carry men (implicitly alluding to the first flying machines), or of dragons seen in Western countries, obliquely referring to the first submarines. In other words, they reinterpreted the achievements of Western technology in the light of the conventional codes of traditional Chinese culture. It is in this context that we can understand the actual meaning of the refashioning of the Colossus of Rhodes and of the caption above it:

> Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty once cast a bronze figure that was higher than the clouds [...] Many have doubted the authenticity of this historical account, but lately a traveller returning from abroad said that, at the port of Rhodes, there is a bronze figure standing over the strait, and that huge vessels can pass easily between his legs.[9]

Thus, there was nothing exceptional in the Colossus of Rhodes, if Chinese chronicles bore evidence of even older, comparable exploits that took place in China. The environment depicted in the plate, however, is contemporary: the ships passing under the colossus are steamboats. It has been suggested that the image was in fact covertly alluding to a monument of which news had just arrived in China, namely the Statue of Liberty (inaugurated in 1886): another "Bronze figure bestriding the strait", that was thus domesticated through a double sublimation – transposed into a mythical past; and presented as a proof that great Wonders had always been built in China, by no means less magnificent than the Western ones.

Fig. 6. Jin Gui, *Bronze figure bestrides the Strait*, c. 1887 (from *Dianshizhai huabao*, XVI, p. 2). MIT Visualizing Cultures/Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University.

Finally, here is a case where the notion of architectural *Pathosformel* seems particularly appropriate, even if the *Dianshizhai*'s reporters seem to cultivate a very different attitude towards Western paradigms as opposed to the authors of *Uki-e*, Verbiest, or the artists of the Cuzco School. Our aim, however, was not to generalize typologies, but rather to stress the metaphorical significance – thus, the performative potential – of the imagery we evoked, capable of soliciting reworkings and appropriations in cultural contexts as diverse as the Far East and Latin America even on the threshold of the 20th century.

Notes

* We publish here, with minor changes, the text of our oral presentation, given on September 1, 2019. For a first outline of our interpretation of Heemskerck's *Octo mundi miracula*, see M. Folin, "Compiute/incompiute/incompletabili. Le Sette Meraviglie del mondo nella ricostruzione di Maarten van Heemskerck (1572)", in G. Aureli, F. Colonnese, S. Cutarelli, eds., *Intersezioni. Ricerche di Storia, Disegno e Restauro dell'Architettura* (Roma: Artemide, 2020), pp. 281-290; we have been preparing a more comprehensive essay on these topics.

[1] M. Folin, M. Preti, *Maarten van Heemskerck's Wonders of the World: Architectural Fantasies in the Northern Renaissance*, paper presented at the conference *Fantasy in Reality: Architecture, Representation, Reproduction*, The Courtauld Institute of Art (London, June 15, 2017).

[2] M. Ricci, *Opere Storiche del P. Matteo Ricci*, ed. P. Tacchi Venturi (Macerata: Giorgetti, 1913), p. 284.

[3] H. Walravens, "Father Verbiest's Chinese World Map *(1674)*", *Imago Mundi* 43 (1991): pp. 31-47.

[4] Id., "Die Sieben Weltwunder in chinesischer Darstellung", *Oriens Extremus* 17, no. 1/2 (1970): pp. 101-111, 113-124.

[5] S. Porras, "Going viral? Maerten de Vos's St. Michael the Archangel", *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 66 (2016): pp. 54-79.

[6] B. von Barghahn, "A Silver Age of Colonial Latin America, The Viceregal Andes and the Persistence of Tradition", *The 1992 Washington Antiques Show*, Washington DC: 1992, pp. 2-3, 101-108.

[7] G.A. Wainwright, "The Pyramids of Meroe in a Japanese Colour-print", *Antiquity* 11 (1937): pp. 229-233.

[8] J. Wasserstrom, R. Nedostup, *Shanghai's Lens on the new(s)*, 1, *Dianshizhai Pictorial (1884-1898)*, MIT Visualizing Cultures 2015. https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/dianshizhai/index.html.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. iv-12.

"Para hacer honor a su patria y al gobierno": Mexican Artists in Rome (1825-1835)

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On the 28th of November 1868, Felipe Santiago Gutiérrez experienced a déjà vu.[1] The Mexican painter was in Rome to complete, at his own expense, his education in Europe. During a visit to the Vatican Museums, the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge*, in the Raphael Rooms, triggered in his memory the time spent studying a copy of the fresco once preserved at the Academy of San Carlos:

> he visto muchas veces el de *La batalla de Constantino contra Maxencio*, que posee la Academia de San Carlos de México, muy bien copiada por nuestro pensionado Vázquez; pero ahora tuve ocasión de conocer el original. ¡Qué bello es y qué magistralmente compuesto y dibujado![2]

The copy could be identified with the unsigned one kept today in the Museo Nacional de San Carlos, and, as his comment suggests, attributed to Ignacio Vázquez (fig. 1). Vázquez's copy of the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge* would be the only painting by the artist known to us – the excellent quality of the painting, however, suggests a far more experienced hand.[3]

The story of the Mexican artists who starting from 1843 went to study in Rome, sponsored by the proceeds of the national lottery, is well charted.[4] Less known is the case of the students that the government sent to Italy in 1825, few years after the proclamation of the Mexican Republic. On the 11th of January of that year, the Secretary of State, Lucas Alamán, illustrated the mission to the General Congress of the Federation:

> Para que nuestros artistas adquieran en sus respectivos ramos aquella maestría y delicadeza de gusto que solo puede producir la vista de los grandes modelos que ofrece la Italia, se ha dispuesto con aprobación del soberano congreso que acompañen a la legación que debe partir para Roma, tres jóvenes bastante adelantados en la pintura, escultura y arquitectura, que podrán con este viaje perfeccionar sus conocimientos y a su vuelta ser muy útiles a la nación.[5]

To distinguish this cohort of students from the ones studying in Rome after the reform of the Academy of San Carlos in 1843, I label this group as 'republican *pensionnaires*'.[6]

Fig. 1. *Battle of the Milvian Bridge* (copy after the fresco by Giulio Romano in the Raphael Rooms, Vatican Museums), 1832. Oil on canvas. Mexico City, Museo Nacional de San Carlos.

Vázquez was part of this group, together with José María Labastida, specialising in sculpture; Vicente Ferrer Casarín, in architecture; Francisco Xavier Arias, in botany; and, with funding provided by the state of Puebla, José Manzo y Jaramillo, a student of engraving.[7] The five Mexicans left Veracruz on the 15th of May 1825, joining the so-called Legación de Roma, a diplomatic delegation of fourteen members, headed by the canon of the Puebla cathedral, Francisco Pablo Vázquez, entrusted with the difficult task of pledging to the Holy See for the recognition of the new Republic.[8] Spain was in the way, and the pope was forced to deny entry to the Mexican delegates until June 1830, when a permission was finally granted – five years after their arrival in Europe.[9] The funding provided by the government to support the mission amounted to 377,076 pesos, 15,900 of which were destined to cover the personal expenses of the fourteen members, including the artists.[10] Upon their arrival in Rome, in 1830, the students were placed under the protection of the Jesuit Ildefonso de la Peña, who also took care of allocating their pension managed by the Banco Torlonia. Francisco Pablo Vázquez was guest of Ignacio Tejada, the Minister Plenipotentiary of Columbia, who until 1833 acted as chargé d'affaires for the Mexican Republic.[11]

Professor of painting, Giuseppe Pirovani, known in Mexico as José Perovani, redacted few basic guidelines for the students ("la instrucción en dos palabras"), urging them to follow the instructions of their Roman teachers, carefully study what was in their studios, learn from the best students of other nationalities, and familiarise themselves with the practice of copying, without neglecting "la lectura de la mitología, historia romana, la geometría y los 5 ordenes de arquitectura con la idea de la perspectiva". The advice to keep an honourable behaviour ("la decencia y buena educación"), common in this sort of texts, acquired in this case a special value – the students accompanying the Legación de Roma were not only there to perfect their art, but also to act as cultural ambassadors of the new Republic: "para hacer honor a su patria, y al gobierno que los premia con liberalidad para que sean distinguidos y estimados".[12]

During their first years in Europe, the Mexican students remained in Paris, and only Vázquez and Labastida managed to progress with their studies in Rome after 1830.[13] Casarín could not join them for lack of funding, but managed to take private lessons with Jean-Paul Douliot in Paris and work on the decoration of La Madeleine, thanks to a recommendation from Alexander von Humboldt. Manzo was allegedly prevented from travelling for health reasons.[14] In Paris, Labastida studied under the guidance of Bernardo Niccolò Raggi, protégé of Lorenzo Bartolini in Carrara and pupil of François Joseph Bosio in Paris.[15] The only proof of Labastida's studies in Paris that has come to us is the bas-relief in plaster of the *Libertas Mexicana* (1827), in which the artist depicted himself as a new Fidia, presenting to Lutetia/Paris the allegory of Mexico. As the inscription suggests ("Mexico. Mexican freedom. The universe promotes the triumph of the young homeland, supports its feats, and, inspired by Fidia, so in the stone Lutetia confirms it"), the relief was made to celebrate the first commercial treaty between Mexico and France signed that year – a treaty that acted *de facto* as the French recognition of the new independent Republic (fig. 2).[16]

Fig. 2. José María Labastida, *Libertas Mexicana*, 1827. Plaster. Mexico City, Museo Nacional de Arte.

Unfortunately, nothing has remained of Vazquez's works made in Paris. We also do not know under whose guidance the two artists continued their training in Rome, but we know that they were very productive: "los pensionistas que la Academia tiene en Europa siguen remitiendo muestras de sus progresos".[17] Their presence in the city was only one side of the cultural strategy illustrated by Lucas Alamán in 1825. The "grandes modelos que ofrece la Italia", capable of instilling "maestría y

delicadeza de gusto" in their beholders, were not only meant to be seen *in situ* or filtered through the works produced by the three designated *pensionnaires*, but were supposed to directly exert their beneficial influence upon future generations of artists trained at the Academy of San Carlos in Mexico.

The institution of the Mexican Grand Prix de Rome was complemented by the acquisition of a gallery of copies made in Rome to support teaching at home. Speaking about the utility for the nation of the Academy of San Carlos, Alamán asserted in 1832 that

> Este establecimiento sigue siendo de la utilidad que se ha conocido y apreciado por el público. Su colección de pinturas se enriquecerá mucho con las excelentes copias de los cuadros más clásicos de Roma que ha traído el Illmo Sr. Obispo de Puebla y que se ha dispuesto se coloquen en ella.[18]

The Archivo General de la Nación preserves a precious list of copies compiled on behalf of Alessandro Torlonia, featuring the subjects and the estimated price of twenty six paintings taken from masterpieces in the Borghese Gallery (8 paintings), Sciarra Gallery (4 paintings), Corsini Gallery (5 paintings), and the Capitoline Museums (9 paintings), including works by classical Italian masters (Reni, Titian, Guercino, Caravaggio, Barocci, Mola, Albani, Carracci, Dolci, Andrea del Sarto, Raphael, Correggio, Garofalo), as well as foreign ones (Dürer, Rubens, Valentin de Boulogne), including two paintings by Ribera.[19] The Mexican Government acquired eleven paintings together with specimens of marbles and other objects pertinent to natural history for a total of 1,752.70 pesos.[20] Among them figured also a "Batalla de Constantino, comprada con marco" (76.50 pesos), which may be identified with the copy mentioned above, excluding therefore its attribution to Vázquez. The series also included copies of Guercino's *Persian Sibyl*, from the Capitoline Museums (52.80 pesos); Domenichino's *Cumean/Tiburtine Sibyl*, from the Borghese Gallery (40.00 pesos); and Reni's *Salome holding the head of John the Baptist*, then interpreted as *Herodias*, from the Corsini Gallery, which together with his *Cleopatra* totaled a price of 105.60 pesos.[21]

These lists bear the date of June 1832. In July of that year, José María Ortiz Monasterio informed Francisco Pablo Vázquez that the paintings had arrived at the Academy of San Carlos, including the copy of the "Batalla de Constantino", measuring "de largo dos y media varas y de ancho tres cuartas con su marco dorado".[22] Ortiz added separately detailed information about "los estudios de pensionado de Pintura", which further excludes the attribution of the copy to Vázquez. These "studies" comprised the following items:

> Un lienzo de la *Herodías* de vara y dos tercias. Dos ídem de vara y media, uno del *Descendimiento* y el otro de *Tobías curando a su padre*. Uno de *Cleopatra* de más de vara. Uno de *San Sebastián* de ítem. Uno ítem de dos tercias retrato de *Miguel Ángel*. Uno ítem, ítem de una tercia, una *Virgen de Belén*. Tres ítem de una vara con una figura cada una, estudios del natural. Uno ítem de media vara estudio de ítem un torso; cinco cabezas estudios de ítem. Un retrato de Van Dick. Una copia por original de Teniers. Otra ídem por original de Rubens. Un cuadro alegórico que representa al *Congreso constituyente manifestando a la América su Constitución*.[23]

The mixture of studies, *bozzetti* and copies taken from established models chimes with what we would expect from a *pensionado* in Rome by that date.[24] In addition to these studies, the envoy also included "tres bocetos de nuestro compatriota Vázquez", which the bishop of Puebla kept for himself.[25] The list features also Vázquez's regrettably lost painting depicting the *Congreso constituyente manifestando a la América su Constitución* – a subject that perfectly fitted Alamán's patriotic project as a pendant to Labastida's *Allegory of the 1824 Constitution* (1832).[26]

Ortiz also mentioned a "lienzo de San Lucas", which in the inventory of the purchased items is described as "San Lucas, copia de una pintura original de Rafael".[27] This canvas may be identified with a copy of *St Luke painting the Virgin*, traditionally attributed to Raphael – the emblematic icon of the Academy of Saint Luke in Rome and a perfect choice for the Academy of San Carlos. The painting arrived at destination "desarmado y bien maltratado", bearing evidence of damage occurred during the transport. The same destiny affected also an unidentified sculpture in plaster by Labastida, which arrived Mexico in pieces ("hecha pedazos") together with three marble heads, now lost.[28] This unfortunate circumstance is also mentioned in a letter dated 12 December 1831 that Vázquez ad-

dressed to Alamán, in which the bishop expressed his deep sorrow ("una gran pesadumbre") in seeing "el famoso cuadro de San Lucas" ruined by seawater and his satisfaction with the restoration produced by José Julián Ordoñez.[29]

We do not know whether the same fate was shared also by Labastida's *Mexican soldier*, currently untraceable, which Vázquez mentions in another letter to Alamán dated 11 March 1832: "un soldado mexicano, que si está conforme al modelo que vi en Carrara ha de ser una estatua de mérito".[30] The sculpture would have offered a nice complement to the 'revolutionary' marble figures togheter with the *Roman Gladiator* and the *Phrygian Gladiator* carved in Rome around 1830

Fig. 4. José María Labastida, *Mexican Eagle*, 1833-1834. White marble. Mexico City, Museo Nacional de Arte.

(fig. 3).[31] The envoy from Rome comprised eight boxes with marble statues, among which figured also Labastida's *Bust of Pope Gregory XVI*, now in the sacristy of the Cathedral in Puebla. In the subsequent years Labastida sent his *Mexican Eagle* (1833-34) in marble (fig. 4) to Mexico, which would have found its accompanying piece in a statue representing the *Mexican Republic* ("Estatua que representa la República de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos"), mentioned in a letter by Ignacio Tejada to Lorenzo de Zavala dated 23 March 1833. Labastida would have completed his model in plaster the following August, with the intention of carving it in marble a year later.[32]

This project was destined to remain unfinished. The Mexican government ceased to support the programme in Rome and urged the two artists to come back to Mexico. The letters shared between Tejada and Zavala from 1833 onwards document well the progressive reduction of their monthly stipend and the reiterated request to interrupt their studies in Rome. The plan was to return to Mexico in the summer of 1834, but the fear of yellow fever, which regularly plagued the city of Veracruz during the summer season, prevented their

Fig. 3. José María Labastida, *Phrygian Gladiator*, c. 1830. White marble. Mexico City, Museo Nacional de Arte.

departure. This however could not be postponed any longer, and the artists left Rome the following summer.[33] In Mexico, Vázquez and Labastida were meant to become directors of painting and sculpture at the Academy of San Carlos, but this plan could not be realised. Vázquez reached Veracruz on the 26th of May 1835, without funding to cover the expenses for his travel to Mexico City. He re-

ceived some local commissions for portraits, but died of typhus on the 29th of June of that year.[34] Very little is known of Labastida upon his return to Mexico. In a bitter piece against the government, written some years later, Vicente Casarín laconically commented: "en Europa nos dejó el gobierno abandonados a la miseria, a los pensionados por las artes".[35]

Notes

[1] On Gutiérrez, see C.A. Herrera Martínez, A. Taracena Feral, eds., *Discursos de la piel: Felipe Santiago Gutiérrez (1824-1904)*, exh. cat. (México: INBA, 2017).

[2] F.S. Gutiérrez, *Viaje de Felipe S. Gutiérrez por Mexico, los Estados-Unidos, Europa y Sud-América*, 3 vols. (México: Filomeno Mata, 1883), II, p. 179.

[3] In the "Inventario de las galerías de pintura en 1914", included in the appendix of E. Báez Macías, *Historia de la Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes antigua Academia de San Carlos, 1781-1910* (México: UNAM, 2009), p. 284, the copy is attributed to Vázquez.

[4] G. Capitelli, S. Cracolici, "Apostar por Roma: arte en México en el siglo de la Independencia", in G. Capitelli, S. Cracolici, eds., *Roma en México / México en Roma: las academias de arte entre Europa y el Nuevo Mundo, 1843-1867*, exh. cat. (Roma: Campisano, 2018), pp. 19-56.

[5] L. Alamán, *Memoria presentada a las dos cámaras del Congreso general de la federación, por el secretario de Estado y del despacho de relaciones exteriores e interiores, al abrirse las sesiones del año de 1825, sobre el estado de los negocios de su ramo* (México: Gobierno de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 1825), pp. 34-35.

[6] On the reform of the Academy in 1843, see E. Báez Macías, *Historia de la Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes*, cit., pp. 58-62; M. Galí Boadella, "El traspaso de la lotería a la Academia Nacional de San Carlos", in C. Beltrán, J. Bribiesca, eds., *La lotería de la Academia Nacional de San Carlos: 1841-1863*, exh. cat. (México: INBA, 1986), pp. 47-50; Ead., *Cultura y política en el México conservador: La lotería de la Academia Nacional de San Carlos, 1843-1860* (Puebla: Ediciones de Educación y Cultura, 2012).

[7] For the special case of Manzo, see Ead., "El patrocinio de los obispos de Puebla a la Academia de Bellas Artes", in G. Curiel, ed., *Patrocinio, colección y circulación de las artes* (México: UNAM, 1997), pp. 237-260; Á.J. García Zambrano, "Ilustración y academia en Puebla y la Ciudad de México a partir del virreinato del II conde de Revillagigedo", *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 11, no. 1 (2002): pp. 82-83.

[8] On Vázquez, who in 1831 became bishop of Puebla, see S.F. Rosas Salas, *La iglesia mexicana en tiempos de la impiedad: Francisco Pablo Vázquez, 1769-1847* (México: Ediciones EyC, 2015).

[9] R. Gómez Ciriza, *México ante la diplomacia vaticana: El periodo triangular 1821-1836* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1977), pp. 204-224, which includes, on p. 210, a full list of the delegates, including the names of the students and the details of their specialisation.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

[11] M.E. García Ugarte, *Poder político y religioso México siglo XIX* (México: Porrúa, 2010), I, p. 153; on Tejada in Rome, see P. Zubieta, *Apuntaciones sobre las primeras misiones diplomaticas de Colombia (primero y segundo períodos: 1809-1819-1830)* (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1924), pp. 574-602.

[12] J. Perovani, "Información por lo que toca a los tres pensionarios elegidos que debe ir a Roma", Mexico City, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Facultad de Arquitectura, Biblioteca "Lino Picaseño", Archivo de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos, doc. 2180; see also M. Sartor, "Le relazioni fruttuose: Arte ed artisti italiani nell'Accademia di San Carlos di Messico", *Ricerche di storia dell'arte* 61 (1997): p. 8; on Pirovani, see I. Rose-De Viejo, "José Perovani, un artista viajero a su pesar", in M. Cabañas Bravo, A. López-Yarto, W. Rincón García, eds., *El arte y el viaje* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2011), pp. 47-60.

[13] Cuadriello maintains that Labastida was already in Rome in 1829, see J. Cuadriello, "José María Labastida: 'Libertas Mexicana'", in E. Acevedo, et al., eds., *Catálogo comentado del acervo del Museo Nacional de Arte: Escultura: Siglo XIX* (México: Museo Nacional de Arte, 2000), I, p. 176.

[14] On Manzo, see M. Galí Boadella, *José Manzo y Jaramillo: artífice de una época (1789-1860)* (México: Ediciones EyC, 2016); Casarín completed his degree in architecture under François Debret in 1829, see L.M. Jiménez-Madera, "Los arquitectos latinoamericanos en la École des Beaux-Arts de París en el siglo XIX", *Revista de arquitectura* 17, no. 1 (2015): p. 84; for his work at La Madeleine, see V. Casarín, "Exposición de los motivos por qué no tengo que hacer, y sobre si estoy o no en el caso de entender lo que es la construcción", in Id., *Contestación al suplemeto [sic] del núm. 668 del Siglo XIX, publicado por D. Lorenzo Hidalga* (México: Impr. de V.G. Torres, 1843), p. 39.

[15] M.G. Revilla, "Catálogo razonado de las colecciones de la Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes (antigua Academia de San Carlos)", in E. Acevedo de Iturriaga, E. Uribe, eds., *La escultura del siglo XIX: Catálogo de colecciones de la Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, manuscrito de Manuel G. Revilla, 1905* (México: INBA, 1980), p. 28.

[16] J. Cuadriello, "José María Labastida, 'Libertas Mexicana'", *Memoria*, no. 1 (1989): pp. 84-85; Id., "José María Labastida: 'Libertas Mexicana'", cit., pp. 173-182.

[17] L. Alamán, *Documentos diversos (ineditos y muy raros)*, ed. Rafael Aguayo Spencer, 4 vols. (México: Jus, 1942), I, p. 228.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 390.

[19] B. Arteaga, "Documentos", *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 9, no. 36 (1967): pp. 97-98.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

[21] On these copies, preserved today at the Museo Nacional de San Carlos in Mexico City, see the entry by C. Mazzarelli, in G. Capitelli, S. Cracolici, eds., *Roma en México / México en Roma*, cit., pp. 154-58; R. Velásquez Martínez del Campo, M. Arnal Fernández, eds., *De la creación a la copia: Siglos XVI-XX*, exh. cat. (México: Museo Nacional de San Carlos, 1995), pp. 166-67.

[22] B. Arteaga, "Documentos" cit., p. 100.

[23] *Ivi*.

[24] C. Mazzarelli, *Dipingere in copia: Da Roma all'Europa (1750-1870)* (Roma: Campisano, 2018).

[25] "La galería del señor obispo Vázquez" (1849), in I. Rodríguez Prampolini, ed., *La crítica de arte en México en el siglo XIX*, 3 vols. (México: UNAM, 1997 [1964]), I, p. 203.

[26] E. Acevedo, "1821-1843", in E. Uribe, M.E. Eguiarte, E. Acevedo, eds., *Y todo… por una nación: Historia social de la producción plástica de la Ciudad de México, 1781-1910* (México: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 1984), p. 42; J. Cuadriello, "José María Labastida: 'Alegoría de la Constitución de 1824'", in E. Acevedo, et al., eds., *Catálogo comentado*, cit., I, pp. 151-63, 161 for a comparison with Vázquez.

[27] B. Arteaga, "Documentos", cit., p. 98.

[28] S. Ventra, "Raffaello Sanzio (tradizionalmente attribuito a), 'San Luca dipinge la Vergine alla presenza di Raffaello'", in F. Moschini, V. Rotili, S. Ventra, eds., *Raffaello: l'Accademia di San Luca e il mito dell'Urbinate*, exh. cat. (Roma: Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, 2020), pp. 31-35.

[29] Austin, TX, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, Lucas Alamán Papers, doc. 190, IV, 175-176; on Ordoñez, see M.E. Ciancas, "La pintura mexicana del siglo XIX" (Tesis de maestría en historia de las artes plástica, México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1959), p. 127.

[30] Lucas Alaman Papers (as in note 29), doc. 209; see also J. Cuadriello, "José María Labastida: 'Libertas Mexicana'", cit., p. 175.

[31] On the *Gladiators*, now at the Museo Nacional de Arte in Mexico City, and their 'revolutionary' allusions, see E. Uribe, "Claves para leer la escultura mexicana: periodo 1781-1861", in E. Acevedo, S.G. Widdifield, eds., *Hacia otra historia del arte en México*, 3 vols. (México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2001), I, p. 183.

[32] J. Flores, *Lorenzo de Zavala y su misión diplomática en Francia, 1834-1835* (México: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Departamento de Información para el Extranjero, 1951), doc. 42, p. 158.

[33] *Ibid.*, doc. 41, p. 155; doc. 49. p. 179; doc. 63, p. 183.

[34] "México 16 de julio de 1835", *Diario del Gobierno de los Estados-Unidos Mexicanos* 2, no. 77 (July 16, 1835): p. 4.

[35] V. Casarín, *Contestación al suplemeto* [sic], cit., p. 40.

From Colony to Republic: Political Images and Ceremonies in Costa Rica (1809-1858)

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This paper analyses the political images and public ceremonies produced in Costa Rica during its transition from a Spanish colonial structure to a republican political system. The study starts with the Oath to Fernando VII, King of Spain, in 1809, and finishes by examining some cultural events promoted by President Juan Rafael Mora Porras' government. This study is divided in four parts, following a chronological order. Each part concerns different moments of Costa Rica's political history: the last years of the Colony, the Federal Republic of Central America, the transformation of Costa Rica into an independent republican State and the Republic of Costa Rica's first decade.

From Fernando VII to Mora Porras, the ruling elites of Costa Rica reinforced their power in society by politicizing popular feasts and using the arts as means of persuasion. They used fireworks, theater, music, visual arts, costumes, architecture, and numismatics as aesthetical and rhetorical tools to manifest their authority and communicate their political ideals to society. This paper approaches such images and ceremonies using theories taken from Iconography, Numismatics, Semiotics, Cultural History and Political History. The primary sources are provided by manuscripts, numismatics, and newspapers.

The Oath to Fernando VII

Costa Rica was a province of the Captaincy General of Guatemala (also known as the Kingdom of Guatemala), a territory composed by the current territories of Chiapas, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. From the 16th century until the Independence of Spain, the Captaincy General was located in Guatemala, with Costa Rica being the most peripheral province of the kingdom.

On December 12, 1808, the Spanish colonial authorities of Guatemala celebrated the Oath to the King Fernando VII splendidly.[1] The rulers of Costa Rica celebrated the Oath one month after Guatemala, in January 1809. The festivity began in the Government House, when the soldiers, indigenous and military musicians, and the political authorities started a parade to the Chapter House and then to the Plaza of Cartago. There, the Governor pronounced the Oath, throwing handfuls of money at people. Then, they rang the church bells, many fireworks flew up into the sky and everyone shouted: "Long live the King don Fernando VII!".[2] Later, they returned to the Government House and had dinner before the night fireworks show.

On January 23, a group of actors performed a theater show on a wooden platform built in the Plaza for that purpose, transforming the city into an open-air theater.[3] The play was satirical and political at the same time, due, on the one hand, to the public's theatrical taste and, on the other, to the reason for the event.

Thus, the authorities of Cartago used public entertainment to capture people's attention and disseminate certain ideas among them. They also used elements taken from Catholic rituals, such as the presence of priests in the Oath and the burning of a Napoléon Bonaparte doll during the play (a practice similar to the traditional burning of Judas during Holy Week). In this way, Costa Rican elites used popular cultural practices to convey to the people the official position of Spanish colonial rulers on contemporary European conflicts.

Federal Republic of Central America

On September 15, 1821, Guatemala proclaimed its independence from Spain, followed by El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. In 1823, the five former provinces of the Kingdom of Guatemala declared their unification as the United Provinces of Central America, later named the Federal Republic of Central America.

The coat of arms of the Federal Republic of Central America was designed to reflect the ide-

als of Enlightenment and Republicanism.[4] The coat of arms combined five volcanoes inspired by the colonial emblem of Guatemala, a rainbow, and a Phrygian cap, all within an equilateral triangle.

The iconography of the Enlightenment is also evident in the shining sun on the front of federal coins (fig. 1).[5] On the reverse of the coins, they put a tree surrounded by the inscription: "Grow freely and fruitfully [my own translation]". The tree and the phrase are a clear reference to the famous Liberty Tree, a symbol of the American and French revolutions. These iconographies – the sun and the tree – were common in Latin America after the independence, and, as we will see, those symbols traced the iconographic path that the rulers of Costa Rica followed in the following years.

other (fig. 2).[7] The plant refers to the agro-export of coffee, a key activity for the growth of the Costa Rican economy. The image of the indigenous woman comes from an allegory of America commonly used by Europeans to represent their colonies, but the independence processes in the Americas changed the meaning of this personification into a symbol of freedom.[8] Thus, the Costa Rican rulers of the 1840s used the image of the Indian of Freedom to represent the autonomy of the country.

A year later, in 1848, the Republic of Costa Rica was officially founded, and the Congress immediately decreed the national symbols and the first coins of the Republic. Whereas the flag was inspired by the French tricolor flag, the coat of arms combines elements taken from Central American federal iconography (the sun and the volcanoes) and a representation of Costa Rica's presence in the global market (a merchant ship in each ocean) (fig. 3).

Fig. 1. Federal Republic of Central America, Gold 8 escudos, Costa Rica, 1828. San José, Fundación Museos del Banco Central de Costa Rica.

Fig. 2. State of Costa Rica, Silver 1 real, Costa Rica, 1847. San José, Fundación Museos del Banco Central de Costa Rica.

Towards an Independent Republic

Costa Rica left the Federal Republic of Central America in 1838 and, in the mid-1840s, its governors began a campaign to publicly legitimize the new political order as an independent state. For example, on March 7, 1847, Costa Rican political authorities celebrated the oath of the new Constitution. That day, the Constitution was taken from the Congress to the Plaza of San José in a luxurious carriage, with a girl dressed as an indigenous woman.[6] As in the Oath to Fernando VII, wooden platform was built in the Plaza, and there the girl gave the Constitution to Vice President José María Castro Madriz. Then, the priest threw handfuls of allegorical coins to the people, an action similar to the one carried out in Cartago in 1809.

The allegorical coins had the face of an indigenous woman on one side and a coffee plant on the

Fig. 3. Republic of Costa Rica, Gold 2 escudos, Costa Rica, 1855. San José, Fundación Museos del Banco Central de Costa Rica.

The national gold and silver coins combine the coat of arms with two symbols that we have already commented. On the one hand, the indigenous woman of the gold coin allegorizes the political independence of Costa Rica (fig. 3). On the other hand, the silver coin depicts a tree, as in

the previous federal coin. In this way, Costa Rican politicians used once again the Indian of Freedom and the Tree of Liberty, but this time they used both symbols together, as part of the national iconography of the new republic.

Juan Rafael Mora Porras's Government

President Juan Rafael Mora Porras dominated Costa Rican politics in the 1850s. During the Mora government, a coalition of Central American troops repealed an invasion initiative by American filibusters who wanted to conquer Central America. President Mora took advantage of that victory to validate his increasingly authoritarian government. A few years before the war, the government began the construction of the first republican buildings in San José, among which there were the University of Saint Thomas (UST) and the National Palace. Once Mora had this infrastructure, he used it to perform political ceremonies, exalt his power and hold banquets.

On May 13, 1857, President Mora organized a magnificent welcome to the soldiers who had won the war against the American filibusters. The road to the Plaza of San José was adorned with triumphal arches, flowers, national flags, and allegorical ornaments. Mora led the troops to the entrance of the National Palace, where people acclaimed them, while bells rang, cannons fired, fireworks exploded in the sky, military music played, and a group of women threw flowers from the balconies of the palace.[9]

After that triumphant welcome, they went to a special mass in the cathedral, and then to the UST to attend a presidential reception in which Mora was the protagonist. The biggest table for the banquet was in the main hall, where an allegory of the Costa Rican triumphs in the Central American war welcomed the guests. The image represented Costa Rica as a girl defeating a tiger with a flag on a spear.

President Mora's propaganda policies also permeated the banknotes issued by the National Bank of Costa Rica (BNCR) in 1858. These banknotes depict the national coat of arms, the portrait of Mora, and allegories based on ideals promulgated by previous Costa Rican rulers, such as international maritime trade and agriculture.[10]

The 20 pesos banknote represents an allegory composed by a personification of agriculture next to an artistic version of the coat of arms of Costa Rica (fig. 4). The Costa Rican emblem, with its merchant ships, is flanked by the personification of Agriculture and various harvests, thus tracing a relationship between trade, agriculture, and the country's prosperity. In the background, a moving locomotive represents progress and complements the meaning of the elements in the foreground.

Fig. 4. National Bank of Costa Rica, 20 pesos, Costa Rica, 1858. (J.A. Carranza Astúa, *Historia de los Billetes de Costa Rica 1858-2012*, 2012).

The allegories of the 1858 banknotes of the BNCR were designed in a neoclassical academic style common to the engravers of the American banknote companies of these years. These allegories are in tune with the images examined so far since all of them were based on a neoclassical visual repertoire and republican iconography. Finally, it is important to note the absence of the indigenous woman in these allegories and its replacement by female personifications dressed *all'antica*.

President Mora knew the political potential of the performing arts, so he ordered the construction of a theater in 1850; the Mora Theater, named after the president, was used by him to legitimize his prolonged government and campaign for his two consecutive reelections. For example, in December 1858, a theater company performed a play based on the war against the American filibusters, in which Mora was honored. That act occurred in the context of the presidential reelection campaign, and the show was part of a strategy to reinforce his image as supreme leader of Costa Rica.[11] Thus, forty-nine years after the Oath to Fernando VII, despite the political changes, the rulers of Costa Rica continued to use the theater as a means to legitimize their power before the population.

Conclusions

Since the Colony and up to the early period of the republic, it is possible to trace the political use of

images and ceremonies for a constant transformation of Costa Rican society, in order to maintain diverse values and, overall, the prevailing authority of the elite. For this reason, this tracing activity needs to be carried out considering the predominating political ideologies at the time and the impact of the colonial legacy on such processes. As we examined, post-independence Costa Rican rulers reused some images, ceremonies and political strategies that were common in colonial times, due to their cultural importance to the people and their power as aesthetic and rhetorical tools to manifest their authority.

These historical, geographical, political and cultural relations have an interesting point in common, which is crucial for this paper: the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the State in relation to the notion of power and authority, and the representation of it in the ceremonies and images studied. As we have shown in this paper, despite the fact that the Catholic Church participated in the political ceremonies held in the early 19th century in Costa Rica, Christian iconography was not part of the political images used by civil authorities. Conversely, liberal politicians fostered new mythologies in different visual devices, and republican cults gradually confronted the Christian dominance in government rituals.

Finally, we can conclude that images played an active role in the political disputes that occurred in Costa Rica from 1809 to 1858 and laid the aesthetic foundations for the nation-building process developed in the second half of the 19th century. At the basis of this early nationalism, there was clearly a significant influence of French, American and Latin American iconography and civic festivals (e.g., the Indian of Freedom and the Liberty Tree), which were combined into political events with elements inherited by the colonial past.

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[1] A. Sánchez Mora, "Las fiestas de proclamación de Fernando VII en el Reino de Guatemala: transformación y supervivencia de un modelo retórico", *Atenea* 517 (2018).

[2] G. Brenes Tencio, "¡Viva Nuestro Rey Fernando! Teatro, poder y fiesta en la ciudad colonial de Cartago (1809). Una contribución documental", *Escena. Revista de las artes* 66 (2010): p. 99.

[3] M.A. Carlson, *Places of performance: the semiotics of theatre architecture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 14.

[4] M. Chacón Hidalgo, *Del Real al Colón. Historia de la moneda en Costa Rica* (San José: Fundación Museos del Banco Central de Costa Rica, 2015), pp. 46-49.

[5] E.H. Gombrich, *Los usos de las imágenes: estudios sobre la función social del arte y la comunicación visual* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003), pp. 166-167.

[6] EE., "Constitucion", *El Costa-ricense* (Mar. 20, 1847): p. 73.

[7] M. Chacón Hidalgo, *Del Real al Colón. Historia de la moneda en Costa Rica* (San José: Fundación Museos del Banco Central de Costa Rica, 2015), p. 136.

[8] R. Earle, "La iconografía de la independencia en la Nueva Granada", in A. Calvo-Stevenson, A. Meisel-Roca, eds., *Cartagena de Indias en la independencia* (Bogotá: Banco de la Republica de Colombia, 2011); M.G. Oviedo Salazar, "La supervivencia de una alegoría: América como independiente, comerciante y civilizada", *Escena. Revista de las artes* 75, no. 1 (2015): pp. 73-81.

[9] "La Crónica", *Cronica de Costa-Rica* (May 16, 1857): pp. 2-3.

[10] J.A. Carranza Astúa, *Historia de los billetes de Costa Rica, 1858-2012* (San José: self-pub., 2012), pp. 19-31.

[11] P. Fumero Vargas, *Teatro, público y estado en San José 1880-1914: una aproximación desde la historia social* (San José: EUCR, 1996), p. 53.

Propagating Power: Gender, Language, and Empire in the Edwardian Baroque Revival (1885-1920)

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In his classic 1977 study of Edwardian architecture, Alastair Service observed that the turn of the nineteenth century was a period during which the "moneyed public" in Britain yearned for an architecture of national pride and glory.[1] What this pride and glory rested upon, however, was not only debatable but also increasingly unstable. Anxiety over Britain's standing in the world had steadily intensified since the 1870s. Economic and agricultural depression followed by the grim realisation that the nation was losing its grip on industrial supremacy stirred enormous feelings of vulnerability.[2] Once dominant, Britain now faced challenges at home and abroad that would have seemed to many remote if not unlikely only twenty years earlier. The onset of these woes of course provided the backdrop to Benjamin Disraeli's famous 1872 Crystal Palace speech, generally considered the starting gun for the 'New Imperialism' that came to dominate British cultural and political life between the years 1875 and 1915.[3] Action was required, and confidence in the nation had to be restored. During this period empire, nation, and identity would all be recast in the service of making Britain great again, and the effects would be felt across every facet of society, including in architecture.

Indeed, dissatisfaction with the state of British architecture had already begun to mount by this time. The eclectic cul-de-sac into which architectural design had seemingly cornered itself by the 1880s was coming to be viewed as a sign of national confusion and weakness if not disgrace. To some, a more resolute even ebullient expression was required to restore order, clarity, and a new kind of "strength" in British architecture – an architecture that would, as it were, address the growing tide of national doubt. Power was not only on the line, but prestige too.

In the context of the New Imperialism, and especially from about the mid-1880s onwards, British architecture underwent a precipitous transformation that hinged on a renewed interest in the classical language of architecture. These events – that is, the rise of the New Imperialism and the classical resurgence in British architecture – were not coincidental. There was a studied, self-conscious inflection to this iteration of British classicism that was largely absent from previous versions, especially where grand buildings of state were concerned. Any old classicism would not do; not even the customary Palladianism would cut it, despite its reassuring familiarity. This time, only an architecture that spoke directly to the identifiable characteristics of a home-grown, 'vernacular' classicism would suffice. In other words, something that amounted to a forthright, manly, and 'sober' form of the genre that would reflect those self-same, no-nonsense characteristics of the British nation and its people was now the order of the day. This architecture would be an architecture of pomp, pride, and the proverbial stiff upper lip (fig. 1).

But there is an important discursive foundation to this movement that we would do well to consider. By the time we reach the 1890s, a whole new scholarly interest in the history of English classical architecture had begun to flourish in British architectural discourse. It must be remembered that through the early and mid-nineteenth century the reputations of the English classical masters such as Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren had suffered at the hands of an ascendant Gothic Revival. But things were about to change. Not surprisingly, architects led the way. Everywhere one looks in this new discourse the same language of national exceptionalism, intellectual clarity, and masculine sobriety in the English classical tradition prevails. It all began with John McKean Brydon's lecture at the Architectural Association school of architecture on the 15th February 1889.[4] Although entitled

Fig. 1. E.W. Mountford, Old Bailey (Central Criminal Court), London, 1899-1907. The dome of St Paul's Cathedral looms in the background.

simply "The English Renaissance", it was anything but a dreary summary of certain well-known English architects and their buildings. Rather, it amounted to a clearly formulated discourse regarding the tightly bound relationship between architecture and identity – that the 'English Renaissance', as it immediately became known, was an architecture that only a race and culture such as the 'English' could devise. It was not only unique, but in its own way superior.[5] Brydon's entire lecture is revealing for the level of awareness it displays among architects at the time of not only the history of British architecture but also that of the British nation and its empire. It demonstrates full cognisance of Britain's historic political and economic rise in the world, and how this had become a fundamental part of contemporary British life. Here language mattered. Brydon could have articulated his 'history' of English Renaissance architecture in any number of ways, but chose this particular way. He deliberately employs terms such as "national", "English", and "the people" in relation to architecture, with a view to reducing the output of Jones, Wren, and their contemporaries to an analogue of identity. Being a Scotsman, it is also not surprising that Brydon presents the idea of the union between England and Scotland as a critical moment in that bigger history.

But language mattered in another, perhaps even more important sense than this. Set within Brydon's selective and telescoped version of British history, architecture emerges as the inevitable embodiment of certain cultural characteristics and traits. The classical tradition now spoke with an English tongue.[6] A foreign import, the classical language of architecture had been vernacularised through the genius of Jones

and Wren to the point where it was now utterly unique, an invention to be found nowhere, we are told, "but in England". Indeed, English language and the study thereof would acquire a new importance in the national psyche during these years, from which the rhetoric of 'Englishness' in architectural discourse can hardly be dissociated. It would be no exaggeration to say that by way of Brydon's lecture, and under the banner of this broader association between English language and genius, a new and influential discourse on English architectural exceptionalism had commenced.

This relationship between the attributes of language, identity, and architecture went even further in Brydon's mind. Detectable throughout, as in many of the key publications on the history of English classicism that would emerge in the 1890s, is a leaven of masculinity. The text is peppered with words and phrases that were understood as having gendered connotations, including "plain", "simple", "true", "honest", and "natural", not to mention more obvious adjectival qualifiers such as "power", "vigour", and "manhood". It was these qualities that were seen to characterise and distinguish the 'English' variety of Renaissance architecture. In this equation, English equalled strong, sensible, and stable (fig. 2).

There can be little doubt that Brydon's lecture helped set the tone for discussion around the 'English Renaissance' through its carefully modulated language regarding Englishness as an indicator of plucky if not eccentric resourcefulness. The interest it set in motion was soon picked up and developed by others. Between Brydon's lecture and the death of Queen Victoria (1901), a number of serious and scholarly publications appeared that were dedicated specifically to the period of architectural production highlighted by Brydon. These included, among others, such imposing and influential tomes as W.J. Loftie's *Inigo Jones and Wren* (1893), Reginald Blomfield's *A History of Renaissance Architecture in England 1500-1800* (1897), and the lavishly illustrated *Later Renaissance Architecture in England* (1898-1901) by John Belcher and Mervyn Macartney. In nearly all of these works, the stars of the show were of course Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren, with the likes of John Webb, Nicholas Hawksmoor, James Gibbs, John Vanbrugh, Colen Campbell,

Fig. 2. A. Brumwell Thomas, Dome of Belfast City Hall, 1895-1903.

and William Chambers bringing up the rear. It is important to observe that these publications cannot be taken as merely disinterested accounts of a particular phase in the history of English architecture. Although scholarly, they are not what we would consider to be objective scholarship. In setting out to present English Renaissance architecture as not merely an historical phenomenon but a potentially remedial one, too, these publications were 'operative' in the sense suggested by Manfredo Tafuri.[7] This is to say that they worked on two distinct yet overlapping registers: first, in describing and cataloguing buildings and details of a genre, they sought to establish both a 'history' and type of canon; second, they worked to insist that these buildings were not only remarkable but also exemplars to be followed by contemporary practitioners.

As Katherine Wheeler has observed, underlying and thus characterising these publications is a discernible language of chauvinism.[8] At one level this language referred to the apparent masculine attributes of both the architects and their

creations, presented always in a positive light. For instance, it is not uncommon to encounter phrases or passages in these books that speak of the architects' boldness of intent or strength of mind, being men of decision and action. Likewise, in attempting to adumbrate a certain essence, the designs of these architects are often described in terms such as "strong", "massive", "vigorous", "proportioned", "principled", "clear", "reasoned", "dignified", "restrained", "sober" and so on. At another level, however, this language extends itself by appeal to what might be described as the baser instincts of pride, prejudice, and nativism. Here masculinity was logically and necessarily coupled to identity and nationhood.

These developments reflected deeper and more acute misgivings over the direction of modern British architecture (or lack thereof), itself perceived as something of a crisis in manly vision and purpose. In effect, the 'great' architects described in the pages of these publications were being retroactively co-opted as ideal English male prototypes in terms of character, attitude, and achievement – men who could (and should) serve as aspirational models in the present.[9] Their masterworks stood in stark and humiliating contrast to what Brydon bemoaned as the "frippery and littleness" of his own age; as men, they were the antithesis of what Loftie disparagingly called the "know-nothings" of the contemporary scene, those brainless and pitiful vandals of the mid-Victorian generation who were wont to drag the good name of English art into an abyss of ignominy.[10]

It is worth noting that all of these books were copiously illustrated, with either line drawings or photographs, or both. Visual communication was obviously an important element of the discursive economy that structured and infused these publications, and it is therefore reasonable to suggest that the illustrations were more than just pretty pictures. In most cases the illustrations are rendered in such a way as to maximize their impact vis-à-vis the conveyance of each publication's central message. They are characterised by either clear and stark drafted line-work drawings in the form of plans, elevations, and sections; high-contrast half-tone photographs; highlighted sketches of principal details; reproductions of original drawings, or those from earlier publications such as *Vitruvius*

Fig. 3. Christopher Wren, Greenwich Royal Naval Hospital, 1696-1716. (J. Belcher, M. Macartney, *Later Renaissance Architecture in England*, London: Batsford, 1901).

Britannicus; and/or classic two-point perspective drawings of key buildings (figs. 3-4). Each of these media, or combinations thereof, appear calculated to emphasise the clarity, purity, and thus 'power' of the best examples that English Renaissance architecture had to offer. Seen alongside the text, and in their visual efficiency, these illustrations did their work in helping the reader (in most cases architects) interpret and absorb the elemental forces of proportion, scale, and boldness that were understood as primal to the architectonics of true English design.

It is worth remembering that the New Imperialism, as John Tosh has so neatly summarised it, "was not so much an assertion of strength as a symptom of weakness. The excesses of imperial fervour may have looked like the high point of national self-confidence, but they were in reality an overwrought reaction to an increasingly perilous international situation".[11] With this in mind, one of the preliminary conclusions we may draw
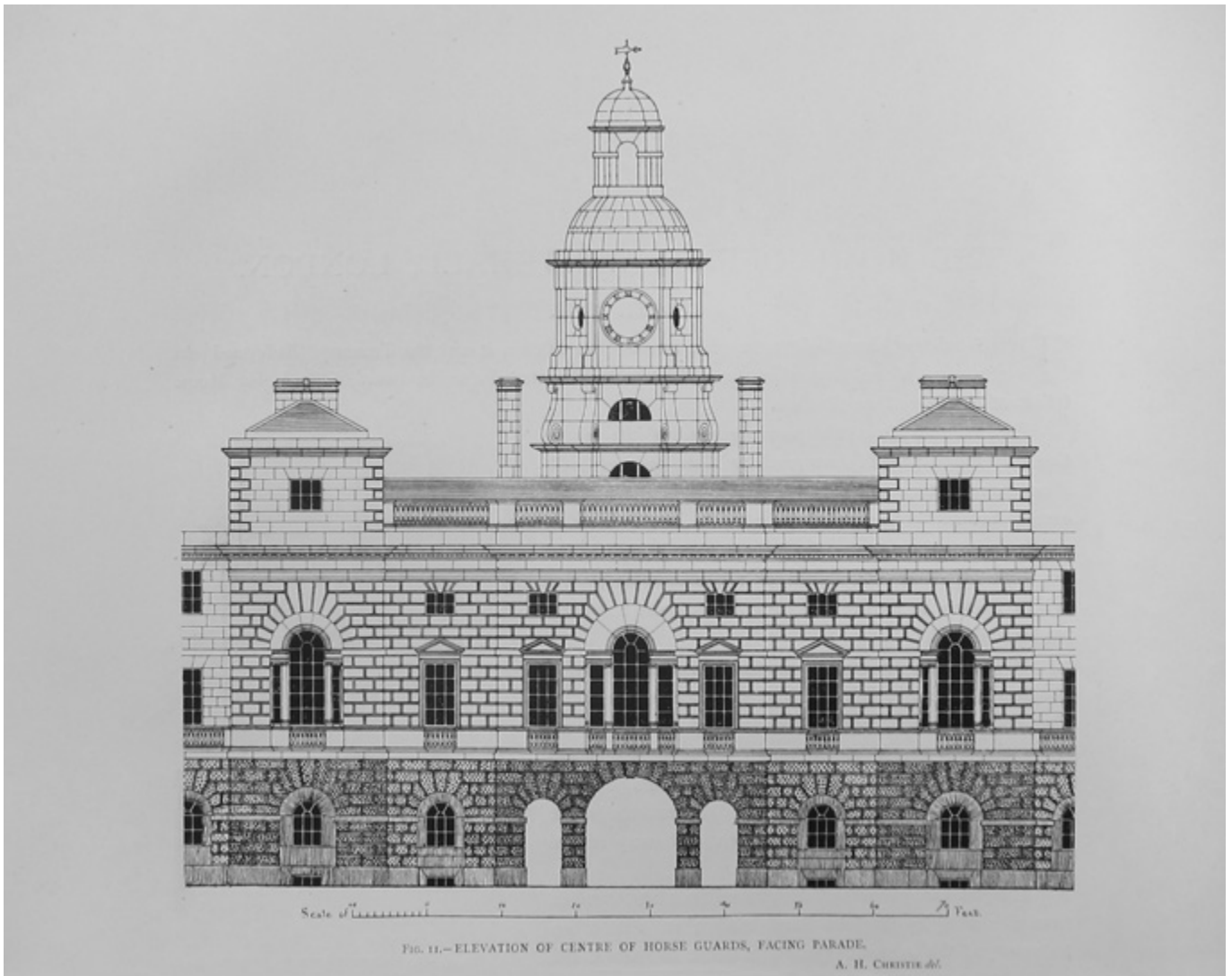
Fig. 4. William Kent, Horse Guards, London, 1745-1750. (J. Belcher, M. Macartney, *Later Renaissance Architecture in England*, London: Batsford, 1901).

concerning Edwardian Baroque architecture is that its bold and ebullient, if not aggressive, texturing was born of a certain psychic fragility, predicated on feelings of insecurity and doubt. Misgivings over the state of British architecture in the 1880s must therefore be understood, in part at least, as a kind of lament over architecture's inability to live up to its obligations as a cultural practice.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to interpret the advent of this new, pulsing muscularity in architectural design as resulting from a loss of nerve. Rather, it was more a self-regarding gesture of defiance, a type of pompous posturing the rationale for which was the attempted rescue of both the nation's and profession's reputation from accusations of feebleness and decline. In this respect it was an exercise in what might otherwise be termed architectural chest beating, in which ideals of honour and manliness underwrote an imposing front. Therefore, however hollow it was in reality as a remedy for the economic and political challenges Britain faced as a nation, in projecting an *image* of strength and stability, the Edwardian Baroque revival was nonetheless a strategy that sought to monumentalise and thereby affirm feelings of national esteem and imperial pride.

Notes

[1] A. Service, *Edwardian Architecture: A Handbook to Building Design in Britain 1890-1914* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), p. 140. See also Id., "John Belcher's Colchester Town Hall and the Edwardian Grand Manner", *Essex Archaeology and History* 5 (1973): p. 225.

[2] For instance, see A.E. Musson, "The Great Depression in Britain, 1873-1896: A Reappraisal", *The Journal of Economic History* 19, no. 2 (1959): pp. 199-228.

[3] John Tosh, among others, has noted how the New Imperialism was "not so much an assertion of strength as a symptom of weakness". See J. Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire* (Harlow: Pearson Educational Ltd., 2005), p. 208.

[4] This lecture was reported in full in *The Builder* (Feb. 23, 1889): pp. 147-8, and (March 2, 1889): pp. 168-70. Brydon would give a further lecture on this topic, entitled "The English Classic Revival of the 17th and 18th Centuries", at the RIBA in February 1891. See *The Builder* (Feb. 14, 1891): pp. 129-131.

[5] J. Brydon, "The English Renaissance", *The Builder* (March 2, 1889): pp. 169-170.

[6] The classic study on this is J. Summerson, *The Classical Language of Architecture* (London: Methuen & Co., 1964). Reginald Blomfield also understood the classical style in these terms. See R. Blomfield, *A History of Renaissance Architecture in England 1500-1800* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1897), II, p. 398.

[7] M. Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*, tr. G. Verrecchia (London: Granada, 1980 [1968]), pp. 141-170.

[8] K. Wheeler, *Victorian Perceptions of Renaissance Architecture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 101-120.

[9] J. Brydon, "The English Renaissance", *The Builder* (Feb. 23, 1889): p. 148.

[10] Id., "The English Renaissance of the Eighteenth Century", *The Builder* (Feb. 14, 1891): p. 131; W.J. Loftie, *Inigo Jones and Wren, or the Rise and Decline of Modern Architecture in England* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1893), pp. 3-16, 280. Blomfield would later call the "revivalist" period a "silly sentimentality". See R. Bloomfield, *Memoirs of an Architect* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1932), p. 80.

[11] J. Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, cit., p. 208.

"Engaged in an Undertaking of the Highest Artistic Culture": Two Projects for a South American Academy in Rome* (1897-1911)

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This paper revolves around two projects that involved artistic and diplomatic relationships between Italy (Rome in particular) and South America (especially Argentina) at the turn of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. On the one hand, I seek to contribute to the discussion about Rome as cultural capital: as confirmed by recent studies, it never really lost its attraction, neither as a place to visit nor as a place of artistic education.[1] On the other hand, I propose an additional perspective about the Argentinian system of art consolidation process. Buenos Aires did not have a national academy of fine arts until 1905, but in 1897 the Government constituted the National Commission of Fine Arts with the aim of regulating the flow of young artists who left annually to Europe (they were taken under control by the national Patronage of pensionnaires only in 1909).[2]

Although the presence of South American artists in Europe has been recorded since the first half of the 19th century, their number increased considerably during the last decade of the century. In my research, I was able to record a considerable concentration of South American artists in the Eternal City between 1890 and 1914 (fig. 1).[3]
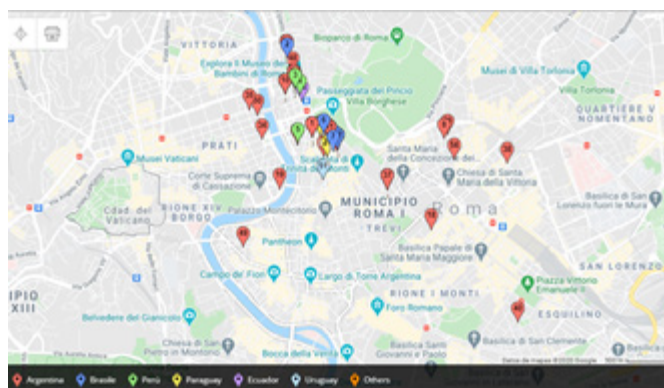
Fig. 1. South American artists' studios (Rome, 1890-1914). Map elaborated by Batchgeo software, based on *Guida Monaci* (Guidebook of Rome founded by Tito Monaci in 1871) and archive documents from Argentina and Uruguay.

The relationship networks established between artists and other compatriots gave rise to community dynamics which I believe should be linked to the first idea of creating an Argentinian academy of Fine Arts in Rome.

Until 1909, the plenipotentiary minister was the only institutional figure Argentinian artists depended on. From 1896 to 1906, the plenipotentiary minister in Italy was Enrique B. Moreno (1846-1923), who participated in the South American sociability of the city (fig. 2).[4] He arrived in Rome after a long diplomatic career and here he created a network of relationships that involved many artistic personalities, from both Argentina and Italy, among which the name of Ettore Ximenes (1855-1926) stands out.

The creation of an Argentinian Academy in Rome was an initiative of Moreno but involved Ximenes from the initial drafts. Not only was the Sicilian sculptor a sort of advisor of the diplomat, but also a mediator between Italy and Argentina in the late 19th century. In 1896, he won an international competition to erect a mausoleum for General Manuel Belgrano (creator of the Argentinian flag) in Argentina. The sculptor travelled to Buenos Aires three times between 1896 and 1903; besides working on the construction of the monument, he set up an atelier on Corrientes Avenue, in the city center, received commissions from the local elite families and established relationships within the Italian community.[5]

The First Project: an Argentinian Academy

The first mention of the project for the creation of the Argentinian Academy in Rome may be found in the correspondence between Ximenes and Moreno, in a long letter that the sculptor wrote on September 12, 1897 in Rome, shortly before embarking for the second time to join the country on the River Plate.[6] He presented a concrete proposal (including a budget) for the establishment

Fig. 2. E.B. Moreno (third person from the left, in the foreground) with Argentinian artists at the banquet in honor of José Ingenieros, Rome, 1906. Collection of Pio Collivadino Museum, Photo Album, inv. 2.8.2/500-99997-1657.

of the academy that was welcomed by Moreno. In the official report of the Argentinian Legation for the year 1897, the minister announced a series of points which summarized the main characteristics that the institution should have had.[7] Their eagerness to compare Argentina with European countries and with the United States transpired from their words: on the one hand, arguing that art could bring to completion the process of national civilization; on the other hand, taking the academies that France, Spain and the United States had already founded in Rome as an example.[8]

Although Moreno referred to some Argentinian institutions, to carry out this project he did not involve any figure linked to Argentina's world of art. He had been advised almost exclusively by Ximenes. In the cited letter, in addition to showing all his support for Moreno, he offered him an extensive promotional activity, even in Argentina: evidently, he already had solid social circuits in which he had accessed during his first stay in Buenos Aires. However, it was only during the third trip – which corresponded to the installation of the monument – that the sculptor was able to officially become the spokesman of the project to found the Argentinian Academy in Rome. At the end of 1902, at the Dante Alighieri Society in Buenos Aires, Ximenes gave a lecture on art in the Rio de la Plata and on the need to create an academy in Italy.[9]

The year 1905 represented a point of arrival for the project: an agreement was announced between the Italian plenipotentiary minister in Buenos Aires and the Argentinian minister of educa-

tion for the creation of the school in Rome, precisely in correspondence with the nationalization of the Argentinian academy. The news generated heated debates, which were echoed by the press. While some newspapers applauded the initiative because it would have tightened the bond between the two countries, others accused the government of carrying out demented projects and condemned the choice of a city such as Rome.[10] Being the academy already an antiquated institution, founding it in the city that symbolizes tradition would have been the worst decision to make. However, a few months later the project vanished without any specific reasons.

The Second Project: a South American Academy

In 1906, the plenipotentiary minister Moreno left Italy for Belgium and was replaced by Roque Sáenz Peña (1851-1914) who remained there until 1910, when he was elected President of the Argentine Republic. Despite the few years in Rome, he promoted various initiatives to facilitate the relations between Italy and Argentina. Sáenz Peña is known above all for his pacifist ideas and for being one of the major supporters of an inter-American alliance that could limit the advance of the interference of the US, especially in South American countries. He was a supporter of the so-called A.B.C., a pact between Argentina, Brazil and Chile officially signed in 1914.[11]

This regional tendency might explain the interest that the project proposed by Santiago Aldunate (the Chilean plenipotentiary minister in Rome) aroused, that was the idea of 'using' art to unite peoples. The Brazilian minister Alberto Fialho joined too, and Sáenz Peña officially became the spokesperson of the initiative for the Argentinian government. On May 7, 1909 he wrote that the plenipotentiary ministers of Argentina, Chile and Brazil had agreed on "the convenience and opportunity of founding in Rome [...] an academy of fine arts that brings together and binds Latin American pensionnaires, today dispersed in various centers of Europe".[12] An initiative that allowed the three countries to "unite fraternally for the first time", showing harmony in their 'civilizing aims'. This idea of *hermandad* among South American countries already existed in the first project: Moreno had thought about the possibility of allowing the citizens of other South American republics to attend the Argentinian Academy,

stating that in this way, "the solidarity of the continent […] would have its first field of action in the field of artistic study".[13]

On a public occasion, while promoting the initiative, Sáenz Peña said that the three countries "after having fought for freedom […] have to work for notoriety, and this commitment, today national, could be continental tomorrow, associating us […] to increase […] our gravitation in the universal movement".[14] Therefore, art was a tool to enter an international framework.

Indeed, the project was supposed to be carried out in correspondence with the International Exhibition of the fiftieth anniversary of the Italian unification in 1911. The three South American countries were supposed to participate to the exhibition in Rome, and the municipality would have offered them the land for the pavilion, in Valle Giulia area, where the headquarters of the Academy would have been built afterwards. This was part of a policy supported by Mayor Ernesto Nathan, maybe the last episode of the 'cultural mission' that Rome, as capital of Italy, had started in 1883 with the first International Art Exposition.[15] However, the results of this second initiative became blurred. A short telegram from Rio de Janeiro, published in the newspapers of Buenos Aires at the end of April 1910, is the only indication of the failure of the project. It announced that the Brazilian government, on the advice of the director of the national academy, wished to decline the idea of accompanying Chile and Argentina in the project of the South American Academy in Rome.[16]

Nevertheless, the failure of both projects must be read as a political and artistic success. The different actors unified their intentions for the common objective of having an international acknowledgement of the art system that had been consolidating in their own country. The first project highlighted the need for a greater state protection of the arts and was filed when the Academy of Buenos Aires was nationalized. The second project arose simultaneously with the establishment of a national Patronage of pensionnaires (based in Paris): though it possibly represented one of the causes of the defeat for the project – at least in the Argentinian context, – it surely reinforced the bond among the three most 'powerful' countries in South America: Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, constituting the first real step towards the ABC pact.

Therefore, Rome represented the place where South American encounters became projects. De-centering the analysis perspective and positioning it in Argentina,[17] I can read the actions that Rome promoted as a way to strengthen its role as cultural capital.[18] Although it is only briefly mentioned here, the 1911 Valle Giulia exhibition was an important moment of international affirmation. In July 1911, with the exhibition already open, the Argentinian vice-consul Atilio Parazzoli wrote to the patron of pensionnaires Ernesto de la Cárcova that a plan by the municipality was still in vogue to grant the land used for the exhibition for free so as to build an international district dedicated to the arts.[19] The Eternal City thus re-proposed itself as a central place of diplomatic, political, and artistic representation.

Notes

* It is part of my doctoral research. After the presentation of this case study at CIHA Florence 2019, I explored the subject in depth in a paper: G. Murace "Arte, política y diplomacia: dos proyectos de academias sudamericanas en Roma (1897-1911)", *MODOS*. Revista de História da Arte. Campinas 4, no. 2 (May 2020): pp. 39-53. https://doi.org/10.24978/mod.v4i2.4581. I would like to thank Christina Strunck and Giovanna Capitelli for accepting my proposal, they were kind and professional chairs and made my participation at the congress very pleasant.

1 On this topic: G. Capitelli, S. Cracolici, eds., *Roma en México/México en Roma. Las academias de arte entre Europa y el Nuevo Mundo 1843-1867* (Roma: Campisano, 2018); G. Capitelli, M.P. Donato, M. Lanfranconi, "Rome capitale des arts au XIXe siècle. Pour une nouvelle périodisation de l'histoire européenne des capitales culturelles", in C. Charle, ed., *Le temps des capitales culturelles. XVIIIe-XXe siècle* (Seyssel: Champs Vallon, 2009), pp. 65-99; C. Dazzi, "Pensionistas da Escola Nacional de Belas Artes na Itália (1890-1900).

Questionando o "afrancesamento" da cultura brasileira no início da República", *19&20* 1, no. 3 (Nov. 2006). http://www.dezenovevinte.net/ensino_artistico/pensionista_1890.htm); C. Dupont, *Modèles italiens et traditions nationales. Les artistes belges en Italie 1830-1914* (Brussels-Roma: Institut historique belge de Rome, 2005); P. Musitelli, "Artisti e letterati stranieri a Roma nell'Ottocento. Strutture, pratiche e descrizioni della sociabilità", *Memoria e Ricerca. Soggiorni culturali e di piacere. Viaggiatori stranieri nell'Italia dell'Ottocento* 46 (May-August 2014): pp. 27-44; A. Varela Braga, T.L. True, eds., *Roma e gli artisti stranieri. Integrazione, reti e identità (XVI-XX s.)* (Roma: Artemide, 2018).

2 A private academy had existed from 1878, founded by Sociedad Estímulo de Bellas Artes. About the construction of a system of art in Buenos Aires: L. Malosetti Costa, *Los primeros modernos. Arte y sociedad en Buenos Aires a fines del siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001); Id., *Collivadino* (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo, 2006); M.I. Baldasarre, *Los dueños del arte. Coleccionismo y consumo cultural en*

Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2006); Id., "Between Buenos Aires and Europe Cosmopolitanism, Pensionnaires, and Arts Education in Late 19th Century Argentina", in O.E. Vázquez, ed., *Academies and Schools of Art in Latin America* (New York: Taylor and Francis/Routledge, 2020), pp. 17-32.

[3] The River Plate community in Rome is the subject of my PhD thesis (in progress): *Rome from River Plate: Argentinian and Uruguayan artists on trip (1890-1914)*, National University of San Martín, Buenos Aires.

[4] In 1909, the Patronato de Becados was founded, a national institution to control the Argentinian pensionnaires in Europe. Cf. M.I. Baldasarre, "La educación de los artistas", in L. Malosetti Costa, ed., *Cárcova* (Buenos Aires: Asociación Amigos del MNBA, 2016), pp. 51-62.

[5] The competition spread through the diplomatic channel, so Ximenes probably met Moreno on this occasion. About Ximenes as a bridge between Italy and South America, see: M.C S. Monteiro, "O Mausoléu a Belgrano, de Ettore Ximenes, e a presença artística italiana na Argentina", *Caiana. Revista de Historia del Arte y Cultura Visual del Centro Argentino de Investigadores de Arte (CAIA)* 8 (2016): pp. 1-16. http://caiana.caia.org.ar/template/caiana.php?pag=articles/article_2.php&obj=223&vol=8.

[6] Ettore Ximenes to Enrique B. Moreno [Letter], Rome, September 12th, 1897, General Archive of the Nation (Argentina), Fondo E.B. Moreno, Leg. 1885, f. 425-429.

[7] E.B. Moreno, "Italia. Memoria de la legación. Roma 1 de marzo de 1897", *Memorias del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto* (Buenos Aires, 1897): pp. 211-216.

[8] The French Academy in Rome, founded in 1666, was the model for the other foreign academies in the city, whose number increased since 1870 (when Rome was the capital of United Italy): i.e., Spain Real Academy (1874), American schools of architecture and classical studies (1894) that converged to American Academy in 1905. Cf. J. García Sánchez "Roma y las academias internacionales", *Repensar la Escuela del CSIC en Roma. Cien años de memoria* (Madrid: CSIC, 2010), pp. 77-108.

[9] E. Ximenes, "El Arte en la República Argentina", *Revista de Derecho, Historia y Letras* V, t. XIV (1902-1903): pp. 397-409 and V, t. XV (1903): pp. 66-76. The sculptor showed it was informed about the artistic debates in Argentina on the need to create a National Academy. About the nationalization of the fine arts' academy, see: M. Zarlenga "La nacionalización

de la Academia de Bellas Artes de Buenos Aires (1905-1907)", *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 76, no. 3 (July-September 2014): pp. 383-341.

[10] Cf. "El error de ayer – Megalomanía suicida – matando la Academia de Bellas Artes – una solución inconsciente – ¿Escuela en Roma? – el arte nacional triunfando – los resultados más tarde", *El Tiempo* (Jan. 27, 1905); "La escuela de Roma", *El Tiempo* (Jan. 30, 1905).

[11] Cf. B. Solveira, "El ABC como entidad política: un intento de aproximación entre la Argentina, Brasil y Chile a principios de siglo", *Ciclos* año 2, no. 2 (primer semestre 1992): pp. 157-183; E. Boone, "The 1910 Centenary Exhibition in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. Manufacturing fine art and cultural diplomacy in South America", in D. Raizman, E. Robey, eds., *Expanding Nationalisms at World's Fairs Identity, Diversity, and Exchange, 1851-1915* (New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 196-213.

[12] R. Sáenz Peña, "Nota proyectando una academia de bellas artes, en Roma", in Id., *Escritos y Discursos 1888-1910* (Buenos Aires: Casa Peuser, 1914), I, pp. 266-274.

[13] E.B. Moreno, "Italia. Memoria de la legación. Roma 21 de marzo de 1899", *Memorias del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto* (Buenos Aires, 1899), pp. 278-279.

[14] "Discurso del dr. Sáenz Peña", *La Nación* (August 8, 1909). In this article, Sáenz Peña wrote that the three countries were "engaged in an undertaking of the highest artistic culture" ("empeñados en una empresa de elevadísima cultura artística").

[15] Cf. G. Piantoni, ed., *Roma 1911* (Roma: De Luca, 1980).

[16] "Brasil", *El Diario* (April 5, 1910).

[17] About the descentered perspective see N. Zemon Davis, "Descentering history: local stories and cultural crossings in a global world", *History and Theory* 50 (May 2011): pp. 188-202.

[18] On the definition of cultural capital, see: C. Charle, "El tiempo de las capitales culturales europeas", *Debats. Revista de cultura, poder y sociedad* 132, no. 2 (2018): pp. 103-117. http://doi.org/10.28939/iam.debats.132-2.10). About the cultural position of Italy in Europe at the turn of the 19th century cf. G. Piantoni, A. Pingéot, eds., *1880-1910. Arte alla prova della modernità* (Torino: Allemandi, 2000).

[19] A. Parazzoli to E. De la Cárcova [Letter] Roma, July 15, 1911, Archive of Argentinian Foreign Minister, "Embajada en París y Consulados en Francia", AH/0019, "Patronato de los becados argentinos a Europa". For Parazzoli, it was an opportunity for the artistic future of the young Republic.

An Overview of Contemporary New Media Art in China

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Introduction

New media art is a comprehensive visual art built on various art categories.[1] Many scholars believe that new media art includes digital art, computer animation and computer graphics, video art, digital photography, sound and light art, computer games, multimedia art, etc.[2] Contemporary art, new media art, and digital art are the new darlings of the art world. Some researchers simply classify them as a single, blurred category, called 'digital media art'.[3] This artistic form, which is different from traditional art, relies greatly on innovative scientific theories and technological achievements, adopts new artistic techniques and expressive forms, highlights humanism and artistic reflection, and displays distinct environment- and culture-specific characteristics.[4] Therefore, before attempting to discuss the characteristics of any new media art, we should first understand its history and theory, as well as its unique laws of development and evolution, so as to lay a solid foundation for mastering the so-called 'new media' mode of thinking. In today's era of rapid development in science and technology, art and technology are more closely integrated.[5] In education, teaching programs and related contents are constantly changing.

In the late 1960s, new media art first appeared in the Western world in a calligraphy video and, since then, it has greatly developed.[6] New media art is an interdisciplinary field of art, the combination of art, science and technology.[7] New media art and digital art, although related, are different types of art.[8] In this context, this paper focuses on the development and needs of the times, explores some problems arising in the process of re-integration of science and art, and discusses the relationship between new media art and digital art and their different forms of expression and basic characteristics. The calligraphy video mentioned above focuses on the process of calligraphy art, showing different elements that change according to the rhythm of music, such as the writing itself or the thickness and speed of the brush. This provides a more delicate and richer expression of the musicality and rhythm of this kind of art. The vocabulary of new media art is not fixed, but rather constantly changing with the development of society, and especially the advancement of science and technology.[9] In different periods of history, new disciplines with different characteristics have appeared and combined in a comprehensive and interdisciplinary nature.

New media art creation and its teaching and research are still in their infancy across the world. In China, new media art is an exotic product. It began to appear around the end of the 1980s, in the 'postmodern' period. Therefore, new media art emerged in the cultural context of postmodern society, thus, it must have acquired some distinctive characteristics of postmodernist culture.[10] Therefore, defining the concepts, types, and relations of these two kinds of art and comparing them can help us understand their connotations more clearly. Today, with the development, application, and popularization of digital technology, great changes have taken place in human society. We have been transforming from an industrial society into an information one, from a material civilization in an industrial society into a non-material civilization in a post-industrial society. New media art relies on the support of modern technology, which reflects its artistic connotation, thought and existence of new features, however without degrading the essence of China.[11] If we have to simply provide a definition of the 'new media' in new media art, we can say that the expression refers to the use of all media and technological means to create works of art. Not only do we have all kinds of traditional technologies at our disposal, but we must also include all kinds of new innovations that have emerged and will emerge in the future.

Related Works

After more than a decade of ups and downs in contemporary Chinese art, a beautiful landscape has formed. Not only is it a hot topic of discussion in the art circle, but it is also attracting attention on a global scale. As an early scholar who paid attention to the new media art, Wouters et al. put forward the category of 'China's new media art' in *What is the new media art*.[12] Enigbokan and others explore the problem of 'reproduction and collage' of works of art as a major feature of postmodernist culture, and the new media art, in this context, bears the signs of this feature.[13] Arthur I. Miller put forward that when we generally refer to the new media art, we mainly refer to technology and computer creativeness.[14] Under the guidance of the professor, author of the book, his students created a number of new media dance works, and successfully held exhibitions and televised seminars. The photographic techniques and media that appeared in the early 19th century and later, namely printing and film, all reshaped the value system of the traditional evaluation of artworks and established the value concept of replicating original works. In this process, the work of art is no longer a static, finished product, but an ongoing event. Therefore, it is necessary to present a systematic, comprehensive, clear, and scientific exposition of this subject, with a view to clarifying opinions, correcting understandings, deepening research, and promoting teaching.

New media art is a worldwide art phenomenon, and there are numerous related works in the West and in China. Pénet, Pierre and other scholars pointed out that in the new orientation of art, the *New Vision, New Media* Seminar on Chinese Contemporary Art: New media art has become a remarkable phenomenon in Chinese contemporary art.[15] Cook and Roger's *Technology Wave of Conceptual Art – New Media Art* also introduces the situation of new media art in China.[16] Images have been widely used in recent years. Modern image concepts are closely related to science and technology. With the help of image concepts, new media and digital art can be summarized in the so-called 'image art'. Accordingly, great changes have taken place in this art form which are becoming an important node in the history of the development of world art.[17] It gives art a new interpretation of meaning, it gives viewers a new feeling, so that they can be more deeply immersed in the beauty of art.

Tab. 1. Classification of art creative industries

Types of	Category	Core activities
Art category	Design	Architectural Design, Planning Approval, Information Production
	Art and Antiques Market	Sale of Antiques and Works of Art
	Crafts	Creation, Production and Development of Textiles, Pottery, Jewelry, Metals and Glass

Tab. 2. Classification of design creative industries

Types of	Category	Core activities
Design category	Art Design	Design Consulting, industrial design, interior design and environmental design
	Fashion Design	Clothing design, production, consultation and distribution of clothing for fashion shows
	Software design	Software development, system software, contract, solution, system integration, system design and analysis, software structure and design, project management, basic design

Tab. 3. Classification of interactive leisure creative industries

Types of	Category	Core activities
Interactive leisure	Film and Video	Film script creation, production, distribution, performance
	Music	Production, distribution, and retail of recorded products, copyright management of recorded products and composing, live performances, touring exhibitions, clothing design and manufacturing, lighting
	Performing Arts	Content originality, performance production, ballet, contemporary dance, drama, musical Opera and Opera performance, touring exhibitions, clothing design and manufacturing
	Television and Radio	Program production and matching (databases, sales, channel), television broadcasting (program list is sold in media), radio broadcasting

The Development of New Media Art
Art in the Age of the Technological Myth

Mass media such as newspapers, radio, and television, which we are familiar with, have brought about great changes to human life. The emergence of new media also gives the world the purpose of communication, entertainment, and leisure through interpersonal interaction.

According to the opinions of experts, the classification of creative industries includes 13 industries, namely art, design, interactive leisure and others. As shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3:

Spatialization of Art

Next came a period that could be referred to as the 'honeymoon of technology and art', which mainly refers to the experimental art activities in the form of small groups with the purpose of carrying out comprehensive media art experiments in various parts of Europe after the Second World War. This art relies on information technology and knowledge, using text, voice and image as carriers, and therefore possesses real-time, interactive and experiential characteristics. Because of the contradiction between the strict traditional educational programs and the market demand in our country, art colleges and universities have set up some so-called 'hot majors' in the form of specialty orientations in the current catalogue of professional disciplines. These majors are TV program production, image design, film and television art, computer art design, multimedia art design, etc. New media is a relative concept: as a matter of fact, in the process of emergence and development of the media, new media emerges constantly; newspapers are new media compared to books, and newscasts are the new media compared to newspapers. The research on new media art itself is superficial, although rapidly expanding, but the quality is still quite poor. Most of them focus on foreign creative achievements and results of theoretical research, and only a few involve the creation of and research on domestic new media art. When it comes to new media, including new media art, the latter is different from traditional art forms such as easel painting, landscape art, performance arts, etc. However, as other art forms are combined with digital technology and electronic media, new media
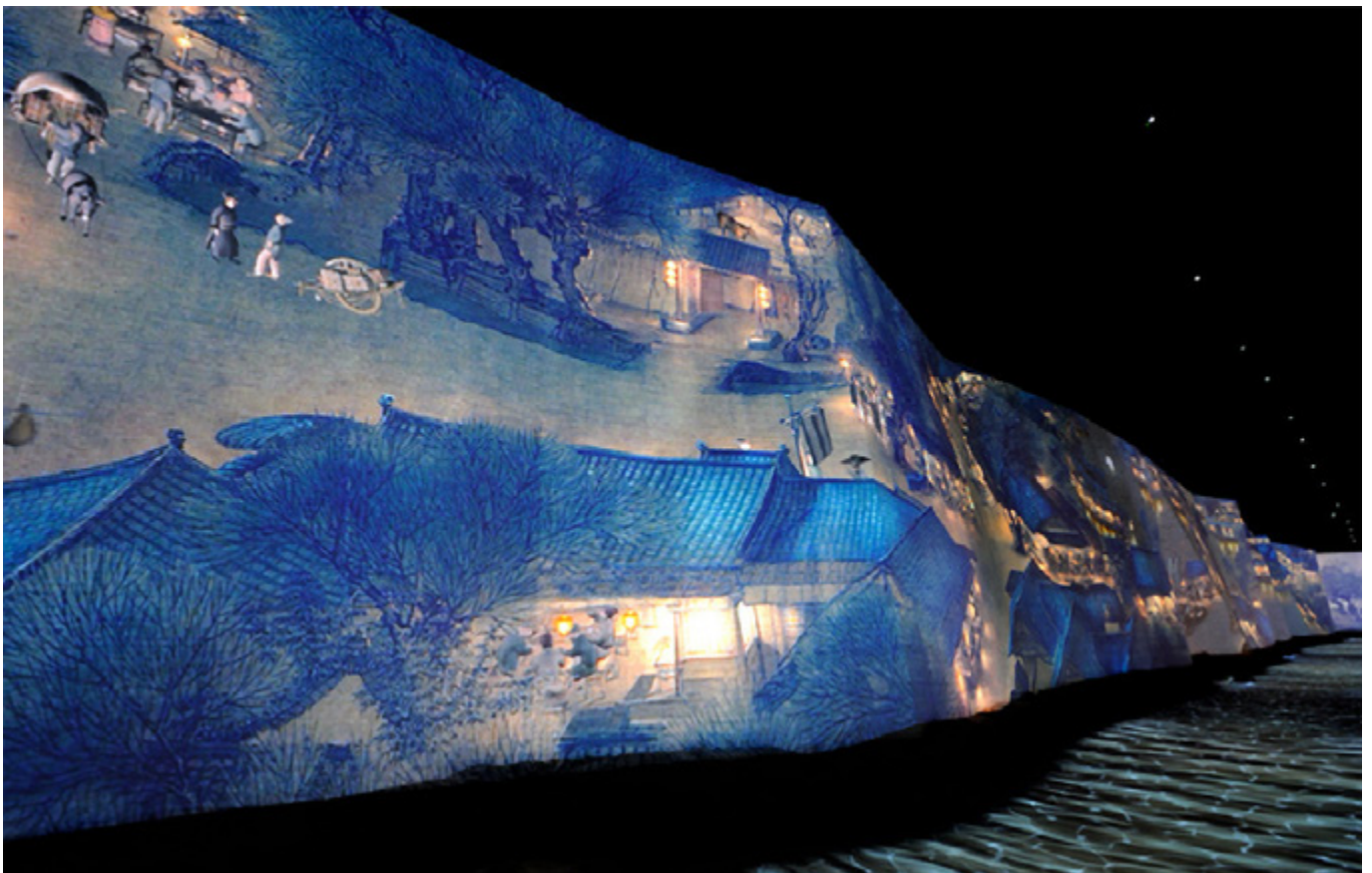
Fig. 1. Qingming Shanghe map in the China Pavilion of the World Expo.

art too contains other forms of art. For example, the dynamic theme of the China Pavilion at the World Expo will be "The Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival" (fig. 1).

Layout design is an effective arrangement of many elements (such as fonts, pictures, lines and color blocks) in a limited space according to certain rules and contents. Each plate should not only correspond to the others in color and font, but also be flexible and convenient in the dynamic interpolation of each plate (fig. 2).

Universities and academies of Fine Arts have set up new teaching programs in the field of digital art: introduction to animation, original animation techniques and post-production, pre-animation creativity, video editing, audio editing, film and television language, photography basis, animation art performance, web design, animation art design, animation behavior law. The following is a set of curriculum standards for new media art education in European and American art colleges, as shown in Tables 4 and 5:

Tab. 4. New Course for Digital Film and Television Major

Course Number	Course Name	Course credits
CG102/ART145	Design and color	3.5
CG109	Photography	3.5
CG110	Digital	3.5
CG125	Digital four-color printing	3.5
ART107/CG107	History of Photography	3.5
CG219	Intermediate Digital	3.5
CG230	Intermediate Chemistry	3.5

Tab. 5. Multimedia Video Design and Production

Course Number	Course Name	Course credits
MM105	Interactive Media	3.5
MM106	Video Design and Multimedia Production	3.5
MM225	Video Design and Multimedia Production	3.5
MM110	Multimedia Animation Graphics	3.5

Fig. 2. Design of a Web Navigation Page.

In the art industry, new media brings more art forms and powerful visual stimuli, which are favored by more visual performances and stage effects. For example, the handscroll at the opening ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games has played an important role in the world's activities in new media art (fig. 3).

Prospects for the Development of New Media Art

Wider Applications of Virtual Reality

The combination of the further development of multimedia art and interactivity leads to the popularity of virtual reality. Interactivity leads to an unpredictability of the outcome of the work. The boundary between games and movies will be increasingly weakened in a deconstruction of the previous art forms, while weakening the central position, in the arts, of the traditional art forms. Digi-
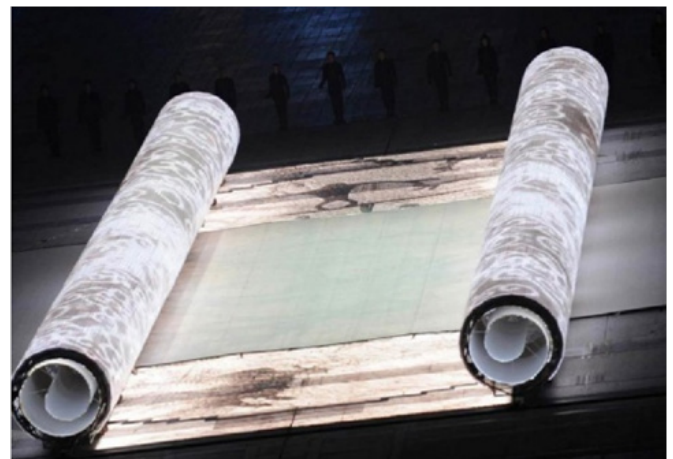
Fig. 3. Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games.

tal technology makes art creation more immaterial. Video artworks have a fixed broadcasting platform, which has produced many refreshing digital visual languages, promoted the application of new technologies in artistic creation, and created the first generation of artists in video art. Stage design is a key link in major event activities. In recent years, new media has been applied to stage design, and the most prominent application should be the holographic projection technology. In the 2016 Spring Festival Gala of Liaoning, the holographic technology was used to visualize the six-year-old children in the style of the Monkey King (fig. 4).

The five stages of new media art creation are: connection, integration, interaction, transformation, and emergence. It is connected and interactive. As seen in fig. 5, multimedia technology and digital control mechanisms were able to produce an impressive simulation that attracted the audience's attention.

Movie and Game Technology Will Be Further Integrated

Movies and games are at the forefront of new media art, and their sharing of resources and technology integration will become more universal in the future. In order to clarify the expression of new media, we might as well start with the literal meaning of this word. The culture created by media is a surreal 'imitation' of the world, according to Baudrillard. As a matter of fact, media do not really reflect the voice of the masses but shape our society according to its needs.

The process of artistic creation employs new media technologies. Today, the modern museum (fig. 6) has a modern aesthetic on the exterior of the building. The museum uses light, shadows, sounds or images to show the exhibits, and enhances the interaction with the audience through fresh experiences such as audiovisual effects (fig. 7).

Fig. 4. Golden Monkey Primula.
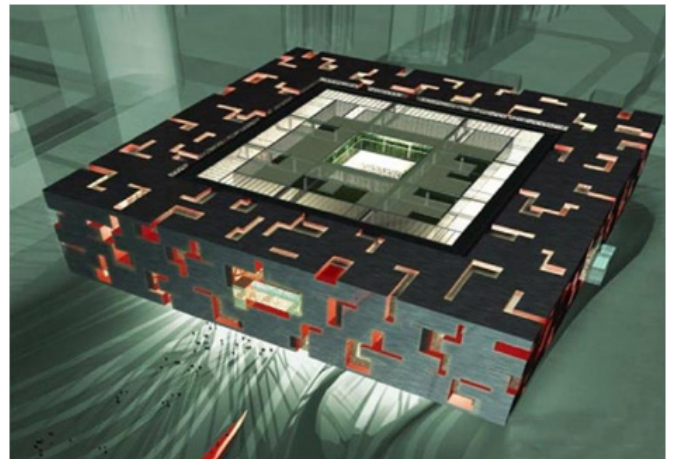
Fig. 6. Museum seen from above.

Fig. 5. High-tech Experience.
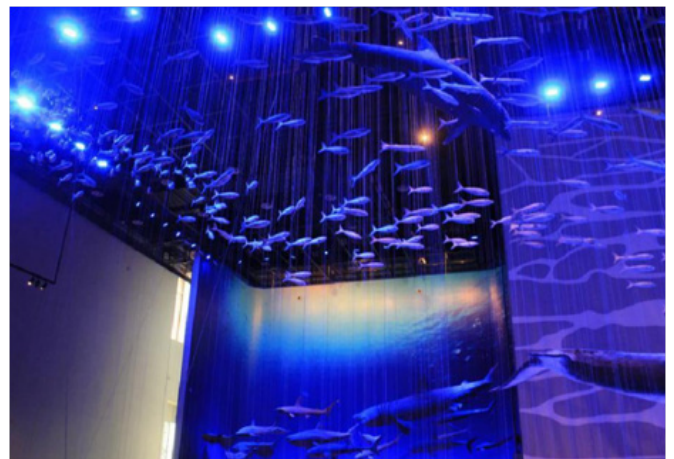
Fig. 7. Museum Exhibition Hall "Sea of Dreams".

Conclusions

The current phenomena show that we are in the context of postmodern culture. With the continuous development and innovation of science and technology, the characteristics of new media art in this context are constantly developing and evolving. New media art faced a context that could not be clearly defined and has become the most popular form of art in the last century. However, today, compared to the fascinating digital art, it has long lost the concept of 'new', so much so that a more accurate name should be given to the art type of employing new media technology. The subdivision and mutation of modern art is not over, it has only just begun. The theory of new media art is also a part of this process. It is necessary to participate in the interaction of various elements in this process and react to each element. This high degree of immersion and interaction is entirely dependent on the development of technology. It represents the most powerful and sharp exploratory force in the development of art today. It continuously integrates various artistic styles and embodies the complexity and pluralism of artistic development. The influence of new media art theory on new media art criticism is profound and crucial. This will bring greater possibilities for new media art, and we look forward to a better future in this field.

Notes

[1] M. Freire, E. McCarthy, "Four Approaches to New Media Art Education", *Art Education* 67, no. 2 (2014): pp. 28-31.

[2] Xuan Wang, "New Media Art in Japan Review Based Computer Graphics Technology", *Applied Mechanics and Materials* 687-691 (2014): pp. 1774-1777.

[3] D. Dietrich, F. Adelstein, "Archival science, digital forensics, and new media art", *Digital Investigation* 14 (2015): S137-S145.

[4] G. Wharton, "Re-Collection: Art, New Media, and Social Memory", *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 56, no. 3/4 (2017): pp. 1-2.

[5] See A.B. Paterakis, A. Price, H. Kapan, "Walking the walk and the impact of space and place on new media art", *Studies in Conservation* 61, Sup. 2 (2016): pp. 174-182. C. Post, "Preservation practices of new media artists", *Journal of Documentation* 73, no. 4 (2017): pp. 716-732. C. Rosa, "Preserving New Media: Educating Public Audiences through Museum Websites", *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 34, no. 1 (2015): pp. 181-191.

[6] K. Anderson, "Object Intermediaries: How New Media Artists Translate the Language of Things", *Leonardo* 47, no. 4 (2014): pp. 352-359.

[7] I. Nahonserfaty, R. Ahmed, "New Media and Communication Across Religions and Cultures", *Register* 5, no. 79 (2014): p. 122.

[8] K. Menzies, F. Johnson, "Academic attitudes toward new media: An exploratory multidisciplinary study", *The Information Society* 32, no. 1 (2016): pp. 1-13.

[9] L. Kingston Mann, "What Can Feminism Learn from New Media?", *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 11, no. 3 (2014): pp. 292-297.

[10] E. Scheer, "Robotics as New Media Dramaturgy: The Case of the Sleepy Robot", *TDR/The Drama Review* 59, no. 3 (2015): pp. 140-149.

[11] A. Everett, "Black Film, New Media Industries, and BAMMs (Black American Media Moguls) in the Digital Media Ecology", *Cinema Journal* 53, no. 4 (2014): pp. 128-133.

[12] M. Wouters, S. Morales, "The Contemporary Art of Cost Management Methods during Product Development", *Advances in Management Accounting* 24, no. 1 (2014): pp. 259-346.

[13] A. Enigbokan, "Delai Sam: social activism as contemporary art in the emerging discourse of DIY urbanism in Russia", *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 9, no. 2 (2015): pp. 1-16.

[14] A. I. Miller, "Colliding Worlds - How Cutting-Edge Science is Redefining Contemporary Art", *Nature* 510, no. 7504 (2014): p. 216.

[15] P. Pénet, K. Lee, "Prize & price: The Turner Prize as a valuation device in the contemporary art market", *Poetics* 43 (2014): pp. 149-171.

[16] R. Cook, "The mediated manufacture of an 'avant-garde': a Bourdieusian analysis of the field of contemporary art in London, 1997-9", *The Sociological Review* 49, S. 1 (2001): pp. 164-185.

[17] P. Kuppers, "Outsider Histories, Insider Artists, Cross-Cultural Ensembles: Visiting with Disability Presences in Contemporary Art Environments", *TDR/The Drama Review* 58, no. 2 (2014): pp. 350.

Between Museum as a Symbol and Museum as a Forum: Power Relations in Building a Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw

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The construction of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie, abbreviated as MSN) is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2022. Due to its prominence regarding its symbolic value and location, it is one of the most hotly debated museum projects in contemporary Poland. Its history started in 2005, when the Minister of Culture and the mayor of Warsaw signed an agreement on the creation of the new museum. It has been a long-awaited museum, called for since the end of the Second World War, meant to be the first museum of contemporary art in Poland, and its significance was emphasized by its central location in Warsaw, on Plac Defilad (Defilad Square), in the immediate vicinity of monumental Palace of Culture and Science (built in 1952-1955), considered a Stalinist symbol of the capital, and by its architecture, which was meant to be spectacular, comparable to the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao.

The story of the MSN signifies a shift from the 'iconic' vision of a museum building, which was meant to emphasize the power of authorities and create a brand image to be used in tourism and international relations, towards the 'civil society' vision which empowers people – users of the cultural offerings of the museum. In this article, I discuss on what grounds and to what extent an art museum building becomes the subject of a power struggle.

The Pursuit of a Museum Icon[1]

In trying to assert its position after 1989, Poland needed modern buildings whose unique architectural expression would bring together the names of cities with unique forms. In almost all cities that have undertaken museum design, competition proposals, investors, politicians, and the media have made reference to iconic architecture, and the hunger for flamboyant forms has been great. Today, architecture is in a different place, as catchy fireworks have given way to quality. The architecture of the MSN was meant to eclipse everything that had been built in Poland to that point, most importantly in the areas of culture and museums.

Unlike the 1990s, the following decades were favourable with regard to cultural investments. In 2005, an international architectural competition was announced, and an institution established. The museum director Tadeusz Zielniewicz, before the announcement of the results, stated that "the team working on the organization of the museum dreams that the building, in a sense, would be the first exhibit. That it could be a value in itself". (Statement for Dziennik, after Piątek, 2007: 66). The expectations about this new symbol were so great that the lights of the Palace were symbolically turned off at the time of signing the letter of intent between the city and the ministry, signifying that it was to give way to the museum in the future (Zielniewicz, Borkowski, Mazur, 2006).

The terms of the architectural competition stipulated that

> Architecturally, the building of the Museum should be a formal and meaningful counterpoint for the Palace of Culture, and its shape a globally recognizable symbol of Warsaw. The museum, together with the adjacent square and park, will become the most important public place in the revitalized centre of Warsaw (Regulamin konkursu na opracowanie koncepcji architektonicznej [2005]: 7).

Sadly, in terms of architecture, the years 2005-2012 were time wasted. They were filled with scandals around the organization of the competition – the first competition was annulled due to excessively strict regulations, and many acclaimed international architecture studios would not enter the second competition – and also around the winning project.

Fig. 1. Visualisation of the Museum of Modern Art designed by Thomas Phifer and Partners who won the third architectural competition in 2014. © The Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

The winner of the first prize (by a ratio of votes of 7:6) was Christian Kerez, an architect from Switzerland who proposed a minimalist project reminiscent of two juxtaposed cubes, with fully glazed lower storeys whose only ornament was a sculptural roof treatment. After the previous, ineffective appeals to the city authorities and the minister, the museum's director resigned, followed by the entire program council as a form of protest against the jury's choice.

Extremely negative comments dominated the online forum on the architectural competition's website. Kerez's building was associated by most with the grey concrete blocks typical of socialist architecture that filled the cities and provinces of the Eastern bloc countries, as well as with the rectangular shape of superstores that dominate cityscapes. After the results were announced, the press reprinted an image of the museum design with the logo of the French supermarket chain Carrefour that had appeared in online discussions.

Attacked by a wave of criticism after the announcement of the competition's results, Christian Kerez defended himself in the project's description posted on the competition's website:

The new museum is not big enough to compete with such a gigantic building [the Palace of Culture and Science]. Therefore, this new building can also be seen as an extension of the Palace of Culture in Warsaw. [...] However, the proposed new building does not submit to the neoclassical structures of its immediate surroundings – the new Museum of Art is rather the antithesis of the 1950s architecture [...]. Contrasting with the vertical skyscrapers from that time, the Museum of Modern Art consists of horizontal surfaces arranged one on top of the other (Kerez).

Regardless of the huge stir in the circles of architects, city planners, art historians, museologists, and publicists, the project was accepted for implementation and a new director, Joanna Mytkowska, was appointed. From the beginning, however, problems around this investment amassed. In 2008, the city authorities halted the design work for almost six months to consider the idea of placing another institution, the Rozmaitości Theatre, within the building. Finally, in 2009, the architect resumed the design with the additional task of placing a theatre room in the building.

Fig. 2. Ongoing construction of the Museum of Modern Art in Spring 2021. The museum is located in the heart of Warsaw, the colonnade visible in the photo on the left is the basis of the Palace of Culture and Science. © Marta Ejsmont/The Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

This resulted in designing the building again, and only the general shape was preserved. The next three years were wasted by problems regarding land ownership on Plac Defilad and delays in the delivery of the construction project by the architect. It turned out that the municipality did not own the entire plot on which the museum was to be built. Kerez declared that he could not provide the complete documentation without the proof of ownership of the land, whereas the municipality claimed that it was not necessary. In 2012, as a result of a long-lasting conflict, the city of Warsaw broke the contract with the architect and brought the case to court.

Towards the Creation of a Museum Forum

Many commentators claimed that blaming Kerez seemed a tactical move aimed at creating a 'diplomatic' escape from the unwanted investment (e.g., see Jagodzińska 2012). Despite justified fears that it could have been the end of the dream of building a museum of contemporary art in Warsaw, the second half of 2013 opened a new chapter in the history of the MSN building. A new (and third) architectural competition was announced for the design of

the building housing the museum and theatre. This time, the competition's description clearly stated that the goal of the project was not to search for an iconic building, but to build social bonds.

> The Museum's building is not meant to be an icon, nor a monument – the aim is to create a place of contact between residents and modern art in Warsaw, as well as meeting places for Varsovians and visitors to the capital. This social situation alone will be the best monument for the city (Wytyczne programowe… 2014: 8).

It was also meant to become "an important place for education, entertainment, leisure and meetings, to help the public from various environments participate in culture and experience architecture and public space" (Wytyczne programowe… 2014: 8).

In the new competition process, the selection was based not on an anonymous architectural concept, but on a project that was to be implemented by an architect based on a general vision and portfolio. The American studio Thomas Phifer and Partners won the competition in 2014 for showing, according to the competition's com-

Fig. 3. "Emilia" pavilion, where the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw was operating in 2012-2016 (afterwards it was dismantled). It is surrounded by socialist residential blocks and modern office buildings. Opposite, across the street, is the Palace of Culture and Science. (Figs. 3-6 © Author).

mission, "the highest understanding of the functional program" of both designed institutions. This project, similarly to the criticized vision of Kerez, seems visually anti-iconic. This time, however, there was no social mobilization against the outcome of the competition. It seems that consensus was reached around the belief that any building would be better than none.

The museum's project was started over the following several months, entailing a close cooperation between the museum's team and the designer's understanding of the character and logic of architecture, urban planning, and the social space of Warsaw. As a result, a minimalist design of two cubes emerged – a white museum and a black theatre.

The Centre Pompidou is the point of reference for the MSN project in terms of openness of the building and of the relationship it builds with the adjacent square. The square in front of the building in Paris, also designed by the building's architects, has become an important meeting place and location for artistic events. The landscape has become an integral part of the concept, and the view onto it from the observation deck, escalators, and elevators was directly incorporated in the building's design. In Warsaw, this function will be given to so-called city rooms – places of rest opening onto views of the city. In the main space on the ground floor, there is a large auditorium which will be visually open up to the level of the exhibition rooms. This element was taken from the museum's temporary location in the pavilion called 'Emilia', in the cen-

tre of which there was an atrium, and an auditorium inside. From the exhibition spaces located there, one could look down at the auditorium and participate in organized events. "This element of the project indicates that these meetings, this audience presence, are to constitute the institution", as noted by the Director Joanna Mytkowska (interview with Joanna Mytkowska in Jagodzińska 2019: 99).

Learning and Testing in the Shadow of Museum Building

The history of the MSN building illustrates the change in the museum paradigm where the attention has shifted from the collection to the public; in this case, it is a shift from the shape of the building towards its functionality. Even though the construction of the museum was considerably delayed, and huge financial resources were lost, the whole discussion that evolved and the transition time required for the newly established institution – it started its program activity in 2008 – was much needed for the future of the museum. Mytkowska admits that at the time,

> we have learned what a museum can be. We were not working, of course, from the perspective of a well-organized institution, but at the beginning it was rather a collective union that had to cope with all the problems that affect the average citizen. It brought the museum so close to its audience. [...] Throughout the years, we learned from the mistakes that were really made on a small scale. This is definitely priceless. It also forces us to be extremely creative – this comes from the simple fact that, in the absence of many things or solutions, you have to find them yourself (Jagodzińska 2019: 97).

The prolonged wait for the museum building has been used to get to know its neighbourhood and public. Luckily, the temporary headquarters of the museum are located near to the intended site – since 2008, it is the back of the furniture pavilion Emilia (initially only a warehouse, in the years 2012-2016 the entire pavilion). Since 2017, exhibitions have been organised in spacious, but more distant pavilion on the Vistula River, while the offices are still located in the back of the Emilia (the pavilion was dismantled in 2016). The four-year exhibition activity in the furniture pavilion helped establish momentum and create a

Fig. 4. Passage between the warehouse of the furniture pavilion "Emilia" and the pavilion, 2015. Spaces of both buildings were fully glazed and one could look into the exhibition spaces from the street.

Fig. 5. Museum sign on the façade.

lively space of discussion not only about art, but also about contemporary culture and current societal issues. The pavilion's fully glazed elevations provided the opportunity to observe the Palace in a way that will be similar to the newly erected building.

The Warsaw Under Construction festival, inaugurated in 2009, has been a powerful tool for the rooting of the museum in its location. Every year, it becomes a platform for discussion on various topical issues related to the urban and visual spaces of Warsaw. It revolves around the main exhibition that is always staged in a different location in the city, and the program includes a whole range of discursive events. The 2017 9th edition, called *Plac Defilad: A Step Forward* was devoted to the future location of the museum. The exhibition was presented in a gallery located in the Palace, and many program activities were organised in the square.

This time, the museum was not only the location where documents, research, and comments give room to discussions, but it also took an active role in building a group of local stakeholders that represent their common interests. There was a need to speak with a single voice about the future of the square adjacent to the plot of the museum and theatre (called the Central Square), on the other side of the Palace. Artur Jerzy Filip, researcher and practitioner of innovative forms of cross-sectoral urban project management, became the museum's consultant and plenipotentiary for building the partnership. On behalf of the museum, he started to form a group called 'Local Stewards of Plac Defilad' (modelled after New York City-

based benchmarks, see Filip 2020) consisting of seven institutions with entrances on the square. Although the group failed to build any permanent cooperation mechanisms with the city (which was one of its aims), its major success was the creation of networks of neighbours that had never cooperated before and started to voice their joint stance on the matter of the square. The group was active until the autumn of 2019, when the design of the future Central Square entered its technical phase.

Another major project of the MSN is the Bródno Sculpture Park, initiated in 2009 by the artist Paweł Althamer and co-organized by the district authorities of Bródno (which is a distant district of Warsaw). This experimental park encompasses traditional sculptures, as well as installations, pictorial elements, sound interventions and performative acts (defined as 'social sculptures'). Activities in recent years have been undertaken jointly with the local community and have a participatory character.

Fig. 6. "Emilia" pavilion inside – all floors with exhibition space were organised around a central staircase. On the ground floor, at the very bottom of this well, there was an audiovisual conference room.

Conclusions

Struggles regarding the creation of the building for the MSN have been going on simultaneously with museological debates on the changing definition of museum adopted by the International Council of Museums, so that it would reflect in a better way a shift towards the public of the museum. The high social demand for a museum of contemporary art, its central location, and its politically charged neighborhood resulted in a difficult position for a young institution – it has been created in the spotlight, where all possible interests and power relations have crossed.

It is ironic that the final design has the same spirit as the first one – a white box. It responds to the needs of the museum in a better way, but it is because of the time that passed that the team of the museum was allowed to specify what they actually needed. The lesson that can be learned from the history of this museum is that a major public institution should not be just a jewel box to accommodate a function, no matter if it is an extravagant or minimalist project. It needs to address the needs of its specific location and the mission and character of the institution. And, to know what these needs are, the institution should come first to be able to test various strategies.

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Note

1 The history of the MSN is based on Jagodzińska 2020.

SESSION 3

Art and Nature.
Cultures of Collecting

CHAIRS

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Aby Warburg in Arizona: The Denkraum *of Nature and Art*

Anja Grebe
Art, Nature, Metamorphosis: Maria Sibylla Merian as Artist and Collector

João Oliveira Duarte
Archiving Nature. From Vandelli's Curiosity Cabinet to the Natural History Cabinet

Elizabeth J. Petcu
Palissy and the Clash of Natural and Artistic Processes

Matthew Martin
The Philosopher's Stone: Art and Nature in Eighteenth-Century European Porcelain Production

Stefan Laube
Collecting the Other Way Round: Collecting and Being Collected
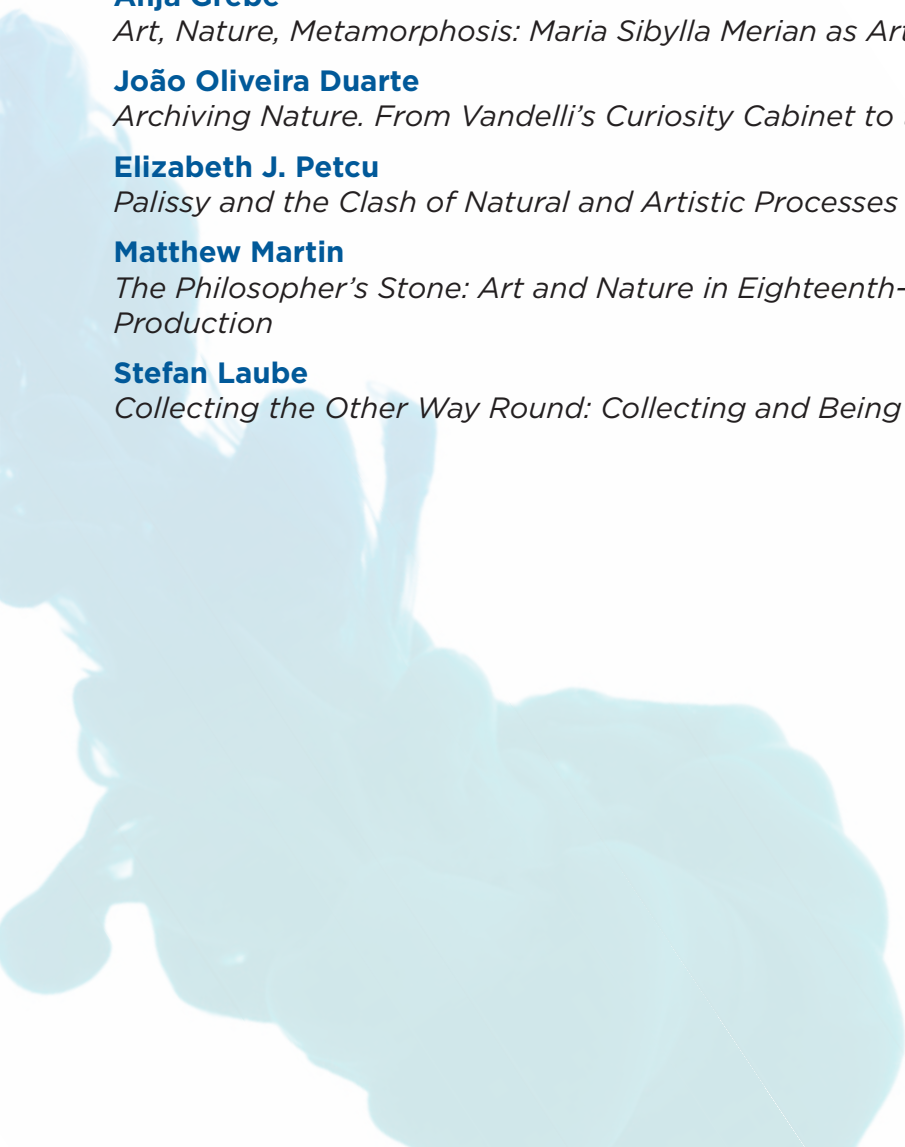
Introductions to Session 3

The traditional historian of art – as I believe him to be – is accustomed to reflecting on the relationship between art and nature in the wake of ancient Greek thought. As a matter of fact, it was Aristotle who popularised the formula: "art imitates nature". It looks like a simple dictum, but it is not really like that. The meaning of the words 'art' and 'nature' varies according to the space-time coordinates of the interpreter, and the same is true for the meaning of the verb 'to imitate'. The distinction between *natura naturans* (that is, the physical laws that govern the products of nature) and *natura naturata* (that is, the outward appearance of those same products) helps us understand why both the architect who builds and the painter who represents legitimately believe to imitate nature. The matter is more complex when the typically Biblical idea of a single God who creates all things is grafted onto the hard core of ancient Greek thought. Aristotelian and Christian at the same time, Saint Thomas Aquinas added to the original formula "art imitates nature" the wise and witty clarification: "as it can". This is a clarification that helps us understand why a protagonist of Flemish naturalism like Jan van Eyck accompanied his signature with the motto "Als ich can", meaning 'How I can'.[1] In more recent times, the affirmation of an immanentist metaphysics and the associated absorption of divine creativity in the person of the artist have further complicated – or rather definitively distorted – the traditional sense of both the classical formula and its Christian interpretation. And yet the comparison between art and nature continues to interest those who have not definitively given up asking questions about the place that man occupies in the world. Indeed, the global perspective in which we are immersed also as art historians offers the possibility of going beyond not only the prevailing Western point of view, but also the intrinsic limits to the concept of 'imitation'. Indeed, imitation does not exhaust the relationship between art and nature, which involves numerous other meeting points in the fields of aesthetics, science, technique, and the classification of reality. This is what we intend to demonstrate with the present third session of our conference, significantly entitled *Art and Nature. Cultures of Collecting*. The development of the program was essentially possible thanks to Avinoam Shalem. I thank him from the bottom of my heart and leave the word to him.

Marco Collareta

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[1] For this interpretation of Jan van Eyck's motto, the reader can refer to M. Collareta, "Als ich can", *Predella*, 24. http://www. predella.it/archivio/predella21/index.html), Sept. 2007.

In a lively conversation with his colleagues in a relaxed atmosphere outside the city of Baghdad, while discussing the feeling of astonishment for the beauty and charm of a young man (*fityan*), Sijistani, the philosopher Abu Sulayman al-Sijistani (born in Sistan in 912, died in Baghdad in 985), in a groundbreaking manner, associated art with intellect and therefore placed it above nature.

It was a clear and pleasant day, and the educated company enjoyed the beauty of the outdoor breeze and nature. Yet, overwhelmed by the beauty of the young man sitting among them, the whole conversion took another path, concentrating on rethinking beauty and nature. One person in this group commented: "If this fellow had someone to train and tend him, and guide him in harmonious modes and various melodies, he would become a wonder and a temptation, for his nature is extraordinary, his artistry is marvelous".[1] To this comment, Sijistani immediately answered:

> Discuss with me what you were saying about nature. Why does it need art? For we know that art imitates nature, and wish to adhere and draw nigh to it because it falls beneath it… it is a sound opinion and well-expounded proposition. (Art) only imitates (nature) and follows in its track because its level is beneath (that of nature). Yet, you claimed that nature did not suffice for this youth, and that it needed art so perfection might be derived from it and so that it may ultimately be attained with its assistance.

The group of these intellectuals answered and in one voice:

> 'We don't know. It is really a question'.
> He (Sijistani), then, replied:
> 'So, give it some thought'.

After several hesitant verbal exchanges among the scholars, Sijistani kept on speaking and concluded:

> Nature only needs art in this place (i.e., the world) because here art receives dictation from soul and intellect, and it dictates to nature. And it has been ascertained that nature's level is beneath the le-

vel of soul and intellect, and that it loves soul, receives its impressions, follows its command, takes upon itself its perfection, operates by its direction, and writes by its dictation.[2]

This account illustrates the joy of exploring new fields of thinking and the ability to move beyond the restrictions of tradition. Unlike other discussions about the beauty of young men, which usually prompts the more common discussions about youth and adolescence vis-à-vis adulthood, and which, in turn, normally discuss the metamorphosis and ephemerality of our bodies, this particular debate took another path. It underscored the natural and artistic beauty of youth and initiated a whole discussion on Nature and Art. Moreover, this group of scholars embarked upon the broader scope of this discourse. As Kraemer argues: "Sijistani threw out the Aristotelian dictum in order to stimulate a reflection on an assumption that his company took for granted".[3] As a matter of fact, Sijistani revised the Aristotelian dictum that says "art imitates nature" by suggesting that "art improves nature".

Thus, the relationship between art and nature, which has been usually discussed through the concept of mimesis, namely accepting that art imitates nature – and mimesis (*imthal* in Arabic) was and still is, to some extent, the strong argument for *Bilderverbot*, namely iconoclasm, in Islam – was rethought by Sijistani who then suggested a novel constellation of hierarchies between the two.

And yet, medieval claims according to which artists are condemned to the imitation of nature, or that any highly qualified workmanship of the artisans' productions involves divine intervention, suggest that a Division between art and nature is a late medieval and early modern phenomenon. For example, apart from relics, the medieval church treasury usually consisted of naturalia, acheiropoieta and human-made artifacts. Yet, the distinction between natural substances and workmanship, as expressed so clearly in the 12th century by Abbot Suger's manifestation "*materiam superabat opus*", suggests the beginning of the falling-out between nature and art.

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[1] All citations in this introduction on the intellectual discourse with Sijistani near Baghdad are taken from J.L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), pp. 162-163.

[2] It is worth noting that Kraemer drew the readers' attention to Sijistani's most-probable knowledge of Aristotle's theory on nature and art in his *Physica*, *ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

[3] J.L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, cit., p. 165.

Today, in the so-called Anthropocene age, a distinction between natural processes and human activities seems to be anachronistic, let alone irrelevant. Dramatic environmental changes occur today at a scale previously unknown. These are the 'natural' catastrophes that we are experiencing, and the fact that we term them natural clearly emphasizes that no distinction is made in nature between what is artificial and what is natural. Artificial materials have started to play a major role in accelerating natural tragedies and misfortunes, and our world appears far from being natural.

Yet, art making is a human activity which engages with nature and its materials. The formed and tooled artifact is a product on which the relationships between humans and nature are imprinted. We observe these formations, classify them, assign specific temporalities to them, and try to read histories of woman and mankind from them. Anthropology might be the fitting junction in which nature and humans cross, but so is the want for art.

This session has the ambitious aim of discussing varied approaches to and thoughts about nature, artists, and artistic productions of the last 500 years. These approaches involve varied ways and systems of documenting, collecting, and classifying art and nature, which suggest estrangements and turning points in the history of thinking about nature, revisiting concepts of craftsmanship and techniques, differentiating human thoughts from human deeds, retrieving and reclaiming the landscape from nature, and discovering temporalities in natural as well as artificial materials.

Avinoam Shalem

Aby Warburg in Arizona: The *Denkraum* of Nature and Art

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"It is an old book to leaf through, Athens-Oraibi, cousins all!".[1]

It was this paraphrase of Goethe's Faust that fifty-seven-year-old Aby Warburg chose as an epigraph to his 1923 talk on "Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America" (better known as "A Lecture on Serpent Ritual") at Ludwig Binswanger's Kreuzlingen asylum where he had been living for the past three years. To demonstrate the bridge that links these two geographic, intellectual and historical poles – classical antiquity (Athens) with modern-day Hopi life and worldview (Oraibi) – Warburg offered a series of recollections illustrated by photographs of his North American trip of twenty-seven years prior which has by now become a founding myth of Warburg studies, the germinating event for the birth of iconology or even cultural history as practiced by Warburg's disciples.[2] Alternatively, if one is more cynical, Warburg's expedition and its afterlife has increasingly descended to the status of an art historical cliché, to wit, the scholar who cures himself of his mental affliction by evoking and working through a pagan practice he had witnessed as a young man in the American Southwest (the Freudian analyses practically write themselves). This is not to belittle the important (and in some cases revisionist) work that historians and thinkers like George Didi-Huberman, Michael Steinberg or David Freedberg have done in the wake of Warburg's own ground-breaking transdisciplinary scholarship on ritual, gesture and the psychological and anthropological study of art.[3] Rather, like the sediment accruing on top of an archaeological site or the excess of ornamentation that Warburg saw as a sign of decadence in Baroque art, we have for some time been in danger of forgetting the trip's original purpose and its actual importance for Warburg's work and orientation of thought.

In what follows, I would therefore like to propose a virtual "excavation" through this terrain of scholarship on Warburg's 1896 voyage that has accumulated since the publication of a hastily edited English language translation of the Kreuzlingen talk in 1939, but especially in the past three decades.[4] As Warburg put it, in a different context, speaking to the 1912 International Congress of Art History in Rome, "stripping away layer upon layer of unintelligible accretions" allows us, in this case, to return to the journey itself and the natural landscape within which it took place (fig. 1).[5] This need not be a shift away from the ethnographic significance of Warburg's discoveries in Arizona and New Mexico, nor is it a denial of the place of the biographical – important as that was for one of Warburg's intellectual models at the time, Thomas Carlyle – but a call in favour of the conceptual model of *space* (as landscape, and thought-space) as a crucial corollary to Warburg's already developed understanding of *time* (survival/afterlife of antiquity). Through a consideration of the geographic, geomorphological, meteorological and vernacular landscapes that the German cultural historian traversed in the winter and spring before he turned thirty, I argue that the indigenous conceptualization of the man-made and natural topography of the land marked Warburg's mental landscape in ways that go beyond the famous ceremonies that he may or may not have witnessed at the time. Beyond a mere "journey toward archetypes" as Fritz Saxl would later call it, this was above all a journey in the vast and rapidly changing territories of the American West.[6] His travel should be seen as a spatial performance of his theories, not a simple way-station towards his mature formulations on culture. Symbol, distance, orientation, movement – so many of the keywords of the Warburgian method stem from a systematic reflection on space and nature. To uncover that we have to go back to Warburg the aspiring

Fig. 1. Photograph of the participants in the 1912 International Congress of Art History in Rome. Warburg is fifth from the left in the first row.

Americanist, Warburg the traveller, Warburg the image-hunter.

Amerikanistik

Incredible as it may sound, writing on Warburg's six-month trek thought the American West has so far tended to ignore its geographic and cultural specificity. It's as if the German *privatgehlert* was seeking to illustrate his thesis on the continuity and transformation of the symbolic thinking of antiquity in the contemporary world, and it did not matter whether he found his proof among the Navajos and the Hopis of the old Spanish Southwest, the Maoris of Polynesia, or in Japan where he had initially planned to continue his trip. Granted Warburg was himself prone to universalizing assumptions about the people and places he encountered, and David Freedberg has adequately demonstrated just how many things about the indigenous populations and their lifestyle went right over his head, taken as he was (like any German of his generation) with Karl May's romantic tales of the Wild West as wilderness. And yet, time and again Warburg affirmed the importance of American cultural history, with all its layers of colonial conquest, to the development of his thought on cultural anthropology and the place of emotions in human creative expression. How else could one justify the fact that the United States was his first substantial journey abroad after the completion of his studies and that he cut short what had been planned as a world tour – his brother Felix had already completed one – in order to return to the Southwest for a more in-depth visit starting in March 1896? Or that Warburg's first three public presentations after he returned to Germany, which were also his first of many illustrated talks throughout his career, chronicled this journey to the New World from a touristic as well as research standpoint.[7]

One of these "flickering picture journeys" of "images accompanied by words" as he called them was held at Berlin's Amerikanistenklub (Jan 1897) of which he had been a member. For Philippe Despoix, it was this particular talk for a general public with its ninety-three projected images that served as the model for his famous 1923 speech in Kreuzlingen, both in terms of the slides-and-improvised-lecture format and in terms of the themes he addressed, and the sequence and narrative he constructed.[8] Warburg was in frequent correspondence with important figures of American ethnography like Jesse Walter Fewkes and Franz Boas throughout his life – Boas even invited him to settle in the US and help establish the nascent field of anthropology there – and wrote articles on topics like the fin-de-siècle American chapbooks like *The Lark* (published in San Francisco). At the very end of his life, Warburg was in the advanced stages of preparation for a return trip to the New World, "once again to see America, which I have loved with unyielding force for thirty-three years," as he put it.[9] He also deemed such a trip crucial to the completion of the Atlas Mnemosyne, his iconological testament. Time and again he stressed the "significance of ethnologic American research for the fundamental principles of cultural studies".[10] His colleague and successor at the Warburg Library Fritz Saxl informs us that when Warburg died in October 1929 he had offered his library as

a venue for the upcoming Congress of American Anthropology in which he planned to participate.[11]

If Warburg's attachment to what we could now call American cultural studies from his time as a (self-admittedly) 'bad traveller' in his early thirties to his dying months in 1929 is well established, we should remember that this attachment was not predicated on the novelty, technological prowess and scientific know-how of the East Coast of the United States, but rather the meeting point of natural and cultural forces in the vast expanses of the West and Southwest. Warburg referred to the "emptiness of civilization in the American east" as the motivation for his "escape to the natural object and to scholarship [...] to visit Western America both as a modern construction and in its Spanish-Indian underlayers.[12]

Naturreisen

Warburg chose this itinerary using a combination of popular travel guides like the one offered by the Fred Harvey Company whose extensive network of railways and hotels had led to a boom in tourism in the area, as well as scientific treatises (fig. 2). At the Smithsonian he had discovered Swedish explorer Gustaf Nordenskjøld's recent book on the Mesa Verde whose photographs served as a key reference for Warburg.[13] Warburg had always tried to incorporate elements of the exact sciences in his cultural-historical research methodology. Anthropologist Carlo Severi argues that the roots for much of Warburg's thinking lie in a "biology of art" as it emerged at the end of the nineteenth century.[14] Instead of fellow humanists, Warburg sought out scientists like John W Powell who was the first director of the Bureau of American Ethnology, and A.L. Fellows, an expert in canal engineering, to serve as advisors and even guides for his expedition. The nascent fields of American anthropology and ethnology were directly and intimately linked to geology and the same was true in Germany where the Ethnology Museum that Warburg would donate many of the artifacts he collected and purchased in the Southwest had started out as a Natural History Museum.[15]

It is small wonder then that Warburg was so attuned to the geomorphology of the terrain as evidenced in his diary and letters home. He sought to test his hypotheses in the liminal spaces (*zwischenräume*) between the many layers of the landscape he found: the geological, the homeland of the Hopis, the Navajos and their antecedents like the Anasazi, and finally the Spanish-Christian and Anglo-American colonial landscapes superimposed on all of the above. Almost half of the photos Warburg took and half of the ones he included in his 1897 talks can be described as scenery shots of one kind or another. An amateur though he was as a photographer, Warburg had a pretty developed sense of how to stage the landscape. As Uwe Fleckner has observed, his "proto-cinematic sequences lead the viewer through the expanses of the Southwest wilderness" capturing the length of railway track and depots that structured the surrounding space and underscoring the distance from 'civilization' back on the East

Chicago	early Nov
Denver	Nov 20
Colorado Springs	Nov 23
Durango	Dec 2
Mancos	Dec 3
Wetherill Ranch	Dec 5-10
Durango	Dec 10-13
Santa Fe	Dec 14-18
Albuquerque	Dec 18-Jan 21
Santa Fe	Jan 22
Pasadena	Feb 6
Coronado Beach	Feb 12
San Francisco	Feb 26-Mar 27
Flagstaff	Mar 31
Albuquerque	Apr 5
Fort Wingate	Apr 10
Holbrook	Apr 14
Keam's Canyon	Apr 20
Oraibi	Apr 22-May 2
Keam's Canyon	May 3
Albuquerque	May 7

Fig. 2. Map and itinerary for Warburg's 1895-96 trip to the United States. Cartographic background is based on US Geologic Survey's 1895 *Map of the United States*.

Coast.[16] In many photographic sequences, Warburg constructs veritable tracking shots starting with a panorama of a village in its natural setting (long shot), then advancing to the built environment (medium shot) to finally penetrate into the interior of a building or one or more of its residents in close-up.

Occasionally however, the natural (macro) and cultural (micro) elements are layered on one another in involuntary but eloquent acts of photographic syncretism. Due to an apparent rookie mistake, one of Warburg's photographs ended up featuring a composite image where the head of the subject in the foreground and the scene in the middle ground merge into the landscape. Perhaps

Fig. 3. Unknown photographer (possibly Warburg), [Double exposure of portrait of Hopi male with Hemis-Katchina dance scene], c. March-April 1896.

an over-determined photographic error, this composite is nonetheless a great visual summary of the whole trip (fig. 3).

Another no less important aspect of the natural milieu constantly preoccupying Warburg was the weather in its symbolic and climatic dimensions.[17] He noted the extent to which the symbolic systems and ritual practices used by Pueblo inhabitants (a "magical-architectonic polarity" in his words) were conditioned by the desert climate and marvelled at how they had managed to thrive in a "barren landscape" without much

government support for agriculture.[18] In perhaps the best-known discovery that Warburg made during his stay in North America, he contrasted European to Pueblo symbolism of snakes where they function as stand-ins for lightening: mastery of the serpent symbolizes mastery of the forces that bring rain. Warburg never witnessed the famous snake-dance ceremony that took place in Oraibi after he had departed in May. The emphasis placed by commentators on this single non-event of his trip has long overshadowed everything else that *did* take place during it. For all that, the figural tautology (snake-lightning-ladder) illustrated in Cleo Jurino's January 1896 drawing for Warburg is a testament to the impossibility of separating biology from ethnology and natural history in any investigation of the indigenous worldview. More generally, the symbolic epistemology of the Hopi was what stayed with Warburg the longest: as he engaged with the work of Giordano Bruno toward the end of his life, his notes returned to the Zuni creation myth represented with quasi-abstract symbols for "the world-house". The zigzag movement of these lines connects traditional Hopi architecture with their counterparts in the movement of the serpent and according to Svetlana Boym "opens into the space of hieroglyphic mediation between word and image".[19] The way the Hopi oriented themselves in the cosmos (Greek for ornament), from the inverted amphitheatre shape of the kiva, via the step-back shape of their ladder-like roofs and upwards to the lightening-bearing clouds gave Warburg a way to understand the process through which ornament and ritual construct an architectonics of nature – not to master it, as in the assertion of some scholars that in-corporation and symbolization hold nature at a distance in order to dominate it, but instead to contemplate it.[20]

Photography

Boym finds Warburg's photographs of native architecture "quite remarkable in the way they deviate from the conventions of ethnographic photography with their strange, off-cantered compositions and multiple shadows".[21] We could add that they also differ from the visual vocabulary of popular travel lecturers of the day like Burton Holmes. Holmes visited the same locations three years after Warburg and subsequently compiled his images (moving and still) into one of his illustrated talks that drew thousands of patrons

wherever he spoke across North America. Finally published as "Moki Land" in 1901, it presents a romantic view of Hopi "citadels" and "Acropoles," the remnants of a once-great civilization (fig. 4).[22] "A changeless corner in our land of perpetual change," reads Holmes' opening sentence. Hewing closely to the picturesque aesthetic of the day, Holmes' photographs of scenery seem inspired by his famous motto "to travel is to possess the world".[23] If shots of the desert and some of the landmarks occasionally resembled Warburg's own snapshots, they nonetheless come from a completely opposed conception of progress: for Warburg, the elimination of distance and the simultaneity brought about by technology presented a threat to the space for contemplation so copiously gained by the Hopi over the centuries. Between possessing the world and being possessed by it – as in the ceremonies witnessed by Warburg – the German scholar would seem to prefer the latter. As David Freedberg has argued, Warburg

Fig. 4. "The Photographic Battery", from B. Holmes, "Moki Land", in *Lectures* (Battle Creek, MI: Little-Preston Company, Limited, 1901), VI, p. 298.

had an acute "sense of the tragedy entailed by Western man's detachment from nature, and then his overcoming of it by violent means… [by the] annexation of nature".[24]

If not exactly ethnographic or touristic, Warburg's subsequent use of his photos of New Mexico and Arizona was not, strictly speaking, art historical either. Instead of Heinrich Wölfflin's com-

parative projections, Warburg's 1923 lecture adopted a sequential/narrative model following his traversal of geographic space. His later exhibition panels assembled both for his various lectures through the years and ultimately for the Atlas Mnemosyne used photography and re-photography to assemble extensive diagrams of comparative symbology vastly more complex to those of a more formalist art historiography. From the time-based slideshows to the space-based exhibition panels and the Atlas, Warburg's late work is a masterclass in the comparative spatialization of cultural memory.[25]

It is only recently that scholars working on Warburg's *Collected Writings* have completed the work of identifying the locations, landscapes and buildings captured by his Buckeye Kodak camera and there have been at least three different exhibitions of parts of this photographic corpus in the past 20 years – most recently one curated by Horst Bredekamp at the Humboldt Forum in 2018.[26] The logistics of 'camera hunting' (a popular expression of the day for amateur travel photography) were far from straight forward: while the Buckey was an early model of a personal portable camera advertised with Kodak's well-known "you press a button we do the rest" tagline, one had to possess a more than rudimentary understanding of focus, composition and contrast. It was also a costly proposition since beside purchasing the camera one had to pay licenses to photograph in certain territories, not to mention the costs involved in developing glass slides for projection that Warburg used in his 1897 and 1923 lectures.[27] While such costs were insubstantial for someone of Warburg's means, they point to the commercialization of nature and so-called primitive cultures in which Warburg knowingly partook. Part trespassing, part participatory ethnography, part touristic picture-hunting, he understood his complicity in the travel economy of the day, prefacing one of his lectures as "un coin de la nature vu par un Kodak".[28] There are numerous analogies aimed at giving his audiences a grounding in familiar scenes: the Mesa Verde is "an American Pompeii," the Garden of the Gods in Colorado was a "Böcklinesque world" while the cliffs of the "Mesa Encantada" recall the popular holiday resort of Heligoland in the Baltic Sea.[29] Nevertheless, Warburg's eye was attuned to architectural and ritual details staged in space, in a way that substantially differs from contemporary travel lecturers.

By the time he had left the Cliff Palaces of the Navajos for Uncle Sam's civic palaces and city-scapes of the West Coast with their faux European architectural styles, the distance-eliminating electric wires snaking all around them, he realized that his trip *had* to end with this return to Western civilization at the edge of another ocean: the European ideological West has found its counterpart in the American geographical West.

Conclusion: Cartography and Space-Time Models

To Gaston Bachelard's assertion that every cartography implies a metaphysics we could contrast Aby Warburg's self-evaluation as a "seismograph of the soul, to be placed along the dividing lines between different cultural atmospheres and systems".[30] Both statements point to the function of mapping as a way of knowing with implications that enjoin nature and culture, a worldview that is at the same time a view of the world. Warburg often conceived of his mission and his trajectory as a scholar in terms of maps. He opened his 1897 travel-lectures with projections of detailed maps that demonstrated how features both natural (the mesas and desert of the Southwest) and man-made (railroad stations) determined his route and researches. Late in his life he charted his own personal trajectory in genealogical and intellectual terms between occident and orient while prefacing his Atlas Mnemosyne with three panels solely dedicated to maps, star charts and cosmological models dedicated to the systematization of man's understanding of his world throughout history.[31]

Warburg meant for his famous library to become an observatory from where scholars could acquire the necessary distance and detachment from the natural world and the symbolic systems imposed upon it so as to better sketch the routes of the "Bilderfahrzeuge" (image vehicles) imprinted on the "Wanderstrassen" (the byways) of culture.[32] If the historiography of art up to Warburg's time viewed nature in imagistic and thematic terms, as a two-dimensional projection or ideologically neutral canvas to be filled, the history of disciplines like cosmology, geography and natural science were indispensable to the study of images by a science of culture which the Hamburg scholar pioneered. While Warburg's fame is secure as a forerunner of asynchronous models in art historiography that are predicated on after-lives, residues and revivals, we should remember that this time-based formulation has an important spatial correlate. Orientation is a structuring principle of his famous library that he once called a "problem-oriented" universal-energetic institute of orientation.[33] This idea germinated during his time in the landscapes and mesas of New Mexico and Arizona. It was during this period and inspired by his interaction with the natural environment of the American Southwest that Warburg's concept of *Denkraum*, the space of reflection necessary for human art and thought, took root.

Entering the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliotek Warburg when it opened in May 1926 (exactly thirty years after the end of Warburg's American journey), readers gained their orientation in the great oval-shaped reading room where periodicals and general reference works were kept. As Kurt Forster reminds us, this shape distantly recalls the kivas of the Hopi; and indeed, Warburg explicitly brought Cassirer's and the Zuni reflection on cosmology together in his 1923 talk.[34] Following this orientation, one might browse the stacks dedicated to 'Image', 'Word' and 'Action' on the upper levels, relying on the law of spatial proximity that Warburg referred to as the principle of good neighbourliness between books, rather than on a systematic catalogue of the kind most libraries had by then adopted. One might have even chanced upon Warburg's own workspace where the surface of his desk was his private own instrument of orientation, the pattern of arrangement of word and image on the table forming the generative terrain of research; mountains of books with valleys of maps and artworks and perhaps a photograph of Oraibi, that Athens of the West, close at hand.

Notes

[1] A. Warburg, "A Lecture on Serpent Ritual" [1923, published 1939], as cited in *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, trans. with an interpretive essay by M.P. Steinberg (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 70.

[2] My account of Warburg's lecture and 1896 American trip is primarily drawn from the Warburg Institute Archive (WIA.III.46-49), supplement by documents published in A. Warburg, *Bilder aus dem Gebiet der Pueblo-Indianer in Nord-Amerika: Vorträge und Fotografien*, Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe

Band III.2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), particularly U. Fleckner's introduction (pp. 1-24).

3 G. Didi-Huberman, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017); P.A. Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion* (New York: Zone Books, 2004); D. Freedberg, "Warburg's Mask: A Study in Idolatry," in M. Westerman, ed., *Anthropologies of Art* (Williamstown: Clark Institute, 2005), pp. 3-25; H. Bredekamp, *Aby Warburg, Der Indianer: Berliner Erkundungen Einer Liberalen Ethnologie* (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 2019).

4 A. Warburg [tr. by W. Mainland], "A Lecture on Serpent Ritual", *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2, no. 4 (1939): pp. 277-292.

5 A. Warburg, "Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara" [1912], in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999), p. 569.

6 F. Saxl, "Warburg's Visit to New Mexico" [1929-1930], in *Lectures* (London: Warburg Institute, 1957), I, p. 326.

7 A. Warburg, *Werke in einem Band* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), pp. 495-523.

8 P. Despoix, "Conférence-projection et performance orale: Warburg et le mythe de Kreuzlingen", *Intermédialités / Intermediality*, no. 24/25 (2014), available at https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/im/1900-v1-n1-im02279/1034167ar/.

9 Cited by Steinberg in A. Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, cit., p. 108.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 107.

11 Saxl gave a detailed account of Warburg's 1896 journey – including a reading of his unpublished lecture on the Pueblo serpent ritual – to the participants of the International Congress of Art History in September of 1930, nearly a year after Warburg's death. This lecture was later published in 1957.

12 Cited in A. Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, cit., p. 60.

13 G. Nordenskjöld, *The Cliff Dwellers of the Mesa Verde, Southwestern Colorado: Their Pottery and Implements* (Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söner, 1895).

14 C. Severi, "Warburg anthropologue ou le déchiffrement d'une utopie", *L'Homme* 165 (2003): p. 121.

15 A. Warburg, *Bilder aus dem Gebiet der Pueblo-Indianer in Nord-Amerika*, cit., pp. 355-456.

16 U. Fleckner, "Aby Warburgs amerikanische Reise", in A. Warburg, *Bilder aus dem Gebiet der Pueblo-Indianer in Nord-Amerika*, cit., p. 20.

17 Warburg canceled his trip to Japan to avoid having to traverse the Southwest upon his return in the summer, the height of hay fever season. For more recent scholarship on this topic see F. Fehrenbach, C. Zumbusch, *Aby Warburg und die Natur* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019).

18 P.M. Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, cit., p. 319.

19 S. Boym, *Another Freedom: The Alternative History of an Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 59-60 where Jurino's drawing is reproduced.

20 "An important day", Warburg scribbled in his notes when he made this particular association on December 17, 1895. See P. Burke, *Photographs at the Frontier: Aby Warburg in America*, 1895-1896 (London: Merrell Holbertson Publishers, 1998), p. 152.

21 S. Boym, *Another Freedom*, cit., p. 60.

22 'Moki' is an outdated and now considered derogatory term for the Hopi people.

23 B. Holmes, *The Burton Holmes Lectures* (Battle Creek, MI: Little-Preston Company, Limited, 1901), VI, p. 227.

24 D. Freedberg, "Warburg's Mask: A Study in Idolatry", cit., p. 10.

25 A. Warburg, *Bilderreihen und Ausstellungen*, Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe Band II.2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012).

26 Museo Archivio di Fotografia Storica, *Fotografie alla frontiera: Aby Warburg in America, 1895-1896* (Roma: Servizio Pubblicazioni dell'ICCD, 1998); P. Kort, M. Hollein, *I like America: Fictions of the Wild West* (München: Prestel), pp. 176-211. See also the upcoming H. Bredekamp, *Aby Warburg and America: The Art Historian as Ethnographer* (New York: Bard Graduate Center, 2021).

27 Warburg paid $25 for his photographic license in Arizona. P. Burke, *Photographs at the Frontier*, cit., p. 38, n. 26.

28 A. Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, cit., p. 95.

29 As cited in C. Naber, "Pompeii in Neu-Mexico: Aby Warburgs amerikanische Reise", *Freibeuter* 38 (1988): p. 96; and P.A. Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, cit., pp. 200-201.

30 G. Bachelard, *La poétique de l'espace* (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1957), pp. 191-192; P.A. Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, cit., p. 332.

31 A. Warburg, *Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe Band II.2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000).

32 Axel Heil, Margrit Brehm and Roberto Ohrt, "Warburg's Terminology" (Karlsruhe: Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, 2020), available at https://zkm.de/en/event/2016/09/aby-warburg-mnemosyne-bilderatlas/warburgs-terminology.

33 A. Warburg, G. Bing, F. Saxl, *Tagebuch der Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg*, Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe Band VII (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), p. 111.

34 K. Forster, "Aby Warburg: His Study of Ritual and Art on Two Continents", *October* 77 (Summer 1996): p. 13.

Art, Nature, Metamorphosis: Maria Sibylla Merian as Artist and Collector

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In 1679, the thirty-two-year-old artist Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717) published the first volume of her *The wondrous transformation of caterpillars and their remarkable diet of flowers* in Nuremberg. Its title page promised the newest insights into the origin and metamorphosis of "caterpillars, worms, butterflies, moths, flies, and similar creatures" as well as into their diet[1] (fig. 1). The book is exceptional in several ways. First of all, publications on insects were still rare at the time. Secondly, it was written by a woman who had ventured herself into the male-dominated field of natural science. And thirdly, with its lavish full-page engravings, the volume transgresses the borders between art and nature, natural sciences, and artistic practice, and it is directly connected to the practices of collecting.

From the viewpoint of scientific discourse, Maria Sibylla Merian remained an amateur throughout her life. Born in Frankfurt as the youngest daughter of the famous printer and engraver Matthäus Merian (1593-1650), and raised in a milieu of artists and artisans, she had practically no chance of attending a Grammar school or going to university and learn Latin, the basic requirement for a scholarly career.[2] At the age of 18, after an informal apprenticeship in the Frankfurt studio of her stepfather, the still-life painter Jacob Marrell, she married the engraver Johann Andreas Graff (1637-1701) from Nuremberg, and moved to his hometown with him. With Graff, she had two daughters, Johanna Helena and Dorothea Maria, who also became artists.[3] In addition to her responsibilities as housewife and mother, she pursued a career as an artist, naturalist, and tradeswoman. As early as 1675, the German artist biographer Joachim von Sandrart highlighted her multiple talents in his *Teutsche Academie* ('German Academy'). Sandrart emphasized Maria Sibylla's efforts in researching and depicting insects and described her as a follower of Minerva, the ancient goddess of Wisdom and Art.[4]

Fig. 1. Maria Sibylla Merian, *Caterpillar Book*, 1679. Coloured Title Page, previously in the Volkamer collection, Erlangen-Nuremberg, University Library. (H62/CIM.P 38/Wikimedia Commons).

Joachim von Sandrart was not the only author who praised Maria Sibylla Merian's achievements as artist and scientist during the early years of her career. The 'Caterpillar Book' is prefaced by a 'eulogy' composed by the Nuremberg theologist and poet Christoph Arnold (1627-1685). In his poem, Arnold compared Merian to some of the most renowned entomologists from different times and nations in Europe, such as the Swiss naturalist Conrad Gessner (1516-1565) and the Dutch biologist Jan Swammerdam (1637-1680). In early modern times, eulogies like the one composed by Ar-

nold were an important means of highlighting both the objectives of a book and the achievements of its author. According to Arnold, Maria Sibylla was 'astonishing' inasmuch as she combined the knowledge and virtues of a natural scientist *and* of an artist. Moreover, she was a woman.

In 1685, after twenty years of marriage, Maria Sibylla left her husband and moved to Holland with her daughters. She finally settled in Amsterdam in 1691, where she worked as a botanical illustrator and maintained close contacts to the local circle of naturalists and collectors, among which there was Caspar Commelijn, director of the Amsterdam Botanical Garden, the mayor Nicolaas Witsen, the physician Frederik Ruysch, but also several women like Ruysch's daughter Rachel and the collector Agnes Block.[5] At the age of fifty-two, Maria Sibylla undertook a two-year expedition to Suriname together with her younger daughter. In South America, she studied exotic species in their natural surroundings, made numerous drawings and gathered samples of rare specimens which she brought back to Europe to enrich her collection. In 1705, she published her findings in her most renowned book, the *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium*.[6] Maria Sibylla Merian continued her career until her death in Amsterdam in 1717.

Merian's Collection

Shortly after her return from Suriname, Maria Sibylla wrote a letter to her long-time acquaintance from Nuremberg, the physician, botanist, and collector Johann Georg Volkamer the Younger. She informed Volkamer about her safe return and the artistic and scientific outcomes of her journey. As we learn from the letter, Merian had brought a considerable amount of dried and preserved specimens with her, which she used as study material. In her letter to Volkamer, she highlights the 'strangeness' and 'rarity' of the objects, two qualities typically assigned to collectibles in early modern cabinets of art and curiosities:

> [...] since my return from America, I have worked and am still working on bringing everything I searched for and found in the said America on parchment in all its perfection. [...] But everything which I did not have to paint immediately, I have brought with me, as, for instance, the butterflies and beetles and everything which I could conserve in alcohol or which I could dry, and this I am about

to paint [...] everything on parchment in Royal Folio, the plants, and animals in life size. This is really curious, as there are many strange and rare things in it which have never come to light.

To refinance her voyage to Suriname and the lavish folio edition of her 'Metamorphosis' book, Maria Sibylla even sold parts of her collection of dried and preserved species. In her letter to Volkamer, she offered selected objects for sale; among them, there were also bigger items such as a crocodile or snakes:

> I have brought all these animals, which will be part of this work, with me in dried form and well-preserved in boxes, so that they can be seen by everybody. In addition, I still have in jars with alcohol a crocodile and many snakes and other animals, as well as 20 round boxes with various kinds of butterflies, beetles, hummingbirds, cicadas [...] and other creatures for sale. Whenever you, Sir, would like to have those things, please do not hesitate to order.[7]

As we learn from Merian's letter, her collection served multiple functions, all of which are connected to the different notions of the verb 'collecting' – from 'selecting' and 'gathering up' to 'ordering', 'classifying' and 'storing' items.[8] First of all, the collectibles were used as scientific study material to explore the secrets of nature and its underlying orders. Just like the items in other natural history cabinets, Merian's collection was a store of rarities and valuables and a source of admiration and wonder; it served as a basis for learned conversation and exchange with other scholars and amateurs. Secondly, for Merian as an artist, the items also functioned as models for her drawings, prints and still-life paintings. And finally, the objects could be transformed into merchandise as there was a constant demand of such collectibles, both of European and 'exotic' origin, among scholars and amateurs.[9]

The different notions and functions of 'collecting' are illustrated in the frontispiece which the Amsterdam publisher Joannes Oosterwyk added to his posthumous editions of the *Metamorphosis* book in 1719[10] (fig. 2). The engraving shows the goddess Flora sitting at a table in a noble interior. She is surrounded by a group of putti who are busy examining and ranging boxes full of dried butterflies which are scattered all over the

room. In the background, the eye falls on an imaginary view of an 'exotic' landscape with palm trees and a village near a river. In the center, a woman with a hand net is kneeling on the ground, hunting butterflies and gathering insects, thus alluding to Merian's voyage to Suriname. The entire frontispiece can be interpreted an idealized image of Maria Sibylla Merian as an artist, naturalist, author, and collector.

Fig. 2. Frederik Ottens/Johannes Osterwijk, Coloured Frontispiece of the 1719 Dutch Edition of Maria Sibylla Merian's *Metamorphosis* book. (Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University).

According to the collection theorist Krzysztof Pomian, an object in a collection is a material item which has been taken from the circulation of goods in order to become a 'semiophor' or 'sign' of something abstract and invisible, e.g., God, nature, the past.[11]

However, the multiple functions identified in Merian's collection and particularly her use of collectibles as study material and potential mer-

chandise throw new light on the practices of early modern collecting and the circulation of collectibles among scholars at the time. They prompt a broader definition of premodern collecting which incorporates the idea of 'economies of collecting', as outlined by Nils Güttler and Ina Heumann.[12]

Merian's large and constantly growing and renewed collection of dried butterflies and other insects, plants, and taxidermied animals was either sold by herself during her lifetime or by her heirs shortly after her death. Part of Merian's collection is believed to have entered the collection of the merchant-banker Johann Christian Gerning (1745-1802) of Frankfurt, which later became the basis of the Museum of Natural History in Wiesbaden, where it was rediscovered a few years ago. The exact provenance of the items, however, is not always easy to determine as Gerning (or his son) did not maintain the original mounts but remounted the insects in single glass boxes.[13]

Art and Scientific Collecting

From the beginning, both art and collecting played an eminent role in the development of early modern natural sciences, including entomology – which became a field of interest only in the late 16th century. Among its pioneers are the Swiss physician Conrad Gessner (1516-1565), the Italian scholar Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605), and the English naturalist Thomas Moffett (1553-1604). As the full title of Moffett's posthumously published *Insectorum sive minimorum animalium theatrum* (1634) indicates, at that time caterpillars and insects were counted among the 'inferior creatures' and for a long time they were not considered significant enough to be worthy of studying, perhaps except for 'useful' species like bees or silkworms.[14]

Moffett's book contains a certain amount of woodcut illustrations, mostly marginal images, which accompany the descriptions of the various species of insects. Sometimes the illustration fills the entire double page, combining different species of animals and insects. As a rule of thumb, the artist rendered the insects without shadows. They are usually seen from above – a layout similar to the arrangement of contemporary butterfly collections – or from the side. The images render the physical characteristics of an insect, including the surface texture, more or less well, however, they do not really give an idea of its volumes.

As for Aldrovandi and Gessner, their attentiveness towards insects derived from a general in-

terest in nature and from their aim to understand its intrinsic properties and cohesion.[15] For both scholars, insects and their metamorphosis formed an ideal exemplum to study the secrets of the genesis of life. Despite their small dimensions, insects revealed the greatness and beauty of God's creation. With reference to Aristotle, Gessner reflected that "even in the most inconsiderable beings, in almost inexistent bodies, all mental and spiritual faculties can be assembled".[16] For Gessner as for Merian, the study of nature was a means of knowing God. Though Merian's works cannot be interpreted without taking their pietist context into account, it would be very reductive to only concentrate on this aspect.[17] Maria Sibylla was as much a pious woman as she was an artist and a natural scientist.

Both Gessner and Aldrovandi owned extensive collections of drawings which portrayed their possessions of realia. In 1595, Aldrovandi described his collected 'microcosm' consisting of thousands of preserved specimens, as well as a 'Pinacoteca':

> Today in my microcosm, you can see more than 18,000 different things, among which 7,000 in fifteen volumes, dried and pasted, 3,000 of which I had painted as if alive ('al vivo'). [...] I have had paintings made of a further 5,000 natural objects – such as plants, various sorts of animals, and stones – some of which have been made into woodcuts. These can be seen in fourteen cupboards, which I call the Pinacoteca.[18]

Compared to contemporary woodcut illustrations in natural history books, the watercolors in Aldrovandi's 'Pinacoteca' were much more detailed and realistic. However, the character of the drawings was primarily documentary. They served as a mirror of the collection and as a starting point for further research and for scientific exchange.[19] Images like the ones commissioned and collected by Gessner and Aldrovandi helped scholars establish a general taxonomy, like the classification system published by Aldrovandi in his *De Animalibus Insectis Libri Septem* in 1602.[20] Looking at the woodcuts in the *De Animalibus Insectis* and other books, however, it becomes clear that the images basically had an illustrative role at the service of the text, which was the main authority.

It was only during the 17th century that the relationship between text and image(s) began to change.[21] In the mid-17th century, the invention of the microscope allowed new and minute insights into organisms. Instead of woodcuts, natural history books were now more often illustrated with etchings or engravings. Images became central to scientific reasoning. The Amsterdam naturalist Jan Swammerdam (1637-1680), who was a pioneer in the microscopic studies of insects, was also among the first who illustrated his writings with engravings, asserting that he had drawn most of the plates himself (fig. 3). Thanks to the invention of the microscope, Swammerdam was able to give exact descriptions of the process of metamorphosis of an insect.[22] Thus, in his *Historia Insectorum Generalis*, published in 1669, he was able to correct the traditional theory according to which insects came into being spontaneously from mud.[23]
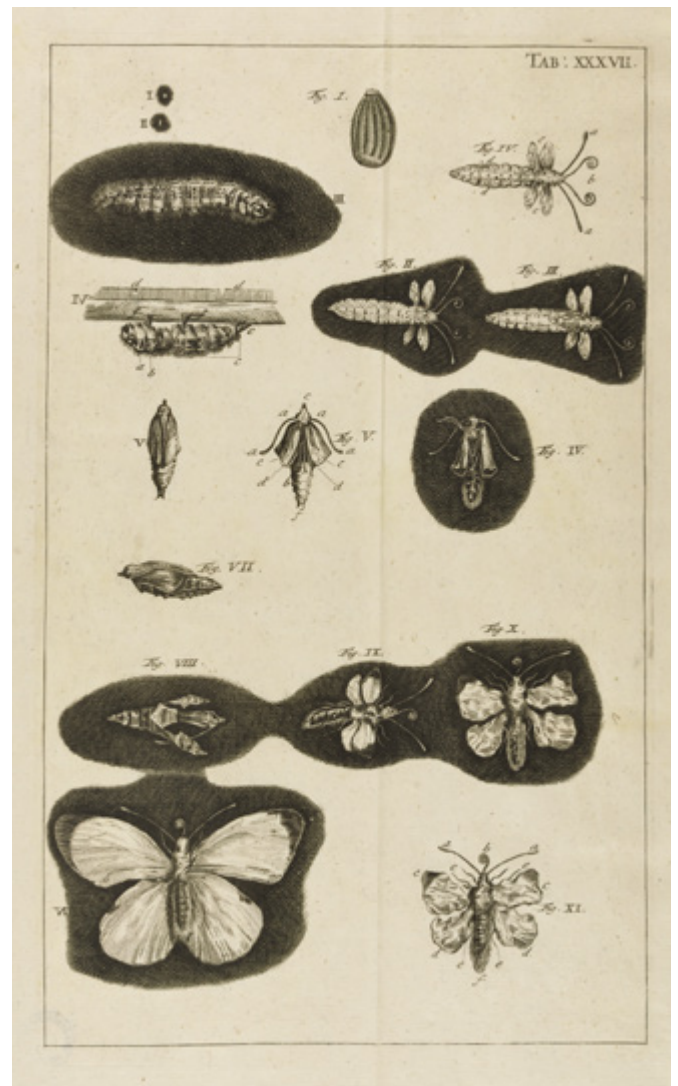
Fig. 3. Jan Swammerdam, *Bibel der Natur [...]*, Leipzig 1752, plate 37: Metamorphosis of Butterflies, Med. 308.2°. Nuremberg, City Library.

Returning to Maria Sibylla Merian's works, it becomes obvious that her compositions are far from being mere reproductions of nature. Though she had very probably studied most of the details from living or prepared specimens, the finished work was always a well-balanced composition in which the single elements formed an ensemble preferably oriented along a central axis. As a matter of fact, it was a typical visual strategy of 17th-century Dutch still-life painting which Maria Sibylla had probably come to know in the workshop of her stepfather Jacob Marrell (1614-1681), and which she herself applied in her autonomous paintings of flowers and insects.[24]

Merian's illustrations can be described as artificial compositions of nature based on a drawing from life, enhanced by scientific observation and research. Thus, in the course of the creative process, the empirically generated knowledge of nature is transformed, on the basis of the knowledge of art acquired through imitation and continuous practice, into a new work which can be best designated as 'scientific work of art'. In preparation for some plates in the *Metamorphosis* book, Maria Sibylla is even believed to have made use of the relatively new technique of the microscope to enter even deeper into the (otherwise hidden) structures of nature, like in the case of the butterflies with a pomegranate (fig. 4).

Compared to most early modern natural history manuals, Merian's engravings were far from being mere illustrations to a text, in the sense of a visual addition. On the contrary, the images – which Maria Sibylla also sold independently as autonomous works of art – played a dominant role, whereas the texts served as explanations of the image and provided additional information to make the image fully understandable. While the engravings can be understood as autonomous works of art, their scientific value, however, only emerges with the text. Both components originate in the same moment of meticulous observation of nature recorded in drawings and in written notes which Merian produced during the empirical phase of her work. Later, she worked up, developed, completed, amplified and (re-)arranged these notes into pictorial compositions and texts.[25]

Conclusion

With her deliberately subjective, experimental, and descriptive approach, Merian's work differs from most of the other entomological publica-tions of her time which aim to interpret nature and natural phenomena and try to set up a comprehensive classification system which mirrors similar arrangements in contemporary cabinets of curiosities and natural history collections. Rather than an overall taxonomy, Maria Sibylla Merian was above all interested in the process and circumstances of metamorphosis. Her way of seeing and investigating nature, which Natalie Zemon Davis has designated as an 'ecological approach' is mirrored in the texts and illustrations of her books.[26]

Merian's overall aim was to contribute to the understanding of nature and thus also deepen the understanding of God's creation. Being equally a painter and a natural scientist, Merian's approach to nature differed from most of her predecessors and contemporaries, both male and female. However, the two fields were founded on the exact observation of nature and they inspired each other. Her work intersected the contemporary practice of naturalist collecting, and many of her well-to-do clients also bought butterflies and other preserved specimens from her.

Fig. 4. Maria Sibylla Merian, *Two Butterflies with a Pomegranate*, c. 1705. Watercolour and bodycolour on vellum from the *Surinam Album* (see *Metamorphosis* book, plate 9). London, British Museum, SL,5275.9. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Merian's books can be defined as artfully arranged observations of nature, where individual perception is transformed into empirical knowledge which is then transmitted to the reader in the form of texts and images. Art and nature, as well as the knowledge of art and the knowledge of nature, are not played off against each other but rather put into close relationship.

Notes

[1] Maria Sybilla Merian, *Der Raupen wunderbare Verwandelung, und sonderbare Blumen-Nahrung [...]* (Nuremberg: J.A. Graff, 1679), I.

[2] K. Wettengl, ed., *Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647-1717. Artist and naturalist* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje, 1998).

[3] E. Reitsma, *Maria Sibylla Merian & Daughters. Women of Art and Science* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2008).

[4] Joachim von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie [...]* (Nuremberg et al.: J. von Sandrart et al., 1675), II, p. 339.

[5] B. van de Roemer, "Merian's network of collector-naturalists", in H. Mulder, M. van Delft, eds., *Maria Sibylla Merian 'Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium' 1705* (Tielt: Lannoo Publishers, 2016): pp. 19-28. E. Reitsma, *Maria Sibylla Merian*, cit.

[6] Maria Sybilla Merian, *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium [...]* (Amsterdam: M.S. Merian, 1705). See H. Mulder, M. van Delft, eds., *Maria Sibylla Merian 'Metamorphosis'*, cit.

[7] Letter to Johann Georg Volckamer, dated July 31, 1702; translated from K. Schmidt-Loske, et al., *Maria Sibylla Merian. Briefe 1682 bis 1712* (Rangsdorf: Basilisken-Presse, 2020), pp. 68-71.

[8] M. Sommer, *Sammeln – Ein philosophischer Versuch* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002).

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[10] Maria Sybilla Merian, *Dissertatio de generatione et metamorphosibus insectorum Surinamensium [...]* (Amsterdam: J. Oosterwyk, 1719) / *Over de voortteeling en wonderbaerlyke veranderingen der Surinaemsche insecten [...]* (Amsterdam: J. Oosterwwyk, 1719).

[11] K. Pomian, *Collectors and curiosities. Paris and Venice, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 32.

[12] N. Güttler, I. Heumann, eds., *Sammlungsökonomien* (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2016).

[13] H. Lerp, F. Geller-Grimm, *Die Sammlung von Maria Sibylla Merian im Museum Wiesbaden* (Wiesbaden: Museum Wiesbaden, 2017). J. van de Plas, *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium. Eine Entdeckungsreise neu erlebt* (Wiesbaden: Museum Wiesbaden, 2013).

[14] Thomas Moffett, *Insectorum sive minimorum animalium theatrum* (London: T. Cotes, 1634). A. Grebe, "Maria Sibylla Merian als Naturforscherin. Kunst und Natur im Dialog", in A. Grebe, C. Sauer, eds., *Maria Sibylla Merian. Blumen, Raupen, Schmetterlinge* (Nuremberg: Bildungscampus, 2017), pp. 25-37: 27-28.

[15] A. Fischel, *Natur im Bild. Zeichnung und Naturerkenntnis bei Conrad Gessner und Ulisse Aldrovandi* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2009).

[16] Translated from the quotation in A. Fischel, *Natur im Bild. Zeichnung und Naturerkenntnis*, cit., p. 51.

[17] On Merian's pietism and her ties to the physico-theological interpretation of nature in which the study of nature becomes a "way of [...] pursuing one's path of salvation", see A.-C. Trepp, *Von der Glückseligkeit alles zu wissen. Die Erforschung der Natura als religiöse Praxis in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2009), pp. 210-337.

[18] Quoted from C. Swan, "From Blowfish to Flower Still Life Paintings. Classification and Its Images, circa 1600", in P.H. Smith, P. Findlen, eds., *Merchants & Marvels. Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002): pp. 109-136: p. 110.

[19] A. Fischel, *Natur im Bild. Zeichnung und Naturerkenntnis*, cit., p. 103-111.

[20] Ulisse Aldrovandi, *De Animalibus Insectis Libri Septem* (Bologna: J.B. Bellagamba, 1602). M.C. Tagliaferri, et al., "Ulisse Aldrovandi als Sammler. Das Sammeln als Gelehrsamkeit oder als Methode wissenschaftlichen Forschens?", in A. Grote, ed., *Macrocosmos in Microcosmo. Die Welt in der Stube. Zur Geschichte des Sammelns 1450 bis 1800* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1994), pp. 265-281.

[21] J. Neri, *The Insect and the Image. Visualizing Nature in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

[22] E. Jorink, "Beyond the Lines of Apelles. Johannes Swammerdam, Dutch Scientific Culture and the Representation of Insect Anatomy", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 61 (2011): pp. 148-183.

[23] Jan Swammerdam, *Historia Insectorum Generalis [...]* (Utrecht: M. van Dreunen, 1669).

[24] S. Segal, "Maria Sibylla Merian als Blumenmalerin", in K. Wettengl, ed., *Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647-1717*, cit., pp. 68-87.

[25] A. Grebe, C. Sauer, eds., *Maria Sibylla Merian*, cit.

[26] N.Z. Davis, *Women on the Margins. Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 140-202. V. Schmidt-Linsenhof, "Metamorphosen des Blicks. 'Merian' als Denkfigur des Feminismus", in K. Wettengl, ed., *Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647-1717*, cit., pp. 202-219.

Archiving Nature. From Vandelli's Curiosity Cabinet to the Natural History Cabinet

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Between Science and Education

Born in Padua in 1735, son of Giacomo Vandelli, professor of Medicine at Padua University, Domenico Vandelli – or Domingos Vandelli, as he became known in Portugal – followed his father's footsteps and graduated in Natural Philosophy and Medicine from the same university in 1761. Having been invited to teach in Lisbon a few years after he graduated and having already obtained a good reputation in Natural History, he moved to Lisbon in 1764, eager to explore a wide, untapped territory which, by then, was comprised of several colonial territories, none of them explored from the perspective of natural history. Although he had intended to teach at the high school level at the Real Colégio dos Nobres, founded by Marquês de Pombal, he never truly started teaching there – and, strangely, natural history was not even part of the curriculum. Only four years later, in 1768, did Vandelli actually start working for the Portuguese monarchy, not as a professor but as director of a botanical garden in Lisbon, o Jardim Botânico do Palácio Real da Nª Sr.ª da Ajuda. After that, and while remaining director of Ajuda's botanical garden, he superintended the construction of another botanical garden – a much wider one, and with a wider scope – in Coimbra. There, he helped write the university Constitution, namely the part pertaining the *Philosophical Course*, he established and directed the Natural History Cabinet, bought several (particular) collections for the university, including his, he taught Natural History, and superintend the first "Philosophical journeys" both in Portugal and abroad. These "Philosophical Journeys", which consisted in short or long travels in which the naturalist gathered specimens for the university collection, were at the same time both a scientific exploration as well as a kind of political enterprise, since the objective was not just to collect scientific evidence but to map uncharted territories and even to establish frontiers.

In addition to all this institutional/scientific work, Vandelli also wrote extensively: memoirs on botanical gardens, books on botany, agriculture, and economy, several reports on the findings of his students, catalogs of the Natural History Cabinet, a book on monstrosities (now scattered across several institutions in Portugal). He also maintained a vast correspondence with a great number of Portuguese and foreign scientists, among which the letters between him and Linnaeus stand out – which he partially published in a dictionary on Natural History terms and in a book on Portuguese and Brazilian botany. He also created a very beautiful text, marvelously written, that I would try to read, an introduction to a book on Natural History which Vandelli never actually wrote, despite his dream of systematizing the Portuguese empire's natural history – and not only his dream, since Linnaeus himself, in a letter to Vandelli, mentioned a magnificent opportunity to map out all these at the time uncharted territories, full of novelties and exotic animals and plants, from the perspective of natural history.[1]

From the Curiosity to the Natural History Cabinet

Despite his work at the university, the texts he wrote, and the impetus he gave to natural history in Portugal, his truly remarkable work was his curiosity/natural history cabinet – a cabinet that still bears his name. It was established in Italy in 1757, where he collected specimens from nearby cities, mountains, seas, and an expedition a countryman of his made to Egypt – he visited Florence and wrote a *Descrizione della galleria di Firenze* in 1759 – but quickly expanded, when in Portugal, to a Natural History Cabinet. This expansion, of course, was the result of two factors: on the one hand, he had bought several other Portuguese curiosity cabinets, incorporating them in this public natural history cabinet he started building (we

must also underline the importance of the "Philosophical journeys"). On the other hand, the quick expansion also had to do with the pressure that teaching imposed. When Horst Bredekamp analyzed Parmigianino's *Portrait of a Collector*, he emphasized the tension between nature's three kingdoms – a tension that is a profound connection – and quickly saw in the human figure the animal kingdom's jewel:

> The human figure dominates the foreground as the jewel of nature's third kingdom, the animal kingdom. In his left hand he holds a book, though it is not clear whether this is itself a collector's item or an attempt to symbolize the spirit of humanism that inspired the act of collecting. The objects spread out on the table – some unidentifiable medallions, an obviously ancient coin, and a statuette of Venus – identify the young man as a collector of mostly ancient artifacts (Bredekamp 1995, 11-12).

This reading of Parmigianino's painting is of course indisputable – the tension between the three kingdoms, the way in which it conveys a link between nature and art, the reference to antiquity – all these aspects are stated in the painting. However, one must wonder if this human figure, which Bredekamp quickly harks back to the natural kingdom, is not strangely forgotten in his description. Bredekamp says that the figure "dominates the foreground as the jewel of nature's third kingdom" but one may wonder if this *dominion* is in fact a reference to nature's third kingdom or, much more simply stated, if it is rather a praise to the collector *himself*. That is, contrary to what we will find in Domenico Vandelli's natural history cabinet, in the curiosity cabinet the key figure is the collector himself and the collection is nothing but the assertion of the *dominion* the collector exercises towards the collection itself and, consequently, man's control over nature. The human figure is not just the "jewel of nature's third kingdom", the collection itself is a jewel the collector *possesses* – the collection being one way of asserting the collector's power and wealth.

In the natural history cabinet, particularly the one Vandelli built in Coimbra, the power and dominion of the collector seem to disappear. Due to didactic pressures, to the fact that the collection is no longer private but public – it is made for *use*,

for *study* – the passage from the curiosity to the natural history cabinet finds one key division: the collection does not seem to correspond to the collectors' particular taste and private wealth, but to the need to classify, organize, and give sense to a particular realm.[2] It is not, therefore, the undetermined field of the marvelous, the singular, and the unusual,[3] but an organization that allows the formation and transmission of knowledge.

From the correspondence with Linnaeus, which started in around 1759, we can see that the issues surrounding natural history were always on Vandelli's mind,[4] that he is not a 'classical' collector interested in building a microcosm of the world like, for example, Medici's *Studiolo*. However, the division between *naturalia* and *artificialia* remains quite classical in its shape, and in its curiosity cabinet we encounter the type of objects one usually finds: coins, stones, a statue of a centaur, the horn of a unicorn, plus a number of marble stones, shells, ancient lamps and vases, as a way to demonstrate the intersection between art and nature, the place where creation is both a natural phenomenon and a human one, where art begets nature and nature begets art. Curiously enough, however, one does not find books among the collected objects, marking probably what Foucault recalled in *Les Mots et les Choses*: the disappearance of the sign, the written tradition, all those stories that coupled with the animals and plants. This is not entirely correct, however, since the university's Constitution included the work of Pliny[5] and praised it, not only for its literary value but also for its scientific worth – even if we must note in order to be faithful to Foucault, that this praising has to compete with the more experimental and empirical foundation of science, with the *need to see*.

It is true that, when in Lisbon and Coimbra, Vandelli still has a great appreciation for antiques, although he shows great satisfaction with the substitution of what he calls "medals museum", quite famous in the previous century according to him (he is referring to the curiosity cabinets), with the natural history museums.[6] For him, in this same text, which is the preface to the dictionary of natural history terms, the natural history museum 'supplements'– and the Portuguese term he uses is an almost Derridean term, if we can make such an anachronistic claim – the impossibility of gathering and seeing all of nature's production in the same place.

The Museum in which, that just like an amphitheater, shows everything that our Globe contains, supplements the impossibility to see all of Nature's productions spread through remote countries (Vandelli 1788, 2).

The museum supplements, it allows us to see all the diversity contained in nature. One may wonder if this supplementary logic – it is because we cannot see all this diversity that the museum was instituted – is not split into two different, if not antagonistic, rhetorics. The notion of amphitheater, for example, seems a clear reminiscence of Giulio Camillo's *Theater of Memory*. The man in the center stage of a theater in which the wonders of Nature are seen and *contemplated* – in that contemplation is not entirely coincidental with the *study* of nature based on series and classifications.

Two Different Fields of Visibility

What strikes the viewer, while seeing the Vandelli collection, is a sort of shift between two different "epistemological regimes", "fields of visibility", both present in the same place and at the same time. As we have already seen, the change that occurred in a couple of decades from the curiosity to the Natural History cabinets has a sort of institutional explanation, marking the passage between a private collection, vulnerable to the individual taste of the collector – even if this taste is a scientific one – and a public collection subsumed to a scientific curriculum and fully integrated into university research. These two different "epistemological regimes", these two different rhetorical apparatuses that can be traced in Vandelli's writings, may be seen by looking at the collection.

On the one hand, we have all those exotic shells, the antiquities, the curious stuffed animals, the fossils, and other strange and unusual objects, emphasizing a kind of eccentric circle made of differences, a constant and somewhat irrational metamorphosis without a model. This playfulness, to borrow a term from Horst Bredekamp,[7] shows an experimental microcosm, evidently not devoid of rationality, an amphitheater where we can see a dynamic side of nature. It is an immense archive of nature, from which historical time seems to be oddly absent (even though we can find fossil remains in it) in a metaphysical understanding through which Nature knows no negative: in *Memórias de História Natural*, the preface to an unwritten work, Vandelli sees Nature as an "infi-

nite sphere" that knows no death (only a perpetual generation and corruption, to borrow Aristotle's terms), encompassing all that has ever existed and will ever exist. The infinite power of Nature, according to Vandelli, knows no limit and even the different human civilizations are subjected to its power – to the point that they are always already ruins,[8] that everything that is man-made is a future ruin.

Who could manifest to the city dwellers all the beauties of raw nature, the contemplations of wilderness, mountains, cliffs, all the thoughts of all times and worlds that address the imagination? Who could paint for them the oceans, the wildfires, the nuanced clothes of spring and the ice of the poles? Is there any expressions able to give the feelings that these immortal beauties inspire? Nature speaks to the heart, attracts our soul to this innocent and blissed state that was lost in the world's noise (Vandelli 2003, 84).

All these rhetorical questions full of enthusiasm, the grandiose spectacle of nature – nature as wonder – is present in both parts of the collection, as a guiding line that unites both the curiosity and the natural history cabinet, "the *marvellous*, the *singular*, the *unusual*" as well as nature, understood as a play of minor and almost undistinguishable differences.

The first part of Vandelli's collection, then, is the curiosity cabinet with its divisions, its logic, with the harmonious continuation between art and nature – which is also their undistinguishable character from the point of view of creation. The second, however, has nothing of this grandiose spectacle of nature, full of secrets and motion. First, all the exotic, the unusual and strange disappears. Then, all the *artificialia*, followed by the magnetic link between art and nature. What we have left, besides the anthropological detour which somehow continues this side of amazement of the world, is a tedious archive of animals and plants, identical to the untrained eyes. What seems interesting is this difference between the enthusiastic rhetoric of Vandelli, which somehow continues to claim nature as wonder, as a place of contemplation, and the highlighting of the common features that presupposes another type of relationship between man and nature. A kind of paradoxical spectacle of normality, contrary, if not contradictory, not only to Vandelli's texts but

also to a mode of display that is based on seriality and equality. As Foucault claimed in *Les Mots et les Choses*:

> The documents of this new history are not other words, text of records, but unencumbered spaces in which things are juxtaposed: herbariums, collections, gardens; the locus of this history is a non-temporal rectangle in which, stripped of all commentary, of all enveloping language, creatures present themselves one besides another, their surfaces visible, grouped according to their common features, and thus already virtually analyzed, and bearer of nothing but their own individual names (Foucault 2002, 142-143).

According to Foucault, this museum, this "white-cube", if we can use a contemporary notion, is the true creator of natural history. Without the possibility of things being juxtaposed, stripped naked of all eccentric knowledge, without them appearing devoid of any semantical spectrum, the historical weight of tradition, it would not be possible to reduce them to "surfaces and lines". Therefore, if we follow Foucault's argument, words and things can come to communicate in the representation if and only if the former is made possible by the space of the museum in which animals and plants are reduced to a knowledge that relates itself only to vision and visuality. To see, Foucault seems to say, is only to see and we must strip all things of an embedded language that history and tradition have imposed. Things must be cleaned of all those texts, of all those relations that captured them throughout history, they must be stripped bare, appearing as mute surfaces upon which we must impose language. And language, for its part, must be stripped of his history, must be born out of the things themselves, must lose all its historical sedimentation.

Curiously, both spaces, both regimes seemed to coexist in the collection Vandelli gathered, and what we see is a kind of interference between them, a contamination not only in the visual dimension but also on the discursive side, as if a magnetic relation has precluded any kind of stabilization.

Therefore, on the one hand we have a need to archive nature, and this in an almost literal sense. In one of those quite common texts of the time, a set of rules for the naturalist when on a journey, Vandelli encourages them to keep record of al-

most everything. It is not just the place, the longitude and latitude where the specimen was gathered (it is strangely important to Linnaeus, who keeps calculating the summer difference between cities), but also the climate, the type of land, and other type of information that had to be quite meticulously recorded. I am now going to quote a passage from *Viagens Filosóficas ou dissertação sobre as importantes regras que o filósofo naturalista, nas suas observações, deve principalmente observar* (1779). In its second paragraph, there is the need to undertake the most elaborate record possible:

> either the objects can be collected, like all the plants with their flowers [...] and the animals that can be send, all of which must be collected so that they can be described according to the system of nature; or they can't be moved, like houses, hills, fountains, big trees, ferocious animals, and some type of plants and their flowers, and given the fear that they can't be conserved, all of them should be sketched with as much clarity as possible (it's quite difficult to translate the term Vendelli uses, since it refers to Enlightenment) (Vandelli 2008, 93).

But that is not all. In order to make the archive fully functional, one needs also to indicate "both in the descriptions as in the sketches of all those objects, the latitude, the longitude, the climate and the quality of the atmosphere". In order to proceed with this archival practice, Vandelli divides the notebook into eight sections, which should all be filled out: conditions of the day; items; places; latitude; longitude; abundance or scarcity; direction; and, lastly, a kind of Borgean category: vicinity and conditions of the site, a kind of etcetera in which the naturalist should write "in a few words" whatever seemed worthy of notice to him. However, so as to narrow the possibilities, Vandelli quickly adds the following amendments: what is worthy of notice should relate to countries nearby or, in a strange argument, all those conditions that allow one to know the country one is in.

So, to see is not just to see, narrowing the animals to surfaces and lines, as a kind of abstract art before the sheer possibility of abstract art; the visual field is filled with all this meticulously gathered knowledge, this play of difference and repetition, this archival gaze.

But if this archival gaze gives a certain movement to nature, the rhetorical apparatuses of Vandelli point to a different direction. In the aforementioned preface to his unwritten book, the kingdom of nature is said to be one of "harmony, regularity and order", an "always present continuity", a "circle without end".

> In the middle of such unstable scene, man was placed to feel, to admire, to know, to raise his eyes to heaven and to walk, without competitor and master, through the surface of the earth (Vandelli 2003, 95).

"Admire", "raise his eyes", but also "wonders", "marvelous picture of plants and animals", "concealed mechanisms of life", a "perpetual exalted state of the forces of life" that know no death but only "destruction and renovation". It is the "world spectacle", to quote Vandelli once again, that is gathered in the amphitheater. But this spectacle is no longer that of the unique and the singular. It is the spectacle of the normal, the banal.

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D. Vandelli and C. Lineu, *De Vandelli para Lineu. De Lineu para Vandelli: correspondência entre naturalistas* (Rio de Janeiro: Dantes, 2008).

Notes

[1] On February 12, 1765, Linnaeus complained to Vandelli about the lack of information concerning the Portuguese territory, especially Brazil and the other colonies: "Tomara que possas mesmo ir ao Brasil, terra que ninguém calcou, exceto Macgraf, com seu servidor Piso, quando ainda não havia um facho de luz aceso na história natural, e por isso tudo deve ser descrito de novo à sua luz. Estarás mais apto que os outros, tu que estás bastante firme no que diz respeito à natureza, incansável no inquirir, extremamente hábil no retratar os exemplares mais belos. [...] Depois que a Europa inteira foi calcada pelos pés dos botânicos, resta agora somente Portugal, terra próspera que merece a alcunha de Índia da Europa. Dali temos somente o *Viridarium Grisley Lusitanicum*, obra paupérrima, cujas plantas não há Édipo que compreenda. Esta terra produz uma enorme quantidade de plantas raríssimas, como fica evidente pelos numerosos exemplares lusitanos nomeados por Tournefort em *Instituitiones rei Herbariae*, mas em parte algum descritos ou desenhados e ainda hoje novos, de forma que ninguém, a não ser um outro Édipo, pode compreendê-los" (Vandelli and Lineu 2008, 58).

[2] Distinguishing the *Wunderkammer* and Natural History collections during the Renaissance, Alessandro Tosi emphasized this didactic purpose: "Didactic and research aspects, absent in the *Wunderkammer*, were expressed in the naturalists' desire to classify and systematize. One need only consider the importance of the catalogue, not as a simple inventory of objects, but as an epistemological verification: «From Rome I have received many kinds of minerals from several friends, and from Naples many kinds of *alumi* from Imperato. Since I want to organize them in my new display case I will send you the catalogue of everything», wrote the Lucca apothecary Giovan Battista Fulcheri to Aldrovandi in September, 1572" (Tosi 2005, 51).

[3] These three characteristics are what constitutes the nascent curiosity cabinets, according to Schlosser: "At Ambras, as with the collections of Rudolf II at Prague, of the Dukes Albert V and Wilhelm V at Munich, of the prince of Saxony and Dresden – and even earlier, that significant prototype, the Duke Jean the Berry – we see the coexistence of marvels of nature and art, of *naturalia*, *artificialia* and *curiosa*. And these nascent Wunderkammern or cabinets of curiosity were directly linked to the «fantastic Middle Ages» which had entrusted the treasures of the German churches and cathedrals with the task of expressing «the constant interest in the *marvellous*, the *singular*, the *unusual*" (Tosi 2005, 44).

[4] Consider for example a letter Vandelli wrote to Linnaeus in 1759, while still in Italy, where he praises Linnaeus' knowledge on Natural History and his *Systema Naturae*: "Estupefacto, vi a ti como uma fénix em meio à tua gente: insatisfeito com a casa exterior da natureza, não te deténs no seu vestíbulo mas adentras, penetras os segredos divinos e trazes às claras os que estavam encerrados no sacro interior da natureza. É tudo muito agradável; são sobretudo saborosos ao meu paladar a holotúria, a uva-marinha e a cóclea, animais inteiramente ignorados por mim, que contudo conheço mais de 4.000 enumerados no *Systema Naturae*" (Vandelli and Lineu 2008, 14).

[5] In *Memórias de História Natural*, the preface to Vandelli's unwritten Natural History dictionary, Vandelli praises the encyclopedic knowledge of Pliny, even though he also quickly adds that he was too gullible: "Apareceu depois um homem que disse: «Quero conhecer, e abranger tudo quanto os homens, até hoje, têm sabido acerca da natureza e das artes: traçarei, com estilo grande e nervoso, a enciclopédia dos conhecimentos humanos». Foi Plínio o homem de quem falamos; e assim cumpriu. Suas obras compreendem a história de cada terra e seus povos, dos minerais, das plantas e dos animais; a descrição das artes liberais e mecânicas; a medicina e as antiguidades, os usos, o comércio e a navegação; as ciências: parece haver penetrado em todos os lugares, medido

todos os espaços em todas as idades, contemplado todo o universo. [...] increpam-no contudo de nímia credulidade" (Vandelli 2003, 91-92).

6 "No seculo passado, e no principio do presente, haviaõ muitos Museus de Medalhas, dos quaes agora ha poucos, e preferem-se os da Historia Natural" (Vandelli 1788, 2).

7 "Creation was not only a product of a mechanic-God, but also the work of a playful demiurge who celebrated divine wisdom, in the words of Solomon: When God created heaven and earth, «I was by his side, a master craftsman, delighting him day after day, ever at play in his presence, / at play everywhere in the world, delighting to be with the sons of men» This possibly reveals a double misunderstanding; the meaning of the Hebrew *mitsaheket* is more like «joke» or «laugh», and in the vulgate «*ludens*» was probably intended to mean «joy» rather than «game or lay»" (Bredekamp 1995, 67).

8 Just like Babylon and Palmyra, all of our cities, monuments, all that is man-made is doomed to disappear: "Toda a natureza muda e altera na terra: tempo virá em que hão-de desmorona-se essas cidades opulentas, esses pórticos arrogantes, esses aros triunfais, monumentos das artes, e magnificência dos povos. Babilónia e Palmira desapareceram; as silvas e as serpentes serpejam na residência dos reis; o pastor sobe em suas ruínas, e friamente as contempla. Desta maneira recobra a natureza seus domínios usurpados: elevam-se os impérios sucessivamente sobre as ruínas de outros impérios, que os precederam, para, quando lhes tocar a sua vez, sucumbirem também a novos vencedores" (Vandelli 2003, 69).

Palissy and the Clash of Natural and Artistic Processes*

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On the 24th of February 1562, ceramicist and natural philosopher Bernard Palissy (c. 1510-1590) dedicated to Duke Anne de Montmorency (1493-1567) a dialogue titled *Architecture, et Ordonnance de la grotte rustique* [...] (Architecture and Order of the Rustic Grotto).[1] Published in 1563, Palissy's *Architecture* can be readily consulted today thanks to a 1919 transcription bookseller Édouard Rahir (1862-1924) evidently made from a copy of the text that surfaced briefly at auction.[2] In the transcription, "Demande" (Question) interrogates "Responce" (Answer), questioning whether the natural phenomena depicted in a grotto Palissy is said to have built in Saintes "[...] so closely approach the natural, that one could never augment them [...]".[3] I propose we join Demande in probing Palissy's simulation of natural phenomena, for while the artist's mimetic procedures and the natural processes they imitate obey the same natural philosophical order, they prove, under scrutiny, less similar than now generally thought.

In his 1926 "Der Stil 'Rustique' [...]", Ernst Kris (1900-1957) established how sixteenth-century artists such as Palissy and Wenzel Jamnitzer (1507/8-1585) used an artful life-casting technique to simulate natural forms and processes, phenomena which, respectively with natural philosophical principles, Palissy conceived as the "[...] diverse labours and the beauteous order [...]"[4] of God.[5] Scholars have long asserted that Palissy, employing empirical methods, used his art to research natural philosophy, that he in turn used natural philosophical inquiry to hone mimetic procedures, and that his investigations of nature and art shaped each other.[6] An adjacent, decades-old tradition argues that Palissy not only sought to replicate natural objects, but also considered his methods simulations of the natural processes that yield such objects.[7] And yet, Wolfgang Lefèvre has argued that certain analogies between natural and artistic processes in Pal-

issy's oeuvre remain unclear, due to the fact that the artist's procedures did not always arise from natural philosophical theories.[8] Indeed, practical issues such as kiln explosions loom so large in Palissy's writing that historians have emphasised how the artist – like sixteenth-century peers from Leonardo to Dürer to Cellini – documented challenges in imitating nature's workings.[9] Even when Palissy identified effective mimetic procedures, his approach to emulating natural processes was not necessarily straightforward, or duplicative of such phenomena.

The contradiction between Palissy's tales of mimetic struggle against nature and what scholars have long perceived as the functional consistency between natural processes and artistic procedures throughout his oeuvre demands further inquiry. In what follows, I examine discrepancies between Palissy's accounts of natural rock-generation and the ceramic replication of geological effects. I also probe how multivalent relationships between natural and artistic processes arise when Palissy's work invites multiple interpretations, as well as the artist's concept of the potential reciprocity of mimesis between nature and art. I contend that Palissy's narratives of confrontation with natural processes do more than engage familiar agonisms between art and nature, or aggrandize the artist's ultimate triumphs in unlocking the arts of the earth. Palissy inscribed within a natural philosophical framework the notion that the artist need not, and sometimes could not, replicate natural phenomena to simulate their effects, as well as the concept that artists can emulate one natural phenomenon by manipulating other natural phenomena. His testimony evidences the development of an eventually ubiquitous theory of imitation: the idea that natural processes and the methods artists use to imitate such phenomena are governed by shared natural philosophical principles of chemical and physical change, even

when their respective material and technical conditions differ.

Palissy offers privileged perspectives on sixteenth-century notions of discord between natural and artistic processes because the artist wrote at length not merely of imitating, but of simulating, geological phenomena. For instance, as proof of the artist's ability to simulate the interior fabric of jasper, Responce reports in the *Architecture* how

> [Palissy] took a piece of one of the aforementioned [ceramics] and, having broken it in several faces, he showed me [...that] it was entirely like a natural rock.[10]

Palissy breaks his ceramic not merely to show that his simulations of natural phenomena penetrate beyond surface-level imitation, to internal colours, structures, and textures, but also to evoke the penetrating empirical research whereby he studied such phenomena. In fact, it has been in helpfully revealing links between Palissy's nature research and his ceramic practices that scholars developed the thesis that the artist discerned parallels between his ceramic procedures and the natural phenomena they imitated.[11] Still, Palissy elsewhere contradicts that inference.

The most complete expression of Palissy's geological and ceramic thinking occurs in his *Discours admirables* [...] (Admirable Discourses), published in 1580.[12] The *Discours admirables* contends that stones form through a watery process called "congelative augmentation",[13] in which water containing metals and congelative salts inspissates into rock. Adapting geological theories from Aristotle (384-322 BCE) and Theophrastus (c. 372-287 BCE), Palissy describes how

> [...] the rains which flow through the ground receive the salts that are also inconnu [;] such salts or metallic materials are fluid and allow themselves to sink with the waters that permeate the ground until they have struck upon some depth in order to settle [...and] come to congeal and indurate, and form one body and one mass with the other stone.[14]

It has been said that Palissy likened his clay-firing process to the formation of rocks because both could involve the release of normal, exhalative waters, and subsequent hardening of remaining congelative water, infused with congelative salts.[15] It has also been contended that Palissy likened his kiln to a fiery, subterranean matrix, and the source of his ceramics to the igneous origins of certain rocks.[16] However, Palissy's account of the essentially watery character of natural rock-formation contrasts with the fiery nature of his clay-firing process.

This is not to suggest that Palissy regards geological and artistic processes as entirely different. He invokes an artistic procedure – waxwork – to clarify how congelative augmentation conserves the earth's total mass of rocks:

> [...] if one should cast melted wax upon an already-solidified mass of wax, and if it came to harden with that mass, that [mass] would be augmented by as much as the addition [...].[17]

Besides observing the conservation of mass amidst the transformation of matter in both nature and art, Palissy also notes that liquids assume the form of their surroundings in both artists' moulds and underground spaces.[18] By underscoring how the same order that governs nature also determines how artists manipulate materials, Palissy acknowledges that natural phenomena and artistic procedures follow shared natural philosophical principles. However, as the contrast between the artist's theory of the watery formation of stones and the fiery formation of ceramics like his fictive jaspers also shows, artistic and natural processes that follow the same principles and achieve similar effects can still proceed differently in terms of the physical or chemical transformations each process entails.

Clashes between divergent natural phenomena such as the elements can, moreover, shape artistic processes. For instance, Palissy's *Discours admirables* links the formative conditions of rock and clay to elemental profiles for each material that differ from the fiery conditions and clay-transforming operations of his kiln. If the artist contends that stones must grow in "[...] humid and watery confines [...]",[19] he surmises that unfired clay constitutes a "dough-like earth"[20] that originates in the same environment. According to the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles (c. 490-c. 430 BCE), the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire exist in different combinations within materials, and exhibit various affinities and antipathies capable of prompting material trans-

formations when they combine.[21] Palissy similarly suggests that firing involves clashing elements, noting that the watery, earthy nature of unfired clay, with its humid exhalations, opposes the fiery nature of the kiln. He warns that if potters

> [...] do not remove the exhalative humour, which is within the clay, little by little, and if they want to rouse a great fire before [the exhalative humour] is ousted, there is nothing surer than that the combining heat and humidity will engender a thunder, due to their contrariety.[22]

To describe how violently nature responds to the enmity between the kiln's inferno and the aqueous, earthy condition of unfired clay, Palissy invokes thunder, another product of elemental clashes. Ceramicists must fire clay slowly, methodically extracting its "exhalative humour" to mitigate the watery element that would otherwise express antipathy toward the fiery kiln. In other words, an artist can temper elemental clashes afflicting their procedures by accommodating natural philosophical principles like the idea that materials change when their elemental compositions shift. By extension, an artist does not have to simulate natural phenomena to replicate their effects, but can leverage alternative natural phenomena to achieve similar results.

A multivalent relationship between natural phenomena and artistic processes marks Palissy's famed rustic ceramics. Responce reports in the *Architecture* how the serpents, asps, and vipers of Palissy's *rustiques figulines* "[...] so closely approach the natural that movement alone remains".[23] And yet, to evoke animal motions, Palissy likely drowned creatures in vinegar and urine before arranging their bodies for casting in a manner that belied their demise.[24] Regarded as images of living fauna, Palissy's rustic wares demonstrate that imitating natural processes sometimes required extinguishing the natural model. So perceived, the results epitomise incongruity between artistic procedures and the natural processes they emulate.

But, in addition to reading Palissy's rustic wares as representations of living creatures or amphibious environments, scholars have also interpreted them as figurations of fossils and the artist's rustic ceramic procedures as emulating fossilisation, either insofar as his casts recalled how fossilised organisms impressed in stone,[25] or as the release

of clay's exhalative waters and the hardening of its congelative waters during firing mirrored how congelative water fossilises organic forms.[26] In fact, Palissy's *Discours admirables* holds that fossils are petrified bodies such as

> [...] crustaceans and [fish] that were engendered in certain recesses or receptacles of water [; and when] that water mingled with earth and a congealing and generative salt, the entirety was reduced to rock [...].[27]

Palissy contends that fossils form when congelative salt petrifies submerged organisms. Since the artist believed fossilisation involved far more than impression-making, and since he did not think fossils congealed through firing, the idea that Palissy saw his rustic ceramic procedures and fossilisation as sharing anything beyond certain natural philosophical principles cannot hold. More crucially, that one can interpret Palissy's rustic wares both as representations of life and as fossils disrupts any straightforward analogy between the artist's rustic ceramic practices and the natural phenomena they emulated. The various interpretations of Palissy's rustic wares demonstrate that a single ceramic could evoke contradictory natural phenomena. Thus, the relationships between artistic procedures and the natural processes they emulated could prove as multivalent as mimesis itself.

A different rapport between artistic and natural processes manifests in Palissy's engagement with human petrification. Accounts of humans becoming stone and of stone sculptures becoming enlivened had permeated European culture since antiquity.[28] Palissy gave the former trope a geological explanation. His *Discours admirables* speculates that

> [...] if a corpse was interred in a place with some resting water, and there was a quantity of congelative water amongst [that water...] the aforementioned cadaver would petrify [...].[29]

Though petrification differs from sculpture, we can conjecture that early modern viewers referred to fossilised bodies to compare geological processes with the procedures of the sculptor.[30] Palissy described one figure from his *Architecture* grotto as a hybrid between petrified body and naturally-occurring sculpture, which

seemed "[…] to be made from grey stone […] and on several surfaces of its body there are several pebbles and shells, as if nature had formed them among the stone of the said statue".[31] Like the myths of petrification and sculptural enlivenment it engaged, Palissy's chimera indicates mutual mimesis between nature and art.[32] If human petrification was nature's way of sculpting, then Palissy's simulations of petrified humans imitated a natural process that itself emulated the effects of an artistic procedure. Thus, natural and artistic processes could inhabit a circuit of mutual influence even as they aligned or misaligned on various levels.

Palissy never divulged the full secrets of simulating jaspers, fossils, petrified humans, or other natural phenomena. Instead, he insisted that readers learn from their own experience, alleging that "the errors I made whilst formulating my enamels educated me more than what was readily discovered […]".[33] For Palissy, insights derived from mimetic successes in which natural and artistic processes clash supersede knowledge arising from more straightforward mimetic triumphs, where the processes of art and nature align.

Palissy's writings cast the potential conflicts between natural phenomena and the methods the artist uses to simulate them in natural philo-sophical terms such as theories of the elements, and of chemical and physical change. In the artist's wake, interest in divergences between natural phenomena and the synthetic means whereby artists recreated identical natural effects shaped nature research. For instance, natural historians drew insights from how artisans gauged the material and technical qualities of natural and artificial phenomena in honing systems of classification for distinguishing natural materials like stone from artificial materials like glass.[34] Thus, conversations about the discord between natural and synthetic processes had profound implications for art and natural philosophy.

Attending to sixteenth-century discourse on clashes between natural and artistic processes complicates two long-prevalent positions: the idea that sixteenth-century artists sought to imitate natural phenomena largely by replicating the mechanics of corresponding natural processes, and more broadly, the tendency to regard Palissy's era as a time when knowledge predominantly derived from resemblances between things.[35] The work of Palissy highlights how sixteenth-century artists also probed substantial differences between natural and artistic processes. For Palissy and his peers, mimesis could slice against the grain of nature itself.

Notes

[1] B. Palissy, *ARCHITECTVRE, ET ORDONNANCE DE LA GROTTE RVSTIQVE de Monseigneur le Duc de Montmorancy, Pair, & Connestable de France* (La Rochelle: Barthélemy Berthon, 1563). I have been unable to consult an original copy of this elusive text and derive the dedication date and bibliographic information from the introduction and reproduced title page prefacing the transcription B. Palissy, *ARCHITECTURE & ORDONNANCE DE LA GROTTE RUSTIQUE DE MONSEIGNEUR LE DUC DE MONTMORANCY Connestable de France. Premier Livre du célèbre potier demeuré inconnu. Réimprimé d'après l'édition de la Rochelle, 1563*, transcribed with an introduction by É. Rahir [hereafter "Palissy, *Architecture*, transcr. Rahir"] (Paris: Librairie Damascène Morgand, 1919), London, British Library, General Reference Collection 07816.c.18, pp. 8 and 11, respectively. Rahir omitted pagination from his publication and did not indicate the pagination of Palissy's original text. My citations assume a consecutive pagination for Rahir's entire publication, including metatext and transcription, with the first title page as page 1.

[2] See É. Rahir, untitled introduction, in Palissy, *Architecture*, transcr. Rahir, pp. 6-7.

[3] Palissy, *Architecture*, transcr. Rahir, p. 23: "[…] qu'elles sont si pres approchantes du naturel qu'il n'y a nul qui peut rien adiouster […]". The dialogue probably refers to a grotto Palissy developed from c. 1556 to c. 1564-1567 in his Saintes workshop, likely for Montmorency's Écouen château. Excavations of Palissy's Paris atelier in 1845, 1855, 1865, and 1984-1987 nevertheless unearthed fragments closely corresponding to ceramic flora, fauna, and minerals described in the *Architecture*. The findings suggest that Palissy brought grotto elements detailed in the *Architecture* and first made for Écouen to Paris around 1567 to use in Catherine de' Medici's (1519-1589) Tuileries grotto, a project deserted in 1572. See L.N. Amico, *Bernard Palissy: In Search of Earthly Paradise* (Paris and New York: Flammarion, 1996), pp. 53-54, and p. 69.

[4] B. Palissy, *DISCOVRS ADMIRABLES, DE LA NATVRE DES EAVX ET FONTEINES* […] [hereafter "*Discours admirables*"] (Paris: Martin le Jeune, 1580), London, British Library, General Reference Collection 1171.d.3., p. 105: "[…] les diuerses euures & le bel ordre […]". An English translation is B. Palissy, *The Admirable Discourses of Bernard Palissy*, introduction and tr.

A. La Rocque (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1957). I have read La Rocque's translation with appreciation, but employ my own translations from Palissy's original *Discours admirables* here.

5 See E. Kris, "Der Stil 'Rustique'. Die Verwendung des Naturabgusses bei Wenzel Jamnitzer und Bernard Palissy", *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* NF 1 (1926): pp. 137-208.

6 For the first thesis, see, for example, A.B. Hanschmann, *Bernard Palissy der Künstler Naturforscher und Schriftsteller als Vater der induktiven Wissenschaftsmethode des Bacon von Verulam.* […] (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Theodor Weicher, 1903), pp. 100-101; for the second thesis, see, for instance, W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions: Alchemy and the Quest to Perfect Nature* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 145-163; and P.H. Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 100-106; for the final thesis, see, for example, N. Andrews, "The space of knowledge: Artisanal epistemology and Bernard Palissy", *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 65/66 (2014/2015): pp. 275-288.

7 Studies generally aligning natural and artistic processes in Palissy's thought include M. Kemp, "Palissy's Philosophical Pots: Ceramics, Grottoes and the 'Matrice' of the Earth", in W. Tega, ed., *Le origini della modernità. II: Linguaggi e saperi nel XVII secolo* (Firenze: Olschki, 1999), pp. 69-87; W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, cit., pp. 157-159; and H.R. Shell, "Ceramic Nature", in U. Klein, E.C. Spary, eds., *Materials and Expertise in Early Modern Europe: Between Market and Laboratory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 50-70; more specific theses from these and additional sources follow below.

8 See W. Lefèvre, "Natürliches Bild und Naturabguss. Zur Bildnatur gewisser Fossilien", *Bildwelten des Wissens. Kunsthistorisches Jahrbuch für Bildkritik* 8, no. 1, *Kontaktbilder* (2010): pp. 95-102: pp. 100-102.

9 On Palissy's struggles, see, for instance, P.H. Smith, *The Body of the Artisan*, cit., pp. 103-105.

10 Palissy, *Architecture*, transcr. Rahir, pp. 35-36: "Lors il print vn loppin d'vne desdictes pieces, & l'ayant rompu en plusieurs endroicts, il me monstra […] tout ainsi que si c'eust esté une pierre naturelle". On this passage and Palissy's interest in replicating nature, see W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, cit., pp. 150-152.

11 See, for example, M. Kemp, "Palissy's Philosophical Pots", cit., pp. 83-85.

12 On the evolution of Palissy's natural philosophical ideas, see, for instance, H.R. Thompson, "The geographical and geological observations of Bernard Palissy the potter", *Annals of Science* 10, no. 2 (1954): pp. 149-165: p. 154.

13 Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 197: "[…] augmentation congelatiue".

14 *Ibid.*, p. 198: "[…] les pluyes qui passent au trauers des terrres prennent les sels qui sont aussi inconnuz, lesquels sels ou matieres metaliques, sont fluentes & se laissent couler auec les eaux qui entrent dens la terre iusques à ce qu'elles ayent trouué quelque fonds pour s'arrester […] se viennent à congeler & endurcir & faire vn corps & vne masse auec l'autre pierre". On Aristotle and Theophrastus's geological theories in relation to premodern art, see F. Barry, *Painting in Stone: Architecture and the Poetics of Marble from Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020), pp. 49-50.

15 See W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, cit., pp. 156-157, which highlights shared natural philosophical principles of each phenomenon, but also, unlike the present paper, emphasises their specific, material and technical similarities.

16 See M. Kemp, "Palissy's Philosophical Pots", cit., p. 83.

17 Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 197: "[…] comme qui ietteroit de la cire fondue sur vne masse de cire desia congelée, & que icelle se vint cógeler auec ladite masse, laquelle seroit augmentée d'autant que l'addition […]".

18 See, for example, W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, cit., p. 158.

19 Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 198: "[…] lieux humides & aqueux […]".

20 *Ibid.*, p. 256: "[…] terre pasteuse […]".

21 See M.R. Wright, *Empedocles: The Extant Fragments. Edited, with an Introduction, Commentary, and Concordance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 22-40.

22 Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 259: "[…] ne chassent l'humeur exalatiue, qui est dedens la terre, petit a petit, & qu'ils veulent mettre le grand feu au parauant qu'elle soit ostée, il n'y à rien plus certain que le chaud & l'humide se rencontrant engendreront vn tonnere, à cause de leur contrarieté".

23 Palissy, *Architecture*, transcr. Rahir, p. 21: "[…] adprochent si pres du naturel, qu'il ne leur reste que le mouuement".

24 Scholars have extrapolated Palissy's life-casting procedures from methods described in a manuscript composed by a French metalworker between c. 1570 and 1594: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Fr. 640 – see, for instance, L.N. Amico, *Bernard Palissy*, cit., pp. 86-92.

25 See, for example, L. Daston, K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature: 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), p. 286; and H.R. Shell, "Ceramic Nature", cit., pp. 63-66. Shell also notes the multiple interpretations for the rustic wares, and sees Palissy's life-casting practices and his understanding of fossilisation as mutually informative.

26 See, for instance, W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, cit., pp. 153 and 158; H.R. Shell, "Ceramic Nature", cit., pp. 65-66; and N. Andrews, "The space of knowledge", cit., pp. 285-286. For the thesis that Palissy's rustic ceramics represent not fossils, but living organisms, cf. W. Lefèvre, "Natürliches Bild und Naturabguss", cit., p. 102.

27 Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 220: "[…] des poissons armez & autres, qui se sont engendrez dedens certains cassars ou receptacles d'eau laquelle eau meslée de terre & d'vn sel congelatif & generatif, le tout s'est reduit en pierre […]".

28 For example, Medusa's powers of petrification in Ovid, *Metamorphoses: Books 1-8*[3], tr. F.J. Miller, rev. G.P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 42 (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1977), 4.779-781, pp. 232-233; 5.177-235, pp. 250-255; and 5.248-249, pp. 254-255; and the enlivenment of Pygmalion's statue in Ovid, *Metamorphoses: Books 9-15*[2], tr. F.J. Miller, rev. G.P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 43 (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1984), 10.280-294, pp. 84-85.

29 Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 204: "[…] si vn corps estoit enterré dans vn lieu ou il y eust quelque eau dormante, parmi laquelle y eust de l'eau congelatiue […] ledit corps se petrifieroit […]".

30 See M. Kapustka, "Die verlorene *carnosità* oder Skulptur und Fossilien im Zeitalter des Paragone. Versuch einer vergleichenden Bildanalyse", in A. Lipińska, ed., *Materiał rzeźby. Między techniką a semantyką / Material of Sculpture. Between Technique and Semantics* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2009), pp. 273-293: p. 285.

31 Palissy, *Architecture*, transcr. Rahir, p. 30: "[…] semble qu'il soit d'vne pierre de grison […] & en plusieurs endroicts de sa corporance il y a plusieurs cailloux, & coquilles comme si nature les auoit créés parmi la pierre de ladicte statue". On the *Architecture*'s treatment of human petrification, see W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, cit., pp. 153-154.

[32] On nature imitating art in the context of Palissy's work, see, for example, L. Daston, K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, cit., p. 286.

[33] Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 291: "Les fautes que i'ay faites en mettant mes esmaux en doze, m'ont plus apprins que non pas les choses qui se sont bien trouuées [...]".

[34] See, for example, S. Dupré, "The Art of Glassmaking and the Nature of Stones: The Role of Imitation in Anselm De Boodt's Classification of Stones", in I. Augart, M. Saß, I. Wenderholm, eds., *Steinformen. Materialität, Qualität, Imitation* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 207-220: pp. 212-220.

[35] The latter is exemplified by M. Foucault, *Les mots et les choses: une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966). On difference and sixteenth-century art, see J. Nelson, *Disharmony of the Spheres: The Europe of Holbein's Ambassadors* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).

The Philosopher's Stone: Art and Nature in Eighteenth-Century European Porcelain Production

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The mastery of a kaolinic porcelain technology in Dresden in 1709 and the subsequent founding of the royal Meissen factory in 1710 is one of the outstanding technical scientific achievements of the European eighteenth century. From the outset, the new material assumed an important representative function at the Saxon court, where it symbolised the cultural achievements of the Wettin King-Electors. It was deployed in architectural projects like the Japanese Palace, and disseminated as diplomatic gifts to courts the Saxons wished to influence.[1] This representative function had much to do with the context in which the secret of porcelain production was rediscovered. European porcelain was not a product of traditional ceramic industries. The persons responsible for perfecting a formula for hard-paste porcelain were not potters; instead they were natural philosophers, and the milieu in which they worked was that of the court-sponsored laboratory.

Natural philosophy in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries encompassed a broad range of disciplines, all concerned with understanding the natural world. Some of these intellectual endeavours would be embraced by the enlightenment academy, becoming the foundations of modern scientific knowledge. Other aspects of natural philosophy – like astrology for example – would find themselves excluded from the realm of science and relegated to the realm of the occult. Porcelain occupies a position on one of these fault lines in the historiography of science. Porcelain production was for much of the eighteenth century closely associated with alchemy, that field of natural philosophy that concerned itself with revealing the nature of matter and discovering means to manipulate and transform it.[2] The modern historiography of science has, until very recently, drawn a firm distinction between alchemy – characterised as a fraudulent pursuit practiced by charlatans, conventionally deemed to have been banished from the canons of rational learning of the academy by the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century – and chemistry, the system of rational knowledge about the nature of the material universe pursued through experimental laboratory-based procedures. Historians of science like William Newman and Lawrence Principe, however, have shown how the search for a clear-cut distinction between alchemy and chemistry in the eighteenth century is anachronistic and that many natural philosophers engaged in laboratory investigation and associated by later historiography with the enlightenment science of chemistry in fact spent much of their careers simultaneously pursuing activities conventionally associated with alchemical knowledge.[3] Indeed, alchemy was characterised, first and foremost, by its laboratory-based procedures which encompassed a broad range of undertakings, all of which involved the transformation of materials, including the manufacture of pharmaceutical products, metallurgical refinement, glass production and dye formulation,

Fig. 1. Meissen Porcelain Factory, Teapot, 1710-15. Böttger red stoneware, cut and wheel-polished, 9.6 cm high. London, Victoria and Albert Museum (C.274&A-1921). © London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

and not just the pursuit of *chrysopoeia* – the transmutation of base metals into gold – with which alchemy is most commonly associated today.[4]

This ambiguous historiography of chemical knowledge in the eighteenth century inflects accounts of the events leading to the discovery of a porcelain formula in Saxony. Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus, mathematician, physicist, physician, philosopher, *Académicien* and correspondent of Leibniz and Spinoza was, along with Johann Friedrich Böttger, one of the two investigators responsible for the discovery of a method for producing hard-paste porcelain.[5] Von Tschirnhaus had experience in glass production and the smelting of a wide range of materials, and his sophisticated work on focusing mirrors and burning lenses, in particular, was critical to investigating the high temperatures required for the successful firing of a kaolin porcelain paste. But if von Tschirnhaus – remembered by historians as a physicist and chemist – was a key figure in this discovery, so was his compatriot Böttger, an apothecary, metallurgist and professional alchemist, who was being held under house arrest in Dresden after coming to the attention of Augustus the Strong, the Saxon elector, for purported success in transforming base metals into gold.[6]

There is dispute over which of this pair, von Tschirnhaus or Böttger, was ultimately responsible for the breakthrough that led to a successful kaolinic porcelain formula. While Böttger has traditionally been identified as the inventor of Saxon porcelain, there has been a growing tendency in recent literature to attribute the discovery to von Tschirnhaus, claiming that his sudden death in 1708 left the way open for Böttger to claim the success.[7] But this narrative rehearses the historiographic trope that Böttger the 'alchemist' – and therefore a fraud – cannot possibly have succeeded and that it must have been von Tschirnhaus the 'scientist' who was ultimately responsible for the discovery. If we remove this false dichotomy between alchemist and scientist and instead recognise both men as natural philosophers dedicated to investigation of nature's secrets, then the possibility of their joint responsibility for the discovery comes into focus. Indeed, it seems likely that Böttger's technical laboratory skills – characteristic of the 'alchemical' enterprise – and his commitment to the *possibility* of material transmutation were major contributors to the success of the undertaking. It was the cooperation between these two natural philosophers, von Tschirnhaus and Böttger, that resulted in success where so many others had failed.[8]

That it was students of natural philosophy, not ceramic craftsmen, that achieved success in replicating Chinese porcelain is a point worthy of closer attention. Since the time of Marco Polo, reports about the fabrication of Chinese porcelain had circulated in Europe – all of them impressive for their inaccuracy.[9] They betray little real knowledge of either raw materials or methods involved in porcelain production. By the time an accurate description of the making of Chinese porcelain was recorded by the Jesuit Père Francois Xavier d'Entrecolles in 1712, based on first-hand observation at the imperial kiln complex at Jingdezhen, the Meissen factory had already been established, so these earlier European speculations about porcelain manufacture provide a context within which early experimentation took place.[10]

A regular feature of European accounts of porcelain manufacture was the construal of the material's creation in terms of natural processes, with raw materials being exposed to the elements or buried in the earth in order to achieve the final translucent, white product. The late thirteenth-century *Description of the World* (*Divisament dou Monde*) attributed to Marco Polo provides perhaps the earliest written European description of Chinese porcelain and its manufacture.[11] Polo claims to have had a chance to view porcelain production in a city called Tinju, a site that has been associated with the great southern kiln complex of Dehua in Fujian province.[12] It is this text that gives us the word porcelain – Marco Polo linked this class of Chinese ceramic to the white cowrie shell (*cypraea moneta*), 'porcella' in Italian, on the basis of its appearance.[13]

> These dishes (*porcellana*) are made of a crumbly earth of clay which is dug as though from a mine and stacked in huge mounds and then left for thirty or forty years exposed to wind, rain, and sun. By this time the earth is so refined that dishes made of it are an azure tint with a very brilliant sheen […] when a man makes a mound of this earth he does so for his children; the time of maturing is so long that he cannot hope to draw any profit from it himself […].[14]

Here the method of porcelain production involves a transformation of earth through the agency of

natural forces – exposure of clay to sun, wind and rain. It is a change that takes place on a timescale more akin to natural processes than the techniques of industry – the periods of time involved are generational in length.

Another account of Chinese porcelain production is contained in the 1516 travelogue of the Portuguese India officer Duarte Barbosa that was widely circulated throughout the 1550s in the collection *Delle Navigationi et Viaggi* published by Ramusio.[15] Barbosa writes:

> They take the shells of sea snails and eggshells and pulverize them and, with other materials, make a paste which they put under the earth to become refined for a space of eighty or a hundred years […] they then dig it out and work it into vases of various shapes, large and small, paint them, glaze them […].[16]

We find here repeated the association of seashells with porcelain, but now as an ingredient of the paste, and the notion that an extended period of time, more than the average human lifetime, is required for the paste's refinement. But Barbosa's account introduces a trope that will be repeated in other early modern accounts of Chinese porcelain production – namely that porcelain was formed underneath the ground. So, in 1547 the Italian polymath Gerolamo Cardano wrote that:

> It is certain that porcelain is likewise made of a particular juice which coalesces underground and is brought from the East.[17]

The author here evokes the notion found in Pliny the Elder of liquids solidifying underground through natural heat.[18] Similarly, in 1557, noted scholar and rhetorician Julius Caesar Scaliger proposed that porcelain was made from shells that were pounded into dust, reformed, and then buried. Like Barbosa, Scaliger hypothesized that the maturation process for porcelain takes longer than a human lifespan:

> Eggshells and the shell of umbilical shellfish (called porcelains, whence the name) are pounded into dust, which is then mingled with water and shaped into vases. These are then hidden underground. A hundred years later they are dug up, being considered finished, and are put up for sale.[19]

Scaliger describes a process that attributes porcelain's creation to a subterranean transformation that defies human observation and comprehension. Vessels formed of a porcelain paste are buried in the earth and when dug up after the appointed period, have been transformed into finished porcelains.

Not all early descriptions of porcelain production agreed that porcelain required lengthy periods of time to mature. Gaspar da Cruz, Portuguese Dominican, had been to China and in 1569 wrote a treatise on his travels in which he issued a corrective to some of the common musings on porcelain production. Da Cruz debunks reports of porcelain paste being made of materials like oyster shells or rotten dung:

> The substance of the porcelain is a white and soft stone, […] or in better speaking is a hard clay, the which after well beating and grinding it, and laying in cisterns of water […] they make the very fine porcelain […] in this clay, as the potters do any other vessel […].[20]

Here the connection with shells, and the idea of transgenerational maturation times, is explicitly rejected. But what remains evident is the idea that porcelain was extracted from the ground as a substance ready to be processed and turned into vessels. The porcelain paste was produced within the earth, not mixed from raw materials by craftsmen. A similar theory of porcelain paste being extracted from the earth is repeated in the popular China travelogue of Johan Nieuhoff first published in 1665.[21]

Interestingly, subterranean generation and transformation is an idea common in European natural philosophical speculation. From the middle ages until the eighteenth century, theories of metallic generation suggested that metals grew within the earth. The mercury-sulphur theory of metals, ultimately Aristotelian in origin, proposed that all metals are compounds of two principles, mercury and sulphur. These substances combined in different proportions and purities, condensing in the earth to form various metals.[22] Of classical origin too was the notion of the fertility of metals – that they increased within the earth.[23] Other minerals were also believed to incubate within the earth, developing slowly in subterranean regions. Paracelsian alchemy of the sixteenth century proposed that metals and minerals grew un-

derground in the form of huge stalks that formed the branches of vast subterranean trees, no doubt reflecting the practical observation of the occurrence of metals and other minerals in veins.[24]

Early speculation about porcelain's creation suggests that the material was construed as a mineral substance, one whose creation echoed that of other minerals – formed beneath the ground over extended periods of time. This idea is perhaps suggested by one of the earliest surviving depictions of Chinese porcelain in European painting: Mantegna's *Adoration of the Magi* (c. 1495-1505). Here we find depicted the three Kings from the East offering their gifts to the Christ Child in luxurious vessels of agate (Persian cup), jasper (Turkish censer) and porcelain (the stylised, scrolling cobalt–blue floral ornament on the cup is reminiscent of the decoration of early fifteenth–century Ming porcelain wares). Porcelain appears here to be construed as a mineral, comparable with the other precious hardstones on display. The idea that porcelain was somehow a mineral product of natural processes has important implications for how we understand the circumstances surrounding the successful fabrication of a kaolinic porcelain in early eighteenth-century Saxony. The production of a porcelain in Dresden in 1708 was achieved by natural philosophers – alchemists – who understood their task to be, through observation of the natural world, the discovery of how nature worked, and the emulation, acceleration and perfection of her practices in the laboratory.[25] Even though the various accounts of porcelain production circulating in Renaissance Europe were inaccurate, the framing of porcelain's creation in terms of natural processes rendered it an obvious object of alchemical investigation.

The attempt to create porcelain by Grand Duke Francesco di Medici at the Casino di San Marco in Florence is an instructive comparison here. Natural philosophy had long been an interest of the Medici court – Francesco's grandfather Lorenzo had retained the Neoplatonic philosopher Marsilio Ficino – and Francesco continued this tradition, pursuing a personal interest in alchemy, a discipline which had become established at the court during the reign of his father Cosimo I.[26] Much of Francesco's alchemical experimentation focused on glassmaking, an endeavour that demonstrated alchemical processes of material transmutation.[27] Francesco took special pride in the creation of artificial precious stones with glassmaking techniques, in-

stantiating the quest to create mineral products through alchemical procedures. The same interest in transmutational practices must have motivated Francesco's experiments in the production of porcelain, resulting in the so-called Medici porcelains; essentially an opacified glass formula, more like a Middle Eastern frit ware than Chinese kaolin porcelain.[28] Of note is the fact that this earliest of European attempts to fabricate porcelain proceeded without the involvement of traditional ceramicists – there are no potters mentioned in descriptions of the Florentine project. Questions concerning the nature of porcelain were construed, not within the tradition of utilitarian ceramics, but as part of the quest to understand the secrets of nature. The taking of raw earth and subjecting it to fire to create glass or porcelain mimicked what were understood to be geological processes at play beneath the earth generating metals and minerals.

These considerations – the manipulation of natural processes to generate a mineral substance – remained current in Dresden at the turn of the eighteenth century. When in 1706, in the course of experiments in pursuit of a porcelain formula, Böttger and Tschirnhaus achieved a high-fired red stoneware inspired by Chinese *Yixing* wares, it was dubbed *Jaspisporcelain*. Its principal ingredient was red bolus or Nuremburg earth, a red earth that since the sixteenth century was believed to possess healing properties and was taken medicinally. Böttger, whose career began as an apothecary's apprentice, would no doubt have been familiar with this material, a mineral that Rudolph II's personal physician, Johannes Scultetus Montanus had identified as 'gold fat', *Axungia Auri*, gold transformed by the influence of the sun.[29] The bolus not only had alchemical transmutational associations – it naturally occurred as veins in the volcanic rock in which jasper was found. It is highly likely that Böttger believed he had achieved the transmutation of the bolus into an imitation jasper by emulating the natural forces at play in the earth – sealing the material in a kiln and exposing it to extremely high temperatures.[30] And the completed *Jaspisporcelain* was subjected to grinding and polishing, cutting and engraving like a hardstone – something impossible with other European ceramic bodies – creating artworks that Augustus gave pride of place within his *pretiosen* collection in the Green Vaults.[31]

The eventual production of a white porcelain in 1709 – realizing the transmutation of raw earth

into the long sought after 'white gold' – could be understood as a resounding affirmation of the transmutational goals pursued by alchemy. And that Böttger's work for Augustus the Strong took place in the context of ongoing alchemical investigations is emphasised by the fact that, even after arriving at a formula for a hard-paste porcelain, on 20 March 1713 Böttger performed a transmutation experiment in the presence of the King, producing a gold and a silver regulus, still retained in the Dresden Porzellansammlung.[32]

This intimate connection between porcelain production, the mineral realm and the manipulation of natural forces remained current in Europe long past the publication of Etienne-Francois Geoffroy's 1722 paper 'Some cheats concerning the Philosophers' Stone', traditionally deemed as marking the end of transmutational experimentation as a respectable enterprise.[33] Indeed, many of the leading technicians associated with the most important European porcelain factories continued to conduct transmutational investigations: for example, Jean Hellot, Académicien and Fellow of the Royal Society, was from 1751 until his death in 1766 the chief technician at first the Vincennes and then the royal porcelain factory at Sèvres, formulating glazes, enamel colours and porcelain pastes. But in addition to these activities, as Laurence Principe has shown, Hellot, the so-called father of French industrial chemistry, actively pursued alchemical, and in particular, chrysopoeiac experiments throughout his career.[34] And Hellot was not alone in his alchemical interests; academy chemists like Macquer and Rouelle were discussing transmutation at least into the 1770s.[35]

Even the decoration of Sèvres porcelain reflected the mineral and natural philosophical associations that the medium clearly held well into the second half of the eighteenth century. Juliet Carey has drawn attention to the way in which the decoration of Sèvres porcelain often references contemporary mineralogical knowledge. So, for example, the *caillouté* decoration employed on Sèvres useful wares from the 1760s onwards reflects elite interest in and knowledge of the mineralogical world revealed by natural philosophers.[36]

But what is the significance of all this effort to recover the transmutational context of European porcelain's creation in the eighteenth century – the idea that porcelain is a mineral product achieved by artificial manipulation of natural forces and materials? The significance lies in the way in which these associations allowed porcelain to function as, not merely an emblem, but a physical manifestation of power. At the ruler's command, raw earth was transmuted into precious mineral. Porcelain production was proof that an anointed prince shared in divine creative power. The scramble by courts across Europe to establish porcelain factories in the wake of the successes in Dresden was not primarily driven by economic concerns – porcelain production was prohibitively expensive and virtually none of the great eighteenth-century manufactories were truly viable as commercial concerns. They relied on state subventions to survive. Instead, a porcelain factory manifested princely power. "For a prince of my rank, a porcelain factory is an essential attribute of splendour and dignity". So declared Herzog Carl Eugen von Württemberg in the 1753 founding decree of his porcelain factory at Ludwigsburg.[37] Familiar today as a purely utilitarian material, in the eighteenth century, European porcelain was art that emulated nature and confirmed princely mastery of matter.

Notes

[1] M. Cassidy-Geiger, ed., *Fragile Diplomacy: Meissen Porcelain for European Courts ca. 1710-63* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

[2] On the history of alchemy in European thought see L.M. Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2013).

[3] L.M. Principe, "The End of Alchemy? The Repudiation and Persistence of Chrysopoeia at the Académie Royale des Sciences in the Eighteenth Century", *Osiris* 29, no. 1 (2014): p. 114.

[4] W. Newman, "What have we learned from the recent historiography of alchemy", *Isis* 102, no. 2 (2011): pp. 313-321.

[5] M. Schönfeld, "Was there a Western Inventor of Porcelain?", *Technology and Culture* 39, no. 4 (1998): pp. 716-727.

[6] For an overview of the discovery of the Arcanum in Dresden see C.H. Nelson, L. Roberts, *A History of Eighteenth-*

Century German Porcelain: The Warda Stevens Stout Collection (Memphis: Dixon Gallery and Gardens, 2013), pp. 117-183.

[7] M. Schönfeld, "Was there a Western Inventor", cit., pp. 716-727.

[8] R. Hoffmann, "Meissen Chymistry", *American Scientist* 92, no. 4 (2004): pp. 312-315.

[9] Interestingly, Arab accounts of Chinese porcelain production, like the one found in Ibn-Battuta's *Travels* of 1355, record reasonably accurate descriptions of the materials and method involved M.F. West, "Arab Sources of European Notions about Chinese Porcelain Clay", *Folklore* 88, no. 1 (1977): p. 66.

[10] M. Pollard, "Letters from China: A History of the Origins of the Chemical Analysis of Ceramics", *Ambix* 62, no. 1 (2015): pp. 57-58.

[11] P. Jackson, "Marco Polo and his 'Travels'", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London 61, no. 1 (1998): pp. 82-101.

[12] L. Meicun, R. Zhang, "A Chinese Porcelain Jar Associated with Marco Polo: A Discussion from an Archaeological Perspective", *European Journal of Archaeology* 21, no. 1 (2018): pp. 39-56.

[13] F. Hamer & J. Hamer, *The Potter's Dictionary of Materials and Techniques* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), p. 229.

[14] Marco Polo, *The Travels*, tr. R. Latham (London: Penguin, 1958), p. 238.

[15] M.F. West, "Arab Sources of European Notions", cit., p. 66.

[16] D. Barbosa, "Libre di Odoardo Barbessa", in Gio. Batt. Ramusio, ed., *Delle Navigationi et Viaggi* (Venezia 1550), vol. 1, p. 345f. The MS tradition also includes accounts of eggwhites, as well as the shells, being added to the paste. M.F. West, "Arab Sources of European Notions", cit.

[17] Gerolamo Cardano, *De subtilitate rerum* (Nuremberg 1550), pp. 100v-101r. Quoted from R.W. Lightbrown, "Oriental Art and the Orient in Late Renaissance and Baroque Italy", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): p. 230.

[18] Pliny, *Natural History, Volume X: Books 36-37.* Translated by D.E. Eichholz. Loeb Classical Library 419 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 180.

[19] Scaliger, *Exotericum exercitationum* (Paris 1557), pp. 135v-136r. Quoted in R.W. Lightbrown, "Oriental Art", cit., p. 231.

[20] Gaspar da Cruz, in C.R. Boxer, ed., *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, Hakluyt Society, Series 2, no. 106 (London 1953), pp. 126-127.

[21] Johannes Nieuhoff, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperour of China, Delivered by Their Excellencies Peter de Goyer and Jacob de Kayser, at his Imperial City of Peking...*, tr. J. Ogilby (London: John Macock, 1669), p. 71: "The Earth whereof this Purceline is made, is digged in great quantity out of the Mountains situated near the chief City Hoeicheu, in the Province of Nanking [...] The Earth is not Fat, like Clay, or Chalk, but like to our fine Sand, which they mingle with water, and so to make it into four-square Clods [...] The Earthen Clods which are thus brought from the Mountains, are afterwards framed into what fashions they please, after the same manner as our Potters in Europe form their Earthen Ware [...]".

[22] L.M. Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 35-37.

[23] On the classical ideas concerning the fertility of mines see R. Halleux, "Fécondité des mines et sexualité des pierres dans l'Antiquité greco-romaine", *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 49 (1970): pp. 16-24.

[24] W. Newman, "What Alchemists knew: early modern chemistry", in D. von Kerssenbrock-Krosigk, ed., *Glass of the Alchemists: Lead Crystal – Gold Ruby, 1650-1750* (Corning, NY: The Corning Museum of Glass, 2008), p. 45.

[25] W. Newman, *Atoms and Alchemy: Chymistry and the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). C. Stanley Smith, M. Teach Gnudi, eds. and tr., *The Pirotechnia of Vannoccio Biringuccio* (New York: Dover Publications, 1943), pp. 396-398.

[26] A. Perifano, *Alchimie à la court de Côme Ier de Médicis: Savoirs, culture et politique* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997).

[27] M. Beretta, *The alchemy of glass: Counterfeit, imitation and transmutation in ancient glassmaking* (Sagamore Beach, MA: Science History Publications, 2009).

[28] A. Lane, *Italian Porcelain, with a note on Buen Retiro* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), p. 3; W.D. Kingery, P.B. Vandiver, "Medici Porcelain", *Faenza* 70 (1984): pp. 441-453.

[29] J. Horschik, "Die deutschen Terra-Sigillata-Gefässe des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts und ihre Siegelmarken", *Keramos* 33 (1966): p. 13, citing G.A. Volkmann, *Silesia subterranea* (Leipzig 1720), pp. 277f.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[31] D. Syndram, U. Weinhold, eds., *Böttger Stoneware. Johann Friedrich Böttger and Treasury Art* (Berlin and München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009).

[32] M. Bothe, "Johann Friedrich Böttger – "vir honestus excellentissime ingenii"", in D. Syndram, U. Weinhold, eds., *Böttger* Stoneware, cit., pp. 27-28.

[33] É.-F. Geoffroy, "Des supercheries concernant la pierre philosophale", *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale des Sciences* 24 (1722): pp. 61-70.

[34] Work by scholars like Laurence Principe and Marco Beretta has demonstrated that a gap existed between the public denouncement of alchemy and the actual practices of leading chemists of the period. Hellot's library contained a large number of important sixteenth and seventeenth alchemical treatises – and we know this through the records of his estate sale where, interestingly enough, Antoine Lavoisier purchased a number of these alchemical texts. L.M. Principe, "The End of Alchemy? The Repudiation and Persistence of Chrysopoeia at the Académie Royale des Sciences in the Eighteenth Century," *Osiris* 29, no. 1 (2014): pp. 96-116; M. Beretta, "Transmutations and Frauds in Enlightened Paris: Lavoisier and Alchemy", in M. Beretta, M. Conforti, eds., *Fakes!? Hoaxes, Counterfeits and Deception in Early Modern Science* (Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, 2014): pp. 69-108.

[35] C. Lehman, "Alchemy Revisited by the Mid-Eighteenth Century Chemists in France: An Unpublished Manuscript by Pierre-Joseph Macquer", *Nuncius* 28 (2013): pp. 165-216; L.M. Principe, "The End of Alchemy?", cit., p. 114.

[36] J. Carey, "The riches of the Earth: Mineralogy, microscopes and caillouté patterns on Sèvres porcelain", *The French Porcelain Society Journal* 5 (2015): pp. 117-131.

[37] "[...] ein notwendiges Attribut des Glanzes und der Würde". 5 April 1758, Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart A 248 Bü 2430. The Württemberg court at Stuttgart had a long-standing association with alchemical research. T. Nummedal, *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 32, pp. 122-140.

Collecting the Other Way Round: Collecting and Being Collected

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On the Double Meaning of Plastic and What It Has to Do With Collecting

This article argues that the triad of art, nature, and collecting gains new perspectives through the ambiguous semantics of plastic. In our present, 'plastic' is primarily a mass product made of polyethylene, polyester or PVC. Created by engineers in chemical laboratories and no longer by craftsmen and artisans in their workshops, synthetic things are produced, used, and thrown away in gigantic quantities. Between 1950 and 2017, 6.3 billion tons of plastic waste are said to have accumulated worldwide without being biodegradable.[1] The vast majority of this plastic waste ends up in the oceans, where it now circulates in gigantic currents, especially in the northern Pacific. In the past, 'plastic' had completely different connotations. For centuries, the term *vis plastica* had described the almost inexhaustible drive of nature to take different forms, or its transfer to the *technē* of humans, who imitated this intrinsic transformative power.

And collecting is quite close to plastic in both senses of the word. As pictorial sources show us, in the Renaissance and Baroque eras, human beings put themselves at the center of the scene as collectors. Surrounded by curious, unusual objects, the human being often slipped into the heroic role of Prometheus, who unlocked the secrets of nature.[2] Nowadays, however, it is the ocean that can be described as a curator of artifacts. As a matter of fact, as a result of a circulating oceanic gyre, acheiropoeitic accumulations of man-made things come into view on huge surfaces.[3] In early modern times, on the other hand, collectors were ambitious to assemble and condense the world inside four walls by gathering and exhibiting exotic objects from distant regions.[4] Today, anthropogenic mass-produced goods have become nature's plaything, often in places where no human being has ever been before. Under the influence of the Anthropocene, facts that are taken for granted are dissolving.[5] The *vis plastica* of nature has become the natural force of plastic, and collector and collection have exchanged places!

The First and Second 'Plastic Age'

Against this backdrop, it seems worth considering talking about a first and a second 'Plastic Age'. In the first 'Plastic Age', between 1550 and 1650, man's artistry competed with the plastic power of nature in a previously and subsequently unattainable inventiveness and elaborate combinatorics. The inventories and items collected in the Cabinets of Curiosities bear eloquent witness to this. The joy of the unusual, the mysterious, and the enigmatic influenced the choices of the collector. Ostrich eggs, corals and nautilus shells were regarded as wonderful relics of a strange, enchanting nature; masterful craftsmanship increased their effect even further.

The second 'Plastic Age' began around 1950 and will probably continue for several decades, perhaps until around 2050 – a century in which plastic should become an artificial and industrially produced throw-away product.[6] Plastic has become the substrate of advanced capitalism. Indeed, in the much-quoted words of Victor Lebow: "We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced and discarded at an ever-increasing rate".[7] With its smooth surfaces and bright colours, plastic represents the promises of modernity: the promise of a sealed, perfect, clean, smooth abundance. It embodies the fantasy of freeing oneself from the dirt of the world, from decay and death.[8] Roland Barthes speaks of plastic as an "alchemical substance".[9] And who does not remember the words of Andy Warhol, who loved Los Angeles and Hollywood for a very specific reason? "Everybody's plastic, but I love plastic. I want to be plastic".[10] Today, the dream of the ultimate passivity of matter and nature, which only exists to yield to

the will and whims of the modern subject, seems to have faded away. While on the one hand, engineers have created plastic materials that have imposed their forms on society over decades, without thinking about their consequences and safe disposal, on the other hand, a 'mega-matter' of plastic floating in the oceans is now making itself visible on a global scale, and in a way that mankind cannot ignore. The sea has become an active collector and has started to communicate with people through its wandering objects.

Different Types of Hybrid Objects

There would be no history of collecting without collecting objects. This essay deals with artefacts in the sea and naturalia from the sea, i.e., on the one hand, gigantic accumulations of macro and micro plastics in the oceans, which nevertheless take on certain shapes, and, on the other hand, marine exhibits in the cabinets of rarities from the late Renaissance and Baroque eras. Anyone who has even a fleeting interest in Kunst- und Wunderkammern knows that naturalia from the sea are an indispensable part of their collection. Sea and water and its ingredients were part of cosmological ideas and, as such, quickly found their way into the Wunderkammern. The frontispieces of publications on famous collections of the time such as those of Ferrante Imperato, Francesco Calzolari, and Ole Worm describe this phenomenon.[11] Everywhere one discovers a part of the room with exhibits that can be attributed to the sea – from mollusc shells and crustaceans to large fish skeletons. Many of them were considered wonders of nature and represented the then widely unknown and also feared marine world.[12]

Fig. 1. Thomas de Critz (1607-1653), attributed to, *John Tradescant the Younger with Roger Friend*. Oil on canvas, 107x132 cm. Oxford, The Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology.

Among the maritime exhibits in the Kunstkammer, shells were particularly popular. Shells are the ideal items for a collector. There are many species, both rare and common, they are small in size and often beautiful.[13] It is striking how often one encounters shells in paintings when collectors immortalize themselves, as documented by John Tradescant Senior and Junior (fig. 1). With-

Fig. 2. Goblet made from a shell with a gilded triton as mounting, end of the 16th century. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (Kunstkammer). *Die Entdeckung der Natur. Naturalien in den Kunstkammern des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. Seipel (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2006), p. 263.

out their passion for collecting, the Ashmolean Musuem in Oxford would not exist. In this painting, the younger Tradescant appears in the background with his colleague, while an opulent wealth of shells and corals stands in the foreground. Such *conchylia* were surrounded by stories oscillating between miracles, allegories, and natural history.[14] Shells were so much sought after by collectors because at first glance they illustrated the 'sculptural power', namely the 'vis plastica', the artistic activity of nature. When this portrait was painted, shells were still considered by many to be spontaneous creations ('creatio ex nihilo') of nature. This theory, which originated with Aristotle, was based on the assumption that shells could be created by solar radiation, i.e., by heating sand or mud. The creative power of the sun is thus expressed in shells, and art had the task of imitating this creative principle.

What this painting also reveals is the main features of the age when the world was explored. Expeditions to previously unknown parts of the world not only brought profitable goods but also exotic curiosities and rarities to Europe. The older Tradescant testifies to the rising interest in the commercial exchanges in this new form of trade. In an appeal to commercial travellers dating back to 1625, he expressed his keen interest in buying everything that was huge and strange, from the head of an elephant to the largest shellfish.[15] The more peculiar the items from afar were, the greater was his willingness to purchase them.

Between artefacts in the sea and naturalia from the sea, despite all their differences, there are commonalities which give rise to a third genre, that of hybrid objects. Hybrid objects were particularly popular in cabinets of curiosities. And such objects are also becoming increasingly widespread in the vastness of the ocean. As Giuseppe Olmi has noted, this pronounced tendency towards syncretism, which is ultimately based on a predilection for the bizarre and the grotesque, culminated in the Kunstkammer of the second half of the 16th century.[16] The shell, for instance, or the nautilus, "which is to be counted among the outstanding wonders, because it moved by expelling water, and in addition sets its own sail",[17] as Giovanni Battista Olivi wrote in his 1584 description of the Musaeum Calceolarium in Verona, was an object in which nature's richness of form and intricate human artistry met.[18] In the following photo, a shell is carried by a golden triton whose

arms are looped into the mounting (fig. 2). Finely crafted, this hybrid object oscillated between the spheres of art and nature. The exotic quality of the material, even though it already has some kind of magical aura, is further enhanced by a fine artistic design.

Similar objects, yet under reversed signs, can be found in the trash vortex of the Pacific, such as transparent, smooth plastic bottles whose outer surface has been occupied by shells (fig. 3).[19] The single elements of these hybrid objects really complement each other: in the decorated shell goblet, the organic part is present at a fixed point, while the elements made of precious metal are added as moving parts. In the plastic bottle covered by shells, the artefact is the static part, while nature brings about dynamism and change. By the way: with the help of this plastic vehicle, shells reach regions of the world where they do not belong at all. Hybrid objects in the sea and from the sea show how questionable the distinction between culture and nature has become today.

Artefacts in the Seas as Patterns of the Sublime

This expansion of the perspective towards hybrid and grotesque natural objects and artefacts in Mannerism put the classically measured ideal beauty of the Renaissance to the test.[20] Such strange things had a special effect, and not only because they oscillate between inclusion and exclusion and are able to create a zone of flowing transition beyond the common patterns of order.

Fig. 3. New hybrid objects between nature and artificiality, fished in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. © National Geographic.

The effort to order and classify nature according to the existing species – *natura naturata* – was paired with an approach aimed at grasping it in the mode of its creation and ever-changing nature – *natura naturans*. In the Anthropocene, on the other hand, we are often confronted with representations that radiate horror and beauty, that stun us but can also shake us up. The very fact that, in the Anthropocene, the processes take place over long periods of time, which can far exceed human life, and thus often occur in secret, forces their visualisation, which must make use of specific visual languages.[21] Indeed, we often deal with visual constructs or with sections of a larger whole.

Perceptions of greatness that far exceed the imagination of the individual human being often dominate the aesthetics of the anthropocenic discourse. The bird's-eye view photos of Edward Burtynsky or J. Henry Fair show the relentless plundering of earthly resources. Huge octopus-like dredging monsters are visible stripping the earth of its mineral resources. As if they were a force of nature crushing all natural forces, they embody the human influence in the Anthropocene.[22]

What is irritatingly fascinating about these visual examples is not just the fact that the bad and reprehensible can also radiate beauty. Under water, everything looks more beautiful simply because everything floats and is in motion, in bright colours, even if it is rubbish (fig. 3). Sublimity, "das Erhabene",[23] can perhaps occur when one realizes that, in this image, the tiny and the giant come together: a plastic bag in the immeasurable vastness of the sea. The following question is raised: do images that create a controversial beauty trigger a process of rethinking or does this kind of aesthetics lead to anaesthesia?[24] There are also temporal structures inherent in the materiality of this plastic bag, which the viewer could become aware of: it is made of crude oil which took millions of years to form in the underground rock layers. For the next centuries to millennia, the bag will fall to the bottom of the ocean and fragment into smaller pieces without dissolving completely. Between these two longer periods, there is the short time span of a few weeks in which the materials composing the object were extracted, and then the object produced, filled, sold, and discarded.

It would be worth trying to transfer the feelings of sublimity, of both horror and fascination, which until now have been triggered by the sight

of a stormy sea or a mountain covered in mist to constellations of objects associated with the collective, planetary power of humanity.[25] Or should we agree with Bruno Latour, who believes that the sublime in nature belongs to past ages? "How can you feel the sublime while guilt gnaws at your guts?".[26]

Some Conclusions and a Brief Outlook

The Greek word πλαστικός means 'suitable for forming, skilful for shaping' and etymologically forms the root of the word 'plastic' used in western languages today to refer to a synthetic material as well as the artistic-formative capacity of nature and the human being in the early modern period. The picturesqueness of the museum staging in the cabinets of curiosities should not obscure the fact that every marine exhibit conceals a radical decontextualisation that is contrary to nature. Shells, corals, and fish skeletons are removed from their natural cycle, they are no longer in their element when they become showpieces for human cognizance and aesthetics. They are dead, made permanent – often with the help of preservatives – they cannot even decompose. On the other hand, the artefacts that cavort in the sea consist of substances that are hostile to nature and attract pollutants. Plastic is a recalcitrant material. This material is so impenetrable, so isolating from its surroundings that – as we all know – a person quickly suffocates as soon as a plastic bag is placed over his or her head for a few minutes. Both the artefacts in the sea and the naturalia from the sea are the result of practices that basically document man's disturbed relationship with nature.

The approach of the ultimate passivity of matter and nature has proved to be erroneous. Nature, or what we call nature, has become active as a collector and communicates with humans through material signs. The ocean has become obsolete as an inexhaustible no-man's land. Based on this assumption, Hugo Grotius argued for freedom of fishing in the high seas in his *Mare Liberum*, published in 1609. And indeed, when the book was written, the seas were teeming

Fig. 4. Plastic bag in shallow sea water. (Photo: picture alliance/dpa/Mike Nelson).

with life: "For it is certain that if many hunt on the land or fish in the river, the forest is easily robbed of its animals and the river of its fish, which is not the case in the sea".[27] As late as 1937, Rachel Carson could write from "the surface of waters of the ocean" as "boundless pastures", overflowing with "the stuff of life".[28] Barely eighty years later, we are living in a time in which, if effective countermeasures are not taken, there will be more plastic particles than fish in the sea in the foreseeable future.

The previous remarks dealt with two plastic ages. They do not address the third 'Plastic Age' that is currently emerging. Nowadays, material chemists and engineers are increasingly taking nature as their role model. With its exquisite plasticity, nature offers a toolbox for inventive designers of advanced materials. Maybe it will not be long before plastic is synthesised by bacteria, without waste disposal and without further pollution or contamination of the environment. Despite their admiration for nature's achievements, biomimetic chemists are unwilling to revive the theology of nature and the celebration of the 'wonders of creation', as many collectors did in the late Renaissance and Baroque eras. Rather, biomimicry is based on a technological perspective on nature. There is reason to fear, since no scientist and engineer will be able to resist the temptation not only to imitate nature, but to surpass it.

Notes

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2 H. Bredekamp, *Antikensehnsucht und Maschinenglauben. Die Geschichte der Kunstkammer und die Zukunft der Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2002), pp. 19-21.

3 Scientists and the media are talking about a "Great Pacific Garbage Patch". C. Phillips, "Discerning ocean plastics. Activist, scientific, and artistic practices", *Environment and Planning A. Economy and Space* 49 (2017): pp. 1146-1162.

4 A. Lugli, *Naturalia et Mirabilia. Il collezionismo enciclopedico nelle Wunderkammern d'Europa* (Milano: Mazzotta, 1983).

5 C. Hamilton, F. Gemenne, C. Bonneuil, "Thinking the Anthropocene", in C. Hamilton, F. Gemenne C. Bonneuil, eds., *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis. Rethinking Modernity in a New Epoch* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 1-13.

6 The organic precursors of plastic were already produced in the 19th century and the first fully synthetic plastic, called Bakelite, found commercial success through the chemist Leo Baekeland since 1907. However, plastic has only been mass produced since the end of the Second World War, when petrochemical processes were decisively developed.

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13 H.E. Coomans, "Conchology before Linnaeus", in O. Impey, A. MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums. The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 188-192.

14 U.-B. Kuechen, "Wechselbeziehungen zwischen allegorischer Naturdeutung und der naturkundlichen Kenntnis von Muschel, Schnecke und Nautilus. Ein Beitrag aus literarischer, naturwissenschaftlicher und kunsthistorischer Sicht", *Formen und Funktionen der Allegorie.* Symposion Wolfenbüttel 1978 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1979), pp. 478-514.

15 A. MacGregor, "Tradescants as Collectors of Rarities", in Id., ed., *Tradescant's Rarities: Essays on the Foundation of the Ashmolean Museum 1683* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 17-23.

16 G. Olmi, *Ulisse Aldrovandi. Scienza e natura nel secondo Cinquecento* (Trento: Unicoop, 1976); S. Laube, "Hybridität", in U. Pfisterer, ed., *Metzler. Lexikon Kunstwissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2011), pp. 183-186.

17 Giovanni Battista Olivi, *De reconditis et praecipius collectaneis* (Verona 1584).

18 H.-U. Mette, *Der Nautiluspokal. Wie Kunst und Natur miteinander spielen* (München: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1995).

19 Another example: A buoy made of plastic covered in shell colonies, fished in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, from: Plastik: Der Fluch der Meere, Film von Max Mönch, Friedeman Hottenbacher, ZDF/arte 2012 [film still (36:23)].

20 G.R. Hocke, *Die Welt als Labyrinth* (Reinbeck: Rowohlt, 1957).

21 For Nicholas Mirzoeff, the longue durée of the Anthropocene goes hand in hand with an invisibility that virtually forces visual constructions; N. Mirzoeff, "Visualizing the Anthropocene", *Public Culture* 26 (2014): pp. 213-232.

22 S. Boettger, "The Mirror of Our Nature. Edward Burtynsky's Images of the Anthropocene", in E. Burtynsky, J. Bauchwal, N. de Pencier, eds., *Anthropocene* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2018), pp. 9-16.

23 J. Grave, "Das Erhabene", in U. Pfisterer, ed., *Metzler. Lexikon Kunstwissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2011), pp. 113-117; E. Treptow, *Die erhabene Natur. Entwurf einer ökologischen Ästhetik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001).

24 Such ambivalences seem to be firmly anchored in the western modern tradition. They already appeared in the smog in Claude Monet's *Sunrise*; see N. Mirzoeff, "Visualizing the Anthropocene", cit.; M. Wagner, "Regen und Rauch. Landschaftsmalerei als Index klimatischer Veränderungen", *Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* 1 (2016): pp. 21-37.

25 A comparison between Caspar David Friedrich's painting *Das Eismeer* (Kunsthalle Hamburg, 1823) and a photograph of a melting iceberg by Camille Seaman (Newport Beach, CAL, 2008) would be particularly fruitful.

26 B. Latour, "Warten auf Gaia. Komposition der gemeinsamen Welt durch Kunst und Politik", in M. Hagner, ed., *Wissenschaft und Demokratie* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012), pp. 164-189: 168 (tr. by the author).

27 Hugo Grotius, *Mare Liberum* (Leiden: Elzevir, 1609), ch. 7.

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SESSION 4

Art and Religions

CHAIRS

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Introduction to Session 4

Animation Reloaded: The Image as 'Cult Value'

And?

The title of one of the sessions of the CIHA in Florence, "Art *and* Religions", evoked a very problematic and controversial plexus. The conjunction 'and' between the two terms 'art' (problematically in the singular form) and 'religions' (more conveniently inflected in the plural) is somehow echoed by the etymology of 'religion' itself, which comes from the Latin verb *religare*, namely, 'to bind', to gather people together in a deep connection.

Over the centuries, such connection has operated under the sign of images: the sensible visualization of the sacred, of the divine or transcendent dimension, has always been a crucial moment in the experience of the religious. And yet, as the history of aesthetics teaches us, this connection 'art-religions' suggested by the conjunction 'and' is far from being unanimously accepted. On the contrary, there has been a line of thought that has conceived these two terms in opposition rather than in connection: if art is religious, then it is not authentic art because it is not autonomous, it does not give its own laws to itself, but rather receives them precisely from the religious domain. In this respect, Hegel's aesthetic stance offers a paradigmatic case: art's essence is to unveil the truth in the form of a sensible configuration which has its end and aim in itself. Other purposes, like instruction, purification, bettering, financial gain, honour, have nothing to do with the work of art as such, and "do not determine its nature".[1] In Hegel's wake, Adorno's aesthetic theory recognizes the origin of art in religion and at the same time strictly requires their complete separation.[2]

And yet, *pace* Hegel (and his follower Adorno), in the thirties of the last century Walter Benjamin still characterized the auratic work of art in terms of *Kultwert* ('cult value'), linking it to the ritual and to transcendence. Our attitude when in front of auratic artworks, original and authentic in their here and now, resembles a devotional pilgrimage to a holy relic: such authoritative objects command respect and look down at us regardless of how close we come to them: they consist in a "unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be".[3] And, at a closer consideration, even cinema (identified by Benjamin as the champion of non-auratic kinds of image production) reinstates a ritualistic tonality in its mode of reception: spectators go to the movies similarly as they would attend mass: in a dark room, obliged to maintain a specific position, immobile, following a predetermined timetable.

The birth of the museum – which dates back (and certainly not by chance) to the 18th century, the same period in which aesthetics originated as an autonomous philosophical discipline – adds a crucial factor to this plexus: analogously to the religious temple, the museum institutes a radical separation between the ordinary space and a special enclosure which has the power to transform the objects collected in there into special things. *Tem* – the Indo-European root evoking the action of cutting – resonates both in the Greek *temenos* and in the Latin *templum*. The museum is a temple for art: the so-called institutional theory of art (Danto, Dickie)[4] has clearly emphasized the role of art institutions such as museums and galleries, and the corresponding specific agents (critics, curators, directors, art historians) in dictating what is art and what is not. With a paradoxical effect: anything that enters the sacred museum enclosure is offered to an 'aesthetic' contemplation and becomes 'artistic', including religious objects (like for example the *shabti*, the ancient Egyptian funerary figurines collected in the British Museum) that had been conceived and realized for aims which had nothing to do with art.

Death

The reference to funerary statuettes is not proposed here by accident. Image theorists and histo-

rians (such as Debray and Belting)[5] have frequently identified in the archaic funerary image the origin of images tout court. The image is born, constitutively, together with the experience of death and the human being's awareness of it: the image offers the presence of an absence, the surrogate of the living body corrupted in the dead corpse, the effort to make permanent what is structurally transitory: the monument, the memorial. The awareness that our body is doomed to decay, decomposition and, therefore, disappearance is accompanied in the various cultures by the elaboration of *thanato-praxis* techniques aimed at the iconic management of the corpse, i.e., the elaboration of an antidote that, by opposing the nullification of the body, can represent its lasting substitute.

In virtue of this co-participation of image and the experience of death, the role played by the tomb, the sepulchral monument as the first sign of the present/absent body, is crucial. Plato's dialogue *Cratylus* (400c, 1-9) offers us a telling pun: the body (*soma*) is the *sema* (tomb and sign, *semeion*, at the same time) of the soul, thus laying the foundation of a semiotic approach to the sepulchral image.[6] Given the fact that strategies of thanatopraxis – practices aimed at managing death and dead cadavers – are common to all cultures, this linkage should be considered an anthropologic universal.

The sepulchral stele planted in the ground: a simple vertical sign that seems to say that the person who is not present and will never be present again is still, and forever, present. This dialectic of presence and absence is all the more disorienting as the realism of the image increases, as in the case of the funerary portraits of the Fayum, Roman-Egyptian hybrids that seem to address, from the sarcophagi on which they are placed, a "silent apostrophe" (Bailly, 1997) to us.[7]

There are also important etymological references in this regard: the Greek term for 'idol' (*eidolon*) refers first and foremost to the spectre or ghost of the dead, and only in a derived sense is it an image or portrait. If we turn to Latin, *simulacrum* is primarily the spectre; *imago* is the wax cast of the deceased's face. In Roman law, *ius imaginum* was the right reserved to nobles to display their ancestors' death masks in public. *Funus imaginarium* was, in the 2nd century, the funeral of the image, if the body was not available.

In medieval times, the term 'representation' itself referred to a modelled and painted figure, which 'stood for' the deceased during the funeral. More generally, Louis Marin has proposed to extend the notion of 'representation' to the chiasma of presence/absence constitutive of the status of the image tout court: the prefix 're-' introduces the value of substitution. Something that was present and is no longer present is now re-presented. In place of something that is present elsewhere, an iconic *datum* is present here.[8]

We can mention another class of iconic objects, also belonging to the sphere of the experience of death, that presents some very interesting characteristics with regard to the issue of power and efficacy: the *ex* votos.[9] They are votive images, widespread in all epochs and cultures, which are produced as a thanksgiving for having escaped death, a serious illness or disaster, but also to persuade the deity to perform miraculous interventions outside the laws of natural causality.

In modern times, the case of photography expands this structural relationship on a huge scale. By virtue of those contemporary archaisms so frequently encountered by visual culture scholars, the photographic image appears no less bound than the funeral to the experience of death. It is born, so to speak, in the cemetery (a place particularly suited to the long exposure time necessary in early photography) and it is immediately engaged in immortalising corpses (the disturbing practice of post-mortem portraits – in which the body was often arranged in such a way that the deceased appeared to be alive and asleep – was inaugurated in the early forties of the 19th century, immediately after the invention of the daguerreotype) and the spirits of the departed (a fashion that spread mainly in the Victorian age).

But, on closer inspection, even a selfie of any kind irretrievably confronts us with a time that, although close to the viewer, has already and definitely 'been'. Thus, in the words of Roland Barthes, photography is a disturbing "return of the dead";[10] the photographic image, as Susan Sontag observed, cannot but present itself as a "melancholy object".[11]

For all these reasons, when addressing the problem of the origin of the image, visual culture studies draw important stimuli from thanatology.[12]

Presence

When considering the relationship between religion and image production, one might object that it should not be understood as a universal connection. Some types of religion – exemplarily the Jewish and the Islamic monotheisms – reject visualiza-

tion and sensible externalization: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image", according to the Book of Deuteronomy. And only Allah is the *Musawwir*, as we read in the Quran. Nevertheless, we know very well that these allegedly 'aniconic' faiths too actually possess icons (let us just think of the synagogue in Doura Europos in Syria (4th cent.), or the palaces of Qusayr Amra in Jordan (8th cent.) and of Samarra in Iraq (9th cent.). Religious aniconism should therefore be labelled as a 'myth'.[13]

The investigation of the role played by sensible images in the religious sphere offers stimulating insights and hermeneutic options which remarkably differ from the mainstream mimetic theory which has dominated the Western tradition of image theory for centuries. As notoriously conceptualized in Book X of Plato's *Republic*, an image is 'inferior' both from a gnoseological and from an ontological point of view with respect to its real model. An iconic representation of a table has less being and less truth in it than the sensible table. This, in turn, is inferior with respect to the idea of table. From Plato's *Sophist* we know that a good image is the one that faithfully imitates the model (*mimesis eikastiké*) and not its sensuous appearances (*mimesis phantastiké*).

However, as brilliantly shown by Jean-Pierre Vernant,[14] Plato's theory (for our cultural tradition, the *terminus a quo*) can be rather regarded as the *terminus ad quem* if we look at it from the perspective of the archaic Greek attitude towards images. Vernant was able to highlight a mode of existence of the iconic – think of the stable *kolossos* or the mobile *xoanon* – in which the concern for 'representation', in the sense of a mimetic rendering in the form of image of an external object, had not taken over yet: rather, there was an experience of the image as presence, or rather as a 'presentification' of the invisible (the god, the dead).

These two aspects – representation and presentification – are interestingly both present in the Christian theory and practice of sacred images: icons (according to the decree of the Second Council of Nicaea, 787)[15] should only be representations of the divinity, and not divine in themselves; trampolines, as it were, mere springboards to encourage pious meditations on the prototypes they represent. On the contrary, the Eucharist (at least for the Catholic and for some Protestant churches) implies the so-called 'true presence' of Christ in the host and wine, which are not to be intended as mere symbols.

Animation

Within this frame, if presence has to be living, 'animation' plays a fundamental role. Scholars like David Freedberg,[16] W.J.T. Mitchell,[17] Horst Bredekamp,[18] Spiros Papapetros[19] have variously underlined the ancient and fecund tradition of the *imagines agentes*, images endowed with proper life, force, and potency, *enargeia* and *dynamis* for the Greek, or *vis*, *virtus*, *facultas* for the Latin. In other words, images are not to be relegated in the generic domain of mere things, simple objects, but rather in the one of entities which claim a status of quasi-subjects, or even of super-subjects, thus undermining the classic ontological antithesis subject-object and calling for a diverse ontology, as recognized in these last decades by cultural anthropologists who have been radically re-discussing (even if from different perspectives) the very notion of animation.

However, 'animation of the image' is itself an ambiguous formulation: in the sense of the objective genitive, it can refer to an operation through which the image (not animated in itself) is endowed with *anima*, *psychè*, life, coming from another lively entity; in the sense of the subjective genitive, the image is conceived as animated per se, and possessing its own life, which is expressed in agencies, power, desires.

The history of this complex issue shows a *longue durée* which can be traced back to the a-historical temporality of myth, as attested by various legends in Western and non-Western cultural traditions, such as, to mention but a few examples, the legend of Pygmalion,[20] the Golem,[21] the Chinese Terracotta Army,[22] which were endlessly remediated in numerous different ways along the centuries, and reenacted by contemporary androids, cyborgs, and humanoids.[23]

From the point of view of its systematic conceptualization, the problem of animation becomes an explicit issue during the 18th century, thanks to the proto-anthropological reflections of Giambattista Vico and Johann Gottfried Herder. But it is in the 19th century – with the foundation of cultural anthropology, thanks to the work of Edward Burnett Tylor and James Frazer on the one hand, and of the psychological aesthetics revolving around the notion of 'empathy' on the other[24] – that the world of the *imagines agentes* is placed at the center of the scholarly attention.

Since then, an enormous effort has been made to comprehend the animistic phenomena: from Lévy-Bruhl's *participation mystique* down to the more re-

cent work by Bruno Latour,[25] Tim Ingold,[26] Philippe Descola,[27] Eduardo Viveiros de Castro,[28] and Carlo Severi.[29] In this context, Alfred Gell's emphasis on the notion of 'agency' has constituted a major reference which has reached various disciplinary fields far beyond cultural anthropology.[30]

This scholarly trend resonates with the interest demonstrated by curators in organizing exhibitions and events specifically devoted to animation and to alternative, non-human forms of visual expression. Amongst them, to mention but a few significant examples, there are: *Pixar: 20 Years of Animation* (2006, MoMA, New York); *Animismus. Moderne hinter den Spiegeln* (2011-2012, Generali Foundation, Vienna); *Animism* (2012, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin); *Persona. Étrangement humain* (2016, Musée du Quai Branly, Paris); *Nonhuman Networks* (2017, Art Laboratory, Berlin); *Human/Non-Human* (2018, Espace Le Bal, Paris); *Artistes & Robots* (2018, Grand Palais, Paris).

At present, this kind of iconic entities proliferates in the specific field of virtual immersive and interactive environments, which has progressively expanded also because of the circumstances created by the pandemic: the comprehension of the processes of animation appears particularly urgent, given the ever-increasing role played by digital avatars as non-human alter egos in our everyday life.[31] A specific research line within the domain of virtual reality studies is labeled as 'presence studies'. But the effect of presence produced by virtual and augmented images (two kinds of icons which seems to abolish the representational reference in order to directly present themselves as real objects) cannot be properly understood if we confine ourselves to the investigation of the so-called new technologies and new media: in the urgent need to understand our contemporary experience of the hyper-technological image, we can definitely benefit from a historical awareness of the 'cult value' of images deeply rooted in the secular tradition of ritual practices.

Andrea Pinotti

Notes

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Parer vivo and Perspective: The Case of Mantegna

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In 1531, when Michelangelo completed the statue *Night* for the tomb of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, everyone agreed that it appeared to be *alive* (Shearman 1992, 105). Giovanni di Carlo Strozzi, a young poet whose family had close ties to the artist, wrote a poem saying that the statue seemed to be sleeping peacefully. He added that precisely *because* it was sleeping, *Night* was not inanimate and could thus wake up at any moment and reveal that it was alive:

> The Night that you see sleeping in such a
> graceful attitude, was sculpted by an Angel
> in this stone, and since she sleeps, she must have life;
> wake her, if you don't believe it, and she'll speak to you.
> (Saslow 1993, 419)

Since the poem ended with a challenge, Michelangelo responded with another poem in which the statue itself addresses the young poet:

> Sleep is dear to me, and being of stone is dearer,
> as long as injury and shame endure;
> not to see or hear is a great boon to me;
> therefore, do not wake me–pray, speak softly.
> (Saslow 1993, 419)

The statue is immobile because it is sunk in deep sleep. And it is so alive that it knows the suffering (*il danno e la vergogna*) inflicted by the Medicis on their city during that period of violent conflicts. But she refuses to see it. Michelangelo has her say that she appreciates silence and sleep; even though she is alive, she likes "being made of stone" (*l'esser di sasso*) far more than sleeping. This paradox is only an apparent one, since, in the artist's hand, the material that makes up the statue has become *living stone* (*pietra viva*): a cold stone where the soul of a living being, instead of disappearing, simply takes up a new abode ("though I've changed homes, I live on in you") (*ben ch'albergo cangi, resto in te vivo*) (Saslow 1993, 356). The theme of life attributed to works of art, which was prominent throughout the Italian Renaissance, probably appears nowhere more clearly than in the dialogue between this statue (which speaks for Michelangelo) and its young interlocutor. This notion of a living work of art is an ancient theme (Bettini 1992, ch. 1). It was prominent in Greek and Roman writings about the arts and gave rise to reflections on perspective. Almost a century before this poem by Michelangelo was written, Leon Battista Alberti wrote in his treatise *On Painting* ([1435-36] 2011) that all painting using the method of perspective must exhibit *parer vivo*, the appearance or the 'semblance of life' in the image. If the artist achieves this goal, the figures will show not only an accurate image of reality but also the 'movements of the soul' that confirm the presence of life (Alberti [1435-36] 2011, 62).

In this paper, I will briefly outline the epistemology of this notion. Deeply rooted in the notion of perspective, *parer vivo* is distinct from the geometric rules for composing the image, decoding depth, and interpreting the movement implicit in the figures. For Alberti, as well as for Ernst Gombrich (1977) and Thomas Kuhn (1977) in our time, perspective is above all a science that applies the laws of optics and geometry to the representation of space. It thus creates what could be called a *visual truth* and belongs to the same epistemological ideal as modern science. By contrast, *parer vivo* – the principle of appearing to be alive – is a specific type of illusion. More precisely, it designates the illusion produced by perspective, the effect of reality that it can activate. It includes not only the construction of a plausible space but also the perception of life in the figures. These two features are necessarily connected since one cannot be contemplated without the other. To outline the

epistemology of this illusion, which leads to 'seeing' living beings on an inanimate surface or in an immobile statue, I will shift from the history of a practice of plastic representation, which, having been well studied in the history of art, I will not consider here, to the anthropological interpretation of a relational space where images take on a kind of life and become object-persons.

Can this type of approach be applied to a European perspective? Some twenty years ago, I noticed that a strange paradox seemed to be influencing the anthropology of art (Severi 1991, 81-85). While anthropologists attempt to demonstrate the validity of their discipline for any society, whether traditional or modern, specialists in the anthropology of art continue to study almost exclusively non-Western arts or 'popular', 'pathological', or children's forms of Euro-American arts. Why do they never approach the 'great art' of the Western world, its currents of ideas, its issues, and its great artists, while many Western art historians, from Aby Warburg to Michael Baxandall, David Freedberg, Salvatore Settis, Hans Belting, and Horst Bredekamp, have renewed their approaches by aligning themselves more closely to anthropology? There are many reasons for this paradox. Some of them surely depend on a timid epistemology to which ethnologists have too frequently remained loyal. But other reasons concern the difficulty involved in the undertaking. For it must be acknowledged that, in the West, the practices, concepts, and representations developed in the field of art are nearly always related to parallel developments that continually reflect other fields of knowledge. Research in both the history of art and the history of the science has come to parallel conclusions about the development of perspective. Scholars in art history, following Warburg ([1932] 1999), have shown that great Renaissance painting drew on seemingly distant fields, such as symbolism, rhetoric, and the arts of memory. Historians of science, inspired by Alexandre Koyré (1950 and 1968) and others, have demonstrated that these roots also penetrated scientific traditions such as optics and ancient and Arabic geometry (Lindberg 1976; Panofsky [1927] 1991; Simon 2003; Belting 2011). Before being appropriated by art, the Latin word *perspectiva* was used for centuries in a theory on the distribution of light that continued the ancient studies of Euclid and Ptolemy. This theory was developed fully in classical Arabic culture, particularly in the works of

Ibn Haytham Alhazen, before being taken up in the West by Witelo, Blaise de Parme, Toscanelli, Alberti, and Piero della Francesca (see Parronchi 1964). Under these conditions, how are we to define the subject of an anthropological approach to perspective when each of the areas of development and application of its key concepts (space, depth, light distribution, proportion, as well as verisimilitude, analogy, art, and artist) tends to provide only a partial view of it? Where do we locate the principle of unity around which all the practices connected to perspective can achieve coherence? A precise definition of this issue is already contained in Erwin Panofsky's writings devoted to perspective as a 'symbolic form'. In a celebrated essay on Riegl, he wrote:

> For art criticism, it is at once a blessing and a curse that these objects (of science) necessarily put forth the pretension of being understood in some way other than from a historical viewpoint. […] A method like the one that Riegl ushered in does no harm to a purely historical historiography […] in any case no more than the consciousness theory undermines the history of philosophy (Panofsky [1927] 1991, 197, 217).

The works of any particular artist exist within a broader context with their own distinctive type of visual thought (an exercise of thought with which images are associated). Defining visual thought as a framework for integrating partial definitions of the concept of perspective is undoubtedly the right direction to take for an anthropological approach to the notion of a 'semblance of life'. However, Panofsky sticks to two levels of analysis – the reading of space, which he believes to be "theoretically homogenous", and the symbolic deciphering of iconography – which do not enable us to fully comprehend this notion. What is the most appropriate way to interpret what Alberti calls "the movements of the soul" in an image in perspective? What are the principles that make possible the dialogue – partially fictitious, partly real – between the young poet and the statue *Night*? How can we grasp the effects of substitution or the magical sense of a 'presence' in the image when all we have is the rational description of the optical experience, which seems to exclude every hint of such magic? Where does the *life* that animates the contents of a work of art come from? Of course, the answer to this question is first to

be found in the writings that the great thinkers of the Renaissance devoted to this idea (Fehrenbach 2020). Nonetheless, the Neoplatonist and Aristotelian theories associated with medicine, logic, and natural magic offer us little more than the backdrop of a general cosmology to understand the emergence and development of the field of perspective. Artistic practices faced difficulties, found solutions, and made choices that were distinct from those encountered in philosophy. The ideal definition of the notion of 'life', in particular, is far from obvious if we move from texts by theoreticians to the practices specific of painting and sculpture. From Brunelleschi onward, this ideal definition develops within a context where the act of *ritrarre* (literally 'making a portrait' of appearances) is contrasted with the act of imitating. In the language of the Italian artists of the time, *ritrarre* indeed means describing what is seen as exactly as possible. However, the ideal technique of *imitare*, 'imitation', of which Alberti provides the canonical version, refers to the application of the rules, independent of appearances, that the classical tradition (Vitruvius in particular) had established for achieving beauty. In Italian art, these two principles for applying perspective emerged as a polarization (in Warburg's sense of this term)[1] between depicting an ideal image and producing a faithful description of the visual experience.

How is the appearance of life (the *parer vivo*) achieved within the framework of this polarization? Let us briefly examine here the case of Mantegna. As a close follower of Alberti's teaching, Mantegna always tried to imitate the art of classical antiquity as much as possible. According to Vasari, he was so adamantly opposed to the *ritrarre*, the portrayal of real things, that he came to prefer classical statues over living beings as models for his figures. To achieve the perfection of appearances, he did not hesitate to draw inspiration from inanimate objects. Vasari relates that his teacher Squarcione criticized his frescoes in the Ovetari chapel in Padua by asserting that he had 'imitated' ancient marbles; he claimed that "one cannot learn to paint perfectly by imitating sculpture, since stone always possesses a hardness and never the tender sweetness which flesh and other natural objects that bend and move possess" (Vasari [1556] 2008, 243-44). Vasari added that Mantegna, sorely stung by Squarcione's reproaches, persisted in his belief that formal perfection was rare in reality. To achieve the ideal

of beauty, it was thus necessary to employ the sublime synthesis of appearances that the great artists of classical antiquity had used. Mantegna concluded that classical statues were "more perfect and more beautiful" than real bodies. When they were compared to the living bodies of men and women, the statues always appeared "better finished and more exact in depicting muscles, veins, nerves, and other particulars than natural figures" (Vasari [1556] 2008, 244). According to Mantegna, the statues were more effective illustrations of not only ideal beauty but also of human anatomy. Vasari believed that Squarcione had correctly identified a real flaw in the painting methods of his former pupil; a highly accomplished painter, Mantegna nevertheless remained tied to a "style which is just a little bit sharp and sometimes seems to suggest stone more than living flesh" ([1556] 2008, 244).

Today, Mantegna's work strikes us as being in search of a sometimes-paradoxical relationship between the ideal appearance of forms and the semblance of life. In many of his works, action, sometimes violent, is explicitly attributed to figures in marble or bronze, which are *painted as such*. On the other hand, many of his '"living' figures seem to remain so faithful to the statues used as models that they sometimes appear to be frozen in a type of solemn rigidity. A telling example of this contrast is the *Saint Sebastian* of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, where he arranges statues and living bodies side by side, as if inviting us to compare them. In this picture, Saint Sebastian appears as immobile and handsome as a statue. But the pieces of marble around him appear to have the appearance of the muscles, veins, and ligaments of living bodies. Thus, Mantegna almost gives the impression of working experimentally. He creates a perfect (and completely theoretical) image of appearances from the faithful observation of the *inanimate*. Then, he transfers this model of pictorial description to the living figure, even to the point of setting up an exchange, a continual mimesis that leads from the statue to the living figure and from the figure to the statue in a sort of endless, implicit back and forth between the animate and the inanimate. In Mantegna's later work, the *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* (fig. 1), this process is carried to extremes. Pierced by many arrows, which seem to multiply the viewpoints on his body, Sebastian casts one last glance heavenward. This extreme gesture probably represents

Fig. 1. Andrea Mantegna, *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, c. 1506. Venice, Galleria Franchetti, Ca' d'Oro.

the death throes he experienced in the last instant before death. This transitional state is emphasized by another, more discreet gesture. Sebastian advances his left foot toward the observer. His en-

tire body reflects this movement, which is emphasized by his right foot, still raised. The viewpoint is placed so low in the composition that the figure of the saint seems to approach the observer. The position of his shoulder, like that of his elbow, indicates a slight twist. Sebastian moves his foot toward a plane that seems to be placed beyond the compositional space. The saint is caught in the act of crossing a threshold, a probable allusion to the passage from life to death. The definition of space is less explicit, as he is surrounded by a faux marble frame from which he seems to emerge. An observer who looks at the top of the painting – to the left, behind the coral rosary – gradually notices that this is a niche, a chosen location in which statues were placed, following the model of classical antiquity. Sebastian's body conforms to the skillfully calculated morphology of the classical statue, and the whiteness of his skin, painted with a very thin layer of tempera, suggests the appearance of gray marble. At the same time, the expression of extreme agony on his face and the traces of blood on his skin point to a body that is still very much alive. Other – although more indirect – signs of life are also present. The entire composition and the moment that it reproduces are characterized by another passage, both symbolic and immaterial. The light streams in from the left while a slight breeze blowing from the right moves across the painting. Here and there it lifts the white fabric surrounding the saint's flank, and at the top, it tousles his hair. At the same time, the draperies are caught in a state of perfect immobility, with their "sharp folds, as if set in ice" (Romano 1981, 10-11), and presented in such classical shapes that they, too, resemble statues. There is yet another sign of life: in the lower right, Mantegna has placed a candle on the step where Sebastian places his left foot. The candle has just gone out, for the breeze is still dissipating the smoke. Once again, the candle and the smoke bring us back to the last instant in which St. Sebastian's body throbbed with life. If the theme of the painting is the appearance of life as it appears in Sebastian's death throes, Mantegna chose to depict it indirectly, in the continual passage from the animate to the inanimate. From the heroic statue of perfect appearance installed in its niche, we move on to Sebastian's body pierced with arrows and paralyzed by pain. Around the candle, there is a *cartiglio* with this unobtrusive inscription: *Nihil nisi divinum stabile est, et cetera fumus* ("Nothing is

stable if not divine; the rest is smoke"), which confirms that this work is a meditation on imminent death. The painting invites observers to read this phrase, which carries a message that is addressed to them and which embodies the presence of Sebastian – both statue and living body, animate and inanimate. To give life to the image of Sebastian, Mantegna contrasts it with its opposite, namely, the perfect appearance of the inanimate.

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Note

[1] With Goethe ([1810] 2006), this term, subsequently adopted by Warburg, indicated the reciprocal influence that two circles placed on two different backgrounds, white and black, exert on one another in both their apparent dimension and their color.

There Where the Light Retreats: More About Titian's *Annunciations**

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For some time now, the representations of the Annunciation have been constituting the key to understanding the epistemological value of the sense of sight, introducing a break between visibility and visuality in Renaissance art, as Georges Didi-Huberman noted.[1] In this context, Beato Angelico's *Annunciation* fresco of 1444 is of significant importance. In defiance of the iconographic tendencies of the 15th-century *Annunciations*, Beato Angelico's painting was deprived of many details that artists borrowed from the exegetic literature. The synthetic character of the representation was even more intensified by the whiteness of the cell. The natural illumination coming in through the window of the cell diffuses a light that embraces the viewer as well. However, the scene loses its perspicuity when seen against the light, and the viewer is absorbed by a visual void that emanates from the central part of the fresco. Nevertheless, in Beato Angelico's painting, the traditional element of the representation of the dialogue scene between the Archangel Gabriel and Mary is to be found in the stillness of the figures – which makes the void between the protagonists even more eloquent and induces the viewer to confront the mystery of the Incarnation of the invisible Logos.[2] The dialogue is suspended, just as suspended is also our understanding of the *istoria*, which was meant to invert the consequences of the original sin.

This suspension of the dialogue becomes the antithesis of the dialogue between Eve and the devil, that led to the original sin and *left no place* for God's presence in the human's actions. Eve's active role has been reversed by Mary's obedience and *passiveness/submission*, in accordance with the logic of the inversion of the name *Eva* in Gabriel's healing salutation *Ave*. In this way, the angelic salutation to Mary restores the heavenly order that enables God to advise on good and evil. It is then hardly surprising that the 15th century *campanilismo* prompted sometimes to fill the gaps in the center of the *Annunciation*'s representations with paintings of cities. In this case, we can suppose that the order of the *civitas* was becoming a substitute for the heavenly order reconstructed with the Annunciation.

The conception of the original sin, complex and long in its development, lay the basis for the cult of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, popular since the Middle Ages.[3] People, supported by the Franciscan Duns Scotus' erudition, could not accept the idea that the mother of God might have been conceived with the burden of the original sin. However, it was only the Franciscan Sixtus IV that agreed to validate the cult (1477-82), which gained the status of dogma only in 1854. The long history of the systemization of the folk devotion was also a result of the Dominican aversion towards the Immaculate Conception. Saint Thomas Aquinas, using the Aristotelian idea of the passive role of women in the act of procreation, considered it superfluous to free Mary from the original sin, as she could not pass it on, being a woman. Consequently, the Dominicans did not see the need of recurring to the idea of the grace of the Immaculate Conception. On the other hand, the Franciscans, who were devoted to Galen's views, attributed to the women an active role in the procreation and although Mary was capable, according to them, to rationally control her personal desire, nevertheless being God's mother, she needed to be freed from the original sin. For centuries, the image of Mary standing on a snake, which sometimes was even choking with the apple from the Garden of Eden, was acknowledged to be the best visualization of the idea of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

Looking at the *Annunciations* (figs. 1-3) left by Titian Vecellio, painter par excellence, we can recognize that no one else has been able to contest

so radically the visual stillness of Beato Angeli-co, and thus underline her active role. Especially the last *Annunciation* (fig. 1) in the chronology of the Venetian painter, which emerged around 1563 in the church of San Salvador in Venice, was painted as a dynamic representation that shows the descent and consequently, the rushing of the light from heaven into temporality. This was ena-bled by the technique of the so-called *non finito* which, with a very limited range of color, was able to extract a varied saturation of light from each element of the painting.[4] The dynamism of the representation, however, paradoxically was not employed by Titian to *diffuse* the light, as we could have suspected in the *Annunciation* scene, following the example of Beato Angelico.

Fig. 1. Titian, *Annunciation*, c. 1560. Oil on canvas, 403x235 cm. Venice, Chiesa di San Salvador. © Web Gallery of Art.

The light of the Dove of the Holy Spirit occu-pies, on Titian's canvas, only a scrap of space. However, even more important is the fact that the more the light comes down from above and approaches the protagonists of the representa-tion, the more it loses its strength. It dies away completely in the right-hand lower corner, where there is a vase with wilted flowers in which the water is all but clear. This is one of those details that caused Augusto Gentili to state that the rep-resentation of the *Annunciation* of San Salvador questions the cult of Mary's virginity.[5] Although we cannot deny the researcher's reflections, we should however bear in mind that in the context of the stylistic-technical solutions applied, the art-ist could have meant not much about the very cult of Mary, but rather about the visualization of the drama of the Incarnation, shown through the colli-sion between light and matter *as a cosmic event* – as stated also by Gentili. It seems that, as was later the case with the philosopher Bernardino Telesio, the observation of nature had led the painter to the conclusion that the color white is the essence of light, but its emanation, while clashing with matter, causes light to *stain and shrink*.[6] In this context, it is worth reminding once more that the objection against the cult of the Immaculate Con-ception was evoked by the Aristotelian idea of the passive role of women in the procreation, thus she could only transmit matter to the creation, which was ultimately formed by the male element. In the *Annunciation* (fig. 1) of San Salvador, we may get the impression that Mary is active, as she turns all her figure, driven by her senses – sight and hear-ing – towards the sensual Archangel, which has been deprived of his white lily – the symbol of pu-rity. At the same time, Mary turns away from the source of light, and thus we get the impression that the light's power retreats from the area of the angelic salutation. Therefore, it is not only a mat-ter of Mary's virginity, although her maiden bed, even if nearly hidden in the background, is in an obvious way a mess and her chastity belt is be-ing raised by the wayward cupids. Mary's *natural, human* impulse of going after her senses causes the light's power to be constrained, just as the sin restrains the possibility of being redeemed. This is what happens in Titian's painting, although Saint Thomas Aquinas, in the 30th chapter of *Summa Theologiae*, underlines that the sharpness of Mary's senses was necessary so as to be able to see the *carnal* Archangel. It was necessary to

embrace Christ's carnality, but first of all, so as to gain the certainty that the incarnation actually took place.

The problem of the contribution of Mary's senses in the context of the dialogue with the Archangel Gabriel had already appeared in Titian's older *Annunciation* (fig. 2), painted in the early 1520s at the latest.[7] The *Annunciation* in the cathedral of Treviso astonishes with the anachronistic mode in which Titian depicted a chessboard pavement where Mary is kneeling and again turning her back to the angel. Painters had done so before, at the time of Beato Angelico, in order to show the measurability and thus the limitations of the space susceptible to sensual reception.

On Titian's representation, Mary's gaze runs parallel to the vanishing lines that are offered by the chessboard pavement, suggesting that her glance measures the distance between her and Gabriel. However, more important is the fact that the ray of light coming from a gigantic sun disc runs parallel too – the sun ray represents the trajectory of the incarnation of the Holy Spirit, although there is no depiction of a dove. This omitted iconographic detail would have disrupted the impression that it is a feeble ray of sun, breaking through the shadow of the ark above the porch, that illuminates its inside and allows to see the 'measure' of infinity, as well as Mary's gaze. It is unnecessary to remind that in liturgical texts, Mary was considered to be the ark of the New Covenant. This architectural element subtly joins the two realities together. The natural landscape in the background of the representation – which

Fig. 2. Titian, *Annunciation*, c. 1520. Oil on canvas, 210x176 cm. Treviso, Cathedral. © Web Gallery of Art.

in Renaissance art usually evoked temporality, after the exile from Paradise – is joined to the building thanks to the arch, whose dark atmosphere inside is probably related to the Temple in Jerusalem.[8] Mary, as an ark, joins the reality after the Original Sin (the period *ante legem*) to the time of the Old Testament (*sub lege*) but she herself becomes the protagonist of the period *sub gratia*, whose brightness spreads over her, as well as over a fragment of the relief called *Letto di Policleto*.[9] And it is just this direct illumination offered by the ray of this iconographic detail that indicates that on Titian's first *Annunciation*, the artist wanted to show the possibility of submitting the whole of sensitive and even sensual reality to the light's source – the logos – which has been questioned in the representation of San Salvador.

The famous antique relief that Titian could know from the copy in Pietro Bembo's collection, was modified by the painter so as to intensify its erotic dimension.[10] The figure of a woman – Venus/Psyche – on the original relief was substituted by the figure of a Satire on Titian's relief. The artist frequently used this *hybris* figure, for instance in the painting *Jupiter and Antiope* in the Louvre, so as to point out the drama of the choice between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*, between mythical time and historical time – the time of human activity.[11] However, while the figure of the Satire underlined the drama of human choices in mythological representations, in the *Annunciation* painting even this figure appears to be embraced by the time of grace.

The presence of the Satire can, however, arouse anxiety considering that he is just behind Mary, whose shapes can easily lead us to suppose that the incarnation has already taken place. Another piece of evidence of this may be provided by the absence of the Dove of the Holy Spirit, which was meant to respond to the act of Incarnation. However, it is worth remembering that a part of the exegetes thought that the Annunciation took place after the Incarnation, therefore Gabriel was often represented in a hurry so as to indicate that his actions were secondary to God's actions. In Titian's painting of Treviso, the somewhat childish Gabriel not only runs, but also lifts his right hand with two fingers raised and parted in the 'victory gesture'. We can assume that he is announcing that Jesus is in Mary's womb, already in his dual nature – both human and divine.

Fig. 3. Titian, *Annunciation*, c. 1545. Oil on canvas, 166x266 cm. Venice, Scuola Grande di San Rocco. © Didier Descouens.

The attempt that Titian made to resolve in a positive key many of the matters related to the problem of the Incarnation in the Treviso painting could be connected to the fact that, during that time, the artist was close to the Franciscans, for whom he painted the *Assumption of the Virgin* (about 1518), and was also in the course of painting the *Pala Pesaro* (about 1526). Gradually, however, this optimistic message faded away in the next versions of Titian's *Annunciation*, just as the illuminated sections disappeared in the canvas.

It is hard to forejudge the *Annunciation* of 1537 that was destined for Santa Maria degli Angeli, which has been lost, whose only record is Caraglio's engraving. It is true that this time, on the engraving, the Dove of the Holy Spirit is present and depicted radiating large, bright rays upon Mary. However, this does not undermine the fact that, in this instance, Titian probably decided to show the Annunciation in a much obscure convention, as he has done in the painting of San Salvador.

In the next *Annunciation* (fig. 3) representation (about 1545), Titian limited the natural light, as he represented the scene at sunset instead of just after noon, as he had done in the Treviso painting. Saint Bede the Venerable reckoned that the sunset hour indeed was the most proper time for the Annunciation, as it indicated the fullness of time – its readiness to embrace Jesus. In the painting of San Rocco, however, the presence of Christ is tragically marked – by means of the Savior's tunic over which the soldiers fought during the Crucifixion. What is crucial, however, is the fact that the lower border of the tunic runs parallel to the ray radiating from the Dove of the Holy Spirit.[12] The Incarnation is accompanied by the awareness not only of the grace of redemption, but also of the fact that it will be fulfilled by the death of God.

This time too, Mary is situated in a context of alarming details, which are usually positively connoted as the attributes of the New Eve. It is the case of the apple and the fig leaf, which directly relate to the theme of the Original Sin. Similarly, the guinea fowl present in the painting, which was believed to have such a strong sexual instinct that it could be inseminated by the mere voice of the male – functions as an allusion to Mary's conception, occurred while hearing the voice of the Angel. However, this time Mary is not surrounded by the bright aura, although her robe was originally of a brighter – bluish color. The ray of the Dove of the Holy Spirit has somewhat stopped on the column of the porch and returned on the image of Christ's tunic, thus evoking Telesio's remarks on the confrontation between matter and light, which *si restringe e macchia*.

To sum up, we can say that Titian provided the most complete expression of the drama of the Incarnation in his work in San Salvador, by showing the dialectic play of light which, while expanding, loses its value. This church played a fundamental role in Venice's foundation myth – it was meant to be founded on the Annunciation day, just as Venice, close to Rialto, which is where the Serenissima had its beginning. From the time of the *Annunciation* meant for Santa Maria degli Angeli, not preserved today, which eventually ended up in Charles' V court, Titian had more and more reasons to mistrust Venice's *origine* myth and to look more dramatically upon his role of official painter of the Republic. In this mythology, a key issue has been provided by the identification of Venice with Mary, especially the Mary of the Annunciation scene, and maybe this is why, on Titian's representations of this theme, light loses its strength while expanding – regardless of how ambivalently Mary's figure is portrayed.

Notes

* Translated from Polish by Bibiana Sfilio Lebek.

[1] G. Didi-Huberman, *Devant l'image: question posée aux fins d'une histoire de l'art* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1990), p. 40.

[2] D. Hillman, "Salutation and Salvation in Early Modern Theology", *Renaissance Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2020): pp. 823-824.

[3] D. Ellington Spivey, *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul. Understanding Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), pp. 50-51.

[4] A. Gentili, "Descrizioni per il grande vecchio: quadri finiti, infiniti, non finiti (veri e finti), e le ragioni dell'iconologia", *Venezia Cinquecento* 36, no. 2 (2008): pp. 197-230.

[5] Id., *Un Angelo senza giglio. L'Annunciazione di Tiziano a San Salvador*, in Id., *La Bilancia dell'arcangelo. Vedere i dettagli nella pittura veneziana del Cinquecento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2009), pp. 175-186.

[6] M. Grosso, "Per la fama di Tiziano nella cultura artistica meridionale tra letteratura e scienza", *Venezia Cinquecento*, 36, no. 2 (2008): p. 26.

[7] C. Smyth, "Insiders and Outsiders: Titian, Pordenone and Broccardo Malchiostro's Chapel in Treviso Cathedral", *Studi Tizianeschi* 5 (2007): pp. 32-75.

[8] A. Chastel, "Fra Bartolomeo's Carondelet altarpiece", in P. Humfrey, M. Kemp, eds., *The Altarpiece in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 131.

[9] M. Grosso, ""Ne la tenerezza composta dal latte e dal sangue": Tiziano e il tema dell'Annunciazione", in S. Baia Curioni, H. Friedel, G. Iovene, eds., *Tiziano/Gerhard Richter. Il cielo sulla terra* (Mantova: Corraini, 2018), p. 58.

[10] S. Corsi, "Dal "Letto di Policrate" al "Letto di Policleto". Prime ipotesi sulla genesi di un'attribuzione", *Prospettiva* 117/118 (2005): p. 147.

[11] A. Gentili, *Da Tiziano a Tiziano. Mito e allegoria nella cultura veneziana del Cinquecento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1988), pp. 149-161.

[12] M. Koos, "Verkörperung – Entkörperung bei Rembrandt", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 80, no. 3 (2017): pp. 349-351.

Divine Sculptural Encounters in the Italian Renaissance Household*

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The ability of statues to act as substitutes for real bodies during the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance has been traced in a variety of public experiences. Three-dimensional figures were actually animated thanks to complex mechanisms or appeared to be active in the experience of the beholder during the liturgy, processions, performances in city squares or royal coronations.[1] By contrast, the encounters between the religious sculptural matter and human beings within private spaces deserve further study. Scholars working in this field analysed the well-documented cases of nuns such as Camilla Battista da Varano or Margarethe von Ebner, who interacted with wooden statuettes of the Infant or Crucified Christ.[2] The reasons for neglecting lay encounters with the religious sculptures at home are manifold. They are linked partially to the difficulty in reconstructing what happened in the Renaissance home. However, I suspect that the lack of scholarly interest is related also to the types of objects, which required scrutiny. They are mostly stucco or terracotta reliefs of the Virgin and Child. This group of artefacts attracted attention mostly in terms of their stylistic attributions, with an important exception being the studies on the effect these reliefs had on Renaissance wives and mothers. In art historical writings, sculpture continues to be divided into the fine art (mostly sculptures in bronze and marble) and the applied arts. The latter category is often dismissed as merely decorative. However, in the 15th century everything had a function and in particular objects with devotional imagery. These artefacts solicited specific types of interaction through the agency of their form, material, and iconography, as well as thanks to their accompanying texts. Moreover, various objects were believed to possess the power to protect against evil at home, including the so-called *vasi a pigna*, maiolica vases placed on the roofs of private homes, for instance in Ariano Irpino, in south-ern Italy, where they were recommended as a way of protecting the house and its inhabitants (fig. 1).[3]

Despite their often intricate and lavish forms, it is impossible to describe these objects as being solely decorative, because of the great faith invested in their efficacy. The term 'decorative' has been questioned by Alfred Gell and James Elkins, who both argued that any kind of object has an active presence of its own.[4]

In theory, the encounters with religious images at home should serve three purposes that echoed the role of images in the ecclesiastical context: to instruct the members of the house-

Fig. 1. Ariano Irpino, *Vaso a pigna*, c. 1600. Glazed earthenware. Ariano Irpino, Museo Civico. (Photo by the Author).

hold, to fill the memory and imagination with images of saints, and to inspire the devotion. Indeed, while the form and iconography of domestic sculptures often depended on the ones that were displayed in public places of worship, the ways in which the devotional sculpture operated at home were significantly harder to control. Therefore, the little-studied, yet remarkably wide spectrum of interactions with domestic statues invites scrutiny. This paper aims to reconstruct the conditions which allowed the viewers to experience sculptures as being alive at home. I wish to consider what particular properties of the object evoked its material presence.

From written accounts, it seems that one of the most common instances when a sculpture became active at home was when it had to protect the inhabitants from evil. According to the Christian faith, evil could result from one's deeds, and contemporary writers of the past instructed parents to expose their children to images of the Christ Child and the young John the Baptist in order to model their behaviour upon these saintly figures, and to protect them from the influence of the devil.[5] The survival of many three-dimensional sculptures showing interactions between the young John the Baptist and the Christ Child testify to the popularity of this iconography. An example of this representation, now in the Private Collection in Cento, is modelled as a sculptural object, though much of its expressive quality depends on the vivid colours skilfully and imagina-

Fig. 2. Giovanni della Robbia, *Meeting of the Young John the Baptist with the Christ Child*, c. 1520. Partially glazed terracotta, 40x35x18 cm. Cento, Private Collection. (Photo: Cento).

tively applied to the white tin-glazed surface of the biscuit-fired earthenware (fig. 2).

Telling details, such as the animals and the depiction of water, animate the scene. Trickling from the rocky landscape, the painted stream runs through the middle of the statuette towards the edge of the base and bridges the gap between the represented space and the space of the beholder. This vividness allows to perceive the experience of the represented encounter of the young St. John and the Christ Child as being real, to be imitated by the beholders. The scale of the figures is an important aspect that differentiates the domestic encounters from those that took place on the outside. In the public context, religious sculptural groups, such as those of the Nativity or related to the Passion of Christ were, typically life or nearly life-size. Through physical similarity, these figures facilitated the identification of the viewer with the saintly characters from the life of Christ. At home, the scale was reduced: the Cento statuette measures 40 cm in height and 35 cm in width. This was a practical solution but one that also facilitated other types of physical engagement. More important than the life-like scale was the surface quality of the sculpture. This aspect included the reflectiveness of the surface – which caused an effect of animation – the life-like colouring, or the habit of dressing the sculptures with soft fabrics.

The statuette from Cento points to the tactile character of the encounter. In the hierarchy of the senses, touch was perceived as the least important because the sensory information received when handling objects has to travel a long way before reaching the brain and was therefore considered less reliable. Yet, touching and manually operating the figures was an important way in which Renaissance beholders interacted with sculptures at home. A tin-glazed earthenware group showing the *Last Supper*, now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (inv. no. 1983.61), points to this operational potential of maiolica sculpture, which in turn enriched the encounter through the appeal to the senses of sight and taste. Despite the object's small scale (h: 21.6 cm, w: 62.2 cm, d: 37.5 cm), the artist created a very detailed composition, with great attention paid to minute elements. The clear interest in the realistic depiction of the table and food informs the imagined participation in the single most important meal in the history of the Catholic Church. The beholders could picture themselves participating in the event, through the active distri-

bution of jugs or cutlery, or through the shifting of the spatial relationships between apostles. Another object that facilitated different kinds of interactions, aimed at experiencing the sculptural scene as alive, is a maiolica group of the *Stigmatization of St. Francis*, also from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (inv. no. 53.2912). The statuette is animated through the presence of water, as the opening to the right of the Crucifix might have been a receptacle for holy water. It does have a little tube through which water could have trickled down, but the view of the back seems to suggest that this was only added to create an illusion, and perhaps to enhance the link between the holy water kept at home and the water from the La Verna sanctuary. Water, which sprang miraculously from the rock, is the subject of one of the most vivid stories from St. Francis's life, and one that clearly identifies him as the antitype of Moses and Christ. On the back of the statuette, there is an opening which connects to a chimney-like rock behind the Crucified Christ. It was created to allow the burning of the incense to add its smell to the devotional experience. Similarly, paper flowers or representations of trees or other vegetation could have been placed in the small holes spread across the top of the sculpture to enrich the landscape. The operations, such as the burning of incense, imagining water springing from the rock at La Verna, touching the actual holy water poured into the receptacle, and placing flowers in the small holes, were all aimed at animating the scene and activating the figure of St. Francis and the image of La Verna, so that they could be experienced as being actually present.

Sculpture was believed to be actively present in the 15th-century home, as clearly stated in the documents that describe people sleeping with figurines of the Virgin and Child protecting them when they were most vulnerable, such as the hand-held maiolica examples from Palazzo Madama in Turin (inv. no. 2721/C) and Museo Duca di Martina in Naples (inv. no. 969).[6] Sculptural images of Christ and the Virgin came to life to protect various members of the family, but under specific circumstances they could also have been experienced as living bodies not only to be encountered, but also able to control the outcome of that meeting and of any other encounters that took place between the family members at home. It suffices to quote the story of Faustina, as described in one of the *novelle* by Matteo Bandello (1485-1561), to illustrate the ability of a statue to act as a substitute for a

real body at home. Faustina, a woman from Rome, having discovered that her husband wanted to escape with his lover Cornelia, became so still and cold that she appeared to be a marble statue rather than a living woman: "stette per buono spazio di tempo che pareva più statua di freddo marmo che donna viva".[7] She then decided to create an effigy of herself and commissioned a statue of her height from an excellent woodcarver. As I mentioned earlier, the majority of the statues that entered homes were of small dimensions and certainly ordering a life-size sculpture for the domestic space was unusual. In all likelihood, the woodcarver had to model the statue of Faustina on figures that constituted his typical commissions, namely the figure of the Virgin. Subsequently, Faustina covered the wooden surface with animal skin and, convinced that her husband would try to kill her, she added tiny blisters filled with red water to the statue, so that they would spill false blood when pierced. After that, she placed the figure in her own bed awaiting her husband's return. She even cleverly attached ropes to the statue, so that it would shake and tremble to become more life-like. As envisaged by Faustina, the husband stabbed the statue in the back several times with a dagger. Following her miraculous survival, Faustina, who since her childhood had always shown devotion to the Virgin, went barefoot to Loreto, where she offered an image pierced twice with a dagger as an ex-voto. Though the miracle happened at home, she felt compelled to bring her votive offering to the Virgin in Loreto. This perhaps shows that Faustina believed that the divine was more immediately present in a church rather than at home. Thus, the story shows two functions of the sculptural image: at the beginning, it acts as a representation of human vulnerability through its three-dimensionality, life-like scale, and added imitation of the human skin and blood, and finally, the ex-voto sculpture becomes a testimony of God's mercy and received grace.

Most of my examples were objects made of glazed terracotta because clay seems to have been an important material for evoking divine presence at home. The 'life force' was embedded in its form by the artist, who applied his skill to make the image more life-like but the successful firing of any statue depended on the divine assistance as, according to the accounts of the time, fire was difficult to control. Moreover, glazed terracotta seems to constitute a perfect example of how religious sculpture of reduced dimensions could possess the vividness

that caused it to seemingly move in the mind of the beholder. With its radiant surface, glazed terracotta had the potential to animate the figure and to remain impressed in the mind of the faithful.

Finally, the interactions with domestic sculpture point to the relationship between memory and active presence. *Miracoli della gloriosa vergine Maria historiati*, published in Venice in 1551, describes an episode from the life of a family from Lombardy in which a young son was saved by the Virgin, which he later identified with a specific image he had in his house.[8] It was customary for all members of the family to hail and pray to the figure, and thus they established a specific bond with that particular object. In the moment of need, the boy, who was drowning, cried for help, addressing the mental image impressed in his mind through the numerous times he looked at, spoke to, and touched the statue in his home. He acted upon the sensory data that was stored in his memory in the exact moment when he needed to evoke the life-saving presence of the Virgin. The stories of the boy from Lombardy and of Faustina from Rome seem to point to the fact that people had limited power over the outcome of their encounters with the active sculptural image. In both instances, the sculpture and the human could only have limited contact with each other, and it was the miraculous, divine intervention that secured the happy outcome. The faithful sought protection and the divine power saved them when they needed it. Despite this, as far as I am aware, the presence of the religious sculpture at home is never considered in terms of its uncanny presence. In negative terms, it can be discussed as unwanted or to be limited. Inquisitional records describe people blowing out candles or closing the wings of triptychs before committing indecent acts in front of their domestic tabernacles.

The animated and active presence of sculptures at home depended on the context of visualization, on enacted rituals, and formal aspects such as the surface quality of maiolica statuettes. People attributed to their domestic statues the power to rescue their children from drowning. They handheld figurines, which protected them at night when they were most vulnerable. Small-scale narrative representations came to life in the mind of the beholders thanks to a specific medium and through various operations that animated the represented saintly figures and scenes. Through informing different senses and impressing itself in the memory of the

inhabitants, the sculpture at home had the power to evoke the active presence of the saintly figures, perhaps more directly than any other domestic object. Our understanding of devotional practices at home in the early modern period is still rather limited when compared to the public pious encounters with paintings, sculptures, or other artworks. Further research enriches that catalogue in the hope of being able to formulate a more general theoretical framework about the encounters between domestic devotional sculptural matter and the beholders. It seems that in the domestic context, reflective sculptures made of glazed terracotta had the greatest potential to evoke the divine presence.

These encounters were never passive, but instead included an array of more or less essential gestures.

I am grateful for the discussion that followed my paper at the congress in Florence. Moving forward, I have been thinking a lot about the remark about glazed terracotta not inviting touch, about its coldness and immaculate surface failing to create a sensory appeal similar to that commonly associated, for instance, with bronze statuettes. However, as I have mentioned during the Q&A session, I believe that in its accessibility, terracotta was a 15th-century equivalent to plastic, and religious figurines were frequently handled and touched by their beholders at the time.

Notes

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[1] R.M. Rodríguez Porto, "Knighted by the Apostle Himself: Political Fabrication and Chivalric Artefact in Compostela, 1332", in G. Jurkowlaniec, I. Matyjaszkiewicz, Z. Sarnecka, eds., *The Agency of Things in Medieval and Early Modern Art: Materials, Power and Manipulation* (New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 51-62; K. Kopania, *Animated Sculptures of the Crucified Christ in the Religious Culture of the Latin Middle Ages* (Warsaw: Neriton, 2010).

[2] G. Capriotti, "Simulacri dell'invisibile. 'Cultura lignea' ed esigenze devozionali nella Camerino del Rinascimento", in R. Casciaro, ed., *Rinascimento scolpito. Maestri del legno tra Marche e Umbria*, exh. cat. (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2006), pp. 73-83; U. Rublack, "Female Spirituality and the Infant Jesus in Late Medieval Dominican Convents", in R.W. Scribner, T. Johnson, eds., *Popular Religion in Germany and Central Europe, 1400-1800* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), pp. 16-37.

[3] G. Donatone, "Prefazione", in G. Furcolo Fiore, *L'antica maiolica popolare di Ariano Irpino nel Museo Civico* (Ariano 1998).

[4] A. Gell, "The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology", in J. Coote, A. Shelton, eds., *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 43; J. Elkins, *The Object Stares Back* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 40; A. Gell, *Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2013).

[5] G. Dominici, *Regola del governo di cura familiare* (Firenze: A. Garinei, 1860), p. 137.

[6] In 1627, Galeotto Marazzani, a captain from Rimini, owned two figurines of Christ to be held in or near the bed. A. Turchini, "Tracce di religione domestica in ambiente urbano: il caso di Rimini fra il XV e il XVII secolo", *Il Carrobbio*, anno VI (1980): pp. 352-364: 356.

[7] Matteo Bandello, *Novelle*, ed. Ferruccio Ulivi (Roma: Curcio, 1978), p. 62.

[8] *Miracoli della gloriosa vergine Maria historiati*, Venice 1551, chapter 35.

Sacrifices Material and Immaterial: The Survival of Graeco-Roman Candelabra

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The three colossal candelabra Piranesi made in the 1770s out of fragments from Hadrian's Villa, excavated at Pantanello near Tivoli, as well as Roman collections of antiquities raise many issues about authenticity, authorship, aesthetic value, or their iconography (fig. 1). Here, I want to use them as a starting point for a series of reflections on the survival of religious artefacts, the changes – and losses – in religious meaning during that survival, the processes of transfer in which they play a major part, and what they tell us about the material survival of Roman religion and the episodes of human-thing entanglement that punctuate their history.

Candelabra are among the oldest religious artefacts in the West, documented first in Egypt, and prehistoric Spain. From the Hellenistic period they became highly prestigious and precious, Roman cult objects, used in temples to flank statues of divinities but also to mark entrances. The major production sites were in Ephesus and Tarento.[1] In speeches against Verres, Cicero mentions the former's theft of the extremely costly candelabra

Fig. 1.a. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Marble Candelabrum*, h. 300 cm, made out of various elements (Roman, 15th and 18th Century), after a design by Piranesi. Acquired by Sir Roger Newdigate in 1774, donated to Oxford University in 1775. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum. (Photo by the Author).
Fig. 1.b. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Candelabrum*, from *Vasi, Candelabri, Cippi*, Rome, 1778. (Photo by University Library Ghent).

that the sons of King Antioch XIII had intended to donate to the recently built temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Pliny also records their extremely high prices and the fetishist object-attachment they tended to create in their owners.[2]

Yet, these objects are singularly understudied, and no history of this artefact type exists to date. In the 15th century, they re-emerge, in a tale of survival full of twists worthy of Aby Warburg: a fragment of a candelabrum that sported a relief of an ecstatic maenad (fig. 2). Now in the Grimani Collection in Venice, it shows a triangular basis of a Neo-Attic candelabrum from the first century CE that had stood in the church of San Lorenzo in Tivoli. Bought by the Venetian collector Domenico Grimani in the 1590s, it became part of the collection of the Republic of Venice, where many artists saw it. It was drawn by Giuliano da Sangallo, and included in major drawing collections such as the Codex Escuraliensis and painted, in a ruined condition, in the Prado *Madonna della Quercia* once attributed to Raphael, as part of a figuration of the triumph of Christianity over pagan religion.

This as well is uncharted territory, but it appears from their earliest descriptions in Homer, and its earliest surviving speciments such as the one mentioned above from Lebrija in Prehistoric Spain that candelabra were consistently considered as stand-ins for divinities and kinds of body-doubles.[3] This is documented most clearly in the tale of Candelabrus in the *Satyricon* by Petronius. A suggestive image of such a doubling of human and candelabra bodies survives in a Pompeian mural painting (fig. 3).[4]

When they were revived in the 15th and 16th century, these associations were lost. Instead, candelabra were either integrated, in one scenario of its afterlife, into a visual representation of the triumph of Christianity over paganism. Here the fragments of the candelabrum's pedestal symbolise that demise. In the other scenario the Roman candelabrum type is integrated with the Mediaeval paschal candelabrum type, resulting in such stunning artefacts as Riccio's immense candelabrum in Padua, more than four meters high. It integrates the formal scheme of Roman candelabra

Fig. 2. Triangular basis of a Neo-Attic candelabrum from the first century CE, marble. Venice, Collezione Grimani. (Photo by the Author).

Fig. 3. Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy, Florence, Medici Chapel, interior, altar with candelabra attributed to him, 1519-34. (Photo by Ralph Lieberman Archive, Harvard).

– pedestal, shaft with balusters and other articulations and a disc element to carry fire – with complex Christian and classical figural elements that revolve around sacrifice. This type, integrating Roman and Christian elements, enjoyed a long life, with specimens attributed to Michelangelo (fig. 3), others designed by famous sculptors such as Tacca, and continuing well into the 20th century.

By the 1770s, major Roman specimens such as the Barberini candelabra entered the market, and new excavation campaigns at Tivoli made available large quantities of Graeco-Roman and Egyptianizing fragments from Hadrian's Villa. As a result, there was an intense fashion for these candelabra, which for a few decades were considered to be among the best and most beautiful specimens of Greek and Roman sculpture. One of the main reasons for founding the Museo Pio-Clementino was to provide a suitable display for them, after the sale of the Barberini Candelabra to the English market had been prevented. The Sala dei Candelabri is the lasting witness to that enthusiasm.

But by this time, the original, Roman meanings associated to the figural elements of the candelabra had been lost. This was partly the result of the general overtaking of Roman iconographical traditions by emblematics as codified by Alciati, but as Roman candelabra often display quite obscure figurative elements, their loss of meaning was even greater. In the first catalogue of the Museo Pio-Clementino, E.Q. Visconti did give an analysis of their symbolism, but one that largely favours conventional mythological interpretation. Thus, he does capture the fact that the figurative friezes of the Barberini Candelabra present various episodes from the myth of Apollo and Marsyas, but the rich Greek and Roman symbolism of balusters eludes him. According to a widely held popular belief, the etymology of the baluster is the ancient Greek *balaustion* or pomegranade, which was believed to be a symbol of divine Law.

Within this context of survival, partial retrieval and large losses and transformations of meaning, the candelabra Piranesi created out of fragments from Pantanello present the most interesting case. First of all, for formal reasons. A brief comparison with surviving Roman specimens will show how different, if not strange, they are: there is typically Piranesian design overdrive, a proliferation and reduplication or retriplication of elements, prominent animals, and lack of a coherent conventional iconography.

Their formal strangeness can be explained to some degree because he used the traditional, Roman, triangular, tripartite formal scheme with a pedestal, a shaft often consisting of balusters, and a disc to carry the light or fire; but then he combined it with the kind of rich figuration, drawing often on the symbolism of death and funerary rites, that we find in the Christian revival of candelabra, most conspicuously in the monumental candelabrum by Riccio. This one has the same piling up of symbolic elements. So Piranesi combines the Roman formal scheme with a different kind of figuration; he also greatly expands and enriches that formal scheme; but the most disconcerting deviation from the early modern tradition is that his candelabra display very little iconographical coherence when considered from a post-Alciati, Christian perspective. And this even though at least one of them, the one now in the Louvre, was designed by Piranesi to stand on his own grave in Santa Maria del Priorato, where it should be lit 24/7; in itself yet another profoundly unconventional gesture.

Yet, the animals that figure so prominently on his candelabra give some clues. In the one now in the Louvre, leonine heads and claws support Birds of Stymphalos, who in turn support rams' heads, those in the Ashmolean have pelicans, elephants, and sphinxes. Their number, vividness and formal predominance is another feature that distinguishes them from their Roman ancestors.

The same interest in animal statuary is documented in the work of sculptors such as the *animalier* Franzoni, who was also very active as a restorer for the Sala degli animali in the Museo Pio-Clementino, and in the creation of zoomorphic objects such as the Bacchus and Ceres Thrones now in the Louvre, or the pelican candelabrum, now in Naples, long considered to be an antique, but now believed to be an 18th-century *pasticcio*.[5] Yet, a brief glance at the animal statues displayed there shows an important difference with the zoomorphism in Piranesi's work. In the Sala degli Animali, most animals are real, existing animals. Many visitors noted that, with the exception of a few mythological animals, the room looked like the sixth day of Creation, with all the recently created beasts waiting for God's commands.

In the artefacts made by Piranesi, mythological beasts, monsters, and *Mischwesen* dominate: sphinxes, griffins, hippogriffs, dragons, the birds of Lake Stymphalos, hybrid birds that are a cross

between storks and pelicans. In contrast to most animal representations of the later 18th century, they lack heraldical meaning or usage; they do not refer to fables such as La Fontaine's, nor to the animal metamorphoses of Ovid. Instead, the animal features of his candelabra, and in particular the Oxford and Louvre specimens, orchestrate in a rather abstruse manner their main function, to give light, and their main context, that of sacrifices and funerals with their attendant associations of the end of life, and the transition to the afterlife. These large themes come together in the notion of eternal light. The candelabrum dedicated to Charles Morris for instance, reproduced in the *Vasi, Candelabri, Cippi* and found in Pantanello according to Piranesi's caption, recalls sacrifice and burial in its main elements of parts taken from Roman altars and the column (fig. 4). It features three hippogrifs, a round disc carried by turtles, sacrificial rams' heads, birds, baskets with fruits, acanthus and ivy leaves. This suggests a representation of the cosmos, with the disc carried by turtles referring to the earth, and the birds suggesting the air; funeral associations because of the acanthus, and a reference to the cycle of life, death, and rebirth because of the Bacchic/Dionysian symbolism of the fruit basket and the ivy, as well as the sacrificial associations of the rams' heads.[6]

The meaning of the Louvre candelabrum is explained in a caption by Piranesi for its etching in the *Vasi, Candelabri, Cippi.* Here he points out its funerary character, stressed by the *erotes* with downturned, extinguished torches that originally flanked it when placed on his tomb in Santa Maria del Priorato. This is combined with references to the four seasons of the year and the end of life. The fauns decorating the shaft for instance harvest pines, the last fruit of the year. As in the other candelabra, rams' heads and the leaves of acanthus and ivy suggest death and eternal life, sacrifice, and the passage from this life to the next.

The Oxford candelabra have a less obvious coherence of animal symbolism, but nevertheless some patterns can be detected. They stand out by the conspicuous presence of dolphins with twisted tails, elephants' heads and hybrids between storks and pelicans, all carved in the exquisite manner reminiscent of Francesco Franzoni. Dolphins have a substantial presence in Greek and Roman mythology and visual culture. They are the companions of Amphion, Amphytrite and Neptune, and are often depicted together with

erotes. They were also considered as an image of the voyage of the soul across the Ocean to the Isle of the Blessed, and are frequently depicted on sarcophagi, a tradition that persisted into the 4th century AD. A sarcophagus excavated under Old St Peter's has four pairs of dolphins solemnly accompanying the soul on its journey to the afterlife.[7]

Elephants carried a rich array of cultural meanings in Roman visual and material culture. They were very well known since the expeditions of Alexander the Great, their use by King Pyrrhus of Epiros against the Romans in 282 BC, and the Punic wars. A substantial corpus of Roman elephant lore survives, and according to popular belief they adored the Sun.[8] They often figure on Roman sarcophagi as part of Bacchus' triumphal procession returning from India, for instance in sarcophagi dating from the second century CE in the Walters Gallery and Fitzwilliam Museum. Elephantine im-

Fig. 4. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Candelabrum dedicated to Charles Morris,* from *Vasi, Candelabri, Cippi*, Rome, 1778. (Photo by University Library Ghent).

ages and statues had clear religious connotations. Augustus had statues of elephants made of black obsidian placed in the Temple of Concord, according to Pliny inspired to do so after the occurrence of a *miraculum*, a miraculous portent.[9] Perhaps most suggestive in the context of this book is their deployment in the quadruple triumph Caesar celebrated in 46 BCE. Here, forty drilled elephants marched in two rows, each carrying a burning torch in its trunk.[10] This strong association of elephants with light is also present in Pompeii. Here we find for instance a bronze candelabrum flanked by elephants, and elephants surrounding the basis of a candelabrum.[11]

So we could say that in a sense, Piranesi restored ancient Roman meanings attached to animals such as the dolphin, ram or elephant. To conceive the candelabra as restorations entirely ties in with Piranesi's own presentation of these artefacts. He claimed in the captions of their etchings published in the *Vasi, Candelabri, Cippi* of 1778, and his last publication, that they were found 'tale quale' in the swamp of Pantanello, and were only lightly restored in his studio. In fact, this is very far from the truth. In his studio, or Museo as he preferred to call it, animal sculptors such as Franzoni, and restorers such as Cavaceppi, employed fragments found in Pantanello to integrate them into what are in fact Piranesi's new inventions, and his own take on the Roman type of candelabrum. The brief discussion of the candelabrum now in the Louvre shows this.

It would be overhasty, I believe, to dismiss therefore the candelabra as pastiches, fakes, or even frauds, as has been done since the early 19th century. Instead, I would argue, Piranesi's creative recreations tie in with a practice of restoration current in this period which is very different from present-day conceptions of it as a return to pristine origins and author's intentions. Instead, artists such as Piranesi, and collectors such as Wilhelm and Caroline von Humboldt, preferred what Pascal Griener has called 'poetic restoration': trying to constitute the full potential of the surviving fragments. This was often done by inserting surviving fragments into casts of what the original might have looked like, and then making a new marble object on the basis of that cast; that is, a very projective approach, rather than a retrospective one. The Calixtus Well restored, or recreated, by the German sculptor Rauch for Caroline von Humboldt is a very good example of such a procedure.[12]

In fact Piranesi's merging of design and restoration, starting with fragments and incorporating them into new wholes, which he claimed where *opere romane*, recall, to a striking degree, the ideas on the origins of Roman material culture, the practice of history, and the relation between memory and imagination as developed in two works by the Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico: *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians. Drawn out from the Origins of the Latin Language* (1711), and the *New Science* (1730/44). We cannot assume a simple relation of influence, even though Piranesi happened to be in Naples when the second edition of *New Science* was published, because the metaphysical and epistemological problems Vico addressed are too far removed from Piranesi's lifelong paper and stone reconstruction of ancient Rome.[13] But as Erika Naginski has suggested recently, there are a series of similarities that make it worthwhile to think for a moment about Piranesi's late work in relation to Vico's ideas.[14] To begin with, they share the idea that Rome had a history, and origins, that were independent of those of Greece. The proof of that independence lies in the Etruscan, not Greek, origin of Roman material culture and its religion. They both broke with the humanist textual tradition of studying Antiquity: Piranesi by excavating and etching Roman ruins, Vico by studying the oldest monuments of Etruria. As Vico put it in the *New Science*: "Great fragments of antiquity, hitherto useless to science because they lay begrimed, broken and scattered, shed great light when cleaned, pierced together and restored".[15] This leads, as Naginski shows, to a shared interest in the composite: art, like the being and becoming of all culture, is characterized by a process of composition. Hence repair, reconstruction and restoration are essential for the survival of material cultural as well as institutions. They also shared, one could add, an interest in what we would now call the material culture of religion. Many of Vico's observations on the original meaning of Roman religious terms start from surviving sacrifical and ritual artefacts. These same objects – the boucrania, knives, and receptacles – are very often integrated in Piranesi's late works.[16]

But we can take Naginksi's argument one step further: like Vico, Piranesi may well have believed that the essence of human culture, both material and immaterial, lies in its being made. Vico summarized this in his famous, but hermetic dictum that being and truth are equivalent, *verum et fac-*

tum convertuntur, which is generally taken to mean that we can only know what we have made, and that God alone can fully know the entire creation. Piranesi's approach to Roman material culture was not a philological, text-based one, but one that started from the excavation of fragments, and proceeded through an artefactual process of repairing, reconstruction, and reintegration, as we have seen, into new compositions. Considered in such terms, Piranesi's apparently free, capricious handling of Roman fragments becomes a process of material investigation that leads to restoration based on artefactual knowledge. For Vico, repeating Aristotelian theory of memory and imagination, the memory is a storage of perceptions, whereas imagination is their recalling; invention is nothing, as he put it in the *New Science*, but a 'working over of what is remembered'. Artistic invention as practised by Piranesi in artefacts, is essentially a process of imaginative remembrance: working over the fragments from ancient Rome that have survived; and thereby the ultimate form of restoration.

A few short observations to conclude. First, the *longue durée* of the survival of this particular kind of religious artefact shows succeeding stages and varieties of human-thing entanglement, from the commodification and fetishization of the late Republic and Early Empire to the competition between English and Italian collectors to own a candelabrum. Second, even though the *function* of the candelabra does not change fundamentally – it continues, through the ages, to illuminate religious rites – the religious *beliefs* associated with it change profoundly, from Roman paganism to Catholicism to Piranesi's own quite private brand of religion. Third, the survival of these objects, their rediscovery and ongoing series of episodes and new formal developments, is not so much a case of Warburgian *Nachleben* of images, nor of antiquarian or arthistorical retrieval and conservation of Graeco-Roman originals. Instead, it is a process of restoration, but in a very particular sense: that of imaginative remembrance exercised by Piranesi on material fragments surviving from Hadrian's Villa, just as Vico believed institutions survive by such acts of imaginative remembrance. Ultimately, both views tie in with the very Roman view of religion conceived as a set of rituals designed to instate, and restore, the ties that connect heaven and earth, humans and gods.[17]

Notes

[1] Cicero, *In Verrem* IV.xxviii-xxix.64-68, in *Verrine Orations Part* II, Book 3-5, tr. L.H.G. Greenwood (Cambridge, MA and London: William Heinemann, 1935).

[2] Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, XXXIV.vi.12.

[3] *Odyssey* VII.100-3, *Iliad* 18.421; cf. M. Kokolakis, "Homeric Animism", *Museum Philologum Londiniense* 4 (1980): pp. 89-113.

[4] Petronius, *Satyricon* 75.10-11, Petronius, *Satyricon*, tr. M. Heseltine (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913); cf. R. Bielfeldt, "*Candelabrus* and Trimalchio: Embodied Histories of Roman Lampstands and their Slaves", *Art History* 41, no. 3 (2018): pp. 420-443, in particular pp. 425-428.

[5] See W. Amelung, G.H. Lippold, *Die Skulpturen des Vaticanischen Museums* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1936) vol. III.ii, p. 544, and vol. II.ii, no. 122; R. Carloni, "Francesco A. Franzoni tra virtuosismo tecnico e restauro integrativo", *Labyrinthos* 10 (1991): pp. 155-255; A. González-Palacios, "Per 'Francesco A. Franzoni", *Antologia di Belle Arte* n.s., no. 48/51 (1994): pp. 107-128; Id., *Il Serraglio di Pietra. La sala degli animali in vaticano* (Roma: Edizioni Musei Vaticani, 2013).

[6] On the symbolism of acanthus leaves and the Corinthian order in general, see P. Gros, *Situation stylistique et chronologique du chaiteau corinthien de Vitruve*, in L. Pressouyre, ed., *L'acanthe dans la sculpture monumentale de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance* (Paris: Société d'Archéologie, 1993), pp. 27-37; on ram symbolism, particularly their role as intermediaries between this life and the afterlife see A.-C. Soussan, *Une figure de passeur: le bélier à la toison d'or entre Grèce et Colchide*, in P. Carmignani, ed., *Figures du passeur* (Perpignan: Presses Universitaires de Perpignan, 2002), pp. 21-37. I am much indebted to Anca Dan for these references.

[7] J.M.C. Toynbee, *Tierwelt der Antike*, tr. M. Älfoldi and D. Misslbeck (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1983) [first, English edition London: Thames and Hudson, 1973], pp. 195-198. See also N. Gluek, *Deities and Dolphins. The Story of the Nabataeans* (London: Cassell & Co, 1966); B. Cassin, et al., eds., *L'animal dans l'Antiquité* (Paris: Vrin, 1997); A. Zucker, ed., *Prédateurs dans tous leurs états*. Rencontres d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art d'Antibes (Antibes: Editions APDCA, 2011); J. Mynott, *Birds in the Ancient World: Winged Words* (Oxford: University Press, 2018).

[8] H. Cancik, et al., eds., *Brill's New Pauly* (Leiden: Brill, 2006) s.v. elephant. See also C. Daremberg, E. Saglio, eds., *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines, d'après les textes et les monuments* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1892), II, s.v. 'elephas', and the chapter on elephants in J.M.C. Toynbee, *Tierwelt der Antike*, cit., pp. 24-48.

[9] Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 36.196.

[10] Suetonis, *Iulius* 37.2.

[11] Cf. J.M.C. Toynbee, *Tierwelt der Antike*, cit., pp. 39-47. For the murals in Pompei (respectively I.6.4 and VI.15.1) see G. Pugliese Carratelli, ed., *Pompei. Pitture e Mosaici. Enciclopedia dell'Arte Classica e Orientale* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1990), I, p. 324, and V, p. 545.

[12] On the Humboldt case see Pascal Griener, *Plaster versus Marble. Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt and the Agency of Antique Sculpture*, in C.A. van Eck, ed., *Idols and Museum Pieces. The Nature of Sculpture, its Historiography and Exhibition History 1640-1880* (München: De Gruyter, 2017), pp. 159-177. On the practice of replacing heads of classical statues see D. Grassinger, "Zersägte Köpfe. Die Transformation antiker Porträts und monumentalen Gemmenbildern im 18.

Jahrhundert", *Opuscula. Annual of the Swedish Institutes at Athens and Rome* 2 (2009): pp. 179-191.

[13] For a recent over view of this issue see L. Kantor-Kazovsky, *Piranesi as Interpreter of Roman Architecture and the Origins of his Intellectual World* (Firenze: Olschki, 2006), pp. 17 and 145-147. She comes to the conclusion that specific influence of Vico's ideas on Piranesi cannot be demonstrated, particularly where Etruscan architecture is concerned. But since the present essay is concerned with Piranesi's *piccola architettura*, unlike Kantor's book, which is devoted to Piranesi's views on architectural history, a different view can be justified.

[14] E. Naginski, "Preliminary Thoughts on Piranesi and Vico", *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 53, no. 4 (2008): pp. 152-167.

[15] G. Vico: *The New Science*, tr. T.G. Bergin and M. Frisch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 106.

[16] Giambattista Vico, *On The Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians: Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language* (Naples, 1710), tr. L.M. Palmer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988). This quotation is taken from Vico's articles in the *Giornale dei Literati d'Italia*, vol. VIII, no. X (1711), pp. 308-333, in which he replied to reviews of his book, reproduced in Palmer's translation, p. 149. Many of Vico's interpretations, as well as his view of Roman religion as essentially a series of rituals in which connections between the divine and the human are made, rather than a faith like Christianity, have been confirmed recently. See J. Scheid: *Quand faire c'est croire* (Paris: Aubier, 2005).

[17] This essay is a brief development of religious aspects of Piranesi's candelabra, which are discussed in much more detail in my forthcoming book *Piranesi's Candelabra and the Revival of the Past. Excessive objects and style formation in the age of neo-classicism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).

Visual Mimesis, Textual Nemesis: Animation and Alienation in Zen Portrait Inscriptions

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Introduction

This paper focuses on Zen master Dōgen's (1200-1253) portraits (*chinzō*) and their self-inscribed poems (*jisan*). It argues that Dōgen naturally engaged with painted portraits of himself as every Zen master did, but that he used the power of text to remind viewers to detach from the image of enlightenment and to focus on their own awakening instead. Dōgen used poetic verse to not only deconstruct the power of his own likeness, but to also express and ideally trigger in his audience a three-fold experience of awakening. Portions of this paper appeared in my first book, where the relevant images can be found.[1]

Dōgen, Visual Culture, and Religious Experience

Our discussion of Dōgen's portrait poetry begins with an anachronistic yet nevertheless helpful analogy. In a famous image entitled *The Treachery of Images* (*La Trahison des Images* 1928-29), René Magritte paints a realistic picture of a pipe but directly below he also provocatively writes "This is not a pipe" (*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*). In keeping with 20th century semiotic theory, Magritte's combination of image and text underscores the gap between representation and reality, that is, the difference between a painted pipe hanging on a museum wall and real pipes that can be stuffed with tobacco and actually smoked. Likewise, Dōgen inscribed many of his own *chinzō* portraits in this same spirit of detaching from external images of Buddhahood and instead actually realizing Buddha-mind within.

This same tension between ideal illustration and real illumination has been a central concern in Zen visual culture throughout East Asia. Ever since Chan (J. Zen) Buddhism first flourished in China during the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE) and Japan during the Kamakura period (1197-1333/36), mas-ter portraits were considered to be living substitutes for a deceased abbot.[2] Disciples and adherents bowed before the abbot's portrait, placed it above the dharma seat, and treated it as a stand-in for the departed abbot during monastic ceremonies. The portrait posthumously functioned as a dynamic and animated 'double' for the departed master himself. In this monastic context, visual mimesis animated the dead abbot in the image.

However, textual nemesis concurrently alienated students from attaching too much importance to the abbot's portrait. The term *nemesis* is deliberately invoked here, for it originally refers to the Greek goddess Nemesis who metes out punishment for those with excessive hubris or spiritual pride before the gods. Therefore, in order to support yet also subvert the substitutive power of one's own likeness, Zen masters would often brush self-negating poetic inscriptions (*jisan*) upon completion of their portraits.[3] As a result, inscribed *chinzō* portraits first present the image of the sitter, then deconstruct it with verse, and finally allow both image and verse stand together in nondual coexistence.

This three-fold movement from mimetic image, to nemetic text, to nondual coexistence, I argue, is the same presupposed temporal logic that enables Dōgen's sequential assertion, negation, and ultimate reaffirmation of a transformed self in and through the enlightenment experience. This is the same tripartite movement that Dōgen himself outlines in his celebrated *Genjōkōan* fascicle, "to study the self is to forget the self, to forget the self is to be confirmed by all dharmas". This paper strives to demonstrate that the very structure of Dōgen's poetry mimics this same triple experiential sequence expressed in his famous sobriquet. It argues that Dōgen's overarching objective was not only to express, but also to model and ideally even trigger in others, the same kind of tripartite experience of awakening. The third uneasy co-

existence of visual *mimesis* and its textually emptied-out *nemesis* in the end actively expresses and possibly triggers the enlightened realization of nonduality.

Dōgen's *Chinzō*

Several extant inscribed portraits are said to survive from Dōgen's lifetime, though some scholars question all but his 1249 moon-viewing self-portrait to be discussed presently. Twenty *jisan* verses about his own image, however, do survive in the earliest unrevised version Dōgen's *Extensive Record* (*Eihei kōroku*) and thus can be attributed to the master himself.

Hommyōji chinzō

The first inscribed portrait of Dōgen to be considered is housed at Hommyō temple in Kumamoto prefecture, in Japan's southernmost island of Kyūshū. The figure itself is a late Muromachi-period (1336-1600) copy of an undated Dōgen portrait from Ankokuji temple. Two inscriptions by the Edo-period (1600-1868) monk Sonkai (n.d.) in 1770 and 1825 rewrite Dōgen's earliest poem explicitly composed for a portrait inscription. Sonkai's explanatory coda on his 1825 inscription explains that the copied verse and portrait originally date back to "Karoku 3 (1227), Dōgen *jisan*, Eiheiji's first patriarch's portrait". Dōgen's poem reads:

> The cold lake reflecting the clear blue sky for thousands of miles
> A gold-scaled fish moves along the bottom in the quiet of night,
> Swimming back and forth while fishing poles snap off-
> On the endless surface of water appears the bright white light of the moon.[4]

Visually speaking, the formal portrait of a seated Zen master communicates the individual identity, solidity, and public face of the monastery. Poetically speaking, however, the text here communicates fluidity and private movements of the golden-bodied master hidden deep below the expanse of his fully illumined white light moon-mind. In this case, the visual and poetic idioms simultaneously serve to concretize yet dissolve the image of Dōgen as both an individual man and an abstract symbol of Zen awakening, as the fish is a stock metaphor for Zen enlightenment since it never blinks.

Full Moon Self-Portrait

The second inscribed *chinzō* to be considered is definitively dated to 1249. This reputed self-portrait by Dōgen at age forty-nine is said to capture a moment when he viewed the harvest moon in Echizen on 8.15.1249. Above his self-portrait, Dōgen brushes a Chinese poem that again invokes the stock images of harvest moons and fish swimming back and forth. Dōgen versifies in *jisan* no. 3 in the *Eihei kōroku*,

> Autumn is spirited and refreshing as this mountain ages.
> A donkey observes the sky in the well, white moon floating.
> One [the moon] is not dependent;
> One [*the well*] does not contain
> Letting go, vigorous with plenty of gruel and rice,
> Flapping with vitality, right from head to tail,
> Above and below the heavens, clouds and water are free.[5]

In this enigmatic poem, the old mountain monk Dōgen initially sets up a standard Zen dichotomy between the reflected moon floating in well water (ideas about the path to enlightenment) and the real moon floating in the sky (enlightenment itself). He underscores the split between the moon's false illusion below and its true illumination above by saying that only a donkey (i.e., himself, perhaps)[6] gazes at the reflected moon in the well instead of the real moon itself. Translated from Dōgen's poetic codespeak, this is the same as saying that only an ass would mistake the map for the territory or the menu for the meal. Those are but fingers pointing to the moon.

Then Dōgen toggles between ontological and epistemological standpoints when he asserts that "one does not depend" and "one does not contain". This means that the real moon above does not depend on the well below for its existence or appearance (i.e., realization does not depend upon practice; original buddha nature always already just *is* from an ontological standpoint). At the same time, however, from an epistemological standpoint, one must paradoxically practice zazen in order to realize this fact, even though the well of practice alone does not contain the real full moon of satori realization. For Dōgen, therefore, practice-realization, samsara, and nirvana, or more poetically, well-floating reflections as well as sky-floating moons, freely ap-

pear suspended in the infinitely open water-sky of emptiness.

Thus, like a well-fed fish free to swim in the waters of contemplation, Dōgen frolics in the open expanse of this non-dual space while clouds above and water below float freely by him. He locates himself squarely in the samsaric realm as a fish swimming in water, but he nevertheless finds freedom and joy in his environment. He delights in the swirling moon-images floating in the water all around him and relishes the interfusion of moon (nirvana) and water (samsara) thoroughly. In this perfect realization of non-duality, "from head to tail, above and below the heavens, clouds and water are free".

The fact that "clouds and water" can also be read literally as *unsui* (雲水) or novice monk, expresses the typically Zen paradox that extols the recovered beginner's mind of a true master. It simultaneously constitutes a last-line self-deprecating jab at one who nevertheless has masterfully expressed his grasp of non-dualism. The poem therefore follows Dōgen's threefold trajectory that progresses from an unenlightened donkey fixated on appearances, to a radical realization of emptiness that abrogates dualisms, to a third and final enlightened return that humbles one's sense of self-importance. In this case therefore, the text both undergirds and undercuts the treachery of the image, which both is and is not emblematic of his enlightenment experience.

Finally and theoretically speaking, the text-image tensions created in this case would ideally trigger the realization of non-dualism in the open space between the actual reader-spectator and the *chinzō* itself. Knowing that the majority of people viewing his portrait and reading his verse would be unenlightened novices in the monastery, Dōgen strategically delivers his poetic punchline about *unsui* floating freely to inspire them. The invocation of their own inferior rank at the climax of his verse would automatically wake them up, attract their attention, perhaps generate a fleeting thought of dissent or resentment that they were *not free* in the monastic regimen, but then (again, ideally) dissolve such feelings in the paradox of freedom within discipline, and realization within practice.

Eiheiji Seated Chinzō

The final Dōgen *chinzō* to be considered is housed at Eiheiji. It demonstrates the difference between

actualizing enlightenment instead of envisioning it, and of realizing practice / practicing realization instead of just showing it as an image. Scholars debate whether the portrait itself may have been completed posthumously, but Dōgen's Chinese verse definitely appears as *jisan* no. 10 in the *Eihei kōroku*. In this accompanying poem, Dōgen deconstructs the validity of his own likeness when he self-deprecatingly versifies,

> Recognizing this [portrait of me] as true, how can this be reality?
> Upholding this portrait, how can we wait for the reality?
> If you can see it like this, what is this body hanging in emptiness?
> Fences and walls are not the complete mind.[7]

In this verse, Dōgen takes up the old conundrum of reality and representation in the form of three conditional questions. First, he rhetorically asks which is more real, himself or a picture of himself. This automatically calls into question the ontological status of both the painting and the sitter himself. Second, he rhetorically asks whether displaying his portrait now can somehow lead others to realization later on. This more functional, temporal, and epistemological query automatically destabilizes the then-current assumption that venerating the master's painted 'double' could help advance one's practice.[8] Third, he rhetorically asks if the enlightened eye viewing the portrait in a correct, nondualistic and emptied-out way can really discern the nondualism of form and emptiness. That is, by asking if one can perceive this image of Dōgen in the enlightened sense of 'seeing' a Buddha eye-to-eye, then "this body hanging in emptiness" itself is called into question. "Body in emptiness" can refer to the painted figure suspended on the wall, to the spectator's body floating before it, to the living Dōgen hanging in emptiness like the famous bell image in one of Nyojō's own poems, or to form and emptiness more generally. Combined with doubting the value of viewing his double in the previous line, the entire matter of form and emptiness itself remains uncertain, which after all, is Dōgen's main objective. The final line of Dōgen's verse does nothing to resolve matters either. His cryptic allusion to fences and walls literally leaves the reader-viewer hanging as well. Here he refers to the great Nanyan Huizhong (J. Nanyō Etchū) response about the mind of ancient

buddhas beings "fences, walls, tiles and pebbles".[9] Dōgen calls his realization only partially complete but does not say what complete realization would be. In the end, the verse is designed to destabilize his students and remind them not to mistake the painting for the real thing or somehow substitute the representation for the experience. When it comes to representing himself, therefore, Dōgen is happy to let imagery stand, as long as he can use text to undercut its treachery.

Conclusion

This study of Dōgen's *chinzō jisans* facilitates a deeper appreciation for the role that image and text play together in Dōgen's larger project of expressing and eliciting enlightenment in his followers. For Dōgen it seems, the deconstructive value of the word can qualify and relativize the treachery of the image in powerful and important ways. The stunning power of the pivot word or phrase, the double entendre of *unsui* novice monks and clouds floating free, or the blithe references to Nyojō's bell – and/or Dōgen's portrait and/or our own bodies hanging in emptiness before the hanging scroll – all serve as wake-up calls that remind us that representation is not reality. The power of poetry to wake us up to seeing such images with the True Dharma Eye is a powerful tool indeed.

Notes

[1] Some of this material was originally published in *Icons and Iconoclasm in Japanese Buddhism: Kūkai and Dōgen on the Art of Enlightenment* by Pamela D. Winfield and has been reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press. https://global.oup.com/academic/product/icons-and-iconoclasm-in-japanese-buddhism-9780199945559?cc=gb&lang=en&. For permission to reuse this material, please visit http://global.oup.com/academic/rights.

[2] T.G. Foulk, RH. Sharf, "On the Ritual Use of Ch'an Portraiture in Medieval China", *Cahiers d'Extreme-Asie* 1 (1993/94): 204. 1 3.

[3] T.D. Leighton, S. Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record: A Translation of the Eihei Kōroku* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2010), p. 41.

[4] S. Heine, *Did Dōgen Go to China? What He Wrote and When He Wrote It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 123; DZZ 2: 188. Also translated in T.D. Leighton, S. Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, cit., p. 608; and K. Tanahashi, *Enlightenment Unfolds: The Essential Teachings of Zen Master Dōgen* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Press, 2000), p. 29.

[5] T.D. Leighton, S. Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, cit., p. 602 (italics mine); *Dōgen zenshi zenshū* (*DZZ*), ed. Ōkubo Dōshū (1970), II, p. 187.

[6] Steven Heine's *Zen Poetry of Dōgen* (pp. 130-131) and Genryū Kagamishima's 1988 edition of the *DZZ* omit the donkey reference, but K. Tanahashi, *Enlightenment Unfolds*, cit., p. 260 also includes it. In *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, p. 602, n. 15, Leighton and Okumura explain that the character for donkey may have been added after Dōgen, and that Manzan's revision of the verse in his edition of the *Eihei kōroku* invokes Caoshan's exchange about donkeys and wells observing each other.

[7] T.D. Leighton, S. Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, cit., p. 605; *DZZ*, II, p. 188. Heine translates this verse alternately:

If you take this portrait of me to be real,
Then what am I, really?
But why hang it there,
If not to anticipate people getting to know me?
Looking at this portrait,
Can you say that what is hanging there [on the wall]
Is really me?
In that case your mind will never be
Fully united with the wall (as in Bodhidharma's wall-gazing meditation cave)

S. Heine, *Zen Poetry of Dōgen*, p. 131 (brackets mine).

[8] T.G. Foulk, RH. Sharf, "On the Ritual Use of Ch'an Portraiture", cit.

[9] T.D. Leighton, S. Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, cit., p. 605, n. 30.

SESSION 5

De/Sign and Writing

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Writing as a Visual Art: The Maya Script

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The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove: The Canonization of a Pictorial Theme in Brick Reliefs During the Southern Dynasties

Béla Zsolt Szakács
Written on the Wall: Script and Decoration in Medieval Central Europe

Tutta Palin
Modern Disegno*: The Embodied Splendour of Lines*

Arthur Valle
Brazilian Pontos Riscados*: Spiritual Invocation, Nomination, Geometric Thought*

Introductions to Session 5
De/Sign and Writing: Toward an Aesthetic of the Asemic

"As a way can be told, it is not the universal and perpetual Way;
As a name can be termed, it is not the eternal Name".
道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名。

Laozi, *Dàodé Jīng*

The collected essays from session V of CIHA 2019, under the theme *De/Sign and Writing*, show that the mutual evocations between design or sign and writing tend to break down a set of false dichotomies imposed upon them, namely spatial vs. linear, visual vs. semantic, pictorial vs. conceptual, affective vs. communicative, and so on.[1] Those dichotomies have deflated understandings of design, sign, and writing as they tend to delimit their operative parameters by seeing design – understood as related to the Italian word *disegno* ('drawing') – as an inventive pictorial arrangement and manifestation, seeing sign (natural or made) as a vehicle of signification, and writing as a barrier of meaning. What follows shall unsettle these boundaries by presenting both ancient and modern practices of design or sign-making and writing in various cultural contexts. The main task of this effort is to confront our customary approaches to grasping worlds by words. In doing so, we question the coherence and transparency constructed for writing, which has been most often understood to be linguistically bound. From drawings, diagrams, cursive calligraphy, pseudoscripts, magical graphs, cryptic ciphers, nonsensical glyphs, graffiti, to emoticons, meaningfulness simultaneously persists and denies itself. Within them and through them, figuration can coalesce with abstraction; delineation can coincide with configuration; and obscuration can invoke authoritative or malevolent voices. Considering the sheer variety of graphic or even plastic recording and distinction-making methods, either old or new, we will realize that the attempt to grasping things on *our* terms could, more often than not,

prove to be a disenchanted projection. Thus, the present collection of essays inquires into the dynamic relationships between de/sign and writing by interrogating not only their differences but also how they resemble or evoke one another.

Abstraction and the Asemic: Modernism and Orientalism

In his 1908 book *Abstraction and Empathy*, Wilhelm Worringer outlines that the art of abstraction is not due to a cultural inadequacy in achieving mimesis but can be ascribed to an instinctual creative will; to relinquish a lifelike figuration in inorganic crystalline is to approach the unworldly spiritual domain, a recourse toward which modernist abstract art was oriented. The desire for empathy, on the other hand, can be satisfied in realist art that resembles the beauty of organic life.[2] While Worringer considers the abstract lines as a necessity and lifelike forms as arbitrary occurrences, he admits that this pure abstraction could never exist once there is a factual underlining of it. Reflecting on Alois Riegl's idea of *Kunstwollen*, Worringer believes that the history of art is not a history of ability (materials, technics, uses) but a history of feeling or volition, an urge or impulse to deliver oneself into an object (where empathy operates), or to draw the law of forms (hence, abstraction). Worringer's discourse anticipated the Surrealist automatic writing and drawing which tended to twist these seemingly antithetical aesthetic operations and turned them into something different. As a matter of fact, Surrealists experimented with involuntary drawing without a 'design' and instinctive writing without 'meaning'. At the same time, automatic drawing and writing were meant to reveal the practitioner's psychic and spiritual state; these representational forms do not stand for what they represented but rather for themselves. This so-called 'asemic' writing (or non-word writing) turns writing into signs that

contain the signified. It is emptied of the *seme* and its signification is opaque. The asemic aesthetics has experienced the neurosis of modernism, the irony of postmodernism, and the metaxy (or in-betweenness) of the 21st century metamodern media sphere and digital world.[3]

In the early 20th century, the modernist practice of asemic writing directly or indirectly drew inspiration from Chinese script as it appealed to the 'eye' of Westerners as 'ideogram'. The Orientalist sinologist Ernst Fenollosa (1853-1908), in his book *Chinese Character as a Medium of Poetry*, described Chinese characters as "visible hieroglyphics" that are "based upon a vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature".[4] For Fenollosa, the Chinese script bears poetry in the visual form and "metaphor on its face".[5] The poet Ezra Pound (1885-1972), who was Fenollosa's student, drew upon the tradition of Chinese textual commentaries; he uses parataxis to manifest the relationality of signs or ideograms as a form of poetry.[6] Having studied Chinese ideograms, in 1929 Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948) formulated the idea of 'cinematographic principle' in relation to ideographs in which he explored the linguistic formulae of montage. Around the same time, in 1927, Henri Michaux (1899-1994) made his famous graphemic work *Alphabet* in which he experimented with semi-involuntary writing of alphabet in illegible forms, which he called 'ideogram compositions' or 'cinematic drawings' (fig. 1).[7] Like in many of his later works, this one presents a visual 'language' that conflates signs into non-word writing, enmeshing and enlivening the referents within the physical marks on the substrates. Subsequently, in 1930-31, Michaux traveled to China and he found immediate affinity between his earlier practice to Chinese painting and writing: "Markings launched into the air, fluttering as if caught by the motion of a sudden inspiration".[8] As Richard Siburth comments, Michaux saw that Chinese art was both tangible and abstract; like anything else he saw there, it was an art of signification, not simulation.[9] In his *Ideogram in China*, Michaux describes the writing process, saying that "the brush freed the way, and paper made the going easier"; the original meanings, however, come back to life, "full of lives and objects".[10] In short, the world dances within words, as ideograms showcase the élan of motion. Roland Barthes (1915-1980), who favored Michaux's works, in his *Empire of Signs* reflects on Japanese haiku by referring to the Zen Buddhist idea of immediacy. Seeing the limitation of language, Barthes promotes an 'a-language' liberation, like in the concise form of haiku, which in his view abolishes the semantic operation of the symbol and allows meaning to dwell within "the spheres of the symbol".[11] From Fenollosa, Pound,
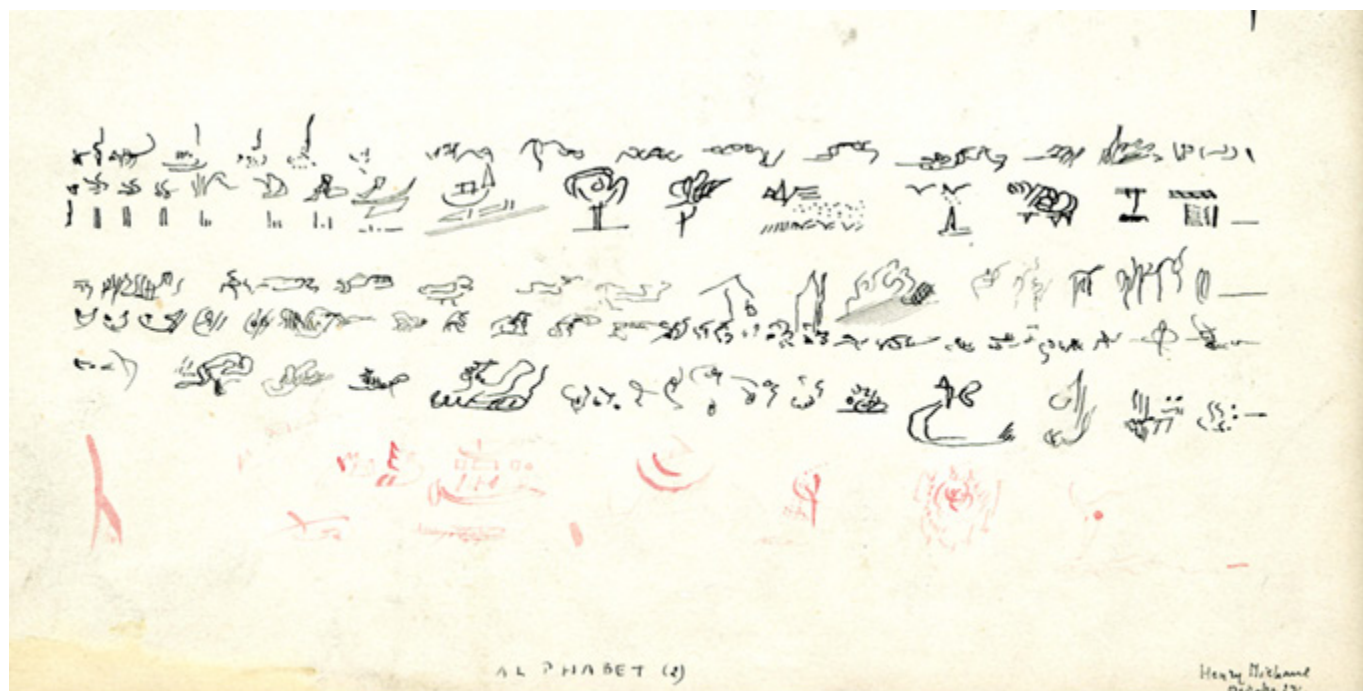

Fig. 1. Henri Michaux, *Alphabet* (excerpt), 1927, dédicacé à Jean Paulhan, verso. Paris, Coll. Particulière. (Image in the public domain, modified by the Author).

and Michaux to Barthes, it is the visual traits of the ideogram or symbol that measure, contain, and display language in the form of writing or signs.

The Song dynasty artist Mi Fu's (1051-1107) *Coral Note* (*Shanhu Tie* 珊瑚帖) may serve as an example to show how writing and sign are juxtaposed and collaged (fig. 2). His masterful calligraphy recorded an inventory of collections he had received, which included a coral branch. When writing down the characters of the coral, he immediately drew such branch. His continued acts of writing and drawing, by using the same brush and ink, resulted in the surface of the paper becoming a lively space where depth is indicated by the gradation of ink tones on the stand of the coral; the various characters congregate around it, with varying thinness and thickness of the strokes. The two characters of coral (*shanhu* 珊瑚) stand out in thick strokes corresponding to the dark and crooked coral – which in turn comes into form through calligraphic strokes. Both the characters and the drawing of the coral give visual gravity. The form of the coral, with its natural branching and unruly shape, makes the collected things in the inventory tangible; at the same time, it materializes the traits of the calligraphy, which is fluid or knotted. The coalesced writing and drawing offers potentialities of both translucency and opaqueness to the reader-viewer.

Throughout the 20th century, asemic art acted within the realm of transcultural imagination. Asemic art has tended to simultaneously deconstruct and re-construct 'otherness'; a process that both acknowledges and dejects the wholesale packaging of languages as cultural façades or even nationalistic fortes. In 2009, the exhibition *The Third Mind* held in the Guggenheim Museum in New York showed a history of American artists' simulation of Asian texts in their artworks from the 1860s to the 1980s. As this exhibition demonstrates, American avant-garde artists defined their modernity of art by looking 'East', and they created new forms and meanings in their asemic works by actions of misreading, appropriation, repudiation, and projection – all done through their seemingly innocent embodiments in writing Asian texts without grasping their intrinsic meanings.[12] The simulated Asian texts in their works served as codes of transcendental escapes from those artists' own selves that were conditioned by the social and cultural environments they aimed to subvert or critique.

Text-Image Simulation and Simulacra

Playing with Chinese textual tradition and parodying a *view* of global multilingualism, since the late 1980s the Chinese artist Xu Bing started to create *Book from the Sky* (*Tianshu* 天書), in which he reengineered Chinese woodblock printing technology, the moveable typeface that was invented in the Song Dynasty (960-1279), to produce 4,000 illegible glyphs evoking a superficial likeness to Chinese characters (fig. 3). The media and translation theorist Lydia H. Liu describes them as non-word images that yield simulacra of Chinese characters, which evoke and challenge at once our habits of reading Chinese as a logographic text.[13] Xu Bing states that this work "doesn't have any connection with text, since there is no 'real' text, even though it takes the form of books and the appearance of 'words.' But it does have a connection with writing and printing".[14] Xu Bing withholds the artist's self-expression in his ostensibly mechanical facture of the work that eventually effaces readability and, thereby, personality. The uniformity of those script-like signs is compounded with their illegibility, which leaves the audience struggling in the darkness, in search for the limelight of a 'meaning' that is familiar or plausible to them. Commenting on Xu Bing's *Tianshu*, the art historian Wu Hung calls it 'nonsense writing' and ingeniously sees it echoing an ancient legend: when the mythical figure of Cang Jie invented writing, all the ghosts cried in the night, because they had hence lost their control over divine secrets or feared that words would spread lies. The legend insinuates that words are enemies to the divine and to simple truths. Xu Bing's work likens this 'ghost rebellion' by marring the legibility of

Fig. 2. Mi Fu, *Coral Note* (*Shanhu Tie*), c. 11th century. Ink on paper, 26.6x47.1 cm. Beijing, Palace Museum. (Image in the public domain).

Fig. 3. Xu Bing, *Book from the Sky* (*Tianshu*), 1987-1991. Mixed media installation/hand-printed books and scrolls printed from blocks inscribed with 'false' Chinese characters. Installation view at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China, 2018. Image © Xu Bing Studio.

writing, while also retracing the traditions of Chinese writing.[15]

In his 2001 installation *Monkeys Grasp for the Moon*, Xu Bing used 21 languages to resemble shapes of monkeys from a Chinese allegory (fig. 4). The allegory alludes to the lamentation that some great efforts made by the most cognizant beings can turn out to be in vain: when the monkeys saw the moon in the water, they thought that it had fallen into the pond from the sky; clever monkeys swiftly congregated on a tree and hanged upside down on a branch, one by one, to retrieve the moon from the water; the moon vanished as soon as the monkey in the lowest position on the tree touched the surface of the water. This installation simultaneously *represents* that story and *embodies* its allegorical meaning. Its meaning pertains to the viewer's perplexed encounter with the piece itself – which appeals to the curious eye and invites the body to engage with it but is ultimately ungraspable. Xu Bing made sketches for the individual monkey-words; each design of the monkeys shows a stylized figuration of the word

'monkey' in a specific language, such as the one in Lao, which appears to be a monkey turning its head while its right arm holds the monkey above and its tail hooks the one below; the artist's writing around the shape of the monkey consists of comments on details of the design aimed at having adjustments made in the manufacture of the wooden model (figs. 4a-b). Based on the sketches, twenty-one laminated wood pieces were made to turn the linked monkeys into a hung sculpture to be installed in the impluvium space of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington DC. While words appear as pictographs, the viewer would be instantaneously puzzled by the work as a whole, as the figurations of words turn out to obscure both the figures and the words of the monkeys. The homogeneity of the material used to realize the sculpture adds to obscuring differences among the chosen languages; a multilingual composition eventually flattens out linguistic specificities within it. In the viewer's circuitous way of searching for a meaning, meaning is ironically revealed as: plausible observation, great effort, but in vain.

Fig. 4. Xu Bing, *Monkeys Grasp for the Moon*, 2001. Installation, laminated wooden pieces. Washington, DC, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. Image © Xu Bing Studio.

Fig. 4a. Xu Bing, Sketch for *Monkeys Grasp for the Moon*, 2001. Preparatory sketch of the Lao word for 'monkey' in the shape of a monkey. Image © Xu Bing Studio.

Fig. 4b. List of the shapes of monkeys forming the word 'monkey' in 21 different languages. In the top row (from left to right): Indonesian, Russian, Braille, Italian, Hindi, Afrikaans, Chinese, Korean, Persian, Lao, and Urdu. In the bottom row (from left to right): Thai, Turkish, Japanese, German, Spanish, French, English, Swahili, Hebrew, and Arabic. Images © Xu Bing Studio, compiled by the Author.

Xu Bing explained this idea when reflecting on his huge installation *Ghost Pounding the Wall* in 1990: "I hope to experience the process of expending great effort for a 'meaningless' result".[16] Nonetheless, Xu Bing's plausibly meaningless works invite many people to interpret their meanings.

The Asemic as Transhistorical and Transcultural Aesthetics

While modernists and postmodernists confronted the preset semiotic mechanisms in the writing technology that split words (the signifier) from their referents (the signified), the asemic aesthetics tangles the modern with the ancient and abstraction with physicality. It ultimately poses challenges to our understandings of text and textuality as they have been shaped by the mediums and technologies of prints and pixels which render words logocentric and/or phonetic and anything associated with writing (such as lines and dots) is turned into forms of conceptual abstraction.
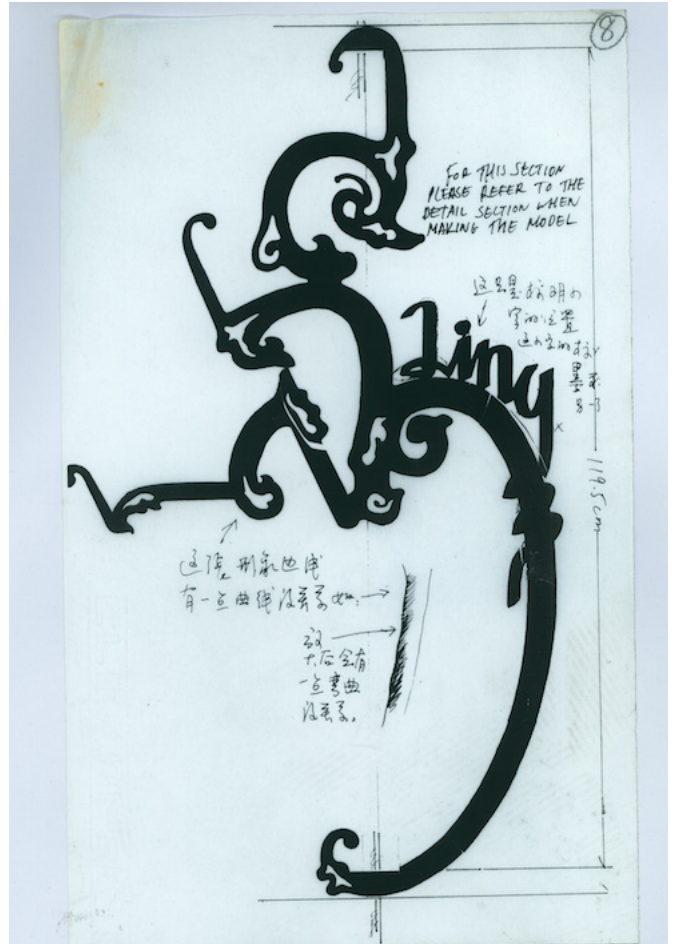
At first, in the earliest developments of markings in human histories, graphic and physical signs provided methods of visual and material recording and signaling. The tortoise shells carved with

symbols found in the late Neolithic site (dated to 6600-6200 BCE) at Jiahu, Henan Province, China, which were considered as the earliest instances of writing-like marks, indicate that the use of signs had preexisted long before the Chinese writing system was developed in the Shang dynasty (1700-1100 BCE) (fig. 5).[17] Apparently associated with ritual practices, those symbols remain ambiguous whether they are words or non-words. Archeologists have pointed out that the symbol for 'eye' (⬭) found there, for instance, is related to the Chinese character 'mu' (目), but the majority of the symbols remain indecipherable, although some are visually evocative. Taking as examples the Jiahu symbols, Palaeolithic cave drawings, as well as cursive writings, psychologists have considered the 'visual-motor memory' as an advantageous construct of human ability.[18] Likewise, in her study of prehistoric Chinese writing, Paola Dematté observes that the origins of writing "lay beyond the linguistic-communicative field, in the visual-recording area", and writing developed upon preexisting sign use systems including "image-making, number recording, and eventually language structure".[19]

Fig. 5. Symbols carved on tortoise shells found in Jiahu, Henan Province, China, dated to 6600-6200 BCE. Zhengzhou, Henan Provincial Museum. (Image in the public domain).

Not only were the origins of symbol-making and writing palpably visual, but they were also irreducible material facts embedded in physical and cosmic worlds.[20] It is plausible that the Jiahu symbols carved on tortoise shells were made for shamanic invocations performed in rituals. More pragmatically, African tally-strings and counting stones and sticks were well suited for calendaring systems and calculations; there, any objects

from the lived world at hand could aid with calculation.[21] In Mayan hieroglyphs, as discussed by Sanja Savkic and Erik Velásquez García in this Session, words came into being with animating forces drawn from worldly and natural phenomena with sensorial appeal; lines, dots, shapes, graphs existed as if they were traces of actions caught in a moment of transformation; and, in turn, the malleable Mayan letters were morphed into architectonic objects and spaces. Design or drawing, too, could be materialized and instigate multiplication and monumentality. As shown in Liang Chen's study of mortuary arts in 5th-century China, the drawing of eminent historical figures was used as a design for the brick reliefs that made up the walls of a tomb, and the molds of the bricks became agents of further circulation of the drawing in different tombs, as the figures in the brick reliefs became spiritual models for the deceased. In her analysis of the role of drawing and script-like notation of dramatic bodily poses and gestural movements in modern Finnish paintings, Tutta Palin compellingly showcases the monumentality and exuberance of lines that bring to life female corporeality and women's emotional catharsis and spiritual liberation at once.

At the same time, in the process of taking natural objects or phenomena as signs or making signs for the physical and spiritual worlds, humans struggle with indeterminacy and unknowability. In the face of global mobility and intensified cultural interchanges, modern and contemporary artists have reflected on some more 'liberal' expressions of sign-making that are of indeterminate, if not destructive, meaning. Drawing upon both ancient markings and modern art, in his recent book *Asemic: The Art of Writing*, Peter Schwenger describes an 'eco-asemic art' which "is not using language, that valuable tool of the colonizing impulse, to translate the natural world into human terms. Rather, it reminds us that natural objects may have a voice of their own".[22] When objects of nature (such as dried branches on a sandy beach) make up cryptic signs, as Schwenger notes, humans "are left incoherent, illiterate" and are compelled to realize that their familiar literacy has tended to "mask the strangeness of natural objects".[23] Schwenger's notion of the 'asemic' responds to a variety of modern and contemporary literature and arts which have purposefully deconstructed the meaningfulness of high literacy and figurative representation. A series of artworks
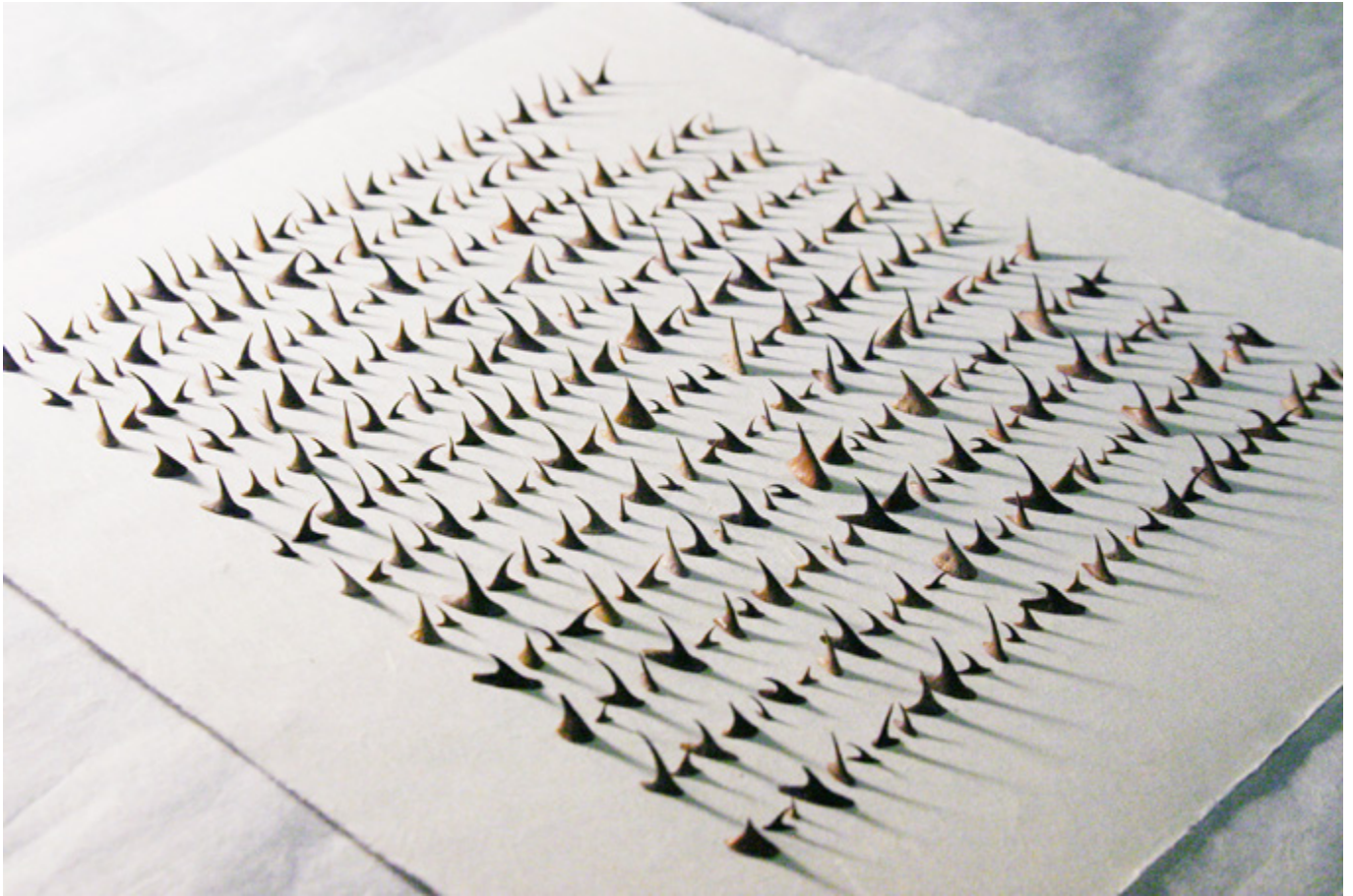
Fig. 6. Cui Fei, *Read by Touch*, detail, 2005-2006. Thorns on rice paper, each page measures 27x23 cm, for a total of 11 pages. Courtesy of the Artist. (Photo by Zheng Lianjie).

made by the New York-based Chinese artist Cui Fei, for instance, have intriguingly manifested the aesthetics of eco-asemic art. In her *Read by Touch*, Cui arranges thorns on rice paper to emulate haptic textual tableaux that, alluringly and alarmingly, prohibit human touch and thus deny readability (fig. 6). The thorns truly speak in their own terms against the human will to *grasp* them.

The asemic trends have prevailed in the global art arena as a response to the fluxes of media sources and knowledge dissemination. The American artist Rosaire Appel challenges the viewers' access to 'making sense' with a deliberate disruption of the practice of reading. In her work *Branching / with luggage*, she relates 'luggage' to 'baggage' which she sees as an analogy to 'language'. The booklet consists of pages that contain images of shadowy tree branches scattered over printed English texts (of political, scientific, and domestic contents). The unruly tree branches (as natural linear forms) crawl over the texts; a natural force superimposes language/luggage which is organized, circulated, unpacked,

and put away; the branching trees visibly intrude the 'baggage' of knowledge (fig. 7). In the same vein, the writer and artist Michael Jacobson promotes asemic writing as a form of art that intriguingly displays indeterminacy, ambiguity, or an utter loss of semantic meaning. As Jacobson defines it: "Asemic writing is a shadow, impression, and abstraction of conventional writing. It uses the constraints of writerly gestures and the full developments of abstract art to divulge its main purpose: total freedom beyond literary expression".[24] Asemic writing, as wordless writing, simulates the form of writing without the content of language; the word is simultaneously referred and renounced to. It elicits the viewers' act of looking rather than reading, or looking as a way of reading. Its modes of visualization more generally simulate art at work – namely the tension and coalition between facture and force, which push and pull the viewer in and out of varying distances as they attempt to make up, or give up, a certain meaning or figuration. As the asemic aesthetics has reemerged as a looking glass of
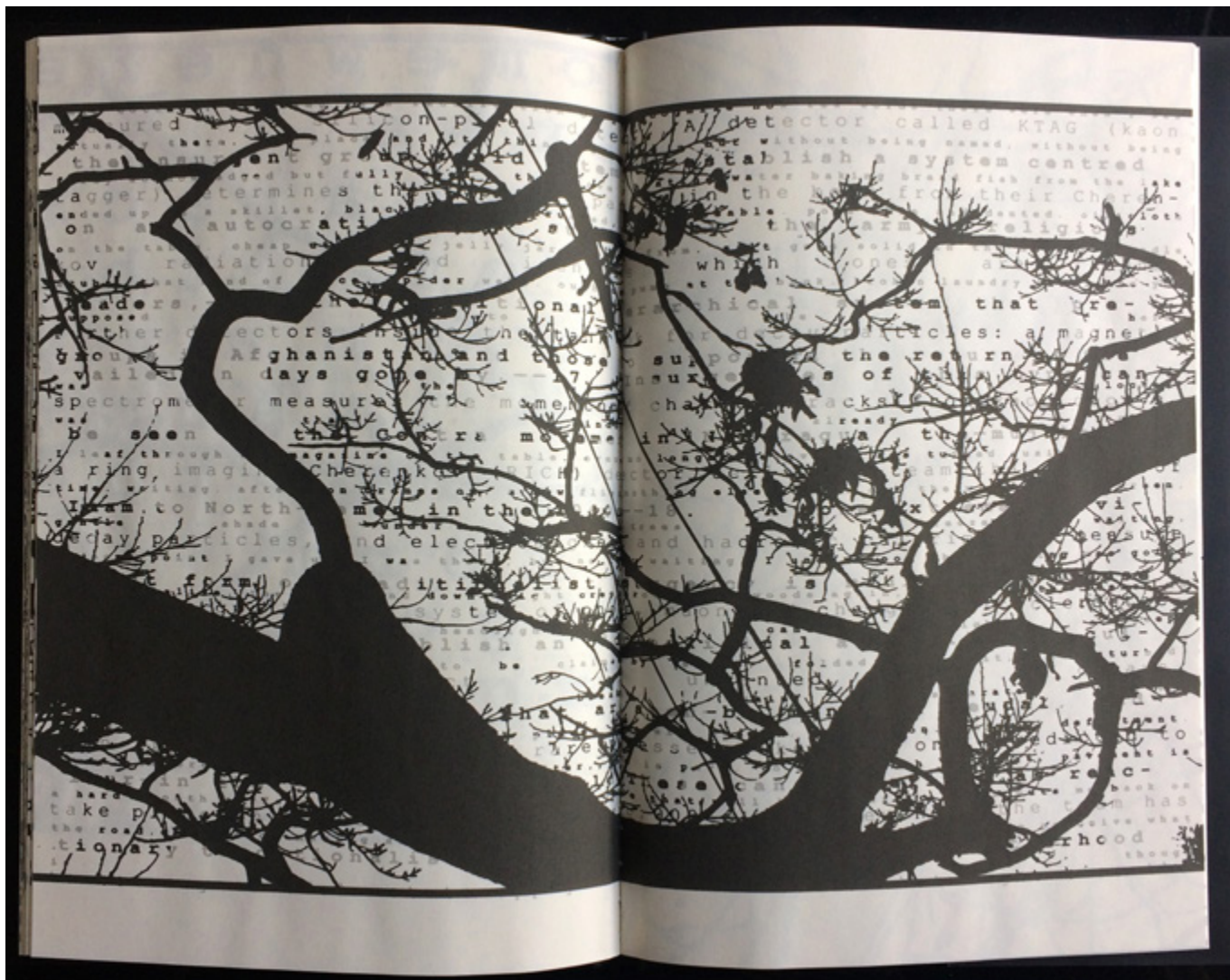
Fig. 7. Rosaire Appel, *Branching / with luggage* (excerpt), 2018. Booklet, 23x15.5 cm. Courtesy of the Artist.

what Jacobson calls 'The New Post-Literate' during the course of global fluidity and digital age, transcultural and transhistorical perspectives on the relationship between de/sign and writing urgently call scholars' attention. What does the claim 'seeing as understanding' mean, after all?

Comprehension does not necessarily rely on legibility. Efficacy and affect matter, too. That was the case in the oldest symbols and scripts and their variants, as well as in the newest trends of asemic writing and cryptic coding. In his study of pseudo scripts across various traditions, the anthropologist Stephen Houston observes that while asemicity could exude malevolent forces, cast prestige, or appeal to the illiterate, they always generate secondary meanings, for "the lack of semantic freight being itself a statement about the properties of script".[25] In modern and contemporary art, while taking a transcultural orientation, asemic writing appears to be an artistic manifestation of, and response to, text-rich traditions. Its simulation of the gesture of writing that results in illegible script-like marks relinquishes the burden of semantic meanings, on the one hand, and generates multivalence in the viewers' 'reading' of the aggregation of marks, on the other. In these double-edged processes of undoing and assembling, the gestural marks uncannily encourage viewers to 'decipher' them in contingent terms, either within the variability of randomness or through a plausible visual logic of combination and permutation. As Liu points out (in the case of Xu Bing), the viewer is caught up with "the ghostly assumption of the familiar by the foreign" and sees such uncanny place as "where non-words pass as words and where the perils of nonsense invade sense".[26] In these processes, the asemic becomes pansemic.[27]

Moreover, in a given context of reception, meaningfulness could persist through a higher order of efficacy, as Savkic and Velásquez García state that Mayan pseudoglyphs shone in "communicating a message of power and prestige beyond the point of legibility".[28] Such communicative efficacy reaffirms the role of spectators in completing or expanding the work through their memories or moments of realization. Also, in this Session, Béla Zsolt Szakács explains the symbolic message conveyed through pseudo-Kufic calligraphic ornaments in Christian churches in medieval Central Europe; some of them emulate textiles. He argues that although the inscriptions were illegible to the illiterate local people, their efficacy in conveying power and dominance animate the space of worshipping. Alternatively, in his essay dealing with the context of histories of slavery and racial struggles in Brazil, Arthur Valle argues that Afro-Brazilian people of the African diaspora use *ponto riscado* as magical diagrams that contained graphic symbols from the Congo writing systems in order to communicate in their own communities.

The Asemic at Stake

Finally, we must underscore that reevaluating an aesthetic of the asemic does not necessarily endorse a nihilistic deconstruction of languages and their meanings but rather recall, upon the forms, gestures, and matters of writing or sign-making, the things that have been reduced, flattened out, neglected, or excluded for the sake of a seeming efficiency of communication and knowledge dissemination. The asemic art emulates and parodies the pretense, control, and alienation of languages by evoking the appearances of words while deforming and denouncing them. Thus, it circumvents elitist shortcuts to grasp meanings; to 'grasp' is interpreted in the sense of both comprehending and commanding. At the same time, asemic art reminds us of "the limitations of human knowledge" as well as the "existence beyond knowledge" and identity, to borrow the words of Gu Wenda (another Chinese artist who uses pseudo-languages in art).[29] Asemic art also reveals the entangled worldly and physical embeddedness and embodiment of our intellectual construct and visionary maneuver.

Altogether, considering the aesthetic of the asemic as a point of departure, this Session aims to also critically reflect on some perennial and cutting-edge art-historical issues, including the word-image and text-body relationships, architexual space, as well as the interconnection between textuality and textility – in relation to textile, the process of delineation, and figuration. Furthermore, the theme 'de/sign and writing' is closely connected to translation theory and practice, and not only to translation between languages, but also between words and images and between images and cultural spaces. The following essays shall demonstrate that our attempts to make sense of the mythical, the unknowable, the nonsensical, or the emotional spheres are, nevertheless, revealing.

Lihong Liu

Notes

[1] Besides the essays in this volume resulting from the conference, Jens Baumgarten presented the meanings and functions of signs and letters in paintings in the Philippines in the context of Iberoamerican cultural encounter; Eugenia Bogdanova-Kummer presented modern Japanese calligrapher Nantenbo Toju's expression of postwar sentiments in his reinvention of tradition which led to a misreading of Japanese calligraphy in American expressionism; Yu-Chi Lai presented the Qianlong emperor's adaptation of European drawing in traditional Chinese plain-drawing style during Sino-European encounter in the 18th century, Kim Richter and Rebecca Dufendach presented figural transformations in the Florentine Codex; and Virve Sarapik presented intermediate forms between art and literature in Estonian conceptual art; their contributions to the conference session were integral to the intellectual debates here.

[2] W. Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, tr. M. Bullock (New York: International Universities Press, 1953), reprinted, esp. pp. 3-25.

[3] For a critique of 'metamodernism', see M.P. Eve, "Thomas Pynchon, David Foster Wallace and the Problems of 'metamodernism': Post-millennial Post-postmodernism?", *C21 Literature: Journal of 21st-Century Writings* 1, no. 1 (2012). http://www.gylphi.co.uk/c21.

[4] E. Fenollosa, *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, Ezra Pound ed. (San Francisco: City Lights, n.d.), pp. 8-9.

[5] *Ibid*., p. 25.

[6] L. Géfin, *Ideogram: History of a Poetic Method* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982). For the relation between Pound's poetry and Chinese writing tradition, see, for example, Z. Qian, *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

[7] H. Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: University of California, 1971), p. 162. For an extensive study of the ideogram idea in Fenollosa, Pound, and Michaux, see R. Siburth, "Signs in Action: Michaux/Pound", in H. Michaux, *Ideograms in China*, tr. G. Sobin (Cambridge, MA: New Directions, 2002), pp. 39-58.

[8] From Michaux's travelogue *A Barbarian in Asia*, cited in R. Siburth, *Signs in Action: Michaux/Pound*, cit., p. 49.

[9] *Ivi*.

[10] H. Michaux, *Ideograms in China*, tr. G. Sobin (Cambridge, MA: New Directions, 2002), unpaginated.

[11] R. Barthes, *Empire of Signs* (1975) (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), reprinted, p. 75.

[12] A. Munroe, et al., *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860-1989* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2009).

[13] L.H. Liu, "The Non-Book, Or the Play of the Sign," in K. Spears, ed., *Tianshu: Passages in the Making of a Book* (London: Bernard Quaritch Ltd., 2009), pp. 65-79.

[14] S. Leung, et al., "Pseudo-Languages: A Conversation with Wenda Gu, Xu Bing, and Jonathan Hay", *Art Journal* 58, no. 3 (Autumn, 1999): p. 88.

[15] W. Hung, A "'Ghost Rebellion': Notes on Xu Bing's 'Nonsense Writing' and Other Works", *Public Culture* 6 (1994): pp. 414-415.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 417.

[17] X. Li, G. Harbottle, et al., "The Earliest Writing? Sign Use in the Seventh Millennium BC at Jiahu, Henan Province, China", *Antiquity* 77, no. 295 (2003): pp. 31-44.

[18] A.H. Waterman, J. Havelka, et al., "The Ontogeny of Visual-Motor Memory and Its Importance in Handwriting and Reading: A Developing Construct", *Proceedings: Biological Sciences* 282, no. 1798 (2015): pp. 1-6.

[19] P. Dematté, "The Role of Writing in the Process of State Formation in Late Neolithic China", *East and West* 49, no. 1/4 (1999): p. 244.

[20] Li Feng asserts that the graphic symbols dating to the Neolithic period in China consist of images linked to 'real-world phenomena' as well as ones of linear abstraction. See F. Li, "The Development of Literacy in Early China: With the Nature and Uses of Bronze Inscriptions in Context, and More", in A. Kolb, ed., *Literacy in Ancient Everyday Life* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), p. 17.

[21] S. Lagercrantz, "African Tally-Strings", *Anthropos* 63/64, no. 1/2 (1968/1969): pp. 115-128; "Tallying by Means of Lines, Stones, and Sticks", *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde* 16 (1970): pp. 52-62.

[22] P. Schwenger, *Asemic: The Art of Writing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), p. 81.

[23] *Ivi*.

[24] M. Jacobson, "On Asemic Writing", *Asymptote Journal*. https://www.asymptotejournal.com/visual/michael-jacobson-on-asemic-writing/. (Accessed January 24, 2021).

[25] S. Houston, "Writing that Isn't: Pseudo-Scripts in Comparative View", *L'Homme* 227/228 (2018): pp. 42-43.

[26] L.H. Liu, "The Non-Book, Or the Play of the Sign", cit., p. 68.

[27] Stephen Houston makes the same argument when examining Mayan pseudoglyphs.

[28] S. Savkic Sebek and E. Velásquez García, "Writing as a Visual Art: The Maya Script", in the present volume, p. 239.

[29] S. Leung, et al., "Pseudo-Languages: A Conversation with Wenda Gu, Xu Bing, and Jonathan Hay", cit., p. 90.

Lines, Blots and Graphemes: From Drawing to Invisible Forms

"It is not an image, it is the thing offered, it is the offering of the thing, the coming and going of its presence…"

Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, 1993, p. 354

Straight, broken, sinuous, or dispersed in pigments, drawing signs are a repository of marks which generate artworks and aesthetic experiences, texts, and their simulacra, but also architectural spaces and liturgies. Evidence from diverse cultural domains shed light on the fracture and linkage between drawing and pictorial signs and writing. It is worth mentioning, for example, the calligraphic brushwork used in Chinese paintings, intimately correlated to the line of written characters; the Italian *disegno*, where composite drawing techniques create layers mixing graphic styles and calligraphic views; the Islamic world, that gave birth to calligraphic trajectories connecting Europe to East Asia and the Indian sub-continent. These are all forms that were structured by the exchanging, meeting, or even morphing of pictures and objects, with the potential to show that the experience of the sign is inseparable from the sign itself.

Drawing practices are an important means of studying diverse forms and territories of artistic creation shared by many traditions around the globe: figurative drawing percolating into writing with the possibility of becoming grammar, calligraphy turned into design and producing an inheritance of objects and architectures. Indeed, spectators may read drawings and look at texts, as they always have. In dissimilar artistic cultures, we may see comparable procedures and views, divided, of course, by cultural practices. Their diversity is important to challenge art-historical hierarchies, and even to rethink our own historiographical paths towards the graphic sign.

Drawing is a practice, but also the product of that practice, and the substance giving form to it, whether it be ink, graphite and whatever the hands use. The *stilus*, the metal stick employed as a tool for writing in the Mediterranean basin in classic times, stands as the root of the term 'style', an abstract concept to mark both the individual choice about what expression to employ, and its origin as 'exemplary' or 'variant of', be it the manner of a workshop, a *scriptorium*, a school, or an entire cultural tradition. Without considering the division between drawing and painting, one must look at the tools. The materiality of ink, graphite, and pigments, as well as that of the brush, the pen, and the pencil, leaves an indelible mark for the viewer. Each single stroke evokes the visual memory of both the movement of the hand and the drawing tool, as if the subject of the picture spoke of its own material creation through its form. For example, the interchangeability between the brush and writing tools often leads to the impossibility of distinguishing the one from the other, thus uniting the history of drawing and writing.

Among many pictures of such an encounter expressing disdain towards the general categorizations of art history, there is for example a drawing like the image of a dragon, created by Shah Quli (fig. 1), an artist born in Tabriz, Iran, who emigrated to Istanbul to serve Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566) during the mid-16th century. Here the 'saz' style displays an array of diverse signs. The dragon's spine is a thick black line which powerfully moves the creature's body and at the same time sculpts the foliage below, characterized by small, serrated abstract leaves: it is not a calligraphic sign, but it may become one. The dragon and the foliage take shape by means of a drawing displaying powerful Chinese borrowings, together with a shading made with delicate pigments. It is a piece of obscure writing, a flowering pattern, an image flowing before the viewer's eyes, a pattern for endless designs

ready to be transposed to many different media. The manner of such a picture is also called *Hatâyî* meaning 'from Cathay', and this means that the ink and colors employed by imperial artists in the *nakkaşhane* had the potential to sprout in different geographical and cultural directions, and to endow the practice of drawing with a rich selection of mental images.

Drawing as writing and writing as visible flows of pictorial thoughts can create objects and define spaces. The possible working models for the creation of real or imaginary building blocks are numerous. These will show the meaningful connections between drawing and epigraphy in Renaissance Europe, between calligraphy and architectural spaces in Nasrid Granada or in Sultanate India. Another block will be visible in the pages of 16th-century Italian writing repertoires. There, all the possible signs that a hand can trace will turn into all the possible letters that an alphabet can contain, and then into as many images of objects' names that a vocabulary can list. In traditions around the planet, it is remarkable how within different streams of artistic literature, the visible and invisible transitions from letters and

characters to figures, spaces and surfaces are discussed and pondered. A sketch waiting for its future life has the magical qualities of evoking nature; an exegetical diagram may become an element stimulating the eye in search of truths beyond words.

How to go back to the moment when drawing and writing take form, how to follow a work from its sketch to the final image? Once these questions are answered, one will be ready to consider whatever is 'around' a work, e.g., the frame, the space for viewing, the eye. Along this tripartite line, the graphemes, blots, or lines of a drawing may become a meaningful image, a decorative element, or even a pattern which may be followed to reach a visual destination. This is the case of drawings like the *Scupstoel* (or *schopstoel*, men shovelling chairs, fig. 2), a study for a narrative capital carved in 15th century for the Maison de l'Estrapade in Bruxelles, then demolished for the construction of the Hôtel de Ville. The original capital, in poor conditions, may be found at the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles, and its 19th-century copy is visible today on the arcade of the Hôtel. This narrative represents a pun as the word *scup-*

Fig. 1. Shah Quli (active in the mid-16th century), *Saz-style Drawing of a Dragon*, c. 1540-1550. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, picture H. 17.3 cm. The inscription in nast'aliq style reads: "the work of Shah Quli as an exercise". New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Cora Timken Burnett, 1956.

stoel (literally 'showel chair') also indicated the torture of the 'banishing chair' (or the *estrapade*) employed before banishing an offender from the city. An inscription on the reverse indicates that the drawing is a *patroen*, a model that stands between the first sketch and the picture that will be used by sculptors. Such an inbetweenness, characterizing the drawing as a mutable vehicle giving shape to an architectural form, is amplified by its curved design and the three-dimensionality of the moving figures. It seems as if when the shoveling ends, the sculpture will appear, and its image disappear.

The fact that, in a way or another, drawings may disappear in front of our view is well explained by the Arabic word *khatt* (خط), 'calligraphy', which according to pre-Islamic poets refers to the notion of the trace left in the sand after a campsite has been abandoned.[1] It is a powerful image underscoring the identity of the drawing sign as a creative element, as something always *in nuce* but, at the same time, always autonomous and

ready to become matter, and thus to disappear. In a drawing, what is 'unfinished' also expresses such a tension, the creative spark, and the power of presence through visible absences. A drawing like the one by Fra Bartolomeo, portraying a road leading to a mountain village (fig. 3), is considered as belonging to the landscape painting genre. Is this landscape an image showing the 'weight' of a stretch of road climbing up to the village, its travelers and horses, their tension in the moments before the arrival or departure? The atmosphere of the place fills the blank spaces of the sheet of paper indicating what is not depicted in the drawing: the experience of the road, the sight of a town, the immersive experience of nature, the moments lived by a traveler.

Drawings from many diverse cultural traditions are evidence that stylistic hierarchies are not always the right compass to follow, and that all the experiences composing spectatorships are a vital part of our analysis. From such a perspective, the study of drawings is today more impor-

Fig. 2. Circle of Rogier van der Weyden, possibly Vranke van der Stockt (c. 1420-1495), *Men Shovelling Chairs* (scupstoel), 1444-1450. Pen and brown ink over traces of black chalk, 30x42.6 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.

Fig. 3. Fra Bartolomeo (Baccio della Porta, 1473-1517), *Approach to a Mountain Village with Horsemen on the Road*, c. 1501. Pen and brown ink, traces of black chalk, 29.8x20.6 cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.

happens through the lenses of presupposed dialogues supported only by evidence of commercial exchanges and objects in motion. This narrow simplification reiterates old schemes for defining artistic cultures by means of a universal determination of artistic identities, and the term 'hybrid' has indeed mistakenly become a global container for admiring what is seen as 'spurious' form. Such a construction has also created the false opposition between transcultural arts and arts that are thus mono-cultural, while all artistic cultures have been built by forms coming, in varying degrees, from transcultural (and thus often trans-medial) trajectories but based on very solid local roots. The dialogues visible in drawing traditions do not show cultural agreements, but reactions to matters and tools, imaginaries, and poetics. Such reactions, that represent the first step to a full artistic translation, also involve our art-historical translation, our being lost in such a process. This includes the great problem arising from the use of English as a lingua franca while trying to preserve the conceptual complexity shaped by other idioms discussing the same topic. Exploring drawing therefore also means to get rid of key words and conceptual modelling to look at imagination and working experiences, fractures, and erasures, that is, the space between thinking and materiality which structures the poetics of many artistic traditions around the globe. If the cultural mind and its product, the image, are always in a process of creation, then primary evidence must also include what we cannot clearly see.

tant than ever for fighting against the spell of the global model. Over the last decade, *globalization* has been transformed from a theme to an entire territory in art history, where looking at objects

Marco Musillo

Note

[1] This is especially visible in the *al-Muʿallaqāt* (المعلقات) a collection of poems edited by the scholar and compiler Ḥammād ar-Rāwiya (VIII century AD). See S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), introduction, p. xxv. Also see D. Amaldi, *Tracce consunte come graffiti su pietra, note sul lessico delle Muʿallaqāt* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1999).

Writing as a Visual Art: The Maya Script

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Throughout their long history,[1] Maya hieroglyphs served both practical and aesthetic purposes. Displayed on a plethora of objects – different in size, shape, and worked in diverse techniques on a wide array of materials – hieroglyphic writing was one of the most prominent and distinctive features of ancient Maya visual culture.[2] In this paper, we engage with a range of evidence concerning ancient Maya writing in order to explore the aesthetic properties of hieroglyphs, as well as their effects in concert with other artistic expressions.

Unlike what happened in other parts of the world, where writing seems to have been invented for economic or oracular purposes as in the Near East and China, respectively, the origin of writing in Mesoamerica[3] is linked to promoting and sustaining the power of rulers (and their lineages) as a constitutive part of what we may call Mesoamerican 'cosmopolitics', as defined by Stengers.[4] Ancient Maya script remained closely bound to native notions of time-space, ancestors and deities, myth-history, agency, ownership, rituals related to a ruler's agenda, and also courtly life. Control over the making and interpretation of hieroglyphic texts constituted an important source of the king's authority.

Among many objects, private in character and small in size, different kinds of vessels with painted and carved texts were important status symbols, to the extent that they were commissioned for court banquets. As a seal of pledged obligations, visitors brought lavish polychrome vessels as gifts to those courts. These gifts operated as a sort of social currency, establishing alliances with the host ruler, while his power increased through this type of possessions.[5] The inclusion of the name of the owner on the vessel in the written text dubbed 'Dedicatory Formula' provided these artifacts with a label of their origin and materialized a personal bond between the donor, the object and the beneficiary. In addition, the process of making of this kind of objects was profoundly ritualized in order to make them efficient for the intended purpose. It required precaution and abstinence of the craftsman or scribe in many aspects; his energy invested in the making was also contained in the finished object. In other words, the work invested in the creative process was considered a spiritual force which added value to the manufacture and acted as a spiritual link between the artisan and the users of the object.

Hieroglyphs were also exhibited in public places such as plazas (containing different monuments), temple-pyramids, and palaces, which invested these places and objects with social prestige. For both the literate minority and the illiterate majority of the population, hieroglyphs possessed a potent symbolic value that went beyond their capacity to make language visible. Written words themselves were the locus of viewing and could incite admiration and act as a powerful medium for their visual aspect alone; that is, even independently of their content.

Besides the manifest aesthetic qualities of graphs[6] and writing's ability to contribute to an object's decorative scheme, the complete apperception of the inscribed objects actually required the engagement and articulation of a set of 'arts'. During highly formalized ceremonies carried out before a wider audience, literati would read written words aloud, and both communicated and enriched linguistic information with information shown in images that usually accompanied texts, as well as through oral recitations and ritualized performances (*Vid*. Navarrete 2011).

In grammatological terms, like all known hieroglyphic scripts, the Maya writing system is logosyllabic: namely, it is comprised of logograms (word-signs) and syllabograms (or phonograms). Words could be written in different ways: by employing only logograms (more frequent in early writings), but they were commonly spelled out by combining

logograms with syllabograms or conjoining only syllabograms, all adjusted into a single hieroglyphic 'block'. Formally different graphs of equal reading value (allographs) are interchangeable and can be used alternately throughout a text or regrouped within a block, depending on the aesthetic preferences of the scribe.[7] This gives a considerable visual variety to Maya inscriptions and painted texts as, for example, in the case of the Copan dynasty founder's name (Honduras), K'ihnich Yahx K'uk' Mo', 'He Who Is Solar Warmth[8] First Quetzal Macaw', who ruled AD 426-437 (fig. 1).

Visually, hieroglyphs are all more or less figurative: logograms, in particular, could quite accurately depict what they denoted – beings, objects, actions – sometimes in a stylized and simplified way, but they were all generally recognizable in form and formatted to fit within a hieroglyphic block, as in fig. 1.b-d (a head of a quetzal bird [**K'UK'**] and of a macaw [**MO**']). In this manner, they operated both as writing and as visual art. Graphs were recurrently personified with a face,

eyes, mouth, and nose (as in the same example), and sometimes even given a full-body-figure (e.g., back of Copan Stela D).[9] They were possibly conceived as animated entities whose vital forces had to be activated through rituals.

According to Berlo, one way of interaction between visual image and written text occurs when they are conjoined within an expressive work, representing two parallel but never absolutely identical statements: "a basic aesthetic principle of Maya arts and letters is the restatement of the same information in slightly altered form".[10] Likewise, discrete texts can appear without being associated to salient images, and hieroglyphs can also be embedded in images, commonly as personal names of the depicted personages or as toponyms on which they are seated.

For example, K'ihnich Yahx K'uk' Mo''s name was also written using 'iconographic spelling': on the Margarita Substructure's western painted stucco façade, the king's name took an emblem-like form made up of two full-figure birds (fig. 1.e);
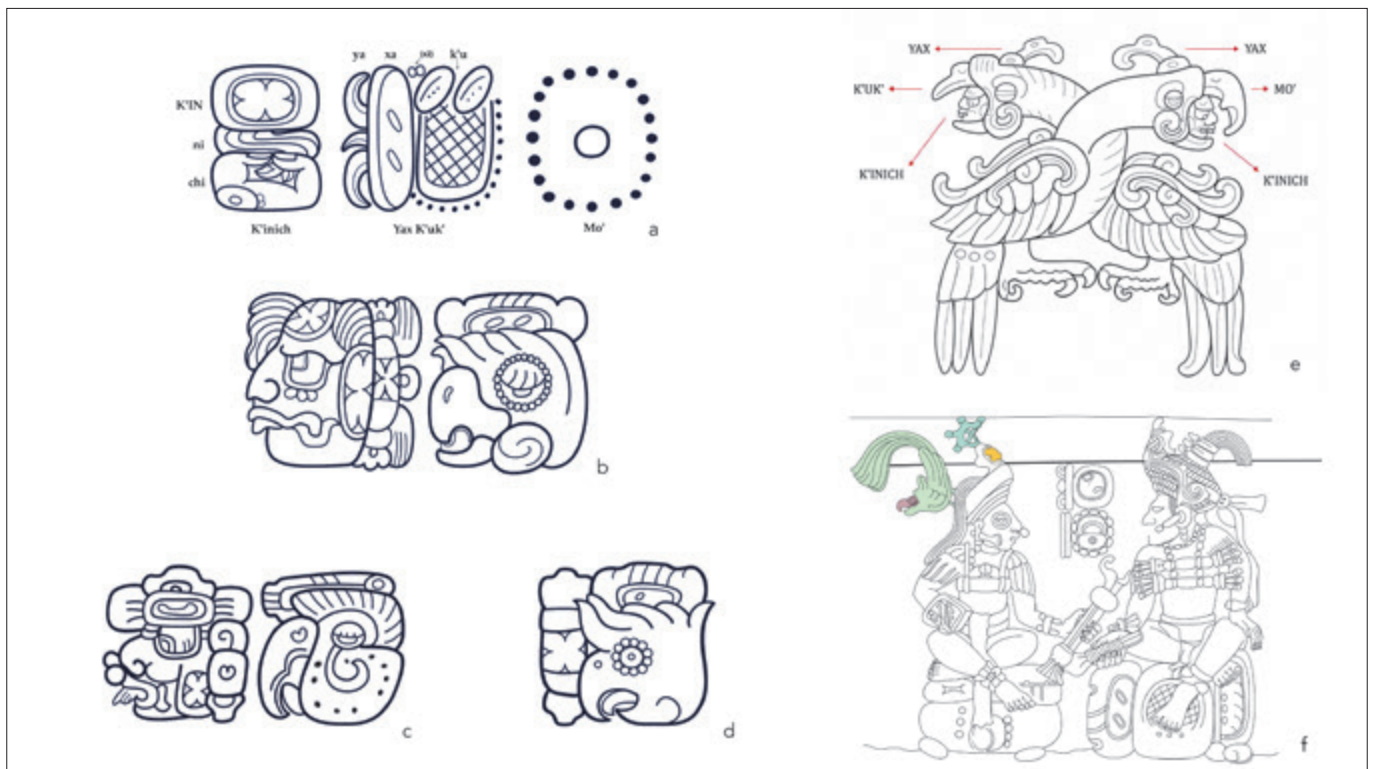

Fig. 1. Different ways of writing the name of K'ihnich Yahx K'uk' Mo', 'He Who Is Solar Warmth First Quetzal Macaw', founder of the Copan dynasty (ruled 426-437):
(a-b) Recently devised hieroglyphs based on an ancient Maya writing system where graphemes are taken from different monuments from the past and combined in innovative ways. (Created and drawn by Jorge Pérez de Lara).
(c) 'Xukpi Stone', Copan (Honduras). (Drawing by Jorge Pérez de Lara).
(d) Altar Q, Copan (Honduras). (Drawing by Jorge Pérez de Lara).
(e) Margarita Substructure's western façade, Copan (Honduras). (Drawing by Daniel Salazar Lama).
(f) Altar Q, Copan (Honduras); the king's name-headdress is marked in different colors. (Drawing by Jorge Pérez de Lara).

on the west side of Altar Q, carved in stone, his name is his headdress (fig. 1.f). Here, image and writing intersect, and the modes of reading images and viewing words in the ancient Maya world challenge simple categorization. Writing travelled fluidly between the literary, visual, and material domains, and conjointly communicated on both lexigraphic and sematographic levels. Based on this evidence, we conclude that to ignore the appearance of ancient writing is to fail to 'read' it comprehensively. It is no wonder that the same Maya word *tz'ihb'* encompassed the semantic fields of writing, drawing, and painting.

Occasionally, ancient Maya painters-scribes and sculptors signed their works,[11] but there was also another way to reference themselves as producers of those pieces of visual/material culture. This is the case of the polychrome ceramic cylinder known as K6020 (in the Kerr catalogue).[12] Reflecting on some aspects of text-image interaction, in this example the written text defines the space of the figurative scene on two sides, and fully integrates the image of an individual within its format. The individual is the very artist-scribe who fashioned this vessel and painted himself reclining on a codex, while sitting next to his own hieroglyphic signature. It resulted in a quite original way of self-referencing through different media, namely through verbal and visual arts, especially given that self-portraits are rare in Maya art.

The ancient Maya considered hieroglyphs as a sacred means of communication invented by It-zamnaah, the supreme deity and the first 'priest', who gifted them to humans. On some pieces, other supernatural beings are also shown in the act of writing. Likewise, deities are the first 'artists' since they fashioned men, as shown on the Classic polychrome vessels K717, K8457, K7447.[13] The verb used for this kind of making is *pak'-*, meaning 'to shape by hand' and 'to shape from clay', which ultimately corresponds to the creation of humans.[14] The images on these vessels show gods holding human heads, thus engaged in the process of creating human beings by carving/painting them.

Similarly, the elaboration of hieroglyphic texts by human artists-scribes was considered as much a creative process as the making of images of gods in different media. In the final passage of the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs from Palenque (Mexico) (fig. 2) – a beautiful example of an object where glyphs not only serve to communicate a verbal message, but are the only decoration – we read that the act of writing hieroglyphs is expressed through the transitive verb *kob'*, meaning 'to conceive, beget, procreate' and 'to have sex':

yuxuluuj k'antuun, utapaw k'uh[ul] … woj, ukob'ow; ukab'jiiy ho⁷ winikhaab' ajaw, K'ihnich Jan[aab'] Pakal
'He has sculpted the tablet, decorated the sacred … hieroglyphs, procreated them; the lord of five k'atuuns, K'ihnich Janaab' Pakal, had already ordered it'.

Fig. 2. Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, Palenque (Mexico). (Photo by Jorge Pérez de Lara).

The scribe's name is not mentioned explicitly in this passage, but he is simply alluded to by the pronoun /he/, for his role languishes before the will of the dead ancestor Janaab' Pakal (603-683) who, according to Palenque's official records, had died a hundred years before the Tablet was fashioned. It is not clear whether this king had conceived the Tablet while still alive, that is, more than a century before it was made, or whether Maya officials asserted that this renowned ancestor had ordered its making from the afterlife, which seems more likely in the framework of the native understandings of agency and spatio-temporal relations.[15]

In the same vein, according to Grube,[16] the fourth ruler of Copan, K'altuun Hix, speaks to his ancestor through a quotative phrase located in the inscription on the Papagayo Structure step. This reinforces the supposition according to which rulers and some members of the elite had the ability to communicate with the dead through inscriptions, materializing their relations by this means. For the ancient Maya, artifacts, images, and inscriptions were much more than mere objects or media, since they apparently believed that they spoke for themselves (i.e., as subjects) and could cross the barriers of time and, as long as they existed physically, they were still alive.

The aesthetics of the arrangement of the Tablet lie both in the shape and the relative size of individual glyphs and their proportions within the overall layout of the text, executed neatly, with care and dexterity, using a fine instrument to carve on the smooth surface. Design decisions such as the spatial ordering of words placed at regular distances, as well as a fixed reading direction,[17] produce symmetry and harmony which make them visually pleasing. These may be purely aesthetic factors that have an impact on how and why a certain visual composition is perceived as beautiful but sometimes there are also functional, technical, and even cognitive reasons for such visually effective rules. We can speak of a functional form when these elements, i.e., function and decorative form, are in balance. An expressive and skilful form of written signs may operate as a rhetorical device in visual terms. The power to beautify is the power to glorify, and this aspect may add to the very content of texts or the way they are read. The complex interplay of these factors and planes regarding inscribed and painted texts, rather than being accidental and arbitrary, is essential to the act of communication and makes the point that the semantic meaning of these words is not their only important feature.

On Panel 3 from Piedras Negras (Guatemala) (fig. 3), the inscription provides the aesthetic unity on the surface of the panel: it is at the same time a narration in written words and functions as the frame that shapes the space of the image by en-

Fig. 3. Panel 3, Piedras Negras (Guatemala). (Photo by Jorge Pérez de Lara).

closing the figurative palace scene (associated with additional shorter texts). Here Itzam K'an Ahk II (701-757), the fourth ruler of this city's dynasty, presides over the ceremony of the proclamation of his son and heir, witnessed by local and foreign nobility. In a creative way, the artist-scribe integrated the writing with the visual scene, so that the shape and placement of the written words simultaneously communicate with the viewer on multiple levels. This is to say, in the context of the figural narrative, the visual poetics of written words bring their potential to a full fruition. To underestimate their visual impact is to miss a great deal of the message(s) they communicate linguistically.

This is taken to the extreme in regard to pseudoglyphs: these false graphs only imitate hieroglyphic forms but are linguistically meaningless and thus illegible.[18] That is, the mere visual impact of written language communicated a message of power and prestige beyond the point of legibility. They functioned as an abstract decoration or 'pure' design since their visual presence alone and their careful placement on artifacts contributed to its aesthetic appeal. Nevertheless, there is always some sort of

meaning and pseudoglyphs can be seen as a creative option and as an intentional practice.

The power granted to graphs simply for their visual aspect reaches an unprecedented level in the inscription carved on the sanctuary crowning Copan Temple 26, composed entirely of full-figure signs.[19] Maya hieroglyphs rendered in what Stuart called Teotihuacan 'font'[20] were placed side by side and gave the false effect of a bilingual text, even when these foreign hieroglyphs were actually a calligraphic style of Maya writing itself. The purpose of this composite inscription was to enhance the symbolic value of this sanctuary dedicated to the ancestors. The distant and, at that time, already defunct city of Teotihuacan became for the Maya both the model and the real source from which the Copanec dynasty traced its origins.[21]

As a last example, we shall consider the colossal Hieroglyphic Stairway of Copan Temple 26 (fig. 4), associated with the aforementioned sanctuary. The inscribed staircase consists of around 2,200 individual hieroglyphic blocks, today in rather bad condition, carved in over 63 steps, each approximately 7.5 m wide; the height of the entire staircase as presently reconstructed is about 21 m, covering an area of ca. 158 m^2. A series of sculptures in full round, depicting royal predecessors, were inserted at intervals in the middle of the stairs in a vertical line. The Stairway is in fact two monuments made one. An early version dedicated by king Waxaklaju'n Ub'aah K'awiil (Ruler 13) in 710 provided a lengthy treatise on Copan's royal history, culminating with the dedication of Ruler 12's tomb buried deep beneath the staircase, after whom the very Stairway is named 'The Steps of K'ahk' Uti' Witz' K'awiil'. A later king, K'ahk' Yipyaj Chan K'awiil (Ruler 15), updated this visible statement of history by expanding his predecessor's version in 755. He made an effort to integrate his addition with the earlier text, both rhetorically and in aspects of visual design. He also included his own portrait in stela format (Stela M accompanied with its altar), placed at the foot of the stairway, completing the series of sculptures inserted into the steps. In this way, he connected the kingdom's recent turbulent history[22] with the glories of the distant past and, ultimately, with the story of the founder of Copan Classic dynasty, K'ihnich Yahx K'uk' Mo', whose accession rite was performed at an unknown place which some Mayanists believe was Teotihuacan, in 426.

Fig. 4. Hieroglyphic Stairway, Copan (Honduras). (Photo by Sanja Savkic Sebek).

When climbing the stairs, one goes back in a sacred time and vice-versa: when going down, one

is closer to the worldly present. Thus, we can think of the Copan Hieroglyphic Stairway as a sort of 'time machine', which is activated by the movement of the reader within the space marked by written text, sculptures, and architectural elements. This is an embodied reading – a 'performative reading' – that requires full 'immersion' in this unified, inseparable presentation of historical and cosmological information. As every step is made of hieroglyphs, we suggest that the written text (together with the associated sculptures) creates the very space of the architecture and, conversely, this architectural feature is the text and not only its vehicle. At the same time, this stairway is an object, a text, and a decoration where each medium adds to the overall understanding and provides the maximum means of expression and meaning. It shows in a unique way how aesthetically complex and materially diverse ancient Maya script can be.

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Notes

[1] The oldest known example of a Maya written 'text' is painted on a building wall at San Bartolo, Guatemala, and dates back to ca. 300 BC. When the Spanish arrived in the 16th century, literacy and hieroglyphs were still vigorous, but persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church because they were linked to the polytheistic religion. Knowledge of the art of writing and reading hieroglyphs was almost completely lost during the 18th century. However, ancient signs were used sporadically on some pages of the *Codex Pérez* and the *Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, manuscripts written in the Maya Yukatek language with the Latin alphabet, whose final versions date to the late 18th or early 19th century. In recent decades, the Maya script has become operative again and is used in creative ways by modern artists-scribes, showing the plasticity of the Maya hieroglyphic script and its dynamism over time (fig. 1.a-b).

[2] Approximately 10,000 complete and fragmentary texts of different length, complexity and state of preservation are known to date. As a result of the advancement in the deciphering of these texts started in 1950s, most of them can be read and understood. Most come from sites that hosted dynasties with developed court culture from the Central American tropical lowlands, and date to the Classic period (ca. AD 300-900). The majority of hieroglyphs were carved in limestone (e.g., stelae, panels, monumental stairways) or painted on vessels made of clay, as well as on other materials (e.g., jade adornments, bone implements). Likewise, there is evidence of hieroglyphs on perishable media, such as wood (e.g., lintels, figurines), or bark paper covered with a thin stucco layer on which people wrote and drew/painted, forming folded books (codices) protected by covers made of wood and lined with feline skin.

[3] The Mesoamerican writing tradition includes scripts such as Olmec, Zapotec, Isthmian, Maya, Izapa-South Coast, Teotihuacan, Xochicalcan, Mixtec, Nahuatl, among others. Within this writing tradition, Olmec is the oldest script (ca. 900 BC). *Vid*. A. Davletshin, E. Velásquez García, "Las lenguas de los olmecas y su sistema de escritura", in M.T. Uriarte Castañeda, ed., *Olmeca* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Jaca Book, 2018), pp. 219-243, 246-247. Nevertheless, among those Mesoamerican scripts which fully expressed natural languages and their grammatical categories graphically, only the Maya one has been deciphered so far. The logophonetic Nahuatl script has also been deciphered (Aubin [1884] 2002; Lacadena García-Gallo 2008), but its subject matter is almost restricted to onomastics, so it did not need to record all the grammatical categories of the Nahuatl language.

[4] I. Stengers, *Cosmopolitics*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2003 [1997]). According to Savkic and Neurath the very foundation of a ruler's power was his talent in cosmopolitical diplomacy; that is, the ability to negotiate across different worlds of existence: the ability to 'multiply' his personhood, to move in time and space, and to relate to the complex world inhabited by powerful beings such as ancestors and gods. Thus, the focus of many rituals is managing those relations materialized in different media, such as artifacts, images, hieroglyphic narrations, etc. S. Savkic, J. Neurath, "Imágenes-vehículos entre mundos: enfoque relacional en el estudio de las ofrendas y los altares mesoamericanos", Magistral lecture (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, February 2020). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uArOfQpsiS0.

[5] It is also possible that they worked the other way around: that the vessels were given away by rulers to allies as prestigious objects that would cement their interrelations.

[6] The graph or sign is the minimum visual and functional unit of any writing system. *Vid.* G. Sampson, *Writing Systems* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), pp. 22-25, for the definitions of grammatological concepts such as graph, grapheme, and allograph.

[7] There is no closed inventory of signs, but only an estimated number of those used throughout the long history of the pre-Columbian Maya. Judging by the evidence known so far, there are around 800-900 signs. However, only about 400 graphs were in use at any given time, and they often changed. This allowed for the invention of new signs and innovations of writing styles. *Vid.* N. Grube, "Observations on the History of Maya Hieroglyphic Writing", in V.M. Fields, ed., *Seventh Palenque Round Table, 1989* (San Francisco: Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute, 1994).

[8] In the specialized literature, other translations of K'inich are 'Radiant as the Sun' or 'Sun-Faced'.

[9] *Vid*. image: http://research.famsi.org/uploads/montgomery/261/image/JM00602cpnstdrearIS.jpg, © J. Montgomery.

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[11] *Vid*. D.S. Stuart, *Ten Phonetic Syllables. Research Reports on Ancient Maya Writing* 14 (Washington: Center for Maya Research, 1987); S.D. Houston, "Crafting Credit: Authorship Among Classic Maya Painters and Sculptors", in C.L. Costin, ed., *Making Value, Making Meaning: Techné in the Pre-Columbian World* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2016), pp. 391-431; M.E. Vega Villalobos, "El legado de los escultores: un estudio de las firmas de los artistas registradas en los monumentos mayas del periodo Clásico Tardío", *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*, XXXVIII, no. 108 (2016): 149-175.

[12] *Vid*. image: http://research.mayavase.com/kerrmaya_hires.php?vase=6020, © J. Kerr.

[13] *Vid*. images: http://research.mayavase.com/kerrmaya_hires.php?vase=717, http://research.mayavase.com/kerrmaya_hires.php?vase=8457, http://research.mayavase.com/kerrmaya_hires.php?vase=7447, © J. Kerr.

[14] D. Beliaev, A. Davletshin, "'It Was Then that That Which Had Been Clay Turned into a Man': Reconstructing Maya Anthropogenic Myths", *Axis Mundi: Journal of the Slovak Association for the Study of Religions* 9, no. 1 (2014): pp. 2-12.

[15] A.R. Zamora Corona has shown how Classic Maya kings were able to be in several time-spaces simultaneously: epigraphic evidence shows that kings situated themselves in reference to the larger cosmological framework and claimed to be entangled with ancestors from the remote and often mythical past not only to be legitimized as rulers through their divine bloodline, but also to be redefined ontologically through ritual effort as a type of subject (the ruler) within an intricate calendric ontology where different temporalities are juxtaposed. A.R. Zamora Corona, "La antropología del tiempo ritual en la ritualidad maya clásica y contemporánea", MA thesis (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2015), pp. 38-90.

[16] N. Grube, "Speaking Through Stones: A Quotative Particle in Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions", in S. Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz, et al., eds., *50 años de estudios americanistas en la Universidad de Bonn: Nuevas contribuciones a la arqueología, etnohistoria, etnolingüística y etnografía de las Américas* (Markt Schwabe: A. Saurwein, 1998), pp. 543-558.

[17] As a tendency, Maya texts are arranged in a linear way and read left-to-right and top-to-bottom, usually in columns of two hieroglyphic blocks, like in this inscription.

[18] *Vid*. image: http://www.smb-digital.de/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultLightboxView/result.t1.collection_lightbox.$TspTitleImageLink.link&sp=Scollection&sp=SfieldValue&sp=0&sp=1&sp=3&sp=Slightbox_3x4&sp=0&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=F&sp=T&sp=0,©Photo:Ethnologisches Museum der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz; photographer: Claudia Obrocki.

[19] *Vid*. image (detail): http://www.mesoweb.com/features/findings/founder/24.html, © J. Skidmore.

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[21] S. Martin, N. Grube, *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens: Dynasties of the Ancient Maya* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2008), p. 208.

[22] In 738, Ruler 13 was seized by his vassal, the Quirigua king K'ahk' Tiliw Chan Yopaat.

The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove: The Canonization of a Pictorial Theme in Brick Reliefs During the Southern Dynasties

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In 1960, archaeologists discovered the first piece of a set of brick reliefs in Gongshan (GS), near Nanjing, China. These bricks make up the lower parts of two walls of a tomb occupied by a deceased aristocrat of the Southern Dynasties (420-589). Across each of the walls, those reliefs compose an image known as the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and Rong Qiqi (hereafter, 'Seven Sages', fig. 1).[1]

The Seven Sages refer to seven famous literati, active around the year 240, who often gathered to converse, drink wine, and play music; Rong Qiqi was a renowned hermit and philosopher of the Spring and Autumn period (771-476 BCE). Following that discovery, archaeologists also found other seven examples following the same theme in tombs of the same period,

Fig. 1. The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, brick mural from the tomb at Gongshan, southern wall (above) and northern wall (below), each 240x80 cm. From left to right: Ji Kang, Ruan Ji, Shan Tao, Wang Rong (above), Rong Qiqi, Ruan Xian, Liu Ling, Xiang Xiu (below). (Yao Qian, Gu Bing 1981: plate 162/163).

including in Xiantangwan, Jinjiacun (JJC), Wujiacun (WJC), Shizigang (SZG), Tiexinqiao and Shizichong, in the regions of Nanjing and Danyang – two cultural centers of the Southern Dynasties.[2] All of them are sizable brick tombs built for royal figures, including rulers, crown princes or concubines of the highest rank. Not only are the subjects of these brick reliefs the same, but they are also designed and constructed in similar ways, which indicates that the same set of molds may have been used, transmitted, partly lost, and then mended and changed. This paper focuses on the transfer of the design across different media by addressing the following issues: 1) ways of production, i.e., how these brick reliefs were produced, numbered, and built; 2) dating and authorship, i.e., when the first brick relief of this subject was introduced into the tomb and who invented the original design; and 3) the canonization of the Seven Sages theme, i.e., why this pictorial motif was introduced into the context of the tomb.

Ways of Production

Scholars have referred to the brick reliefs in question as 'portrait-mural', 'tile friezes' or 'stamped-brick murals'.[3] According to Maxwell Hearn, "the designs were first incised into clay molds, then stamped onto clay bricks, so that the resulting lines stand out in shallow relief. Every brick was then numbered on the side in order to facilitate the assembly in the tomb".[4] Luo Zongzhen divides the process of production into more steps: 1) painting the image on silk; 2) dividing the paint-

ing into sections and producing a wooden mold for each section; 3) stamping the molds onto clay bricks; 4) incising numbers onto the clay bricks; 5) burning the clay bricks in a kiln; 6) laying the numbered clay bricks to assemble the brick reliefs.[5] Therefore, the design underwent multiple transfers across different media: first as a painting on silk, then as a set of wooden molds and, lastly, as an assembled brick-relief wall. The first two media, namely, paintings on silk and wooden molds, which are perishable, got lost. Only the last medium, the brick relief, is still preserved; hence, the technical details of the pictorial transfer may be inferred from it.

By comparing the figure of Ji Kang (223-262) in the JJC relief with the same figure seen in the rubbing of the GS relief, Hearn confirms that certain details on the horizontal bricks in both reliefs are identical, while details on the vertical bricks differ markedly. This indicates that the JJC artisans may have had some leftover bricks from GS, "which they impressed into soft clay forms to make new molds. They then incised additional lines into the molds so that the lines would continue the designs on the newly created vertical bricks".[6] However, Gong Juping notices that the brick relief of tomb M5 in SZG and the one of the GS tomb may not only be traced back to the same original design, but they may also have originated from the same set of molds.[7] Geng Shuo further points out that the same long line which runs through the shoulder of Ruan Ji and plays no compositional role at all appears both on one of the bricks of the GS tomb and on the corresponding brick of

Fig. 2. Left: Comparison between a detail of a brick depicting of Ruan Ji in the Gongshan tomb (left) and a detail of the Shizigang tomb (right). Right: Comparison between a rubbing from Jinjiacun (above) with a corresponding brick from Gongshan (below). (Geng Shuo & Yang Manning 2019: p. 112; Wang Han 2018: p. 50, elaborated by Liang Chen).
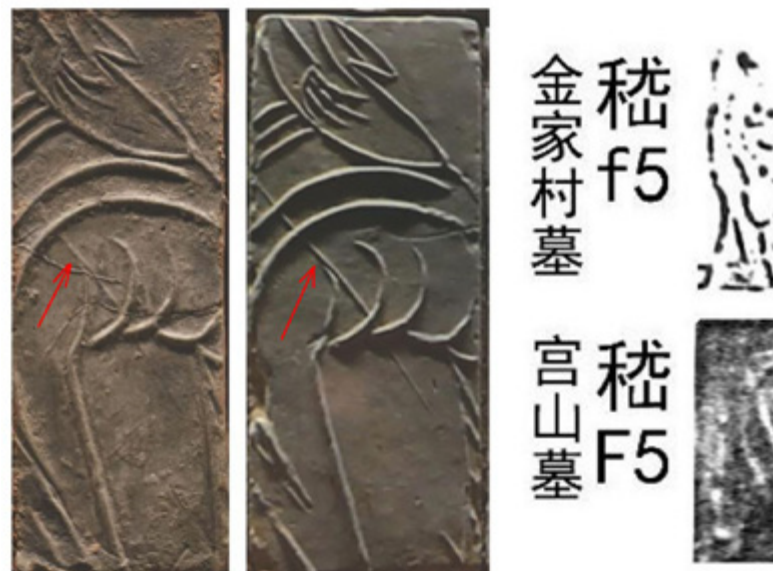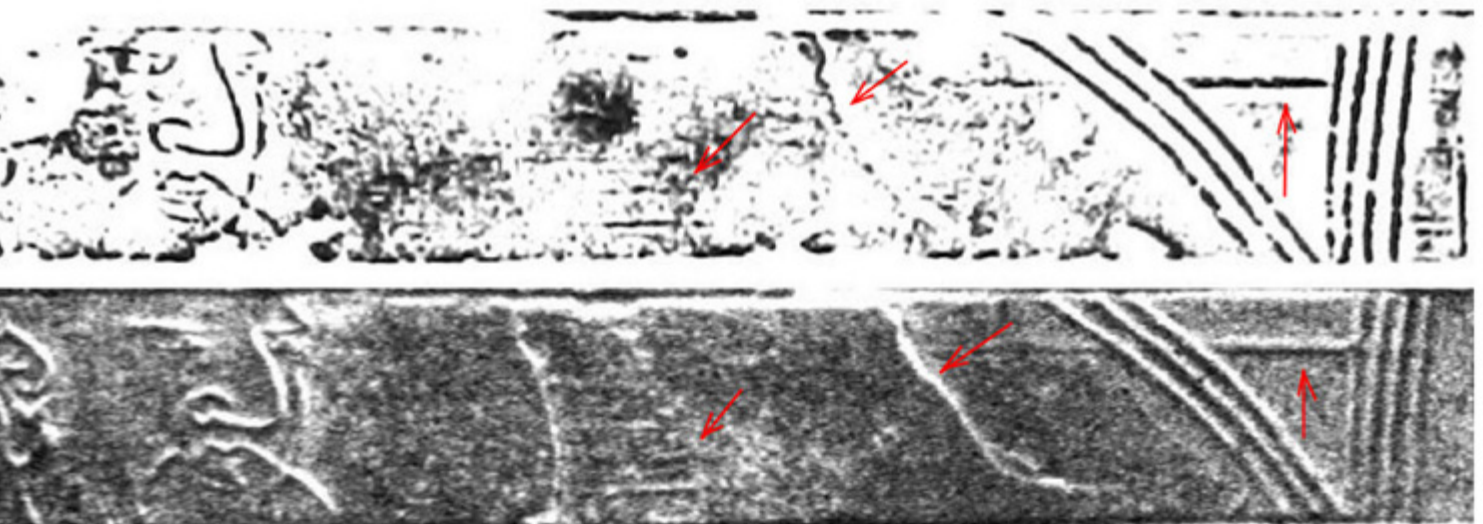
the SZG tomb (fig. 2: left), which suggests that this line may be the result of an error in producing the wooden molds.[8] In my view, however, a more reasonable explanation could be that it may be simply a rift on the wooden mold rather than a line erroneously drawn onto it. This is because in order to produce the pictorial bricks, rectangular wooden molds – whose four sides can be easily dismantled and fixed together – might have been used. Thus, it would be very difficult to retain every fine detail of a leftover brick by impressing it into a soft clay brick to make a new mold and then produce an identical brick out of the mold, since some details will inevitably get lost during this copying procedure. If we compare one of the pictorial bricks from JJC with the corresponding one from GS, we will find not only that the outline of the face of Shan Tao, one of the seven literati, is identical on both bricks, but also that some horizontal lines – which play no role in the composition – and one shallow curve on the right part are identical (fig. 2: right). This implies that both of them were produced by impressing the same wooden mold onto a soft clay brick.

The stamped bricks were systematically numerated so that they could be laid correctly to assemble a brick relief wall. In each brick, contrary to the four narrow sides that make up the thickness of the brick may be impressed with molds, its two planar sides were left unimpressed. One of the planar sides was incised with a stylus with a short inscription indicating the exact spot where the brick was supposed to be placed on the wall's coordinates. When the bricks were placed onto

the wall, the narrow sides (also with relief images) faced the tomb chamber.

Dating and Authorship

The tomb at Xiantangwan and two tombs at Shizichong are clearly dated to 495, 526, and 530 respectively. Sofukawa Hiroshi dates convincingly the tombs in JJC and WJC to 498 and 502, respectively.[9] The tombs in SZG and Tiexinqiao can be dated to the middle or later Southern Dynasties. Scholars have disputed about the dating of the tomb at GS and indicated that it may have been built between the Eastern Jin (317-420) and the Southern Liang (502-557).[10] One way of solving this problem is to determine the relative chronological sequence of the GS tomb, the JJC tomb, and the WJC tomb. Machida Akira dates the GS tomb to the earliest period and the WJC one to the latest period because of the degeneration of realism in images and an increased number of mistakes in the inscriptions.[11] Sofukawa argues that although the set of molds used in the GS tomb is in its artistic quality better than the one of the JJC tomb, if a more complete set of molds than that of the JJC tomb had been found in the construction process of the GS tomb, the GS tomb may still have been built later than the JJC tomb. Thus, he dates the GS tomb to the Southern Liang, with further arguments about issues concerning the architectural form of the tomb and its burial goods.[12] However, the architectural features which Sofukawa attributes to the Southern Liang and similar grave goods have proven to also appear in tombs dating to the late Eastern Jin and early Southern Dynas-

ties. Therefore, it is more logical to presume that the set of molds of the GS tomb, which is complete and correct, is the earliest one. The molds from the GS tomb then got partly lost, and the incomplete set of molds was used in the JJC tomb: the old ones were mended, and new but incorrect molds were added. This mixture of molds got partly lost again and added in building the WJC tomb. Wang Han examines the technical details of the construction of those tombs and the inscriptions and confirms the chronological sequence as such.[13] But what about the SZG tomb? If we compare the rubbings of the image of Ji Kang from SZG with those from JJC (fig. 3), it becomes clear that the molds of the bricks which are below the shoulder of Ji Kang are mostly preserved in SZG, whereas they are almost lost in JJC. Therefore, I suggest that the SZG tomb was built earlier than the JJC tomb, and later than the GS tomb.

On the basis of its architectural features and grave goods, Wei Zheng dates the GS tomb convincingly to the middle or late Liu Song period.[14] Although Wang agrees that the GS tomb is the earliest one, he dates it to the Southern Qi (479-502) with the following arguments: 1) the GS tomb may have been constructed not much earlier than the SZG tomb, which he dates to a later period than the WJC tomb. 2) The artisans who made the molds of the GS tomb bricks may probably have been still active when the JJC tomb was built,

which he dates to 501.[15] However, the SZG tomb could not have been constructed later than the WJC one, as discussed above. And it is quite clear that the molds mended for the JJC tomb were produced by other artisans, as opposed to those who created them for the GS tomb, otherwise the mended ones would be much more similar to the original ones. Therefore, it is possible that the GS molds were made more than 20 years before the construction of the JJC tomb.

Who made the drawing used to produce the wooden molds of the GS tomb? Luo observes many similarities in the fine, unbroken, and elastic lines and well-proportioned figures of the GS relief and the famous handscroll *Admonitions of the Court Instructress* attributed to Gu Kaizhi (348-409) (hereafter, 'Admonitions scroll'). Therefore, he suggests that it was probably Gu Kaizhi who made the drawing, or one of his contemporaries or someone who was active shortly after him.[16] Alexander Soper compares the drawing with the *Admonitions scroll* and considers it as 'harsh and obvious', in part because of the much clumsier technique used. Soper thus attributes it to an unknown draftsman of the Southern Dynasties[17]. Nagahiro Toshio admits that the artist is unknown and he dates the tomb to no later than the mid-5th century.[18] However, for Max Loehr, "even in the crude transposition into the relief lines of stamped bricks all the grace and rhythm of the original de-
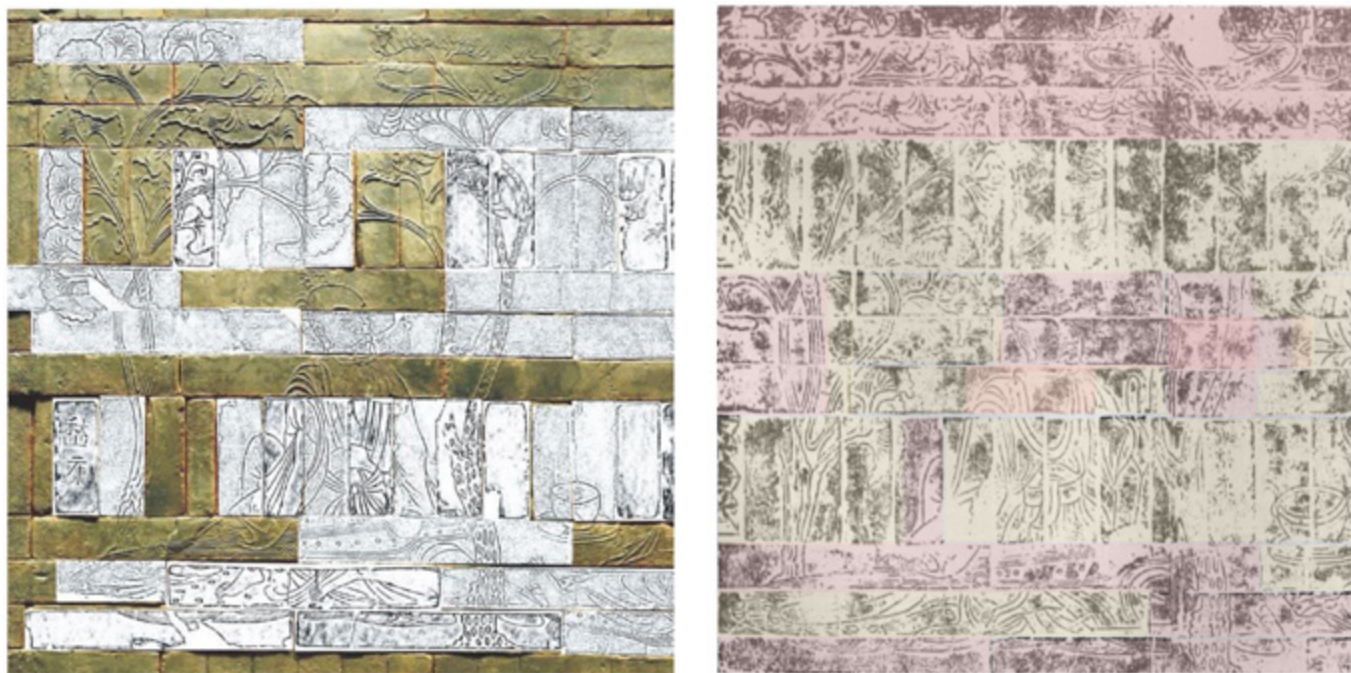

Fig. 3. Comparison between rubbings of the image of Ji Kang from Shizigang (left, white sections) and those from Jinjiacun (right, marked in red). (Geng Shuo & Yang Manning 2019: p. 111; M.K. Hearn 2004, p. 207, elaborated by Liang Chen).

sign is not lost", thus he identifies it as a replica of one painting of Dai Kui (326-396): "the temptation to substitute these bricks for the else lost oeuvre of Tai K'uei is hard to resist".[19] Marylin Rhie agrees with Loehr[20]. Hearn notes that "the figures have broken free of the restrained and ritualized poses dictated by Confucian decorum. Now, facial expressions, poses, and gestures all convey distinct psychological states".[21] Thus, he assumes that the GS reliefs probably reflect the achievements of the artist Lu Tanwei (?-c. 485), although the authorship of the Seven Sages designs may never be known. Wang pursues the same direction and tries to demonstrate that the drawing used to produce the wooden molds was probably drawn by Lu Tanwei himself.[22]

Among the three above-mentioned masters, Dai Kui, Gu Kaizhi, and Lu Tanwei, only the active years of Lu Tanwei overlap with the dating of the GS tomb. However, considering the mistakes of the hand gestures in playing the *qin*-zither, and the harsh depiction of hands of Ji Kang and Rong Qiqi – which seems as if they were twisted or broken – the drawing from which the wooden molds were directly produced could not have been painted by Lu Tanwei, even if the original design may have been painted by him. Mistakes may have emerged when the original design, which may be a handscroll or a set of screen paintings, was transferred to a wooden board which was then cut into pieces, from which wooden molds were produced.

Wu Hung also agrees that there is a lack of evidence in tracing the GS brick reliefs to a scroll painting by Gu Kaizhi or another 4th-century master, and he assumes that the reliefs on the two walls were designed by two different artists. Wu holds the following arguments: 1) there is marked stylistic difference between the panels on the two walls. The four figures on the left panel form two groups, with the two men in each group seemingly engaged in conversation, but on the right panel, isolated figures are absorbed in individual activities; 2) the two compositions also reflect divergent spatial concepts. On the southern wall, tree trunks overlap on the figures' robes and the mats they sit on. In contrast, the trees and figures on the northern wall are arranged next to each other, with little overlapping spatial relationships.[23] However, when we check the spatial arrangements of the trees on both walls, the difference is not that obvious. On both the southern wall and the northern wall, there are four trees aligned in the same

line with one tree at one end positioned slightly backwards, and on each wall two tree trunks overlap on the figures' robes. The major difference between the reliefs lies in the grouping of figures: their eye contact connecting the four figures on the southern wall in groups; on the northern wall, such eye contact is however absent, leaving four figures in isolated meditation postures. Just as Wu mentions, the depiction of an "interior space" of Liu Ling (c. 221-c. 300) and Xiang Xiu (c. 227-272) is especially successful. Taking all the differences and resemblances into account, however, it is more reasonable to infer that the molds of the two reliefs are produced by the same artist.

The Canonization of the Seven Sages Theme

Machida observes that the name assigned to each of the figures varies from one tomb to the next, although the depictions are largely the same. The fact that such errors were accepted by the patrons indicates that these reliefs represent a collective portrayal of idealized hermits.[24] Spiro also thinks that all eight men personify and celebrate the same values which, different from filial piety, as demonstrated in the Han and Jin tombs of all social classes, are shared by a small elite group. The Seven Sages have become models for those elites whose cultural roots lied in Northern China and who deemed those hermits worthy of emulation.[25]

Since the 4th century, the Seven Sages have become a popular theme of discussion in elegant gatherings and described as idealized models of literati in the influential literature *Shishuo xinyu* edited by Liu Yiqing (403-444) during Liu Song (420-479).[26] They also became popular pictorial themes for painting masters like Dai Kui, Gu Kaizhi, Shi Daoshuo (active in the 4th century), Zong Bing (375-443), Lu Tanwei, and Mao Huiyuan (fl. in the later 5h century)[27]. But why did the Seven Sages appear in the GS tomb and what are their functions in the tomb context? Luo assumes that they were depicted in the tomb because the tomb occupant, who must also have been a member of the literati class, admired them.[28] Machida takes a different position, suggesting that the Seven Sages are part of the imaginative representation of the tomb occupant living in the land of immortals and philosophizing with ancient sages.[29] Zhao Chao also contends that the depiction of the Seven Sages in royal tombs has a meaning of immortal worshiping.[30] Zheng Yan similarly suggests

that the Seven Sages in the context of the tomb have become a reference to immortals.[31]

However, regarding the function of the Seven Sages theme, there is a tendency in the above-mentioned discussions to deal with different representations of the Seven Sages as a whole and thus ignore the possible differences in their meanings. Machida has actually pointed out that the GS relief is realistic, whereas the JJC relief degenerates artistically in some details. But they still belong to the same system, compared with the WJC relief, in which all the figures were intentionally depicted as old men. In this way, the historical Seven Sages had been transformed into idealized hermits and the meanings of the reliefs had changed from representations of historical figures into an adoration of Daoist immortals.[32] However, Wei confirms that in Daoist canons like *Zhengao*, *Zhenling weiyetu* and *Wushang miyao*, among the Seven Sages, only Ji Kang is listed as an immortal.[33] Therefore, the Seven Sages do not possess a position in the system of immortals of that time.

If the historical Seven Sages did not function as immortals in the GS tomb, what was the original aim in introducing the Seven Sages into it? The identity of the occupant of the GS tomb is still a matter of debate. Sofukawa regards it not as a tomb of a ruler, since there is only one stony tomb door at the entrance.[34] Luo, on the other hand, attributes it to Liu Jun (430-464), Emperor Xiaowu of Liu Song, according to its geographical location.[35] But it is without doubt a royal tomb, to be exact, an emperor's tomb of Liu Song. If we attribute the dating of the GS tomb to the middle or later Liu Song, i.e., around 440 to 479, this dating

overlaps somewhat with the time when *Shishuo xinyu* was compiled by Liu Yiqing, nephew of Liu Yu (363-422), Emperor Wu. However, there is a subtle difference between the intention of introducing the Seven Sages theme into the GS tomb and the compilation of *Shishuo xinyu*. If Liu Yiqing sought to distance himself from political struggles and to express his admiration of the spiritual height achieved by some literati of the Wei and Jin dynasties, the occupant of the GS tomb would have been marked by a certain cultural identity associated with the Seven Sages theme. The fact that this was the first time that the theme appeared in the tomb of a deceased imperial member makes such identity association all the more significant. Just as Wei suggests, although Liu Yu, the founder of Liu Song, stole the throne from Eastern Jin through his military power, the royal clan originated from a clan of low rank. In a period when the discrimination between clans of high rank and those of low rank remained obvious, the motivation of the royal clan to elevate their cultural status by all means – including the reformation of burial customs – must have been strong.[36] It is probably under these circumstances that the Seven Sages theme became canonized and introduced into an imperial tomb.

Then, what is the spatial relationship between the brick reliefs and the tomb occupant? According to Luo, there are two stone coffin beds placed at the rear of the tomb chamber. The brick relief with the imagery of Ji Kang is placed onto the southern wall and the one with Xiang Xiu on the northern wall, with their lower edges set 50 centimeters above the floor. Interestingly, the reliefs
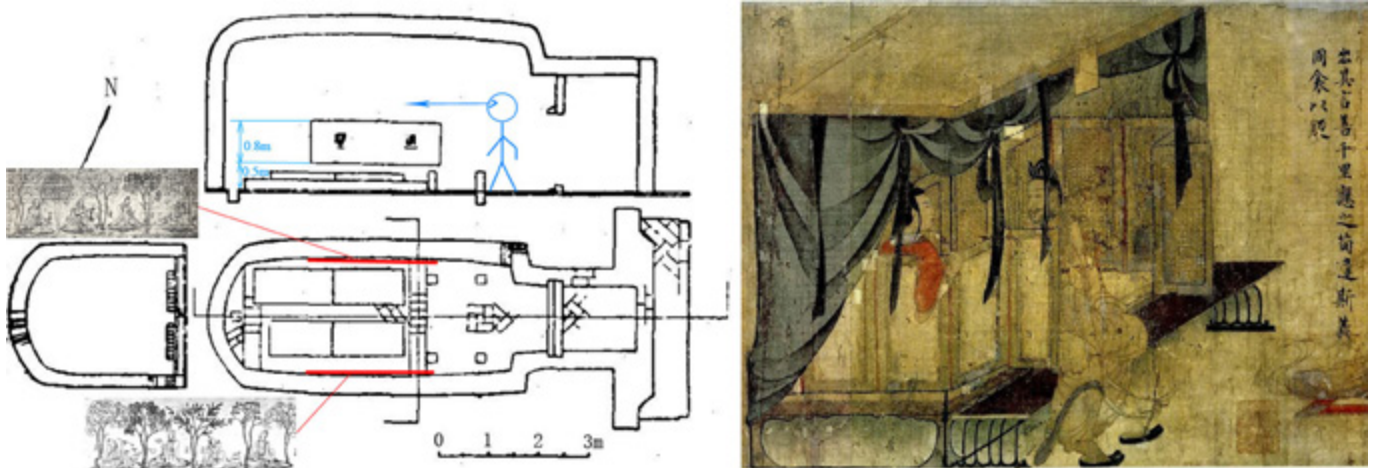

Fig. 4. Left: Diagram of the spatial relationship between a living human and the brick mural in the Gongshan tomb. (Right: Luo Zongzhen 1960: p. 37, elaborated by Liang Chen).

are positioned quite low, although there is a large area of blank wall above them, which indicates that their images were not intended to be viewed by a standing, living person (fig. 4: left). Sofukawa finds a resemblance between the GS reliefs and a mural in a tomb of the Northern Qi (550-577) period at Dong baliwa, Jinan, in which four hermits sitting under trees, painted on an eight-panel screen, are still discernable.[37] In the tomb of Sima Jinlong dated 484, several panels of a lacquer screen painting have also been found. The restoration shows a 12-panel screen painting which is placed on a stone funerary couch.[38] The form of the screen painting and its spatial relationship with the funerary couch reminds us of the Seven Sages reliefs and their relative positioning (also above the coffin bed) in the GS tomb, where the

brick reliefs were designed as an 8-panel screen painting; together with the adjacent wall, the painting surrounded the coffins of the tomb occupants. More interestingly, considering the tomb occupants' points of view, we find that the height of the reliefs in the GS tomb has been adjusted to the eye level of the tomb occupants, as if their souls may sit on the funerary couch, similarly to the space in the *Admonitions scroll* in which an emperor sits on a couch bed (fig. 4: right). In this spatial arrangement, we can infer that all the settings around the funerary couch in the GS tomb were carefully designed to be the sitting area of the tomb occupants' souls, so that they could commune with their ideal models of culture and philosophy, namely, the Seven Sages and Rong Qiqi, in the same place forever.

Notes

[1] Yao Qian, Gu Bing, 六朝艺术 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1981), plate 162.

[2] For a more detailed introduction to these tombs and their excavation, see Wang Han, 图变今情——南朝'竹林七贤及荣启期'砖印壁画研究, Dissertation (Peking University, 2018), pp. 1-11. For the attribution of the tombs at JJC and Wujiacun to Xiao Luan and Xiao Baorong, see Sofukawa Hiroshi, "南朝帝陵の石獣と磚画", 東方学報 63 (1991): pp. 140-142.

[3] A.G. Spiro, *Contemplating the Ancients: Aesthetic and Social Issues in Early Chinese Portraiture* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 3-4; M.M. Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia, Volume 2: The Eastern Chin and Sixteen Kingdoms Period in China and Tumshuk, Kucha and Karashahr in Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 205; M.K. Hearn, "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove", in J.C. Watt, et al., eds. *China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200-750 AD* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), pp. 206-209: 206.

[4] M.K. Hearn, "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove", cit., p. 206.

[5] Luo Zongzhen, "南京西善桥南朝墓及其砖刻壁画", 文物, no. 8/9 (1960): p. 41.

[6] M.K. Hearn, "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove", cit., pp. 207-208.

[7] Gong Juping, et al., "南京雨花台石子岗南朝砖印壁画墓(M5)发掘简报", 文物, no. 5 (2014): p. 37.

[8] Geng Shuo & Yang Manning, "试论南京石子冈南朝墓出土模印镶嵌画像砖的相关问题", 考古, no. 4 (2019): 112.

[9] Sofukawa Hiroshi, "南朝帝陵の石獣と磚画", cit., pp. 141-144.

[10] Luo dates it to "Jin-Song Period". See Luo Zongzhen, "南京西善桥南朝墓及其砖刻壁画", cit., pp. 8-9. Machida dates it to "Later Liu Song". See Machida Akira, "南齐帝陵考", tr. Lao Ji, 东南文化, no. 1 (1986): p. 60. Sofukawa dates it to "End of Southern Qi or Southern Liang, probably Southern Liang". See Sofukawa Hiroshi, "南朝帝陵の石獣と磚画", cit., p. 228. Rhie dates it to 4th century or "early rather than later Eastern Chin". See M.M. Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia, Volume 2*, cit., p. 205.

Hearn dates it to "the later fifth century". See Hearn 2004: p. 208. Wei Zheng dates it to "Middle or Later Liu Song". See Wei Zheng, "南京西善桥宫山'竹林七贤'壁画墓的时代", 文物, no. 4 (2005): p. 83. Wang Han dates it to "Southern Qi". See Wang

Han, 图变今情——南朝'竹林七贤及荣启期'砖印壁画研究, cit., pp. 152-153.

[11] Machida Akira, "南齐帝陵考", cit., pp. 49-51.

[12] Sofukawa Hiroshi, "南朝帝陵の石獣と磚画", cit., pp. 225-230.

[13] Wang Han, 图变今情——南朝'竹林七贤及荣启期'砖印壁画研究, cit., pp. 84-86.

[14] Wei Zheng, "南京西善桥宫山'竹林七贤'壁画墓的时代", cit., pp. 75-83.

[15] Wang Han, 图变今情——南朝'竹林七贤及荣启期'砖印壁画研究, cit., pp. 113-119.

[16] Luo Zongzhen, "南京西善桥南朝墓及其砖刻壁画", cit., p. 42.

[17] A.C. Soper, "A New Chinese Tomb Discovery: The Earliest Representation of a Famous Literary Theme", *Artibus Asiae* 24, no. 2 (1961): p. 86.

[18] Nagahiro Toshio, 六朝時代美術の研究 (Tōkyō: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1969), pp. 43-53.

[19] M. Loehr, *The Great Painters of China* (HarperCollins Publishers, 1980), pp. 20-21.

[20] M.M. Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia, Volume* 2, cit. p. 205.

[21] M.K. Hearn, "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove", cit., p. 208.

[22] Wang Han, 图变今情——南朝'竹林七贤及荣启期'砖印壁画研究, cit., p. 138.

[23] Wu Hung, "The Origins of Chinese Painting (Paleolithic Period to Tang Dynasty)", in R. Barnhart, et al., eds., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Haven, London, Beijing: Yale University Press; Foreign Languages Press, 1997), p. 47; Wu Hung, "空间"的美术史, tr. Qian Wenyi (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2018), pp. 29-32.

[24] Machida Akira, "南齐帝陵考", cit., p. 51.

[25] A.G. Spiro, *Contemplating the Ancients*, cit., pp. 62/91-92.

[26] Li Ruoqing, "竹林七贤与荣启期画像砖渊源考", 美术史与观念史 IV (2005): p. 39.

[27] Wei Zheng, "地下的名士图——论竹林七贤与荣启期墓室壁画的性质", 民族艺术, no. 3 (2005): p. 93.

[28] Luo Zongzhen, "南京西善桥南朝墓及其砖刻壁画", cit., p. 42.

[29] Machida Akira, "南齐帝陵考", cit., p. 51.

[30] Zhao Chao, "从南京出土的南朝竹林七贤壁画谈开去". 中国典籍与文化, no. 3 (2000): p. 10.

[31] Zheng Yan, 魏晋南北朝壁画墓研究 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2002), pp. 223-228.

[32] Machida Akira, "南齐帝陵考", cit., p. 51.

[33] Wei Zheng, "地下的名士图——论竹林七贤与荣启期墓室壁画的性质", cit., p. 98.

[34] Sofukawa Hiroshi, "南朝帝陵の石獣と磚画", cit., p. 215.

[35] Luo Zongzhen, 六朝考古 (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 1994), p. 69.

[36] Wei Zheng, "地下的名士图——论竹林七贤与荣启期墓室壁画的性质", cit., p. 96.

[37] Sofukawa Hiroshi, "南朝帝陵の石獣と磚画", cit., p. 217.

[38] Nanjing bowuyuan, ed., 琅琊王：从东晋到北魏 (Nanjing: Yilin chubanshe, 2018), p. 158.

Written on the Wall: Script and Decoration in Medieval Central Europe

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According to the well-known passages of the Book of Daniel (5: 1-31), when King Belshazzar of Babylon took golden vessels from the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, suddenly a disembodied hand wrote words on the wall of the royal palace. Nowadays, we are not as surprised as King Belshazzar when we find inscriptions on walls of important buildings. Nevertheless, calligraphy is usually associated with Asian cultures. Decorative inscriptions are often found in Islamic monuments, sometimes as a symbolic expression of power and dominance.

Even though mosques are normally decorated with calligraphic Islamic inscriptions, this is unusual in Latin Christian churches that were never used by Muslims. However, this is the case in Pécs, a town in Southern Hungary, where a medieval Christian chapel was decorated with wall paintings imitating Arabic script. The building is a ruin, discovered in 1922 and further excavated in 1955 and more recently, in 2013-14.[1] It was originally a three-lobed building with an entrance and a porch on the south side; that is why the building is usually called *Cella Trichora*. The building is situated in the UNESCO world heritage site of Pécs, which was originally the Early Christian cemetery of the Roman city Sopianae. The cemetery was in use between the 4th and the 5th century AD.

The *Cella Trichora* (fig. 1) situated next to the medieval cathedral shows signs of later usage, especially from the Carolingian and Romanesque periods. It seems that the level of the eastern apse was elevated, housing an altar, and the walls were painted. The main part of the frescoes is lost however, the lower part is intact. This is an imitation of a textile, a widely used compositional formula since the Early Middle Ages. What makes this decoration more specific is the usage of Arabic, more precisely Kufic script. The letters themselves are not legible; this is merely a decorative element without any specific meaning. Pseudo-Kufic dec-oration is known in Byzantium as well as in Spain and other centres of Romanesque wall painting.

Based on the style of the drapery and the distribution of pseudo-Kufic inscriptions in Europe, Melinda Tóth convincingly dated the fresco to the second half of the 12th century.[2] Looking at the map of Europe of the period, we can easily understand the geographical position of our monument. Pécs, situated in the southern part of the Hungarian Kingdom, was equally close to both the Byzantine Empire and to Italy, which was so inspiring for medieval Hungarian art. Moreover, the late 12th century is the period of King Béla III (1172-1196), one of the greatest medieval Hungarian rulers. Educated in Constantinople, where he was regarded as heir of the imperial throne for a while, he returned to Hungary to rule the country for a quarter of a century. He introduced a new coinage system which included copper coins, never used in Hungary before. One type of these coins is decorated with pseudo-Arabic letters. These are completely illegible but closely resembling real Arabic golden coins, especially those issued in the Almoravid Empire. What is unusual is that the Hungarian coins were minted in copper,

Fig. 1. Pécs, *Cella Trichora*, wall-decoration with pseudo-Kufic inscription, 12th century. (Figs. 1-4 © Author).

probably following the Byzantine system. Giving them an aspect similar to the highly respected Arabic golden coins may have made the otherwise less valuable copper coins more attractive.[3] Another strange appearance of Arabic script in the spheres of Béla III is his gold ring, found in his tomb in Székesfehérvár (Budapest, Hungarian National Museum).[4] It contains an almandine seal stone with an Arabic inscription. The gemstone lost its original function and meaning but was attractive enough to be used for the king's ring. Probably it was not only its colour and material but also its inscription that made the stone so precious for the king.

Seemingly, Arabic inscriptions are concentrated in medieval Hungary at the time of Béla III. It has been argued that Islamic inscriptions were associated with the Holy Land in medieval Europe. Avinoam Shalem has pointed out that Islamic objects in European church treasures were often associated with Biblical stories; as a matter of fact, the Arabic inscriptions "helped to bestow Biblical aura on them".[5] At the time of the crusades, references to the Holy Land had special importance. Béla III himself took the cross (although this task was finally completed by his son, Andrew II) and, according to the convincing hypothesis of Péter Tibor Nagy, it is highly probable that the real and pseudo-Arabic inscriptions evoked a crusader ideology in the entourage of the Hungarian king.[6] The pseudo-Kufic inscriptions on the wall paintings at Pécs might have provoked similar associations.

The letters written on the walls at Pécs were not legible and served merely as a symbolic decoration. In late Gothic parish churches, however, rather long Latin inscriptions can be found covering entire walls of the buildings. One of them is situated in the wonderful Gothic cathedral of Košice (fig. 2), once an important royal town in Upper Hungary, today part of Slovakia (Kassa in Hungarian, Kaschau in German). The church, erected between the late 14th and early 15th centuries, is shaped like a cross in its ground plan. At the end of the south transept, an oratory was established above the south porch; it can be accessed thanks to an exceptional double staircase, inspired by the cathedral of Prague. Next to the staircase and above the portal, a long inscription has been preserved. There are other inscriptions on the northern side of the church, but they are fragmented. They commemorate events from the years between 1395 and 1439. As a continuation

but in a much more central place, a six-line long inscription has been painted with calligraphic initials. It was considered so important that the letters were repainted during each of the restorations of the church, i.e., in 1766, 1862 and 1896. The long Latin inscription, which has been often quoted by secondary literature in order to date the south transept, commemorates an event from the year 1440. From the text we learn that Ladislaus, the son of King Albert of Habsburg was born and legitimately crowned. In fact, this inscription is more than a usual expression of loyalty. It is certainly true that St Elisabeth's church was supported by King Sigismund, whose coats of arms are still visible in the chancel. However, the inscription is more than homage to his grandson.[7]

Albert, who inherited the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary by marrying the daughter of Emperor Sigismund from the Luxembourg Dynasty, died after two years of rule in October 1439. When he died, his widow Queen Elisabeth was

Fig. 2. Košice, St Elisabeth's church, interior of south transept with inscription from 1440.

pregnant. While the Hungarian noblemen invited a new king from the Jagiellon Dynasty, Vladislaus III of Poland, in order to defend the country from the Ottoman Empire, the widow queen prepared to steal the royal crown and, after giving birth to a son on 22 February 1440, convinced the barons and the royal towns of the country to support the coronation of the young Ladislaus. This happened on 15 May in Székesfehérvár, in the official coronation basilica of Hungary, by the archbishop of Esztergom and with the Holy Crown of Hungary; these three conditions were necessary in medieval Hungary to deem a coronation legitimate. In the meantime, on 8 March 1440, the Hungarian noblemen elected Vladislaus of Poland, who was crowed on 21 July in the same basilica by the same archbishop (but without the Holy Crown, which was taken by the widow queen). Elisabeth, with the young King Ladislaus, escaped to Western Hungary and later to Austria, accepting the protectorate of Frederic III of Habsburg.[8]

In this awkward political situation, the country split into two factions: the barons and the towns supported the Habsburg king, whereas the noblemen favoured the Jagiellon Vladislaus. The significance of this competition was the fate of the Luxembourg heritage. After the death of Sigismund, who ruled Hungary and Bohemia, the Habsburgs from Austria and the Jagiellons from Poland fought for the dominion of these countries for a century. With Albert (1437-1439) and Ladislaus (1440-1457), the Habsburgs were prevailing; with Valdislaus I (1440-1444) and later Vladislaus II (1471/90-1516) and Louis II (1516-1526) the Jagiellons did. Finally, after the death of Louis II in 1526, the Habsburgs took power over Bohemia and Hungary for the next 400 years; this situation ended only with the First World War.

In order to defend her interests, Queen Elisabeth summoned the Czech condottiere, John Jiskra, who took control of Upper Hungary and a dozen of towns including Košice. It was at this particular time that the inscription was painted: the patricians, who eagerly supported the young Ladislaus (but were also under the control of Jiskra's army) openly voted for the legitimacy of the
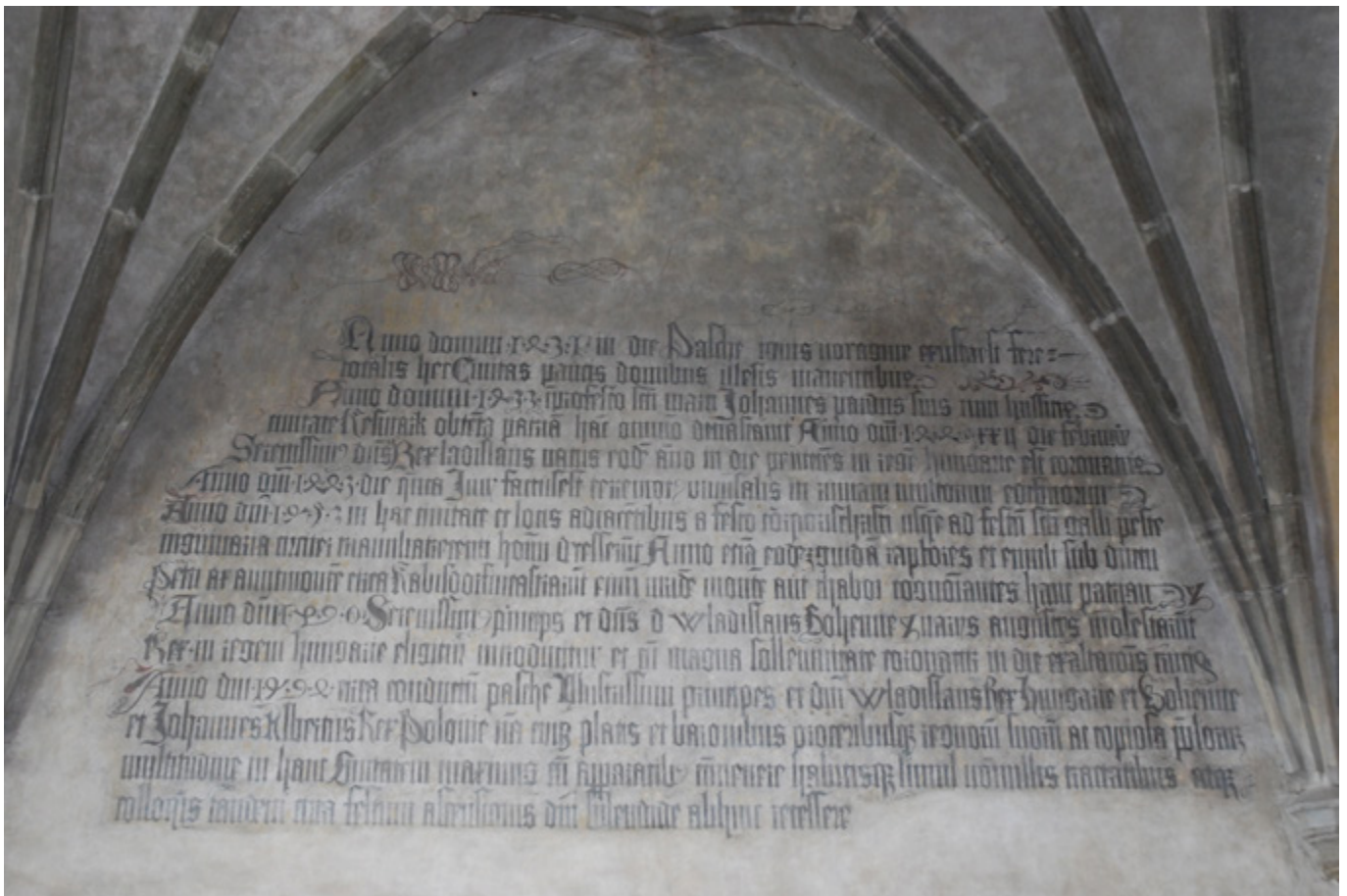

Fig. 3. Levoča, St James' church, south porch, inscription commemorating events between 1431-1494.

posthumous king. Jiskra remained lord of Upper Hungary as long as 1452, when King Ladislaus returned to Hungary and strengthened his positions.

Košice was not the only town in Upper Hungary keeping historical inscriptions on the walls of its parish church. Not far from it, the town of Levoča (Lőcse in Hungarian. Leutschau in German, today in Slovakia) was a similarly important royal city, capital of the Saxon community in the Spiš (Szepes, Zips) region. The parish church, dedicated to Saint James, was built during the 14th century (fig. 3). Its main entrance is situated on the south side, decorated with a porch and a splendid portal.

Entering the porch, on the left side (i.e., on the west wall), a long Latin inscription can be seen. It was written in late gothic epigraphic minuscule, dated to around 1500. The inscription was always visible but needed restoration in 1936, 1960, and 1988-90.[9] The text commemorates events between 1431 and 1494.[10] Contrary to the inscriptions of Košice, here the events are usually of local significance: fires, earthquakes, diseases, and attacks of Hussite troops, but also the coronation of Ladislaus in 1440 and that of the ruling king Vladislaus II in 1490. The list ends with the meeting of the Hungarian and the Polish kings, which took place in the town of Levoča in 1494. Thus, the inscription can be regarded as the manifestation of self-identity in the rich and proud Saxon town.[11]

Comparable wall chronicles are also to be found in Transylvanian Saxon towns. Similarly to the Spiš region, the Saxon Lands (Királyföld, Königsboden, today Romania) enjoyed special autonomy in the medieval Hungarian Kingdom. The centre of the Saxon community was Sibiu (Nagyszeben in Hungarian, Hermannstadt in German, today Romania). The impressive parish church, once dedicated to the Holy Virgin, was built starting from the middle of the 14th century and finished by the early 16th century. The last addition was a huge western entrance hall, the so-called *Ferula*, to which a south gallery was added in around 1520. On the western wall, a long Latin inscription written in two columns in gothic minuscule has been preserved. The text commemorates events occurred between 1409 and 1566, thus it must have been written in the 1560s. The subject of these inscriptions is a series of local occurrences, especially battles against the Ottomans, including diseases, fires, and other political events.[12]

This wall chronicle was not unique in 16th-century Transylvania. In another important Saxon town, Brașov (Brassó in Hungarian, Kronstadt in German, today Romania) the so-called Black Church also housed a long Latin inscription.[13] It was entitled as *Breve Chronicon Daciae* (Short Chronicle of Transylvania). Due to the devastating fire of 1689, it has not been preserved in its original form. Its fragments were whitewashed in 1761-62 but fortunately the text was copied several times before that. The author was probably Martin Oltrad, an important local humanist and rector of the Secondary School of Brașov in 1569-71, when the inscriptions were painted. The text is based on an earlier chronicle up to 1554, but with a special selection: it contains exclusively events related to Transylvania. Being a Latin text situated next to the chancel, it is surprising that there is nothing ecclesiastic in it. Even the most important turning point in the history of the church, the introduction of the Reformation in 1542, is not mentioned. On the contrary, it focuses on the Ottoman wars which affected the city of Brașov immensely. The

Fig. 4. Csaroda, inscription on the triumphal arch from 1642 with earlier layers of frescoes.

long Latin inscription, starting with the invitation of the Saxons to Transylvania in 1143 and ending with the earthquake of 1571 and the appointment of Stephen Báthory as Duke of Transylvania, served as a source material for the rich and learned patricians of the town to understand their own history. At the time of the Reformation, these Transylvanian wall chronicles – which differed so greatly from the figural depictions typical of the Catholic churches – were the result of the emergence of a special Saxon self-consciousness.[14]

Texts often replaced images in other Protestant communities of early modern Hungary, too. The small village church of Csaroda, situated in Eastern Hungary, was built in the early 14th century (fig. 4). It was originally decorated with frescoes in the 14th and 15th centuries, however, after the introduction of the Calvinist religion, this figural decoration was whitewashed and replaced by ornaments and inscription. From the Latin text, we can learn that the church was whitewashed in 1642, on 9 July, in the time of the priest Stephen Szentkirályi. The text is situated above the chancel arch, in a central position, and was written in different colours and font types. Beside its informative character, the inscription is certainly highly decorative.[15] Similar cases can also be found in Western Hungary (Csempeszkopács, Magyarszercsőd).[16]

Decorating the walls of churches with letters instead of images is certainly aniconic, but not necessarily unpretentious.[17] Letters always play a decorative function whenever they are written on the walls. In Pécs, their primary function was to imitate an expensive textile. However, even in the most modest Calvinist churches, letters speak of the decorative interest of their commissioners, artists, and audience: the use of different colours, character types, and sizes makes the inscriptions visually attractive. Letters, especially for the illiterate, were a special type of ornament.

But they were much more than that. Inscriptions, as far as their letters are readable and languages are understandable, tend to be informative. Interpreting their content depends on different levels of literacy. But they work for all as visual symbols. The pseudo-Kufic letters of Pécs were never meant as anything else; they can be regarded as a visual sign referring to the Holy Land. The rather long Latin wall chronicles of late Gothic parish churches were probably understood by the rich patricians of the towns of Košice, Levoča, and Braşov; but the large surfaces close to the entrances might have been meaningful for all others who recognized their significance in local identity-building. The illiterate local people of the Protestant villages were unable to decipher the exact meaning of the inscriptions, even if they were written in their native Hungarian language. However, these letters were necessarily eloquent for the entire community: the fact itself that there are letters decorating the walls instead of images was meaningful, as it reflected the transformation of Christian culture.

The letters themselves, legible or not, had a symbolic value which can be decoded taking into consideration their location, forms, and context. With my examples from medieval Central Europe, I intended to present a few possibilities of reading the complex meaning of inscriptions instead of viewing them as a boring mass of incomprehensible letters written on a wall.

Notes

[1] Zs. Tóth, "Jelentés a pécsi székesegyház nyugati oldala előtt, a Cella Trichora I.-től északra végzett megelőző (hitelesítő) régészeti feltárásról (2013.10.30-2013.12.11) és a Cella Trichora I. védőépületének bontása során végzett régészeti felügyeletről (2014.01.08-2014.03.19)", *Archaeologia – Altum Castrum Online* (2015). http://archeologia.hu/content/archeologia/330/toth-trichora.pdf.

[2] M. Tóth, *Árpád-kori falfestészet* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1974), pp. 42-46.

[3] R. Ujszászi, *A XII. századi magyar rézpénzek* (Budapest: Magyar Éremgyűjtők Egyesülete, 2010).

[4] P.T. Nagy, "'Islamic' artefacts in Hungary under Béla III (1172-1196): Two Case Studies", *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 22 (2016): pp. 49-61.

[5] A. Shalem, *Islam Christianized* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1996), pp. 129-137.

[6] P.T. Nagy, *Islamic Artefacts in Twelfth-Thirteenth Century Hungary*, MA thesis (Budapest: Central European University, 2015).

[7] T. Juckes, *The Parish and Pilgrimage Church of St Elizabeth in Košice* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), p. 224.

[8] P. Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-huszita mozgalmak és uralom története Magyarországon* (Budapest: Hornyánszky, 1917), p. 184 and passim.

[9] M. Togner, V. Plekanec, *Medieval wall paintings in Spiš* (Bratislava: Arte Libris, 2012), pp. 157-158.

[10] K. Wagner, *Analecta Scepusii sacri et profani. Pars II* (Viennae 1774), pp. 346-347.

[11] J. Šedivý, "Stredoveká písomná kultúra na Spiši", in M. Homza, S. Sroka, eds., *Historia Scepusii* (Bratislava: Katedra slovenských dejín UK FiF, Kraków: Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2009), pp. 483-520; K. Szende,

Trust, *Authority, and the Written Word in the Royal Towns of Medieval Hungary* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), pp. 194-195.

[12] I. Albu, *Inschriften der Stadt Hermannstadt aus dem Mittelalter und der frühen Neuzeit* (Heidelberg: Hora, 2002), pp. 54-57; H. Fabini, *Sakrale Baukunst in siebenbürgisch-sächsischen Städten* (Hermannstadt: Monumenta, Heidelberg: Arbeitkreis für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde, 2013), p. 67.

[13] Á. Ziegler, *A brassói Fekete templom: Reformáció és renováció* (Budapest: Martin Opitz, 2018).

[14] "Breve Chronicon Daciae", in O. Netoliczka, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Brassó. 4. Band* (Brassó: Zeidner, 1903), pp. 1-10; P. Lőkös, "A brassói falikrónika", *Könyv és Könyvtár* 26 (2004): pp. 211-224.

[15] B. Zs. Szakács, "Csaroda, református templom", in T. Kollár, ed., *Középkori templomok a Tiszától a Kárpátokig* (Nyíregyháza: Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Megyei Területfejlesztési és Környezetgazdálkodási Ügynökség Nonprofit Kft., 2013), pp. 262-269.

[16] I. Lente, "A csempeszkopácsi románkori templom falfestményeinek restaurálása", *Műemlékvédelem* 12 (1968): pp. 208-215, E.C. Harrach, "A magyarszecsődi r.k. templom kutatása és helyreállítása", *Magyar Műemlékvédelem* 7 (1974): pp. 125-143.

[17] A. Eastmond, ed., *Viewing Inscriptions in Late Antique and Medieval World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Modern *Disegno*: The Embodied Splendour of Lines

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The topic of my presentation is the role of drawing and script-like notation of dramatic poses and gestures in the service of monumental painting in modern figurative art. My two examples, equal in their emotional intensity and cosmic sense of scale, come from the Western Hemisphere, but from different contextual settings, the interlinkages of which are only now being discovered in their full complexity. These contexts include modern dance and theatre reforms, women's liberation, and esoteric spiritualities.

My two comparative cases, the Swiss artist Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918) and Finnish painter Eva Törnwall-Collin (1896-1982), represent different generations of artists. Both, however, incorporate an amalgamation of symbolist and expressionist interests in their monumental works.

Hodler

In the case of Hodler, my focus lies on his use of contour, with his idea of 'Splendour of Lines' (*Linienherrlichkeit*) expressed in the title of a cycle of paintings from ca. 1908-1909 depicting a female figure in intense dance-like attitudes.[1] Eva Törnwall saw examples of Hodler's work for the first time in 1908, when she, as a 12-year-old tourist, visited Switzerland with her parents (both of them architects), and re-encountered his works later on, as a young artist returning to continental Europe on study stays or with her spouse Marcus Collin (1882-1966), an artist himself, in part also to improve her fragile health.[2] In her concise autobiographical notes, written down in preparation for a volume of Finnish artist biographies published in 1950 by Hertta Tirranen, she retrospectively underlined the name of Hodler in her manuscript when referring to the art that she saw on her travels through Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland. She added that she felt very grateful for this early encounter with Hodler's work.[3]

One may wonder what might have so greatly impressed this young girl about the violent rhetoric of a male painter 43 years her senior whose imagery of women, characterized by strong allegorizing and aesthetizing impulses, might have felt as something external and other to femininity.[4] Hodler's public murals from the 1890s, on the other hand, depict gruesome and tragic episodes from the Swiss military history, such as the defeat to the French in the Battle of Marignano of 1515. Wounded or dying soldiers in various positions appear in the preparatory studies and sketches of this fresco cycle executed in 1897-1900 in the form of three lunettes at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich.[5]

Noteworthy formal features in Hodler's compositions include upright vertical lines meeting horizontal ones in a full angle, full profiles, and an overall impression of frontality, which, coupled with the clear contours, constitutes an homage to Hans Holbein. As Verena Senti-Schmidlin has pointed out, for Hodler, the contours of a human figure both expressed the individuality of the body and bore its decorative potential. The contour became articulated in the movements of the figure. The artist's task was to isolate the figure from its environment and bring out its characteristic outlines and rhythmic essence, something that had been instinctively grasped by the great masters.[6] Hodler's conscious aim was to arrest the constant flux of forms at moments when nature appeared optimally in its "most felicitous contours",[7] and he guided his students in capturing the outlines of such movements "as authentically as possible".[8]

The arrested, static positions invite the viewer to give them specific yet intuitive meanings in terms of a constantly evolving gestural vocabulary of emotions and passions. From 1905 on, a parallel interest in emotive formulas, or the morphology of *pathos*, was articulated and theorized by the German art historian Aby Warburg (1866-

1929) through his concept of *Pathosformel*. Warburg's emphasis was on the afterlife of motifs and gestural patterns of antiquity in the pictorial heritage of the West rather than on discoveries made through the observation of contemporary, live models. What is shared by Warburg and Hodler, however, is the Nietzschean idea that the symbolic order must be understood in relation to affective, obscure forces: the Dionysian undertone of ecstasy and terror. As Georges Didi-Huberman puts it in his monograph on Warburg, ancient tragedy can in the same vein be seen as both the central matrix and the central vortex of Western culture.[9] Another shared emphasis of theirs is the organic, non-schematic nature of this gestural language.

Törnwall-Collin

Regarding Eva Törnwall-Collin's art, my contextual framing is largely based on the works themselves, as there is no wealth of biographical material available (her spouse and both their children died before her). The main part of her production comprises half-length portraits or figures and landscapes. In a half-length self-portrait signed in 1916, the 20-year-old artist, who had just finished her studies, still presents her-

self wearing braids, just as a girl.[10] The portrait is characterized by a relatively large scale for a half-length format (65x54 cm) and a stern and somewhat rigid frontality, implying an inclination towards monumentality. Moreover, she chose to present herself in the act of sketching on a canvas, that is, drawing.

It is in Törnwall-Collin's studies for a pair of commissioned – and realized – monumental paintings that her fascination with Hodler's expression becomes evident. These were in fact painted as late as the 1930s. In 1932, she participated in the competition for the ceiling painting of the auditorium of the Finnish National Theatre (Suomen Kansallisteatteri) in Helsinki, submitting a compositional sketch (fig. 1) and a sketch of a selected detail. Her entry came fourth, but the donator commissioned two of the four scenes to be realized five years later as lunette paintings mounted above door openings in the foyer of another theatre in the city, the Swedish Theatre (Svenska Teatern). They were realized as oil paintings on canvas and glued to the concrete wall in the niches.[11]

In 1917, Finland had gained independence as a bilingual state with a large Finnish majority and a small but influential Swedish minority, which explains the two respective national theatres in the capital. The anonymous benefactor, who was later revealed to be the owner of an architectural decoration company, the entrepreneur Salomo Wuorio (1857-1938), later donated the original competition entries, including the two sketches by Eva Törnwall-Collin, to the Finnish National Gallery.

Törnwall-Collin's composition comprises four scenes from an international repertoire – thus completely omitting Finnish plays in the face of the nationalist fervour and the language feud dividing the young nation. The playwrights have been identified as being Euripides, Shakespeare, Molière, and August Strindberg (1849-1912), the modern Swedish author of naturalist and symbolist drama. Interestingly enough, three of the scenes represent topics related to violence against or by women. The most well known among these depicts Othello slaying Desdemona. My interpretation is that the two main scenes, on opposite sides, representing classical and modern tragedy, both depict a child murderess: Euripides' Medea and Kersti from Strindberg's play *The Crown Bride* (1901).[12] Medea kills

Fig. 1. Eva Törnwall-Collin, Sketch for a ceiling painting plannned for the Finnish National Theatre, 1932. Oil on wood, 122x122 cm. Helsinki, Gerda and Salomo Wuorio Collection, Finnish National Gallery/Ateneum Art Museum. (Photo by Hannu Aaltonen/Finnish National Gallery).

her husband's new bride, Glauce (or Creüsa), for whom he had deserted her, and her own two sons born to the treacherous husband. Kersti, on the other hand, murders her illegitimate newborn in order to be allowed to bear the crown of the honourable bride, as the unexpected possibility to marry the father of her child is presented to her thanks to the settlement of a feud between their families.

The choice is quite striking, as public art usually supported normative family values and an image of feminine motherliness and frailty.[13] Here, the theatre setting of course partly legitimizes and naturalizes the choice. Even so, the iteration of such a heavily taboo-laden thematic remains remarkable. Furthermore, the lighter Molière scene, a selection of types from different plays, quite bitingly ironizes the foolishness of the feminine woman, underlining the role of the theatre as a site for problematizing conventional gender dynamics and bourgeois values. In the scene, the folly and vanity of the social establishment is unveiled by a clever maidservant.

The realized pair of lunettes was chosen to represent comedy and tragedy through Molière and Euripides. The artist revealed in an interview that she was far more deeply engaged in the *Medea* scene.[14] In this scene (fig. 2), the figures' angularly wavering contours are integral to rendering a monumentalized pathos to the painfully static 'attitudes' and warped gestures that function as metonymic loci of the dramatic storyline.

A dance-like quality indeed characterizes the movements of the anguished characters of *Medea*, the heroine's husband Jason mourning the children, and King Creon, the devastated father of the slain bride – but especially those of Medea. Her hand gestures can be interpreted as a plea to the gods in the face of her terrible fate; and alas, the dragon-drawn chariot of Helios, the sun god and Medea's grandfather, is waiting in the background to carry her and her sons away in a *deus ex machina* manner. Medea's figure can be compared to Hodler's *Joyous Woman* (*Fröhliches Weib*) from ca. 1911 (fig. 3), a sequel to the *Splendour of Lines*, in the way both figures are united
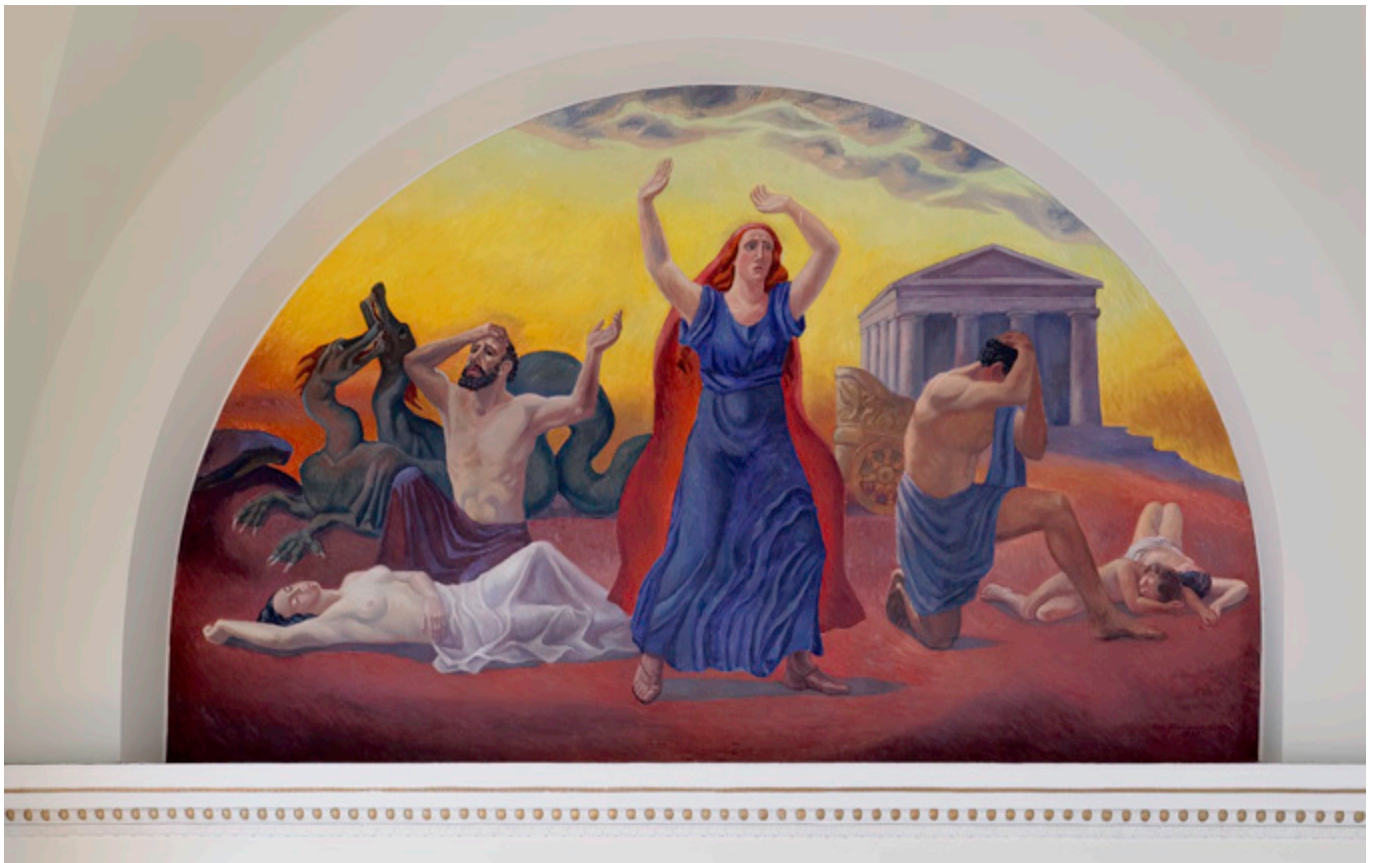

Fig. 2. Eva Törnwall-Collin, *Medea*, 1937. Oil on canvas glued to cement wall, 203x340 cm. Helsinki, Svenska Teatern. (Photo by Kia Orama/Pro Artibus Foundation).

Fig. 3. Ferdinand Hodler, *Fröhliches Weib*, c. 1911. Lg 2390, oil on canvas, 166x118.5 cm. Kunstmuseum Bern, on loan from a private owner (Obj_ID: 58297, Ref. No.: Bätschmann/Müller 3/2: 1444 [SIK 81037]). (Photo by Kunstmuseum Bern).

with the surrounding universe through their bodily motions.

Törnwall-Collin's sketches are preserved in the collection of the art-historically experimental 'Museum of Sketches' (Skissernas Museum – Museum of Artistic Process and Public Art), founded in 1934 as part of the University of Lund, Sweden, on the initiative of the local professor of art history Ragnar Josephson (1891-1966). The idea was to document and highlight the creative processes behind projects of public art. A large set of Törnwall-Collin's sketches, both drawings and pastels, was acquired for the museum directly from the artist in 1937. They illuminate the thoughtful consideration behind the message conveyed by the final lunette.

The focus lies on the wrongs done to women and children by men, who also eventually suffer the terrifying consequences of the imbalanced power dynamics and the intertwinement of sexuality and state affairs. Medea, princess of Colchis,

is a foreigner in Corinth, and when Jason decides to improve his position by deserting her and marrying Glauce, the local ruler's daughter, she loses all her citizenship rights, having fled Colchis on account of having helped Jason take the Golden Fleece from her father. Through her acts of violence, she is taking her life back into her own hands, albeit in the grimmest possible way. Yet, Euripides lets the sons be saved in the end, thus not really condemning her.[15]

The focal points of the sketches are the flaming figure of Medea and the victimhood of the blonde and pale Glauce. Medea's swirling red headscarf is easily mistaken for part of her loose hair, further underlining her fierceness. While playing with the fin de siècle aesthetic of the red-haired *femme fatale*, Törnwall-Collin focuses de facto on Medea's alarmed and distressed psychological state. She concentrated on the pleading gesture by which Medea claims justice from the cosmic forces instead of the gesture of holding the corpse of her baby in her hands, showing it to Jason.

The studies show a keen interest in the character of Glauce, who lies dead on the ground, only partially covered by the poisoned cloak, as sternly horizontal as Hodler's warriors. The sketches also include careful studies of Medea's head and hands, highlighting the centrality of the gestural language to the artist (fig. 4). One drawing in particular seems to contemplate the female characters in relation to each other.

One may ask how the kind of primal visual experience in her youth, which I assume in my argumentation, translates into a public commission as late as 30 years later. Certain interdisciplinary, transnational interlinkages are conceivable as the combining context, the most obvious of them being the early 20th-century interest in rhythmic movement and free dance as part of a vitalist reform culture (*Lebensreform*). Hodler was friends with the Swiss pedagogue Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950), who set as his goal to develop kinesthetics into an autonomous art form. Dalcroze's pedagogic institutes in the German-speaking world, especially the one in Hellerau-Dresden between 1910 and 1914, were frequently visited and reported on in articles and essays by Finnish gymnastics teachers and dance critics, and his students included the Finnish pioneer of modern dance and dance pedagogy Maggie Gripenberg (1881-1976).[16] Another student, the internation-

Fig. 4. Eva Törnwall-Collin, Sketch for the *Medea* lunette in Svenska Teatern, Helsinki, 1937. Pastel on paper, 64.7x47.8 cm. Lund, Museum of Artistic Process and Public Art. (Photo by Kim Westerström/Museum of Artistic Process and Public Art).

ally acclaimed German dancer Mary Wigman (née Marie Wiegmann, 1886-1973), gave a solo performance in Helsinki in October 1926.[17] While the Hellerau institute had made its reputation on the application of *la rythmique* to theatre,[18] Wigman

belonged to the pioneers of modernism believed by contemporary critics to embody the *demonic* dimension of 'feminine dance' and to articulate the metaphysical connection between the human being and her universe.[19] It has been argued that in her early work, Wigman redefined the Woman as the Demonic without denigrating her otherness.[20]

Eva Törnwall-Collin gradually became a committed member of the anthroposophic circles in Finland and incidentally visited Rudolf Steiner's Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, for the first time in 1937, right after finalizing the lunettes in Helsinki.[21] Steiner famously developed eurythmy, another form of rhythmic pedagogy expressive of his esoteric conviction, which seems to have directly informed some of Törnwall-Collin's later compositions. We may here detect both general and personal connections to the occult roots of modernism.[22]

Conclusion

Through her monumental project in Helsinki, the Finnish female artist produced an homage to Hodler's idiosyncratic linear expression, thereby transforming the figurative imagery of the manic sexuality of the *femme fatale* into a eurythmic vehicle of spiritual renewal. Törnwall-Collin's 1937 *Medea* lunette may be seen as an expression of a persisting interest in the development of an emotive language of gestures outlined in movement. Hodler's visual formulas proved to be applicable to new contexts, while at the same time, the modern interest in line drawing, or *disegno*, retained its intimate connection with topoi of female corporeality in figurative art.

Notes

[1] E.g., oil versions of 1908 (private collection), and of ca. 1909 (Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Dr. Max Kuhn-Stiftung).

[2] For the artist's biography, see R. Konttinen, "Eva Törnwall-Collin – taidemaalari naamion takana", in J.-H. Tihinen, ed., *Eva Törnwall-Collin* (Ekenäs: Pro Artibus, 2017), pp. 35-57.

[3] Undated manuscript, Hertta Tirranen Collection (Donation collection of the Department of Art History at the University of Helsinki), Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki. The published volume by Tirranen is: *Suomen Taiteilijoita Juho Rissasesta Jussi Mäntyseen. Elämäkertoja* (Porvoo and Helsinki: WSOY, 1950).

[4] Cf. E. Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 51-52.

[5] E.g., dying warriors in the second cartoon for *The Return from Marignano* (1897-1898, pastel on cardboard, private collection).

[6] V. Senti-Schmidlin, *Rhythmus und Tanz in der Malerei. Zur Bewegungsästhetik im Werk von Ferdinand Hodler und Ludwig von Hoffmann* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2007), p. 97.

[7] "[I]n den angenehmsten Linien". Cited in C.A. Loosli, *Ferdinand Hodler. Leben, Werk und Nachlass 1: Das Leben Ferdinand Hodlers* (Bern: R. Suter, 1921), p. 137; V. Senti-Schmidlin, *Rhythmus und Tanz in der Malerei*, cit., p. 98.

[8] "[S]o treu als möglich". *Ivi*.

[9] G. Didi-Huberman, *The Surviving Image. Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art*, tr. H. Mendelsohn (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017/2002), p. 90. See also D. Fässler, "Körperausdrucksformen zwischen Tradition und modernen Ausdruckstanz", *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 51, no. 4 (1994): p. 335. The art historian's spouse, Mary Warburg (née Hertz), was an artist close to the German symbolist circles.

[10] For a reproduction of the oil painting in the collections of the Pro Artibus Foundation, see J.-H. Tihinen, ed., *Eva Törnwall-Collin* (Ekenäs: Pro Artibus, 2017), p. 10.

[11] For this information, I thank the conservator of the Pro Artibus Foundation, Kaj Nylund, who restored the lunette paintings in 2011. I also wish to thank the Foundation for inviting me to participate in an exhibition and catalogue project on the artist (exhibited in Helsinki and Tammisaari-Ekenäs in 2017-2018), as well as for Kia Orama's photos.

[12] See T. Palin, "Ihmiskuvauksen monumentaalinen draama Eva Törnwall-Collinin tuotannossa", in J.-H. Tihinen, ed., *Eva Törnwall-Collin*, cit., pp. 94-97.

[13] For Finland, see e.g., J. Ruohonen, *Imagining a New Society: Public Painting as Politics in Postwar Finland* (Turku: University of Turku, 2013).

[14] S. T–lt. [S. Tandefelt], "Eva Collins lunetter för Svenska teatern", *Hufvudstadsbladet* (September 1, 1937).

[15] C.E. Luschnig, *Granddaughter of the Sun: A Study of Euripides' Medea* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. xi, 1-4, 9-10.

[16] See J. Laakkonen, *Tanssia yli rajojen. Modernin tanssin transnationaaliset verkostot* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2018), pp. 50-59.

[17] Wigman gave this solo performance on 7 October at the Opera House (today known as the Alexander Theatre) in Helsinki, accompanied by the Dresden-based pianist Will Goetze. See e.g., Anon., "Mary Wigman tänään Oopperatalolla", *Helsingin Sanomat* (October 7, 1926).

[18] I. Spector, *Rhythm and Life: The Work of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1990), p. 197.

[19] J. Laakkonen, *Tanssia yli rajojen*, cit., pp. 65, 166.

[20] S.A. Manning, *Ecstasy and the Demon: Feminism and Nationalism in the Dances of Mary Wigman* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 130 (republished as *Ecstasy and the Demon: The Dances of Mary Wigman*, with a new introduction, by the University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

[21] Undated manuscript, Hertta Tirranen Collection (Donation collection of the Department of Art History at the University of Helsinki), Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki.

[22] See J.-H. Tihinen, "Eva Törnwall-Collin ja mystiikka taiteellisena työtapana", in J.-H. Tihinen, ed., *Eva Törnwall-Collin*, cit., pp. 125-139. For Hodler's links with Rosicrucianism, see W.H.L. Ogrinc, "Boys in Art. The Artist and His Model: Ferdinand and Hector Hodler. A New Approach", *Journal of Homosexuality* 20, no. 1/2 (1991): pp. 71-102.

Brazilian *Pontos Riscados*: Spiritual Invocation, Nomination, Geometric Thought

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In Afro-Brazilian religions, *pontos riscados* are magical diagrams that mediate between drawing and writing. They have many functions, notably to invoke a spiritual entity or to identify – when drawn or worn by a medium – the entity that took possession of her/his body. Nowadays, *pontos riscados* are used mainly in the context of Umbanda, a religion mostly based on the Kongo cults to the ancestors, but which also assimilates elements of the Yoruba religion of the Orishas, of Christianism, the Spiritism of Allan Kardec, European magic, and Amerindian religions. Therefore, just as Umbanda itself, the *pontos* "tell a complex history of cultural contact and experience in a form of geometric thought".[1] In this paper, by focusing on *pontos* produced in Rio de Janeiro, we will discuss aspects of their origins, uses, making, and iconography, as well as briefly historicize their reception.

According to a popular thesis, *pontos riscados* have a Central-African origin.[2] They would make part of what Barbaro Martinez-Ruiz calls "Kongo graphic writing systems", borrowing the expression from an article written by Gerhard Kubik. Martinez-Ruiz defines these systems as:

> codes of shared knowledge that develop and communicate cosmology, mythology, and philosophy and define aesthetic realities. They perpetuate and validate collective memories, epics, legends, myths, and ancient knowledge and play an integral role in the definition and development of African and African-[American] cultures and in the practice of traditional and contemporary African-based religions.[3]

In this definition, the word 'Kongo' is central. As explained by Robert Farris Thompson, "spelling Kongo with a K instead of a C, Africanists distinguish Kongo civilization and the Bakongo people from the colonial entity called the Belgian Congo and the present-day People's Republic of Congo-

Brazzaville […]".[4] A subset of the broader Bantu culture, the Bakongo first settled in Central Africa as a result of large and complex migrations across the continent.[5] Key Bakongo cultural and religious concepts are shared with other peoples, such as the the Punu, the Teke, the Suku, and some ethnic groups of northern Angola. All these peoples suffered the ordeals of the transatlantic slave trade and the forced work on plantations and in cities in the Western Hemisphere. Therefore, centuries of slavery brought Kongo memories and beliefs to the Americas. The diverse graphic traditions found not only in Brazil, but also in Belize, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, or Trinidad would become testimonies of this process.

But *pontos riscados* are not exclusively Central-African in origin. Criticizing what they interpret as the "search for Africa"[6] in works by art historians such as Thompson or Martinez-Ruiz, Julien Bonhomme et Katerina Kerestetzi have more recently stressed the contributions of European magic to African American religious graphic traditions. According to their view,

> Si, dans leur forme et leur usage, les graphismes de l'abakuá et du palo monte [in Cuba], mais également ceux du vaudou haïtien, de l'umbanda et des Églises spirituelles baptistes partagent un air de famille, *celui-ci ne tient sans doute pas tant à leurs racines africaines qu'à l'influence ubiquitaire de la magie européenne*. […] il s'agit vraisemblablement d'un héritage de la magie talismanique européenne et de la théorie des signatures sur laquelle elle s'appuie depuis la Renaissance.[7] [emphasis added]

It is necessary to recognize, however, that, at least since the 1980s, researchers such as Thompson or Roger Bastide already recognized – albeit to a lesser extent – the importance of European esoteric literature for the iconography of the *pontos*.

Fig. 1. The medium Zélia de Moraes in front of the *ponto riscado* of the Caboclo das Sete Encruzilhadas, in the Our Lady of Mercy's Spiritist Tent, undated photo.

In addition, they cited other sources: Roman Catholicism; the Yoruba, Fon and Ewe religions; and even elements of Masonry.

In Umbanda, *pontos riscados* perform various roles. They may have apotropaic functions, but are more frequently used to summon or identify a bewildering multitude of spiritual entities: Yoruba goddesses and gods and their matching Catholic saints; Native Brazilian spirits (*caboclos*); deceased black elderly slaves (*pretos velhos*), children (*erês*), sailors, or gypsies; etc. With the *pontos*, literally hundreds of spiritual entities are invoked today in Brazil. In *terreiros* (Afro-Brazilian temples) spread all over the country, these entities return, talk, sing, and dance in the body and voice of their devotees.

As signs of spiritual invocation and nomination, *pontos riscados* are usually transient. They are drawn on shrine floors using charcoal, gunpowder or, more commonly, a kind of thick chalk called *pemba* – a term derived from the Quicongo word *mpemba*, 'chalk', which correspond to the Quimbundo word *pemba,* 'lime'.[8] In an un-

dated photograph, we see the religious Zélia de Moraes, a medium into the Our Lady of Mercy's Spiritist Tent – founded in the early 20th century and considered by many to be the first official Umbanda centre – kneeling before several *pontos* drawn with white *pemba* (fig. 1). Some *pontos*, in the form of five-pointed stars, are being used "in a Kongo manner to 'center' consecrated water in vessels for spirits".[9] Most noteworthy is the drawing of an arrow-pierced heart, the *ponto riscado* of the famous *Caboclo das Sete Encruzilhadas* (Seven Crossroads Caboclo), the temples' main spiritual guide. As briefly mentioned before, *caboclos* are Amerindian spiritual entities and they can be found in almost all Afro-Brazilian religious denominations.[10]

But *pontos riscados* may also be permanently rendered on relevant spiritual objects, such as drinking cups, embroideries, liturgical musical instruments, etc. Many examples of this can be found in contemporary Umbanda *terreiros*, such as the Ogum Megê Spiritist Temple, located in the city of Cabuçu, Rio de Janeiro. In this place of

Figs. 2a-b. *Pontos riscados* in the Ogum Megê Spiritist Temple, Cabuçu, Rio de Janeiro.

worship, the *pontos* are no longer drawn on the floor but are, for example, permanently painted on small canvases that surround the main altar.

In a prominent place, just below an image of Jesus Christ – designated as 'the Supreme Medium' – we see the *ponto riscado* of the temple's main spiritual guide, the *Caboclo Ogum Megê* (fig. 2a). Within a red circle, it shows several iconographic elements: blue stars, a brown cross, and, most notably, green arrows and two crossed swords painted in red. The arrows are traditionally associated with the *caboclos*. On the other hand, the swords are connected to Ogún, the warrior Orisha of the Yorubas, lord of iron, agriculture, and technology.

In the Ogum Megê Spiritist Temple, *pontos* are also sewn onto the mediums' clothing. In this case, the *pontos*' function is essentially to identify the entity that has taken possession of the medium's body. An example is the *ponto riscado* of an Eshu, composed of three crossed tridents, found on the long black cape that a medium used while in a state of trance (fig. 2b). This specific iconographic attribute – the trident – is a palimpsest of diverse cultural allusions, as summarized by Thompson:

[In Rio's Umbanda occurred] a fusion of the cross within a circle, the Kongo concept of the crossroads, with the Yoruba spirit of the crossroads, Eshu-Elegba. Because of the believed unpredictability of the latter West Coast spirit, he comes to be compared with the Biblical Devil. And all of these qualities are present in [Eshu's] *ponto*.[11]

This amalgam of different cultural references exemplifies well how the *pontos*' exegesis may be problematic. Although in Umbanda's *pontos* some iconographic associations may be common – as we have seen, arrows are associated with the *caboclos*, swords with Ogún, tridents with the Eshus, etc. – these associations are not exhaustive. As pointed out by Raul Lody, "the *pontos* are eminently creative and even personal. There are *pontos* of general knowledge – I would call them 'classics' –, and others invented from the communicative need intrinsic to in the visual production of the *ponto riscado* itself".[12] Therefore, only the knowledge of the context of production of a given *ponto* can ensure an appropriate interpretation. This raises difficulties, especially when we deal with *pontos* produced in earlier periods and lacking documentation.
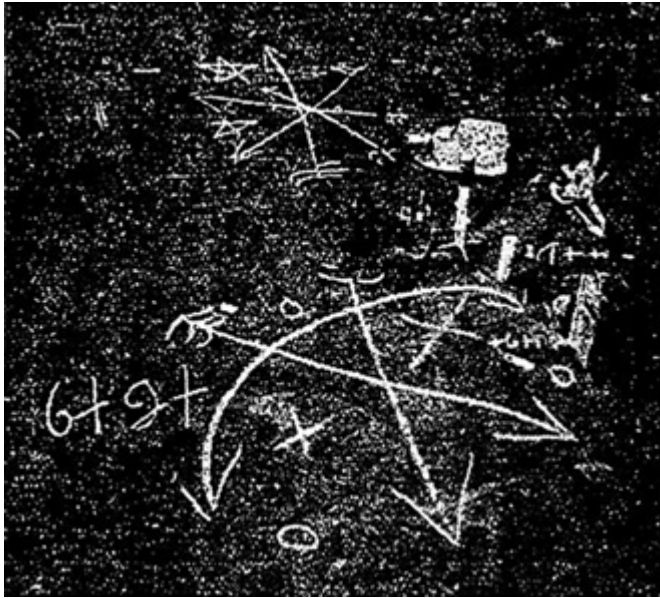
Fig. 3. Photo published in *O Globo*, Rio de Janeiro, year III, no. 682 (June 15, 1927).

The lack of documentation also makes it difficult to properly historicize the *pontos* as a broader artistic category. In Brazil, the practice of drawing magical diagrams on the ground of enslaved Africans and their descendants probably dates to colonial times. But testimonies concerning the *pontos riscados* are rare until the early 20th century. This mainly has to do with racist prejudices that deeply affected the reception of Afro-Brazilian religions, as their devotees suffered punishments and/or restrictions on religious worship as regulated by Brazilian Colonial and Imperial laws, such as the so-called *Ordenações Filipinas* or the *Political Constitution of the Empire of Brazil*, dated 1824.

In the first decades after the proclamation of the Republic, in 1889, racism and repression against Afro-Brazilian religions were expressed even more systematically. The first Republican Criminal Code, enacted in October 1890, reiterated cultural values that justified the police repression of Afro-Brazilian religions. Until the early 1940s, these religions were often framed by articles related to the so-called 'crimes against public health', particularly the ones punishing the practice of Spiritism, magic or spells for illicit purposes, and the practice of faith healing.[13]

It is precisely in the context of this police repression that the first visual records of *pontos* that we found appear in the press of Rio. A good example is a photo dating March 1927 appeared on the headline of the newspaper *O Globo* reporting a police raid targeting a house in the Tijuca neighborhood (fig. 3). The religious person who gave consultations there was a black man named José Iginio, who announced himself as 'son of Shàngó' – the Orisha of justice, thunder, and lightning. The photo shows some *pontos* that Iginio had drawn on the floor of the front room of his house and its original caption tells that, thanks to them, Iginio "bring[ed] down the spirits".[14] It is difficult to retrieve the exact meaning of Iginio's *pontos,* although a preliminary analysis reveals the predominance of arrows, an iconographic element strongly associated with the *caboclos* but also with Oshoosi, the Orisha of hunting and forests.

The aura of racism that has surrounded Afro-Brazilian religions and justified their persecution, as witnessed by José Iginio's arrest, began to lose *momentum* in the 1930s. From the mid-20th century onwards, it became common for artists linked to the institutionalized field of art in Brazil to appropriate elements of Afro-Brazilian religious arts. In this context, the *pontos* affirmed themselves as a repertoire of forms and were used as inspiration for renowned black artists such as Abdias do

Fig. 4. 'Umbanda rings' ad, published in *A Noite Ilustrada*, Rio de Janeiro, no. 1192 (January 15, 1952).

Nascimento (1914-2011), Rubem Valentim (1922-1991), Emanoel Araújo (born in 1940), or Jorge dos Anjos (born in 1957).

Even more interesting was the progressive appreciation that Afro-Brazilian sacred art received among the middle sectors of Brazilian society, in cities such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. This process marked a vast visual culture that manifested itself in the most diverse media and had a widespread diffusion. The appreciation of Umbanda as a legitimate and even 'genuinely' Brazilian religion[15] made it possible for its devotees to instrumentalize their religious belonging as an important element in defining their own identities. It was not long before that companies began to produce personal objects that exploited this idea of belonging and had apotropaic functions. An example of this phenomenon is an ad for the sale of 'Umbanda rings', published in the Rio's newspaper *A Noite Ilustrada* in January 1952 (fig. 4).

The ad proposes a systematization of the iconography of *pontos* referring to various spiritual entities. In this image, we see, for example: a *ponto* of 'Eshu Tranca Rua', with its characteristic trident; a *ponto* of 'São Jorge da Ronda', which bears the typical swords of Ogún, St. George's syncretic equivalent in Rio's Umbanda pantheon; or a *ponto* of 'Shàngó das Matas' (literally, Shàngó of the Forests), in which the ax of the thunder Orisha intersects with four arrows that refer to the *caboclos*, the ancestral inhabitants of Brazilian forests. This systematization is, of course, a particular and contingent one, and we should not

assume that, by the mid-20th century, these entities were invoked by the exact same *pontos* in all of Rio's *terreiros*. But the ad is a good example of the constancy of some iconographic elements and of the syntactic logic of the *pontos riscados*, in which, according to specific needs, diverse elements can be creatively combined to evoke a certain spiritual entity.

This paper was mainly an attempt to present the *pontos riscados* to an academic public. Our hope is that it may help establish the *pontos* as an original and aesthetically potent graphic system, which requires the same attention that scholars of art in Brazil reserve for their canonical objects. Huge work has to be done: beyond the expansion of our historicization effort and the fieldwork to be carried out in *terreiros*, there are other bibliographic sources to be analyzed, especially the catalogues of *pontos* organized by the Afro-Brazilian religious themselves.

We believe that this work is urgent, if we consider the resurgence of religious racism and fascist ideas of all kinds in Brazil. In recent years, *terreiros* have once again been invaded and their sacred objects destroyed, no longer by the police this time, but by Christian fundamentalists.[16] The relative appreciation that Afro-Brazilian religions such as Umbanda and their aesthetic expressions have known since mid-20th century is, therefore, strongly threatened. Politically engaged academic research can help combat this upsurge in religious racism, and the *pontos riscados* may well be one of the themes for this engagement.

Notes

[1] R.F. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit. African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy*, Kindle edition (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1984), location 1687.

[2] Id., "The Structure of Recollection: The Kongo New World Visual Tradition", in R.F. Thompson, J. Cornet, eds., *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1981), pp. 151-154.

[3] B. Martinez-Ruiz, *Kongo Graphic Writing and Other Narratives of the Sign* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), p. 48.

[4] R.F. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, cit., locations 1441-1443.

[5] B. Martinez-Ruiz, *Kongo Graphic Writing*, cit., pp. 15-16; N. Lopes, *Bantos, malês e identidade negra* (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica Editora, 2011), pp. 107-108.

[6] S. Capone. *Searching for Africa in Brazil: Power and Tradition in Candomblé* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

[7] J. Bonhomme, K. Kerestetzi, "Les signatures des dieux. Graphismes et action rituelle dans les religions afro-cubaines", *Gradhiva*, 22 (2015): p. 83.

[8] N. Lopes, *Enciclopédia brasileira da diáspora africana*, Recurso eletrônico (São Paulo: Selo Negro, 2011), locations 20481-20482.

[9] R.F. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, cit., locations 1648-1649.

[10] R. Prandi, A. Vallado, A.R. Souza, "Candomblé de Caboclo em São Paulo", in R. Prandi, *Encantaria Brasileira: o livro dos mestres, caboclos e encantado* (Rio de Janeiro: Pallas, 2011), pp. 120-145.

[11] R.F. Thompson, "The Structure of Recollection", cit., p. 153.

[12] R. Lody, *Dicionário de arte sacra & técnicas afro-brasileiras* (Rio de Janeiro: Pallas, 2003), p. 202.

[13] *Decreto nº 847, de 11 de Outubro de 1890 Promulga o Codigo Penal*.

[14] *O Globo*, Rio de Janeiro, year III, no. 682 (June 15, 1927): p. 1.

[15] J.H.M. Oliveira, *Das macumbas à umbanda: uma análise histórica da construção de uma religião brasileira* (Limeira: Editora do Conhecimento, 2008).

[16] A. Valle, "Afro-Brazilian Religions, Visual Culture and Iconoclasm", *IKON* 11 (2018): pp. 215-222.

MOTION: TRANSFORMATION

35th Congress of the International Committee
of the History of Arts

Florence, 1-6 September 2019

Congress Proceedings

– Part 2 –

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edited by Marzia Faietti and Gerhard Wolf

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SESSION 6

Building an Icon:
Architecture from Project to Product

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Of Architecture, Icons, and Meaning: Encountering the Pre-Modern City

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Shadows of Urban Utopia: Japanese Housing in Colonial Manchuria

Elena O'Neill
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Introduction to Session 6*

The session 'Building an Icon: Architecture from Project to Product', organized for the 35th CIHA International Congress, was entirely devoted to architecture. Specifically, it responded to the overall purpose of the Congress – to explore the dynamics of *transformation* in artistic production – by focusing on the intrinsic relationship between the two extremes at either end of the life cycle of architectural objects: the material, procedural mechanisms of their making, and their unpredictable afterlife in the domain of images. Ultimately, it proposed *non*-teleological, *post*-formalist approaches to architectural history as a way of understanding the metamorphic stages of architecture's coming-into-being, especially when transcending chronological or geographical boundaries.

When drawing our attention to the iconic quality of architecture, both of the single object and of the city as a whole, a useful conceptual tool is provided by a classic text on urban theory, *The Image of the City*, published in 1960 by Kevin Lynch (fig. 1).[1] In particular, it is the popular neologism 'imageability' that helps us to define, for the most outstanding architectural works, their innate tendency to be reduced to pure images. Lynch defines imageability as "that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking *a strong image in any given observer*. It is that shape, color, or arrangement which facilitates the making of *vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images* of the environment".[2] The book addressed what was perceived as a new phenomenon, produced by an unprecedented metropolitan condition and experienced by an increasingly larger population of city inhabitants; in Lynch's words, "the conscious remolding of the large-scale physical environment has been possible only recently; and so the problem of environmental imageability is a new one".[3]
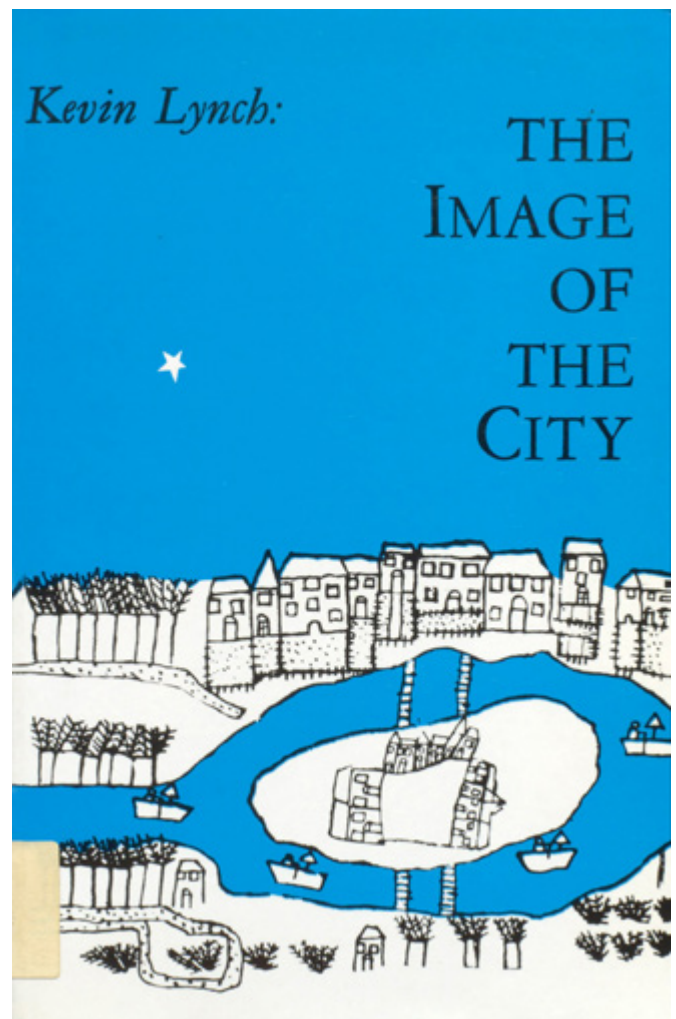
Fig. 1. Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1960), cover image.

The Image of the City started a movement in the revision of modernity that continued throughout the entire decade of the 1960s and into the 1970s, with influential texts such as Rossi's *L'architettura della città* (1966), Venturi's *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972), and Rowe's *Collage City* (1978).[4] Despite their differing approaches, the common denominator of the theory elaborated over those years was an interpretation of urban

architecture as a fabric of signifiers, a system of readable symbols, and a network of identifiable signs: an architectural landscape of *icons*. It was the answer to a moment of crisis that showed the abrupt end of modernist utopia and the failure of its technological optimism, somehow symbolized by a spectacular episode in the story of the late 20th-century architecture: the 1976 fire that destroyed Buckminster Fuller's Biosphere in Montreal (fig. 2).[5] What was left afterwards, and what does remain for us today? Undoubtedly, an unprecedented visibility for an increasing number of architectural icons which appear to be conceived mainly for circulation as easy-to-recognize shapes or landmarks; a phenomenon that speaks of the overwhelming availability of visual material in our contemporary world, and ultimately brings us – in the words of Reinier de Graaf, partner of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) – to "a boredom for iconic architecture" because "when everything is an icon, nothing is an icon anymore".[6]

One would assume that the inevitable consequence of such a condition would be the evanescence of architecture's physicality. However, when looking closely into the making of these iconic components of our architectural imagery, a more complex tension between formalism and the mechanisms of production actually emerges. Let us consider one telling example, that of the Sydney Opera House, Jørn Utzon's masterpiece, designed in 1957 and completed in 1973 (fig. 3). The choice is not as random as it might appear. The story of this building's construction – masterfully unpacked in recent years by architectural historian Françoise Fromonot[7] – reveals how its apparently spontaneous formal eloquence is, in reality, the product of a long process of adaptation to the very necessities of production, "in favor of the rigor and the economy of a system".[8] When retracing the tormented history of the conflict between Utzon's experimentalism and ethos of building on the one hand, and factors such as scale, project timelines, and external disturbances outside the architect's control on the other, the formalist interpretation of this stunning example of late modernism proves insufficient. What at first sight would appear as a self-referential playfulness of forms, or at best an 'architecture *parlante*' with references to a maritime iconography, is in fact the product of a relentless effort to dominate, by means of geometric design, problems that occurred gradually during the seventeen-year-long erection of this enormous mass of concrete, steel, glass, and ceramics (figs. 4-5). A contemporary example of "building-in-time," to borrow Marvin Trachtenberg's pithy definition.[9]

Seen in this light, it should not seem too provocative to compare Sydney's Opera House with a

Fig. 2. Photograph of the fire that destroyed Buckminster Fuller's Biosphere in Montreal, 1976.

Fig. 3. Jørn Utzon, Sydney Opera House, 1959-1973.
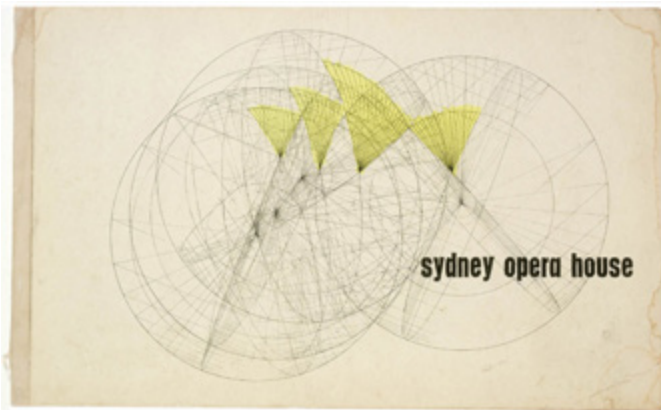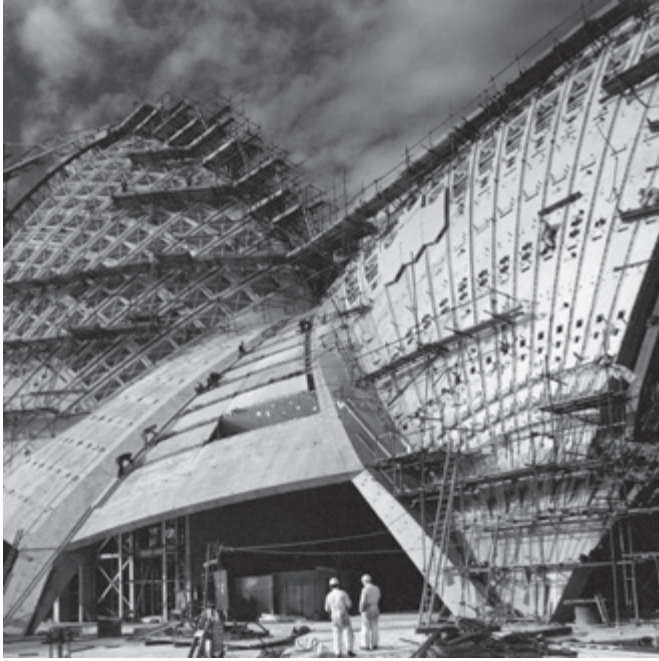
Figs. 4-5. Jørn Utzon, Sydney Opera House and *The Yellow book* (front cover, 1962).

much different, distant in both time and space, but equally popular architectural icon: Brunelleschi's dome of Santa Maria del Fiore (fig. 6). The structure "towering above the skies, vast enough to cover the entire Tuscan population with its shadow" – to employ Alberti's famous description from *De Pictura*[10] – stands among the most recognizable monuments of the Italian Renaissance. A gigantic object whose profile is automatically associated with the picturesque skyline of Florence, Brunelleschi's dome has been a recurring presence in any canonic view of the city since the moment of its erection, from Alinari's photographs to the provoking collages inspired by Bruno Zevi, published in the exhibition catalogue *Brunelleschi anticlassico* of 1977 (figs. 7-8).[11] However, one can hardly find an example of an architecture that was more

determined by its process of construction. Again in Trachtenberg's words, at Santa Maria del Fiore "the building itself, the full-scale fabric, becomes an agent of its own further shaping".[12] Rather than being the pure form-maker of Renaissance architectural style, Brunelleschi thus emerges as a cunning governor of the conditions of work and an ingenious inventor of technological solutions: someone capable of imposing his own authorial imprint on this outstanding piece of architecture by providing a processual, time-related solution to the problem of its realization, thanks to continuous redesign and to his outstanding skills in time management.

The history of Brunelleschi's dome is strictly related to the progression of material studies in architecture: an approach that is somehow demanded by the unique characteristics of the building itself, as revealed, for instance, by the work of a theorist of conservation like Piero Sanpaolesi, from the 1930s onwards.[13] However, for the purposes of this introduction, its case also poses the question of how scholarship could rethink the history of earlier periods with a pro-

Fig. 6. *Brunelleschi's dome at Santa Maria del Fiore*, 1426. Florence, Archivio di Stato.

Fig. 7. Florence, Santa Maria del Fiore in a 19th-century photo.

cess-based approach that has proven to be so crucial to the theory of contemporary architecture. In other words, of how architectural history can overcome the traditional paradigms of linguistic analysis, antiquarian studies, contextualism, and patronage. Fortunately, this is a path that has already been opened by scholarship, which addressed both the issue of authorship in the process of architectural production and the problematic definition of the "degree of participation in the relationship between person and artwork", in the words of Alina Payne.[14] Within this critical frame, drawing can be considered as the space for personal expression in a necessarily mediated process like that of the art of building: an art that is "allographic", as Nelson Goodman defined it in 1968, and therefore needs to rely on a system of notation in order to ensure authenticity and the final work's compliance with authorial intentions.[15]
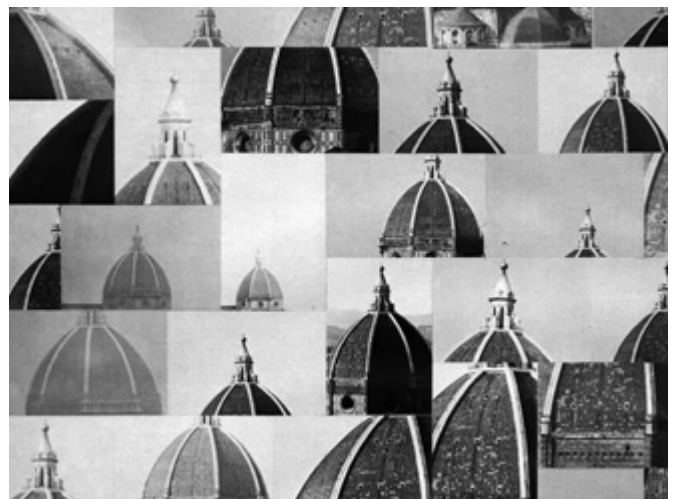
Fig. 8. Florence, Santa Maria del Fiore, from F. Capolei, P. Sartogo, eds., *Brunelleschi anti-classico. Filippo Brunelleschi, sesto centenario della nascita, mostra critica nel refettorio e chiostri di Santa Maria Novella, Firenze* (Firenze: Centro Di, 1977).

Does this leave space to seek more than mere formal analysis in the attempt to study artistic individualities, when making architectural history? We believe so, and this view is equally disclosed by Elena O'Neill in her contribution to the session. Among the consequences of this redefinition of authorship is the increasingly urgent demand to explore architecture's modes of production, including the organization of work and the strict relationship between financial strategies and measurability, as well as the impact of architectural 'imageability' on these processes, as both Sharon Smith and Gloria Yu Yang argue in their presentations. Analyses of the entrepreneurial management of building sites by prominent architects of the past have certainly been carried out, as in the case of Michelangelo, with the publications of William Wallace and, more recently, Vitale Zanchettin;[16] accounts of early modern building practices, on the other hand, have already been proposed by scholars such as Pier Nicola Pagliara or Hermann Schlimme.[17] But such research remains isolated, and much work must still be done to unpack the implications of the process of production for the history of architecture. The session 'Building an Icon: Architecture from Project to Product' certainly opens this conversation.

We conceived the session 'Building an Icon: Architecture from Project to Product' as a testament to world architecture and its diverse execution. In our planning, we envisioned it as a truly international endeavor, and we encouraged contributors to embrace a pluralistic approach that would shed light on a broad transcultural vision of architecture as both a project and a product.

The session's presentations opened with Sharon Smith, Head of Distinctive Collections and Associate Academic at the Arizona State University in the United States. Smith's paper *Of Architecture, Icons, and Meaning: Encountering the Pre-modern City* explored iconic aspects of architecture in two diverse cultural milieus, demonstrated through a comparative study on the urban image of Florence under Lorenzo il Magnifico (r. 1469-1494) and of Mamluk Cairo under Al-Ashraf Qa'it Bay (r. 1468-1496) in the late 15th century. Analyzing Via Laura in Florence and Azbakiyya in Cairo, two urban districts developed during this period, Smith argued that in spite of the differences between the Christian city of Florence and the Muslim city of Cairo, with their contrasting religious and political institutions and structures of government, remarkably

similar cultural and economic developments occurred in both cities, prompting dynamic urban expansion plans. Both rulers – one descending from a dynasty of bankers and the other from a dynasty of slave soldiers – sought to legitimize their positions, ideologies, and worldviews by transforming the urban landscape of these respective cities.

Gloria Yu Yang, Assistant Professor at the School of Letters, Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan, took us to the 20th century. Her paper *Shadows of Bright Houses: Photographs of Architecture in Colonial Manchuria (1900-1945)* presented an analytical approach to images of plans and photographs of residential houses displayed in the House Renovation Exhibition, the first exhibition on modern housing held in Dalian in 1922. During the first half of the 20th century, Japanese photographers, journalists, and architects visited colonial Manchuria (today's northeast China) and left a tremendous collection of photographs of buildings there, including government offices, commercial buildings, and residential houses. Yang examined these photographs from a different perspective, not merely considering them as a reflection of ideologies, but instead focusing on their visual power and function within the historical context of housing reforms in Japan, the exchange of people, objects, and ideas between Japan and Manchuria, and colonial tourism in the early century.

Elena O'Neill, Professor at the Visual Arts Graduate Program, Faculty of Human Sciences, Universidad Católica del Uruguay (UCU), revisited the architecture of Eladio Dieste (1917-2000). In her paper *The Architecture of Eladio Dieste: Challenging Technology, Structure, and Beauty*, she emphasized Dieste's innovative handling of traditional and indigenous materials, and how he became a pioneer in terms of structures, use of materials, and architectural forms. His concerns lay in stability, aesthetics, and form, where form is not the result of an artistic conception but of the effectiveness and behavior of materials. O'Neill approached Dieste's architecture from the understanding that architects are not to express the subject matter of their time, but rather to provide subject matter to their time.

Morgan Ng, Assistant Professor at Yale University in the Unites States, emphasized the relationship between architecture, visual culture, and technical sciences in his paper *The Iconicity of On-site Architectural Drawings in the Renaissance*. He

paid particular attention to exemplary projects executed by major architects such as Giovan Battista Bertani and Giacomo della Porta, whose full-scale architectural drawings were executed on solid architectural surfaces and celebrated as objects of marvel. These graphic works acquired a cultural status in the early modern period as significant architectural icons in themselves.

Alina Payne, Paul E. Geier Director of Villa I Tatti in Florence, The Harvard Center for Italian Renaissance Studies and Alexander P. Misheff Professor of History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University in the United States, concluded 'Building an Icon: Architecture from Project to Product' with her paper *The Architect's Hand: 'Making' Tropes and Their Afterlife*. Payne delved into the thematic heart of the session: the passage of architecture from project to finished building and the many activities and different players involved. She pointed out the conditions of architecture that tend to be either overlooked or taken for granted, in addition to the architects' oft-expressed desire for more involvement in the making of a building and their frustration with their limited role. She discussed the origin myths

of architecture and the definitions of the architect's work embedded within them – definitions that, for a self-referential art, have become the ultimate reference points. Payne also emphasized the transcultural relationships between the East and the West, using as examples Brunelleschi's *Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore* (completed 1436) and the Ottoman mosques of Istanbul during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566), especially the Süleymaniye Mosque by imperial architect Mimar Sinan (completed 1557).

The four articles assembled here are based, for the most part, on the papers presented at the session 'Building an Icon: Architecture from Project to Product', prepared for the 35th CIHA International Congress held in Florence, Italy in 2019. One paper from the session was published elsewhere. The editors and co-chairs of the session would like to express their thanks and appreciation to all participants for their contributions, which inspired – and, we hope, will continue to invite – fruitful discussions.

Filiz Çakır Phillip, Dario Donetti

Notes

* The authors of this Introduction wish to thank The Getty Foundation, which contributed to funding the session in 2019, as well as the Italian CIHA Committee and everyone who participated in the organization of this conference, particularly Marzia Faietti for her constant support.

1 K. Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1960).

2 *Ibid.*, p. 9. Italics added.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

4 A. Rossi, *L'architettura della città* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1966); R. Venturi, D. Scott Brown, S. Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1972); C. Rowe, F. Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1972).

5 Cf. J.M. Montaner, *Dopo il movimento moderno. L'architettura della seconda metà del Novecento* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1996): pp. 111-113.

6 The citation comes from a lecture delivered by R. de Graaf at the Slovak University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture on June 18, 2015 and titled "Is Iconicity Good for Architecture?" whose recording is available at: <oma.eu/lectures/is-iconicity-good-for-architecture>.

7 F. Fromonot, *Jørn Utzon, architetto della Sydney Opera House* (Milano: Electa, 1998).

8 *Ibid.*, p. 87.

9 M. Trachtenberg, *Building-in-Time from Giotto to Alberti and Modern Oblivion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

10 Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting and On Sculpture*, ed. and trans. by C. Grayson (London: Phaidon, 1972), p. 33.

11 F. Capolei, P. Sartogo, eds., *Brunelleschi anti-classico. Filippo Brunelleschi, sesto centenario della nascita, mostra critica nel refettorio e chiostri di Santa Maria Novella, Firenze* (Firenze: Centro Di, 1977); cf. also B. Zevi, "Brunelleschi anticlassico", *L'architettura - cronache e storia*, no. 262/263 (1977).

12 M. Trachtenberg, *Building-in-Time*, cit., p. 327.

13 Among others, cf. P. Sanpaolesi, *La cupola del Brunelleschi* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1965).

14 A. Payne, *L'architecture parmi les arts: matérialité, transferts et travail artistique dans l'Italie de la Renaissance* (Paris: Hazan, 2016), p. 115. Author's translation.

15 N. Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1968), p. 113.

16 Cf. W. Wallace, *Michelangelo at San Lorenzo: The Genius as Entrepreneur* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); V. Zanchettin, "Le verità della pietra: Michelangelo e la costruzione in travertino di San Pietro", in G. Satzinger, S. Schützer, eds., *Sankt Peter in Rom 1506-2006* (München: Hirmer, 2008), pp. 159-174.

17 Cf., among others, P.N. Pagliara, "Materiali, tecniche e strutture in architetture del primo Cinquecento", in *Storia dell'architettura italiana. Il primo Cinquecento*, ed. A. Bruschi (Milano: Electa, 2002), pp. 522-545; H. Schlimme, ed., *Practice and Science in Early Modern Italian Building: Towards an Epistemic History of Architecture* (Milano: Mondadori, 2006).

Of Architecture, Icons, and Meaning: Encountering the Pre-Modern City

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"If you have doubts about our grandeur, look to our edifice".

Abul-Razza Samarqandi[1]

This paper explores similar trajectories in two diverse cultural milieus through an examination of the conscious redefinition of urban space during the late 15th century in Florence and Cairo. During this period, two (sub)urban districts were conceived: Via Laura in Florence and Azbakiyya in Cairo. Analyzing these building projects reveals remarkably similar motivations leading to their conception. In these districts, both situated in areas beyond previously established boundaries of the densely populated urbanized space, and neither of which the result of organic urban growth, we find a systematic process in which the ruling elite deliberately sought to transform the urban landscape.

At first sight, it is the differences between the Christian city of Florence and the Muslim city of Cairo that strike the observer. In the period in question, however, remarkably similar cultural and economic developments occurred in both cities which, I argue, prompted dynamic urban expansion plans. The Medici, a dynasty of bankers, and the Mamluks, a slave dynasty,[2] were equally concerned to demonstrate the legitimacy of their positions in their respective societies. Their roles, the former as *primus inter pares* and the latter as a foreign ruling class, are necessary considerations when evaluating their architectural and urbanistic commissions. It can be said that both the Medici and the Mamluks took advantage of, and sought to foster, the reputation of their respective cities as artistic and cultural centers.[3] The reigns of Sultan Al-Ashraf Qa'it Bay (r. 1468-96) in Cairo and Lorenzo il Magnifico[4]

(r. 1469-94, as unofficial head of state) in Florence were high points in the commissioning of art and architecture earning recognition as a pinnacle of the 'Renaissance'.[5] And while it is clear that Sultan Qait'Bay was of royal status, Lorenzo il Magnifico steadfastly refused to present himself publicly as a prince; however, as I will touch on in this essay, it is possible to read Lorenzo's interventions, architectural and otherwise, as expressions of calculated dynastic ambition.[6]

Without historical contextualization, the meanings ascribed to the built environment are lost. This work examines these planned neighborhoods, appreciating the shifts that occurred in urban expansion in a post-plague world where urban growth was not so much shaped by increased population nor the construction of new cities beyond established territories, but rather on development within known boundaries. Habermas has demonstrated that the built environment is a medium for public representation and communicates status.[7] Indeed, the Florentine and Mamluk elite did fashion and express social roles, build relationships, and define and reinforce positions through construction projects. Moving through the streets of the city there was, and is, an intended exchange of information, a dialogue between viewer, building, and space. Inscribed with legible meaning, the buildings were symbols of prosperity, enduring legacy, and legitimacy.[8] Their history suggests a broad-based understanding of the role of architecture as a medium for projecting status and as a container for activities that would do the same.

The Quattrocento was a time of heightened contact and exchange between the Medici and the Mamluk rulers. One such encounter is illus-

trated by Giorgio Vasari in *Lorenzo de' Medici Receiving Gifts from the Mamluk Ambassadors*, ca. 1555, on the ceiling soffit of the Sala di Lorenzo il Magnifico, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. Seen in the painting and documented in numerous written accounts, Sultan Qait'Bay's ambassadors, having arrived in Florence in 1487, and led by Ibn Mahfuz, sought to enhance diplomatic relations and negotiate a commercial treaty. As illustrated, they present Lorenzo with extraordinary and tantalizing gifts (even by diplomatic gift-giving standards of the day).[9] In 1488, Lorenzo sent his envoy to Cairo; accompanied by ibn Mahfuz, the Florentine nobleman Luigi della Stufa (1453-1535) was sent to Egypt at the behest of the Signoria.[10] The 1489 Mamluk-Florentine trade agreement was finalized. Even during this time of heightened contact and exchange, neither project – their planners nor their builders – was influenced by the other.[11] Each development was the response of the ruling elite to social, political, and economic concerns and desires; each group was seeking a similar outcome. These must be viewed as parallel developments.

Neither the Via Laura district in Florence nor the community of Azbakiyya in Cairo is extant. The Via Laura district was only partly realized. Azbakiyya was built, but nothing remains of the 15th-century site today. During extensive 19th-century reconstruction campaigns, even the Birkat Lake al-Azbakiyya was filled: Muhammad 'Ali (r. 1805-1848) replaced the lake with a European-style garden. As evidenced, cities are never at rest. Urban landscapes shift over time, manipulated by the needs of inhabitants, the desires and rights of individuals, and the will of civic and religious authorities. Regardless, the city remains a repository of cultural meaning, its fabric a primary source.[12]

The control of urban space was an important signifier of power and prestige as well as a source of income in both Florence and Cairo. The built environments of both cities not only reflected sociopolitical organization, but also were designed to actively structure and constitute social and power relations within the city. Public welfare was served by the foundation of a neighborhood, but the very act also satisfied the aesthetic, materialistic, and egotistic motives of the patron.

Examining the planned neighborhoods of Via Laura and Azbakiyya reveals contemporary conceptions of space and form as well as processes at work informing them. The palaces of the elite and their retine were grand and luxurious, but these neighborhoods also fulfilled more basic needs of the larger public. Rental houses in Via Laura, and houses and apartment buildings in Azbakiyya not only provided housing for the lower classes, but also an economic incentive for the powerful founders. In addition to financial gain, these buildings for the larger community also enhanced the patron's public image.

The loci of private and civic pride for the elite families of Florence were the monumental palazzi that dotted the urban Florentine landscape during the second half of the 15th century. The Medici certainly understood that private palaces had become the foremost public expression of culture and status for the ruling class.[13] Accordingly, in ca. 1444 the Medici commissioned Michelozzo di Bartolommeo to build their palazzo on Via Larga (today known as Via Cavour).

Historically, as citizens and not princes, the Medici had been reluctant to undertake urbanization or building projects that might undermine their role as *primi inter pares*, moreover they lacked the imperious authority to procure and repurpose land in the urban core.[14] However, within the city walls, empty land remained that could be built up without altering the city center. The Via Laura was one such suburban area. The area for the Via Laura project was located inside the walls, northeast of the Duomo, encompassing the land beyond Santissima Annunziata and the Ospedale degli Innocenti to the city wall and the Porta a Pinti.[15] The land was scantly inhabited, agricultural in character, and belonged primarily to monasteries (fig. 1).

Lorenzo's interest in urbanizing Florence was well known to his contemporaries. In his *istorie fiorentine*, Machiavelli noted that Lorenzo's aim to build streets and houses in unoccupied areas was part of his intention to expand and beautify the city:

> Volsesi a far più bella e maggiore la sua città: e perciò sendo in quella molti spazi senza abitazioni, in essi nuove strade da empiersi di nuovi edifizi ordinò; ondechè quella città ne divenne più bella e maggiore [...].[16]

Notably, this area constituted the important pilgrimage route to the church of Santissima Annunziata (which had strong Medicean associations). Had Lorenzo's plan come to fruition, he would have rationalized and dignified the processional route. The project was not fully realized in Lorenzo's lifetime (fig. 2).
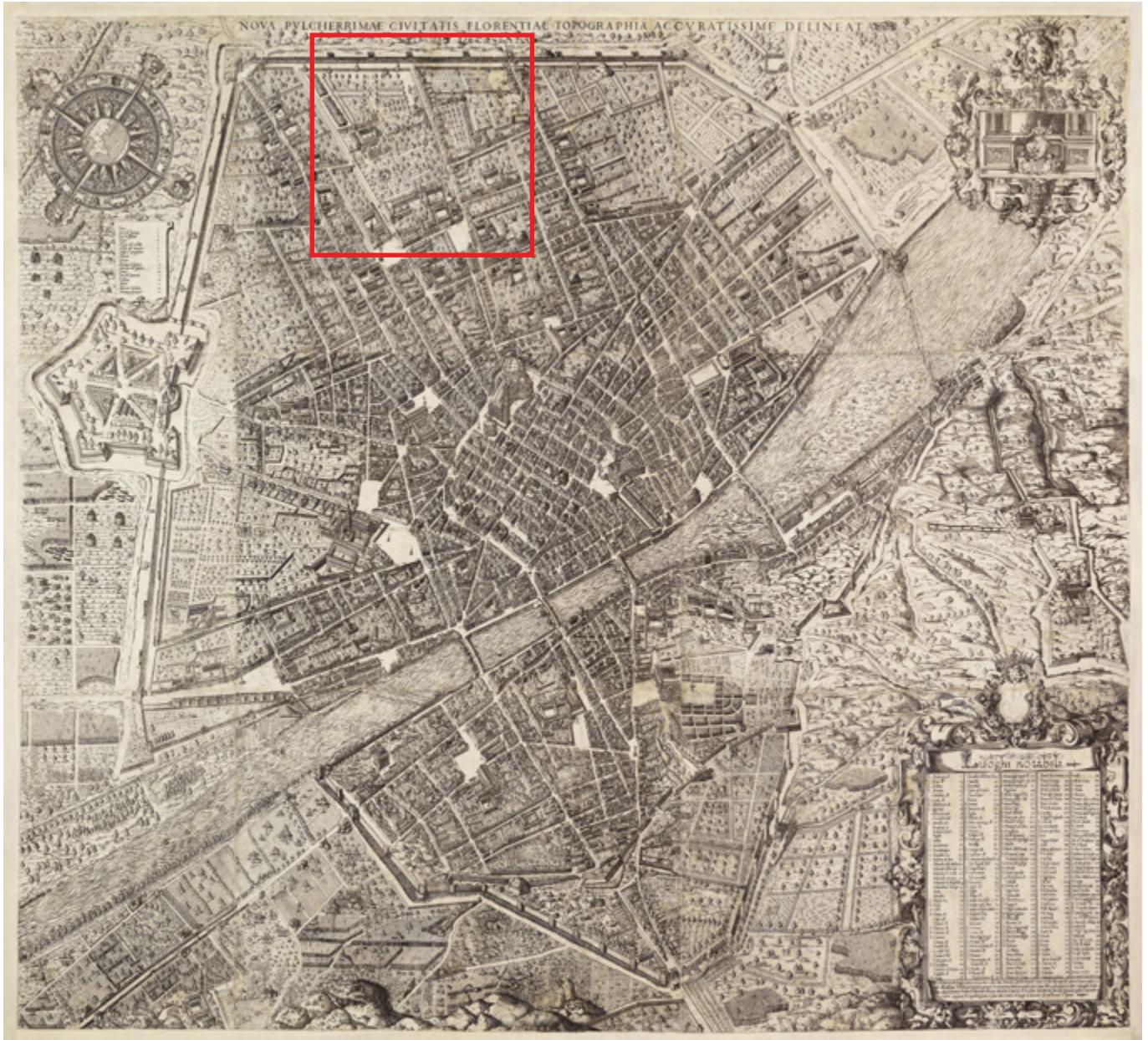
Fig. 1. *Nova pulcherrimae civitatis Florentiae topographia accuratissime delineata*, Florence, Musei Civici Fiorentini. Map of Florence with Via Laura district outlined in red (by the Author). © Fototeca Musei Civici Fiorentini.

The plan, drafted by Giuliano da Sangallo (ca. 1443-1516), for Lorenzo's palace on Via Laura reveals evidence of more modest dwellings. The plan reveals straight streets lined with rows of standardized plots for building. The plots, too small to accommodate the large palaces of the urban elite, were well-suited for rental property. Archival records indicate that four houses completed before Lorenzo's death in 1492 were rented. In addition to the rental properties, further away from the *abitato* (the populated city center), grander homes were planned. Only one such house was completed, the Palazzo Scala (fig. 3). This understudied palazzo on the Borgo Pinti may have set

the tone for Lorenzo's grander Via Laura urbanization project. An innovative housing type, Scala's palace was a suburban villa which combined "the dignity of a city house with the delight of a villa".[17]

Bartolomeo Scala (1430-1497) had become Lorenzo's powerful chancellor and devoted follower. Scala constructed his palazzo within the city walls near the Porta Pinti in 1473. By 1480, Scala and his family were living there. Scala's role in this suburb's development is compelling. He was not from wealth or power, yet he strove to be recognized among the Florentine elite. Without family name or money behind him, his climb to the top rank in society was necessarily by alternate
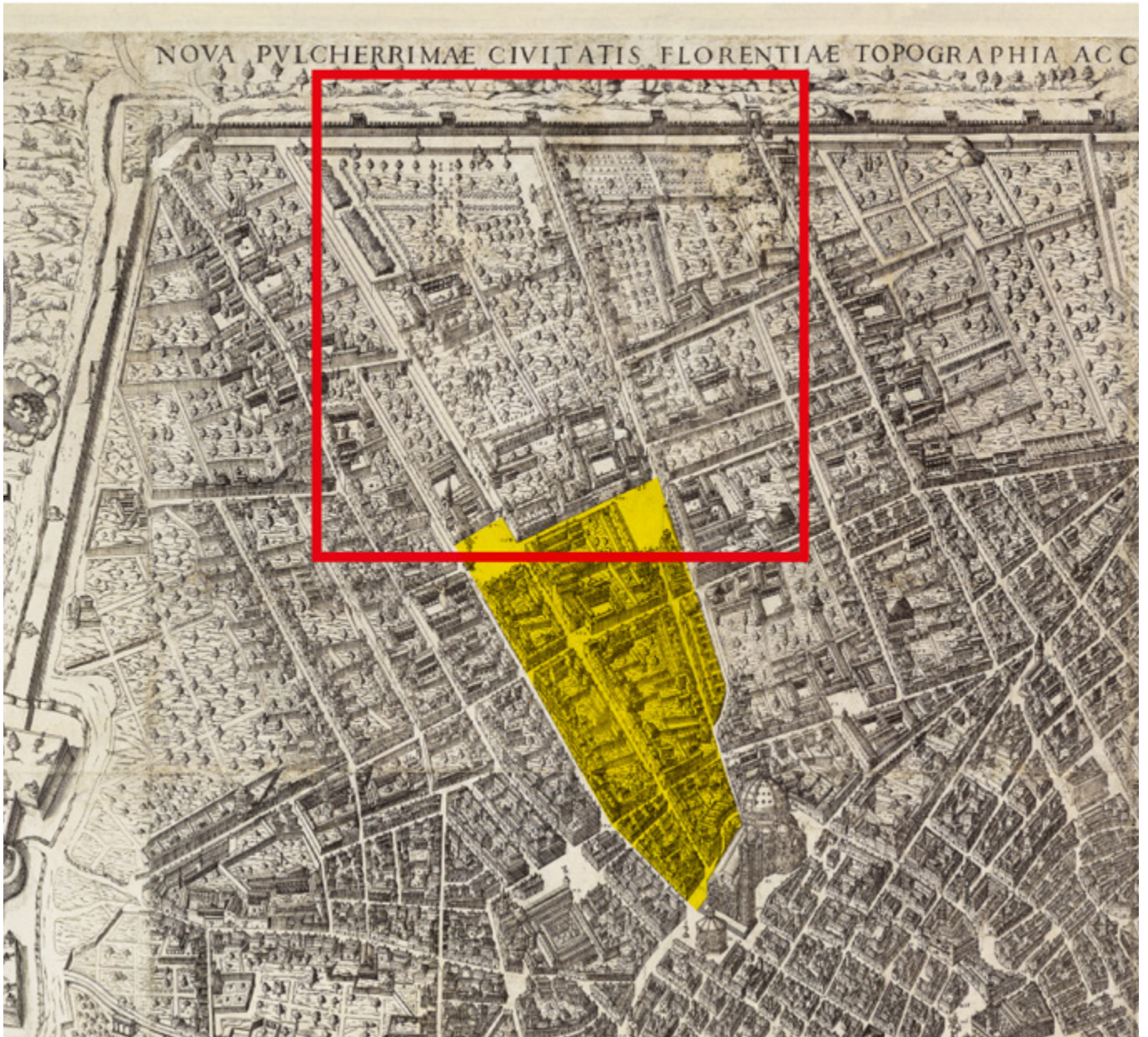
Fig. 2. *Nova pulcherrimae civitatis Florentiae topographia accuratissime delineata*, Florence, Musei Civici Fiorentini. © Fototeca Musei Civici Fiorentini. Map of Florence with Via Laura district outlined in red and pilgrimage route area in yellow (added by the Author). The church of Santissima Annunziata is located at the top of the section, right is the Ospedale degli Innocenti. The path continues to the Piazza del Duomo and moves up (left side) to the Palazzo Medici.

means. Because he was not well-born yet held a high government office, he was *able* to build here. The availability of open land and tax incentives notwithstanding, the palace builders of the ruling class chose to remain in their traditional *gonfalone* or district. They built their palazzi on the familiar and, for them, hallowed ground of their clans.

Scala, without ancestral ties to the city, could take advantage of these conditions to construct an impressive residence, in effect weaving his newly acquired status into the urban fabric and the city's history. His association with the human-

ists and his keen sense of antiquity guided him not only through the court, but also inspired his architectural program in the Via Laura. Despite financial constraints limiting the materials used and project's scale, Scala announced his intellect and status through the innovative architecture of his small yet consequential palazzo.

Another project for the district is that of a palace in the Via Laura that was never constructed and has been the subject of much debate. The extant plan[18] by Giuliano da Sangallo and his younger brother Antonio da Sangallo the Elder

Fig. 3. Palazzo Scala today (highlighted), 99 Borgo Pinti, Florence. (Photo by the Author). The palazzo has been converted to a Four Seasons Hotel.

(ca. 1453-1534) shows an imposing palace with expansive gardens. It is quite unlike any other palace built in Florence up to this time. An inscription by Giuliano states clearly that the design was executed for a Medici patron, *which* Medici patron is unknown.[19] Without a firm date, the Sangallo plan has variously been attributed to the time just prior to Lorenzo's death in 1492 and to the period after the 1512 Medici restoration.

The prodigious palazzo was set back from the road – as opposed to the imposing, unadorned façades of patrician-class palazzi constructed on the street line – and planned on a central axis. The experience of progressing through the gates, past the outbuildings and planned gardens, all the while viewing the magnificent palazzo ahead, was clearly intended to inform all who entered of the august patron's status in society. The plan is in stark contrast to the typical Florentine palazzi of the Quattrocento. If, in fact, the plan was created under Lorenzo's patronage, it would have

signaled a turning point in his political persona. Up until this point, Lorenzo's urbanistic schemes were conceived as being for the public honor and universal good. The Via Laura palace plan, on the other hand, represented a royal palace that would belie Lorenzo's stated cultural and political ambitions. In fact, the Via Laura palace was more closely related to, and is often compared with, Sangallo's plan for the palace for the King of Naples (ca. 1488, unexecuted) and his plan for the Medici Villa at Poggio a Caiano (ca. 1485). For a royal court, the grandeur of the palace for the King of Naples needs no explanation. Lorenzo's rural estate at Poggio a Caiano employed the architectural language of a prince: "This is the work of a king [...] Kingly, Lorenzo, is your house [...]", remarked the Quattrocento Florentine poet, Naldo Naldi.[20]

Within the city, however, Lorenzo's architectural and urbanistic undertakings had to follow his political strategy of demonstrating his devotion to

public welfare, leading many scholars to conclude that such a program as Sangallo's palace complex could not have been conceived for a project within the walls during Lorenzo's lifetime; hence, dating the Via Laura palace plan terminus post quem 1512. Indeed, the Via Laura palace, if constructed, would represent the seat of an imperial court, not the dwelling of the city's primus inter pares. Outside the city walls, however, Lorenzo and Giuliano did not hesitate to create the image of power and wealth in a much grander structure.[21]

Lorenzo's palace complex at Poggio a Caiano revealed his "double image": on one hand, reticent and committed to the public good; on the other, profoundly contradicting that image with commissions befitting a prince.[22] Another undertaking, the unparalleled act of inscribing his name on vener-

able objects in his collection, may provide further evidence of dynastic aspirations.[23] Lorenzo was a consummate collector, a practice rooted in classical tradition and a vehicle for the promotion of antiquity for the humanist scholars of the day.[24] Building upon the collection he inherited from his grandfather, Cosimo il Vecchio, Lorenzo developed a lifelong passion for antiquities and continued expanding his collection until his death. His private collection rivaled those held by his northern Italian princely contemporaries. Indeed, as Kent demonstrated, to hold such an extensive collection was at the least magnificent if not magisterial. Moreover, many of the vases and gems Lorenzo held were engraved with the epigraph "LAU.R.MED". These inscriptions have been interpreted as "Lorenzo Medici" ("Laurentii Medicis") – the addition of "R"
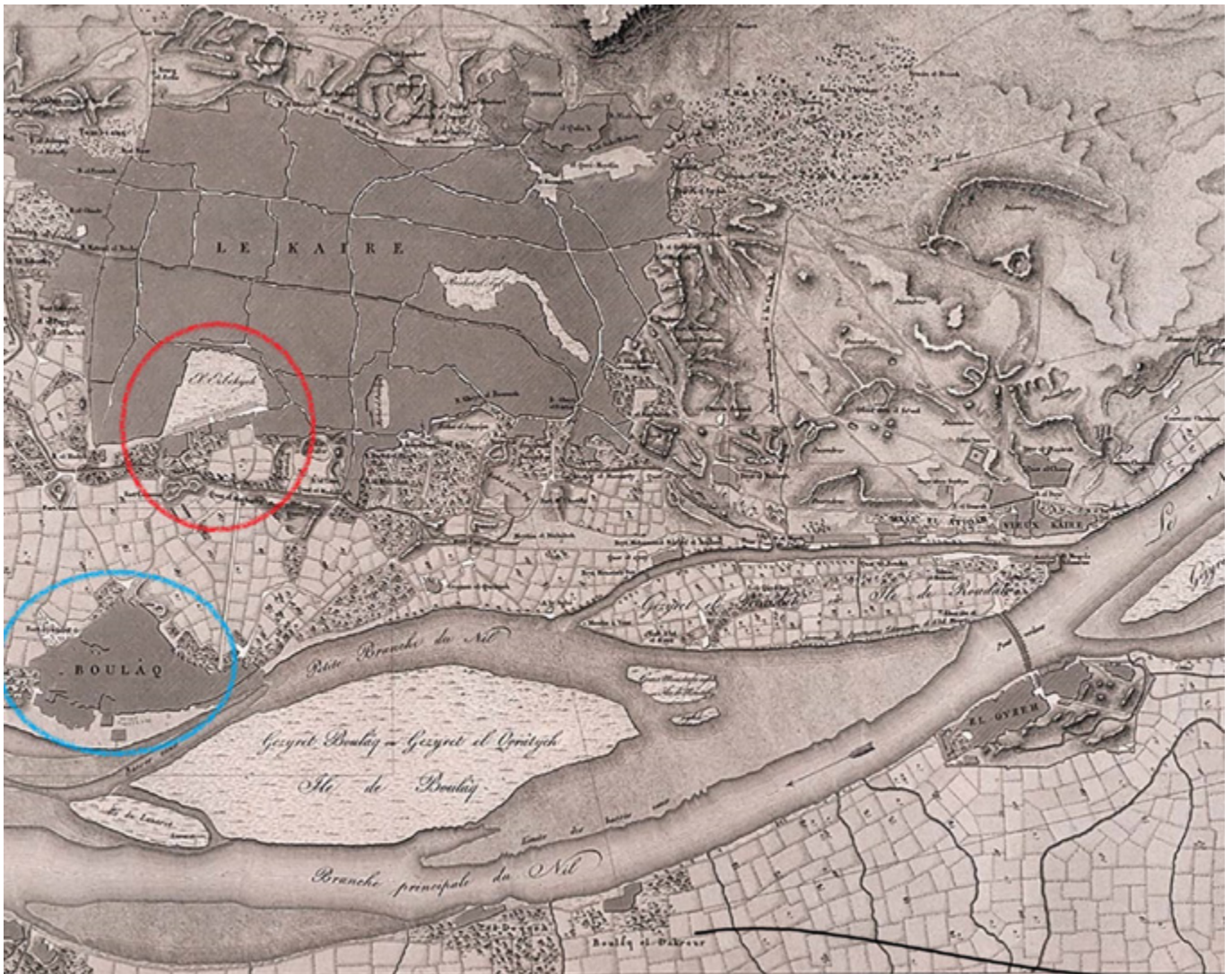
Fig. 4. *Environs du Kaire [Cairo]. Plan général de Boulâq, du Kaire, de l'île de Roudah [el-Rôda], du Vieux Kaire et de Gyzeh [Jîzah].* From *Description de l'Égypte: ou, Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française,* 1809-1828. (From The New York Public Library). Suburb of Azbakiyya, with Birkat al-Azbakiyya, circled in red. Port of Bulaq (Boulaq) circled in blue.

for the sake of symmetry and elegance[25] – or as the more aristocratic "Lorenzo Rex Medici" ("Laurentii Rex Medicis"), the latter more plausible.[26] Either way, inscribing his name onto such rare and magnificent objects was a provocative act.

Lorenzo il Magnifico steadfastly refused to present himself publicly as a prince; however, it is possible to read Lorenzo's interventions, architectural and otherwise, as expressions of determined and anticipated dynastic aspiration.

"[…] to know about Azbak's glory […] look at Azbakiyya".[27]

In Cairo, Azbak min Tutukh[28] (d. 1498) was at the height of his career when he began Azbakiyya. Azbak had achieved the rank of *atabak* (military commander) and was Sultan Qa'it Bay's closest advisor. Qa'it Bay's fondness for Azbak is illustrated by his actions; for instance, when Azbak was exiled to Alexandria, Qa'it Bay vouched for him; when Qa'it Bay's (inherited) atabak, Janibak, was captured and ransomed in 1468 during a failed attempt to halt an uprising in eastern Anatolia, Qa'it Bay refused to pay the ransom. Instead, Qa'it Bay recalled Azbak from his post as governor of Syria and named him atabak.[29] Azbak coveted no higher office and remained in the Qa'it Bay's good stead until the sultan's death in 1496. At the pinnacle of his political career, Azbak's building endeavor was expected to bring him higher social recognition and status, and the historical record confirms that it did. He was praised for the glory of the site and the service he had done for greater Cairo.

Azbak was a wealthy man. Military wages had risen significantly over the course of the 15th century, and, in addition he received the largest income, second only to the sultan himself, from his military fiefs, or *iqta'a*.[30] Noting Azbak's social status, Azbak initiated the construction of the upperclass suburb of Azbakiyya in response to his desire to find a site comparable to his heightened circumstance.[31] Azbakiyya was founded in 1476 to the praises of the historian Ibn Iyas, "Among the interesting events of this year, is the creation of Azbakiyya, named for its founder the Atabak Azbak".[32]

The site was located northwest of the dense urban core of the Mamluk city on land that resulted from the westward shift of the Nile River. During the time of the historian and topographer al-Maqrizi (1364-1442), the site was almost entirely sand dunes.[33] The deserted region was infamous for thieves and robbers. The bleak landscape

remained so until the 1470s, when Azbak built stables there. Soon thereafter, he transformed the western district by digging a large lake, the Birkat al-Azbakiyya. He constructed a palace on the southeast bank of the artificial lake, followed by a mosque, a *madrasa*, shops, and rental buildings. Near the madrasa, he added a *sabil* (fountain), *hammam* (baths), and houses to encourage Cairenes to settle there.[34] Azbak's construction projects lasted through most of the 1480s. In 1485, Sultan Qait'Bay granted him the land in a *waqf*.[35]

Originally, Azbak built his stables at Azbakiyya because "he lived far from there" and wanted to facilitate his travels throughout the region. Indeed, Azbakiyya's ideal proximity to both the urban center of Cairo and bustling port of Bulaq made it a logical location for development (fig. 4). The shift from the southern port of Fustat to Bulaq was gradual but accelerated when the trade route was developed from Upper Egypt to a northern route and to the Mediterranean Sea, as evidenced by the 1489 Mamluk-Florentine trade agreement. The rise of Bulaq led to the urbanization of the western quarter, and Azbak's project at Azbakiyya should be viewed in conjunction with this development. Located on the route between the city proper and the port, the improved suburb of Azbakiyya provided an attractive location for the urban elite who situated themselves within a reasonable distance of the city center in a district that brought them closer to the prosperous trading port and the new economic focus on the Mediterranean.[36] Azbakiyya was soon occupied with the elegant residences of numerous well-to-do Cairenes as well as rental houses and apartments, religious foundations, and commercial structures.

Under the auspices of Qa'it Bay, Azbak's endeavor was as beneficial to the larger community as it was to his own interests. Designed and situated to attract the wealthy merchants and elite of Cairo, the urbanization project also included the religious and social institutions typical of courtly commissions. The congregational mosque, library, madrasa, and *khanqah* (sufi lodge) were all parts of a complex that was intended to benefit the greater community. Shaded walkways connected buildings along the shore. The vast gardens and orchards were open to the public. Serving the public good was one, but certainly not the only, driving force behind his building enterprise.

As with other building projects in Medici Florence and Mamluk Cairo, Azbak had a strong eco-

nomic motive for building. For Azbak, the monies earned from his real estate speculation, hammams, rab'-s, shops, and other commercial and residential structures were to fund the religious endowment. Any surplus revenues belonged to the founder and his descendants. He built to encourage settlement as well as the promotion of the state and himself. All these interests – increased habitation, glorification of the regime, and self-aggrandizement – could be accomplished by, and represented as, serving the greater public interest, the standard architectural signifier of status for the Mamluk ruling class and for Lorenzo's Florence. Azbak was not from a noble class; rather, like all Mamluk sultans and most amirs, he was from a slave class and, as such, did not construct monuments overtly proclaiming any legitimacy for their reign such as buildings establishing the monumental core of new cities. Mamluk sultans and amirs conveyed their political and social status through grand architectural schemes inscribed with their names and dedicated to public good.[37]

As noted earlier, the site that became Azbakiyya was a wasteland – virtually a blank slate – before the development of the last quarter of the 15th century and sites within the old Fatimid walls had remained highly desirable despite the growth of Cairo's suburbs. However, architectural commissions within the old city had to be integrated into the tightly woven urban fabric constrained by pre-existing structures and street layouts. Even if buildings were demolished, street lines could not be altered. This fact is most evident in religious buildings, this necessity resulted in the double orientation of buildings to accommodate the *qibla* wall (indicating the direction of Mecca for prayer).

At Azbakiyya, Azbak planned and executed his project without such constraints, implementing a relatively new design by locating palace façades facing the waterfront of the birkat, taking advantage of the light and cool water breezes. On the main streets the buildings were smaller in size and included commercial or individual houses or lesser residential units combined with retail space as in the rab', i.e., a multi-functional building with apartments on the upper floors and stores lining the ground floor. Many were built on speculation to be rented.

The traditional façade configurations of the Cairene urban palaces were abandoned in this suburban district. The expedients of double orientations and bent entrances were not necessary. At Azbakiyya, around the birkat, the building configu-

ration was regularized and linear: the primary façade of Azbak's palace faced the waterfront, and the back wall of his palace, along with religious, commercial, and smaller residential properties, lined the street. On the street façade of Azbak's palace there was a portal and an apartment connected to the *maq'ad* (a roofed loggia or belvedere, elevated above the courtyard). A rab'was integrated into this street façade. Also present, near the portal, was a *tablakhana* – an area for musicians located near the door which was reserved for those entitled to military fanfares. The installation of both these features on the street façade was not accidental. In constant dialogue with the viewer, the rab' informed the passer-by of the amir's commitment to the community by providing housing and commodities (even if simultaneously generating income for Azbak). The *tablakhana* was an affirmation of the amir's status in society.

In their grand planned suburbs, Azbak and Lorenzo were able to deviate from the traditional urban architectural practices of their respective cities. Scala and Lorenzo used the language of the humanists to articulate their projects for Via Laura. Azbak implemented the most current and popular components along with a different street orientation in Azbakiyya. So innovative was the architecture constructed around the Birkat al-Azbakiyya that Ibn Iyas, when describing the palaces there, proclaimed the buildings both "wonderful and strange".[38]

The new quarters of Azbakiyya and Via Laura were both drawing on fresh and contemporary ideas about the organization of space. Although it may not be expected, and was premised on different concepts, the built product of these suburban projects shared conceptual and spatial features. The commensurate study of these developments undermines some persistent cultural assumptions about the ordering of space reinforcing the importance of understanding certain ideals as not culturally specific, such as straight streets with Europe and dark, winding streets in the Middle East.

This study of two distinct societies, disparate and similar, illustrating both continuity and change, was not a search for origins. This paper examined the ruling elite in Florence and Cairo as they deliberately sought to transform the urban landscape. Furthermore, this work analyzed architectural production, motivations, and social responses, not as unique to early modern Florence or Mamluk Cairo, but as a parallel development across the Mediterranean Sea.

Notes

1 Timuird historian Abul-Razza Samarqandi (d. 1482) as quoted in T.W. Lentz, *Timur and the Princely Vision* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Washington: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), frontispiece.

2 In this context, the notion of *mamluk* or slave (from the Arabic root word meaning "to own") is not the same as in the West. This system of enslavement allowed the purchase, capture, or acquisition of youths as tribute or gift from non-Muslim groups in the territories (in accordance with Islamic law, Muslims could not be slaves, see Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1991), pp. 116-117, for example). Once acquired, the mamluks were educated, trained in warfare and the ways of the state, and eventually converted to Islam. They were placed in the service of the Sultan or other high officials and often served as an elite corps of bodyguards for the Sultan. Later they were freed and allowed to achieve very high ranks, up to and including that of Sultan and were entitled to their own mamluks.

3 An oft overlooked yet consequential element for this study is that both Lorenzo de' Medici and Sultan Qait'Bay ruled in periods of economic decline. Both the Medici and the Mamluks soon reached the end of their respective power: The Medici family expelled from Florence in 1494 and the long reign of the Mamluk Sultanate ended with their overthrow by the Ottomans in 1517, after holding power since 1250. As their power waned, they seem to have intensified their artistic, architectural, and literary patronage, creating the image of grandeur and power in the very face of decline. Decline does not necessary constitute despair. See, R.S. Lopez, H.A. Miskimin, "The Economic Depression of the Renaissance", *The Economic History Review* new series, 14, no. 3 (1962): pp. 408-426.

4 Il Magnifico (the magnificent) is a respectful title afforded to those of political authority without being of princely blood.

5 The term "Renaissance" is used here advisedly. While accepted in common parlance, the notion of "rebirth" is politically loaded; the term is charged and problematic. The period in question is often defined in terms of cultural and intellectual splendor with tremendous artistic, architectural, and literary production – which undoubtedly did occur – but little regard is paid to the conditions in which this production occurred.

6 F.W. Kent, *Lorenzo de' Medici and the Art of Magnificence* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), p. 144.

7 J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, tr. T. Burger with the assistance of F. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989), pp. 8-12.

8 H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, tr. D. Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), p. 78.

9 The delegation was led by al-Khwāja Muhammad ibn Mahfuz al-Maghribi, known as ibn Mahfuz, and often referred to as "Malfota" in the Italian documents. See M. Amari, *I diplomi arabi del R. archivio fiorentino* (Firenze: F. Le Monnier, 1863), document XLI, pp. 210-213; and J. Wansbourgh, "A Mamluk Commerical Treaty concluded with the Republic of Florence 894/1489", *Documents from the Islamic Chanceries* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 41.

10 See M. Amari, *I diplomi arabi del R. archivio fiorentino*, cit., documents XLVI and XLVII, pp. 372-381.

11 As an aside, in the context the word 'influence' implies a passive reception of forms or ideas from a dominant culture by a more submissive group. This model is not persuasive. Alternatively, cultural transmissions were choices, actively adopted and adapted, not the quiescent manifestation of influence.

12 S. Kostof, *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), p. 9, and H.Z. Watenpaugh, *The Image of an Ottoman City: Imperial Architecture and Urban Experience in Aleppo in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), p. 25.

13 D. Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 218.

14 C. Elam, "Lorenzo de' Medici and the Urban Development of Renaissance Florence", *Art History* 1 (March 1978): p. 43.

15 The Innocenti owned much of the land Lorenzo purchased for the project. *Ibid*., pp. 45-47. Elam notes that the method Lorenzo used to acquire these lands is not clear. Later writings claim that Lorenzo had not actually paid for the land but had simply taken procession. Elam cites the Innocenti petition of 1495 and others as critical of Lorenzo's claim; she continues, however, to show that in 1495 the authorities stated that Lorenzo had acquired the land in "good faith and with intent to satisfy the said monastery with the prices of the said land".

16 Niccolò Machiavelli, *Le istorie fiorentine* (Firenze: F. Le Monnier, 1851), Libro Ottavo, p. 351.

17 Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, 9: 2 (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988), p. 294.

18 Gabinetto dei Disegni of the Uffizi (U 282A).

19 Verso, written in Giuliano's hand, "[...] *disegni delo palazo de medici* [...]".

20 Naldo Naldi (1439-c. 1520) as quoted in F.W. Kent, *Lorenzo de' Medici and the Art of Magnificence*, cit., p. 143.

21 M. Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance: Princes, Cities, Architects*, tr. D. Sherer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 65-66.

22 *Ivi*.

23 F.W. Kent, *Lorenzo de' Medici and the Art of Magnificence*, cit., pp. 145-148.

24 See L.S. Fusco, G. Corti, *Lorenzo de' Medici: Collector and Antiquarian* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); A.M. Massinelli, F. Tuena, *Treasures of the Medici* (New York: Vendome Press, 1992); and R.M. San Juan, "The Court Lady's Dilemma: Isabella d'Este and Art Collecting in the Renaissance", *Oxford Art Journal* 14 (1991): pp. 68-69.

25 As suggested by Ruth Rubinstein in her exhibition review. R. Rubinstein, "The Treasure of Lorenzo the Magnificent, in Florence", *The Burlington Magazine* 114 (November 1972): pp. 804-808. See also F.W. Kent, *Lorenzo de' Medici and the Art of Magnificence*, cit., p. 147.

26 A.M. Massinelli, F. Tuena, *Treasures of the Medici*, cit., p. 26.

27 Ibn Iyās, *Nuzhat al-umam fī al-'Ajā'ib wa-al-ḥikam* (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat Madbūlī, 1995), translated in D. Behrens-Abouseif, *Azbakiyya and Its Environs from Azbak to Isma'il, 1476-1879* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1985), p. 24.

28 Azbak was originally from Circassia and was purchased by a royal merchant ca. 1436. He later began his military career as a mamluk under Sultan Barsbay before being inherited by Sultan Qa'it Bay.

29 Azbak had been exiled by Sultan al-Ashraf Sayf ad-Din Inal (r. 1453-1461) from 1453-1457. He was exiled a second time by Inal's successor, Sultan Khushqadam in 1461-1464. See C.F. Petry, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamluk Sultans al-Ashraf Qaytbay and Qansuh al-Ghawi in Egypt* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press), p. 47.

30 *Iqta* (pl. *iqta'a*), a rent-producing land allotment given to military commanders in return for their service; also see A.

Raymond, *Cairo* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 166, and C.F. Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, cit., p. 49. Raymond reports that military wages increased from 11,000 dinars per month under Sultan Mu'ayyad (1412-21) to 46,000 dinars per month during the reign of Qa'it Bay.

[31] C.F. Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, cit., p. 49.

[32] Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'Al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duhūr* (Cairo: Maṭ ba'At Musá Kāstalī, 1288 AH [1871]), quoted and translated in D. Behrens-Abouseif, *Azbakiyya and Its Environs*, cit., p. 22.

[33] J. Abu-Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 48. Maqrizi did not witness the urbanization of the area. He died in 1442, three decades before Azbak's interventions.

[34] Ibn Iyas in A. Raymond, *Cairo*, cit., p. 183.

[35] Briefly defined, a *waqf* (pl. *awqaf*) provided a conveyance of income-producing property in perpetuity, free from taxation and confiscation, providing goods and services that ranged from education to health care to water supply for the larger community. Primarily, a waqf is considered a religious and charitable provision. In addition to pious aspects, though, the socioeconomic impact on urban planning must be noted. Commercial as well as charitable building activity was stimulated by revenue generated by supporting not only religious institutions but also the increased need for commercial and private enterprises to support a growing neighborhood and community.

[36] See N. Hanna, *An Urban History of Būlāq in the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1983) and Hanna, "Bulaq – An Endangered Historic Area of Cairo", in M. Meinecke, ed., *Islamic Cairo: Architectural Conservation and Urban Development of the Historic Centre: Proceedings of a Seminar* (London: Art and Archaeology Research Papers, 1980), pp. 19-29.

[37] Howayda Al-Harithy, "The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture", *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): pp. 91-92.

[38] D. Behrens-Abouseif, *Azbakiyya and Its Environs*, cit., p. 24.

Shadows of Urban Utopia: Japanese Housing in Colonial Manchuria

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Introduction

During the first half of the 20th century, along with Japan's colonial expansion in East Asia, Japanese architects went to Manchuria, the present-day northeast China, and built all over there. Historians of Japanese architecture and urban studies have relied on the extant buildings, maps, and a tremendous number of visual materials to reconstruct Japanese building activities in colonial Manchuria. Their interpretations have split between a realization of a utopian vision of modernity that could not be achieved in Japan, and an architectural propaganda of Japanese imperialism. The current scholarship has focused mainly on the period of the Manchukuo State (1932-1945) and on government buildings and public spaces.[1]

This article shifts the temporal framework to include the time before 1932 and to focus on residential spaces in urban Manchuria. I examine the Japanese housing development in the city of Dalian during the 1920s, through the architects' promotion of the 'Living Reform Movement' and suburban housing development. Analyzing Japanese architects' house plans, interior designs, and related discussions published in architectural journals and exhibitions, my examination reveals the process through which Japanese architects in Manchuria engaged with modern housing movement in Japan, in practice and theory, to design their houses and communities in Dalian. Moreover, my examination highlights the power of the icon: a plethora of visual products of houses and their urban environment shaped the public perception of urban Manchuria as a modern utopia, which overshadowed the multi-layered space in reality.

Japanese Houses in Dalian, 1905

Japan took over Russia's exclusive rights in southern Manchuria upon the victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Like Russia's expansion in Manchuria, in 1906 Japan established the Southern Manchurian Railway Company (hereafter SMRC) in Dalian to build railroads and develop settlements. In 1932, the Manchukuo State, *manshūkoku* 満洲国 was founded under the name of Pu Yi 溥儀 (1906-1967), the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty, with de facto Japanese control. Until Japan's defeat in 1945, Manchukuo was regarded as the 'lifeline' to the sustainment of the Japanese empire in terms of economic development, military expansion, mobilization of people and materials, and cultural production.[2]

The first generation of Japanese architects arrived in Dalian after the Russo-Japanese War. They encountered a cityscape with strong Russian influences in public space: the headquarter of the China Eastern Railway Company, Russian Orthodox churches, and a grand plaza with broad boulevards. The architects were also shocked by the narrow alleys and barrack slums sprawled like "bamboo shoots after the spring rain".[3]

The Japanese administration and architects, therefore, mainly focused on renovating the former Russian office buildings and constructing new public buildings in 'Western' style, as a symbol for the Japanese rule, to occupy the original Russian city center. The earliest Japanese public building was the Civic Administration Office, *Dairen Minseisho* 大連民政署, completed in 1908, located in the central grand plaza of Dalian (fig. 1). The architect Maeda designed the façade with medieval Gothic towers inspired by the Hamburg City Hall and Brussels Town Hall to fulfill the Japanese officials' request for "magnificent grandeur".[4]

The Japanese administration also tried to regulate the chaotic urban sprawl. They relocated brothels scattered around in the city to a designated area in the south. The Chinese neighborhood, which originally occupied the area, was forced to relocate to the west of the city. Their attempts to regulate the Japanese residential neighborhoods, however, were not successful.

Japanese settlers rented enormous land from the Kwangtung Army's at low prices, divided it into small pieces, and rented them out to Japanese newcomers. These Japanese urban dwellers' houses, similar to the local Chinese houses, were one- or two-story houses built with mud bricks or wood sidings, with thatched roofs and interiors placed with *anpera* (soft rush) sheets. In 1905, the Dalian Military and Administration Office issued a building code to set up standards for building materials and measurements. Houses that did not meet the standards were categorized as 'temporary' and had to be renovated; otherwise, they would be demolished.[5] However, the code was not fully executed in reality due to strong oppositions from local residents: they continued to build more mudbrick and wooden houses without permits.[6]

ture', booths displaying local tiles, electrical appliances, gas stoves, as well as kitchen models, Western houses and furnishings; and (3) 'Designs and Reference Works', which exhibited seven winning entries – for the accompanying design competition for a residential house – featuring compact plans for a core family without maids, chair-based interiors, large living rooms for family gatherings, built-in modern kitchens, and convertible furniture. The five-day exhibition attracted a total of 33,000 Japanese visitors, more than a quarter of the Japanese population in Dalian at the time. The exhibition suggested possibilities of constructing a new living environment for the Japanese upper middle-class residents in Dalian, different from the first-generation settlers.

Fig. 1. Postcard of the Civic Administration Office, *Dairen Minseisho* 大連民政署. Private Collection.

The 'Life Reform Movement' Exhibition in Dalian, 1921

The first fundamental efforts to improve the urban environment in Dalian were initiated by Japanese architects working for the Kwantung Army and SMRC in Dalian, who established the Architectural Association of Manchuria, *manshu kenchiku kyōkai* 満洲建築協会 in Dalian in 1920.[7] The Association held its first exhibition, the 'Architectural Exhibition of Daily Life Reform' *seikatsu kaizen kenchiku tenran-kai*, 生活改善建築展覧会 at the newly completed SMRC Dormitory in Dalian on October 29, 1921 (fig. 2).[8]

The exhibition was organized under three themes: (1) 'Daily Life Reform', which displayed Western clothing, cooking recipes, and housing models; (2) 'Construction Material and Struc-

Fig. 2. Photo of the entrance of the Architectural Exhibition of Daily Life Reform held at the SMRC dormitory, Dalian 1921. Published in *Manshu Kenchiku Zasshi* 1, no. 8 (1921).

As the title suggested, the 1921 Dalian Exhibition corresponded to the Daily Life Reform Movement in Japan, which was originally proposed by the

Ministry of Education in 1919 and quickly became a nationwide movement during the 1920s. The Committee of the Daily Life Reform published a series of guidelines promoting a 'Western' reform of clothing, food, and housing to establish a modern urban lifestyle.[9] The new housing featured a chair-centered interior, a plan centered on family gathering, and an emphasis on hygiene and pragmatism. Elements of the traditional Japanese space – tatami mats, a guest-centered plan, and a servant room – were regarded as unpractical and unhygienic. The exemplary house model was the bungalow house popular in the United States at the time, which was introduced into Japan as the 'culture house' *bunka jūtaku* 文化住宅. This type of one- or two-story house featured a compact plan with usually no more than three bedrooms, a chair-based interior, and a large living-dining room in the center.[10]

The 1921 Dalian exhibition was one of the earliest exhibitions promoting the Life Reform Movement, predating major cultural house exhibitions in Tokyo and Osaka. It is important to notice that the two housing movements were contemporaneous: many Japanese architects worked back and forth and submitted proposals for competitions in both regions. As a matter of fact, Japanese architects in Manchuria considered the natural environment of Manchuria – harsh winter, heavy dust, and coal consumption – an opportunity to completely remove tatami mats and paper sliding doors due to hygienic concerns. Liberated from the burden of tradition, they advocated the use of brick walls, double-layer windows, and the Russian stove, the

pechika, as heating equipment. The Japanese architects' practice in Manchuria thus contributed to the development of the Life Reform movement in Japan, as they exemplified the international characteristics and proved the universal adaptability of the movement.

Development of Suburban Housing in Dalian

The 1920s witnessed Japan's rapid expansion in Manchuria and SMRC's fast growth: a large number of SMRC employees and their families came to live in settlement cities. The immigrant surge led to a construction boom and discussions of permanent settlements among architects. In the late 1920s, the *Journal of Manchurian Architectural Association* began to promote the suburban housing projects *kōgai jūtaku* 郊外住宅 in the Laohutan 老虎灘 area south to Dalian. The area was planned for a community consisting of six hundred middle-class family units, together with a school, hospital, social clubs, and resort parks. The city rail was built to connect the suburban community with the downtown Dalian. The main types of houses were small two-floor, typical 'cultural houses' featuring a compact plan with dining and living rooms in the Western style on the first floor and Japanese-style rooms on the second floor. Some of them had sunrooms with large windows in the south (fig. 3). Compared to the Western plans and styles prominent in the 1921 Dalian Exhibition, these houses featured an eclectic design: most of them incorporated Japanese interior elements, such as an alcove (*tokoro-ma*),
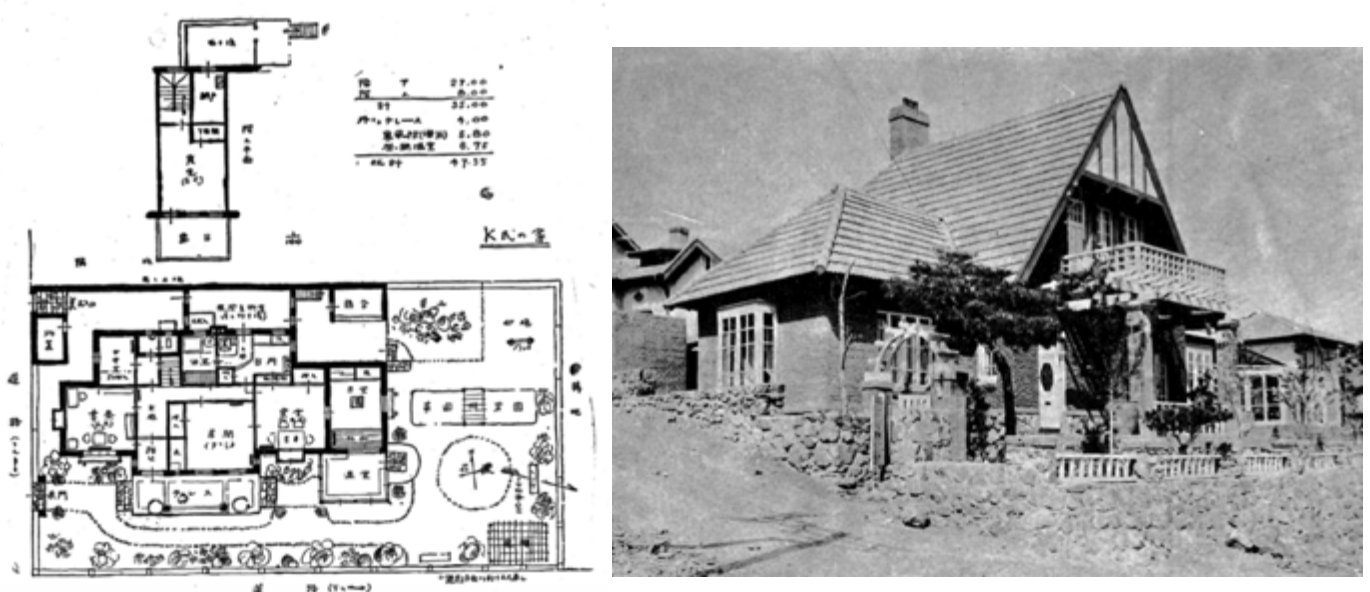
Fig. 3. Plan and photo of the exterior of a suburban house in Laohutan. Published in *Manshu Kenchiku Zasshi* 4, no. 8 (1924).

veranda (*engawa*), tatami-mat floors, shelves (*chi-gai-dana*), and the decorative transom (*ranma*).

Through the 1920s, the *Journal of Manchurian Architectural Association* published special issues, sponsored photo exhibitions, and printed catalogs to promote the Laohutan suburban housing project. The suburban housing in Dalian was expanded in parallel to the suburban housing development in Japan, with which it shared many similarities. Railway companies were in charge of the planning and development of suburban residential communities, which featured one- and two-floor cultural houses, together with parks, schools, train stations connected to the metropolis' centers.[11] The advertising catchphrases were also similar: a healthy and modern lifestyle far from the chaotic and polluted urban center.

Souvenir Postcards: Icons of Utopian Modernity

Photos of two-floor 'cultural houses' in sceneries in the suburbs circulated widely in Japan during the 1920s. These photos embodied a modern lifestyle for the rising urban middle class at the time. Simultaneously, photographs of the 1921 Life Reform Exhibition and later suburban housing projects in suburban Dalian, together with architects' discussions in journals, created the image of the living environment and lifestyle in urban Manchuria. The mass production, circulation, and consumption of these images further transformed the 'cultural houses' in suburban Dalian into icons of urban modernity in Manchuria. In fact, the process of spatial development that the residential projects carried out in suburban Dalian was overshadowed by the absolute power of the icon: a plethora of visual products, such as postcards, tourist photos, and illustrated guidebooks depicting a 'cultural house' by a picturesque seashore (fig. 4), replaced the space in reality.

The mass production, circulation, and consumption of these photos of suburban cultural houses in Dalian were the result of the thriving mass tourism in Manchuria, which developed fast in the late 1920s and 1930s and reached its peak in the 1940s.[12] Colonial tourism is central to the formation and maintenance of the Japanese empire in concept and practice, as tours in colonies mediated the experience of incorporating colonized land into the imperial territory.[13] Regarding the importance of the tourist post-

Fig. 4. Tourist postcard of the suburban cultural house neighborhood. Pre-WWII Image Collection, International Center for Chinese Studies, Aichi University.

cards, historian Kashiwagi Hiroshi 柏木博 points out that postcards played a crucial role in directing and framing the tourists' gaze. Visitors easily transposed postcards' perspectives into their own observations, and their visits therefore confirmed the impressions formed by the postcards.[14] The rapid development of mass tourism in Manchuria (in particular, after the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932) produced a plethora of visual goods. Looking at these souvenir postcards, photo albums, and guidebooks, Japanese tourists conceived the urban space of Manchuria as an ultra-modern utopia, an impression reaffirmed during the sightseeing bus tours in major cities.[15] In the 1940s, the sightseeing bus in Dalian followed a route covering twelve sights including war memorials, shrines, Japanese factories and businesses, the Chinese market, and a resort theme park in the suburbs. The tour guide introduced 'cultural houses' and emphasized their high-quality modern styles when the bus passed by from afar. These icons, therefore, contributed to the colonial discourse according to which Japanese built a modern, utopian Manchuria from a *tabula rasa*.

Conclusion

The examination of the development of Japanese housing in Dalian in the 1920s and the comparison with the one in Japan demonstrates their contemporaneous exchanges in practice and concept, thus challenging the conventional perspective according to which Japan exported modernity to its colonies. Visual products of mass tourism in Manchuria transformed the suburban 'cultural house' in the Dalian housing projects to icons of ultramodern Manchuria, which justified the Japanese colonial expansion.

The visual representation of the residential space in Manchuria was extremely selective and exclusive: it was the living environment for the Japanese urban elites. None of the Chinese and Russian neighborhoods, Japanese brothels, or Japanese lower-class settlers' houses, all of which occupied a large area in Dalian, appeared in architects' discussions or tourist photos. The plethora of images of urban Manchuria overshadowed the fragmented, multi-layered urban space of colonial society.

Notes

[1] Studies on urban planning and architecture in colonial Manchuria developed in tandem with interests in the architectural legacy of Japanese imperialism in postwar Japan. The pioneer research of the historian of urban studies Koshizawa Akira 越澤明 sets up the foundation of the research in terms of use of archive materials (maps), methodological framework (comparative study with Tokyo), and a colonist perspective on Manchuria as an ideal, experimental utopia. See Koshizawa Akira, *Shokuminchi manshū no toshi keikaku* (Tōkyō: Ajia keizai kenkyūsho, 1978). The architectural historian Nishizawa Yasuhiko 西澤泰彦 has criticized Koshizawa's static perspective and explores the network of people and circulation of materials between Japan and Manchuria. See Nishizawa Yasuhiko, *Nihon shokuminchi kenchikuron* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2008. Together, their research laid the foundations for future studies. For recent studies on government buildings and public space, see B. Sewell, *Constructing Empire: The Japanese in Changchun, 1905-45* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019).

[2] For a discussion on the political nature and mechanics of Manchukuo, see Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Kimera: Manshūkoku no shōzō* (Tōkyō: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993). Also, L. Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

[3] Comment by Maeda Matsuoto (1880-1944), a recent graduate from the University of Tokyo hired by the Dalian Military and Administration Office in 1905. Maeda Matsuoto, "Manshūgyō zakki", *Manchurian Architectural Journal* 23, no. 1 (January 1943): pp. 35-48.

[4] Nishizawa Yasuhiko, "Kantō totokufu no kenchiku soshiki to sono katsudō ni tuite: 20 seikihan no chūkoku tōhoku chihō ni okeru nihonjin no kenchiku soshiki ni kansuru kenkyū", *Journal of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Engineering* no. 442 (December 1992): pp. 120-21.

[5] In 1905, Maeda, Kuratuka Yoshio (1879-1942) and Sasaki Seigō, chief of construction at Dalian Military and Administration Office, drafted the Code No. 11, "Temporary Rules and Regulations on Houses in Dalian", *Dairenshi kaoku kenchiku torishimari kari kisoku* 大連市家屋建築取締仮規則, which provided regulations for residential houses in Dalian.

[6] The code was eventually revised in 1910: the height standards for buildings were lowered, the documents to be submitted for the building permit application simplified, and the targets for demolition narrowed.

[7] The association served as a nexus of ideas and people related to the architectural profession in Manchuria, as it organized monthly meetings, lectures, and exhibitions. Its monthly magazine, the *Journal of Manchurian Architecture Association* 満洲建築協会雑誌 (changed to *Journal of Manchurian Architecture* 満洲建築雑誌 in 1934), published from 1922 to 1944, was the most influential architecture magazine in the region. It published articles on a variety of subjects, such as history, technology, and architecture criticism, as well as special issues on social events and trends, all of which provided a rich source for the architectural development and social environment in Manchuria.

[8] The association's monthly *Journal of Manchurian Architectural Association*, *manshū kenchiku zasshi* 満洲建築協会雑誌 (changed to *Manchurian Architectural Journal* 満洲建築雑誌 in 1934), published a special issue on the exhibition, which included photos of the exhibition, entries for the housing design competition, jury commentaries, and reviews on the Daily Life Reform movement. See *Manshū Kenchiku Zasshi* 1, no. 8 (1921).

[9] The guidelines include "*Seikatu kaizen chōsa kettei jikō*" (1921), "*Seikatu kaizen no shiori*" (1924), "*Jūtaku kagu no kaizen*" (1924), "*kaitei seikatu kaizen no shiori*" (1928). See Kiyoshi Nakagawa, "Characteristics of the Discourse on Lifestyle

Improvement and Its Transformation in Japan, 1920s-1930s", *The Social Science* 42, no. 1 (2012): pp. 78.

[10] See J. Sand, "House and Home in Modern Japan, 1880-1920s" (Columbia University, 1996), pp. 289-299.

[11] A similar case of suburban housing can be seen in the denen chōfu 田園調布 area in Tokyo, see Atsushi Katagi, Yōetu Fujiya, and Yukihiro Kadoya, *Kindai Nihon no Kōgai Jūtaku-chi* (Tōkyō: Kajima Publishing, 2000).

[12] One of the most comprehensive historical examinations of Japanese development of tourism in Manchuria is by Gao Yuan, "Kankō no seijigaku: senzen/zengō ni okeru nihonjin no 'manshū' kankō", PhD dissertation (Tōkyō University, 2005).

[13] For an account of the development of colonial tourism, see K.J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at Its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2,600th Anniversary* (Cornell University Press, 2010). Also see Kate McDonald, *Placing Empire: Travel and the Social Imagination in Imperial Japan* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017).

[14] Kashiwagi Hiroshi, *Shōzō no naka no kenryoku: Kindai nihon no gurafizumu o yomu* (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1987), p. 3.

[15] Sightseeing buses, with guides on board, were available in the six major cities: Dalian, Harbin, Shinkyō, Fengtian, Lüshun, and Fushun. They operated on a fixed route, with a tour duration ranging from two to six hours.

The Architecture of Eladio Dieste: Challenging Technology, Structure, and Beauty*

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Uruguay, a small country located in South America, is geographically marked by smooth undulating Pampas covering the area that gently meets the Atlantic Ocean and the Río de la Plata estuary. This geography also coexists with some 150 unique brick constructions, as well as with 285 instantly recognisable rural schools,[1] designed and built by Eladio Dieste, an engineer whose commitment to ethics and humanism led him to create innovative solutions for architectural and structural problems using local materials. But nothing whatsoever suggests that his works are the result of a mimetic approach to the local landscape, nor of the intention of recovering the past. On the contrary, his vaulting systems and his choice of brick as building material are the result of an enormous intellectual effort to achieve economic, efficient, and elegant forms, which can be seen as an update of the Vitruvian trilogy *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas*.

Reinforced concrete had slowly and steadily gained space in the School of Engineering curricula since the 1900s. During the 1920s and the 1930s, Uruguay, a country whose economy is strongly based on cattle-breeding, was going through an economic boom, as a consequence of exporting wool and meat to Europe, and a moderate turning point towards industrialisation. It was during those years that the country received the visit of distinguished scientists, mathematicians, and professors. Amongst them, there were Albert Einstein and Enrico Fermi (both Nobel Prizes in physics), Emile Borel (mathematician), Julio Rey Pastor (mathematician and historian of science), Tulio Levi-Civita (mathematician), Esteban Terradas (mathematician, scientist and engineer), Siegmund Gerszonowicz (engineer and Professor at the Grenoble Institute of Technology); all of them lectured at the Engineering School. That was the ambience when Eladio Dieste (1917-2000) entered the Engineering School in 1937: it offered a solid training, respect for mathematics and phys-

ics, and encouraged an innovative spirit. Dieste studied during the construction of the new Faculty's building,[2] when Felix Candela, Eduardo Torroja and Pier Luigi Nervi were framing, vaulting, and building with reinforced concrete.

However, despite having witnessed these events and accompanied the works of the afore-

Fig. 1. Church of Christ the Worker, Atlántida, Uruguay, 1958. Detail of the eave that absorbs the thrust of the roof vault and sinusoidal lateral wall. Dieste & Montañez S.A. Photographic Archive, Dieste Foundation.

mentioned pioneers as a student and during his professional practice, Dieste chose to build with brick. During the course of 40 years, he developed various technologies using the resistance and structural properties of this traditional material, exploring possibilities that proved to be technologically and architecturally very fertile. In one of his writings, *Reinforced masonry*,[3] he expresses his surprise related to the large brick vaulted structures, and affirms that, although all his works were in brick, when dealing with reinforced masonry any material can be used. His choice was not the result of a personal obsession, nor based merely on economic reasons, but rather on the advantages in terms of resistance, weight, acoustic and environmental qualities, and thermal insulation, explicitly accounted for in the abovementioned text.

Soon after getting his degree as engineer in 1943, Dieste worked for the Norwegian contractor Christiane & Nielsen Construction and Consulting (1945-1948), thanks to which he became familiar with the 'Catalan' vaults in reinforced concrete. During those years, Antonio Bonet asked him to carry out structural calculations for one of his projects, the Berlinghieri house (1945-1947), located in a summer resort 120 km from Montevideo. Bonet had worked with Le Corbusier since 1936, until he moved to Argentina in 1938, and had been working on other housing projects with vaulted roofs. However, Dieste suggested an alternative solution for the Berlinghieri project, which he called 'reinforced masonry' instead of following Le Corbusier's reinforced concrete solution.[4] According to Dieste,

> the origin is not indebted to them [Catalan vaults], the genesis has come through reinforced concrete structures, of quick formwork removal; that's the mother of the structures. That the final result can be matched with some Catalan shells does not mean that it is inspired by them, what we do has nothing to do with the Catalan vault.[5]

The vaulting system of the Berlinghieri house and the Catalan vaults of the Jaoul houses were not the only times when Le Corbusier was evoked alongside Dieste. Both Graciela Silvestri and Stan-

Fig. 2. Church of Christ the Worker, Atlántida, Uruguay, 1958. Eladio Dieste on the roof, watching the dismantling of the scaffolding of the first section of the vault. Dieste & Montañez S.A. Photographic Archive, Dieste Foundation.

ford Anderson mention, *en passant*, the church of Christ the Worker in connection with Ronchamp. Silvestri refers to the similarity between the use of light and stained-glass openings in both churches, noting the difference in the effects this device creates in Dieste's undulating brick surfaces.[6] Anderson underlines the fact that structure, form, and architectural space are one in Christ the Worker, while in Ronchamp the roofing structure is hidden, the wall masonry is covered with stucco, and form and space are sculpted at the expense of structural demands.[7] However, in these works, Dieste and Le Corbusier have an almost symmetrical attitude towards form. While Christ the Worker is the result of a challenge taken to its limit by dealing rigorously and creatively with structure, the concave and convex sculpture of Ronchamp echoes a specific landscape and a desire to update traditional architectural forms based on modern principles.

According to Remo Pedreschi, the first impressions upon visiting the church of Christ the Worker (1960) may mislead the visitors, leading them to think that his architecture is only about beauty, treatment of light, space, surface, and form. Improbable structures can be thought of as the work of an obstinate or temperamental designer rather than of an unpretentious engineer who believed that architecture and technology were inseparable, that the purpose of architecture was to build human spaces, and that the cultural meaning of materials should be taken into account.[8] What started as a contract for a vault ended up being Dieste's first architectural work, a tough apprenticeship

> despite the fact that I had always been concerned about expressive problems and their relationship with construction, and above all, the relationship between art, society and life.[9]

The project consisted of one single nave, a small chapel, a choir, the baptistery, and the vestry, all included in a rectangular ground plan of 16x30 metres. Beside the church, a separate volume was built not only to hold the bell, but also to contemplate the landscape. The floors, walls, and roofs are made of exposed brick. Structurally, it consists of continuous Gaussian vaults and undulated lateral

Fig. 3. Church of Christ the Worker, Atlántida, Uruguay, 1958. Mason filling brick joints of the vault. Dieste & Montañez S.A. Photographic Archive, Dieste Foundation.

walls. However, this description does not account for the fluidity of the space, the absence of pillars, and the expressive smooth wave-like brick walls, nor for the lightness of the structure – a mysterious simplicity that is the result of intellectual effort, precision, and determination. The core of all this is an engineer's attitude towards innovation: a deliberate rejection of imported technology and a deep commitment

> to consider each problem independently, keeping in mind the conditions of our own circumstances and environment which are so different from the conditions in the developed countries.[10]

Dieste challenged structure by combining cladding and structure in one element where texture and material (brick) create light effects and play a central role in creating space. It is not in spite of the brick surfaces that we appreciate the coloured light, it is *because* of the brick that we can dwell in that specific-coloured light.

What Dieste strived for, in and with his work, is "a lightness, a mysterious ease, a concise simplicity, something like dance without effort or fatigue".[11] He achieved this by challenging conventions, avoiding easy solutions, and circumventing standard practice; by employing a conscious approach to the act of building, by being alert of the difficulties of envisioning things that are difficult to express in drawings and not giving up on them. But above all, by being very aware that planar frameworks create simple structural solutions, although not necessarily a rational use of them. Following Dieste,

> the natural tendency is to emphasize what we dominate. It is only through sustained effort that we can liberate ourselves from what (Josep Lluis) Sert calls 'the tyranny of the drawing board'.[12]

His way of dealing with the conglomerate of brick, mortar, and iron results in a particular architectural poetics, evidencing not only the subtle way brick reflects light but also enables the immediate perception of the thinness of the shells; as a consequence, his architectural forms 'breathe'. From churches to industrial warehouses, includ-
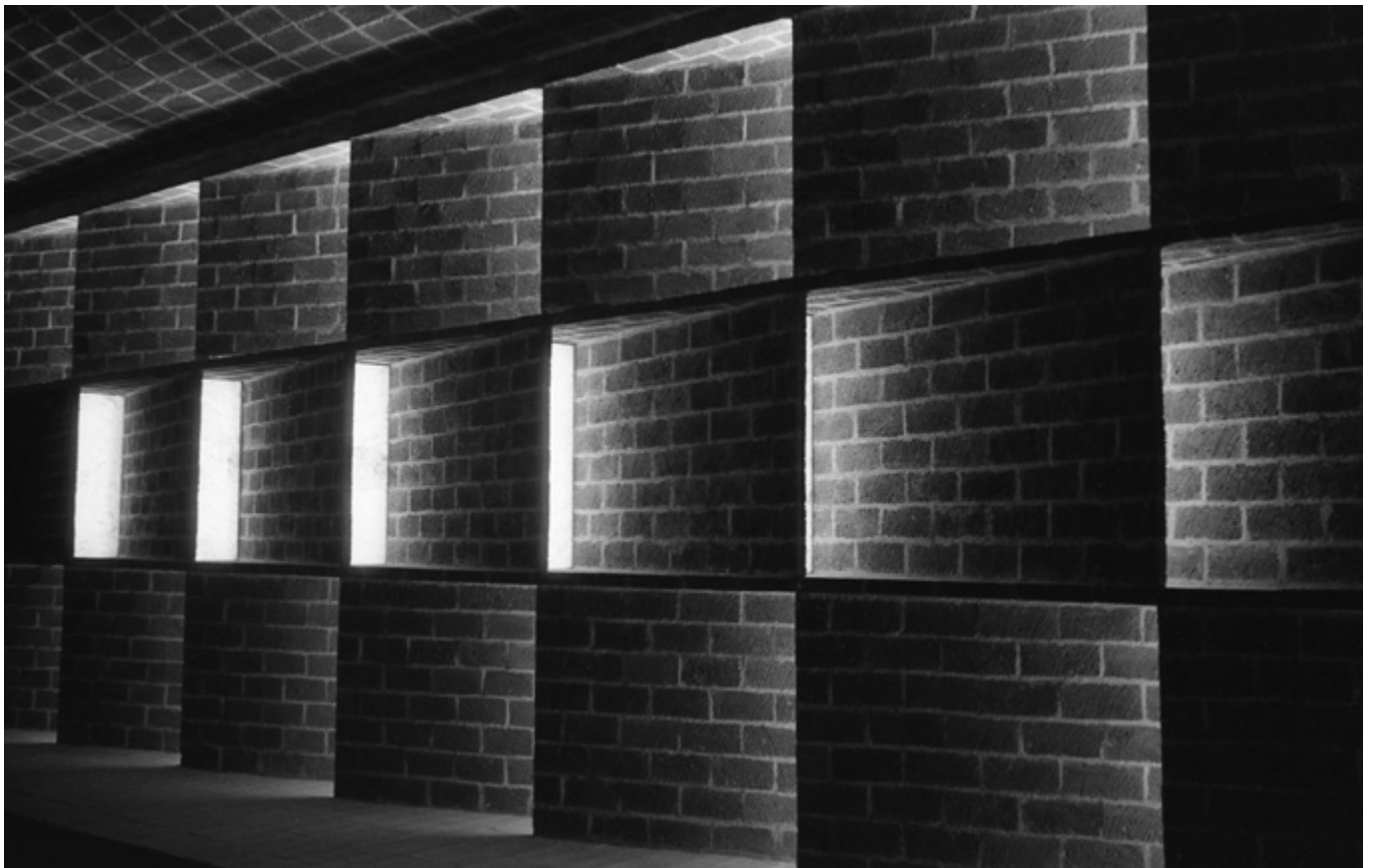
Fig. 4. Church of Christ the Worker, Atlántida, Uruguay, 1958. Choir. Detail of the canted brick grille with alabaster windows that control the light from north. Dieste & Montañez S.A. Photographic Archive, Dieste Foundation.

ing silos, water towers, shopping centres, bus terminals, private houses, bridges, leisure and sports facilities, all of them of exceptional beauty, are not the result of designing space but of creating the adequate technology for solving structural challenges that consequently create space. And creating space does not merely mean encircling space. What I am referring to is the creation of an experience of space, an experience that is about the sensorial absorption of space by means of light and texture effects of surfaces. This aspect turns out to be most relevant since his works are immediately and rationally apprehended as single volumes with a clearly defined layout, forming an inseparable pair with the sensorial spatial experience. Although they are not all really dwelling places, these buildings are in the domain of dwelling, no matter the activity the building was designed for. Distinguishing themselves from constructions, these architectures become locations that offer an experience, and these locations, according to Heidegger, come into existence by virtue of the building itself.[13] Consequently, space is provided in order to have an experience of space. Rather than establishing a boundary, Dieste's shells enable the access to a new experience of existence. Art and technology, the latter deprived of its authoritarian dimension, play a special role in making this experience possible.

Dieste dealt with a traditional and indigenous material in an original way: combining the simplicity of the material with highly complex mathematical calculus, he became a pioneer in terms of structures, use of materials, and architectural forms. He approached brick in a very original way by conferring it the ductility and stability of reinforced concrete, surpassing its use for cladding structures and avoiding the repetition of structural forms already solved in reinforced concrete. On the other hand, it is clear that his choice of a meditated curve is in tune with the research of the 1950s, but his path differs from the one followed by other contemporary architects in South America, such as Amancio Williams and Oscar Niemeyer. Dieste avoids strong formal ideas that

support rhetorical representation; his attitude towards form and structure is condensed in the following phrase:

> The resistant virtues of the structures that we make depend on their form, it is through their form that they are stable and not because of an awkward accumulation of materials. There is nothing more noble and elegant from an intellectual point of view than this, resistance through form.[14]

Dieste's works follow a multidisciplinary attitude: spatiality, ingenious structural and constructive solutions, and commitment to the economic conditions of the community, all of which respond to his human and social concerns. A commitment that his son Antonio brings forward when he says:

> my father's architectural work cannot be continued. As with any other artistic expression, his personal creativity is personal and non-transferable. This is not to imply that his works, writings and teachings are to be forgotten. Quite the opposite [...] 'it is necessary to think everything anew'.[15]

Investigating an ancient and traditional material did not hinder the modernity of his consciousness; he circumvents the idea of decadence by judging the present positively, by assigning it the power of overcoming the inertia of tradition and devoting himself to "thinking everything anew".

The architectures of Dieste are a stimulus to imagination. And the activity that depends on imagination is art. In this sense, we can approach Dieste from Konrad Fiedler's understanding, according to whom "artists should not express the subject-matter of their time, their assignment is rather to *provide* subject-matter to their time".[16] That is, to understand Dieste's work is to acknowledge how architectural *form* is constituted: through the process that makes it visible, focusing on the singularity of the constructive system he conceived and the coherence of the thoughts displayed in his works.

Notes

* I would like to express my gratitude to the Dieste Foundation.
[1] Built between 1961 and 1972 according to the Dieste self-supporting vault prototype, these schools were the result of the Primary Education Council program aimed at replacing shacks used as schools in the poorest regions of the country.

[2] School of Engineering (1936-1945) designed in reinforced concrete by the architect Julio Vilamajó and engineer Walter Hill.
[3] E. Dieste, "Reinforced Masonry", in A. Jimenez Torrecillas, ed., *Eladio Dieste: 1943-1996* (Sevilla: Consejería de Obras Públicas y Transporte, 1997), pp. 33-36.

4 According to Graciela Silvestri, rather than through this ephemeral contact via Bonet, Dieste knew about Le Corbusier and his building principles obliquely, through the collaboration established with the architects Clemont and Serralta. Clemont had worked with Le Corbusier and had his office in the same building as Dieste. Both offices worked on several projects together. (G. Silvestri, "Una biografia uruguaya", in E. Dieste, *Escritos sobre arquitectura* (Montevideo: Irrupciones Grupo Editor, 2011), pp. 142-146.

5 Dieste quoted by A.M. Marin Palma, A. Trallero Sanz, "El nacimiento de la cerámica armada", in S. Huerta Fernández, ed., *Actas del Cuarto Congreso Nacional de Historia de la Construcción* (Madrid: Instituto Juan de Herrera, SedHC, 2005), p. 709. http://www.sedhc.es/biblioteca/actas/CNHC4_068.pdf.

6 G. Silvestri, "Vilamajó, Niemeyer, y Santo Tomás: La justa medida del alma", *El País Cultural* no. 769 (Montevideo, July 30, 2004): p. 4.

7 S. Anderson, "Un innovador en estructuras: Transar cuando no hay más remedio", *ibid.*, p. 7.

8 R. Pedreschi, "Sobre la felicidad humana", *ibid.*, p. 8.

9 E. Dieste, "The Atlántida Church", in A. Jimenez Torrecillas, ed., *Eladio Dieste: 1943-1996* (Sevilla: Consejería de Obras Públicas y Transporte, 1997), p. 153.

10 Id., "Technology and underdevelopment", *ibid.*, p. 264.

11 Id., "Art, people, technocracy", *ibid.*, p. 278.

12 Id., "Architecture and construction", *ibid.*, p. 226.

13 See M. Heidegger, "Building, dwelling, thinking" [1954], in A. Hofstadter, ed., *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1971), pp. 145-160.

14 E. Dieste, "Architecture and construction", in A. Jimenez Torrecillas, ed., *Eladio Dieste*, cit., p. 233.

15 A. Dieste, "A prospect for structural ceramics", in S. Anderson, ed., *Eladio Dieste: Innovation in Structural Art* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), p. 220.

16 K. Fiedler, *Aphorismes* [1895] (Paris: Éditions Images Modernes, 2004), p. 100.

The Architect's Hand: Making Tropes and Their Afterlife*

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"(8) Was it not enough for man to provide himself a roof of any chance of covering and to contrive for himself some natural retreat without the help of art and without trouble? Believe me, that was a happy age, before the days of architects, before the days of builders! (9) All this sort of thing was born when luxury was born [...] (16) Follow nature and you will need no skilled craftsmen".

Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius*, LXXX, 8-9

As this section proposes, the passage of architecture from project to finished building involves many activities and many different players. Among them, the activities of the architect are surprisingly limited. Indeed, it is the only art (the art of building) where the "object" is not physically made by its ideator, where in fact s/he is twice removed (if not more) from it. This condition of architecture tends to be either overlooked or taken for granted such that – as Giorgio Vasari tersely put it in his *Vite* of 1550 – the drawing supplants the building as the real art object for being the only trace of the architect's hand. Yet despite the fact that this problem has been elided in criticism and scholarship, the disconnect between artist and object has not and is not always silently borne, and architects have repeatedly expressed both desire for more involvement in making and frustration at their limited role.

For example, an architect friend of mine in Canada includes something made by his own hands in every building he builds.[1] I have always found this a singular desire, habituated as we all are to see the architect distant – above or at least at a remove – from the object being built. And yet I wondered whether we – as architects, as writers about architecture, as users – have not sublimated something that perhaps exists there, deep in the bowels of this paradoxical art – paradoxical because it is an art "in translation", where

each stage (from drawing to model to construction) translates across materials, across ways of making, and across the many players who collectively are involved in this making. In short, what the architect "makes" is never what we see as architecture. Perhaps then to go right back to the origins – to the first definitions of architecture – may be a promising way to find out if and when the question of the architect's manual involvement emerged, was attended to, and (it would seem) disappeared.

1. Origin myths have always been seen to have a didactic meaning and indeed a didactic intent: those with a negative slant admonishing against (fatal) faults and those with a positive one recommending the appropriate paths to take. There are origin myths for all the arts, but for architecture these have been particularly potent, especially at a didactic rather than poetic or purely philosophical level. For an art with no external referent to be evaluated against (it not being mimetic), the mythical origins of architecture acted as the ultimate and necessary means of validation for later shifts in definitions and inventions. As a result, and uniquely perhaps, architecture's myths and its history are deeply imbricated. And it is this didactic and normative aspect of architectural origin myths that makes them an appropriate starting point for reflection on the changing definition of the architect.

Of course, myths have many layers, their compactness belying their complexity, and volumes can and have been written about them. Here, however, I would like to concentrate only on one particular aspect to the degree that I can disentangle it from intersecting themes: Who/what is the architect (rather than what is architecture)? And what are the architect's skills? This may seem an obvious way of getting at the issue of architecture as artifact and the architect as potential arti-

san, yet in fact architecture myths that focus on making are not plentiful, and one must dig deep and read between the lines. Surprisingly, the same is true of the other visual arts. Given, then, that this issue has been pushed to the margins, if present at all, it might be useful to examine first how myths about the visual arts in general compare, and how, as a group, they illuminate definitions of practice – both historically and now.

2. The primary ancient myth for the origin of painting is retold by Pliny the Elder: Kora, a young Greek woman from Corinth, drew the profile of her lover (a shadow against the cave wall) who was about to go away (or to war, depending on the version)[2] (fig. 1). As such, this first man-made image was a keepsake, a gesture of love and memory (the remembrance of a loved face).

Nature is its principal object, since it is an attempt to copy a real figure, yet by virtue of it being the outline of a shadow, it is an abstraction at the same time. Interestingly, this story is also that of the birth of sculpture, since the girl's father, Butades of Sicyon (an artisan who made clay roof tiles), eventually models a relief in clay from this outline, which later leads him to ornament the ends of roof tiles with human faces, an invention that thus heralds the birth of figural sculpture. The vexed relationship and competition between relief, painting, and sculpture in the round – causing sometimes acrimonious debates at the very least since the Renaissance if not before – may then also have an origin here.[3] The other, equally powerful, origin myth for painting is the story of Narcissus. Taken up from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by Leon Battista Alberti in his *Della pittura* (1435), it became a frequent topos and reference point for painters from the Renaissance onward, even though no actual painting takes place in the story. Narcissus (son of a nymph and a river god) falls in love with his own image reflected in a pool and drowns seeking to embrace it. Like the story of Kora, this, too, associates love

Fig. 1. Jean-Baptiste Regnault, *L'Origine de la peinture*, 1786. Versailles, Château de Versailles.

with the invention of picture-as-imitation, though in this case it is self-love (which leads to death).[4] Reflection on the craft aspect of the art does not figure in either story.

A second group of origin stories for painting that relate to specific artists' biographies come closer to dealing with the physical making of pictures. A leading story is that of the ancient Greek painter Zeuxis, likewise retold by Pliny and many times illustrated by artists (e.g., the rendition Giorgio Vasari painted in his own house in Florence).[5] This is not quite an origin myth, though it was made to fill that role by Pliny's Renaissance readers; instead, it is about artistic behavior, about how painting is done (or practiced). Zeuxis, so the story goes, is invited to paint a Venus by the citizens of Croton and unable to find a perfect model, he asks to behold several young beauties so as to select their best features and thus obtain that elusive perfect body. Only laterally about painting as craft, the story (much commented on from Cicero to Erwin Panofsky) was generally seen as a statement on the fundamental relationship between art and nature: does it look to *natura naturata* or to *natura naturans*?[6]

However, not all origin myths are ancient. A more recent origin-of-painting as origin-of-artist story, this time narrated by Giorgio Vasari in his *Vite* of 1550, is also biographical and concerns Cimabue's "discovery" of Giotto. This is not an origin myth as such, but like the story of Zeuxis and the Crotonian maidens it became equally potent as an "origin of artists" story or anecdote. As Vasari recounts, Giotto is discovered as a young shepherd tending his flock and scratching images in the sand. Struck by his talent, the older and established painter Cimabue, who accidentally passes by, takes him on as apprentice, and in time, Giotto confirms Cimabue's intuition and becomes the watershed artist for the Renaissance.[7] There are many intersecting themes here, though only one pertains directly to practice. As Marc Gotlieb has shown, what is at stake is not only the discovery and the artist's relationship to nature, but also "the scene of instruction": – the relative roles of the nature-boy (not to say savage artist) and his teacher – that is, where and how art is taught (if at all). Is Giotto a self-taught prodigy of nature who breaks with tradition precisely for this reason, or does he need a teacher (and a workshop) all the same?[8] In fact this anecdote is itself a trope since it rehearses the ancient story of the sculptor Lysip-

pus from Pliny the Elder, which in its turn depends on an even earlier story, also about Lysippus, told by Duris of Samos. At Vasari's hands, however, this becomes "the Giotto story" and thereafter recurs as "biographical padding" (as Kris and Kurz call it) in many other biographies.[9]

Clearly there is a core message to these myths and anecdotes: of love that calls forth art-making in imitation of nature (as likeness of the beloved); of the childhood miracle (needing no schooling since the child is already close to nature) and the accidental discovery of the prodigy; finally, it is also about the relationship to a master, for in many of these stories the ultimate object is to genealogize. So much for painting.

A number of origin myths are also associated with sculpture in addition to that of Butades of Sicyon. Surprisingly, the craft aspect of the art is marginal here too. As was the case with painting (and architecture, as we will see), accident plays a role here as well: as Leon Battista Alberti recounts in his *De statua* (1462), a rough piece of wood or a clod of clay set off the artistic act/imagination such that the first sculptor only enhances what is already there.[10] In a way this is a pendent to an ancient anecdote about painting: in a Jackson Pollock-like story *avant-la-lettre*, the Greek painter Protogenes, so Pliny recounts, is inspired by the stain left by a wet sponge he throws against the wall. The story evidently hit a nerve as there is also a later, Renaissance version of this anecdote/myth involving Leonardo and the inspirational effects of cloud formations upon his painting.

To be sure, the most famous sculpture myth remains that of Pygmalion and Galatea (of the sculptor who falls in love with his own creation), which was popularized by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* just like the story of Narcissus. Not strictly an origin myth, this story nevertheless condenses thought about lifelikeness, making art as love, and the liminality between nature and art – a recurring theme in many stories. Finally, a much later though popular vignette that exploits the childhood and body connection between art and artist and hints at the origins of manual practice – perhaps a sculpture pendant to the Giotto story – is included in the life of Michelangelo. As we are told by his biographers Ascanio Condivi and Vasari, Michelangelo absorbed the marble-carving talent through the milk of his wet nurse, the wife of a stone carver from Settignano (a major quarrying center on the outskirts of Florence).[11]

3. Unlike the origin stories for the figural arts, which tend to revolve around a real or mythical figure, architecture's myths fall into two distinct categories: those with architects and those without (i.e., myths with and without a protagonist). The myths *without architects* are more primordial: they are about the invention of shelter, of building, and only subsequently of a "learned" (intellected), deliberate architecture, in that order. One of the most important such myths – much rehearsed by the reception – is the invention of building as recounted by Vitruvius in *De architectura* (fig. 2). In his account, the invention of man-made shelter (rather than ready-made caves) is occasioned by the accidental discovery of fire, which sets off a chain reaction: as a result of congregating around the fire, man begins to speak; this leads to sociability and, as a consequence, also to the production of things (man's hands and fingers being flexible and able to manipulate materials) and eventually also to ingenuity and invention.

"Hence" – Vitruvius concludes – "after thus meeting together, they began, some to make shelters of leaves, some to dig caves under the hills, some to make of mud and wattles places for shelter, imitating the nests of swallows and their methods of building. Then observing the houses of others and adding to their ideas new things from day to day, they produced better kinds of huts".[12]

Of this story of first principles, its best-known avatar and most often repeated version was that of the primitive hut by Marc-Antoine Laugier prominently displayed on the frontispiece of his *Essai sur l'architecture* (1753)[13] (fig. 3). Its tremendous power, however, lay in the sleight of hand that collapsed two myths into one: the origin of building and the origin of architecture. For Vitruvius, these were two separate moments, and even occurred in different parts of the text. In his account, architecture (rather than shelter/building) comes into being when number, order, and form are added to raw matter. Instead, for Laugier, raw
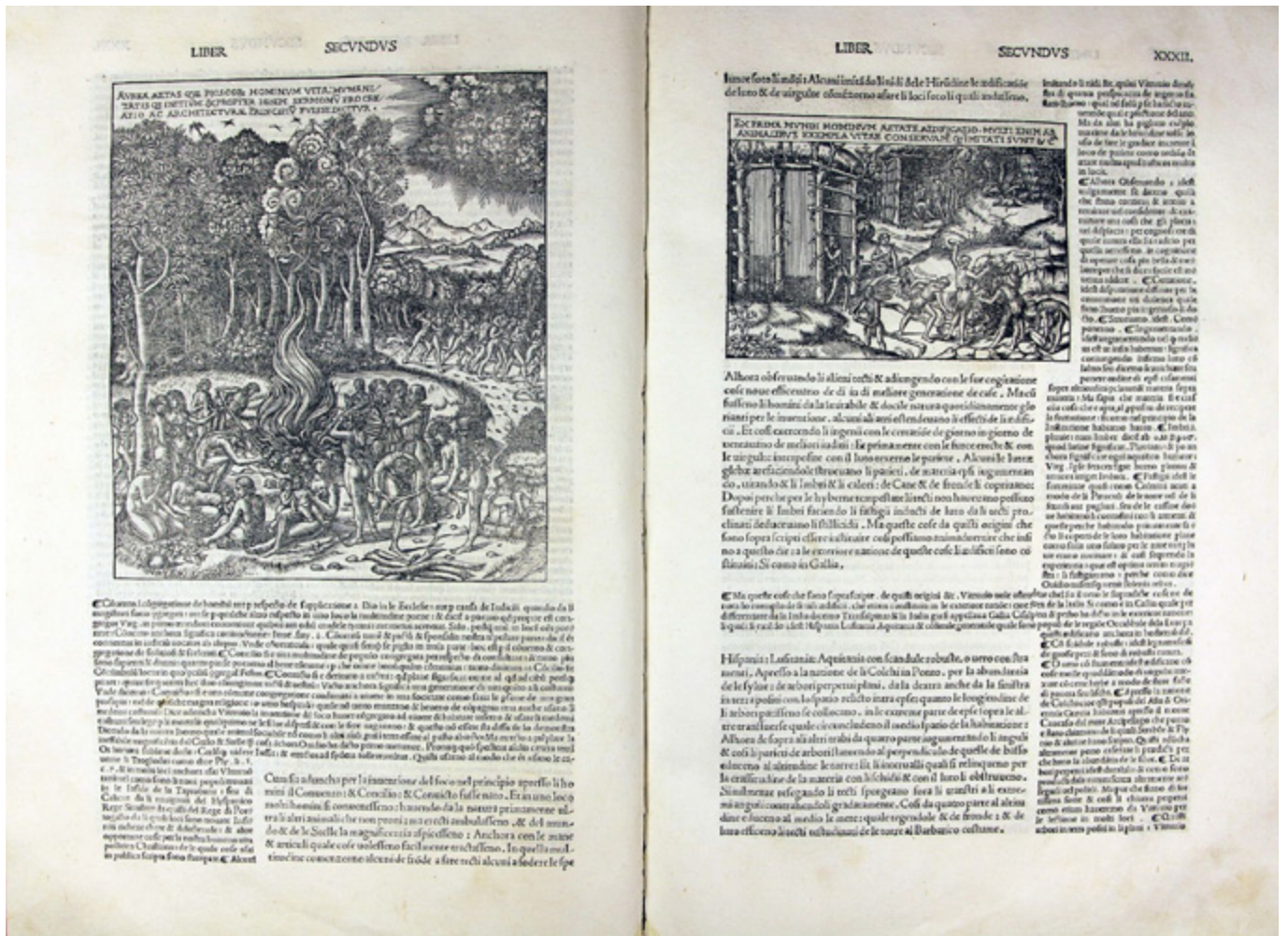
Fig. 2. Cesare Cesariano, illustration for Vitruvius' *De architectura*, 1521.

Fig. 3. Marc-Antoine Laugier, frontispiece and title page to *Essai sur l'architecture*, 1755.

matter already anticipates architecture (the primitive hut anticipates the temple format), somewhat in the manner of the sculpture origin story in which the piece of wood or clod of earth already contained the seeds of the image for the sculptor.

Collective invention also extends to "learned" architecture not only to basic shelter. There, too, chance plays a determining role. Thus, in Book IV Vitruvius turns to the origin of the columnar orders: "For in Achaea and over the whole Peloponnese, Dorus, the son of Hellen and the nymph Phthia was king; by *chance* he built a temple in this style [*genera*] at the old city of Argos, in the sanctuary of Juno".[14] Thereafter, he continues, the people and their "genera" move to Asia Minor, where the original form is developed into the mature Doric by an anonymous "them" and "they", with no specific person/architect attached to it. The Ionic order is likewise invented by an anonymous and collective "they". As such, the origin of the orders, the architectural device that *orders* basic building and turns it into architecture (through both number and form), is semi-mythical: the orders come into being through the agency of the offspring of gods and anonymous groups of people, by chance, accidentally – created in "illo tempore," to use Mircea Eliade's resonant term.[15]

There are few myths with named architects. Perhaps the oldest is that of Daedalus, though his is less a story of the invention of architecture as such (he builds a labyrinth for the Minotaur) than more generally of the dangers of invention if it challenges the order of things (the wings he makes to escape imprisonment by flying collapse and cause his son Icarus's death).[16] The story of Dinocrates of Rhodes, who becomes Alexander's architect, appears to be a Lysippus type of myth, an example of an accidental meeting and an artist's rise out of anonymity. Yet, although the trope of the accidental encounter and the genius plucked from the crowd seems to be shared with painting and sculpture, in fact Dinocrates is not chosen for being an artist prodigy but for standing out, for his appearance and his boldness. Closer to a bona fide myth of architecture with an architect as its main protagonist is a Romanian legend, versions of which are found throughout the Balkans, the Middle East, and Central Asian regions as far as Inner Mongolia.[17] The richest and

Fig. 4. Roland Fréart de Chambray, *Callimachus inventing the Corinthian order*, 1650.

most famous of Romanian monastery churches endowed by the then reigning prince Negru-Voda was built in the first quarter of the sixteenth century (1512-1517) by a Master Manole. As he and his workmen were building the church, so the story goes, it collapsed time and again such they began to despair and pray and in response to these prayers, Manole had a vision: God advised him to immure the first woman to arrive at the site that day, that is, to build her into the church wall. Only thus would the building stand. Knowing that his beautiful and much beloved wife was about to arrive carrying his meal, Manole prayed that she would not reach the building site – but whatever came in her way, she triumphed over it and driven by her love for her husband she overcame all obstacles, thus walking to her death. The sacrifice worked, and the more beautiful the part of her immured body, the more beautiful also that part of the wall.

A similar sacrificial element is embedded in the birth-moment of the Corinthian order as recounted by Vitruvius – probably also the survival of a Greek myth like so much else in his work (fig. 4). The maiden dead in the flower of her youth, on whose tomb an acanthus grew entwined around the offering basket that contained her possessions, is the agent that sparks the imagination of the sculptor Callimachus and allows him to bring a new architectural order into being.[18] This story is not that distant from Manole's, for though there is no actual sacrifice on Callimachus's part, the architecture that emerges is nevertheless conditioned by a death and transformation into stone, and once again a woman is the "ritual" victim. Indeed, in the mid- fifteenth century the architect Francesco di Giorgio shows an immured maiden animating the column, literally encased in it, enlivening it with her grace and spirit. The myth of the caryatids condemned to remain in their prisoner status for eternity holding up the superstructure of the temple is one other instance of an equally terminal and dangerous cross-over between body and (beautiful) architecture.[19]

Biographies of real-life rather than mythical architects are present as well, though they are more recent. Neither Pliny-like in style, nor theory commonplaces as was the case with Giotto's, over time they nevertheless acquired some level of normative power. Condensing evaluations with didactic intent into pithy anecdotes (unlike the biographies of the figural artists), Vasari's architect biographies – the lives of Baccio d'Agnolo, Giuliano da Sangallo and Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, Donato Bramante, Baldassare Peruzzi, and so on – thus functioned as reference points if not as bona fide myths. The same is true of some coming from outside of the European corpus of stories, such as the lyrical autobiography of Sinan, the great architect of Suleiman the Magnificent.[20] To be sure, starting in the Renaissance, Vitruvius became something of a myth himself, initiating the modern phenomenon of the "writing architect" that ultimately became that of the *architecte philosophe*. And it is here, in these biographies, that we might expect answers to the question of architectural craft. Where does the origin of architectural knowledge lie? How is it transmitted?

Like the biographies of painters, these questions, too, bear on the education of the architect: with or without a master? Even if the relationship

between Giotto and Cimabue elicits interpretation, the former is nevertheless an apprentice in the master's workshop. With the architects – and I emphasize that this applies even to the "pure" architects, those few who did not practice other visual arts – there was no passing of a baton, no master/student relationship. Each one was an autodidact of sorts, starting with the inimitable Filippo Brunelleschi, whose career began as a goldsmith. If anything, in Vasari's biographies most architects start with knowledge of other crafts (carpentry, woodcarving, metalworking, perspective construction, sometimes sculpture, sometimes painting), and it is only by absorbing what each has to offer that they finally synthesize the knowledge and become architects. Indeed, it would seem that much of becoming an architect has to do with learning manual crafts, the operation of instruments, and the nature of materials. The same is true of Sinan's rise to the top of his profession – from carpenter to ship builder and janissary (hence acquiring military knowledge) and finally to architect.[21] But most important, what becomes clear is that, unlike the other arts, architecture is not about spontaneous prodigy or genius. Architecture is the *archae*, the coming together of all the arts. And this is the origin and myth of architecture to which all biographies ultimately refer.

We have been following two types of architecture myths: of the art and of its practice through the artist (whether real or mythical). Some (the oldest) are about the relationship between architecture and nature, which is much more problematic than in the case of painting: architecture displaces (or interferes with) nature, so it must make its peace with it. One way of achieving this reconciliation is by following nature's laws, building "with" nature – and this the community does (the Dorians and Ionians), rather than any single architect; the other way is expiatory (for having interfered with nature), hence the sacrificial component of some myths (e.g., Manole's).

Ultimately what all these myths are about is *agency*. Where does it lie? With the architect or with external circumstances? It would seem that in all instances the human (artist's) body comes into play and is the site of agency: either it must mitigate for the interruption of nature (with loss of life and redemption, as per the myths), or (as in the biographies of real architects) it is a knowing body that has accumulated and assimilated – metabolized – physical experience, knowledge of craft, of making. In Vitruvius's words, "When, however, by daily work men had rendered their hands more hardened for building, and by practicing their clever talents they had *by habit* acquired craftsmanship … *then from the construction of buildings they progressed* by degrees to other crafts and disciplines, and they led the way from a savage and rustic life to a peaceful civilization".[22]

4. In the face of these thin references to making in myths and other stories, it seems legitimate to ask: Having metabolized knowledge of various types and contemplated if not actually experienced the deep tie between building and body through bodily sacrifice, is the architect a maker, a craftsman as well as an intellectual? Does the architect need to be both in order to be a *good* architect? In *De architectura* Vitruvius seems to separate (or connect) the two activities when he distinguishes between *fabrica* and *ratiocinatio*: "Opera ea nascitur et fabrica et ratiocinatione".[23] But this is not so much an origin myth as an Aristotelian moment in Vitruvius's effort to systematize architectural knowledge. More in keeping with a transmitted myth is his origin of shelter story, where building is the ur-instinct, and from there come all the crafts. Elsewhere, in the other myths, the architect is in fact a craftsman (witness Manole and Callimachus) as is Daedalus, the paradigmatic Bronze Age architect after whom Manole's figure is certainly modeled: credited with the Cretan labyrinth and a temple to Apollo in Sicily, his name actually means "finely crafted objects" (*daidala*) in Homer's Greek, thus suggesting an artisan working in bronze, on armor, vessels, buckles, and so on.

Yet, despite these occasional appearances, crafting as such is not generally foregrounded in architecture's origin stories. And the biographies of Renaissance architects, for all their references to deep knowledge, contribute to this erasure of making. Despite the fact that most architects were also artisans and artists, and that quite often architecture and sculpture merged to the point of being indistinguishable, little is said about the architect's physical agency – the architect's hand – even by Vasari, who records the many crafts architects must master.[24] Was the architect's hand, and therefore his body, not seen to be implicated at some level at least? Danger certainly threatened it: falling, breaking bones, heavy equipment

Fig. 5. Office for Metropolitan Architecture, China Central Television Headquarters, 2002-2012.

or stones collapsing and crushing him...[25] But what about the body's positive contribution? On the whole, the corpus of stories – and the historiography – have avoided these and all episodes of making. And since architectural history started in earnest in the later nineteenth century, it inevitably told it with a modern bias. Despite a brief moment of concentration on crafting in the second half of the nineteenth century – a direct result of anxieties about manufacturing occasioned by the Industrial Revolution, and which included participants like Gottfried Semper, who claimed textile weaving was the ur-craft of architecture – the theoretical thinking on this topic has been marginal if present at all.[26]

Today, making may seem the last trope to consider. And if Rem Koolhaas is right and contemporary architecture – the post-architecture, post-theory condition – is about "bigness", the gigantic, and the overscale, rhetorically exaggerated

Fig 6. Office for Metropolitan Architecture, models of the project for the China Central Television Headquarters, c. 2002.

to make the point, then craft and the hand have nothing to do with it anymore (fig. 5). Koolhaas's architectural models might suggest otherwise,

Fig. 7. Model-making workshop, office of Renzo Piano Architects, Genoa 2017.

but this apparent miniaturizing has the same effect: it suggests a gigantic (planetary?) perspective from which these enormous elements of the city actually look tiny (fig. 6).

Exaggerated smallness suggests exaggerated bigness. Likewise, in drawing, since AutoCAD has taken over and the keyboard has eliminated the pencil, the gesture and choreography of the hand on paper have also disappeared. Is drawing also obsolete? Not only the body's agency in tracing lines but also the sketch itself, with its unfinished and highly suggestive quality, is a thing of the past: the computer can model everything and anything in space and gives it a deceivingly finished and complete look. The hand has disappeared, so has the body, and what belonged to the body – love and sacrifice. Where is the prodigy, and where lies the talent? What happened with the myths? Are they still informing architecture and architects as they did for millennia, or are we "post-myth" as well?

And yet. Renzo Piano, for example, still holds that things need to be understood through making before they are exploded in scale. In his of-

fice all details are made of wood, studied, turned, made physically available before they are translated into final destinations of scale and materials. His studio is a model-maker's shop (fig. 7). Clearly, this approach connects to his deep history with boat making, the personal history of a genuine Genovese. And he is certainly not alone. Over the *longue durée* many architects produced full-scale details of buildings to assess their assemblage and appearance. But in the context of bigness as contemporary paradigm and commentary on where architecture is headed, is Piano's approach now an anachronism? Or is nevertheless something left between bigness and the human hand? Might there still be a space where one can think about this? The hand develops the thought as *embodied* knowledge, as *techne*, and the knowledge of the draftsman, like that of the craftsman, is mediated by the hand. Instead, with computer-aided design and in industry, the *techne* is not that of the creator; it comes out of calculations and other intellected operations and is no longer a function of the body performing movements at the intersection with thought.

Are we then facing a loss? And, if so, what are its consequences? Does my architect friend's deep visceral desire to make something by his own hand in every building he designs manifest this loss and some deep condition of architecture that neither old nor new myths voice? Is there a place left for the architect's hand today? Modernism is said to have embraced and proselytized the chasm between the artisan and the machine that the Industrial Revolution permitted. Perhaps looking at the Bauhaus – a classic, by now almost mythical site where this parting of the ways was

Fig. 8. Hannes Meyer, *junge menshcen kommt ans bauhaus!*, 1929.

consecrated – is a way to think again about this issue (fig. 8).

The well-known recruitment poster with the hand calling young people to the Bauhaus recalls many things, among them Adam's hand by Michelangelo on the Sistine ceiling and even Lord Kitchener's hand calling young men to join the army in the First World War. But, more important, to me it recalls the examples of Giotto's "site of instruction", for the Bauhaus was also a "site of instruction". Perhaps even at the very heart of modernism, with its claims to have effected a tabula rasa and embraced industry, the hand *was* nevertheless central and meant to be involved – a hand that was led, and taught, but was present.

Notes

* This essay was first published in *Founding Myths, gta papers*, 3 (Zurich: GTA Verlag 2019), pp. 28-40.

1 I refer to Howard Sutcliffe of the Canadian firm of Shim Sutcliffe Architects (Toronto). For their published work see Shim-Sutcliffe, *The Architecture of Point William. A Laboratory for Living.* With essays by Kenneth Frampton and Michael Webb (Toronto: Oro Editions, 2020).

2 "It was through his daughter that he [Butades of Sicyon] made the discovery; who, being deeply in love with a young man about to depart on a long journey, traced the profile of his face, as thrown upon the wall by the light of the lamp [*umbram ex facie eius ad lucernam in pariete lineis circumscripsit*]". Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Loeb Classical Library 394, vol. 9 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), book 35, ch. 15.

3 For a history and its modern consequences, see A. Payne, "On Sculptural Relief: *Malerisch*, the Autonomy of Artistic Media and the Beginnings of Baroque Studies", in H. Hills, ed., *Reframing the Baroque* (London: Ashgate Press, 2011), pp. 39-64.

4 L. Marin, *Des pouvoirs de l'image: Gloses*, L'Ordre philosophique (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993).

5 Pliny, *Natural History* (see note 2), book 35.

6 *Ivi*. For a review of the story and its changes along the centuries, see E. Panofsky, *Idea: A Concept in Art Theory* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968).

7 G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani: da Cimabue insino a' tempi nostri* (Firenze: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550).

8 M. Gotlieb, "The Scene of Instruction", in L. Bolzoni, A. Payne, eds., *The Italian Renaissance in the 19th Century: Revision, Revival, and Return* (Firenze-Cambridge, MA: Officina Libraria-Harvard University Press, 2018), pp. 189-212.

9 E. Kris, O. Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 30.

10 L.B. Alberti, *De statua*, ed. M. Collareta (Livorno: Sillabe, 1998), p. 5.

11 A. Condivi, *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti* (Roma: Antonio Blado, 1553).

12 Marcus Pollio Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, Loeb Classical Library 251, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), book II, ch. 1.

13 M.C. Laugier, *Essai sur l'architecture* (Paris: Duchesne, 1753). For the popularity and afterlife of the story, see J.

Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (New York: MoMA, 1972).

14 Vitruvius, *On Architecture* (see note 12), book 4, ch. 5. My emphasis.

15 M. Eliade, *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour: Archétypes et répétition* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949).

16 On this myth and links between architectural myths and classical philosophy, see I.K. McEwen, *Socrates' Ancestor: An Essay on Architectural Beginnings* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993).

17 On this myth, see A. Payne, "Living Stones, Crying Walls: The Dangers of Enlivenment in Architecture from Renaissance *putti* to Warburg's *Nachleben*", in C. van Eck, J. van Gastel, E. van Kessel, eds., *The Secret Lives of Artworks: Exploring the Boundaries Between Art and Life* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2013), pp. 301-339.

18 Vitruvius, *On Architecture* (see note 12), book 4, ch. 1.

19 *Ibid*., book 4, ch. 8.

20 G. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); H. Crane, E. Akin, eds., *Sinan's Autobiographies: Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*. Muqarnas, Supplements (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2006).

21 H. Crane, E. Akin, eds., *Sinan's Autobiographies*, cit.

22 Vitruvius, *On Architecture* (see note 12), book 2, ch. 1. My emphasis.

23 *Ibid*., book 1, ch. 1.

24 For a discussion of this trope and its absence, see A. Payne, *L'Architecture parmi les arts: Matérialité, transferts et travail artistique dans l'Italie de la Renaissance* (Paris: Hazan, 2016), ch. 3.

25 There are many stories of architects – Antonio Gaudi, Carlo Scarpa, and others – dying in the exercise of their work, just as there are many stories of workmen dying during construction from the days of Brunelleschi's dome to the 1960s Autostrada del Sole, for whose "fallen" the church of San Giovanni Battista "Chiesa dell'Autostrada" was built by architect Giovanni Michelucci (1960-1964).

26 On this as it pertains to architecture and the rise of modernism, see A. Payne, *From Ornament to Object: Genealogies of Architectural Modernism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

SESSION 7

Matter and Materiality in Art and Aesthetics: From Time to Deep-Time

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Small Matter and Eternity: Michelangelo's Last Judgment

Nicolas Cordon
The Liveliness of Stucco: Vanishing Statues and Creamy Clouds in Baroque Palermo

Bronwen Wilson
Lithic Images, Jacopo Ligozzi, and the Descrizione del Sacro Monte della Vernia *(1612)*

Amy F. Ogata
Making Iron Matter in Second Empire France

Stefania Portinari
The Venice Biennale as a World Map: Cartographies, Geological Interventions, Landmark Layers

Liliane Ehrhart
Towards the Creation of Original Material Depictions of the Human: Marc Quinn's Sculptures

Jing Yang
The Human and Non-human Interconnectedness in Three Chinese Contemporary Artists

Introduction to Session 7

Matter, material and materiality: over the course of the past two decades these three words have become ubiquitous in the humanities and social sciences. Driven by a rising ecocritical awareness and backed by a focus on mobility and trade, the discourse on materiality has profoundly shaped both the theory and practice of our discipline. A response to the 'linguistic turn' of the 1970s and 1980s, this 'material turn' now compellingly counterbalances the dematerialization of today's digital reality, the loss of a culture of tactility and manual crafts.[1] But why does materiality appeal so much to art historians? Perhaps it is because it extols the idea that images are not signs but embodied objects that call for our own, discipline-specific expertise; perhaps because it claims a much larger field of intervention for art history, well beyond the realm of art, into that of material culture and even beyond, past the fabricated object and towards unbounded matter of all kinds.[2] On the one hand, materiality has reinforced the disciplinary boundaries of our academic field; on the other, it has broadened them.

This focus on the matter of art has often translated into an emphasis on the moment of the object's creation: its making, production, and the artist's choice of medium. This session looks instead at what happens *over time*.

In attending to time, the following contributions address an often-overlooked dimension in the biography of the 'animated' artwork: not its coming into life, but rather its slow aging and eventual release into a novel configuration of matter – be it a fragment, ruin, or waste. By following matter before and after the finished, localized object, the session encourages to think about materials subject to time scales at odds with those of human experience, moving – as the title suggests – from the time of human history to the deep time of geological history.[3]

The effect of time on artworks is a matter of great concern for conservators, curators, and policymakers, but it has rarely been the focus of art historical inquiry and interpretation. Art historians might even harbor hostility toward time because it obliterates the objects we study. Issues of conservation remain relegated to restoration reports and are often seen as peripheral to the field. Art history established itself as a humanistic discipline by insisting on this distinction: in a now canonical contribution, Erwin Panofsky advocated for the separation between the scientific work of technical art history and humanist inquiry, arguing that "from the humanistic point of view, human records do not age".[4]

When, as art historians, we consider the temporal instability of artworks, we tend to interpret it as the visual manifestation of the distance that separates us from the original condition of the object, a condition we assume to be the relevant one. This session proposes instead to read time more productively and sympathetically: not just in terms of its 'subtractive agency', but as an active, shaping force that compels artists and audiences to confront the object's processes of making and unmaking.

Our session interprets the theme of the 2019 CIHA Congress, *Motion: Transformation* in temporal terms. By focusing on movements that are not just across space but also across time, we hope to complement the current emphasis on the circulation and mobility of objects: the pathways, trajectories, and exchange practices that have helped us productively rethink so much of our globalized discipline.

The themes that the contributions of this session address are rather episodes of stillness and stasis (the dusting of fresco surfaces; the progressive hardening of wet stucco; the freezing of blood; the slow growth of silkworms and plants). They are episodes where movement is vertical rather than horizontal, a deep dive into the earth's stratigraphy and the abyss of geological time

(the rocky escarpments of a sacred mountain; the extraction of iron; the excavations through the geological strata of the Venice Biennale). Taken collectively, they help revise the assumption that matter and objects that are 'on the move' are more significant or have more to offer to art history than those that remain halted, stuck, or marooned.[5]

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Matter, material, materiality: so far, we have used these words as synonyms. But do these notions share the same semiotic content? Today, we are still missing an accurate analysis of their distinct applications in different historical and geographical contexts. A survey of the usage and dissemination of these terms would undoubtedly surprise us with respect to our understanding of art history. With its attention to the material *facies* of works of art, our discipline is, within visual humanities, exceptionally well equipped to deal with these issues.

And yet, over the course of the last century, materiality has been neglected, partially as a result of the pull of two important artistic shifts. First, during the avant-garde, when artistic attention was increasingly focusing on ether vibrations, electromagnetic waves, radioactivity, and other invisible phenomena that could be reinvested in the aesthetic field and beyond the material world – a trend Lynda Henderson has designated as *vibratory modernism*.[6] Later on, in the 1960s, conceptual art challenged materiality in an even more radical fashion. After centuries during which artmaking was fully ruled by the paradigm of visibility, it seemed that, oddly enough, artists were interested in making their works invisible, investigating the threshold of the visible and dismissing its subject matter.

Invisibility, absence, emptiness: the new agenda promoted by conceptual practices involved long-term consequences regarding the role of museums and art institutions, as well as the function of art exhibitions in legitimizing artworks. The material that mattered was now the exhibition itself. This historical move was aptly and timely grasped in 1968 by Lucy Lippard in *The Dematerialization of Art*, a volume that offers a valuable overview of that period.[7]

Within this framework – one that challenges materiality while moving towards invisibility – one should also mention nuclear energy and radioactivity, as it is in these fields that invisibility first revealed its potentially destructive force. This *avisuality*, to use the expression coined by Akira Mizuta Lippit, threatened to engender a catastrophe that would instantly annihilate human presence on earth.[8] Nuclear energy, however, does not endorse the negation of matter but rather its transformation: a conversion of matter into the infinitesimal, into a microscopic scale that is simultaneously invisible to the naked eye and colossal in its effects. It is no accident that contemporary artistic practices have so often turned to nuclear energy as the subject matter or 'material' of art.[9]

What these practices and experiences have in common is a compelling invitation not to oppose materiality and de-materialization in a simplistic manner. As a form of de-substantialization, the dematerialization of objects and media does not necessarily lead to the immaterial. Materials – even when they are invisible to the eye – might still possess a matter of some sort, leading to an *impasse* of the modernist aesthetics grounded on the scopic regime or the oculocentric model.

More recently, according to Jane Bennett, matter has been reconceived not as a passive and inert substance but rather as an activated and energetic element, subject to timescales that are much grander than those of human history.[10] This 'deep-time' of geological history and its unyielding remoteness force the limits of the anthropocentric humanities, eluding our comprehension. Exercising our ecological and geological imagination draws attention to the visual aspect of materiality while challenging common assumptions about the paradigmatic intertwining of time and matter in visual and cultural practices. It leads us to explore the power of images to visualize the materialities that make up our present in an historical framework.

Deep time also resists being reduced to the present moment, to a form of 'presentism' that contemporary art appears to cultivate; it exceeds the human scale and perhaps even our imagination.[11] How do artists respond to the materiality that is specific to what has been now called the Anthropocene? How do they visualize an increasingly controversial and threatening geological era that eschews clear-cut and reliable representations? How do they face the catastrophic events that this might engender? How do they respond to a future that is not only unfathomable, unpredictable, or inscrutable, but also unimaginable?

These questions might offer new methodological insights into the exploration of matter and materiality: both in the historiographical weight these terms carry and in their resonance in contemporary artistic practices. With regard to this session, they provide a useful background to shift the focus away from human orchestration towards human and non-human collaborations; to consider material flows and productively rethink the relationship between matter and form beyond the hylomorphic model, the formalism of art history, and the visibility of the Western scopic regime; and to broaden the *longue durée* – encompassing, according to Fernand Braudel, the history of the Mediterranean sea in the XVI century – into an ecology of deep time towards which the current era of the Anthropocene has stretched.

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As a testament to the liveliness of the material turn, this session offers only a small selection of the many proposals we received. This final line-up follows a rough chronological order but also groups papers by the nature of the material they primarily address. With Fabian Jonietz, we start our journey into matter high above ground: from the subtle, fine particles of dust floating in the air and quietly settling on the surface of Renaissance frescoes. We then move on to the glittering marble dust that is stucco, the stuff of otherworldly, celestial softness: of clouds, wings, fleshy dimples, and garlands spreading onto the baroque ceilings of early 18th-century Palermo in Nicolas Cordon's contribution. From there, we descend to the metallic, the mineral, and the lithic. First, with Bronwen Wilson, exploring the rocky landscape of La Verna, among mountains, boulders, and cliffs and then the underground, as Amy Ogata follows iron from Algerian mines to French furnaces and forges, all the way up to the railroads and lamp posts of the Second Empire. We continue with the complex curatorial stratigraphy of the garden of the Venice Biennale in Stefania Portinari's essay, before resurfacing to organic life: to Marc Quinn's manipulation of biological matter in Liliane Ehrhart's essay and finally, with Jing Yang, to the ecological entanglements of human, animal, and vegetal life of contemporary art in China.

Francesca Borgo, Riccardo Venturi

Notes

The session is the result of the authors' cooperation and collective decisions. Borgo authored paragraphs 1-7, 16 and Venturi 8-15 of the introduction. Both authors would like to thank the contributors for their collegiality and lively exchange.

[1] N. Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, "Materiality, Sign of the Times", *The Art Bulletin* 101, no. 4 (2019): pp. 6-7, as well as the issue "Notes from the Field: Materiality", *The Art Bulletin* 95, no. 1 (2013): pp. 10-37.

[2] For both claims see, respectively, M. Cole, "The Cult of Materials", in S. Clerbois, M. Droth, eds., *Revival and Invention. Sculpture through its Material Histories* (Oxford, Bern, Berlin, Brussels, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Wien: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 1-15; J. Roberts, "Things: Material Turn, Transnational Turn", *American Art* 31, no. 2 (2017): pp. 64-69.

[3] N. Heringman, "Deep Time at the Dawn of the Anthropocene", *Representations* 129, no. 1 (2015): pp. 56-85.

[4] E. Panofsky, "The History of Art as Humanistic Discipline", originally published in *The Meaning of the Humanities*, ed. T.M. Greene (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), pp. 98-118. See C. Fowler, "Technical Art History as Method", *The Art Bulletin* 101, no. 4 (2019): pp. 9-17.

[5] For a similar conclusion, see also C. Heuer, *Into the White: The Renaissance Arctic and the End of the Image* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2019), pp. 174-195. On the impact of the discovery of geological time on 19th-century art, see S. O'Rourke, "Staring into the Abyss of Time", *Representations* 148 (2019): pp. 30-56.

[6] L.D. Henderson, "Vibratory Modernism: Boccioni, Kupka, and the Ether of Space", in B. Clarke, L.D. Henderson, eds., *From Energy to Information: Representation in Technology, Art, and Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 126-149.

[7] L. Lippard, *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1973, 2001).

[8] A. Mizuta Lippit, *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

[9] Cf. E. Carpenter, ed., *The Nuclear Culture Source Book* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2016).

[10] J. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

[11] F. Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité. Présentisme et expériences du temps* (Paris: Seuil, 2003).

Small Matter and Eternity: Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*

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The history of the Sistine Chapel is most likely the single best documented account of a liturgical space of the early modern world.[1] Yet, there is no trace in the sources of the roughly a dozen cart-loads which were necessary to remove approximately 60 to 70 cubic meters of demolition waste at the beginning of 1536, when the preparation for Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* was under way. While the erection of a brick wall which served as immediate support for the fresco is documented in five payments made between February and April,[2] art historians could only speculate about the complexity of this enterprise until scientific analyses, conducted during the 1990/94 restoration, revealed the exact composition of the west wall: prior to the construction of the second layer, a colossal section in the shape of a trapezoid prism had to be chiseled away from the old quarry-stone-wall.[3] Subsequently, the rubble had to be removed from the chapel (apart from some of this material, which was reused by masons to close off the two preexisting windows), before the bricks could be walled and the rough plaster applied. It was only at that point that the 61-year-old master entered the scaffolding and started what he probably considered his final monumental project.

All this laborious preparation, however, served a purpose which even the most attentive observers such as Herman Grimm ("I didn't notice it") missed, and which remains unnoticed by most visitors today: Michelangelo had ordered that the upper part be canted by half a *braccio fiorentino*, in order to make the west wall of the Sistine Chapel lean slightly towards the viewer. Thus, the *Last Judgment* is painted on a non-vertical surface.[4]

Astonishingly, few modern art historians have dealt with the specific purpose of this alteration and of the highly unusual preparation for the fresco. The wall's inclination is prevalently dismissed as an additional means to achieve the perspectival effect, created by the difference in size between the figures in the lower half of the fresco and those painted near the top – an argument which has never been discussed comprehensively, nor demonstrated in a satisfactory way.[5] As a matter of fact, I believe that the very slight inclination of only about 0.9 to 1.3 degrees is almost insignificant for a viewer standing close to the painting, and absolutely negligible for the viewing experience from a distant point of view.[6]
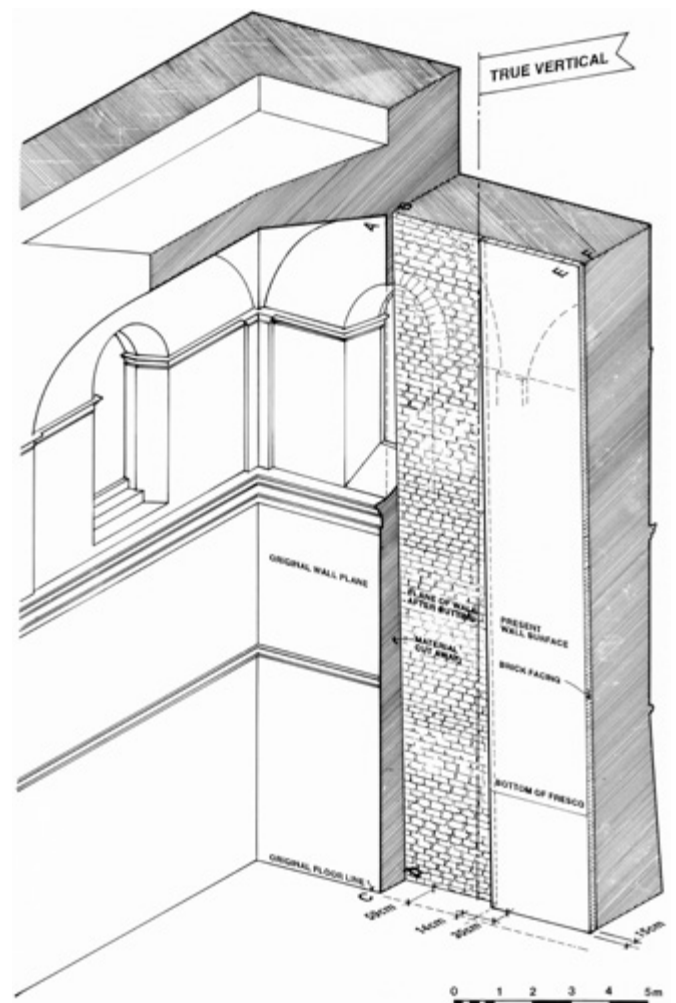
Fig. 1. Layout of the west wall prior to Michelangelo's intervention and today, drawing by © Peter Schmitt 1997. (From *Michelangelo: The Last Judgment. A Glorious Restoration*, New York: H.N. Abrams, 1997, p. 11).

Although Michelangelo was indeed concerned with non-rectangular geometries in relation to distant observation, I will argue in what follows that the architecture of the Sistine Chapel's west wall has little to do with optics. Rather, the complex and costly alteration of the wall can be explained as the result of Michelangelo's concerns about the preservation of his painting, as the only 16th-century source dealing with this matter has already suggested. Following this proposition, the west wall is connected directly to the Cinquecento discourse on the specific qualities of fresco painting, its durability, material transformation over time, and on art as an aging object – thus, an issue intrinsically tied to the subject depicted in the *Last Judgment*.

1. Francisco de Holanda and Ascanio Condivi, two intimate witnesses of Michelangelo's considerations, do not mention the wall's inclination, although Condivi discusses the application of rough plaster (*arriciato*).[7] On the other hand, Giorgio Vasari, who published his biography three years earlier, provides a description which not only includes the exact depth of the canting wall, but also explains the presumed reason for this unusual undertaking:[8]

> Since Michelangelo was very eager and assiduous, he had made, as it had not been before, a projection of bricks on the wall of the above-mentioned chapel and contrived that it should overhang half a *braccio* from above, so that no dust might be able to settle upon it, nor something else might harm it.

In Vasari's second version, published eighteen years later, he rephrased his description only slightly, supplementing, among other details, the generic concept of 'dirt' to the beforementioned dust (*né polvere né altra bruttura*).

Yet, Vasari's decisive statement has been vehemently rejected by art historians and restorers. For Loren Partridge, for example, claiming that the inclination was supposed to prevent the settling of dust is "a clearly illogical explanation. A forward-leaning wall, in fact, promotes the opposite result". This argumentation evidences, however, that Partridge considers almost exclusively rising dirt particles, that is to say "dust and grim (such as the smoke from burning candles or in-

cense used during Mass)".[9] In the early modern period, the term *polvere* could indicate different small materials, such as smoke particles and ash and, in specific contexts, even reduced matter such as ground pigments. Nevertheless, it primarily referred to simple house dust, or the dry dirt brought by visitors from the outside: whenever interiors were accessible to large crowds in the period before roads were paved and cleaned daily, the public carried dirt with them in such quantities that the rooms "appeared to smoke with dust", as an early visitor of the Louvre, for example, reported some centuries later.[10]

Vasari's description of the effect of *polvere*, and the differentiation of the two kinds of dirty aerosols that can be identified by this term, stopped being considered seriously around the time when it became fashionable to generally disavow Vasari's statements. Biagio Biagetti, former director of the Musei Vaticani, who was responsible for the restoration of the *Last Judgment* in 1931, was the last scholar to attempt a reconciliation of Vasari's words with the results of the recent intervention. Biagetti observed that the lower third of the fresco had undeniably been darkened by candles and incense, probably more than in the case of a vertical wall. The upper part, on the other hand, had mostly avoided the pollution usually caused by dust — the wall's inclination, Biagetti concluded, had indeed prevented two-thirds of the fresco from being damaged, including the most important section with the figure of Christ.[11]

In contrast, the argument endorsed by Partridge, among others, is based on the wrong assumption that most of the dirty particles in a room float straight upwards as a result of the hot sources they originate from. This, however, is only relevant in the case of sources in close proximity to the altar wall. In reality, the greater risk for wall paintings is posed by the large number of already risen particles moving in the chapel's micro-atmosphere. When these particles cool down, they slowly start to sink due to their weight, thereby sticking to rough surfaces such as plastered walls. Even though this small matter does not fall in a precise, perpendicular way, the recess of a wall does have a small but significant impact in reducing the settlement of dust. This reasoning would hardly have come as a surprise to Michelangelo, as the laws of movement of solid aerosol particles had become a new subject of study for artists only a few decades earlier. Leonardo da Vinci, in

an analogous way to his contemplation of waves, had begun to meticulously observe the motion of dust and other small particles in order to find an alternative way of depicting movement in battle scenes, or weather phenomena, via clouds of dust and smoke — thereby clearly distinguishing the *attomi di poluere* from the *attomi del fumo*.[12]

Finally, a similar distinction between regular dust on the one hand, and grime on the other (*pulveribus et aliis immunditiis, etiam ex fumo luminarium […] provenientibus*) is also made in the papal breve with which Paul III created, immediately following the completion of the *Last Judgment*, the official position of *mundator picturarum cappellarum*, 'cleaner of the chapel's paintings'.[13] This measure, anticipating the modern concept of 'preventative conservation', was the result of the observation of extensive damages resulting from pollution on the earliest decoration. Precisely at the time when Michelangelo started his work on the west wall, one visitor noted that all of the previous wall paintings had already darkened and were barely visible.[14] The successors in the office of the cleaner are documented throughout the next decades, and in the 17th century, a complete dusting of the whole chapel was carried out at least twice – in 1625 and 1693. The cleaning of the Sistine Chapel was, however, not novel but rather followed common practice for mural paintings. The Cappella Sassetti by Ghirlandaio, master of the young Michelangelo, for example, had to be cleaned "at least annually from top to bottom with reed panicles, or with feathers of a large bird".[15]

2. The necessity to clean artworks was so common that a 17th-century Spanish author, when describing how dusty travelers were treated when entering a house, used an expression that indicated that they were dusted off 'just like paintings' (*como a retablos*).[16] Michelangelo's acquaintance Francisco de Holanda, when arguing in favor of the superiority of painting over sculpture in antiquity, claims that panel paintings were always "well preserved and kept clean" (*conservar e ter limpa*) by their owners.[17] Certainly, avoiding the settlement of dust was important for sculpture, too — in 1610, for example, Pietro Bernini was advised to take this issue into consideration (*che la polvere con il tempo non la innegriscia e non se gli attachi sopra*).[18] However, painters have foremostly sought ways to safeguard their deli-

cate artworks from such deposits, as well as to improve their technique in order to enhance the work's durability since Apelles's invention of the *atramentum*, described by Pliny (*Nat. hist*. XXXV, 97) as a layer serving as a protection from dust and dirt (*pulvere et sordibus*).

In this regard, one needs to reconsider Vasari's ambiguous phrasing when describing Michelangelo's intervention into the chapel's structure (*che non v'era prima*), as it could refer to the novel idea of a leaning wall, or simply to the brick wall which did not exist before.[19] In around 1900, William H. Goodyear had formulated a provocative thesis, based on an extensive measuring campaign with plumb lines, according to which a great number of medieval and Renaissance church facades and walls are intentionally leaning forward, an observation which he interpreted as a spatial and perspective corrective.[20] In any case, Michelangelo could draw upon a much more familiar tradition of non-vertical, inclined surfaces in liturgical spaces. Painted objects were frequently installed leaning towards churchgoers, as is suggested by metal rings for mounting on the backside of such objects, and depictions of such hangings in the Arena Chapel. Even some of Giotto's wall frescoes in the lower church of St. Francis in Assisi are physically inclined towards the viewer.[21] In all of these earlier cases, the inclination allows the light sources to reflect on the gilded parts, inlays, and three-dimensional *pastiglie*, as well as, arguably, it favors a specific perspective perception. Whether this effect was intentional or not, church visitors in the Cinquecento would have also observed different effects of dust on vertical and non-vertical painting surfaces. Michelangelo must have taken such traditions into consideration, as he became interested — precisely in the years in between his two major projects in the Sistine Chapel — in orthogonal anomalies. His experiments aimed at creating innovative spatial solutions by non-vertical structures are manifest in a range of different projects, such as in his trapezoid designs for the top windows of the New Sacristy, or for Piazza del Campidoglio, which follows a similar design without right angles.

3. There is reason to believe that Michelangelo trusted his architectural competence more than his own painterly knowledge.[22] In the case of the Sistine ceiling – Michelangelo's first fresco since his training in Ghirlandaio's workshop – he had

to learn his craft through failure. Condivi reports that already during the work, the fresh fresco began to become mouldy (*cominciò l'opera a muffare*), and that Giuliano da Sangallo had to be called in. He then realized that the plaster was too wet, and thus instructed Michelangelo on how to continue.[23] Apart from the previously mentioned testimony by a visitor – according to whom all paintings in the chapel had already darkened in 1536 – ten years after the completion, Paolo Giovio writes that the ceiling fresco was already severely damaged by saltpeter, and that cracks were visible (*si va consumando con il salnitro e le fessure*).[24]

When he began his second work, Michelangelo changed one fundamental aspect. While he had executed large parts of the ceiling with oil paint, the *Last Judgment* was a veritable *buon fresco*. Pellegrino Tibaldi argued that Michelangelo's decision was partly due to difficulties in painting the effects of light, but more importantly, because oil paint on plaster tends to change in color over time.[25] The fact that Michelangelo was indeed deeply concerned about the durability of his painting is supported by a story according to which Sebastiano del Piombo had proposed to have the *Last Judgment* executed in oils, and even started to prepare an *incrostatura* or *imprimatura grassa* which Michelangelo eventually had stripped off in rage. The report about this controversy, added in the 1568 edition of Vasari's *Vite*, is substantially supported by payments regarding the mason's work in the chapel, which confirm that a first layer of plaster was removed (*disfare lo primo intonicato*) weeks before the brick wall was built.[26] This chronology further suggests that the new wall did not serve – or at least not exclusively – a perspectival purpose, but that the reason was to be attributed to the painterly technique used.

At that time, the quarrel about durability was no longer fought exclusively between sculpture and painting, but between the advocates of different painterly techniques.[27] The fact that Michelangelo would decidedly refuse a method which was linked to the late Raphael's work in the Vatican is hardly surprising. However, it is significant that by doing so, he rejected a technique proposed to him by the very artist who at that time was appraised for his improvements to mural oil painting and ability to create works that were almost 'eternal'.[28] Hence, Michelangelo

was convinced that he could do better than Sebastiano. All mural paintings are susceptible to damage since the humidity in the wall eventually leads to the expulsion of minerals, or even to the detachment of the *intonaco*. Michelangelo's novel brick wall, however, serves as a barrier between the quarry stones and the plaster, preventing humidity, which would otherwise deteriorate the painted surface, from entering the *intonaco*.[29] Yet, the greatest advantage of oil murals, which do not chemically unite with the surface, is that they are protected from dirt and dust by a top coat of varnish. Michelangelo's canting wall was therefore intended to make up for the fresco's inherent disadvantage, in order to prevent it from 'turning into dust', as many writers put it when they commented on the unfortunate destiny of most artworks over time — thus intentionally parallelizing the fate of men and that of art (*quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris*).

4. The destructive effect of *polvere* on art was caused by a combination of different factors. When describing Cimabue's choir frescoes in the upper church of St. Francis in Assisi as being consumed by both time and dust (*oggi dal tempo e dalla polvere consumati*), Vasari laments a complex process that is characterized by the permanent settling of dust particles, the continuous abrasion of the surface due to the obligatory cleaning, and the chemical dissolving of the colored top layer into mineral dust.[30] In any event, paintings usually needed to be 'brought back to life' from time to time by a conservational revision of this process, as Federico Zuccari claims he did for some works by Correggio (*che erano piene di polvere, si ritornarono in vita*).[31]

Michelangelo, in contrast, intended to create a fresco which he had hoped would not need such measures — even though time proved that his work was not as *immortal* as Francisco de Holanda had claimed regarding the Sistine Chapel's decorations.[32] Since it was the only commission during which Michelangelo had to destroy two of his own artworks — the lunette frescoes executed only two decades earlier — the artist must have been painfully aware of the brevity of a painting's life at the time when the *Last Judgment* was conceived. It was inevitable for him to deal with the problem of the material expiration of his art, and, arguably, to even question his own legacy and afterlife following the potential loss of his art.[33] Michelangelo

responded to this threat as no other artist of his time had done before him: by devising the most paradoxical preservation measure, a non-perpen-dicular surface which, despite the seemingly in-stable or collapsing construction, was intended to stabilize his work of art, and to grant it eternal life.

Notes

[1] E. Steinmann, *Die Sixtinische Kapelle* (München: Bruckmann, 1901-05). For a recent overview of scholarship on the *Last Judgment*, see C. Bambach, *Michelangelo. Divine Draftsman & Designer* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017), pp. 199-212.

[2] L. Dorez, *La cour du Pape Paul III d'après les registres de la Trésorerie Secrète* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1932), II, pp. 25, 26, 32, 34, 38. Cf. e.g. D. Redig de Campos, *Il Giudizio Universale di Michelangelo* (Milano: A. Martello, 1964), pp. 105-107.

[3] Cf. E. Steinmann, *Die Sixtinische Kapelle*, cit., II, p. 489; B. Biagetti, "Tecnica di esecuzione, stato di conservazione e restauri", in D. Redig de Campos, B. Biagetti, eds., *Il Giudizio Universale di Michelangelo* (Roma: Arturo Facioli, 1944), I, pp. 73-163, here p. 94; L. Partridge, "Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*: An Interpretation", in *Michelangelo: The Last Judgment. A Glorious Restoration* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1997), pp. 8-154, here 11.

[4] Information about the inclination of the wall varies in modern scholarly publications between 15, 20, 24, 25, 28, 30 and 35 cm.

[5] See e.g., L. Partridge, "Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*", cit., pp. 144-146, and below, n. 9.

[6] Neither has the inclination a measurable effect on the finding that the area most illuminated by daylight seems to be the section around the figure of Christ, as observed e.g., by B. Barnes, *Michelangelo and the Viewer in His Time* (London: Reaktion Books, 2017), p. 135.

[7] A. Condivi, *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*, ed. G. Nencioni (Firenze: SPES, 1998), p. 49.

[8] G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori*, ed. R. Bettarini, P. Barocchi (Firenze: SPES, 1966-97), VI, p. 69.

[9] L. Partridge, "Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*", cit., p. 11. The same rejection has e.g. been repeatedly expressed by F. Mancinelli, coordinator of the 1990s restoration; cf. also G. Colalucci, "Tecnica e metodologia operativa di Michelangelo sul Giudizio Universale", in *Michelangelo. La Cappella Sistina. Documentazione e Interpretazioni* (Roma: Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1999), I, pp. 51-60, here 54. Cf. most recently e.g., U. Pfisterer, *La Cappella Sistina* (Roma: Campisano, 2014), p. 105, following the interpretation of the wall's inclination as serving a perspectival purpose. Studies that are willing to accept Vasari's reasoning are exceptional, cf. among them e.g., A. Nesselrath, "The Painters of Lorenzo the Magnificent in the Chapel of Pope Sixtus IV in Rome", in Jorge Maria Cardinal Mejía, et al., eds., *The Fifteenth Century Frescoes in the Sistine Chapel* (Città del Vaticano: Edizioni Musei Vaticani, 2003), pp. 39-75, here 45.

[10] K. Garlick et al., eds., *The Diary of Joseph Farington* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978-98), V, p. 1863.

[11] B. Biagetti, "Tecnica di esecuzione, stato di conservazione e restauri", cit., p. 136.

[12] See e.g., Windsor Castle, Royal Library, 12665r; Ms. A, fol. 111r; the quotation in Cod. Leicester, fol. 4r.

[13] E. Steinmann, *Die Sixtinische Kapelle*, cit., II, pp. 757-58, doc. 7. The first appointee was Francesco Amadori, who qualified for this job due to his prior task of grinding Michelangelo's pigments to finest dust.

[14] "quarum tamen colores nunc non mediocriter obfuscati videntur, quod haud dubie propter quottidianas accidit suffumigationes". J. Fichard: "Italia", *Frankfurtisches Archiv für ältere deutsche Litteratur und Geschichte* 3 (1815): pp. 1-130, here p. 48. Mistakenly, the visitor Fichard attributes all frescoes to Raphael; he ascribes the layer of dirt to the smoke caused by candles, torches, and incense.

[15] *La chiesa di Santa Trinita a Firenze* (Firenze: Cassa di Risparmio, 1987), p. 347, n. 182.

[16] F. de Quevedo, *El Buscón*, ed. A. Rey (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2007), p. 359.

[17] F. de Holanda, *Vier Gespräche über die Malerei*, ed. J. de Vasconcellos (Wien: Braunmüller, 1899), p. 160.

[18] A. Muñoz, "Il padre del Bernini: Pietro Bernini scultore (1562-1629)", *Vita d'Arte* 4, no. 22 (1909): pp. 425-70, here p. 468. By 1640, the dusting of sculptures in Saint Peter's had to be conducted on a weekly basis; see O. Pollak, *Die Kunsttätigkeit unter Urban VIII.* (Wien: Filser, 1928-31), II, p. 451, doc. 1754.

[19] G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori*, cit., VI, p. 69.

[20] W.H. Goodman, *A Renaissance Leaning Façade at Genoa* (New York: Macmillan, 1902); Id., *The Architectural Refinements of St. Mark's at Venice* (New York: Macmillan, 1902).

[21] I thank G. Guazzini for pointing out this case to me.

[22] Cf. also Clement VII's specification in 1525 to avoid structures that might collect dust: *Il carteggio di Michelangelo*, ed. G. Poggi (Firenze: Sansoni, 1965-83), III, pp. 186-87, doc. DCCXXVIII and pp. 194-95, doc. DCCXXXII.

[23] A. Condivi, *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*, cit., pp. 33-34.

[24] P. Giovio, *Lettere* (Roma: Società Storia Comense, 1956-58), II, p. 85, n. 261.

[25] *L'Architettura di L.B. Alberti nel Commento di P. Tibaldi*, ed. S. Orlando (Roma: De Luca, 1988), pp. 140-141.

[26] G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori*, cit., V, pp. 101-102; L. Dorez, *La cour du Pape Paul III*, cit., II, p. 20. Cfr. G.B. Armenini, *De' veri precetti della pittura*, ed. M. Gorreri (Torino: Einaudi, 1988), p. 141.

[27] Cfr. e.g. B. Varchi, *Due lezzioni* (Firenze: Torrentino, 1549), pp. 97, 102 and 134; A.F. Doni, *Disegno* (Venezia: De' Ferrari, 1549), p. 20v.

[28] P. Bembo, *Delle lettere da diversi re, et principi, et cardinali, et altri huomini dotti a Mons. Pietro Bembo scritte. Primo volume. Di nuovo stampato* (Venezia: Francesco Sansovino, 1560), p. 110v; G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori*, cit., V, p. 97.

[29] I would like to thank L. Somenzi for bringing to my attention earlier methods based on using straw and wood as isolating buffers, e.g., in the case of the frescoes in the Camposanto of Pisa.

[30] G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori*, cit., II, 38.

[31] F. Zuccari, *Il passaggio per Italia*, ed. A. Ruffino (Lavis, TN: La Finestra, 2007), p. 107.

[32] F. de Holanda, *Da pintura antiga*, ed. A.G. Garcia (Lisboa: Casa de Moeda, 1984), p. 202.

[33] Cf. in this regard Vasari's conclusion of the 1550 *Vite*, claiming — prior to an allegorical woodcut inspired by the iconography of the day of resurrection — to "make these glorious artists immortal, freeing them from dust and oblivion". G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori*, cit., VI, p. 411.

The Liveliness of Stucco: Vanishing Statues and Creamy Clouds in Baroque Palermo

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During the Renaissance and later on in the Early Modern period, stucco was employed in the modelling of high-relief and free-standing figures, quite often challenging the appearance of marble statues although it stemmed from a quite different, quasi contrary, creative process. Unlike the marble sculptor, who carves his figures out gradually from the hard and rigid material, the stucco artist starts by handling a malleable paste composed for the most part of lime and/or gypsum, a whitish and ductile blend which hardens once it is permanently exposed to air.[1] Comparing both practices, time appears to be a key factor in the relation between matter and form: on the one hand, the expected form emerges from the rough block of matter in a time-consuming effort which has been a source of inspiration to many poets and philosophers, on the other, time functions as a complementary agent to the artist's gesture, for the setting of the expected form, the way it transforms from a doughy matter into a solid object, only occurs progressively in contact with the surrounding carbon dioxide. This paper will share a few remarks on the transformative nature of stucco and the way it interacts with artworks and artistic invention. The early 18th-century city of Palermo will provide an ideal context, as it was marked by the impressive and original works of its local genius, the great master of stucco Giacomo Serpotta (1656-1732).

Matter vs. Form

At the threshold of the Madonna della Salute chapel in the church of Santa Ninfa dei Crociferi, which I visited during a trip to Palermo in March 2019, a *moving* spectacle caught my eye. Standing on some kind of promontory, just before the wall, on the left of the altar painting, the statue of a woman wearing an elegant dress and with her hair arranged in a sophisticated hairstyle appeared to be melting or dissolving (fig. 1). The fig-ure was in poor condition, its left arm was missing and parts of its body and form had started vanishing in a pasty and a bit trickling metamorphosis. The chapel's stuccoes are attributed to a follower of Giacomo Serpotta and date back to the early 18th century.[2] Our statue is doubtlessly the feminine personification of a virtue – some guidebooks identify her as Justice, on the basis of contemporary descriptions, although symbolic attributes like the sword or the scales are now missing. Representations of virtues and allegories in the shape of aristocratic ladies are typical features of Serpotta's style, who was prone to liven up the atmosphere of churches and oratories with images of appealing Palermitan fashionistas.[3] In the close-by Oratory of San Domenico, another *Justice*, no less elegantly distinguished although brandishing a sabre, makes a good basis for comparison with the Santa Ninfa statue, although in a much luckier state of preservation.

What happened to Santa Ninfa's virtue? Let us imagine it. The melting suggests the idea of an intense heat, while the dissolving may evoke the corrosive biting of some chemical product or toxic substance. Some details of the damaged figure also suggest a kind of disease, or the invasion of organic life, like a fungal growth. All of these images might firstly come to the mind while staring at this unrestored statue without taking any notice of the nature of its material components. It is part of its communication, not only its human and secular appearance or symbolic significance, but also the way its physical state, at this point, can produce ideas of vanishing or transformation. In truth, it is probable that the apparent disintegration of the artifact was partly caused by the progressive ingress of rainwater into its surface. Humidity may have infiltrated the walls and ceiling of the chapel and reached the stucco figure, which is mostly composed of white plaster – a material especially sensitive to humidity and dampness.

Fig. 1. Follower of Giacomo Serpotta, *Justice*?, mid-18th century. Stucco, Palermo. Santa Ninfa ai Crociferi, chapel of the Madonna della Salute.

In the early 18th century, the kind of plaster used for the modelling of stucco figures was generally composed of a mixture of burnt gypsum (calcium sulphate) and lime (calcium carbonate) in variable proportions, together with sand, marble powder and changing aggregates.[4] Once it is set, gypsum plaster is less water-resistant than lime plaster and it is likely that the deteriorated aspect of the statue is due to the artist's inaccuracy in preventing the potential risks of a humid atmosphere.

Becoming Marble

An interesting aspect of the usage of stucco during the early modern period is that a resemblance to marble artifacts is usually sought-after by artists and patrons. In the very church of Santa Ninfa, in the Crocefisso chapel, a *Crucifixion* belonging to Giacomo Serpotta's workshop shows a pluri-medial composition: before a painted landscape stands a wooden Christ on the Cross with Mary,

Magdalene, and saint John around him. These last three figures are made of stucco but are carefully polished in order to simulate the shiny finish of white marble. Serpotta's commitment to give his stuccoes a marble look has often been commented on, by repeatedly alluding to a secret 'recipe' or special treatment applied once the plaster was already set.[5] The reference to marble is well rooted in the theory of stucco since the Renaissance, especially when it comes to praise the durability of a good work executed in the right manner. For instance, in Giorgio Vasari's technical introduction to his *Lives of the artists* (1550), in the chapter concerning stucco work, the author stated that: "[…] one should not doubt and take a work done in this manner for something slightly durable, for it lasts infinitely and hardens so much when being worked, that with time it becomes like marble".[6] By means of a comparison with marble, Vasari's intention was to underline the solidity of a good

stucco work, but with the expression 'with time' he also recalled that this property was the result of a process that required a duration, as the plaster sets progressively. 17th-century theorists like Filippo Baldinucci (1681) repeated almost literally Vasari's statement: "it is very hard, for in process of time it gets hard almost like marble".[7]

What Santa Ninfa's *Justice* shows, in its current state, is almost a reverse process. We can presume that the figure, once freshly displayed beside the altar in the Madonna della Salute chapel, took on a shiny epidermis, but this lustrous appearance has now drastically faded. Likewise, the infiltration of water threatens the formal integrity of the figure and makes manifest the ductile quality of the original plaster. The figure gradually loses the hardness it once acquired while the material was setting. However, its disappointing state of preservation is also a turning point in the way it communicates. For Jane Bennett, author of *Vibrant Matter, a Political Ecology of Things* (2010), matter has an agency of its own that does not depend on human's intentionality, and we should not keep on sealing too hermetic boundaries between life and materiality.[8] A lively power is inherent to matter and things, and is patent in their propensity to change properties, to assemble, to interact, to merge, to create new bodies, and take shape again and again. This philosophy, developed from a large convening of thinkers on life and matter including Spinoza, Thoreau or Deleuze, aims at promoting the idea of a material vitality which, far from being passive and subordinate, acts, produces effects, and alters the course of events in much the same way as humans do. In the field of an artifact's understanding, such a philosophy would be an appeal to give more autonomy to matter and to consider the material handled by the artist as active as his will or design, in a collaborative perspective.

Serpotta's Clouds

Although diligent in conferring a marmoreal lustre upon his statues, Giacomo Serpotta's use of stucco displays an equally thoughtful dedication to exploiting the proper characteristics of the medium and allowing the statues to have a voice of their own. An important feature of his style is the use of childish figures as lively agents who animate large-scale decorative systems. In the Oratory of San Lorenzo, as it is the case in many of the Palermitan halls decorated by the sculptor,

numerous child-like angels stand at the border of windows and pilasters, exhibiting a catalogue of cheerful attitudes and dynamic gestures.[9] The communicative power of these *putti* is rooted in the transitional function taken on by this motif in early modern art since its resurgence during the Quattrocento. However, a peculiar aspect of Serpotta's stuccoes in San Lorenzo is that, in many instances, no clear distinction is perceived between the coating of the wall – made from a similar plaster – and the body of the *putti*, between the architectural frame and the decorative invention. Figures are literally coming out of the omnipresent coating, whose luminous whiteness seems to open towards an indefinite space. What seems to be sought after is an impression of continuous flow, and the transition between wall and figure is made fluid by using a simulated cloud – a recurring expedient in Serpotta's art – which here serves as a kind of shelf for the *putti* but also induces an idea of malleability, of changing forms and patterns, of a transitory state. Indeed, changing forms and patterns is what a human mind would naturally attribute to clouds. Yet, Serpotta's stuccoes do not intend to simulate the steamy texture of true clouds; they look pretty much more like whipped cream or ricotta fillings, the pasty quality of their plaster being left almost unpolished and raw. Their generous and whitish consistence is not absorbed, subsumed by the symbolic form but it rather transforms and enhances its communicative power in order to give the tangible suggestion of smooth transition. From the abstraction of the coated wall to the concreteness of the creamy clouds and the lively presence of the *putti*, a pervading energy bursts from the flexible matter handled by Serpotta. It is an energy of potentiality rather than completion, of becoming rather than being, of a material which is not hard but *hardens*.

This exploitation of the transformative properties of stucco in the Oratory of San Lorenzo is not left to secondary motifs. Situated above the *Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence*, a group of figures representing the Christ bearing the Cross with the help of angels, to be interpreted as a *Glory of Christ with the Cross*, uses a similar method (fig. 2). Indeed, the figure of the Saviour, reacting to the suffering of saint Lawrence just below, is carried by a creamy cloud whose intended function is apparently to blur the transition to the architectural framework of the *Martyrdom*, in a 'out of the frame' effect enhancing the symbolic connexion

Fig. 2. Giacomo Serpotta, *Glory of Christ with the Cross*, 1700-1705. Stucco. Palermo, Oratory of San Lorenzo.

between the two sculpted groups. Furthermore, Christ's body is partly hidden within the stucco cloud, whose curvy folds take the shape of the serpentine posture of the Saviour's bust in such a way that figure and cloud appear to be as one. The body of the sacred figure is carefully polished in order to show the lustre of a noble sculpture but its merging into the raw and pasty motif subtly qualifies the permanence of any property attached to a hard and solid artifact. The versatile materiality of stucco paradoxically stresses the immateriality of the sacred apparition, in an artful manner comparable to the *Glory of Saint Andrew*, modelled in stucco by Antonio Raggi for his master Bernini in the church of Sant'Andrea del Quirinale in Rome. Dating back to the early 1660s – about forty years before Serpotta's stuccoes in the Oratory of San Lorenzo – Raggi's Saint Andrew transported by a cloud is meant to signify the saint's apotheosis, his soul's ascent to heavens leaving the corporeal

envelope of an earthly existence.[10] This holy transportation is staged by Bernini and Raggi in order to establish a clear transition between the body of Saint Andrew depicted in the altar painting below and its dematerialization towards another realm. It is hardly paradoxical that stucco was seen as the appropriate technique to suggest this process in a figure, for the three-dimensional and tangible aspect of the sculpture is compensated by the very adaptable and transformative nature of its medium. The reference to marble, here, lies less in a quest for equivalence than in potentiating the image of an emancipation that surpasses and abandons any property attributed to stone.

Conclusion

In Santa Ninfa, the progressive blurring of the virtue's outline, and the threat to its formal integrity, were by no means part of the artist's plan. The transformation of the figure in time highlights, al-

beit accidentally, the lively energy of matter and its interaction with human design. Contemporary to the statue and placed just beside it, a group of stucco cherubs are represented in the act of awakening from a malleable and ductile cloud (fig. 1). In this case, the noticeable degradation of the work, its propensity to get back to some kind of indeterminacy through its loss of formal steadiness, seems less disturbing. Indeed, indeterminacy and transformation are here an inte-gral part of the motif's original agency: its ability to make manifest the transitory nature of celestial creatures. Both propositions – the statue and cloudy cherubs – are connected within the same decorative whole, which is a derivative of Giacomo Serpotta's versatile plastic poetry.[11] The master understood stucco as a challenge to marble sculpture but also as a vibrant matter, autonomous and infinite, a vector of the lively energy of what goes on, of what transforms perpetually.

Notes

[1] For an introduction to the technical aspects of the stucco technique, see: C. Gapper, "What is Stucco? English Interpretations of an Italian Term", *Architectural History* 42 (1999): pp. 333-343.

[2] See A. Giuliana Alajmo, *La chiesa di Santa Ninfa dei Crociferi in Palermo, sede della Parrocchia di S. Croce* (Palermo: Scuola Grafica don Orione, 1964).

[3] See, amongst many other publications, D. Garstang, *Giacomo Serpotta and the Stuccatori of Palermo 1560-1790* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1984); M.G. Aurigemma, *Oratori del Serpotta a Palermo* (Roma: Palombi, 1989); P. Palazzotto, *Giacomo Serpotta. Gli oratori di Palermo. Guida storico-artistica* (Palermo: edizioni d'arte Kalós, 2016).

[4] See M. Sebastianelli, "La tecnica di Giacomo Serpotta dal cantiere di restauro", in P. Palazzotto, M. Sebastianelli, eds., *Giacomo Serpotta nelle chiesa di Sant'Orsola di Palermo. Studi e restauro* (Palermo: Museo Diocesano di Palermo, 2011), pp. 49-77.

[5] See G. Montana, F. Ronca, "The "recipe" of the stucco sculptures of Giacomo Serpotta", *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 3 (2002): pp. 133-145; See also P. Palazzotto, "Technique and Inspiration in the work of Giacomo Serpotta, Master of Ornament", in P. Caye, F. Solinas, eds., *Les Cahiers de l'Ornement* (Roma: De Luca, 2016), 1, pp. 175-196.

[6] "Né si debbe dubitare di lavoro cosí fatto come di cosa poco durabile, perché e' si conserva infinitamente et indurisce tanto nello star fatto, che e' divento co'l tempo come marmo", G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue, insino a' tempi nostri*, ed. L. Bellosi, A. Rossi (Torino: Einaudi, 2011), I, pp. 55-56.

[7] "è durevolissimo; perché in processo di tempo si fa duro quasi quanto lo stesso marmo", F. Baldinucci, *Vocabolario toscano dell'arte del disegno* (Firenze: Santi Franchi al Segno della Passione, 1681), p. 159.

[8] J. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter, a Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

[9] See S. Grasso, G. Mendola, C. Scordato, V. Viola, *Giacomo Serpotta. L'Oratorio di San Lorenzo a Palermo* (Leonforte: Euno Edizioni, 2013).

[10] G. Careri, *Bernini. Flights of Love, the Art of Devotion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 85-100.

[11] See also G.C. Argan, "Il teatro plastico del Serpotta", in Id., *Studi e note. Dal Bramante a Canova* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1970), pp. 455-463.

Lithic Images, Jacopo Ligozzi, and the *Descrizione del Sacro Monte della Vernia* (1612)

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Diverse lithic formations, their irregularity accentuated by dense cross-hatching, vie for our attention on a large page, 40 cm in height, of a printed book (fig. 1). A dark rock surges upward on the left, its growth obstructed by the pressure of a luminous slab that presses against it. With extremities that evoke limbs, the anthropomorphic contours of the slab are echoed in the rocks on the bottom right that jut into the scene, as if shrouded visitors. These fossilized forms reverberate above in the animated branches and trunks of trees, their roots probing rocky crevices below. The ghostly outcrops on the lower right direct us along horizontal seams to the far left, where a wall appears with a doorway. Easily overlooked in this setting, the human artifice of the masonry blocks contrasts purposefully with the irregular boulders to the right, which – surprisingly – are devised to be manipulated. Cut out from paper and glued to the edges of the page, they can be pulled down, exposing a pilgrim and his guide navigating a path. Much of the mountain is itself devised as an over-

Fig. 1. Jacopo Ligozzi (draftsman), Domenico Falcini (engraver), *The Site of the Bed and Oratory of Saint Francis* [Plate R], in Fra Lino Moroni, *Descrizione del Sacro Monte della Vernia* [Florence] 1612. © Chicago, Newberry Library.

Fig. 2. Detail [Plate R]. © Chicago, Newberry Library.

slip, which viewers turn to reveal the stone bed where St. Francis of Assisi once slept (fig. 2). The volume is anticipatory, its irregular flaps foreclosing knowledge in order to activate the physical and spiritual journey. Virtual pilgrims contend with rocky terrain, its lithic formations slowing down the passage, amplifying its difficulties, and accordingly also its rewards.

The design is one of twenty-two made by Jacopo Ligozzi for the *Descrizione del Sacro Monte della Vernia*, a folio-sized compilation of etchings and engravings that was printed in 1612, probably in Florence.[1] Conceived in 1607 by Cardinal Arcangelo da Messina, the archbishop of Monreale and general of the Observant Franciscan order, the volume presents the saint's famous retreat in Casentino, a valley in the province of Arezzo.[2] The mountainous site, which had been donated to the Franciscans early in the 13th century, had fallen into a state of disrepair. It had been damaged by a fire and appropriated to house troops.[3] Remaking La Verna in a printed volume was therefore a means of reigniting interest in the site and the cult. The Cardinal tasked Fra Lino Moroni, an observant Franciscan from Florence, with the project. Ligozzi, who had been employed by the order during the 1590s for a fresco cycle in the cloister at San Salvatore di Ognissanti, then the new home of the order in Florence, was commissioned to undertake the drawings. He travelled with Fra Moroni to La Verna where they recorded its dimensions and its stories.

Lucilla Conigliello has studied the *Descrizione* in detail, examining the images, the iconography, and its relation to Ligozzi's career. She also notes the unusual combination of accurate measurements and miracles that Fra Moroni excitedly recounts in the brief legends that accompany the printed images. Revisiting the *Descrizione*, my study takes off from Conigliello's intriguing assessment of the volume as a "guazzabuglio", as a jumble of scientific intentions and religious zeal.[4] For it is this apparent confrontation in the volume between "scientific facts" and "speculative fabulation", to borrow Donna Haraway's terms, that generates new kinds of environmental thinking.[5] Instead of drawing a line between empirical observation of stones on one side, increasingly viewed from a distance jand quantified as resources during the early modern period, and, on the other side, their magical poetic meanings for natural historians and theologians, this essay fastens

onto earth's creative potential. Still perceived by some to be a living substance, stone attested to the inventive power of nature. It is a protagonist in Ligozzi's designs for the printed *Descrizione* and in the *pietra dura* (hard stone) altar front he designed for Ognissanti, its obdurate yet dynamic and otherworldly nature expressing diverse conceptions of time in both works.

The extraterranean cliffs of the sacred mountain come into view in the first etching, one of two executed by Raffaello Schiaminossi, that unfolds to the right (fig. 3). Cross-hatching converges in inky crevices of rocky escarpments that undulate horizontally across the three sheets. The sacred mountain shoots upward, its verticality underscored by the valley rendered on the left. Cliffs fracture into perilous shards as they ascend, accenting the precipitous settings where miracles and visions were believed to have occurred in the past and are recreated in the volume. Vertiginous bluffs begin to metamorphose, their surfaces swelling and softening as we move to the right, where a stone marked with a cross divides the path. We see more clearly here, where a small building demarcates the edge of the page on the right, and the diagonal path on the left is marked by a human-made parapet wall. Two pilgrims, setting out on their journey, are depicted above the entrance, just beyond the turn in the road.

The *Descrizione* presents La Verna as a second Calvary, and there are also connections between the volume and the phenomenon of Sacri Monti that I consider elsewhere.[6] Visitors to these pilgrimage sites followed the route with printed maps, pamphlets, and books that prescribed performative modes of devotion, which also characterizes Fra Moroni's and Ligozzi's volume. In contrast to such portable guides, however, the folio size of the *Descrizione* requires a table or an easel for support. And producing the detailed illustrations, sheets that unfold, and overslips, would have been a costly enterprise.[7] Instead, as indicated in the Cardinal's brief to Fra Moroni, the volume was intended for those "absent from our whereabouts" and unable to make the journey.[8] The large-scale format would enable virtual pilgrimages, thereby promoting the cult and ideally also contributing to the restoration of the mountain.

To introduce the site, Fra Moroni recalls his own encounter with the mountain – his disorientation, astonishment, and recognition, as he anticipates our experience to come with the images. The ap-

Fig. 3. Jacopo Ligozzi (draftsman), Raffaello Schiaminossi (etcher), *View of the Mountain of La Verna from the Road of Casentino* [Plate, A], in Fra Lino Moroni, *Descrizione del Sacro Monte della Vernia* [Florence] 1612. © London, Wellcome Collection.

pearance of the terrain continually changes, he explains in his brief address to viewers and readers. Impressions of the mountain vary according to one's distance from it. What can be seen and comprehended depends upon the vantage point: "one discovers it to be the most obscure view, but then one recognizes buildings, and then habitations, and yet it appears more grand than that". He describes "nude rocks...of a height so vast that they appear to be some immense structure [una gran fabbrica]".[9] The scale and composition of the mountain are impossible to grasp all at once. Seen closer, he adds, "near a quarter mile away, the perspective changes distinctively, as the mountain and its many things appear marvellous".[10] To make sense of the site entails moving closer, stepping back, and looking over time.

The *Descrizione* remakes the sacred landscape from La Verna, its lithic imagery unmooring beholders in order to manage their experiences and reorient their visual focus. Fra Moroni implies this purpose when he observes that the site and its sequence of chapels were designed to make the visit "clear, perfect, and intelligible".[11] After navigating the looming cliffs, the journey begins with a stop for food and water, one of the twenty designs that were engraved by Domenico Falcini. Beginning the ascent, we are propelled back to the 13th

century with a vision of Francis on the path, surrounded by birds, a scene to which I return later in the essay. Continuing the journey, we arrive at the piazza, which unfolds to the right where the two sheets have been pasted together.[12] Fortifications run across the lower edge of the left page; initially blocking access, this wall directs us to a portal on the right through which a pilgrim progresses. The smooth surfaces and vaulted ceiling of the entrance are set in contrast with the irregular rocks that flank the opening. Above the wall, on the other side of the piazza, is a church whose nave is also rendered parallel with the picture plane. An arcade running along the nave accentuates the orderly arrangement of buildings.

Throughout the volume, architecture works in concert with the book format; paper facades and perspectival boxes become virtual spaces. On the sheet representing the facade of the minor church and the portal to the convent, for instance, the buildings are almost flush with the picture plane, and their entrances and details arranged symmetrically and systematically, as if a text to be read.[13] Franciscans, pilgrims of diverse status, such as the poor or ill, lie prostrate in the foreground or bend their bodies deferentially, as demonstrated by the man to the right, who stands at the door of the convent. Friars distribute alms, presumably

donated by those of means, whose interest in the cult might be aroused by the book. Such patrons are suggested by two men on the left, who pose in wealthy attire before the door of the church. Human figures model forms of behaviour in architectural interiors that correspond to the format of the page. Looking into the Chapel of the Cross (sheet L), for instance, once a cell of St. Francis, pilgrims, the infirm, and patrons sit on benches observing from a distance, stand in doorways, or kneel at the altar.[14] The perspectival structure of the chapel manages how and what we can see.

Images of cliffs and boulders, in contrast, thwart easy understanding. Their lack of scale and ragged forms purposefully defy the book format. Lithic formations prompt uncertainty about directions, their unruly character destabilizing sure footing. Consider the engraving with which I began (fig. 1). Boulders obscure our vision, and yet the uneven surfaces appeal to our sense of touch as if we are blind. Irregular rocks provoke us to reach out, to make sense of their shapes by tracing their contours. Fingering the uneven edges of the paper to move the boulders enhances the revelatory vision of the mysteries. Pulling back the overslips restores the mountain to its earlier appearance, returning virtual pilgrims to the 13th century. The irregular flaps also contribute to the anticipatory character of the volume, foreclosing knowledge in order to reactivate the physical and spiritual journey. Manipulating the flaps, beholders enact their own on-going religious conversion – from blindness to sight.

Regarding sight, consider one of the engravings of a small chapel where a miraculous beech tree once grew, said to have cured the ill, particularly the eyes.[15] When the volume was made, the tree was no longer present at the site. This explains why one of the two pilgrims in the foreground has turned to inspect the tabernacle while the second man listens to their Franciscan guide. Since none of the three men sees the image of the tree in the chapel, the vision is easily overlooked. However, the legend on the facing page informs readers of the tree's former magic, prompting us to look again – to recognize the vision. Ligozzi conjures an image of the past in the present, endowing beholders with a vision of the miraculous powers of nature.

The design was one of three used by Ligozzi for the panels of the pietra dura altar front in the apse at Ognissanti, dated to 1593-1605.[16] To make

the panels, hard stone is cut and polished into shapes to create images that employ veins, coloration, and natural formations found in the material. The altar front may have been inspiration for the *Descrizione*, but it seems more likely that the panels were completed later, following the artist's journey to the mountain in 1607.

The artist, who arrived in Florence in 1577, was recommended to the Grand Duke Francesco de' Medici by Ulisse Aldrovandi, the natural historian in Bologna. Remarking on the artist's paintings of flora and fauna in a letter to Francesco that year, Aldrovandi writes that they seem "to be made from nature", "as if born in their natural habitat".[17] Numerous paintings of specimens – the focus of Ligozzi's work in the 1570s and 80s – attest to his systematic engagement with the diversity of the natural world. He was court artist to the Medici dukes, producing natural history illustrations and decorations in the Uffizi that include paintings of wildlife in the Tribune.[18] He instructed members of the family in drawing and painting and produced designs for an array of luxury objects, from embroidery to festival decorations. He served as *capomaestro* of the Florentine Academia del Disegno, but a falling out with the academy resulted in his dismissal as court artist. He continued working for the Medici but was employed to design pietra dura furnishings when the family consolidated many workshops into the state-run Galleria dei Lavori in 1588. The Medici Dukes imported stone, studied it, restricted access to local quarries in order to control extraction of resources, and managed artistic production through the Opificio della pietra dura.[19]

Two designs for pietra dura table tops, executed in the years around Ligozzi's involvement with the *Descrizione*, exemplify his deft expertise with depicting natural phenomena. One example is a painting in oil on paper that translates skilful observation of flora and fauna into a canny essay on the elements.[20] Diverse flowers, sometimes isolated and sometimes gathered into bundles, populate the black ground as if suspended in some indeterminate space – the sky at night or in a subterranean cavern. Contributing to the ornamental, even abstract character of the composition, are butterflies that look, from a distance, like single blossoms. Wings, petals, and foliage resemble each other, creating uncertainty for viewers about what they are seeing, especially since these transient forms will be created from hard stones.

This transformation of natural elements into luxury furnishings for the Medici and for gifts to their associates is also demonstrated by a seascape in which the flow of water, vessels, architectural structures, and landscape are cut from stones to depict Livorno, a port strategic to Medici expansion.[21] The pulsating viscosity of the lithic frame, with its variegated coloration and blurred edges, reveals invisible elemental forces. Pietra dura, as the conversion of formless matter into a meaningful sumptuous object, was understood as an alchemical process.[22]

The fusing of ancient and Christian ideas about the earth together with alchemical theories persisted into 16th-century ideas about mining.[23] Still in 1546, in *On the Origin and Cause of Subterranean Things*, the natural historian Agricola writes that stone grows, citing the narrowing of tunnels as one moves deeper into the earth's surface. He adheres to the ancient idea that minerals grow underground like trees.[24] Another account of the generation of stones is the German mining manual, written by Hans Uttman in 1601. The first chapter, "On Mineral Powers", as Warren Alexander Dym explains, discusses theories on the principles of change – salt, quicksilver, sulfur – and how, through the power of God, they convert into metals underground. "These things", Uttman writes, "are brought to a certain suggestion of solid earth from the four elements and the influence of Heaven, according to the nature and quality of the particular metal, which more or less works within it, and well-ground [vielgemahltes] mercury, salt, and sulfur".[25] Reviewing ancient and alchemical theories, Uttman describes the metamorphosis of natural elements and divine forces that result in phenomena such as veins.

Perceptions of stone as a living substance and its associations with divine images maintained by some natural historians, such as Agricola and Uttman, could also instigate new lines of scientific inquiry, as Aldrovandi's reflections on stone and its formative properties suggest.[26] In his studies of minerals and in his letter to Francesco I, the natural historian explores connections between rocks, mines, and geography. As Hannah Baader observes in her analysis of the Livorno table top, Aldrovandi identifies this study as geology in 1603, which is the first time the science is identified as such.[27] Geological formations – the origins, textures and qualities of stones – are topics he discusses in the letter, citing specimens from

Bohemia, Saxony, Naples, and Egypt. He wrote extensively on stone, describing, in his *Musaeum metallicum*, the natural images found in specimens.[28] For example, describing a section of Alabaster, he compares the veins running through it to a flowing river.[29]

Aldrovandi gathered knowledge on the specific locations from which stones came, describing the "place 'on or beneath the surface of the earth' where the stone is 'born' or 'generated'".[30] He comments on dangers to his life resulting from the study of minerology that entailed entering mines "to make their true anatomy".[31] "Personal expenses and bodily exertion", he explains, were needed "in order to write the truth of these things and to verify many doubts", and also for "verifying so many beautiful speculations I had recorded".[32] Harnessing vision to the exploratory hand of the anatomist, he declares "not writing anything that I have not seen with my own eyes and touched with my own hands, and opened up by anatomy of the exterior and interior parts".[33] Probing the mines in the dark, Aldrovandi recalls feeling the surfaces of the stone with his hands.

In Florence, local stones provided vivid evidence of images created by divine and natural forces. Especially spectacular were the landscapes and cityscapes or ruins, and impressions of cloud formations painted by nature on the faces of *pietra paesina*. Horizontal strata of the limestone and fissures were permeated by hydroxides of iron and manganese. Pietra paesina and pietra dura attested to earth's creative forces, forces that reverberate in the lithic formations on the Franciscan altar front.[34] Cutting stones open exposed natural formations that resembled other elements, and in doing so, it engendered inventive reconfigurations. Consider the left panel, which presents the miraculous beech tree. On the left of the panel, natural coloration in the stone simulates the stump of a tree. Bereft of foliage, it refers to Christ's death. Above, to the right of the seam, another stone metamorphoses into a tree, but a verdant one, its green marble foliage set against a lapis blue sky with clouds. The material conversion of stone into tree multiplies the Christological significance through references to Christ as the living stone.[35]

These material and spiritual resonances further the special relation between Christ and Francis created in the other two panels on the altar front, and in the printed *Descrizione*. In the right panel

for the church, the saint appears with the birds, whose multiplicity and movements are conveyed by a variety of stones. In the central panel, Francis receives the stigmata from the seraphim, its otherworldly appearance startling as a result of an efflorescence of luminous white marble and vibrating onyx. This dynamic and floating assemblage transforms rock into a vision, rendered miraculous through the combination of art and nature. In doing so, the deep geological time of stone and the biblical time of Christ's death metamorphose into the vertical movement of birds into the air, who take flight and disappear from sight. The Savior reappears, through the vision of the seraphim, seen in the centre, as Francis, receiving the stigmata, becomes a second Christ. This spiritual vision is beyond time, an idea suggested by the pulsating luminescence surrounding the seraphim, but also from images concealed in stone, like those discussed above. Not unlike acheiropoieta, icons made without human hands, these images were shaped by divine and natural forces, and revealed

Fig. 4. Jacopo Ligozzi (draftsman), Domenico Falcini (engraver), *The Prominent Rock* [Plate I], in Fra Lino Moroni, *Descrizione del Sacro Monte della Vernia* [Florence] 1612. © Chicago, Newberry Library.

by slicing them open. As a material that endures, stone could condense and express theological and geological time.

With this in mind, let us return to the printed images of the monastic retreat, and the engraving with the Sasso spicco, the prominent rock (fig. 4).[36] This site furthers connections between St. Francis and Christ as well as between the two mountains, Calvary and La Verna. The printed image presents the location where St Francis reported his vision that the fissures in the rock at La Verna were created by the earthquake when Christ was crucified. According to the saint's vision, with Christ's death, the earth opened up to create La Verna – a distinctive convergence of biblical and geological time. The distinctive shape of the projecting rock and the cross erected under it are at first obscured by large boulders. Pulling the flaps down allows a view of the passage where a guide shows the location to two pilgrims. In this instance, manipulating paper rocks cut from scissors resonates with stone relics hewn from the lithic surface depicted in the print. Pilgrims to the site would chip at the stone, taking pieces away as relics of both the body of Francis, and of the sacred mountain created from the earthquake at the Crucifixion.

Ginger Hammer has commented on the similarity of the moveable parts in the *Descrizione* to those used in anatomy treatises and on fugitive sheets.[37] A common example of the type is Jacob Frölich's *Anatomy, or a Faithful Reproduction of the Body of a Female (Anathomia oder abconterfettung eines Weibsleib)*.[38] The woodcut, printed in 1564 after Heinrich Vogtherr, presents a female figure sitting on a high bench, her legs parted. A large vessel-shaped flap lifts upwards to display her internal organs. A separate illustration of a womb, carrying a tiny infant, is one of the surrounding details seen adjacent to her open belly. The comparison is worth underscoring, but not only for the mechanical character of the flaps. For understandings of rocky formations, underground spaces, and quarrying were intimately connected both to remote sites and to the womb of the Virgin Mary. According to a 9th-century abbot, the mountain from which the rock was cut was identified with the Virgin; the rock itself…"was Christ" born without "conjugal labour".[39] This legend is evoked by Mantegna in his *Madonna of the Rocks* (Madonna delle Cave), c. 1466, or 1488-90.[40] The Virgin and Christ are enthroned on a crystalline rock with a cave which

refers both to her body and to Christ. In the cave, stone cutters are at work quarrying and mining, which has been linked, through the mythological structure of Pliny's *Natural History*, with the fall of the iron age and robbing mother earth of minerals and metals. The detail of the cave suggests internal forces, according to Jacob Wamberg's keen analysis – the coming into being of art and external forces of mining and quarrying. In the face of growing exploitation of the mineral wealth of nature in early modern Italy, Mantegna's painting betrays a "tension", writes Wamberg, "between seeing art as both fulfilling and corrupting nature".[41]

With this in mind, I turn to one final example from the *Descrizione, The Temptation of St. Francis*, that contributes to the book's story of La Verna as a living mountain.[42] The precipice seen in the etching was measured by the artist, and Fra Moroni provides readers with the dimensions in the adjacent legend. These scientific annotations – testimony to the facts of nature – contribute to the legend of the miracle. A precipitous escarpment takes up three-quarters of the page, its surface faceted by cross-hatching that also calls to mind folds of a robe that hangs along the edge to which three trees cling. A dark triangular opening draws attention to the figure of Francis standing on the edge of the cliff, resisting a demon who flies behind menacingly. The demon sought to propel the saint over the edge. But according to the legend, the rock softened like wax beneath Francis, creating a cavity of sufficient depth that he was no longer vulnerable. To convey this material transformation, a moveable flap can be raised to emulate the barrier of stone that remained to protect the saint. Natural historical and alchemical understandings of rock as a living substance were thereby brought together with the theological and Franciscan legends of stone's generative forces to further the order's claims that the saint was a second Christ. Not unlike the anatomy treatises, the overslips in the *Descrizione* conceal bodies and sacred sites. But in contrast to anatomical and other moveable flaps, which are normally located centrally, the overslips in the Franciscan volume are pasted at the edge of the precipice, or along the bottom, or sides of the pages. In this way, their revelations operate at the interstices – between material and divine worlds, and between natural history and religion.

I have been arguing that it is the creative potency of earth – manifested in powerful vertical and irregular forms, in its obdurate density, in its panoply of colors and dazzling effects, in its potential for making things, and, for early moderns, in images created by natural, alchemical, and divine forces – that engendered the *Descrizione*. Ligozzi also had a role in this environmental imagination. The combination of scientific engagement with the natural world and with fabulous tales and miracles also connects with the trajectory of the artist's career. As noted, he was an illustrator of flora and fauna, his reputation forged by attentiveness to the natural world in the 1570s and 1580s. It was only in the 1590s that the artist, unusually for the period, began to produce religious paintings and artefacts, including the frescoes of the life of Francis at Ognissanti, noted above. From painting flora and fauna, the artist moved to creating images from stones, and only later, to rendering religious mysteries. Not only did the facts of nature enhance miracles in the *Descrizione*, then, but perhaps the act of imagining how to portray miraculous legends also fostered inventive environmental thinking.

As I stated earlier in this paper: instead of drawing a line between empirical observation of the earth's elements on one side, seen from a distance and quantified as resources, and on the other side, the magical poetic meanings of the elements, I am suggesting that we acknowledge the creative potential of their early modern interconnectedness. The otherworldly legends – the volume's 'speculative fabulations' – also foster wonder about the physical dimensions of the mountain. Neither technology nor God are answers, as Harraway reminds us. And in the *Descrizione*, science and religion are *not* reconciled but rather confront each other in ways that insist we contend with the potency of nature. Earth's unruly character, its particulars, and its material density generated alchemical, natural historical, and magical-poetic modes of description, and Ligozzi's *Descrizione*, like the lithic imagery with which it was intertwined, appeals to us to engage with earth's complexities.

Notes

[1] Lino Moroni, Jacopo Ligozzi, *Descrizione del Sacro Monte della Vernia*, [Florence] 1612. On the volume as a conversion machine, see B. Wilson, "Sacred and Material Conversions: Jacopo Ligozzi and the *Descrizione del Sacro Monte della Vernia* (1612)", in B. Wilson, P. Yachnin, eds., *Conversion Machines in Early Modern Europe: Apparatus, Artifice, Body* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, forthcoming).

[2] On the volume, see L. Conigliello, *Le vedute del Sacro Monte della Verna: Jacopo Ligozzi pellegrino nei luoghi di Francesco* (Firenze: Polistampa, 1999); Ead., ed., *Jacopo Ligozzi. Le vedute del Sacro Monte della Verna: i dipinti di Poppi e Bibbiena* (Poppi: Edizione della Biblioteca comunale Rilliana, 1992).

[3] Ead., *Ligozzi* (Milano-Paris: 5 continents-Musée du Louvre, 2005).

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] D. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), p. 3.

[6] B. Wilson, "Sacred and Material Conversions", cit.

[7] For examples of earlier publications see L. Conigliello, ed., *Jacopo Ligozzi*, cit., Z. Sarnecka, "Experiencing La Verna at Home: Italian Sixteenth-Century Maiolica Sanctuaries and Chapels", *Religions* 11, no. 1 (2019): p. 6.

[8] L. Conigliello, ed., *Jacopo Ligozzi*, cit.

[9] L. Moroni, "Al lettore", Moroni and Ligozzi, *Descrizione*, np.

[10] *Ivi.*

[11] *Ivi.*

[12] Image: https://archive.org/details/gri_33125008411585/page/n25/mode/2up.

[13] Image: https://archive.org/details/gri_33125008411585/page/n29/mode/2up.

[14] Image: https://archive.org/details/gri_33125008411585/page/n53/mode/2up.

[15] Image: https://archive.org/details/gri_33125008411585/page/n73/mode/2up.

[16] Image: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7a/Ognissanti%2C_altare_maggiore_su_disegno_di_jacopo_ligozzi%2C_1593-1605%2C_02.jpg.

[17] H. Baader, "Livorno, Lapis Lazuli, Geology and the Treasures of the Sea in 1604", *Espacio, tiempo y forma no. 5, Revista de la facultad de geografía e historia*, no. VII (2017): p. 35.

[18] L. Conigliello, ed., *Jacopo Ligozzi*, cit., p. 23.

[19] A. Giusti, M. Mariottini, "Stones: Ornament of Florence", *Carta geologica d'Italia,* LXVI, *Servizio geologico d'Italia*, 2004.

[20] Image: https://www.wikigallery.org/wiki/painting_342458/Jacopo-Ligozzi/Model-for-a-pietre-dure-table-top.

[21] Image: https://wsimag.com/museo-degli-argenti/it/artworks/67161.

[22] See I. Horacek, "Alchemy of the Gift: Things, Material Transformations, and Geopolitics at the Court of Rudolf II", PhD. dissertation (University of British Columbia, 2015).

[23] W.A. Dym, "Alchemy and Mining: Metallogenesis and Prospecting in Early Mining Books", *Ambix* 55, no. 3 (November 2008): p. 232.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 238.

[25] H. Uttman, Bericht, von denen Ertz-Gebürgen, Streichenderer Gänge, Stöcke, Flöze, Klüffte, Ertze, Berg Arthen und allen Metallen, auch von Schürffen, Seiffenwercken und andern Arthen der Bergwercken, 1601. Saxony Government Archive, loc. 36070. 11b. Cited and translation in *ibid.*, p. 247.

[26] On Aldrovandi and mineralogy, see W. Cavazza, G.B. Vai, "Ulisse Aldrovandi and the Origin of Geology and Science", in G.B. Vai, G.E. Caldwell, eds., *The Origins of Geology in Italy* (Boulder: The Geological Society of America, 2006).

[27] H. Badaar, "Livorno, Lapis Lazuli, Geology", cit.

[28] J.B. Lohff, "Antonio Tempesta's Paintings on Stone and the Development of a Genre in 17th-Century Italy", in P. Baker-Bates, E. Calvillo, eds., *Almost Eternal: Painting on Stone and Material Innovation in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 180-219.

[29] Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Musaeum metallicum in libros 4 distributum Bartholomaeus Ambrosinus … labore, et studio composuit cum indice copiosissimo* (Bologna, 1648), p. 749.

[30] H. Baader, "Livorno, Lapis Lazuli, Geology", cit., p. 370.

[31] Ulisse Aldrovandi, "Discorso Naturale". http://www.filosofia.unibo.it/aldrovandi/pinakesweb/main.asp?language=it. (Bologna: Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, 1572-73), np.

[32] *Ivi.*

[33] *Ivi.*

[34] Image: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ognissanti,_altare_maggiore_su_disegno_di_jacopo_ligozzi,_1593-1605,_04.jpg.

[35] Among numerous references, see Peter 2:4; Deut. 32:4.; also see C. Gerbron, "Christ Is a Stone: On Filippo Lippi's Adoration of the Child in Spoleto", *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 19, no. 2 (2016): pp. 257-83.

[36] Image: https://archive.org/details/gri_33125008411585/page/n45/mode/2up.

[37] G. Hammer's observation is from a video that accompanied the exhibition she curated. https://www.nga.gov/features/description-sacred-mountain-la-verna.html. On moveable prints, see S.K. Schmidt, *Altered and Adorned: Using Renaissance Prints in Daily Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011); S.K. Schmidt, *Interactive and Sculptural Printmaking in the Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); S. Dackerman, *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*, exh. cat. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 2011).

[38] Image: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anatomical_fugitive_sheets_Wellcome_L0055179.jpg.

[39] J. Wamberg, "'A Stone and yet Not a Stone': Alchemical Themes in Northern Quattrocento Landscape", in Id., ed., *Art and Alchemy* (København: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006), p. 67.

[40] Image: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f9/Andrea_Mantegna_104.jpg.

[41] J. Wamberg, "'A Stone and yet Not a Stone'", cit., p. 46.

[42] Image: https://archive.org/details/gri_33125008411585/page/n61/mode/2up.

Making Iron Matter in Second Empire France

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Georges Haussmann, the powerful Prefect of the Seine, famously recounted that Emperor Napoléon III desired "iron, iron, nothing but iron!" for the new central markets in Paris.[1] Iron construction, exemplified in monumental market halls, train sheds, and exhibition buildings is a longstanding motif of a modernist history of art and architecture. The influential Swiss architectural historian Sigfried Giedion claimed industrially produced 19th-century French iron as a singular catalyst for modern architecture in his 1928 book *Bauen in Frankreich, Eisen, Eisenbeton*, and in subsequent writing. Giedion fixed on iron's material qualities, which served his teleology of ever-larger spans, greater internal openness, and the uniform production of cast parts.[2] This avant-garde image of French iron was also canonized in the writing of Walter Benjamin, who enthusiastically read Giedion's book while preparing his own manuscript, the *Passagenwerk*, or *The Arcades Project*. For Benjamin, iron was the technological 'signature' of the 19th century, and the city of Paris was its undisputed capital.[3] These 20th-century views have dominated our reading of 19th-century buildings and materials. They have also obscured a fairer assessment of the ubiquity of iron in the Second Empire. By focusing on freestanding iron structures as innovative new building types, we have neglected the larger history of this material. Despite its cultural significance, art historians pay little attention to this mass-produced metal.[4] Industrially produced iron, I will argue, was a fluid material that was not just structural, but also ornamental. It was precisely this relationship between structure and decoration that made it so powerfully transformative. The mineral, material qualities of iron were not only its resiliency and strength, but also its capacity for seemingly endless reproduction. From extraction, to processing and then to consumption, iron was a material in perpetual motion.

The crucial era of French metallurgical expansion occurred during the Second Empire, between 1852, when Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte crowned himself Napoléon III, emperor of France, and 1870, when he abdicated the throne during the Franco-Prussian War. The large rise in industrial investments, the completion of railways, and the expansion of the metallurgical industry was showcased to flatter the imperial image at home and abroad. The engineer and Second Empire statesman Michel Chevalier proclaimed that iron was

> the most useful of all of the metals. Gold could disappear from the world without much troubling civilization. But if, tomorrow, by some extraordinary event, iron was suddenly taken away, it would be an indescribable calamity. All would become retrograde; civilisation would become impotent.[5]

The extraction of iron ore from the earth set production in motion. Shallow ore deposits were traditionally processed with wood and water. Coal and coke gradually displaced traditional charcoal smelting. In the 19th century, the largest forges implemented new blast furnaces and huge pouring halls. Railway lines and canals created a public network of transportation for the importation of coal and export of finished goods. The exploitation of fossil combustibles greatly increased the output of iron to unprecedented quantities. Although coal was unevenly integrated into French industries, one engineer proclaimed: "If coal is the bread of industry, then one might reasonably say that iron is its instrument par excellence".[6] The massive growth of the industry resulted in lower prices and a wider variety of production. However, the Anglo-French Commercial Treaty of 1860 opened French markets to British goods, precipitating a drop in prices and increased competition.

The movement of iron ores and products concerned Charles-Alfred Oppermann, engineer and editor. He created the *Propagateur et Travaux en Fer*, a monthly publication that he edited and largely wrote himself under the patronage of the Comité des Forges, a powerful union of actors in the metallurgical industry. Although it existed only from 1867 to 1869, the *Propagateur* painstakingly documented the metallurgical universe. Its aim was to publicize new uses of iron and to stimulate consumption, especially in France. Oppermann documented the fluctuations in the output and the market and proselytized for its structural and decorative use in the construction industries. Oppermann's tables and charts showed the amounts of iron entering and exiting the country and entering the building trade as a visual guide to iron's increasing ubiquity.

Oppermann also argued that standardization and stable prices would allow engineers, architects, and contractors to adopt iron more readily in new projects. He used engraved plates in the *Propagateur* to promote all forms of iron fabrication, from I-beams, rails, balconies, fountains, to screws, which served uses both grand and modest. The large-scale serial manufacture of iron shifted from an informal system of production on demand toward an endless variety of possible pre-cast parts. Like his tables of statistics, these engraved images showing flat- and round-topped screws nested in formation, lamp posts, garden furniture, stoves, and cooking pots were a visual guide, an inventory, to the diversity and abundance of the possible applications of iron. In the mid-1860s, Oppermann's *Propagateur* argued both in text and image for iron's material flexibility.

The iron structures Gideon celebrated were new types of commercial buildings with wide spaces. Yet iron quietly displaced, in less visible ways, the traditions and techniques of other types of construction. Parisian building codes required a 50 cm stone facade, however, a net of iron bars allowed builders of the apartment houses going up along the new wide boulevards to build more quickly and efficiently, increasing the internal spatial area of the building and lightening the load of the roof. Oppermann encouraged iron joists not only as a more durable material, but also as a useful measure of fireproofing. While wrought, or rolled, iron was championed for its tremendous tensile strength, cast iron possessed compressive strength and in the Second Empire the two forms were often used in tandem. If structural iron

was hidden behind the pale ashlar facades, decorative iron emerged forcefully on the exterior. Muscular cast iron balconies embroidered a pattern of contrasts on the stone facade. They also added a strongly horizontal accent to the visual experience of the boulevard. Unlike earlier forms, these brawny mid-century balconies extended the space of the apartment into the street itself. Their repeating patterns, whether tightly inverted heart-shaped forms or undulating *rinceaux* patterns, were cast in the image of earlier eras, but their mass and solidity were hallmarks of the new streetscape.

The Second Empire transformations in Paris have been well studied, but without suggesting the ways the city itself was rendered anew in iron forms. Not only did these urban upheavals stimulate a market of structural iron, but they also enhanced the demand for artistic production that would decorate new spaces in the city itself. As Charles Marville's photographs show us, the long dark horizontals formed by the requisite balconies on the new streets and the expansion of gas lighting, which nearly doubled during the Second Empire, required vast amounts of cast iron.[7] This was joined by the integration of tree grates, kiosks, and urinals and other kinds of iron street furniture.

The two largest firms of this era, Durenne and Barbezat, specialized in cast iron decoration and monumental iron sculptures and fountains, which were erected in cities and towns across France. For public monuments, cast iron was more durable and cheaper compared to bronze. Even though iron lacked bronze's artistic esteem, important sculptors such as Pierre Rouillard and Mathurin Moreau created plaster and wood models for Durenne and Barbezat, firms prized for their artistry. A reviewer of a Durenne fountain exhibited in 1862 observed, "Iron enters the furnace as ore... it leaves as living flesh, human skin. One might think a sorcerer dreaming of sculpture suddenly exhaled and transmuted it".[8] Iron, then, was understood as ore in material and mineral terms, but it was also imagined as something far more dynamic and life-like. By 1868, Durenne had already erected some 100 monumental fountains.[9] That same year, the popular writer Louis Simonin observed that iron was everywhere, creating new pathways, replacing wood in shipbuilding and in architectural construction, in the erection of bridges and columns. He also added that "in casting, [iron has] dethroned bronze".[10]

Metallurgical activity underwrote the convulsive motion of modernity: extraction of ores, development of railways, expansion of steamships, excavation of canals, and the making of exhibitions. At the Exposition Universelle of 1867, metallurgy and metallic objects were conspicuously displayed to flatter the image of the Second Empire. Édouard Vasseur has argued that the 1867 exposition was a commercial strategy for industrialists, the government, elites, and a validation of the economic system.[11] Like other exhibitions of the time, this fair was an invitation to view technical and artistic wealth. The ellipse-shaped iron building was erected on the Champ de Mars and set in a pleasure garden dotted with pavilions and attractions. The main building was largely made of iron and many of the buildings on the grounds were also metallic.[12] Throughout the exhibition, French metalwork industries recovering from the upset of the free-trading Commercial Treaty were prominently showcased.

The classification system organized materials from raw to finished, with the most refined at the center. The ceremonial entry to the French section on the outer ring, which was dedicated to heavy industry, was embellished with an elaborate trophy of metal parts (fig. 1). A 'temple' of copper boiler drums and columns of copper piping was ornamented with a Napoleonic eagle made of nails. The Ars-sur-Moselle company created a triumphal arch in iron, allowing a glimpse of huge iron and steel coils, but not the I-beams, nor the blocks of ores crowned by a garland of iron chains.[13]

Throughout the French sections, manufacturers showed the full range of materials that had been mined, moved, and processed. The spectacle of materials in motion was embedded in the exposition's display culture; wonder was the spectrum of material potential. Thus, piles of ores were closely associated with finished products in the exhibitions of the major firms. The single-span trellis bridge
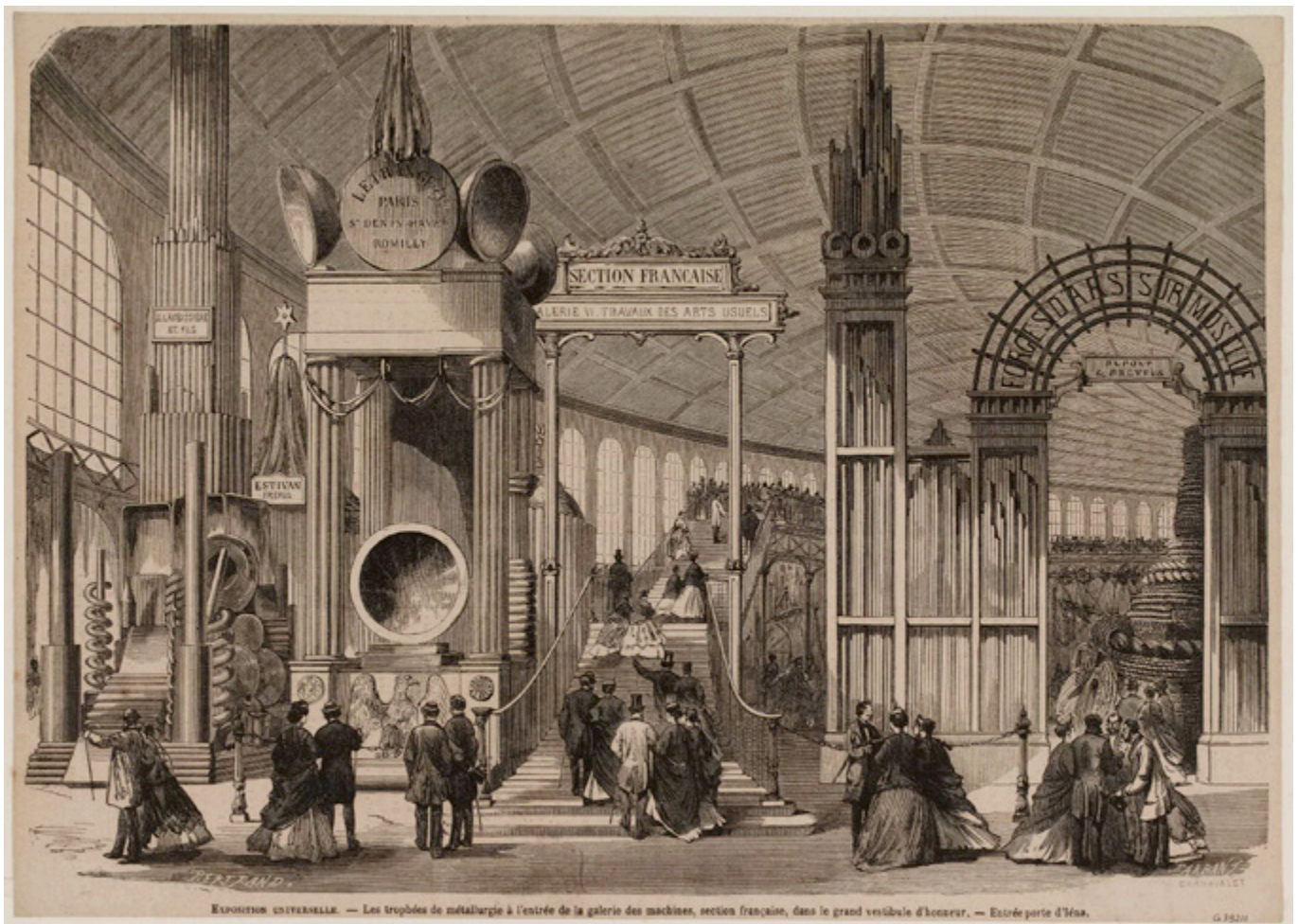
Fig. 1. Nicolas Barbant, *Exposition universelle: The metallurgy trophies at the entry of the French section, in the grand vestibule of honor*, 1867. Wood engraving. Paris, Musée Carnavalet.

connecting two banks along the Seine was the first to be erected in France using steel resulting from the Bessemer process, that would transform the iron industry into steel-making enterprises.[14] This process required iron ores of exceptional purity and a vast quantity was imported into France from a French-owned mine in northern Algeria. This enterprise, which exported 200,000 tons of iron a year to French factories, exhibited a 7,000 kg specimen in the Algerian section that was called the 'eighth wonder of the world'.[15]

The visual dynamics of the exposition's spectacle, which promoted iron as both structure and ornament, was extended to the entire newly re-made city. The streets, parks, and a complement of metallic boulevard ornaments were designed in the Department of Promenades and Plantings. By evoking the splendors of the 18th century, as in Gabriel Davioud's grand gilded gates for Parc Monceau or the smaller Square Montholon, with its heavy cast iron fence, iron forms delineated these new areas of leisure, setting them deliberately apart from the upheavals of renovation and from street life. Iron was not only a material in motion, but also a material that *created* motion, that served as an active guide and partner that directed behavior. Just as elaborate enclosures separated these new green spaces from the street, the promenade was itself defined according to a careful arrangement of new trees set within gothic cast iron skirts, benches for resting under the canopy, iron guards to protect entryways from carriage wheels, and the ever-growing presence of streetlamps. These iron markers, aligned in perfect formation, gave solidity and physicality to the motion of the city itself.

The proliferation of iron in all aspects of French life, from railways to streets to stoves to skirts, may be interpreted as a singular sign of the hand of industrialization. Yet, the forms that these iron figures adopted were resolutely beholden to established aesthetic codes. In this sense, iron may have replaced other materials and marked a new era of public investment in an urban image of wealth and power, but it did not unseat tradition. Instead, these forms paraded their historical ornamental knowledge, re-inscribing the importance of the past in this era of momentous change.

Iron was a material in motion and also a figure of migration. Just as Algerian ores fueled French forges, many cast iron structures and ornaments created in France were exported abroad. The material logic of mass casting made iron easy to transport. In the early 1860s, a cast iron bridge, erected over a deep gorge at El Kantara, was produced entirely in France, shipped to Algeria, and assembled to serve local and colonial interests. Fountains cast in France were erected throughout Europe, such as the Ross Fountain in Edinburgh. They were also exported to sites in Latin America, like Rio de Janeiro.

Tim Ingold asks us to assess materials themselves, apart from the object-forms they take.[16] I have argued that in the Second Empire iron should be understood as a material in motion – extracted, processed, and transformed into both structural and ornamental forms. 19th-century iron was a dynamic material of the industrial age. To see it as heroically rational, or beholden to a discourse of unprecedented innovation, is to miss the ways it was always in flux.

Notes

[1] P. de Moncan, C. Mahout, *Le Paris du Baron Haussmann, Paris sous le Second Empire, Centenaire du baron Haussmann 1891-1991, Les Mémoires* (Chartres: Sodexic, 1991), p. 367.

[2] S. Giedion, *Bauen in Frankreich, Eisen, Eisenbeton* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt and Biermann, 1928).

[3] W. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 157.

[4] C.S. Smith, A *Search for Structure* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1981).

[5] M. Chevalier, *Rapports du jury international* (Paris: Dupont, 1868), p. 35.

[6] C.A. Oppermann, *Propagateur des travaux en fer*, no. 1 (January 1867).

[7] M. de Thézy, *Paris la rue: Le mobilier urbain du Second empire à nos jours*, exh. cat. (Paris: Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, 1976), p. 21.

[8] A. Luchet, "Exposition des Beaux-Arts", *Le Monde Illustré* (October 31, 1863): p. 286.

[9] C.A. Opperman, *Propagateur*, no. 17 (May 1868).

[10] L. Simonin, *La vie souterraine* (Paris: Hachette, 1867), p. 323.

[11] E. Vasseur, "Pourquoi organiser des Expositions universelles? Le 'succès' de l'Exposition universelle de 1867", *Histoire, Économie et Société* 24 (2005): pp. 573-594.

[12] F. Walch, "Das Gebäude der Pariser Weltaustellung 1867", PhD dissertation (Technische Hochschule Karlsruhe, 1967).

[13] F. Ducuing, ed., *L'Exposition universelle 1867 illustrée* (Paris: Administration de l'exposition, 1867), II, p. 98.

[14] The steel was produced at the Terrenoire factory.

[15] Dr. Warnier, "Premières matières", *L'Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée*, cit., p. 183. See also J. Duval, "L'Exposition universelle de Paris, L'Algérie", *Journal des débats* (4 September 1867).

[16] T. Ingold, "Materials against Materiality", *Archaeological Dialogues* 14 (2007): pp. 1-16.

The Venice Biennale as a World Map: Cartographies, Geological Interventions, Landmark Layers

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The Venice Biennale, with its national pavilions, is like a map of the world but also like a geography handbook. Not only is the history of this international art exhibition marked by contrasting geopolitical and creative forces, but also by landscape transformations taking place in the building of its structures and the gradual expansion of this periodical exposition throughout the city.

In 1807, a visionary metamorphosis even took place in a remote area of Venice which would become the headquarter of the Biennale: an area of vegetable plots and gardens was turned into a public park planned by the architect Giannantonio Selva. This also involved demolishing three old churches and their cloisters and using some of the rubble to create a low hill that between 1812 and 1813 was completed with a coffeehouse on top, and then became the British Pavilion. According to the writer Goffredo Parise, it is the park's fascinating landscapes, with its selected trees and views of the lagoon, that make the Venice Biennale *the* Biennale,[1] the first biennial and blueprint for all of the other biennials in the world – now about 300 – and distinguish it from its competitors, like the Bienal de São Paulo or Documenta in Kassel, founded in 1951 and 1955 respectively.

If we consider the Biennale as a whole, as a sort of living, complex organism, we will see that it is subjected to a process of uninterrupted creation and destruction. Its nature has always been ephemeral: from the times of its 'ancestor', the National Artistic Exhibition, which took place in 1887 in a temporary building erected on the site of a demolished stable, and which was followed by a new venue rebuilt for the First International Exposition of 1895.

Its cartography has therefore both real and unreal borders. National pavilions expanded from the main Giardini area to the meadow behind it, in a sort of territorial conquest. They are like embassies sharing the 'territories' allocated by the Biennale but their positioning is empirical, dictated by the geographical design of 19th-century gardens. And so, the Belgian Pavilion appeared in 1907, followed in 1909 by the British, Hungarian, and Bavarian Pavilions (the latter was renamed 'German Pavilion' in 1912); in 1912, France and Sweden built their own (the latter was given to Holland two years later); in 1930, the USA built a neo-Palladian-style pavilion and others followed. Pavilions could also change in their appearance, as in the case of the Central Pavilion: its facade was modified in 1914 and then again in 1932, 1962, 1968, and 1988; or in the case of Belgium and Germany, which both completely rebuilt their pavilions (the first in 1930 and 1948, the second in 1938).[2] The City of Venice issued the building permits and built them, while the State Governments paid for and owned them. They have their own curatorial 'governments' but refer to a higher institutional authority – as in the UN – since the artists of single pavilions are chosen by national curators while, in the past, shows in the main pavilion (originally called the Art Exhibition Building, in 1899 Palace of the Exhibition, in 1932 Central Palace) were conceived by a directorial committee, sometimes also by a jury, and later by a curatorial team or, as at present, by a single curator.

In 1962, the art historian Giulio Carlo Argan recommended demolishing those structures, describing them as 'ungovernable' – suggesting that they give a disorienting overview of contemporary art; in 1967, the critic and editor Bruno Alfieri was of the same opinion, and proposed to spare only the Austrian pavilion designed by Josef Hoffmann and to replace the complex with a minimalistic space where all the works could be exhibited together. After the 1968 Biennale, Germano Celant, promoter of the Arte Povera group, even suggested that the Giardini be allowed to return to a natural 'primordial state', hosting just encounters between artists and the public.[3]

The pavilions have instead become the distinctive feature of the Venice Biennale; even more so in the last decade, which has seen them spring up all over the city as new States all want their own and has started renting spaces and palaces where they can show works of art. The Biennale itself has been expanding into external venues since 1972, doubling its exhibition space in 1980 with the addition of the Arsenal.[4]

Its shaping, transforming matter is the very essence of the Biennale, given that temporary exhibitions are constantly being set up and dismantled, and even the layout of the Central Pavilion changes with every new show. The category of obsolescence belongs to its destiny, as in the city of Leonia, in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (1972) – which is gifted with new objects every day and throws away the old ones – so, each edition of the Biennale is erased at the end. Nonetheless, they sometimes leave traces influencing subsequent editions, marking isobars of intellectual allusions and contour lines of effective physical signals.[5]

Changes in materials used by artists also became a driving force for unprecedented visual and aesthetic practices. In the 1970s, several works of art involved alterations modifying the structure of the pavilions or their surrounding ground by means of 'geological' excavations and infiltration of matter or changes in landmark layers. In 1967, Germano Celant explained what he meant by 'Arte Povera' by writing that "animals, plants and minerals have risen up in the art world", and artists, as producers "of magical and marvellous facts", feel attracted "by their physical, chemical and biological possibilities".[6]

Geological interventions and environments, already presented at exhibitions in Rome ("Fire, Image, Water, Earth" in The Attico Gallery in June 1967), Foligno ("The Space of the Image" at Trinci Palace between July and October 1967), Genoa ("Arte Povera and Im-Space" at La Bertesca Gallery from September to October 1967), and Amalfi ("Arte Povera + Poor Actions" at the Ancient Arsenal of the Amalfi Republic in October 1968) introduced the possibility of considering geology as a driver for visual and aesthetic practices. The art critic Alberto Boatto stated that art seemed to be occupying a "broadened" space and that he felt as if he were consulting "nautical charts" towards a new itinerary where works of art, conceived as "primary structures", became a series of "epicentres".[7] Tommaso Trini wrote of the feeling he had

that the materials of some impermanent works might even "evaporate", becoming merely a device for a "relationship" between public and artist and opening the field to performance.[8]

Thanks to young militant art critics, the Central Pavilion of the Biennale became the epicentre of minor curatorial 'earthquakes'. After 1972, the Venice Biennale was not held on a regular basis until 1976, when a unifying theme was proposed for the very first time, described by the title "Environment, Participation, Cultural Structures". In the twenty rooms of "Environment/Art 1915-1976", Celant ordered that the architect Gino Valle dismantle Carlo Scarpa's structures and remove plaster from the walls to propose an exhibition of exhibitions, as landmark layers of memories: partly a re-enactment of historical environments – from rooms created by Italian Futurists and Russian avant-gardists to the *Salon of Madame B.* (1923) by Piet Mondrian, from the facade of *Le Plein* (1960) by Arman at Iris Clert Gallery in Paris to the environment with horses (1969) by Jannis Kounellis – and partly new creations by thirteen artists including Joseph Beuys, even if he failed to create a zone for land art outside the building.[9]

This kind of operation had already been performed not only at the Venice Biennale in 1968, for one of Lucio Fontana's works (the *Environment*, created in 1949 for the Naviglio Gallery in Milan, re-enacted for the exhibition "Lines of Research"), but also by Harald Szeemann in 1968 in Berna. However, in these new environments, quite a few of them sought a contact with the outside, as in the first room by Blinky Palermo and its open door (*North South East West*, or *Himmelsrichtungen*, 1976). Sol Lewitt asked for his room, entitled *Environment* (1976), to include a large opening looking out onto the garden to promote a dialogue between logic and chaos, mathematics and nature. Similarly, *Untitled* (1976) by Robert Irwin consisted of a perspective window overlooking the outside landscape on the canal, and the pavilion wall of *Untitled* (1976) by Maria Nordman was cut open from top to bottom by a crack to create an environment made only of natural light and dark.

These energy connections extended to places like the British Pavilion. Here, Richard Long created a *Stone sculpture* (1976) with a triple row of 608 pink and white marble rocks looping through the rooms to mark a spiritual and material path. Also, as part of Joseph Beuys' *Tram Stop* (1961-76), an

actual hole was excavated in the German Pavilion; it was conceived as a monument to the artist's childhood memory and involved inserting a 21-metre-long iron probe into the ground. This totem, made of three segments of cast iron, combined a piece of an old cannon, four 17th-century mortar bombs and a sculpture representing the head of a man to recreate the idea of a monument dedicated to the war dead that he knew as a child. The totem was juxtaposed with a track and a probe that was inserted into a hole drilled into the floor to ideally reach the cold water of the lagoon far below, creating a topographic link and a utopian alchemical bond with the artist's hometown of Cleve. Since his first on-site visit the previous November, the artist noticed the slow changes time had impressed on the building and indeed said he wanted to create a sculpture made of metal and water.

In the 1978 Biennale, based on the theme "From Nature to Art, from Art to Nature", invasive interferences and landmarks also affected common spaces, as the great *Wall* by Mauro Staccioli, a real 64-square-metre wall made of bricks and concrete, erected after digging a foundation to obstruct the main boulevard and change the point of view of visitors, forcing them to deviate from their path and to explore hidden aspects in greater depth. The wall installed by Santiago Serra at the entrance of the Spanish Pavilion in 2003 had instead a more political intent, as it granted access only to Spanish citizens.

In the special exhibition "Six Stations for Art/Nature, The Nature of Art" curated by Jean Christophe Ammann, Achille Bonito Oliva, Antonio Del Guercio, and Filiberto Menna for the main pavilion, re-named Italian Pavilion since 1974, energy conduction is evoked again in Beuys' *Feuerstätte* (*Hearth*, 1974) with six groups of copper or iron rods leaning against walls. Geological potential also emerges from Richard Long's *Circle of Stones* (1974) lent by the Sperone Gallery; while *Wide View. Dwelling* (1978), also referred to as *Paesaggio. Abitazione* in the catalogue (that is, *Landscape. Dwelling*, fig. 1), by Charles Simonds, features a huge hole smeared with clay in the pavilion wall. The artist used it to create the appearance of ruins and give rise to a place of absence and abandonment that allowed visitors to see the outside through this unique frame, creating a new fantastic landscape at the same time.[10] Vito Acconci sought to create a thin layering of cultural memory and a landmark implying the mate-

rial history of the building and mysterious perceptions, using a part of the pavilion designed by Carlo Scarpa in 1952 and called the Garden of the Sculptures. It was a courtyard featuring a projecting concrete canopy (*La Pensilina*), a fountain pool, and a little Japanese-style garden, a special place where the artist Alberto Viani had refused to exhibit his works in the 1950s, arguing that the canopy was a sculpture itself and an exhibition of sculptures could not be held beneath another sculpture. This idea was so persistent that, in 2003, Gabriel Orozco replicated the projecting roof in birchwood, actually conceiving it as a sculpture, and placed it inside the pavilion.

Fig. 1. Charles Simonds, *Wide View. Dwelling*, 1978. Venice Biennale 1978, Italian Pavilion, special exhibition "Six Stations for Art/Nature, The Nature of Art". (Courtesy Archivio Storico della Biennale di Venezia – ASAC).

Acconci wrote to Bonito Oliva and Amman that he intended to "install a new piece. Done specifically for this occasion", even though he had actually created a work with three ladders leading to a clerestory in the ceiling, *Venice Belongs to US*, for the show curated by Celant for the Venice Biennale in 1976 – enclosing "detailed plans" drawn by hand so that it could be constructed without requiring his presence.[11] *Flag* (figs. 2-3) was a "whispering room" consisting of a wooden ladder one and a half times as high as the courtyard wall that was connected to the tops of the

three pillars by three steel cables – each one of them supporting a speaker (although one was fake). A hidden tape deck contained an audiotape sent by the artist from New York reproducing sounds recorded by him. The top third of the ladder was supposed to ideally be "left free to sway in the air", like a flag, or a territorial landmark.

In 1980, as painting was once again reclaiming its supremacy, with the emergence of the Italian Transavanguardia group and the so-called Neue Wilde in Germany, an exhibition on the 1970s art was held at the Biennale, where also some land artists such as Long, Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, Walter De Maria, and Christo were invited to display photographs of their works. Achille Bonito Oliva composed a text recalling the way artists had adopted new approaches to materials and had, with a "happy kleptomania" used reality in its "energetical and mythical aspects": art had really "established a magical territory".[12]

At the time, many works of art used earth, metals, or even gardens, while water or a liquid element have come to be quite pervasive more recently: from Pamela Rosenkranz at the Swiss Pavilion to Vincent J.F. Huang at the Tuvalu Pavilion in 2015, and from Giorgio Andreotta Calò's *No Title. The End of the World* in the Italian Pavilion in 2017 to Laure Provost's *Deep See Blue Surrounding You,* featuring an actual fake sea made of resin*,* in the French Pavilion in 2019. These case studies have taken on a special value in a time marked not only by the renewal of artistic languages, but also by ecological concerns. If, as Jane Bennett suggests in *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things* (2010), materials tremble and can affect our behaviour or thinking as unexpected but powerful agents, in the same way that, in the evolution process, a mineralisation of certain tissues created bones that emerged as new material for the 'construction' of living creatures, then maybe the encounters offered by the layers of these unexpected works of art and the very different national cartographies of the Venice Biennale can help us develop a deeper, more all-encompassing awareness.[13]

Fig. 2. Vito Acconci, *Flag*, 1978. Venice Biennale 1978, Italian Pavilion, Garden of Sculptures, special exhibition "Six Stations for Art/Nature, The Nature of Art". (Courtesy Archivio Storico della Biennale di Venezia – ASAC).
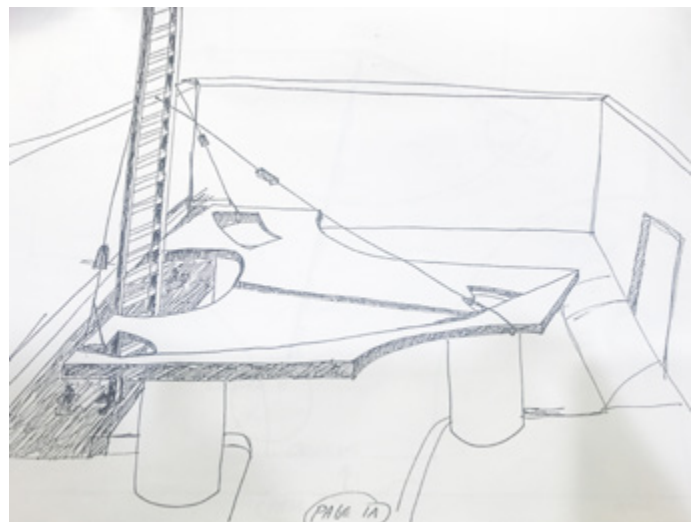
Fig. 3. Vito Acconci, *Flag*, 1978, project from a letter to Achille Bonito Oliva, June 9, 1978. (Courtesy Archivio Storico della Biennale di Venezia – ASAC).

Notes

1 G. Parise, "Vedo i mari della Sonda", *Corriere della Sera* (August 23, 1980); about the Venice Biennale see, among others, E. Di Martino, *La Biennale di Venezia 1895-1995. Cento anni di arte e cultura* (Milano: Mondadori, 1995); *Venezia e la Biennale: i percorsi del gusto* (Milano: Fabbri, 1995); S. Portinari, N. Stringa, *Storie della Biennale di Venezia* (Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2019), http://doi.org/10.30687/978-88-6969-366-3); L. Alloway, *The Venice Biennale from Salon to Goldfish Bowl* (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1968); P. Budillon Puma, *La Biennale di Venezia dalla guerra alla crisi 1948-1968* (Bari: Palomar, 1995).

2 G. Romanelli, *Ottant'anni di architettura e allestimenti alla Biennale di Venezia* (Venezia: Archivio storico delle arti contemporanee, 1976); M. Mulazzani, *I Padiglioni della Biennale di Venezia* (Milano: Electa, 2004); Id., *Guida ai padiglioni della Biennale di Venezia dal 1897* (Milano: Electa architettura, 2014).

3 See S. Portinari, *Anni Settanta. La Biennale di Venezia* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2018).

4 In 1972, an exhibition with sculptures was held partly in the Giardini, partly in squares and courtyards all over Venice; in 1974, the Magazzini del Sale building in the Zattere area was especially set up to host a show devoted to Ugo Mulas' photographs on the Biennale and, in 1975, the venue was chosen for "The Bachelor Machines" by Harald Szeemann and "Proposals for the Mulino Stucky" (with the participation of architects and artists) by Joseph Ryckwert and Pontus Hulten; in 1976, the Biennale expanded its collateral exhibitions to other 11 venues, including deconsecrated churches and underground spaces. In 1980, the 1st International Architecture Exhibition, titled "The Presence of the Past" and curated by Paolo Portoghesi, acquired a new space near the Giardini: the Corderie of the Arsenal, the ancient dockyard of The Venetian Republic. The Venice Biennale is also responsible for the 'biennalisation' of the art world, see E. Filipovic, S. Øvstebø, M. Van Hal, *The Biennial Reader. An Anthology on Large-scale Perennial Exhibitions of Contemporary Art* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010).

5 The process itself of the setting-up, with regard to the architect Carlo Scarpa's interventions, is similar to a geological stratification: in 1968, for instance, he made a very delicate reconstruction of the spaces in the main part of the Central Pavilion for the exhibition "Lines of Research", that contained also a nucleus of an architecture exhibition, creating a mezzanine and an underneath sector divided in cells, see O. Lanzarini, *Carlo Scarpa. L'architetto e le arti. Gli anni della Biennale di Venezia 1948-1972* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2003); P. Duboÿ, *Carlo Scarpa. L'arte di esporre* (Milano: Johan & Levi, 2016); M. Guccione, *Carlo Scarpa. Disegni di Carlo Scarpa per la Biennale di Venezia. Architetture e progetti, 1948-1968* (Roma: Gangemi, 2000); F. Dal Co, G. Mazzariol, *Carlo Scarpa. Opera completa* (Milano: Electa, 1984); S. Portinari, "1968. XXXIV Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte di Venezia. L'Ambiente di Carlo Scarpa", in G. Beltramini, ed., *Carlo Scarpa e la scultura del '900* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2008), pp. 281-287.

6 G. Celant, "Arte Povera. Appunti per una guerriglia", *Flash Art* no. 5 (November-December 1967): p. 4.

7 A. Boatto, "Lo spazio del presente", *Metro* no. 13 (February 1968): pp. 33-34.

8 T. Trini, "Nuovo alfabeto per corpo e materia", *Domus* no. 470 (January 1969) now in A. Boatto, *Mezzo secolo di arte intera, Scritti 1964-2014*, ed. by L. Cerizza (Monza: Johan & Levi, 2016), pp. 282-283: the article was also published in the catalogue of the exhibition "Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form" curated by Szeemann in 1969.

9 La Biennale di Venezia. Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee, Fondo Storico, Arti Visive (ASAC, FS, AV), b. 246: *Ambiente/Arte.* A year later, in 1977, Celant published a volume, *Ambiente/Arte. Dal Futurismo alla Body Art*, not as a mere catalogue of the exhibition but as a work with a historiographic intent, a sort of manual, posing as the art historian he was not. He was also criticised by the press for his concern for aestheticism and neglect of social issues.

10 *La Biennale di Venezia 1978. Dalla natura all'arte, dall'arte alla natura* (Milano: Electa, 1978), pp. 41-45, Simonds's works were actually two site-specific *Dwelling*, 30x40x20 cm; see also C. Simonds, *Dwelling* (Köln: Walther Konig, 2016); a magic conception of gestures and connection with land also emerges from critical texts as in A. Bonito Oliva, *Il territorio magico. Comportamenti alternativi dell'arte* (Firenze: Centro Di, 1971) or G. Celant, *Beuys. Tracce in Italia* (Napoli: Amelio Gallery, 1978) with text and interviews by Bonito Oliva.

11 ASAC, FS, AV, b. 291: Correspondence with artists, Letter from Acconci to Bonito Oliva, June 9, 1978. Acconci wrote: "it's important that the title be known by viewers. Hopefully, some kind of title-card can be placed near one entrance to the garden".

12 A. Bonito Oliva, "L'arte degli anni Settanta", in *La Biennale di Venezia* (Venezia: La Biennale di Venezia, 1980), p. 12.

13 J. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 11-13.

Towards the Creation of Original Material Depictions of the Human: Marc Quinn's Sculptures

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During the Italian Renaissance, it was common to see wax votive offerings (a donation embodying the vow or the gratitude of a person to a saint) of all sorts in Florentine churches: not only were there life-size effigies hanging from the ceiling and miniature representations of Catholic believers dropped in front of saint icons, but also candles and masses of pure wax equaling the weight of the patron. The fact that the votive offering does not necessarily have to take the shape of the giver to represent the believer or the vow illustrates the power of the material of the offerings. In the essay *Ex-Voto*, Georges Didi-Huberman questions the materiality of votive offerings and the domination of a limited range of materials over others to embody the vows: Why, he wonders, have "wax […], papier mâché, clay, softwood and beaten silver leaf […] most exclusively constituted the appropriate materials of the votive offering"?[1] According to Didi-Huberman, explaining the reason for the use of such a limited range of materials would lead to understanding "the symbolic and phantasmatic, temporal and figurative implications of plasticity", and the material's aptitude to fabricating *images*.[2]

Didi-Huberman explains how votive offerings allow art historians to understand the figurative force of the material itself and the way a material addresses issues of figuration and resemblance. Through the case of *ex-voti*, he claims that there are diverse ways to enact an "organic representation": it can be figurative or abstract and symbolic.[3] Considering a human-shaped figure and a block of wax, he asks the question: "But how can we understand the coexistence, and even the anthropological equivalence, of a *mass* of wax silently pressed out on the floor and a wax surface rhetorically erected into a form of devout mimicry, even into the liturgical gesturings of a whole effigy?"[4] His response makes use of the concept of "resemblance": "Spontaneously to affirm that only the wax *surface* modelled or moulded on the face of its donor constitutes a likeness is to exhibit a highly restricted view of the operational field of resemblance: it is precisely to ignore that resemblance forms a *field* and admits of a plurality of objects, criteria, media, and operations".[5] Didi-Huberman proposes that the indexical relationship as developed by Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics – an existential fact relating the sign and the object – invites viewers to see some resemblance in the matter.[6]

Indirectly, contemporary English artist Marc Quinn offers an artistic response to the problems and interrogations raised by Didi-Huberman on the *ex-voti* by highlighting the "resemblance" that exists between the models and the material that he uses to represent them. While Quinn has not conceived votive offerings *per se*, throughout his career, he has explored the ability of different materials to figure the human at different levels. In fact, Quinn's oeuvre is distinguished by the organicity of various materials, his efforts to figure liveliness, and his desire to capture something about humans. Moreover, his practice is bound to the development of techniques or installations incorporating a wide range of materials, whether traditional artistic ones (such as marble, bronze, and wax) or more atypical ones (such as DNA, rubber, bread, and ice) to encapsulate an aspect of the human and to activate a different understanding of the human through a specific material. In short, Quinn extracts a certain property of the material – whether chemical, cultural, transhistorical, or theoretical – that complicates the issue of human likeness not only through figuration, but also through materiality.

This paper interrogates how Quinn renegotiates figuration through several materials and observes how he allows the material to say something about the human that an imitative or hyper realistic representation would not necessarily express. The artworks that he creates invite for a re-

definition of the notion of realism in art that is no longer solely approached through appearances, but through the agency of the material, the properties it contains, and the thoughts it conveys. I argue that Quinn's work with materials finds its roots in the history of alchemy and that approaching this artist as a modern alchemist allows for a better understanding of the way he makes a specific material speak, and how he animates it. It also allows us to see what exactly he triggers at the chemical, cultural, and symbolic levels to activate the expression of the material. To approach Quinn's process, I focus on three main works: "The Complete Marbles" series (1999-2005), *Self* (1991), and *DNA Portrait of Sir John Sulston* (2001). These works explore the forces at play between the form and the material, the representation of the human in art, and the translation of the complexity of the human through the material. The first I study, "The Complete Marble" series, highlights the expression of a traditional material, marble, in the reception of modern sculptures and shows how viewers rely on a certain artistic grammatology to interpret contemporary art. The second, *Self*, relies on a highly symbolic material, blood, to embody or express a human feature and epitomize the alchemical sensibility of the artist. Finally, *DNA Portrait of Sir John Sulston* extends the possibilities of the figural through its use of genetic materials.

Figuring the Present Through the Past

Quinn works with artistic materials that are ordinarily present on the art scene and which visitors may not question because they are so common. While he fabricates many of his artworks with traditional materials such as bronze, marble, or gold, he always emphasizes the way a material influences the reception of an artwork by questioning the artistic and cultural conventions associated with that material. Indeed, certain materials historically used in artwork incorporate ideas that are to a certain extent consciously integrated in people's minds today. Quinn is particularly interested in this inheritance of form and the way it has shaped the modern-day "Western aesthetic sensorium".[7]

"The Complete Marbles" series (1999-2005), one of Quinn's most famous installations, relies on this exploration of the modern through the antique to stress a sociocultural contradiction present in modern society. Quinn often explained that this project relies on a simple observation: today, visitors to the British Museum or the Louvre see

the antique sculptures on display as superb, despite the fact that they are fragmented, worn out, or missing a body limb. Viewers acknowledge that these sculptures were subject to time and exposed to various degradations or alterations. Yet, the artist realized that the fragmentary bodies of classical marble sculptures, which are praised for their beauty, would be perceived in another way if "literally" viewed as fragmented bodies.[8] To highlight this paradox, which pinpoints a discrepancy between what people see as beautiful in society – because it is culturally celebrated – and what people reject as beautiful – because it is not socially seen as such – the artist created a series of marble sculptures representing people who are born with missing limbs or who had lost a member in an accident.

At the material level, this series activates the "cultural and normative meaning of marble".[9] It emphasizes the aesthetics and symbolism associated with one of the most noble artistic materials, and its artistic role in human figuration. The choice of working with marble for this series participates in displacing disabled bodies from the social realm to the artistic sphere – from invisibility to visibility – and include them in a long statuary tradition that invites beholders to look at them as artworks. At different levels, the marble showcases the beauty of these bodies that are generally invisible in the public sphere. The people who partook in the project are no longer only perceived as disabled, but as modern heroes. Indeed, through the material in use and the persons portrayed, "The Complete Marbles" questions the definition of the heroic and its artistic and cultural embodiments.

In this series, Quinn proposes a comparison that orients the reading of disabled bodies through the artistic interpretative framework of ancient sculptures. He activates the cultural properties of white marble to shape a depiction of the human that becomes recognize at a socio-artistic level through the mediation of this particular material. In other works, Quinn's approach explores the ways in which the agency of the chosen material elucidates something about the human, through three main possible axes: human representation, the vitality of existence, and the essence of life.

Art, Life and Matter: The Vitality and Organicity of Biological Material

To conceive the place that a material can take in expressing its subject, Quinn has often worked with biological matter, implying a multifaceted

reading that relies on the fields of sciences, art, and culture. With *Self* (1991), Quinn worked with blood that came from his own body and explored figuration through the casting technique.

Self (1991), his self-portrait, is composed of a glass vitrine that contains a Plexiglas mould of the artist's head filled with about 4.7 liters of his own blood, completely surrounded by liquid silicone to stabilize the blood and prevent it from oxidizing. The blood and silicone are kept at a temperature of -18 °C to prevent the head from melting. This innovative set-up is not only a technical achievement. Artistically, the work expresses self-portrait in a double figurative form: the artist depicts himself through the mould and the portrait contains part of the self it is ostensibly depicting. The casting technique, through which Quinn has crafted the head's structure, has been one Quinn's favourite practices. According to him, the cast underlines the ephemerality yet permanence of the body by stabilizing a transient moment: "I am the sculpture for that moment, the moment the mould is made. Then I vacate it, leaving a frozen moment of change".[10] Because of the "direct" contact of the material on the model's skin and the automatism involved in the creative process, a cast is, in Quinn's own words, "the most photographic way of doing a portrait".[11] Quinn has then chosen to fill this "photographic" cast, which reproduces the sitter in negative or in hollow, with his own blood, a substance that comes from him, and the piece comprises both the idea of containing and being contained.[12]

The piece leads to reconsiderations of the self-portrait as well as contemplation about the human figure – not only in pictorial, but in biological and metaphysical terms. As such, it designates the vibrancy of biological matter as figurative of the person from whom this material comes.[13] Quinn chose to work his blood as a material for his artwork, because "the material is life", it is essential to survival.[14] But the artist also defies the material, by keeping the blood in a "frozen moment on life support" and preventing its natural oxidation.[15] The necessity of keeping blood in a frozen state prompts viewers to reflect on the fragility of life and of living beings as well as on dependency on an ecosystem. This action can also be read as an attempt to defy time. Moreover, Quinn conceived of this work as a series of self-portraits that he will create every five years (should his health allow), which gives another dimension to the project. Paradoxically, the seriality highlights the artist's attempt to cheat death through art, but also emphasizes Quinn's ineluctable extinction since only his frozen self-portraits will survive him.

The "Self series" explores the relationship between the mortal body and the imperishable soul through what James Romaine identifies as an "aesthetics of transcendence celebrat[ing] the potential transformation of, even ascension from, an abject state of existence".[16] Romaine identifies both an alchemical and chemical approach of the material through this series. While he identifies an alchemical approach to blood in Quinn's process, he considers that Quinn might be more a chemist than an alchemist, because of his pursuit of incarnation rather than transmutation. Historically, alchemists aimed at transmuting low-rated metals into nobler ones, such as gold, in order to find the secret recipe for a longer or eternal life. Whilst Quinn may not be an alchemist in the traditional sense, I argue that his process finds its roots in the history of alchemy and that he may be seen as a modern alchemist. Indeed, Quinn works with diverse biological and organic materials that orient, through an artistic gesture, the material so that it symbolically and materially embodies or expresses a human feature.[17] His alchemical exploration not only translates something about the human through the artistic orientation of the expression of a material, but also through the way a material can express something, metaphorically, transcendentally, or literally, about the human body.

Figuring Through the Material

In the 2000s, Quinn turned to the sole power of the material and chose to represent a person without the help of cast or facial features. He has since explored the issue of embodiment by working with matter that is an integral part of the person, such as DNA, which contains the imprint of the person. Queen has been working with material that has been recently discovered to adjust the figuration to our time. As a result, the artist proposes to reflect on the way art can approach and translate, as realistically as possible, the very nature of the human through non-traditional material. By doing so, Quinn seeks to create a portrait that does not necessarily conform to past conceptions of realism, but that would be seen as "realistic" by 20th- and 21st-century viewers, as much as by viewers of the future.

DNA Portrait of Sir John Sulston (2001), the first portrait of Quinn's "DNA portrait series", shows how the material itself can become portraiture. This artwork calls into question figurative art, and by extension hyperrealistic or photographic figuration, as the conventional way to portray a person. Commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery in London, the piece displays a yellowish paper that exhibits several stains within a stainless-steel frame. Quinn describes this abstract portrait of the scientist as more realistic than his other figurative artworks. To conceive it, Quinn worked in collaboration with scientist John Sulston, Nobel Laureate for his work on the sequencing of the human genome. Made from the DNA of the scientist, based on a sample of his sperm, *DNA Portrait of Sir John Sulston* relies on a figuration that is not mimetic, but material. Yet, the material is no longer "visible". Indeed, DNA is only readable at a level inaccessible to the naked eye.[18] Similar to *Self*, this is a double portrait in the sense that the artwork not only represents Sulston's work (his research on DNA), but it is also made with the actual DNA of the scientist. Paradoxically, the work appears abstract, yet suggests that in the 21st century, the closest realistic representation of a person may lie in his biological code rather than his physical features.

Quinn invites viewers to reconsider identity and resemblance through the lens of genetics and scientific matter in art, within the space of the National Portrait Gallery. Bridging art and science, the artwork relies on a language, with which the viewer needs to be acquainted in order to understand how the project redefines figuration. Moreover, Quinn explained that beyond containing information that is proper to each individual, DNA contains inherited information from the past and thereby translates the biological and ancestral nature of humans, and each person's genealogy, which complicates the definition of portraiture.

Conclusion

Quinn approaches and translates the human body through a kind of "realism" that he redefines and reinvents with every new piece. The materials with which he works play an important role in the expression of the artwork. Germano Celant observes that in Quinn's works, the material is "the face of the contents, it is the mechanism with which [Quinn] articulate[s] [his] discourse".[19] Van der Zijpp remarks that "[t]hrough his atypical use

of materials he seems to want to make the public aware of the way in which certain things and materials in our culture acquire meaning".[20] By switching the beholder's focus beyond the form to the material, and by using matters that are not usually associated with the art world and which need a different mode of reading, the artist has developed an original approach that actively participates in the expression and interpretation of the figuration. The works I have analysed highlight both the importance of experiencing the artworks in person and of reading them conceptually.

Quinn's artworks interrogate iconological representations and abstract portraitures and complicate generally accepted distinctions between the figurative and the non-figurative. One might ask whether the viewer would be able to read this artwork as a figurative representation of the human without knowing in which conceptual realm Quinn locates his work and without Quinn's own interpretation of the material. Indeed, the way the artist reads DNA as a more realistic means of representation than a hyperrealistic sculpture entails a different "modality of reading", which requires pedagogical indications for beholders to approach the material. Analysing the use of biological material, Danilo Eccher notes: "Blood and organic material are the intimate alphabet of a primeval language which is still not articulate and declined: they are the elements of an intimacy which is jealous of its own original secret. The apparently intractable decision to compose his own image [...] using his own body fluids is a conceptual choice, even before being a linguistic hazard. It is a lunge into that mysterious culture medium from which all things take life".[21]

Eccher's analysis emphasizes the importance of the bodily and intellectual experience of the artwork. While an artwork like *Self* is figurative and relies on layers of transparency (the glass, the Plexiglas, the exposition of blood), it is not entirely transparent to the viewer. Until the audience discovers that the artwork is a self-portrait made out of the blood of the artist, the full nature of the work remains opaque. Only after this realization does the figural significance of blood as material render the piece more layered, more complex. Information about the artwork and the origin of the blood thus becomes essential for the piece to unveil its complexity, and link an artistic discourse with a scientific one. A different modality of reading is also at stake with DNA portraits. An abstract

work is not perceived as realistic or figurative at first. It needs a title, a text, or a common understanding of what the representation means. With the "DNA series", Quinn suggests that figuration does not necessarily have to appear through vision anymore, but through the choice of material and the justification for working with a particular material.

Quinn's conception of art often constrains viewers to adapt to a different visual experience as well as to multidimensional and interdisciplinary visual language. This approach to figuration is characterized by a drive to explore different and often unexpected ways to represent humans and life in art. I would argue that many of Quinn's artworks do not earn their whole meaning without a text – whether it be a museum label or an artist's statement – to inform the viewer of the material used for the creation of the piece. Only then can the image create life and become realistic, gaining in semiotic complexity, with the material, most often, at the centre.

Notes

[1] G. Didi-Huberman, "Ex-Voto: Image, Organ, Time", *L'Esprit Créateur* 47, no. 3 (Fall 2007): p. 8.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 9.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 7.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 11.

[5] *Ibid*., p. 12.

[6] "The votive practice of *contrepoids* is characterized by a kind of exploration of relations of significance and resemblance. […] [I]t resembles" by means of a criteriological choice that makes resemblance a quality internal to the material: a secret but extremely precise quality, directly linked to the compactness, to the density of the material. […] It is this quality, however, that will give the formless mass its incontestable 'individuality', its organic aura, its 'magic' efficacity" (*ivi*).

[7] M. Squire, "'Casual Classicism': In Conversation with Marc Quinn", *Int class trad* 26 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1007/s12138-017-0451-9.

[8] "The Complete Marbles", *Marc Quinn*. (Accessed February 15, 2021). http://marcquinn.com/artworks/the-complete-marbles.

[9] S.-A. van der Zijpp, *Marc Quinn: Recent Werk = Recent Sculptures* (Rotterdam-Groningen: NAi-Groninger Museum, 2006), p. 21.

[10] J. Hall, "A very good head for figures", *The Guardian* (July 8, 1995), cited in G. Celant, ed., *Marc Quinn: memory box* (Milano: Skira, 2013), p. 72.

[11] M. Quinn, Interview with S. Whitfield in *Marc Quinn* (Liverpool: Tate Liverpool, 2002).

[12] In Quinn's own words, *Self* is therefore "a representation which not only has the form of the sitter, but is actually made from the sitter's flesh". "Frozen blood sculpture on display at National Portrait Gallery", *The Telegraph* (September 9, 2009), February 15, 2021. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/bloody-self-potrait-goes-on-display-at-national-portrait-gallery-7rr7bscdkd2.

[13] D. Itzkoff, "Bloody Self-Portrait Is Headed for Museum", *The New York Times* (Sept. 10, 2009). https://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/11/arts/11arts-BLOODYSELFPO_BRF.html.

[14] S. Hattenstone, "Marc Quinn: Blood Brother", *The Guardian* (October 25, 1999), p. 4., cited in G. Celant, ed., *Marc Quinn*, cit., p. 17.

[15] Marc Quinn ('Self'), *National Portrait Gallery*. https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw138260/Marc-Quinn-Self. (Accessed February 15, 2021).

[16] J. Romaine, "Marc Quinn: The Matter of Life and Death", *Image*, Issue 69. https://imagejournal.org/article/marc-quinn-matter-life-death/. (Accessed February 15, 2021).

[17] His early works, *Faust* (1988) and the "Emotional Detox" series (1994-1996), epitomize an alchemical sensibility since the sculptures are primarily made of lead, one of the quintessential alchemical materials.

[18] The choice of sperm is also playing with the ideas of reproduction and representation.

[19] G. Celant, "About Change and Life", in Id., ed., *Marc Quinn*, cit., p. 16.

[20] S.-A. van der Zijpp, *Marc Quinn*, cit., p. 15.

[21] D. Eccher, "Marc Quinn: Like in No Man's Land", in A. Bonito Oliva, D. Eccher, *Marc Quinn* (Milano: Electa, 2006), p. 112.

The Human and Non-human Interconnectedness in Three Chinese Contemporary Artists

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Today, we live in an era known as the Anthropocene. The interconnectedness between humans and other living entities and environments is an essential part of the theme of the Anthropocene and a central concern in contemporary culture and art. Through the emphasis of the role of non-human agents, new materialism and posthumanism radically problematize the binaries of subject/object, human/nonhuman, cultural/natural, and mind/body, and challenge the superiority of the human. Although both Chinese and Western scholars widely acknowledge that Chinese traditional culture and art are deeply based on less anthropocentric modes of thinking, the contemporary Chinese artists' expression of the interconnectedness between human and non-human in the context of the Anthropocene still deserve more academic attention. This essay is dedicated to revealing how Chinese contemporary artists perceive our complicated interconnectedness and interdependences with other co-beings and entities by examining the engagement of three artists with non-human agents – silkworm, stone, and plants.

Liang Shaoji: Pursuit of the Dao through Silkworm

The Chinese artist Liang Shaoji has been working intensively with silkworms for almost 30 years since he started to raise them and introduce living silkworms into his art-making in 1989. In his studio – which is actually a sericulture laboratory – the artist carefully observed, from a morphological perspective, silkworms' egg-laying, growing, spinning, cocooning and becoming moths, and he made a detailed record of the process. In ecological art, the materials and mediums often come from natural phenomena and processes. Through his working with living silkworms, the essence of Liang's art-making is to transform the life cycle of silkworms, such as their creeping state, their

movement when spinning, the shape of the cocoons, and the scent and sound of the silkworm, into elements of art. He compares his method to ink splashing painting: starting from a rough idea, he makes adjustments according to circumstances after the silkworms begin to spin. For example, by controlling the humidity, temperature, and light in the shed, Liang can adjust the silkworm's biological clock, so that he may control the direction and speed of spinning and the shape of the cocoons. Over the course of a conversation about his work, Liang described his long-term observation of the silkworms and his mastery of the laws of their life cycle. He made clear, however, that he tries to avoid excessive intervention and makes the most of what he calls the 'factors' in natural ecology that can grow into art so as to achieve the effect that "though it is the work of a human being, it looks as if it is from heaven".[1]

His numerous art practices under the *Nature Series* have become a unique phenomenon in Chinese contemporary art. Among his many works, *Broken Landscape*, an installation he first displayed in 2008 may best reflect his attitude toward the living material and his approach towards silkworms.[2] Liang raised silkworms on a huge piece of silk, letting the larvae hatch from eggs, then grow, eat mulberry leaves, excrete, molt, pupate, develop into moths, copulate, lay eggs, and finally die. The countless yellow and black dots and stains that represent the traces of their life course remain intact on the silk roll and form natural textures and patterns, creating the effect of a Chinese landscape scroll. The artist juxtaposes the landscape scroll with camphor tree stumps. In the Chinese language, the pronunciation of the words translating 'silkworm' (蚕), 'broken' (残) and 'Zen' (禅) are very similar, so in a sense a landscape of 'silkworm' is a 'Zen' painting that depicts the contemporary 'broken' landscape. This work establishes a symbolic connection between the ephem-

erality of the silkworm's life and the fragility of the environment, trampled by contemporary humans.

Liang's work embodies the artist's deepest sympathy, appreciation, and respect for a non-human species. Employing the living predicament of silkworms as a metaphor for human society, he opens up the emotional barrier between human and non-human species. In his work, every small aspect of these humble little lives is expressed in a beautiful and poetic way. The discovery of the beauty and poetry of natural life prompts us to review the relationship with nature and other species, and only in this way can we find the right way to deal with nature.

Zhan Wang: Interaction between Human and Stone

Unlike Liang's engagement with living animals, Zhan Wang, a Beijing-based sculptor, chose to work with stone to express his philosophical think-ing about the interrelationship between human and non-human. Zhan coined a neologism, *conceptual sculpture*, to describe his idea of concept-material combination. Inspired by Western conceptual art, the term 'conceptual sculpture', however, does not approach a pure conceptuality; it is deeply rooted in Chinese traditional philosophy, where idea and material are not as strictly separated as they are in Western philosophy.[3]

Zhan was first known for using stainless steel to copy traditional rockeries. Since ancient times, Chinese literati have put rocks resembling real mountains in their gardens and study rooms to create an illusion of living in nature. As rockeries are an imitation of 'real' mountains, which is the first layer of mimesis, stainless steel rockeries are an imitation of real rockeries – thus, an imitation of an imitation, creating a meta-mimesis.[4] Using human power to reproduce something is not un-natural but it is a way to let human power follow

Fig. 1. Liang Shaoji, *Broken Landscape*, 2008. Exhibition view: *Broken Landscape*, ShanghART Gallery Beijing (15 November-31 December 2008). © The artist and ShanghART. (Courtesy of the Artist).

nature, representing the saying in Daodejing according to which "human beings follow the law of earth, earth follows the law of heaven, heaven follows the law of the Way (Dao), and the Way follows the law of nature".[5] Employing the human ability to transform nature, while remaining in harmony with it instead of against it, should be of primary importance in modern science and technology, and that was also Zhan's focus during the conception and execution of his *Artificial Rock*. This work has therefore become a platform where art and technology meet.

The *Artificial Rock (Jiashanshi)* series determined Zhan's basic approach for reflecting the relationship between man and nature through the interaction between human labor and the conceptualized material of stone. For his 2010 performance at the Today Art Museum in Beijing, *One Hour Equals One Hundred Million Years: Suyuan Stone Generator*, he invented a machine that can imitate complex geological movements and natural forces. First, a mixed raw material that can be solidified in one hour is stirred and sent to the tempered glass box. After the operator switches on the machine and initiates the program, heavy rain starts to wash the dough of artificial material, gusts of wind blow over its surface and waves repeatedly crash into it. Then, an artificial earthquake causes an unexpected fracture on its surface and strong light and heat bake the stone hard. Finally, a rock with the characteristics of traditional rockeries, described as 'skinny, sturdy, transparent and wrinkly', is made. The whole process takes about an hour and the audience can watch it through tempered glass.

In the present day, an interpretation of the Anthropocene inextricably binds humankind with geologic processes in cultural imaginations. This work pushes his idea of *conceptual sculpture* forward by integrating the reflection on man's simulation and control of nature with the concept of geological time. On the one hand, this work reflects one of the main characteristics of contemporary society, that is, the increasingly dominant significance of 'speed'.[6] In fact, modern people consider speeding up – that is, the compression of time – as the purpose of technological inventions and the source of sensory stimuli. On the other hand, the artist has created the machine, and the man-made object has replaced the artist, and even replaced nature itself to imitate the mil-

lions of years of evolution. The machine, manipulated by the artists, creates a Taihu rock in one hour whereas nature takes hundreds of millions of years to form it, and the artificial rock looks no different from a genuine Taihu rock. In an ironic way, this work reveals the disturbing fact that the compressed sense of time is consistent with human beings' acceleration of the exploitation of the earth, as we consume in such a short time what the earth has created in hundreds of millions of years.

Zheng Bo: Plant-Politics Discourse

The Hong Kong based artist Zheng Bo is a fast-rising figure in contemporary Chinese art circles. Since 2013 he has been working with plants and made numerous installations, workshops, and videos. Echoing Latour's argument that there has been a breakdown in the distinction between the social and natural sciences,[7] Zheng believes that since the border between politics and nature does not exist, not only does politics concern the relationships within human communities, but also the relationships between humans and all coexisting living and nonliving things and environments. He has established a unique discourse of 'plant-politics' to explain the complicated entanglement between humans and plants. In his works, botanical research and the socio-political, community participation, pedagogy, and artistic imagination are integrated into one complex yet unified web of interrelations. Zheng's plant-politics discourse refers to the roles of plants in human history, their existence and predicaments in current political and social life, and the imagination of a new human-plant relationship for the Anthropocene. While a thorough analysis of the content and approach of his numerous works is beyond the scope of this essay, in the following paragraphs I will just discuss how politics and plants interact in *Kindred*, a work that combines on-site installation and workshop.

In the summer of 2017, Zheng was commissioned a work by the Ming Contemporary Art Museum in Shanghai (McaM) for the exhibition *Precariat's Meeting*. During his visit to the McaM, Zheng noticed that weeds were growing on the edge of the museum lobby. He removed the curtains and transplanted the weeds into five disused industrial lifts hanging outside the museum façade and added LED grow lights. He organized a workshop and invited residents to come write

and read letters to the weeds. In this work titled *Kindred*, he let weeds enter the art museum space and proclaim their existence to the museum and the public. The gap between social classes represented by the space was challenged, and possible communication with those outside the system created.[8] In addition to producing an allusion to the social stratification of contemporary China, this work leads to broader thinking about a potential communication between humans and weeds. Since the early 20th century, there have been several studies on the sentience and even intelligence of plants.[9] Scientific studies on their feelings and possible intelligence have generated more ethical and philosophical thinking concerning our relationship with and attitudes towards plants. Morton once pointed out that if non-human beings are capable of aesthetic contemplation and enjoying art, it would be essential to find out whether this contemplation was an advanced cognitive state or a simple one. So, the question to ask is whether we share this capacity of ours with non-human beings, as "these questions get to the heart of some of our cultural and political assumptions regarding non-human beings".[10] Zheng has expanded similar questions to plants:

do weeds have consciousness and emotions? Can they respond to people's act of reading? If they can, how would they respond to us? The artist's witty irony reveals the similarity between social divisions and the gap between humans and plants and suggests a possibility to erase the gap between social groups as the gap between humans and non-humans.

Social ecologists used to emphasize that "the domination and exploitation of nature by society is but a facet of the domination and exploitation of some humans by others".[11] By projecting the exploitation, oppression, and inequality within human society on the human exploitation and oppression of plants, Zheng has established a connection between nature and society. His discursive plant-politics discourse creates a way to re-understand human history. He believes that the entire human history has been a continuous and accelerating process of manipulation and exploitation of other species. The invention of agriculture is regarded as the beginning of the Anthropocene; for Zheng, the essence of agriculture is the human exploitation of plants, with the energy that people get from plants exceeding the energy they expend, thereby creating a surplus value.

Fig. 2. Zheng Bo, *Kindred*, 2017. Exhibition view: *Precariat's Meeting*, Ming Contemporary Art Museum (McaM), Shanghai (8 November-7 January 2018). (Courtesy of the Artist).

Taking the above-mentioned *Kindred* as an example, herbaceous plants often appear in Zheng's works. Many of these herbs are alien species, humble but tenacious, growing everywhere in urban environments. Zheng called these marginalized plants 'weeds'. The definition of 'weeds' highlights the hierarchical divisions in human society. According to Zheng, on the one hand, weeds are the oppressed class in the kingdom of plants. On the other, the existence of weeds in Earth's history far outlasts that of humans, and their ability to survive is far greater than that of humans. Therefore, weeds are today's political avant-garde on Earth.[12] However, Zheng's analogy between the hierarchical relationship within human society and a human-imposed hierarchy in the natural ecosystem bears a plausible meaning from a socio-ecological perspective, as Murray Bookchin considers that ranking species within an ecosystem is "anthropomorphism at its crudest" and believes that it is problematic to describe natural ecosystems in hierarchical terms borrowed from human social hierarchies.[13] The juxtaposition and contradiction of anthropocentrism and anti-anthropocentrism in Zheng's 'plant-politics' discourse therefore produced a provocative yet interesting tension.

Conclusion

The three artists' conceptual and practical engagement with non-human entities challenges the ontologically distinct categories of human and non-human and the hierarchical dichotomy between nature and culture, materials and life. First, their work has revealed that non-humans, both living and non-living things, are no longer passive and inanimate. The study on the artists' engagement with silkworms, stone, and plants will lead to what Bennett called an aesthetic-affective openness to material vitality and will consequently develop an affective ethical engagement with others.[14] Furthermore, the artists' engagement with non-humans and the emphasis on the vitality of non-human things challenges the special status of human artists as the sole creators of art. In the age of the Anthropocene, it is necessary to further liberate art and aesthetics. This means to expand the inter-subjectivity to the cross-species inter-subjectivity, to include other non-human things into artistic creation and appreciation. As Zheng Bo points out, only if we change the belief that art-making is an exclusive human experience into an understanding that artistic creativity includes the creativity of

Fig. 3. *Kindred*, 2017.

all things, with art museums becoming a space for all things, will we be able to reach a good Anthropocene.[15] Last but not least, their work highlights the least anthropocentric modes of thinking that are rooted in Chinese traditional philosophy. As articulated by the Chinese philosopher Tu Wei-Ming, in traditional Chinese philosophy, regardless of Taoism or Confucianism, the appropriate metaphor for understanding the universe was biology rather than physics.[16] To say that the cosmos is a continuum and that all of its components are internally connected is also to say that it is an organismic unity, holistically integrated at each level of complexity. The study of the concepts of non-human things and the attitudes towards them in the discussed artworks, particularly in Zhan Wang and Liang Shaoji, reveals how ancient ecological wisdom still inspires contemporary Chinese artists to seek solutions to the problem of the Anthropocene.

Notes

[1] Liang Shaoji's conversation with the author on 7 August, 2017. See the interview transcript published by the Open Science Centre at the University of Jyväskylä. doi:10.17011/jyx/dataset/59988. In a large number of interviews and creative notes, Liang repeatedly talked about the enlightenment of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu's philosophy.

[2] *Broken Landscape* was first displayed in Liang's solo exhibition *Broken Landscape* at the ShanghART Gallery Beijing (15 November-31 December, 2008).

[3] B. Erickson, "Material Illusion: Adrift with the Conceptual Sculptor Zhan Wang", in D.A. Fan, ed., *Garden Utopia* (Beijing: National Art Museum, 2009), pp. 238-239. Garden Utopia was published on the occasion of Zhan Wang's solo exhibition *Garden Utopia* at the National Museum of China, May 11-May 21, 2008.

[4] M.A. Wang, *Double Imitation and Nature*, in *Zhan Wang: Garden Utopia*, p. 207.

[5] See Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, chapter 27, English translation by James Legge.

[6] H. Wu, *One Hour Equals One Hundred Million Years: Suyuan Stone Generator and Zhan Wang's art experiment*. http://www.zhanwangart.com/article/9. (Accessed 20 January, 2019).

[7] B. Latour, *Diplomacy in the Face of Gaia: Bruno Latour in conversation with Heather Davis*, in H. Davis, E. Turpin, eds., *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2015), p. 44.

[8] In the Chinese context, the system, or authorial system (体制 *ti-zhi*), has special meaning. The system means governmental institutions, state-owned enterprises, universities, and the permanent employees at these institutions are the so-called 'people inside the system'. On the other hand, private entrepreneurs, freelance workers, farmers, and assembly line workers are people outside the system. Being inside the system means more privilege and better welfare on the one hand, yet, on the other hand, stricter obedience to authority, especially that of the government.

[9] In 1900, the Bengali biophysicist and botanist Jagdish Chandra Bose found that plants have a nervous system that allows them to transmit electrical information among their roots, stems, leaves, and other parts, enabling them to explore their environments and adjusting their behavior with purpose. More recent studies reveal that plants have significantly developed abilities in experiencing sensations, awareness, integration of information, long-term memory, and adaptive learning, which suggest more similarities between animals and plants and lead to consider the possibility that plants might be intelligent, even more intelligent than we used to believe. See P. Calvo, et al., "Are plants sentient?", *Plant, Cell & Environment* 40, no. 11 (2017): pp. 2858-2869. Also: M. Marder, "Plant intentionality and the phenomenological framework of plant Intelligence", *Plant Signaling & Behavior* 7, no. 11 (November 2012): pp. 1365-1372.

[10] T. Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 13.

[11] D. Pepper, "Anarchism and the Green Society", in Id., *Eco-Socialism: From Deep Ecology to Social Justice* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 165.

[12] B. Zheng, "Weedparty: Kindred", Uncut Talks. https://soundcloud.com/uncuttalks/5zkoo8wygqk4. (Accessed 15 December, 2018).

[13] M. Bookchin, "The Concept of Social Ecology", in Id., *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy* (Palo Alto, CA: Cheshire Books, 1982), p. 26.

[14] J. Bennett, "Preface", in Id., *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010): p. x.

[15] B. Zheng, "Ecological Art Practices in a Good Anthropocene", *New Arts: Journal of the National Academy of Art* 39, no. 6 (June 2018): pp. 5-9.

[16] Tu Wei-ming, "The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature", in Id., *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1985), p. 39.

The Ghost in the Machine: The Disappearance of Artists, Critics, Viewers?

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Destruction of Images; Images of Destruction: Critical Stances on Contemporary Heritage

Francesco Guzzetti
Standardizing the Author: Emilio Prini and Conceptual Art

Lola Lorant
From Art Criticism to Art History: Challenging the Environmental Exclusion in the Writings of Nouveau Réalisme in the Transatlantic World

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Bringing the Spectator to the Foreground: Julio Le Parc and Lygia Clark at the Venice Biennales (1966 and 1968)

Leonardo Impett / Peter Bell
Reverse Engineering Michael Baxandall's Pictorial Plot

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Digital Curating and Ephemeral Artworks: Three Case Studies

Sara De Chiara
Edmond de Belamy *or* Bel Ami*: The Rise of the 'Non-Artist' vs. the Artist's Retreat*

Introduction to Session 8

Session 8 – *The Ghost in the Machine: The Disappearance of Artist, Critics, Viewers?*, is dedicated to the three specters that reside in each of these last three terms. This session, diverse as its papers and themes are, as varied the geographies under consideration may be, has one simple and unifying goal: *to make the tables dance*.

This line is inspired by Karl Marx, who in a footnote in *Capital* brought together two worlds – Western and non-Western – of the 1850s. They reflect in the German novelty of spiritualist seances where the upper-classes were 'table-turning' and in China's Taiping Rebellion, where there was a confrontation with state power.

> One may recall that China and the tables began to dance when the rest of the world appeared to be standing still – *pour encourager les autres* [to encourage the others].
>
> Marx, *Capital* I, p. 164.

'To encourage the others' is a line from Voltaire's *Candide* describing an episode in which a random bystander is shot to spur the others to action. Our contributors are in safe hands today, I assure you, but the spell of Marx and the dancing tables by unseen spirits, remain (fig. 1).

Artists-critics-viewers: we are haunted by three specters – three ghosts – three phantoms. This session deals with the types of (1) destruction (2) disappearance (3) 'spirits without bodies' that define our experience of art today. The title 'ghost in the machine' references a concept coined by British philosopher Gilbert Ryle in a 1949 work which challenged the mind/body dualism of René Descartes. Where does consciousness lie in the 21st century? In art, body, mind, or machine? Or, more to the point for our session, does it lie in an acknowledgment of the lacunae of histories and the ways in which they have been written?

Fig. 1. A seance with the Italian medium Eusapia Palladino at the home of the French astronomer Camille Flammarion, Rue Cassini, Paris, 12 November 1898. Gelatin silver print.

We have an excellent session where the contributors reflect on this question from varied angles across geographies. While our goal is to consider the way each paper in the session takes on the forces that 'make the tables dance', or the unseen and contingent forces of history and/or shifts in power and/or technology that both shape and shake loose narratives, some concerns come to fore. Has the changing nature of institutions around the world forever transformed the relationship between artists, critics, viewers? What role does the geographical position play in determining the way art histories and criticisms are shaped and written? Does the shifting nature of art in the contemporary from materiality to immateriality, to formalism, to Artificial/Machine Intelligence, play a part in the investment or collapse of these roles?

Our ten panelists, or investigators, think about this question from their respective areas of research and specialization. Each brings to light issues of destruction, disappearance, or of what I term a 'spirit' without body: a ghost in the machine. The results are surprising: how can societal change provoke the disappearance of certain forms of art criticism, as in China; why has art history 'erased', or made invisible, the contribution of certain artists from the Global South (such as Latin American artists in Paris) in spite of their significant role at biennials? How do artists and art critics from the Middle East participate in forms of self-erasure to actualize power? How have institutions sidelined, ignored, or made certain narratives of art history invisible, and what happens when they seek to retrieve them? How does ecological and environmental damage and destruction (and our blindness to it) shape our view of a particular art movement in France? What was the invisible 'standard' to which artists were drawn in the United States and Italy in the 1960s? Where do we place 'ephemeral', lost, or unrealized works which have no institutional home? How can we compare the destruction of art heritage and culture with the early 20th-century iconoclasm of the avant-garde? Finally, what status do we give to the disembodied 'eye' of technology? How can it help reshape, for example, 21st-century perceptions and critical views of Renaissance paintings? How can machine intelligence come to question, aid, or – dare I suggest it – *replace the critic?*

Is AI the teleological end to the artist's disappearance over time? Or even the disappearance of the critic? To paraphrase the Mumbai art collective CAMP: *Is the dream of the future a room full of computers that make art with no 'humans' present?* No humans, I say, but what about their ghosts? Can our subjectivity be disembodied so that once separated, we can come back to haunt
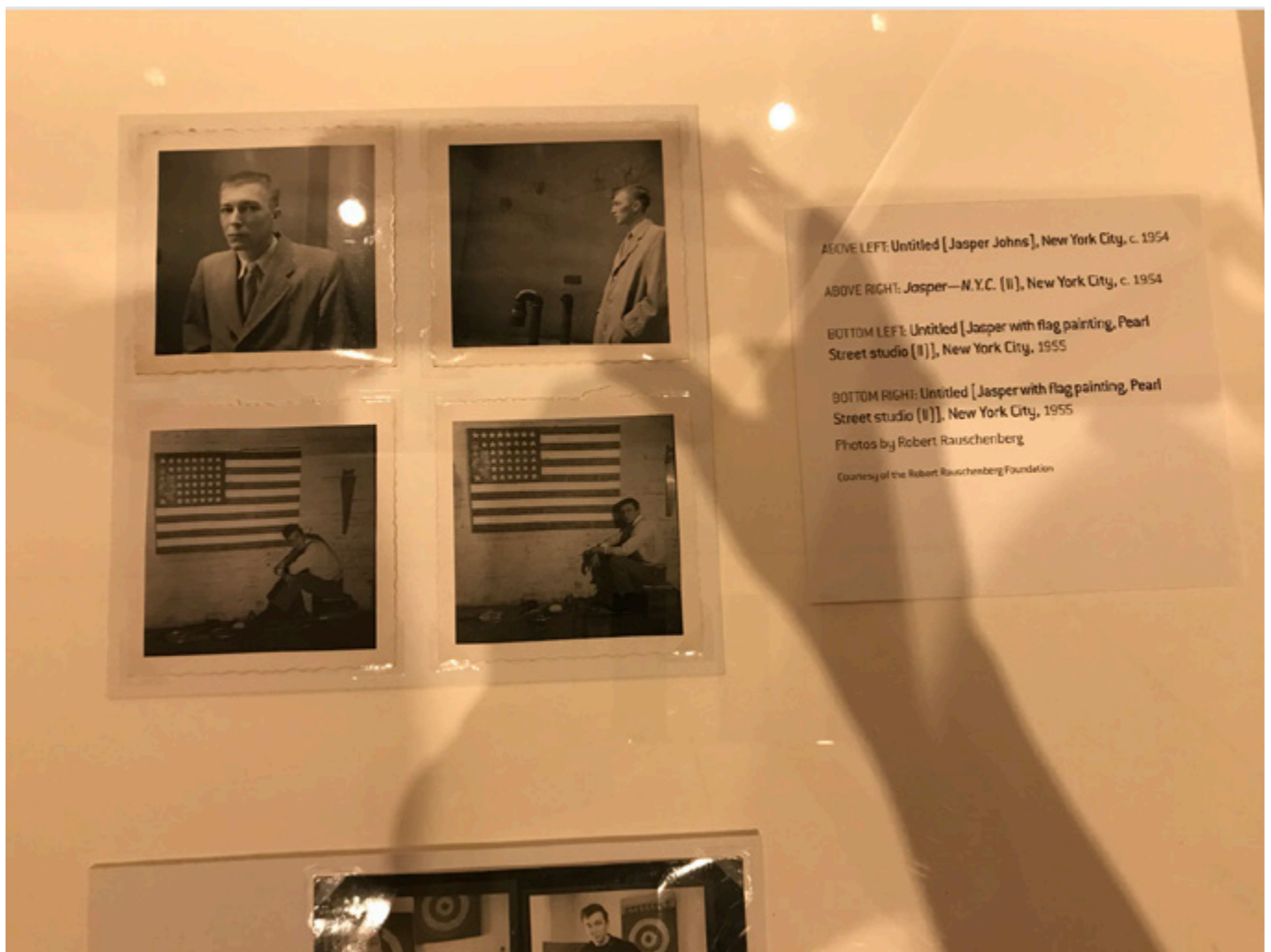
Fig. 2. Photograph of an installation display of Jasper Johns, Williams College Museum of Art. (Photo by the Author).

ourselves – as Jacques Derrida once speculated in his hauntology – by what troubles or disturbs us? Or, taken from the perspective of critics and historians, is there a ghostly presence in what we write about, what we speculate about, what questions we raise through the other, *who is always only ourselves*? This is best seen in a series of images or 'ruined' photos which blend the role of artist, critic, viewer as seen in the images of [artworks in museums with reflective shadows on the glass] (fig. 2), where a 'ghost' in the form of shadows comes to assist, change, and create reflections on the actual artwork. You will forgive me, as critic and viewer play the artist in this proposition for our session. (This is what art historian Griselda Pollock would term a 'gambit'). It is a moment to materialize our own subjectivity in relation to what we study and how we speak about it; or to make visible the contingency that is captured in the moment of change in an artwork, or its image, through our shadows.

The questions from today's session are necessarily polyvalent, layered, nuanced and address diverse areas. They point not to a single direction, but to several – north, south, east, and west – that decenter any single position of privilege. The papers challenge inherited frameworks through a ghost's singular ability to inhabit multiple dimensions, perspectives, and temporalities at once. The narratives are not always chronological, rather they are nonlinear, they run counter, trace back and are sometimes circular. So, perhaps, by virtue of the number of references to Marcel Duchamp in this session, it is appropriate to revisit his *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2.* Duchamp, as you will see, certainly does haunt our session. And we are indeed haunted by his alter-ego, who was not Rose Selavy, after all, but rather the ghost, the trace, the specter, the phantom in the form of the Brown Lady of Raynham Hall descending the staircase (fig. 3). That is not only Duchamp's ghost, but also that of each one of us, everywhere at once.

In looking at art that spans the early part of the 20th century, we see that the apparition of Marcel Duchamp and his iconoclasm continue to haunt our concerns. The 'Dada' spirit of anarchy and destruction found resonance in the papers of Kwan Kiu Leung and her example of a woman artist in China and in José Antonio González Zarandona's consideration of the anti-art and avant-garde tendencies towards 'destruction' in light of images of

Fig. 3. 'Brown Lady of Raynham Hall'. Photograph taken by Captain Hubert C. Provand. First published in *Country Life* in 1936.

destroyed heritage. Francesco Guzzetti refers to Duchamp in connection to the Italian artist Emilio Prini. Kwan Kiu Leung further shows us the way Chinese women artists can challenge the position and hegemony of Duchamp by desexualizing and decentering his legacy.

Geographical positions also shape narratives of art history: such is the case of China with its transformation of art criticism over time, as pointed out by Ling Min. Nadia Radwan describes the way changing art criticism in Egypt and the impact of globalization create forms of loss in French and Arabic historical discourses in a region where local identities disappear with the institutionalization of practices. Maria de Fátima Morethy Couto reveals the way artists from the Global South – even recognizable names such as Lygia Clark and Julio Le Parc – have had their contributions sidelined to different degrees in spite of their participation in European biennials.

Lola Lorant writes about the impact of environmental destruction and the ecological concerns inherent in some of the works of Nouveau Réalisme, which have been too long ignored in art history.

Meanwhile, Pamela Bianchi focuses on ephemeral works, issues of loss, and unrealized works that need a home, lest they disappear forever. Antonio Zarandona too presents us with case studies that challenge the way we look at heritage destruction in view of our own valorization of avant-garde art practices.

Finally, Peter Bell and Leonardo Impett use 21st-century technology to make visible, and simultaneously reinforce and shift, aspects of art criticism that have long guided our understanding of Renaissance art and the Annunciation scene. Sara De Chiara, on the other hand, tells us a story about the disappearance of artists which has been taking place more and more frequently, even be-fore an art collective produced a work of AI art that was seen at an auction at Sotheby's in 2018 – which signals a teleological end, or a beginning of new narratives.

So, it is within this panoply of rich contributions that I open this session to explore the critical stakes for artists, critics, and viewers and bring to light where we stand, or stood, or will stand in our contemporary condition. Perhaps our papers point to the retreat from such hegemonic or monolithic positions? We welcome questions, observations, dissent.

Let's rattle the tables!

Rakhee Balaram

Visibility and Criticism in the Public Sphere: Marcel Duchamp & He Chengyao

Kwan Kiu Leung

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In the 1910s, the Dadaists shouted their anti-traditional, anti-war, and anti-bourgeois messages advocating a change in perception and introducing new modes of art such as the readymade – introduced by the Dadaists that included Marcel Duchamp. In this paper, I argue that these developments parallel the suffragettes' mission to obtain emancipation and women's right to vote in the 1910s.[1] For example, one of the artists, Hannah Höch, used a direct reference to the growing suffrage movement in her photomontage from *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada Through the Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany* (1919-1920), where she uses a map of the European countries where women had the right to vote – in Germany, and also in the UK, women obtained the right to vote in 1918.

Akin to the Dadaists, in the 1960s and 1970s feminist artists in different countries also questioned authority and tradition, which laid the groundwork for their own subjectivity. The spirit of the suffragettes continued to help influence a new generation who fought for the rights of women, better working conditions, better pay, child rights, and protection against violence. These struggles are similar to those of Dadaist artists, whether male or female, who used their art as the basis to assert their freedom of expression and demonstrated how the lack of aesthetic subjectivity and a political agenda were a means to find a new way to visibly protest with their bodies during this historical passage. The impact of the growing influence of women on the arts was not recognised at this time. Some European and American women had just begun: (1) to vote, and (2) to obtain a glimpse of consciousness of female subjectivity through the suffrages. However, during this time, women artists still faced gender discrimination and their work was often undervalued.

Duchamp's rejected 1917 *Fountain* evokes confusion to this day. At the time, Duchamp and his collaborators attempted to provoke the art estab-

lishment – the Society of Independent Artists in New York – with readymades. Many artists joined the Dadaists' effort to raise awareness on the fact that their work was being overshadowed by gender bias, and women's artworks were not seen as a priority. Moreover, women artists were not recognised as artists, much less good or great artists, as Linda Nochlin's 1971 article "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" argued.[2] Since 1917, criticism in art practice has changed due to women's emancipation with the suffragette movement. This encouraged female artists' subjectivity to achieve freedom to enter the public sphere through their right to vote, and they used their art practice to raise awareness on women's rights and to see a glimpse of their own subjectivity in art practice for a global endeavour. The art establishment took longer to acknowledge the contribution of female artists.

Nevertheless, recent attempts to excavate the past or present in contemporary art revealed new discoveries that the work *Fountain* of 1917 may have been created by a female artist rather than Duchamp alone, or that it was more a col-

Fig. 1. He Chengyao, *Marcel Duchamp as My Opponent*, 2001. Western Chess, Photograph, Studio, Beijing. Courtesy of the Artist. (Photo by Han Lei).

laboration. This suggests that *Fountain* was possibly sourced and implemented by the female artist Baroness Elsa in 1917. Irene Gammel's book *Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity* (2002) discussed the impact of Baroness Elsa's ideas on Duchamp, as she was one of the main members of the Dadaist group at the time, and Gammel further discusses this to imply that *Fountain* in 1917 was presented by a female artist using the pseudonym 'R. Mutt', rather than by Marcel Duchamp alone.[3] A letter by Duchamp was found in 1983 in which he wrote to his cherished sister Suzanne on April 11, 1917: "One of my female friends under a masculine pseudonym, Richard Mutt, sent in a porcelain urinal as a sculpture".[4]

Although this could be another 'game' played by Duchamp to disguise his own handy work, it nonetheless revealed some discrepancy in who presented *Fountain* in 1917. Duchamp's relationship with women and the art world around him was a sort of game, similar to the game of chess that he normally played to challenge his mind. Julian Wasser's iconic photograph of Duchamp and Eve, *Playing Chess With a Nude (Eve Babitz)*, 1963, shows Duchamp fully dressed playing chess with the naked Eve Babitz. Duchamp did not compose this photograph – it was the photographer Wasser who saw a photo opportunity and asked Eve and Duchamp to play chess for a photo shoot, but Duchamp's presence did have an impact on the work.[5] This photograph continued to influence many artists and many fields worldwide.

The Dadaists' attitude and Duchamp's 'readymades' also had an impact on many artists in China, such as He Chengyao (b. 1964). Chengyao's photograph of *Marcel Duchamp As My Opponent*, 2001, pays homage to Duchamp through the work of Wasser, and furthermore she claims Duchamp as her opponent.[6] Nude self-portraits are highly unusual for Chinese artists, even more so for Chinese women artists in China, due to a cultural difference between the East and the West. Chengyao's performance photograph shows her half naked, with her head looking down at the chessboard, her arms resting on the table, suggesting confidence and bodily freedom, and shows that she is ready for the mental challenge of a chess match – a game usually reserved for male players, but for Chengyao chess games are normal part of growing up in China. She is consciously evoking the mise-en-scène of *Playing Chess With a Nude (Eve Babitz)* in 1963, for her art practice. Chengyao places herself in a long and established lineage of art practices that blurs past and present, East and West, male and female, modern and contemporary, insider and outsider, rules and rule-breakers. In attempting to come to terms with the relationship between her life and art practice to make sense of things, Chengyao said, "despite an economical growth, China is still the same, the political regime has remained unchanged since 1989".[7] This suggests a change is needed. Multimedia art practice around the world provided Chengyao with the freedom to explore her subjectivity, endurance, and determination. She plays chess with the 'master' Duchamp – albeit by imagining his spectre opposite her – as she re-writes the rules of a chess game with the help of the spectre of Duchamp and creates her own subjectivity in art history.[8]

While Chengyao saw Duchamp as her opponent in the game of chess, simultaneously, in this work, there was a sense of evoking an 'old master', or in the spirit of Chinese tradition, where artists create copies from old masters' paintings, in order to learn from them. However, as for Duchamp since 1917, he chose objects with no masters, he rejected 'old masters' to create his own ideas, in favour of industrial objects to which he granted an 'art-life', thereby considering himself a master. Furthermore, in choosing to play in the spirit of Duchamp, Chengyao embraces the influence of Western artists and reveals the Chinese women artists' art practice that draws attention to the imbalance of power, not only in terms of gender, but also of female subjectivity.

Fig. 2. He Chengyao, *Homage to Duchamp* 2001. Performance, Photograph, Beijing. Courtesy of the Artist. (Photo by Han Lei).

Fig. 3. He Chengyao, *Opening the Great Wall* 2001. Performance, Photograph, Great Wall, China. Courtesy of the Artist. (Photo by Tian Yibin).

Chengyao's *Homage to Duchamp* is a tribute to the cubist-inspired painting *Nude Descending a Staircase, no 2*, 1912, where she 'performs' the action depicted on Duchamp's canvas. Chengyao portrays her own female body descending the stairs in motion, thereby actualising her subjectivity to be visible in the public sphere. When she comes down the staircase, is to suggest she is leaving the bedroom. The image on the right shows a nearly invisible nude female figure whose motion is blurred, attempting to show her visibility, while the other image on the left shows motion visibly.

By using motion, Chengyao emphasises her performativity by actualising and affirming her subjectivity with her body, which becomes part of Duchamp's work. It is through these artworks that Chengyao highlights the ambiguity presented by Duchamp's 1912 canvas: woman, muse, sexuality, and the speed of industrial production. Chengyao's photographs capture the duality of what is

happening to the female body around the world – lacking in female subjectivity on the one hand and asserting her subjectivity on the other. She is voicing a concern for women who may not be ready to apply agency of their own. Furthermore, she is making sense of her world by creating her art practice.

In another works, *Opening the Great Wall* in 2001, Chengyao walks on the Great Wall in China, and she said:

> If my mother did not run about, day and night, stark naked with disheveled hair, shouting through the streets and alleys of my hometown. If she did not use this method to expose the confining morals of patriarchy, to protest its discipline and violence, and to look with contempt on its authority using her extreme insanity to realize her freedom, then I wouldn't have used the identity of artists for my behaviour on the Great Wall. I understand that I similarly violated the prohibition of male-dominated society against women freely controlling their own bodies, especially in the name of art. I believe that I cannot allow myself to sink into the dust my predecessors left behind and become one more sacrificial offering to patriarchal society. I acted instinctively to make a new start.[9]

Her mother's influence is felt in another of her performance pieces, *99 needles* in 2002, where she examines her mother's suffering from mental health issues. In the performance, pins are placed on her body to evoke a Chinese tradition of practising acupuncture to treat the ill, an ancient heal-

Fig. 4. He Chengyao Teaching Young Monks in a Monastery in Tibet, 2013. (Courtesy of the Artist).

ing method prescribed to her mother. Chengyao is also questioning the societal restrictions placed on women and the violence inflicted on their bodies over centuries. The artist stated: "My body is a weapon to challenge restrictions that are hundreds of years old".[10]

In July 2017, Chengyao went to Nepal, India, and took the decision to become a Buddhist nun. As a practicing Buddhist, she spent a year in Tibet and taught young monks how to read and write Chinese. In my discussion with Chengyao, she mentioned how Buddhism influenced her thinking, so it was not a surprise when she pursued Buddhism in a monastery in Nepal for peace and solace.[11] It is unknown when she will return to communicate her experience in art practice again.

Indeed "The Ghost in the Machine" is complex,[12] but we merge, we connect, we explore, we critique, and, as Adrian Moore says, metaphysics is "Making Sense of Things",[13] and perhaps in all our criticisms there is a glimpse of ontology, to make sense of things for our practice, for ourselves, because the spectre hangs around knocking on doors – but do we listen?

Notes

[1] K.K. Leung, *Uncompromising Female Aesthetic Subjectivity: Ontological and Ethical Self in Contemporary Art* (Berlin: De Gruyter, to be published in 2021). Chapter 2.

[2] Extract from L. Nochlin, *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 147-158.

[3] I. Gammel, *Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002), pp. 12, 14, 63, 223-228. Also see SRB's review of Irene Gammel's book, "How Duchamp stole the Urinal", *Scottish Review of Books* (November 4, 2014). (No Author mentioned by SRB).

[4] *Ivi*, Gammel and SRB. On 11th April 1917, Duchamp wrote to his cherished sister Suzanne, "One of my female friends under a masculine pseudonym, Richard Mutt, sent in a porcelain urinal as a sculpture". Gammel claims the female friend is Baroness Elsa.

[5] C. Tomkins, *Marcel Duchamp: The Afternoon Interviews* (New York: Badland Unlimited, 2013), pp. 23-93.

[6] He Chengyao, Skype interview with Kwan Kiu Leung, Beijing 2013 and March 2016 at Today Art Museum Artificial Garden Beijing Group Exhibition, curated by Liao Wen.

[7] Conversation between He Chengyao and Kwan Kiu Leung, at Today Art Museum, March 2016, curated by Liao Wen. For the exhibition's review see – contemporary art to create an "Artificial Garden". Source: Global Times Published: 2016-3-27 19:13:01.

[8] F.M. Naumann, ed., *The Recurrent, Haunting Ghost: Essays on the Art, Life, and Legacy of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Readymade, 2012).

[9] M. Gao, "The Great Wall in Chinese Contemporary Art", *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 12, no. 3 (2004): pp. 773-786.

[10] He Chengyao, Interview with Kwan Kiu Leung, March 2016, at Today Art Museum, Beijing, Group exhibition Artificial Garden, curated by Liao Wen.

[11] K.K. Leung, *Uncompromising Female Aesthetic Subjectivity* see Chapter 4. Chengyao also discussed this in our interview.

[12] G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949). He used the phrase "the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine" to argue against dualism, p. 5.

[13] A.W. Moore, *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics: Making Sense of Things* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 25-39, pp. 107-142.

Invisible Stories: The Other Criteria of Art Criticism in the Middle East

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This paper aims to bring to the fore the issues of translatability, transposition, and anachronism in the field of art criticism in the Middle East by focusing on the case of the permanent collection of Modern and Contemporary Arab Art of the Sharjah Art Museum in the United Arab Emirates.[1] By demonstrating how new narratives come into play in art spaces and institutions that are conceived and run locally in the Arab world, it questions the effects of the shifting place of enunciation of art criticism in the region. More importantly perhaps, it discusses the way the so-called global institutions conceal other stories – stories that are marked by antagonisms and differences. It suggests looking closely at these stories by taking into account art and exhibition practices that offer a third path by disrupting both Western and Middle Eastern narratives.

From the Intimate Critic to the Institution

From the early 20th century until the 1980s, several factors marked a change in the field of art criticism in the Middle East. First, it is essential to underline that in this region, art criticism was dominated by scholars and critics, who positioned themselves as privileged witnesses of the art scene, being artists themselves, art professors, or relatives of artists. Therefore, in that specific context, the form of *testimony* was the form of *art criticism* that became *art history*.

In the case of Egypt, for instance, this literature was published both in French and Arabic. While the publications in French insisted on the cosmopolitanism of the art scene and the presence of European artists and professors, the writings in Arabic, in particular the texts published during the Nasser Era (1950s-1970), provide the reader with a nationalist narrative that essentializes the Egyptianness of artists and tends to minimize foreign influence. However, even though these local historiographies call for a double reading, they constitute a fundamental body of knowledge that deserves to be taken into account in scholarship in the field of art practices in the region. The witnesses have also been possibly overlooked because of the style of the testimony, which may be perceived as non-scientific from a Western academic perspective.

A first shift breaking away from the intimate critic is marked by the disappearance of the witness in favor of the emergence of art criticism produced by the global art market. At the beginning of the 2000s, particularly after the tragic events of 9/11, the place of enunciation of art criticism was progressively transferred from the testimony to the institution. This literature was superseded by other narratives mainly published in English by Western museums and art galleries. Through exhibitions and art sales, the latter signaled the existence of contemporary art and art-makers from the Middle East, and consequently erased multiple other stories of modernism in the region. Indeed, the apparent newness associated with contemporary Middle Eastern art, emphasized over the past twenty years, notably through exhibitions organized in Europe and in the United States,[2] contributed to the strengthening of the already well-established idea of a void between the glorious past of Islamic art and contemporaneity. One may recall the infamous commentary of the British journalist Brian Appleyard regarding the exhibition *Unveiled: New Art from the Middle East* held at the Saatchi Gallery in 2009: "It would be hard to classify anything in the Saatchi as great art. But that is not really the point. What matters is the fact that it is art, and that it detonates our simple conceptions of the Middle East".[3] This comment reflects the general tendency to canonize contemporary art from the Middle East in Western institutions and to consider the artist as a social and political critic.

While the events of the so-called Arab Spring and, more recently, the war in Syria have once

Fig. 1. A sampling of the body of knowledge of art criticism in Egypt (Author's Personal Archives).

again shed light on this phenomenon, artists from the region – although mainly belonging to the diasporas – positioned themselves as commentators. Hence, one may question the role of the Middle Eastern artist. Is it to bear witness to his/her time? A critic producing a commentary on global issues or Middle Eastern politics?

I argue that the disappearance of the intimate critic led to the formulation, by Western institutions and the art market, of criteria for Arab contemporary art that should be mainly oriented towards identity politics and reflect otherness, subsequently excluding from the canon artworks that did not meet these criteria and that rather pointed towards sameness.

A second shift is to be found in the documentary turn that the field has witnessed since more than a decade now, notably with initiatives such as the publication of the Primary Documents series[4] by the MoMA, or the valuation of archives by exhibitions, such as, for instance, the exhibition on the Egyptian surrealist group Art et Liberté held

at the Centre Georges Pompidou in 2017.[5] This Derridean 'archive fever' brings to the fore the question of the discursive power but also of the commodification of the archive, of what is included or excluded from it – that is to say, of what is made visible for the viewer or the critic and what is relevant to the (re-)writing of stories of art in the Middle East.

Finally, one should mention the leading role played by art institutions in the Gulf region – global platforms such as Art Dubai, the Sharjah Biennial, Christie's Dubai, as well as the establishment of iconic museums designed by contemporary 'starchitects', such as the Louvre and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi – in defining the value and criteria of artworks but also in providing a narrative about art from the Middle East.

Behind the Lure: the Case of the Sharjah Art Museum

The abovementioned ambitious cultural projects implemented by Gulf states also conceal invisible

stories. Already in 1990, Rosalind Krauss, in her seminal essay entitled *The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum* foresaw the global turn of the museum, announcing its shift towards a corporate identity linked to the world of leisure in which the encounter with the work of art would be superseded by the subjective "simulacral experience" of the museum space.[6] This idea was pursued in a postcolonial perspective by Saloni Mathur, who coined the term "McGuggenheim effect" to describe the export of the museum brand as a homogenized commodity.[7] While the hegemonic power of museum branding as a cultural legitimization in the Gulf and the problematic notion of universality deserve to be further debated, here I would like to focus on less obvious and more discreet yet significant initiatives that coexist alongside these branded institutions.

They concern different actors and audiences and are formed in the pursuit of distinctive curatorial goals that are not necessarily related to the global art market or the promotion of the ideal of a universal cultural heritage. Rather, these institutions seek to position the United Arab Emirates – a region which has historically constituted a platform for transnational exchange and the connectedness of the global and the local – on the map of Middle Eastern art history.

They therefore form hybrid spaces in which other stories are told, namely, counter-narratives that involve a production that has not only been excluded from Western modernism, but also from the recent canonization of Middle Eastern art by international biennales and art fairs. They seem to escape the paradigms of a global art history which, despite its claim of mapping new art regions and their geographic and cultural differences, seems to remain indebted to the system of inclusion and exclusion by major Western contemporary art platforms, such as the documenta in Kassel or the Venice Biennale.

This is the case, for instance, of the Sharjah Art Museum and in particular of its permanent exhibition entitled Collection of Modern and Contemporary Arab Art inaugurated in 2015. The Sharjah Art Museum was established by the Ruler of Sharjah, Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammad Al-Qasimi in 1997 and can therefore be defined as relatively old in the context of the UAE's history of museal institutions. Initially, the museum centered around the Sheikh's personal collection of 19th century European orientalist paintings.[8]

The Collection of Modern and Contemporary Arab Art is mainly comprised of gifts received by the Ruler of Sharjah and acquisitions made during various events, such as the Emirates Society of Fine Arts annual exhibition. In this sense, it differs from the Sheikh's collection of orientalist paintings and does not follow the logic and coherence of a collector's collection. Rather, it is the peculiar result of an accumulation of eclectic works, including both notable and unknown artists.

The works consist primarily of paintings, featuring portraits and landscapes, in addition to several abstract works. The collection is certainly not significant for its international reception when compared with other neighboring collections, such as, for instance, the Barjeel Art Foundation's collection, established by the critic, patron, and collector Sultan Sooud Al-Qassemi. This impressive collection of modern and contemporary art from the Arab World was exhibited at the very high-end Whitechapel Gallery in London at the same time as the new wing in Sharjah was inaugurated. It includes figures that have already earned their place in the white cube, either as pioneers of Arab modernism, or as contemporary artists. The exhibition catalogue of the Barjeel Art Foundation's collection was signed by prominent international curators and scholars, and the goal of the collection itself, as explained by Sooud Al-Qassemi, was to provide a coherent narrative of modern and contemporary art in the Arab World:

> Certainly, art is borderless and there are intertwining narratives and ethnic groups at play. However, in addition to the obvious matter of a shared language, there are also common causes, at the forefront of which is the Palestinian cause that permeates across all cultural and artistic expressions in the Arab world.[9]

Clearly, in comparison, the Sharjah Art Museum's collection belongs to another story of art, outside, or perhaps even beyond the canon. But the question remains: why then is its collection so meaningful both on a local and global level?

One could argue that the significance of the collection resides in the variety of represented countries, as it includes works from Sudan, Yemen, and Bahrain, which are relatively rare on the art scene. However, although this diversity would seem a relevant aspect of the exhibition, the display neglects to reference the artists' origins. The gallery labels

include only the artists' names, and the titles and dates of the artworks, which may indicate that, in the eyes of the curators, the common denominator of Arabness surpassed regionalisms.

Sameness and Arab Art Histories

Amongst the central pieces of this Pan-Arab collection are two portraits by the Syrian artist Louay Kayali (1934-1978) and the Iraqi Faiq Hassan (1914-1992), painted in 1971 and 1989, respectively. This generation of artists is characterized by mobility between the Middle East and Europe. Most were trained in Europe and, upon returning to their homelands, they took part in the institutionalization of art education and the establishment of museums. For instance, Faiq Hassan created and directed the Department of Painting at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad after studying at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and Louay Kayali studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. Therefore, the genres and styles in which these paintings were executed in the late 20th century do not reflect otherness and are perceived as anachronistic

Fig. 2. Faiq Hassan, *Student model*, 1989. Oil on canvas. Sharjah, Sharjah Art Museum. (Courtesy of the Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, UAE).

on the one hand, and as westernized on the other. Indeed, Kayali's 1989 'impressionistic' portrait may be labelled as 'outdated' if considered in the light of Western criteria.

However, in the case of Arab art histories, it seems more relevant to ask *how* and *why* these works were created, rather than *when*. It was indeed a clear choice by many Arab artists to abstain from adhering to European avant-gardes. A commitment to realism and a conservative aesthetic actually resulted in a translation of European academic training, creating new meanings. Thus, for the viewer and critic, the challenge is to discern the newness of something which, aesthetically, seems completely familiar and even maybe outdated. The curatorial approach to such works can therefore play a major role by emphasizing stories of mobility, circulation, and cultural transfer – in other words, by translating "the appropriation of and simultaneously the emancipation from a cultural object, a transposition that would impart as much legitimacy as the 'original'".[10]

Another question tackled by this collection is the notion of translation and translatability of certain terms and genres. This is the case, for instance, with abstraction (*fann al-tajrid*), which encompasses multiple genealogies of Western and Islamic art, but conveys specific politics and aesthetics when practiced in the context of the Middle East.[11] Etel Adnan, for instance, became internationally famous after exhibiting at the documenta 13 in 2012 and, since then, has been absorbed by the global art market. While her work maintains such a subtle and particular relationship with abstraction, Arabic poetry, and calligraphy, it tends to be over-simplified by institutional narratives.

This equally pertains to *hurufiyya*, a genre that appeared towards the end of the 1950s, when Arab artists began to engage with the art of calligraphy. Deriving from the word *harf* ('the written sign') and playing on the dialogue between the aesthetics, form, and meaning of the Arab letter, it was developed at a time when cultural identities were crystalizing around the question of Arabness. *Hurufiyya*, when simply translated as 'lettrism' or 'calligraphy', obscures multilayered aspects linked to the dimension of form, politics, and the hidden meanings of the Arabic written sign.[12] Over-simplified translation is a recurring issue in the writing of art histories in the Arab World, and arguably, in non-Western contexts in general. In conclu-

sion, the permanent collection of the Sharjah Art Museum brings to the fore issues of anachronism, translatability, and the complexity of defining other criteria for Middle Eastern art history. It demonstrates how new narratives, which are concealed by apparent formal similitudes, come into play in institutions that are conceived and run locally.

Moreover, it draws attention to the sameness trap, in regard to Arab modernism. For the viewer of this permanent exhibition, novelty may not be readily apparent. Indeed, his/her experience of the Collection of Modern and Contemporary Arab Art will differ from the spectator's subjective experience of newness once described by Leo Steinberg as the 'plight' of the audience when discovering new forms of art and being "confronted with an unfamiliar style".[13] Likely owing to familiar styles and easily identifiable genres, the counter-narratives conveyed by this collection of works are rendered nearly imperceptible, or murmuring, and demonstrate how engagement with art history in the Middle East calls for a decentering of the discipline – one which implies a very close look at sameness rather than otherness.

Notes

[1] A longer version of this paper has been published in K. Imesh-Oechslin, *Authenticity and Cultural Translation in the Global City and Community: The Case of the Greater Middle East* (Oberhausen: Athena, forthcoming 2021).

[2] Emblematic of the post-9/11 exhibitions underlining the newness of Middle Eastern contemporary art was the Saatchi Gallery's *Unveiled: New Art from the Middle East*, exh. cat. (London: Saatchi Gallery, 2009).

[3] B. Appleyard, "Islam Stripped Bare", *Sunday Times* (January 25, 2009).

[4] A. Lenssen, S. Rogers, N. Shabout, eds., *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2018).

[5] S. Bardaouil, T. Fellrath, *Art et Liberté: Rupture, War and Surrealism in Egypt (1938-1948)* (Paris: Skira, 2017).

[6] R. Krauss, "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum", *October* 54 (1990): p. 15.

[7] S. Mathur, "Museums and Globalization", *Anthropological Quarterly* 78, no. 3 (2005): pp. 698-700.

[8] On Orientalist collections in the Middle East, see: M. Volait, "Middle Eastern Collections of Orientalist Painting at the Turn of the 21st Century: Paradoxical Reversal or Persistent Misunderstanding?", in F. Pouillon, ed., *After Orientalism* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 251-271.

[9] S. Sooud Al-Qassemi, "The Arab World: A Sum of Its Parts", in *Imperfect Chronology: Arab Art from the Modern to the Contemporary – Works from the Barjeel Art Foundation*, exh. cat. (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2015), p. 15.

[10] M. Espagne, "La notion de transfert culturel", *Revue Sciences/Lettres* 1 (2013). http://rsl.revues.org/219.

[11] This issue has been addressed elsewhere, see: N. Radwan, S. Naef, eds., *Art, Abstraction and Activism in the Middle East*, Special issue of *Manazir Journal* 1 (2019). https://bop.unibe.ch/manazir/issue/view/1009.

See also the Catalogue presenting the Barjeel Art Foundation's collection of Abstract Art: L. Gumpert, S. Takesh, eds., *Taking Shape: Abstraction from the Arab World 1950s-1980s*, exh. cat. (New York and München: Grey Art Gallery in association with Hirmer Publishers, 2020).

[12] See Nada Shabout's discussion about the term *Hurufiyya* in N. Shabout, *Modern Arab Art: Formation of Arab Aesthetics* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007), pp. 75-96. See also: C. Dagher, *Arabic Hurufiyya, Art and Identity*, tr. S. Mahmoud (Milano: Skira, 2016) and I. Dadi, "Rethinking Calligraphic Modernism", in K. Mercer, ed., *Discrepant Abstraction* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press-Institute of International Visual Arts, 2006), pp. 94-114.

[13] L. Steinberg, *Other Criteria. Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 5.

What is Lost in the Transformation of Art Criticism in China?*

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Introduction

Art changes and evolves. Historically, art criticism is no different, as it too is subject to a process of change and evolution. What are the social roles of artists, critics, and viewers in this process? What are the objects that are critiqued? What methods and criteria does art criticism employ? What changes have there been? What is the cause of these changes? What is the general tendency? To get to the bottom of these questions, it will help us not only to try to understand the historic role of art criticism, but also to recognize its current reality. A study of its evolution will help us discover some kind of pattern and enable us to develop new theoretical approaches, thereby enriching our idea of what art criticism is, and deepening our understanding of current practices.

China is a country with a written history of around 5,000 years. From the past to the present of Chinese art criticism, not only does the social role of critics show historical features and obvious characteristics of the time, but it also tells us a great deal over time about the objects that are studied and the methods and aesthetic criteria that are employed. More to the point, if, in the long term, history is divided into classical agricultural and modern industrial society, Chinese art criticism, too, can be divided into two parts: classical and modern. Changes in the classical period (5th century BC-1911 AD) need to be measured by timescales of more than one hundred years; the modern and contemporary periods (1912-present) are evaluated on a timescale of ten years or less. If we make a comparative analysis of this, we will find that the evolutionary trajectory of modern and contemporary art criticism almost replicates that of the classical period in China and presents us with a miniature version of classical art criticism. How can this be so? Why has this happened? What are the problems that modern and contemporary art criticism face? What gets lost? This se-

ries of questions is both surprising and adds special interest to the further exploration of the issue.

The Evolution of Modern and Contemporary Art Criticism

As it may be seen from its evolution over more than three thousand years, Chinese classical art criticism possesses three characteristics: first, critics had diverse social roles but, with the awakening of the public's aesthetic consciousness, the main function of artistic expression shifted from education to aesthetics. Critics transitioned from playing the role of politicians to that of literary masters, who were proficient in art. Secondly, the object of art criticism became diversified. However, with the continuous enrichment of creative themes, the focus of art criticism gradually shifted from subject-matter and content to form and style. Thirdly, criticism itself changed over time. Excessive emphasis on form and style led to a formulaic production and a rigid approach to artistic appreciation; given the interdependence between critic and artist, this inevitably led to a decline in artistic creativity and, eventually, to a move towards change. It was this that marked the evolution of classical art criticism.

Since then, in contrast to the long evolution of classical art, contemporary criticism has taken only one hundred years to evolve. What has been its trajectory then? In line with historical developments, I would suggest dividing the last century into three periods, as follows: 1912-1949, 1949-1979, and 1979 to the present. After performing a comparative analysis of this period, I find that there are many places where this evolution runs parallel to that of the classical tradition. This is very surprising. Here, let us first look at the characteristics and key aspects of art criticism in these three periods.

In the first period (1912-1949), there were two major social changes. One of them was the dis-

integration of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, which marked the end of thousands of years of Chinese classical society. The other was the withdrawal of the old regime from mainland China in 1949, and its replacement by the new government. What changes occurred in art criticism during this period? Here again, I have selected four representative figures: Kang Youwei (1858-1927), Chen Duxiu (1879-1942), Li Puyuan (1901-1956), and Mao Zedong (1893-1976), with the aim of finding out what they can tell us. Kang Youwei was a scholar and political commentator. In his "Preface to Wanmu Caotang's Collection of Paintings", he said that "the execution of modern Chinese paintings is extremely disastrous. Unless the old style of painting changes, Chinese traditional painting will soon die out".[1] Chen Duxiu was a politician; in *The Art Revolution - Answering Lu Zheng*, he said, "Improving Chinese painting, we can't fail to adopt the realism of Western painting".[2] In his publication *Collecting Art*, Li Puyuan, who was a literary critic, said: "Artists and Art Life are a reflection of the social consciousness of their time!".[3] Mao Zedong was the leader of the new China; he published the *The Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art* in 1942, stating that: "Literature and art are a good part of the entire revolutionary machine. Our literature and art are for the people, first and foremost for the workers, peasants and soldiers".[4] Obviously, art criticism in this period had to respond to historical changes, and also to indicate the future direction to be taken. It became highly historical and political.

In the second period (1949-1979), the new political power entered a phase of building of a national economic, social, political, and cultural framework. During this period, art criticism focused not on the views of a few individuals, but on the mission and purpose of the new government agencies in the field of art, such as artists' associations, art colleges, and painting institutes. The charter of the Chinese Artists' Association, published in 1953, stated that "art should serve the people, taking socialist realism's creative methods and critical methods, and striving to develop the artwork that the people need".[5] Art colleges were to become places for cultivating talent. In 1955, the National Association of Drawing Teachers declared that: "drawing is the foundation of realistic art, faithfully depicting the concrete objects seen in the actual environment, and this is the only true purpose of teaching people how to draw".[6]

When the Chinese Academy of Painting was established in Beijing in 1957, the teaching program was drafted on the basis that "The specific tasks of the Academy are to nurture Chinese painting, to train Chinese talent, to investigate the theory of Chinese painting, and to teach and promote the creation of foreign-style paintings".[7] It can be seen that during this period, art was used as a tool for serving the country, and its social function was very prominent.

The third period (1979-present) is a new era in which the Chinese economy has been fully transformed from a planned to a market economy. During this period, the state's total monopoly and centralization of all exhibition resources and communication outlets were broken.

The situation of artists and critics have profoundly changed. Art and criticism have begun to switch over to contemporary production. Many influential contemporary artworks are not from official institutions, and some newcomers to the art scene are not members of the Artists' Association. All forms of contemporary art appear to feature without restriction in numerous private art museums. At the same time, the emergence of independent curators and critics has revolutionized the old approach to exhibition organization. Critics no longer express their opinions in ways that are determined by official institutions, but actively participate in exhibition making as curators, and are starting to plan different types of art exhibitions that show off their individual views and artistic judgments. Various styles and types of exhibitions, such as biennales, have been introduced from abroad. Artists and their works are no longer promoted in keeping with the ideas and methods of the official institutions; they end up creating an entirely different, multi-disciplinary artistic atmosphere.[8] Although the artistic creation and criticism of the period are entirely different, this period has not yet produced any outstanding genius, and there has been no major breakthrough on the theoretical front. The whole pattern has changed, and artists and critics have begun to move from an emphasis on aesthetics to something wholly different. This has become an irreversible trend.

The Loss of Criticism: Changes and Breakthroughs

Although Chinese modern and contemporary art criticism have gone through three stages of development over more than one hundred years, its

exponents, their motives, and the objects of their critique seem to be different from those of the classical period but may still appear to have gone through the same three stages of development, when placed in a larger historical framework. These three stages are equivalent to the three small fluctuations between the first and second phases of the classical period. The trajectory of change has been the same as that of the classical period, which basically fits with the evolutionary logic of art criticism.

For example, in the first two stages (1912-1949; 1949-1979), which make up the modern period, the representative figures of art criticism were mainly thinkers and politicians who tried to transform society. Starting from their own political outlook, they put forward their own ideas for an artistic revolution. They even sought to use art as a political tool, as a means of achieving their principal goal of transforming society and sought to do this through administrative means. This was very similar to the situation in the pre-Qin and Qin-Han periods, when the educational and political role of art was significantly highlighted. By the third stage (1979-present), which is the contemporary period, the subject, object, and purpose of art criticism had changed. Freelance or professional art writers (predominantly academics or journalists) have become the protagonists of art criticism, and the aesthetic function of artistic expression has received their attention. This is very similar to the Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties, when art criticism began to enter the stage of self-awareness. However, so far there has been too little time to build a whole body of reflexive creative and critical practices. So far, Chinese contemporary art criticism has not yet produced great works or new theories that offer an insight into the past and the present, or that attempt to integrate both Western and Eastern traditions; and critics are still lost in the mists of time. What might be the reasons for this?

Before discussing the possible reasons, we shall need first to look at the situation of Chinese contemporary art and art criticism in order to understand the situation. Then we should be able to explore the question in much more depth, as a way of discovering the relationship between classical and modern mindsets. Judging from the current situation, Chinese contemporary art criticism is under a dual pressure, from the inside and outside, both in theory and in practice. The internal pressure is caused by the emergence of two opposing attitudes towards traditional culture and classical art theory: one is to reject tradition and treat classical art as something to be abandoned; the other is to worship tradition, to value classical art as a treasure. These two attitudes seem to be contradictory, but amount to the same thing. Neither can find the correct explanation for both the past and the present, and they both fall into the trap of self-limitation. The external pressure is due to the fact that after China woke up from its state of ignorance of the outside world to reach its current condition of blind bedazzlement (when did this happen?: critics have been left in a state of perplexity; their judgment has been confused and, in the short time that has elapsed since then, they have not yet been able to formulate fresh opinions of their own. Therefore, under the dual effect of these internal and external pressures, both art and criticism are condemned to go through a period of hesitation, cynicism, or even paranoia.

Why should that be the case? This is directly related to the way our civilization has evolved. In 1912, when China's last feudal dynasty was destroyed, it became clear that the country would have to go through a conscious or unconscious process of transformation that would turn it from an agricultural into an industrial country. But the economic and social forms of the industrial and agricultural civilizations are completely different. In ancient China, which was based on an agricultural civilization, economic growth had continued at an extremely gradual pace over a long period.[9] Throughout this situation of ultra-stable – but gradual – growth, people's lives changed slightly for thousands of years, and their ideas and aesthetic concepts were never subjected to dramatic change. The industrial civilization is just the opposite. From 1912 to 1979, society changed several times: especially after 1979, China's process of industrialization accelerated, the economy doubled, hundreds of millions of peasants flocked to the cities to become industrial workers, and the whole of society rapidly changed to become an industrial civilization. In these circumstances, it would be strange if people's ideas too had not undergone some form of dramatic change. This is a good explanation for the fact that art criticism in the classical period is often measured in centuries, while the changes in modern and contemporary art criticism in just a few decades.

For the Chinese, what is changing is not only all aspects of the economy and social life in the current period. What is more important is the humanistic spirit and aesthetic consciousness that have lasted for thousands of years. Even the traditional cultural elements that have infiltrated the minutiae of ordinary life are bound to be replaced. How is this to be done? By abandoning all traditions and replacing them with modern technology and modern industrial civilization? Or is it to be done by integrating the essence of traditional culture into contemporary life? This is a tough choice. At the same time, the problem of alienation caused by industrialization, environmental problems, problems of sustainability, and so on, also come with the rapid development of the economy. These contemporary issues, which are superimposed by social transformation, not only test the social players, but also challenge artists and critics. In this era of openness, the focus of people's attention has completely changed. In the past, closed art criticism – ranging from ideological theory to linguistic methods – did not adapt to the requirements of the new era, and everything was deconstructed. In particular, artistic creation, criticism, and appreciation have also lost their sense of identity. Therefore, it has become a matter of urgency to do something to recalibrate contemporary art criticism. China's current choice is to adjust the relationship between past and present through cultural renewal.

From the gradual changes of the classical period to today's sudden changes, Chinese art criticism shows that when a country or region turns from an agricultural to an industrial civilization, and when people's lifestyles and methods of production change drastically as a result of modifications in the socio-political and cultural structure, an equivalent transformation to artistic creation and criticism will follow. What is the role of critics in the event of a sudden change in civilization? What are the objects, methods, and standards of criticism? What changes will occur? These problems are emerging again, and this is a sign that art criticism is constantly evolving. Today's reality is also the history of the future, a cross-section of history; historical developments have an inherent logic. Chinese classical art criticism has provided a model that will need to be changed from beginning to end, and current art criticism is in the process of creating a new structure; the evolutionary aspect of art criticism will develop its own characteristics. This is where we need to study the difference between classical art criticism and contemporary art criticism. Because the current economic, technological, political, and cultural environments are completely different from those of ancient society, and art criticism will definitely be generated in the new environment. To a certain extent, the dilemma faced in China's latest art and criticism, and the ways and means that have been developed for dealing with them, can also serve as good points of reference for countries and regions that are in the process of economic and social transformation, and are on the road to industrialization. This is the value of the Chinese case.

Notes

* This paper is an abbreviated version of a somewhat longer contribution, in which the author originally examined the early periods of Chinese art critics. No attempt is made here to define the precise role of art criticism, or to draw the line between 'criticism' (a Western concept), aesthetic appreciation, or art history. Nor is there room here to attempt a description of the role of the 'art critic', as it is commonly understood today.

[1] Yin Shuangxi, *Selected Works of Chinese Art Criticism in 20th Century* (Shijiangzhuang: Hebei Fine Arts Publishing House, 2017), p. 71.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[3] Lang Zhaojun, *On Chinese Modern Art* (Nanjing: Jiangshu Fine Arts Publishing House, 1988), p. 23.

[4] Mao Zedong, *The Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art* (Shanghai: Huadong Xinhua Publishing House, 1943).

[5] Yin Shuangxi, *Selected Works of Chinese Art Criticism in 20th Century*, cit., p. 71.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[7] Jia Fangzhou, *Chinese Modern Art Theory Criticism Series, Jia Fangzhou vol.* (Beijing: Peoples Fine Arts Publishing House, 2009), p. 51.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 79-81.

[9] A. Maddison, *World Economy: A Millennial Perspective* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2003), p. 30.

Destruction of Images; Images of Destruction: Critical Stances on Contemporary Heritage

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"[...] the image that survives the work of destruction is the image of destruction".[1]

In this paper, I will analyse the work of Forensic Architecture (FA) in producing the exhibition *Maps of Defiance* (2018) on heritage destruction. To achieve this aim, I will briefly describe how art historians have characterised the destruction of heritage through the aesthetics of destruction to explain the work of artists who are inspired by destruction when creating their art. I will then use Critical Heritage Studies (CHS) to analyse and interpret *Maps of Defiance.*

While I do acknowledge that there are well-established practices in the artworld that have analysed how artists have used heritage sites – such as institutional critique, participatory art, and site-specificity – I will address the discourses around heritage that inform the creation of images of destruction as critical stances of contemporary heritage.

Aesthetics of Destruction

Artistic appropriations of the discourse of destruction are not new. Avant-garde artists incorporated the trope of destruction into their art and writings with varying results.[2] However, while avant-garde artists considered destruction a necessary act to create a new world and erase the old one (established authorities, canonical iconographies, and cultural institutions), contemporary artists use the discourse of heritage destruction to critique the destruction carried out by particular political forces such as colonialism, fundamentalism, authoritarianism, capitalism, and neoliberalism. These forces are part of a destruction that, in some cases, is performed by machines such as mining robots. Therefore, acting out against this destruction may seem futile because "we are made of flesh, we get tired, but we are battling against a machine, and machines don't get tired".[3]

Avant-garde artists operated under the premise that destroying artworks also creates new works of art: "an art destined to show the end of art".[4] An iconoclastic impulse was the drive behind such artistic practices which also showed the traces that the destruction left behind, in a conscious effort to expose the drive to destroy, as in the case of Rauschenberg erasing a De Kooning. While for avant-garde artists the destruction of art was an aesthetic or political choice, contemporary artists focus on the destruction of images and cultural heritage as a result of the politics of heritage, creating new images of destruction. If iconoclasm "became an almost inevitable component of avant-gardism" in the 20th century,[5] in the 21st century the destruction of cultural heritage has become an inevitable component of contemporary art. This is most evident in the growing number of artists who have created artworks that are influenced, inspired, or informed by heritage destruction.[6]

The Politics of Heritage

Boris Groys claimed, echoing Warnke, that by the turn of the 21st century, iconoclasm was a thing of the past because "people no longer had any interest in actually destroying cultural icons".[7] What caused then the shift from the destruction of art, as was practiced in the 20th century by avant-garde artists, to the destruction of heritage as an art topic in the 21st century? What prompted the interest in heritage destruction? Firstly, the politics of heritage, which raised awareness of cultural heritage outside the academic world with the rise of the so-called 'Heritage Industry'.[8] Secondly, the emergence of discourses centred on the role of heritage as social glue that contributed to the creation and preservation of national memories and identities.[9] Thirdly, the destruction of monuments and statues in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to remove the traces of communism

(1989-1992), and the destruction of cultural heritage (mosques, archives, libraries, architectural buildings) as part of the cultural genocide that swept the territories formerly known as Yugoslavia in the 1990s – particularly the dissemination of images depicting the destruction of the university and National Library in Sarajevo and the Mostar Bridge in the media and press.[10] Fourthly, the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan in 2001 by the Taliban regime, which made evident the fragility of cultural heritage, particularly in sites located outside the Western canon, and the lack of power of UNESCO to prevent such destructions. The destruction of the Buddhas, in particular, provided an opportunity to critically revise the theoretical scaffolding on which Heritage Studies were founded, leading to the draft of a UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage because, when it comes to the destruction of religious monuments, there is more than just stones involved.

Today, the methods and techniques available to analyse the destruction of heritage in detail on both a macro and a micro level (analysis of visual material, archival documents, interviews, satellite images, remote sensing, etc.) are well established. Using different methods and techniques, contemporary artists also explore the materiality of art and heritage, which can be analysed in the same way as a human corpse is routinely examined by a forensic scientist. The work inspired by iconoclasm and heritage destruction converges in an archive of destruction composed by images, aesthetics, and discourses of destruction. This archive of knowledge on destruction[11] offers the scholar an array of techniques of destruction, as well as insights as to how destruction informs the artistic practices of certain artists and how heritage destruction is understood in different contexts. Under these conditions, "destruction is the best form of conservation. For we live in a culture today that documents, archives, interprets and processes artistically all forms of destruction on many different levels".[12] As we shall see, the exhibition *Maps of Defiance* works as an exhibition that both creates and archives heritage as a result of heritage destruction.

All these factors contribute to a state of anxiety towards cultural heritage and its demise that continues to escalate. This is especially true in our Digital Age, in which images can be easily deleted with the touch of a key, and consequently, there is

an anxiety that museums and heritage initiatives seek to assuage by digitising heritage, storing the metadata in archives, and sanctioning the destruction of artworks and heritage while creating more *heritage* about heritage destruction. Under the auspices of modernism, "a strategy of 'museumising', archiving and monumentalising important memorials developed" to prevent iconoclasm.[13] The climax of this strategy is the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention, composed today by over 1,100 sites, buildings, and traditions. However, recent debates in Heritage Studies echoing avant-garde artists like Malevich or the radical posture of the Futurists have argued that accumulating objects and knowledge, like the UNESCO World Heritage List does, may have negative effects on how we value our past. While destruction is not offered as an alternative to solve this problem, scholars argue that re-thinking our relationship with the past can lead to more positive effects on the conservation of cultural heritage.[14] Re-thinking this relationship is one of the tasks of Critical Heritage Studies (CHS).

Critical Heritage Theory

Focusing on socially engaged contemporary art, CHS may be a useful tool to understand how contemporary artists deal with heritage destruction. There is no standard theory of CHS and the term is understood differently in many contexts.[15] Underlying all these positions, however, there is a critique of old heritage practices embodied in the Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) that Laurajane Smith identified as the main discourse that nurtured heritage management in different countries, where the figure of the expert was extolled and privileged, while local voices were marginalized in favour of universal concepts of heritage – monumental, aesthetically pleasing and derived from the Western canon. In sum, CHS marks the shift of the discipline of Heritage Studies, from the moment when scholars started to pay attention to the political, cultural, and social consequences of heritage discourses, as opposed to analysing the technical problems faced by conservators and heritage managers.[16] Thus, CHS is in a position to address the issues that humankind is facing at large – such as climate change, the destruction of natural and cultural resources, and migration – by bringing "a critical perspective to bear upon the socio-political complexities that enmesh heritage; tackling the thorny issues those in the conserva-

Fig. 1. Overview of the *Maps of Defiance* exhibition at the Triennale di Milano 2019. © London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

tion profession are often reluctant to acknowledge"[17]

I argue that this conversation is currently being held by contemporary artists and audiences in galleries and museums around the world – the same spaces that CHS have been critiquing for their colonial associations, their reliance on scientific positivism and authoritative expertise. One reason for this conversation to take place within contemporary art is that heritage professionals working in the industry are not always free to be critical about their work, since they must follow strict policy guidelines. In contrast, contemporary artists are usually free – the case of Ai Weiwei in China being an exception – to comment precisely on those critical issues that humankind is facing at large. They do so by using the concept of destruction as a metonym for the tension that exists between endurance and fragility, the central role power plays in human history and culture, and the underlying desire for novelty that (sometimes) motivates destruction. This freedom allows contemporary artists to be critical about how heritage is being appropriated by governments and ideologies, thus blurring the lines that dictate the relationship between authority, the so-called heritage experts, and communities and their heritage.

Blurring the Lines

The exhibition *Maps of Defiance*, curated by the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 1)[18] is an example where the line between communities, authority, and heritage experts was blurred. This exhibition is the result of different organisations and communities that teamed together to create a critical apparatus that looked at the destruction of Yezidi mausoleums in the Sinjar region, in northern Iraq,

by the so-called Islamic State (IS) in August 2014. Trained by FA, members of Yazda – an international Yazidi NGO founded in response to the 2014 genocide – collected information on the destruction of these mausoleums using photogrammetry, a photographic recording technique, and drone footage, which enabled the documentation of the targeted Yezidi heritage sites. Through this data, coupled with media and screenshots from news outlets, historical aerial images, and photo-

Fig. 2. A panel describing the process of reconstruction of the Amadeen mausoleum through photographs of the ruins taken by Yazda members, and satellite and historic images. Triennale di Milano 2019. © London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Fig. 3. In the foreground, objects used by the FA team to train Yazda volunteers to document the targeted heritage sites. From left to right: a digital camera; a plastic bottle to tie the camera to; a kite to fly the camera attached to the bottle; a drone. In the background, the two maps on the wall show Mount Sinjar (Iraq) and the movements of the IS and Yezidi refugees. At the bottom, there are several panels explaining the history of the Yezidis and the training process. Triennale di Milano 2019. © London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

graphs of everyday contemporary Yezidi life, FA was able to digitally reconstruct the destroyed mausoleums (fig. 2). In doing so, FA recreated the object to register its destruction, which is now part of the Yezidi history and collective memory. According to FA's website, the exhibition aims to "reclaim lost histories, not only through documentation and archiving, but also through speculation and imagination".

Maps of Defiance was roughly divided into two parts. In the first part, it set the context by providing an explanation to the motives behind the destruction by the IS as part of their iconoclastic and genocidal campaign against the Yezidis and other minority religious groups living in Iraq and Syria.[19] In the second part, it told the story behind the making of the exhibition, by including the objects and tools (digital cameras attached to plastic bottles, kites, balloons, and drones; fig. 3)

that were used to train the Yazda staff and document the damage. No different from heritage conservators assessing the damage caused by other types of destruction, these tasks were performed not without risks. Although the IS had already left the region, visiting these sites was still dangerous for the Yezidi, who had to flee their villages and escape to the mountains to avoid being killed or, in the case of women, becoming sex slaves. The fact that it is designed in two parts, I argue, makes *Maps of Defiance* a critical exhibition for two reasons.

On the one hand, the meta-exhibition shows viewers the process of creation of the exhibition. In doing so, the exhibition offers a critical perspective to bear upon the socio-political complexities that affect heritage conservation in such a dangerous location, surpassing those issues that Winter mentions and that those in the conservation pro-

fession are often reluctant to acknowledge. The meta-reference is also timely because in studies of heritage destruction, there are no established methods to study this topic. Displaying its process sheds new light on how heritage destruction is evaluated, beyond a conservation point of view, in a space devoted to the criticism of artworks. On the other hand, other objects in the exhibition – such as the 3D models – informed viewers about the process of *re-making* of heritage. The exhibition remakes heritage, mostly in digital format, by reconstructing the destroyed sites through digital techniques that produce a surplus of heritage-related information concerning places targeted to precisely erase the signs that identify them as culturally significant for the Yezidi community. But rather than explaining heritage destruction as an isolated case of iconoclasm, the exhibition further draws attention to the impossibility of discussing such destruction without mentioning the people who were affected by it. This aim is achieved by using the heritage that the exhibition already created, highlighting the bond between the Yezidis and their mausoleums, which played a role in important rituals and, with their unique aesthetics, were an integral part of the Iraqi landscape. The exhibition addresses critical issues – heritage destruction, cultural genocide, the destruction of the landscape – while showing the methods and techniques used to create the exhibition. In doing so, the exhibition makes *heritage* by documenting the destruction of the past, in the present, for the future Yezidi generations. The exhibition also places emphasis on the role that the Yezidi community played in the making of the exhibition not only by documenting the destruction of their heritage at the risk of their own lives, but also as creators contributing with other types of material, such as old photographs of people standing in front of the mausoleums (fig. 4). These archival items made the digital reconstruction of the mausoleums possible since many of them were never formally photographed or documented before their destruction. Both heritage objects (the photographs and the digital reconstructions) will be of particular significance in the near future, as Yezidis are planning to demand reparations in an international court due to their experiencing a cultural genocide, which includes the destruction of mausoleums by the IS. The strong bond created between the Yezidi community and FA is crucial. Operating under the principles stipulated by CHS,

Fig. 4. Panel explaining how, by using old photographs (top left) provided by the Yezidi community, the FA team was able to digitally reconstruct the destroyed mausoleum of Sheikh Mand. Triennale di Milano 2019. © London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

FA approached the destruction of heritage from a bottom-up perspective. It was the Yezidi community who provided the knowledge and interpreted their landscape, however, as opposed to highly criticised heritage practices, FA did not provide the aesthetic criteria, or the cultural metrics, to analyse the architectural structures. Instead, FA's bottom-up perspective demanded accountability by exposing the violence taking place against the Yezidi people and their landscape. *Maps of Defiance* may be an exhibition for a gallery space, but its aim is to tell a story of heritage destruction.

By adopting a critical stance towards heritage or looking at the destroyed landscape in Iraq as "both the means of violation and a source of evidence that can bear witness to the events that traversed it",[20] FA uses a methodology that is more commonly applied to the violation of human rights than to heritage destruction. Their stance is critical,

I argue, because through the analysis of destruction not only does FA document the act, but it also deals with a world outside of the heritage discourse – and on a practical level. This action produces new images while simultaneously re-imagining a heritage in collaboration with the Yezidi community.

Rather than acting as heritage 'experts' who provide an authoritative voice to explain destruction and its meaning, FA focuses on the value of the targeted buildings for the community, thereby placing a community-based heritage making initiative at the centre of their investigations.

Notes

[1] B. Groys, "Becoming Revolutionary: On Kazimir Malevich", *e-flux*, Journal 47 (September 2013).

[2] S. Spieker, ed., *Destruction* (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2017), pp. 14-15.

[3] A. Weiwei, "When there's no Darkness, there's no Light. A Conversation", in Id., *Ai Weiwei: restablecer memorias*, exh. cat. (México: MUAC, Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, UNAM, 2019), p. 133.

[4] Badiou in S. Spieker, ed., *Destruction*, cit., p. 35.

[5] D. Gamboni, "Portrait of the Artist as an Iconoclast", in *Ai Weiwei: Dropping the Urn. Ceramic Works, 5000 BCE-2010 CE*, exh. cat. (Glenside, PA-Portland, OR-London: Arcadia University Art Gallery-Museum of Contemporary Craft-Victoria and Albert Museum, 2010), pp. 82-95: 83.

[6] See for example: P. Eleey, R. Katrib, eds. *Theater of Operations. The Gulf Wars 1991-2011*, exh. cat. (New York: D.A.P., 2019).

[7] B. Groys in N. Fischer, M. el Sani, eds., *Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani: Blind Spots* (Zürich: JRP Ringier, 2008). See also M. Warnke, ed., *Bildersturm. Die Zerstörung des Kunstwerks* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1973), p. 8.

[8] R. Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987).

[9] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006); P. Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 7-24.

[10] It was the end of the Cold War and the investigation of war crimes in Yugoslavia that prompted the rise of forensic sciences, and the 'forensic turn' which saw a revision of the political violence exercised by the state through images of destruction as forensic evidence, to expose the violence in legal and artistic forums. See E. Weizman, P. Tavares, S. Schuppli, Studio S., "Forensic Architecture", *Architectural Design* 80, no. 5 (2010): pp. 58-63.

[11] S. Spieker, ed., *Destruction*, cit., p. 16.

[12] B. Groys in N. Fischer, M. el Sani, eds., *Nina Fischer*, cit.

[13] *Ivi*.

[14] R. Harrison, "Forgetting to remember, remembering to forget: late modern heritage practices, sustainability and the 'crisis' of accumulation of the past", *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19, no. 6 (2013): pp. 579-595; C. Holtorf, "Averting loss aversion in cultural heritage", *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 21, no. 4 (2015): pp. 405-421; F. Vidal, N. Dias, eds., *Endangerment, Biodiversity and Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015).

[15] See for example D. Byrne, "Western hegemony in archaeological heritage management", *History and Anthropology* 5, no. 2 (1991): pp. 269-276; L. Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); L. Meskell, *Cosmopolitan Archaeologies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); R. Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

[16] K. Gentry, L. Smith, "Critical Heritage Studies and the legacies of the late-twentieth century heritage canon", *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25, no. 11 (2019): pp. 1148-1168.

[17] T. Winter, "Clarifying the critical in Critical Heritage Studies, *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19, no. 6 (2013): pp. 532-545.

[18] Up until December 2020, the exhibition was showcased in the following venues and events: 05/09/2020-29/11/2020, *The Destruction of Yazidi Cultural Heritage at Schafhof – European Center for Art Upper Bavaria* Schafhof – European Center for Art Upper Bavaria; 10/10/2019-15/02/2020 *Phantom Limb at Jameel Art Centre*, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai; 03/10/2019-05/12/2019 *Inner Space at the Lisbon Architecture Triennale*, The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Lisbon; 07/09/2019-10/11/2019; *Collective Cities: Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism*, Dongdaemun Design Plaza (DDP), Seoul; 01/03/2019-01/09/2019 *Maps of Defiance at XXII Triennale di Milano*, La Triennale di Milano, Milan; 04/09/2018-23/09/2018 *Maps of Defiance at London Design Biennale 2018*, UK Pavilion, London Design Biennale, Somerset House, London.

[19] B. Isakhan, J.A. González Zarandona, T.J. Al-Deen, "Cultural Cleansing and Iconoclasm under the Islamic State: Attacks on Yezidis and Christians and their Heritage", in F. Oruc, ed., *Sites of Pluralism: Community Politics in the Middle East* (London: Hurst/Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 181-194.

[20] E. Weizman, P. Tavares, S. Schuppli, Studio S., "Forensic Architecture", cit., p. 59.

Standardizing the Author: Emilio Prini and Conceptual Art*

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This essay takes its cue from the notion of conceptual art, as elaborated by Benjamin Buchloh,[1] and focuses on the modalities by which artists in the 1960s and early 1970s integrated the concept of *standard* in their practice as the ultimate way to question the subjectivity of the author in the artistic creation. Major attention will be paid to the Italian artist Emilio Prini (1943-2016), arguing that his practice between the 1960s and the 1970s, despite the lack of recognition, was characterized by one of the most rigorous discussions of the tenets of artmaking, and compares to the work of leading figures of international conceptual art.

The Word Standard *and Foucault's Theory*
Before looking at art, it is worth retracing the origin of the etymology of the word *standard*. According to etymological dictionaries of modern English, the origin of the word entails two major meanings. First emerged in mid-12th century and modeled after the French *estandart*, meaning "flag or other conspicuous object to serve as a rallying point for a military force", the English word *standard* then evolved during the 14th century, with the meaning "weight, measure, or instrument by which the accuracy of others is determined".[2] The first definition implies the sense of conventionality of an object all the members of a community relate to by virtue of a shared knowledge. Through its iteration within a social context, an object is turned into a generally accepted and acknowledged symbol of a collective living practice. The second definition introduces a sense of authoritativeness:

> The standard weights and measures were set by royal ordinance and were known as the king's standard, so perhaps metaphoric, the royal standard coming to stand for royal authority in matters like setting weights and measures. Hence the meaning 'authoritative or recognized exemplar of quality or correctness' (late 15th century). Meaning 'rule, principal or means of judgment' is from 1560s.[3]

By virtue of the combination of conventionality and authoritativeness, the word defines a hierarchy-based set of rules which a community complies with. How the concept meandered its way through the cultural debates in the 1960s is rather self-explanatory. A preliminary distinction should be made in this respect; the notion of *standard* considered here is not related to the iteration of standard forms deployed by minimalist artists, which refers mostly to an internal attitude of artistic practice and vision. Nor is it related to the specific sense of standard art as an "exclusive, negative, absolute, and timeless"[4] art to which Ad Reinhardt's extremely rarified abstraction tended. The cultural debates around the modes of production and structures of societies extensively contributed to the integration of standardized practices into conceptual art. In the lectures given at the Collège de France in Paris in the Fall-Winter 1971-1972, Michel Foucault addressed the subject of *Penal Theories and Institutions* and expanded on the concept of *power-knowledge*, by which he meant to indicate the reciprocal reinforcement of social power and governing epistemes. He analyzed the forms of *power-knowledge* which include *examination*, understood as the "form of power-knowledge linked to systems of control, exclusion, and punishment characteristic of industrial societies". Based on the alternate process of selection and exclusion, *examination* was a "means of setting or reinstating the standard, the rule, the distribution, the qualification, the exclusion; but also a matrix of all the psychologies, sociologies, psychiatries – in short, of what is called the human sciences".[5] Foucault developed the analysis further in his famous essay *Discipline and Punish*, published in 1975. Combining standardization and

normalization, examination is a ritualized form of power-knowledge that

> combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them.[6]

Backed up by a huge apparatus of registration and documentary writing through which individuals are catalogued, archived, and treated as 'cases', examination defines the practice of disciplinary power. A major identifying aspect of disciplinary power is the switch from visibility to invisibility between power and those over whom it is exercised. As opposed to the traditional hierarchy, the examination process requires the relative invisibility of power and the visibility of those it subjects. However, the regime of visibility transforms individuals, turning them from subjects into objects. The objectification of those who are subjected is essential to the functioning of the normative apparatus of registration, documentation, and information.

Conceptual Standard

The words with which the vocabulary employed by Foucault was mostly identified, such as 'examination', 'archive', 'normativity', 'documentation', 'registration', and 'information', were all extensively used in the debates around conceptual art. By internalizing the modes and practices of conventional systems of language, political power, and social and individual habits, artists were able to "subject the last residues of artistic aspiration toward transcendence (by means of traditional studio skills and privileged modes of experience) to the rigorous and relentless order of the vernacular of administration" and to "purge artistic production of the aspiration towards an affirmative collaboration with the forces of industrial production and consumption".[7] These quotations are taken from the famous essay in which Benjamin Buchloh coined the definition of 'aesthetic of administration'. Among the precursors of conceptual art, Buchloh focused on Ed Ruscha, whose use of photography and explicit deployment of format and distribution of commercial books addressed the social implications of the standardization of habits induced by authoritative conventions and

means of mass communication. In early 1963, the artist published the famous photo-book *Twenty-six Gasoline Stations*, containing, as per its title, images of twenty-six gas stations photographed along Route 66 between Los Angeles and Oklahoma – although it is important to notice that the road itself is never depicted or referred to in the book. The concept of the book has already been thoroughly discussed.[8] The sense of standard is first evoked by the artlessness of the photographs, which the artist chose for the documentary style of their depictions. By stressing the stillness of the fixed lens of the camera and the frontal treatment of the roadside edifices, the result is a sequence of anonymous pictures iterating similar shots, views, angles, and frames unfolding through the pages and resembling images produced for commercial use.[9] The whole book conveys a sense of anonymity, to the extent that it does not provide any clue as to whether the artist actually made the journey to photograph those gas stations, or if he assembled pre-existing photos instead. Devoid of any atmospheric or situational content, the photos make up an anti-travelogue that lacks any reference to the author's subjectivity. The images documenting a gas station evoke the *standardization* of industrial and capitalist societies, and the preference assigned by the artist to the Standard Oil Company could resonate with the meaning of that word.[10]

Artists like Lawrence Weiner further expanded Ruscha's vision. Referencing the artist's famous formula regulating the open-ended parameters of the work, its authorship and production, and even its use and ownership, Buchloh noticed that

> it is a recognition that materials and procedures, surfaces and textures, locations and placement […] are always already inscribed within the conventions of language and thereby within institutional power and ideological and economic investment.[11]

Significantly, the analysis of the *Statements* that the artist published in 1968 and distributed through Seth Siegelaub reveals consistent occurrences of the word *standard* that defines the conventional average size, aspect, layout, weight, and color of several objects, often referencing social and political forces, administrative institutions, and conventional infrastructures, such as *A 2'' wide 1'' deep trench cut across a standard*

one car driveway (cat. #019) or *One standard dye marker thrown into the sea (cat. #022)* – referring to the dye marker of the US armed services.[12] The actions described in the sentences are thereby turned into acts of awareness, mimicking the style of administrative regulations.

Emilio Prini

The attitude of institutional critique, as formulated by Buchloh vis-à-vis conceptual art, and the theory of examination as it was envisioned by Foucault resonate with the work of Emilio Prini on multiple levels. Prini is probably the most hidden figure associated with the group of Arte Povera. From the beginning of his career in 1967, his work unravels a thorough analysis of conventions and systems impacting everyday life as well as those that define the process of artistic creation and fruition, which the artist aligned with procedures. The artist largely employed means of mechanical reproduction to record actions he performed as well as visual layouts of installations. The pictures compose a repertoire of the artist's performing self and the surrounding environment, rendered through ambiguous and rather impersonal images by virtue of the technical specificities of the recording camera and the sense of objectivity usually associated with the photographic image in the mass media. The body of work created by Prini addressed major issues of capitalist society through the categories and procedures of technological means of reproduction and communication.

There is no Italian translation for the word *standard*. The term was borrowed from English, with no adaptations, and immediately linked to economics since its earlier known occurrences. In his *Dizionario moderno* ('Modern Dictionary') of 1905, a repertoire of new words and phrases of common use in Italian, the novelist and lexicographer Alfredo Panzini included the word *standard* as a synonym of "banner, model, rule, norm, type" as an "English term employed in commerce to indicate that the quality of a good or a product of industry is the typical, the normal one".[13] Panzini devoted an entry also to the phrase 'standard of life', defined as an "English locution meaning norm, lifestyle, type of life in a given economic and social condition", and continued: "Standard means not only flag, banner, but norm, type, a rule accepted and acknowledged in common use, by public opinion and authority or all these forces together".

Prini fully embraced the notion of standard in his work. In 1967, the artist created *Standard-Asta di comportamento* [Standard-Pole of Behavior], a 6.5 meters long aluminum rod with a green edge. He placed it in the space of the Galleria La Bertesca in Genoa but also in the street, forcing the passers-by to bend over and pass under the work. The rod was elastic, so it could curve or expand depending on the size of the space in which it was positioned.[14] The notion of standard referenced in the title is then dual. First, it relates to the standard size of the rod, which is fixed but looks different depending on the space where it is placed, thus exposing the conventionality of the parameters on which common life experience is based. In this respect, the work evokes the seminal *3 stoppages étalon (3 standard stoppages)* by Marcel Duchamp, a piece which seems to be prescient of conceptual art.[15] Furthermore, the behavior of the people bending over to pass under Prini's rod is another standard, a commonly accepted reaction to the obstacle represented by the work. Actually, the concept of standard expanded to include a third layer of interpretation. The rod is in fact known only through photos: the 'real' artwork did not coincide with the object, but with its reproduction. In 1973, the artist placed another rod, reminiscent of the first one, on the floor of Galleria Toselli in Milan, for one or two days, during an exhibition of Robert Mangold.[16] After then, he produced a work comprised of the photograph of the curved rod at Galleria La Bertesca in 1967,
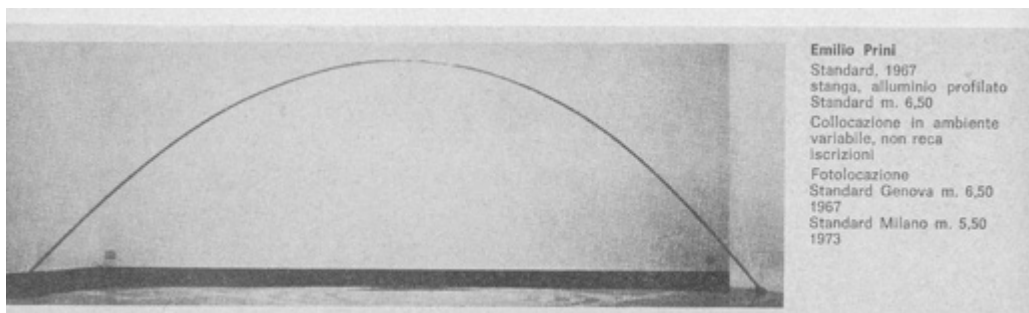
Fig. 1. Emilio Prini, *Asta curvata* (*Curved Rod*), 1967-1973. Offset print on paper, 7.8x10 cm. Private Collection. (Courtesy Archivio Emilio Prini).

accompanied by a caption in standard typeface describing its dimension, the different measurements in Genoa in 1967 and in Milan in 1973, and specifying "Installation in variable settings, no inscriptions" (fig. 1). Two different rods, varying in size, were standardized to an average by being rendered through the presumptive objectivity of the photographic documentation and a minimalist caption.

Prini increasingly entrusted his work to the medium of photography. While focusing on the standardized (and standardizing) properties of the medium, the artist explored the notion of use. The twofold meaning of the word 'use' – referring to the common use as well as the actual usage of an instrument – was investigated by the artist between 1969 and 1971 to the extent that he had it coincide with the concept of consumption. In those years, the artist developed a project titled *Magnet*, which comprised different works, the most important of which is based on the image of an Exakta Reflex camera which the artist took from an advertisement or an instruction manual and replicated it in several iterations on a black or white background (fig. 2). Published in 1970, the illustrations of the work were accompanied by a description which perfectly encapsulated the sense of the project:

> Magnet / photographic series / group of 2,000 sheets related to September 1968 (4 phases) / a normal camera takes photos over and over again until the consumption of the mechanism / expected duration of use for the apparatus / 20,000 takes / expected time of execution of the work / 10 years / annual series of 2,000 elements / technique / black and white photograph / Ferrania sheet / 3M / K203/ 3 / 30 x 40 cm each / fixed aperture lens and shutter speed / tripod with fixed inclination / 1969.[17]

According to the description, the work, be it realized or not (even though the version known today comprises almost 20,000 prints), emphasizes the functioning of the apparatus. The artist defines precise conditions of the photograph: the fixed time, diaphragm, shutter speed, and inclination, the standard size and quality of paper sheet (the sheets measuring 30 x 40 cm and coded 3M/ K203/3, provided by the company Ferrania) and the regular distribution of shots per year. The only criterion was established by the actual duration of

the work, which did not depend on artist's choice, but rather on the machine's 'consumption'. The notion of 'consumption' relates to Prini's practice. In fact, by setting out an essential system of rules, the artist then programmed the camera to operate until the mechanism broke down. Such process resulted in a series of works which complied with the instructions set up in *Magnet*. Prini realized a series of photos of public buildings in Genoa, taken regularly by placing the tripod on a bus and keeping the inclination fixed, printed on 30x40 paper sheets, thus composing a *Self-made narration* revolving around the places hosting and representing the institutions of power. Likewise, another work is comprised of 26,160 photos of a closed-circuit television monitor seen from the same, standard frontal view (fig. 3). Referring to a video that the artist made in 1970, which is now lost,[18] the photographs are divided into three groups according to the image displayed on the screen of the monitor: in the first group, the monitor screen shows a large TV displaying the image of another TV positioned in an anonymous office; in the second, it shows the large TV turned off; in the third, the screen itself is turned off, thus showing a blank image. Just like the buildings of public institutions in Genoa, the closed-circuit television monitor, the TV, and the anonymous open space-like office act like devices of control, means of communication, and workspaces, defining the average living standards. By accumulating prints, Prini visualizes the bulimic consumption of images on which communication systems are based, and the notion of a self-sufficient apparatus repeating itself until it does not work anymore. By doing so, the identity of the author disappears behind the technology of the system, his creative contribution being solely the activation of a process in which use, standard, and consumption get tangled up. Actually, the artist collaborated with a photographer named Antonio Leale to realize most of his works at that time, thus reducing even further the already small contribution of his activity.[19] The apparatus is turned into the subject of the work and a powerful symbol of the critique of a social model based on the conventions of capitalism and consumerism.

Around the same time, the term *standard* resurfaced in the titles elaborated by Prini. In 1969, he produced a large silkscreen whose size and bold typeface resemble advertising posters (fig. 4). Titled *Standard – L'U.S.A. USA* ('THE U.S.A. USES'),

Fig. 2. In the foreground: *Magnete* (*Magnet*), 1969/1970. 18,915 offset prints on paper, 23x17 cm each. Private Collection. On the wall on the right: *Racconto che si fa da solo* (*Self-made narration*), 1969. 90 b/w photographs, 30x40 cm each. Private Collection. Exhibition view: *Emilio Prini*, Fondazione Merz, 29/10/2019-09/02/2020. Courtesy Fondazione Merz, Archivio Emilio Prini. (Photo by Renato Ghiazza).

Fig. 3. *Magnete – Film TV, 5 min* (*Magnet – TV Film, 5 mins*), 1969, 26,160 b/w photographs and offset prints, 30x40 cm each. Private Collection. Exhibition view: *Emilio Prini*, Fondazione Merz, 29/10/2019-09/02/2020. Courtesy Fondazione Merz, Archivio Emilio Prini. (Photo by Renato Ghiazza).

the inscription reads "the recorder records up to the consumption of the mechanism" on the left, and "the used recorder using a used equipment records up to the consumption of the mechanism" on the right. A political critique is played out in the title: the word *standard*, an anglicism, relates to the American model of production, implying the commodification of human life by virtue of its meaning. Recorders do not record anything specifically, rather they expose themselves and the control and 'registration' operated on individuals. Humans are objectified, no margin of subjectivity is left, even to the artist, who hides behind industrial and automatic processes. The automa-

tism induced by standardized practices evokes the depersonalization of individual and collective life, which follows the ritual imposed by standard systems. In 1971, on the occasion of a solo show titled *Merce Tipo Standard* [*Commodity Standard Type*], the artist positioned sound and video recorders recording each other;[20] in a sort of everlasting happening, whose use of closed-circuit system may be aligned with the work of Dan Graham, the viewers saw themselves as the powerless cases of a 'registration' procedure described by Foucault.

The reduction of the subjectivity of the author and the receivers encapsulated in Prini's work is a political statement. The sense of anti-subjectivity that his work achieves encompasses the *aesthetic of administration* in all the invisible power of *registration*. As is consistent with the major trends in international conceptual art, the work of Emilio Prini confronts us with the loss of identity in modern society and the disciplinary power entailed by any process of standardization.

Fig. 4. Emilio Prini, *Standard – L'U.S.A. USA* (*Standard – The U.S.A. USES*), 1969, Print on paper, 112x87 cm, Courtesy Sammlung Goetz, Munich, Archivio Emilio Prini. (Photo by Genevieve Hanson/Hauser & Wirth).

Notes

* Special thanks to Chiara Caroppo, Christiane Meyer-Stoll, Sara Moneta, Valentina Pero, and Timotea Austoni Prini.

1 B.H.D. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions", *October* 55 (1990): pp. 105-193.

2 See: https://www.etymonline.com/word/standard.

3 *Ivi.*

4 A. Reinahrdt, "Twelve Rules for a New Academy", *Art News* 56, no. 3 (1957): p. 38.

5 M. Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (New York: The New Press, 1997), I, p. 18.

6 Id., *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 183.

7 B.H.D. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969", cit., p. 143.

8 I. Walker, "'A Kind of a "Huh?"': The Siting of *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (1962)", in P. Di Bello, C. Wilson, S. Zamir, eds., *The Photobook: From Talbot to Ruscha and Beyond* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012), pp. 111-128.

9 J. Coplans, "Edward Ruscha Discusses his Perplexing Publications", *Artforum* 3, no. 5 (1965): p. 25.

10 See the interview with Paul Kastrom, in E. Ruscha, *Leave any Information at the Signal* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2002), pp. 153-154.

11 B.H.D. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969", cit., p. 136.

12 L. Weiner, *Statements* (New York: Seth Siegelaub, 1968), n.p.

13 A. Panzini, *Dizionario moderno. Supplemento ai dizionari italiani* (Milano: Hoepli, 1905), p. 462.

14 N. Bätzner, M. Disch, C. Meyer-Stoll, V. Pero, eds., *Entrare nell'opera: Processes and Performative Attitudes in Arte Povera* (Köln: Walther König, 2019), pp. 519-520.

15 B.H.D. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969", cit., p. 126.

16 See the photo by Giorgio Colombo in G. Celant, *+ spazi. Le gallerie Toselli* (Milano: Johan & Levi, 2019), p. 261.

17 G. Celant, ed., *Conceptual Art Arte Povera Land Art* (Torino: Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, 1970), n.p.

18 Titled *Magnet*, the video was made for the exhibition *Gennaio 70* in Bologna, see M. Disch, C. Meyer-Stoll, V. Pero, eds., *Entrare nell'opera*, cit., p. 524.

19 *Ivi.*

20 M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, "Lettera da Roma", *Art International* 16, no. 1 (1972): pp. 58-59.

From Art Criticism to Art History: Challenging the Environmental Exclusion in the Writings of Nouveau Réalisme in the Transatlantic World

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Introduction

Tuez-les tous, Dieu reconnaîtra les siens (1961),[1] an accumulation of used insect sprayers by Arman (1928-2005) tells of the inevitable death of pests. At the turn of the 1960s, Arman went bargain-hunting for objects at flea markets or went through bins to find the materials for his sculptures. His colleague Martial Raysse (1936) preferred opting for the colorful packages and brand-new objects, including plastic ones, that filled the supermarket shelves. In Paris, in 1962, Christo (1935-2020) erected an "iron curtain",[2] a wall of barrels "meant for the transport of gasoline and oil for cars".[3] While these artists found their artistic materials in the world of goods and exchanges, Yves Klein (1928-1962) was pondering over the sensitive potentials of the IKB color to occupy space and signify invisibility. In his text *Ma position dans le combat entre la ligne et la couleur*, he declared that his artistic research was topical in the atomic era, in which the material and physical world "[could] disappear overnight to give way to the most abstract things imaginable".[4]

Plastic, pesticides, garbage, oil, and atomic power resonate like potential ecological hazards. Raw materials for the Nouveaux Réalistes' artworks conjure up environmental issues that have been set aside in the interpretations of their work.[5] Arman, Martial Raysse, Christo, and Yves Klein, together with Gérard Deschamps (1937), Raymond Hains (1926-2005), Niki de Saint Phalle (1930-2002), Mimmo Rotella (1918-2006), Daniel Spoerri (1930), Jean Tinguely (1925-1991), and Jacques Villeglé (1926), belonged to the neo-avant-garde group of Nouveau Réalisme launched by the art critic Pierre Restany in Paris at the turn of the 1960s. The objects used as they were found by the artists were considered as an objective tautological and sociological appropriation of what is real. They expressed the ebullient urban and industrial environment of the French booming economy of the 1960s. These ready-made objects distanced them-selves from their dadaist heritage, as they were declared to be "40 degrees above Dada",[6] that is to say, devoid of any polemical tone and aggression. Following these official declarations, Nouveau Réalisme could only mirror a society without any shadows. Consequently, the relationships it established with its immediate environment excluded ecological concerns. For that reason, I would like to investigate the gap between the environmental issues conjured up in artworks and their denial in the historiography dedicated to this neo-avant-garde.

This approach may be deemed anachronic. We could object to a contemporary point of view determined by a growing awareness of the ecological ravages caused by human activity. As global warming and the extinction of species are increasingly being felt, ecology delves into mainstream public debates and shapes our representations of the environment. The notions of environment and ecology, often used interchangeably in common language nowadays, stem from a long history. The word 'ecology' appeared in 1866 through the pen of the German biologist Ernst Haeckel to designate the study of organisms with their environments. From the field of science, the notion of ecology entered the political field and common discourse at the turn of the 1970s. Alongside this discursive shift, 'environment', meaning 'what surrounds', gradually became a synonym for 'ecology', implying a concern to protect the environment from human activity.[7] 'Environment' also became an institutional term with the creation of the United States' Environmental Protection Agency in 1970 and several Ministries for the Environment in OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. In France, the first Ministry for the Environment was created in 1971 and the first green candidate, René Dumont, campaigned for the French presidency in 1974. Thus, ecology gained more visibility at the turn of the seventies, a decade after the creation of Nouveau Réalisme.

However, environmental reflexivity existed before, in other terms and through other representations.[8]

By highlighting environmental issues not considered in the interpretation of artworks classified under the banner of Nouveau Réalisme, this paper is indebted to ecocriticism, as defined by Alan C. Braddock:

> Briefly defined, ecocriticism emphasizes issues of environmental interconnectedness, sustainability, and justice in cultural interpretation. When historically oriented, ecocriticism may bring attention to neglected evidence of past ecological and proto-ecological sensibility or it may cast canonical works and figures in a new light by revealing previously unnoticed complexity regarding environmental concerns.[9]

The polysemic works by the Nouveaux Réalistes encompass the ambivalence of their multifaceted contemporary capitalist world, including its ecological side-effects, whether it is explicitly recognized by the artists and critics or not. In addition, regarding environmental issues, Nouveau Réalisme inevitably integrates a wider transnational context than its Parisian base, where it has been tied by its historiography. The circulation of the Nouveaux Réalistes in the United States, a country France was eager to catch up with economically, provides an asymmetric counterpoint to the French situation.[10] These transatlantic perspectives aim at unsettling the environmental exclusion anchored to the discursive framework of Nouveau Réalisme.

A Thrilling Modern Nature

In the first manifesto of the group in 1960, Nouveau Réalisme was described as the expression of human activities and exchanges.[11] The second manifesto was more specific when it stated that the fragments the artists found came from: "the city, the street, the factory and mass production".[12] Artists could find their language, as well as their materials, in their immediate, fast-paced everyday surroundings which were a stage for efficiency, productivity, and leisure. This context was associated with an ambiguous notion of nature in the third and last manifesto of the group in 1963. According to Restany, the Nouveaux Réalistes seized "*the nature of the XXth century*".[13] Although defining this nature by the XXth century could suggest an evolving nature through time, from an uncontaminated state to a conquered one, the nature described by Restany exclusively results

from human activity and is fully emancipated from an original state of nature. The critic claimed "the return of an *anthropocentric* naturalism"[14] from both sides of the Atlantic by artists using found objects. Naturalism, as a polysemic term, can refer to a philosophy that considers nature as a fundamental principle at the core of our understanding of the world, as well as to the literature of Émile Zola (1840-1902) who strove to give a faithful and accurate account of XIXth-century society. But the emphasis on the term 'anthropocentric' tips the scale in favor of a vision of the world determined by human values and activities, to the detriment of natural laws. This idea of a 'new' nature, which paradoxically separates human societies from nature, was understood as an autonomous system evolving independently from human societies. In addition, the exclusive focus on nature within the scope of the urban context ignores its connection with near or remote spaces as providers of material resources. As such, it reflects a capitalist ideology that considers human and social nature as an alternative that develops through its own means of production.[15] This is in contradiction with ecological concerns for a balanced relationship between human societies and their near or remote surroundings. Since its inception, Nouveau Réalisme has been part of a system where ecology could not exist.

This idea of nature aligned with the myth of modernity in the aftermath of the Second World War, which associated progress with economic growth and productivity. To describe the period of scientific, technical, and industrial development in the aftermath of the Second World War until the beginning of the 1970s, Jean Fourastié chose the enthusiastic term "les Trente Glorieuses",[16] which excluded the environmental issues caused by modernization until recent rewritings.[17] This optimistic point of view on the post-war decades resulted from his staunch, biased commitment to a productivist economic system at the end of the 1940s and 1950s, before it became part of history.[18] Similarly, Nouveau Réalisme made its way into art history through its active promotion by a founding father whose disregard towards ecology had little to do with his right-wing political position (as was common to the whole political spectrum at that time), but instead was a reflection and demonstration of his adherence to mainstream modernist ideology. In art history too, a consensual narrative embracing post-war progress and consumer society clung to historiography.[19]

An Unheeded 'Metamorphosis in Nature'

Being one of the few French art critics to recognize the growing influence of the American art scene after the Second World War, Restany was eager to expand his neo-avant-garde group across the Atlantic Ocean. However, the choice to get closer to the American art scene was also based on ideological affinities. France, in ruins after the war, benefited from the help of the United States through the European Recovery Program, signed in 1947, which fostered the reconstruction of the country. In addition, with the growing Soviet threat at the beginning of the Cold War, France – among other Western European Countries – and the United States, became military allies when they signed the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949. Although the Western bloc that France belonged to was not homogenous, the American way of life was seductive, and the capitalist economic model was a driving force to rebuild the country. In this context, Restany argued that the Nouveaux Réalistes and the American neo-dada artists, such as Jasper Johns (1930) and Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008), shared a common nature, while specifying that the Americans were in contact with an industrial society that emerged earlier. In the *New Realists* exhibition organized at the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York in 1962, he expected his artists to be grouped with those he deemed their equivalents – the American neo-dadaists. According to his plan, he wrote the text *A Metamorphosis in Nature* for the catalogue, where he stated:

> In Europe, as well as in the United States, we are finding new directions in nature, for contemporary nature is mechanical, industrial and flooded with advertisements [...] The reality of everyday life has now become the factory and the city. Born under the twin signs of standardization and efficiency, extroversion is the rule of the new world [...].[20]

However, upon his arrival in New York, he discovered that the American artists soon to be known as 'pop artists' had replaced the neo-dadaists initially planned for the exhibition and taken over the show.[21] The art critic Brian O'Doherty, in his two exhibition reviews published in the New York Times, saw in the American artists' works a satire of mass market and mass culture, as he compared them to throwaway objects with a social commentary.[22] Concerning the European New Realists, his laconic comments such as "bad" or "good",[23] were representative of a dominant chauvinism towards recent European art. The French critic's considerations, associating the emergence of new artistic languages with a new contemporary society, were neither discussed to apprehend the Nouveaux Réalistes' artworks nor to see affinities with the American artists. The historiography that followed the transfer of Nouveau Réalisme to the United States focused on this collective exhibition to map competing national artistic categories rather than to consider how American and European artists could have interacted in a shared capitalist, urban, industrial, military, and economic transatlantic world.[24] In addition, the New Realists' show became a textbook case in American art history. It underlined the mixed reception of Nouveau Réalisme in the country and dismissed subsequent works made by some of its members that brought up important ecological issues, sometimes unequivocally, in the United States.

The USA: a Change in Scale

The environmental issues conveyed by the Nouveaux Réalistes' artworks stemmed from a way of producing, exchanging, and consuming, as well as from a way of waging war in an international context. Arman's accumulations of insect sprayers do not only refer to the French chemical product brand Fly Tox patented in 1934. It slightly precedes warnings against the toxicity of pesticides published in *Silent Spring* by the American biologist Rachel Carson in 1962. The sculpture, ironically titled *Tuez-les tous, Dieu reconnaîtra les siens*, meaning 'Kill them all, God will recognize his own' gives the pests hope for salvation. According to the legend, the sentence was supposedly pronounced by an abbot during the sack of Béziers, in France, during the Middle Ages, in 1209. The military reference is also reminiscent of the use of chemicals for war purposes, including the use of DDT by the Allied forces during the Second World War.[25]

Environmental damage was not to be attributed only to the United States. However, the artists might have encountered ecological drawbacks of consumer society that appeared on a larger scale in the United States.[26] In Paris, Christo planned to pile up rusty oil barrels labeled with various brand names such as ESSO, SHELL, and BP, which were involved in international geopolitical strategies of oil exploitation and distribution. In the United States too, in subsequent projects, he stacked barrels – this time shiny ones – in places known

for being strategic areas for the oil industry. He created *1,240 Oil Barrels Mastaba* at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia in 1968, a city which, during the XIXth century, flourished thanks to the black gold industry. The use of barrels was seen on an exponential scale in an unrealized monumental mastaba shape for Houston-Galveston, one of the major oil ports in Texas in 1970.[27] The project, 200 feet high, would have depicted the seemingly unlimited use and trade of oil in the United States.

The idea of an overflowing production was explored by Jean Tinguely's machine *Rotozaza no. 2,* which was activated on the occasion of the congress Vision 67: Survival and Growth at the New York University's Loeb Center in 1967. The work mimicked an industrial assembly line, except that it destroyed bottles instead of producing them. The machine's performance epitomized the absurd production of large quantities of objects meant to be destroyed, as well as the waste of energy required for it. The performance was accompanied by Clarice River singing: "*Too many tellyphones, too many cars, too many cigars, too many guns, too much of everything*".[28] Through accumulations of garbage, Arman gave a similar account of waste, although less overtly. The 15-minute film *Sanitation,* made in collaboration with Jean-Pierre Mirouze in 1972, shows the side effects of a city's activities. It starts with street views, shop windows and neon lights displaying an attractive, entertaining urban life. Behind the scenes, this world of plenty produces an inevitable huge amount of garbage, whose putrefaction is transferred to the city's outskirts. The film follows the garbage trucks of the *Sanitation* company through the city until they reach a dump on an artificial island near Battery Park. The shots create striking contrasts between the growing mountains of garbage in the forefront and the American symbols, such as the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building in the background. It pictures a world that is about to drown in its own invasive garbage.[29] Arman witnessed a difference between the French garbage at the beginning of the sixties and that of the Americans:

> Just a little bit of dust, a lot of paper, little thread for package, container for yoghurt and ceramic, box for cheese in wood. It was very [...] almost primitive comparatively to the supermarket American garbage.[30]

The art critic David Bourdon also compared Christo's packaging to the growing use of packages in industrial societies, especially in the United States.[31] However, despite an economic gap between the two countries, France witnessed a rapid economic growth in the sixties that went hand in hand with an Americanization of its way of life. Between 1960 and 1972, household waste rose by 50% in France.[32] Arman witnessed this change in the garbage he gathered for his new *poubelles* series at the turn of the 1970s: "you cannot say if they were made in France or in the United States".[33]

Conclusion: an Unwavering Writing Disconnecting the Transatlantic World

Restany's promotional activities strongly shaped the narrative of the Nouveau Réalisme by providing art historians with convenient landmarks, frames, and classifications.[34] Thus, ecological denial, in accordance with the myth of modern progress, quickly shifted from art criticism to art history without being questioned. Encouraged by international competition, especially between Paris and New York, artistic categories based on national borders and defined by art criticism were perpetuated in art history under fixed labels such as Neo-dadaism, Pop, or Nouveau Réalisme. Restany frequently emphasized the American activities of his neo-avant-garde group to cast a favorable light on their international circulation rather than widen the artworks' interpretative scope. As such, the critical dialogues which could have been established between artworks by comparing their similar, interconnected, and transnational environments were excluded. The ecological resonance brought forth by some artworks remained outside the battles art critics engaged in during the cold war. In his book *Les Nouveaux Réalistes*, published in 1968, Restany insisted once more on the pragmatic and anthropocentric character of the modern world seized by the artists, a world "created by humankind for humankind, for its own and entire use",[35] a "product of this unceasing human activity we call progress".[36]

The notion of ecology would appear later through Restany's pen. It would be associated with the Argentine artist Uriburu, who colored water with a green pigment to warn about pollution. In 1982, in a very emphatic text, Restany wrote:

> In the middle of the Falklands war, Uriburu's language talks about oxygen, chlorophyll, and peace.

This artist's language is global, it concerns all of us in the medium to long run; let us listen to him if we want to avoid the apocalyptic catastrophe that would entail the deforestation of the two million square kilometers of Amazonian green land.[37]

According to the critic, Uriburu's Argentinian background and landscape represent an unspoiled nature to be preserved, described as: "the ideal symbol of a wealthy planet", that the artist "felt threatened by the industrialisation from the far north".[38] However, what was at stake, for the critic, were not the transnational tensions with regard to environmental preservation, but rather sensitivity and perception, in accordance with the concept of "integral naturalism" he conceived during his trip to the Amazon in 1978.[39] He declared he was more interested

in "fighting against subjective pollution than against objective pollution, [...] than the one in the air and in water".[40] He drew a line between the 'original' and 'industrial' landscapes, which both shared potentials for creation: "Two eco-systems find themselves face to face. They both function according to the same emotional and sensitive logic in the development of the creative process".[41] Between what the critic called "two senses of nature", the "ancestral one" and the "modern" one, he stated: "We can opt for one or the other".[42] Uriburu's primitive nature only added to the Nouveau Réalisme's industrial one, in contradiction with ecological ideas of interconnected systems on a global scale. Additionally, when the critic started to write about Uriburu, his narrative of the Nouveau Réalisme had already crystallized in historiography for at least two decades.

Notes

[1] Arman, *Tuez-les tous, Dieu reconnaîtra les siens*, 1961, accumulation of Fly-Tox insect sprayers in a wooden box, 80x60x12 cm. The artist made a similar sculpture few years later: *Tuez-les tous, Dieu reconnaîtra les siens*, 1964, accumulation of insect sprayers in a cardboard box made of plexiglas, 60x60x60 cm.

[2] Christo and Jeanne-Claude, *Wall of Barrels – The Iron Curtain*, temporary installation, rue Visconti, Paris, 1962.

[3] My translation from the French: "Exclusivement construit avec les tonneaux métalliques destinés au transport de l'essence et de l'huile pour voitures", in Christo and Jeanne-Claude, *Projet du mur provisoire de tonneaux métalliques (Rue Visconti, Paris 6)*, 1961, collage of two photographs by Shunk-Kender and a typed text, 24x40.6 cm. https://christojeanneclaude.net/mobile/projects?p=wall-of-oil-barrels---the-iron-curtain.

[4] My translation from the French: "Il nous faut – et ceci n'est pas une exagération – penser que nous vivons à l'ère atomique, où tout ce qui est matériel et physique peut disparaître du jour au lendemain pour céder la place à tout ce que nous pouvons imaginer de plus abstrait". Y. Klein, "Ma position dans le combat entre la ligne et la couleur", Paris, April 16, 1958, in M.-A. Sichère, D. Semin, eds., *Le dépassement de la problématique de l'art et autres écrits* (Paris: Éditions Beaux-Arts de Paris, 2011): pp. 50-51.

[5] Ecology in neo-avant-garde practices has received little attention. However, it is worth mentioning: B. Ramade, *Infortunes de l'art écologique américain depuis les années 1960: proposition d'une réhabilitation critique*, PhD. thesis (Université Paris 1, 2013); M. Fowkes, *The Green Bloc: Neo-avant-garde Art and Ecology under Socialism* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2015); J. Nisbet, *Ecologies, Environments, and Energy Systems in Art of the 1960s and 1970s* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2014).

[6] P. Restany, *À 40° au-dessus de Dada* (Paris: Galerie J, 1961).

[7] The word 'environment' comes from *environner*, which originally means 'to surround'. The etymology of 'ecology' comes from the Greek *oikos* meaning 'house' and *logos* meaning 'science'. For a detailed semantic history of ecology and environment see: G. Petiot, "Les mots de l'écologie", in *Mots. Les langages du politique* 39 (1994): pp. 69-78; J. Picoche, "Champ actanciel du mot *environnement* et discours sur l'environnement", in L. Panier, S. Rémi-Giraud, eds., *La polysémie ou l'empire des sens: lexique, discours, représentations* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2003), pp. 255-262.

[8] P. Acot, *Histoire de l'écologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988); M. Bess, *The Light-Green Society: Ecology and Technological Modernity in France, 1960-2000* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); C. Pessis, S. Topçu, C. Bonneuil, eds., *Une autre histoire des «Trente Glorieuses»: Modernisation, contestations et pollutions dans la France d'après-guerre* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2013); C.-F. Mathis, J.-F. Mouhot, eds., *Une protection de l'environnement à la française* (Seyssel: Éditions Champ Vallon, 2013).

[9] A.C. Braddock, "Ecocritical Art History", *Art in America* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2009): p. 26; For further developments on ecocriticism, see L. Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005). More specifically, in the field of art history, see A.C. Braddock, "From Nature to Ecology: The Emergence of Ecocritical Art History", in J. Davis, J.A. Greenhill, J.D. LaFountain, eds., *A Companion to American Art* (Malden, MA and Oxford, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015).

[10] On the development of the transnational turn in the ecocritical approach see S. Oppermann, "Transnationalization of Ecocriticism", in *Anglia – Zeitschrift für englische Philologie* 130, no. 3 (2012): pp. 401-419.

[11] P. Restany, "Les nouveaux réalistes", April 16, 1960, Milan in *Les nouveaux réalistes: un manifeste de la nouvelle peinture* (Paris: Éditions planète, 1968), pp. 204-205.

[12] P. Restany, "À quarante degrés au-dessus de dada", May 1961, Paris, in *Les nouveaux réalistes*, cit., pp. 205-207.

[13] Emphasized in italics in the text. P. Restany, *Le nouveau réalisme: que faut-il en penser?*, February 1963, Munich, in *Les nouveaux réalistes*, cit., pp. 207-212.

[14] *Ivi.*

[15] On the idea of nature produced by capitalism see N. Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (London and New York: Verso, 2010 [first ed. 1984]): pp. 49-91.

[16] Literally 'the Glorious Thirty'.

[17] C. Pessis, S. Topçu, C. Bonneuil, eds., *Une autre histoire des «Trente Glorieuses»*, cit. For a critical historic survey of this period in a broader context outside France see: S.A. Marglin, J.B. Schor, eds., *The Golden Age of Capitalism: Reinterpreting the Postwar Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

[18] Fourastié wrote successful popular books on economy, he was a teacher and appointed advisor of Jean Monnet in

the context of the European Recovery Plan (ERP) to elaborate a plan to increase productivity. For a critical account of Fourastié's diverse activities, see "Jean Fourastié, apôtre de la productivité: Dire et administrer le progrès", in C. Pessis, S. Topçu, C. Bonneuil, eds., *Une autre histoire des «Trente Glorieuses»*, cit., pp. 81-98.

[19] The short-lived PSU (Parti Socialiste Unifié) is an exception in the 1960s France. The party was against nuclear power and promoted self-governance.

[20] P. Restany, "A Metamorphosis in Nature", in *The New Realists* (New York: Sidney Janis Gallery, 1962).

[21] For a detailed account of this exhibition see K. Cabañas, "'Maigres et poussiéreux': les Nouveaux Réalistes à New York", in C. Debray, ed., *Le Nouveau Réalisme* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, Centre Pompidou, 2007), pp. 126-127.

[22] B. O'Doherty, "Avant-Garde Revolt: 'New Realists' Mock U.S. Mass Culture in Exhibition at Sidney Janis", *The New York Times* (October 31, 1962): p. 59.

[23] B. O'Doherty, "'Pop' goes the New Art", *The New York Times* (November 4, 1962), p. 23.

[24] Rather, canonical American history puts forward the preeminent role the United States had enjoyed around the world since the rise of Abstract Expressionism in publications such as *The Triumph of American Painting* by Irving Sandler, published in 1970.

[25] DDT was widely used by the American army since 1942 in the Pacific to fight typhus and malaria. E. Russell, *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with Chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[26] A comparison between British, American, and world carbon dioxide emissions from the XIXth century to 1950 shows the overwhelming historical share of emissions of the United States. In 1955, 55% of carbon dioxide emissions were produced by Great Britain and the USA. The figures are based on the Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center. C. Bonneuil, J.-B. Fressoz, *L'événement Anthropocène: La Terre, l'histoire et nous* (Paris: Seuil, 2016 [first ed. 2013]), p. 138.

[27] In a collage for the project, Christo chose the title *One Million Stacked Oil Drums (Project for Houston-Galveston Area Texas)*. The work was drawn in pencil, charcoal, and wax crayon and comprised other media, such as a photograph by Harry Shunk, a map, and tape. 71x56 cm. https://christojeanneclaude.net/projects/projects-with-barrels.

[28] During the performance, she was holding a paper whose copy might be the one housed at the Museum Tinguely in Basel, on which we can read: "For you 1 zillion cars/for you 1 million tampax/Drink machine/for you/eat machines/80,000 teacups/for you/buy machine/9 million shoes/for you/be machine for you".

[29] Arman, Jean-Pierre Mirouze, *Sanitation*, 15 min, 16 mm, color film, 1972. For a comment on the film see J.-M. Bouhours, "De la petite mort à l'apocalypse", in J.-M. Bouhours, ed., *Arman* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 2010), pp. 94-99.

[30] Arman, interview with Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, November 1991, video, 43 minutes, The Artists Documentation Program.

[31] David Bourdon cited a specific publication: *The role of packaging in the U.S. economy: report to the American Foundation for Management Research, Inc* by A. D. Little, published in 1966, to interpret Christo's work in relation to the economy. D. Bourdon, *Christo* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1970). He would later write a book which testified to his interest in the environment: *Designing the Earth: The Human Impulse to Shape Nature* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1995).

[32] C. Bonneuil, S. Frioux, "Les 'Trente Ravageuses'?", in C. Pessis, S. Topçu, C. Bonneuil, eds., *Une autre histoire des «Trente Glorieuses»*, cit., p. 49.

[33] Arman, interview with Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, November 1991, video, 43 minutes, The Artists Documentation Program.

[34] The art critic Michel Ragon listed Restany's activities in the foreword of his book dedicated to the Nouveau Réalisme: "organising exhibitions, being member of juries, spreading new artistic actions for all new techniques: cinema, television, radio, slides, recorded tapes". My translation from the French: "organisateur d'exposition, de membre de jurys, de diffuseur des nouvelles actions de l'art pour toutes les techniques nouvelles; cinéma, télévision, radio, diapositives, bandes enregistrées". M. Ragon in "De la critique considérée comme une création", in P. Restany, *Les nouveaux réalistes: un manifeste de la nouvelle peinture* (Paris: Éditions planète, 1968), p. 11.

[35] "The artist only has to choose 'his' work in this world, which is a canvas, in this nature created by humankind and for humankind, for its own and entire use". My translation from the French: "L'artiste n'a qu'à choisir 'son' œuvre dans ce monde qui est un tableau, dans cette nature créée par l'homme et pour l'homme, pour son propre et entier usage". P. Restany, *Les nouveaux réalistes*, cit., p. 89.

[36] My translation from the French: "Produit de cette incessante activité des hommes que l'on nomme le progrès, la morphologie du réel est en perpétuel changement. Le phénomène urbain y occupe une place de plus en plus importante". *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[37] Restany probably met Uriburu in the 1970s. My translation from the French: "En pleine guerre des Iles Malouines le langage d'Uriburu nous parle d'oxygène, de chlorophylle et de paix. Le langage de cet artiste argentin est planétaire, il nous concerne tous à plus ou moins long-terme; écoutons-le si nous voulons éviter la catastrophe apocalyptique qui entrainerait le déboisement des deux millions de kilomètres carrés de vert amazonien; [...]". P. Restany, *Voir la vie en vert*, reproduction of a three-page manuscript, Paris, May 1982, Collection INHA-Archives de la critique d'art, Rennes, [FR ACA PREST ART 364 (1/4)].

[38] My translation from the French: "le symbole idéal de la bonne santé de la nature", "il le sent menacé par l'industrialisation venue du grand nord". P. Restany, *URIBURU UTOPIA DEL SUR*, typed text, 68 pages, undated, Collection INHA-Archives de la critique d'art, Rennes, [FR ACA PREST ART 364 (1/4)].

[39] P. Restany, "Manifeste du Rio Negro. Du naturalisme intégral", August 1978, in *L'autre face de l'art/L'altra faccia dell'arte/The Other Face of Art*, Milano, Domus, 1979. On Restany's trip with Sepp Baendereck and Frans Krajcberg along the Rio Negro and Integral Naturalism see C. Palumbo, *A Amazônia como lugar de conflito: o Naturalismo Integral de Pierre Restany*, PhD thesis (Universidade de São Paulo, 2018).

[40] My translation from the French: "Il s'agit de lutter beaucoup plus contre la pollution subjective que contre la pollution objective, la pollution des sens et du cerveau, beaucoup plus que celle de l'air ou de l'eau". P. Restany, *URIBURU UTOPIA DEL SUR*, cit.

[41] My translation from the French: "Deux éco-systèmes se trouvent face à face: l'originel et l'industriel. Ils fonctionnent tous les deux selon la même logique émotionnelle et sensible dans l'élaboration du processus créateur". *Ivi.*

[42] My translation from the French: "Nous vivons aujourd'hui deux sens de la nature. Celui ancestral du donné planétaire, celui moderne de l'acquis industriel et urbain. On peut opter pour l'un ou pour l'autre [...]". *Ivi.*

Bringing the Spectator to the Foreground: Julio Le Parc and Lygia Clark at the Venice Biennales (1966 and 1968)

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Introduction

The Argentinean Julio Le Parc (1928-) and the Brazilian Lygia Clark (1920-1988) both lived in Paris in the 1960s and had won over the attention of a few European critics who had a common interest in new forms of expression that went beyond painting and saw the invitation to spectator participation as one of the main contributions of contemporary art. Combining experimentalism and critique, transcending the image by highlighting the 'direct experiential element', their proposals revolved around the observer and were no longer self-exhausting.

However, as we shall see, although they knew each other and their work was exhibited in the same spaces and commented on by the same critics, Clark and Le Parc were not friends and did not share the same ideas about artistic forms of social engagement.[1] During these years, in Europe, their names were linked to kineticism, both by cultural agents wishing to quickly construct a history for the movement and those who were truly interested in their work. At that time (the 1960s), kinetic art was rapidly gaining admirers throughout Europe, and the term 'kineticism' was still being established by various intellectuals and artistic groups, such as GRAV (in France), New Tendencies (in former Yugoslavia), Zero (in Germany), Gruppo N and Gruppo T (in Italy).

For many, kinetic art could contribute to the building of a future beyond alienation and oppression for different reasons. Those who were most enthusiastic about the emancipatory potential of the relationship between art and technology exalted its parallels with science and other fields of knowledge; others, however, underlined the political and critical character of the kinetic proposals, their capacity to blur traditional artistic codes, to demystify the role of the artist and to break away from the notion of a unique artwork.[2]

In his 1968 book on the subject, *Kinetic Art: The Language of Movement*, the British critic Guy Brett acknowledged the importance of the South American contribution to kineticism, especially regarding spectator participation. At that time, Brett was one of the European critics committed to showing the originality of the production of South American contemporary artists and his approach to their work was both generous and thorough. He considered Clark's and Hélio Oiticica's works "a specifically Brazilian contribution to art, a kind of kineticism of the body", pointing out that "their work has become technically more primitive as it has evolved. But also more fundamental".[3] Concerning Le Parc, however, he does not shy away from expressing harsh criticism of his work, stating, for example, that "he may be unconcerned or unable to bring an idea to the level of expression".[4]

The years 1965-67 were perhaps the most influential in terms of Kineticism, before the protests of 1968 in Europe broadened and radicalised the debate on the role of art and the artist in society and triggered a firmer political engagement. Important awards in major international contests at the time, such as the Biennials of Venice (Le Parc 1966; Riley and Schöffer 1968), São Paulo (Soto 1963; Vasarely 1965; Cruz-Diez 1967) and Paris (GRAV 1963), celebrated artists associated with the movement, while also stimulating a debate on the true reach of its proposals.

An Unprecedented Achievement for a South American: Julio Le Parc's Award at the 33rd Venice Biennale

In 1966, Julio Le Parc won the coveted Grand Prize at the 33rd Venice Biennale. He was 38 years old and had lived in France for six years. Like his friend, the Venezuelan Jesús Rafael Soto, he had arrived in France (from Argentina) with a grant (sponsored by the French Cultural Service) and was in search of artistic and personal development. Soto and Carlos Cruz-Diez, another Venezuelan who was also living in Paris at the time,

introduced him to the French art dealer Denise René, who was committed to geometric abstraction and kinetic art.

However, unlike Soto and Cruz-Diez, who gambled on solo careers, Le Parc quickly associated himself to other young artists of different nationalities, including the Argentinean Horacio Garcia Rossi, with whom he founded the collective GRAV (Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel), whose first exhibition, in 1961, was held at the Denise René gallery.[5] The group soon became renowned in France thanks to its *Mazes* and *Games Room*, assembled at the 1963 and 1965 editions of the Paris Biennial, and to frequent media actions, such as the publication of several small manifestos and critical texts about the art system. The GRAV's proposals were the result of a collective effort and intended to spur the spectator into action by creating spaces of leisure and engagement where play would help in the transformation of individual and social behaviour.

Julio Le Parc was the only artist to represent Argentina at the 1966 Venice Biennale, with 41 kinetic works and objects, including projections, mobiles, vibrating mirrors, and games, made between 1962 and 1966. It is worth noting that Le Parc's presentation in the exhibition's official catalogue was extremely succinct: 22 lines that emphasised his participation in the GRAV group and the open nature of his propositions, which called into question the overvaluation of the artist-creator.

Le Parc's rooms were, according to the news of the time, some of the most visited of the whole event. They contained works that encouraged spectator participation, whether by placing them in polysensorial environments, or by inviting them to manipulate objects that changed their visual perception, such as the *Anteojos para un mirar otro* ('Spectacles for another view') or *Espejos vibratiles* ('Mirrors in vibration'). His award was an unprecedented achievement for a South American, although three other artists from the region had already been awarded smaller prizes.[6] His selection surprised everyone.

It should be noted that in 1964 Robert Rauschenberg had won the Grand Prize at the 32nd Venice Biennale, overcoming Roger Bissière, a candidate supported by France. For many, this was due to a major campaign orchestrated by the US government and led by Alan Salomon, commissioner of the United States delegation and one of the first promoters of pop art.[7] The reaction of most European critics was unequivocally unfavourable. In 1966, probably due to the political issues surrounding the Rauschenberg award, there was an anti-American sentiment in the air, especially on the part of the French critics, which possibly led the jury to choose Le Parc, who was still relatively unknown in the international circuit.

However, the prize awarded to Le Parc at the 1966 Venice Biennale did not extend to the GRAV group, and this also caused considerable controversy. According to Denise René, the award generated two distinct results, representing at once the legitimisation of kineticism and the beginning of the end of the GRAV collective project, which dissolved as a group in 1968.[8]

In her book *Argentinos de Paris*, Isabel Plante discussed at length of the effects of Le Parc's award, not only for certain Argentinean cultural agents who had endeavoured to project Argentinean modern and contemporary art beyond its borders since the late 1950s, such as Jorge Romero Brest, but also for some French critics, who were able to relate it to the retrieval of a space of international exposure and recognition for French art, since the artist lived in Paris.[9]

Following the award, Denise René produced an exhibition of the artist's works, which was accompanied by a catalogue that contained photos of the room in Venice, as well as an introduction to Le Parc's work written by Frank Popper, one of the first advocates of kinetic art, entitled *Le Parc et le problème de groupe*.[10]

In 1967, several South American cities hosted a retrospective of Le Parc's works. At the São Paulo Biennial of that same year, Le Parc was part of the Argentinean delegation, along with three other artists, but was given a special room. He exhibited 26 works, similar to those presented at the Venice Biennale, and won one of the purchase prizes awarded to foreign artists.

It must be highlighted that, up to that point, Le Parc had never displayed any interest in taking a critical stance in relation to the art system, even though he was interested in stimulating spectator participation. As Claire Bishop has pointed out in her in-depth study on the subject:

> The artistic backdrop to participatory art in Paris of the 1960s was an idea of democracy as the levelling equality of consumer capitalism. Everyday culture, accessible to all was at the core of this

understanding of democracy; while this stood in some degree in opposition to elitist cultural hierarchies, and to figurative modes of leftist art in the 1950s, it rarely delved into questions of class difference and social inequality.[11]

In the following years, however, Le Parc's practice would take on a firmer political outlook. In May 1968, at the height of the revolutionary events, he became involved with Atelier Populaire, a workshop that printed protest posters, and took part in political demonstrations – actions which would lead him to be temporarily expelled from France.[12] In the 1970s, already back in the country, he organised a series of exhibitions with the intention of denouncing the repressive conditions of several South American countries and the practice of torture of political prisoners by different military dictatorships.

Lygia Clark in Europe: Claiming a Central Place on the International Contemporary Art Scene

Unlike Le Parc or Soto, Lygia Clark had a clear, well-established career when she arrived in Europe in 1968 to participate for the third time in the Venice Bienniale. She was one of the protagonists of the neoconcrete movement, created in 1959 to oppose the extreme rationalism of the Brazilian abstract avant-garde without relinquishing their relationship with constructivist ideas. Clark's work had already been intensively analysed and discussed in Brazil and supported by critics such as Mário Pedrosa and Ferreira Gullar. In 1961, she was awarded the prize for best Brazilian sculptor at the São Paulo Biennial (organised by Pedrosa). In 1954 and 1962, she took part in the Brazilian delegation for the Venice Biennale. Thus, unlike other South American artists who were committed to modernist doctrines and came to Europe throughout the 20th century in search of training or even inspiration – like Le Parc – Clark left Brazil with the certainty that she would leave her mark on the European scene and contribute to mainstream developments in contemporary art.

Clark had lived in Europe before, most recently in 1964, when she had established a contact with artists, critics, and intellectuals who would play key roles in the recognition of her work on the European scene. She had held an exhibition in Stuttgart in February 1964, in a show organised by philosopher Max Bense, and at the Signals

gallery in London in May and June 1965. In those same years, she had partaken in minor collective shows dedicated to kinetic art in France and in the United Kingdom.

Therefore, although one cannot assert that Clark was a renowned artist in the European artistic scene, her work, especially her *Bichos* ('Creatures'), which consisted of hinged aluminium plates whose shapes could be manipulated, had already attracted admirers and provoked reviews and commentaries in the international press. Her desire to grant spectators the power to act in the experience was praised by European critics, who considered this an original contribution.

In the February 1967 edition of the magazine Studio International, dedicated to kinetic art, Cyril Barrett, author of studies into op art, writes commendably about Clark's work. He states that "on the level of spectator participation Lygia Clark is the more solid achievement to date".[13] In 1968, the French avant-garde magazine Robho dedicated an eight-page dossier, entitled *Fusion géneralisée*, to the artist.[14] It contained a series of photographs of Clark's works, as well as texts she wrote and credible remarks about her ideas and artistic proposals. There was also an elegant presentation of her work by the French critic Jean Clay, in which he concludes that as such, its experience is one of the most open to the future, one of the crossroads of current art.

The understanding of Clark's work as kinetic, which in Brazil might have raised eyebrows, was widespread in Europe. Clark, however, would privately reject the association of her work with the proposals of several other artists who encouraged spectator participation at that time, including Le Parc and the GRAV group. In a letter sent to her friend Oiticica in November 1968, she explicitly mentions the subject:

> Regarding the idea of participation, there are weak artists who cannot really express themselves with thought and therefore illustrate the problem. […] In my work, it's not participation for participation and it's not saying, like Le Parc's group, that art is a bourgeois problem. That would be simple and linear. Nothing profound has such simplicity and nothing true is linear.[15]

This indicates that any attempt to compare Clark and Le Parc or find likenesses between the two should be made with great care, as it may conceal

the many differences that exist between the proposals in question. Perhaps they both agreed that expanding the viewer's perception was the first step towards his/her de-alienation and increased autonomy. But, without doubt, the declared emphasis on play and perception in Le Parc's works was not approved of by Clark, who considered the Argentinean's propositions excessively superficial.[16] Unlike those extroverted, playful experiences, Clark was striving to achieve an existential interaction between subject and object. Thus, instead of trying to attract crowds, Clark encouraged a dialogue marked by proximity, bodily sensations induced primarily by touch.

Clark was prominently featured at the 1968 Venice Biennale, as part of the Brazilian delegation, organised that year by the Brazilian art critic Jayme Mauricio. It is worth recalling that Brazil had been under dictatorial rule since the military coup of 1964, but, until the passing of the Institutional Act 5 (AI-5),[17] in December 1968, there was still room for transgressive experiments in art. Censorship, which was becoming more and more felt in the everyday lives of Brazilians, had yet to completely envelop visual arts (music, theatre, and literature were the first types of art to be strongly censored). Moreover, documents obtained at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prove that the Brazilian government actually gave financial support to the whole Brazilian delegation, including their commissioner, and planned a specific expense allowance for Clark's room.

Probably due to the success achieved by Le Parc at the previous Biennale, Brazil (or Jayme Mauricio) seemed to invest almost all of its resources – namely, Clark – and presented 82 of her works in a retrospective of her 10-year oeuvre.[18] The exhibition, presented in a separate room and assembled by the artist herself, who travelled to Venice with the financial support she received, brought together *Superfícies moduladas* ('Modulated Surfaces'), two *Ovos* ('Eggs'), one *Contra-relevo* ('Counter-relief'), almost 30 *Bichos* and some *Trepantes* ('Climbers'), as well as relational objects, body-clothes, and environments, such as *A casa é o corpo* ('The house is the body').

It is worth noting that a separate and refined catalogue was published exclusively for Brazil by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Olivetti, with an introduction and text explaining the selection of works written by Jayme Maurício in Italian, English, and Portuguese.

Clark was widely expected to be awarded a prize at this biennial but, despite the undeniable originality of the works exhibited, she did not win any.[19] Nonetheless, in this troubled edition, the big winners were artists committed to the doctrines of op art and kinetic art: the English Bridget Riley won the Grand Prize for painting and the France-based Hungarian Nicolas Schöffer won the sculpture prize. Regarding South America, only the Colombian Edgar Negret was awarded a prize (by the Fullbright Foundation).

The 1968 Venice Biennale was marked by a series of criticisms, which had started to be made at the Milan Triennial, after the students and workers' protests in France spread through Europe. The event was inaugurated with a strong police presence, due to fears that the works could be damaged, and the awards jury only gathered at the end of the exhibition and not at the start, as was customary. The awards ceremony was postponed, and then abolished for the subsequent biennials. According to the French critic Pierre Restany, the Biennale opened in a "heavy atmosphere, full of petty-minded machinations and laden with opportunism".[20]

The Conditions of Success

Clark remained in Paris until 1976, probably due to the political situation in Brazil, but progressively moved away from the art scene and into a therapeutic activity, motivated by the collective artistic experiences she developed with her students from the newly created UFR d'Arts Plastiques et Sciences de l'Art - Paris 1 (known as Saint Charles), where she began lecturing in 1972, and also by her own personal experience with psychoanalysis.

At that time, she failed to earn the recognition she previously sought, and to the extent she expected, despite having attracted admirers in the European circuit. Indeed, for a long time she was left out of the main narratives of the history of Western art, and has only recently been included in them, perhaps prompted by the retrospective exhibitions held in major European and North American museums since the late 1990s.[21] On the other hand, Le Parc, whose artistic career was almost entirely played out in France, would rapidly become a hotly contested artist on the international commercial circuit.

Alan Bowness's account of the different steps that lead visual artists to success and consecration may help us, despite its schematism, comprehend

the process of gaining an international reputation.[22] According to him, there are four conditions that lead to an artist achieving recognition in the established art world: the first is peer recognition; the second is the attention of those who write and talk about art; the third consists in the recognition of patrons and collectors; while the fourth stage comprises the recognition of the public. Each condition clearly depends on the previous one, and they all work in each other's best interests.

Le Parc, as we have discussed, travelled a more traditional route than Clark, gaining a widespread public recognition very early in his life, with the Venice Grand Prize. This award represented a turning point in his career and stimulated other situations of institutional recognition. Furthermore, Le Parc did not retreat from the commercial circuit, even when his work took a more critical approach.

Clark, on the other hand, worked outside the hegemonic centres for most part of her career. While living in Paris, her ideas and actions led her to gradually distance herself from the traditional art circuit and focus on other forms of engagement. Back in Brazil, whilst still occasionally presenting her works in collective shows, she developed a therapeutic method, the *The Estruturação do self* ('Structuring of the self') that involved manipulating ordinary objects and provoking sensations capable of awakening the body from its torpor. As Suely Rolnik points out, while Clark explored the therapeutic potential of her artistic propositions in her last years, she also revealed the vital power of art itself, therefore creating "an entirely new territory situated neither in the sphere of art as a department of social life [...]; nor in the sphere of therapy [...]; nor in the border between the two".[23]

Notes

[1] Thinkers like Frank Popper, Stephen Bann, Guy Brett, Max Bense and Jean Clay have written about their work during those years, serving sometimes as interlocutors for them.

[2] On the subject of kinetic art and its early reception in Europe, see the many articles published by Arnauld Pierre in recent years, such as "De l'instabilité. Perception visuelle/corporelle de l'espace dans l'environnement cinétique", *Cahiers du Musée national d'art moderne* 78 (Winter 2001-2): pp. 41-69 and "L'art optique et cinétique, quelques enjeux", in *Let's Move* (Brussels: La Patinoire Royale, 2016), pp. 11-18.

[3] G. Brett, *Kinetic art. The language of movement* (London: Studio-Vista, 1968), p. 65.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[5] The group, active between 1960 and 1968, was formed by the artists Horacio Garcia Rossi, Julio Le Parc, Francisco Sobrino, François Morellet, Joël Stein, and Jean-Pierre Yvaral.

[6] Aldemir Martins was awarded the Drawing prize in 1956, and Fagya Ostrower and Antonio Berni the Engraving prize in 1958 and 1962, respectively.

[7] On this subject, see L.J. Monahan, "Cultural Cartography: American Designs at the 1964 Venice Biennale", in S. Guilbaut (ed.), *Reconstructing Modernism. Art in New York, Paris, and Montreal: 1945-1964* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1990), pp. 369-416.

[8] C. Millet, *Conversations avec Denise René* (Paris: Adam Biro, 1991).

[9] I. Plante, *Argentinos de Paris. Arte y viajes culturales durante los años sesenta* (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2013).

[10] In it, Popper deals briefly with the difficult issue of an individual prize having been awarded to an artist deeply involved in the collective creative process. For the full text, see: http://julioleparc.org/franck-popper.html.

[11] C. Bishop, *Artificial hells. Participatory art and the politics of spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 80.

[12] Le Parc was arrested in a raid on June 6, 1968, near the Flins Renault Factory, where people were protesting because the police had allegedly killed a demonstrator. Five months later, the expulsion was suspended due to petitions and press campaigns and Le Parc could return to France.

[13] C. Barrett, "Lygia Clark and spectator participation", in *Studio International* 886 (1967): pp. 83-87.

[14] The dossier was published in the edition number 4 of the Robho magazine, in 1968. It also contained a translation into French of the *Neoconcrete Manifesto*, published in Brazil in 1959.

[15] Letter from L. Clark to H. Oiticica, dated 14 November 1968, in L. Figueiredo, ed., *Lygia Clark. Hélio Oiticica. Cartas, 1964-1974* (Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ, 1996), p. 84.

[16] In that same letter, she also declares that "they (Le Parc's group) reject the most important thing: a thinking process. I believe we (artists) are now proposers and in our proposals, there must be a thought". *Ivi.*

[17] The AI-5 granted the president the power to provisionally close Congress, intervene in the states and municipalities, revoke terms of office and suspend political rights, as well as dismiss or retire civil servants.

[18] The other three members of the Brazilian delegation presented 12 or 13 artworks each.

[19] In a letter to Clark, Oiticica asks her "And Venice, have they judged already?". Letter from H. Oiticica to L. Clark dated 15 October 1968, in L. Figueiredo, ed., *Lygia Clark. Hélio Oiticica. Cartas, 1964-1974* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora UFRJ, 1996), p. 41. A month later, despite not having won any prizes in Venice, she tells her friend, trying to encourage him to come to Europe: "My time has come, there's no doubt, and I think yours has too". *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[20] P. Restany, "Biennales", in P. Cabanne, P. Restany, *L'avant-garde au XXème siècle* (Paris: André Balland, 1969), pp. 110-119.

[21] More recently, in 2015, a major retrospective of her work was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which may have put her on another level in terms of international recognition.

[22] A. Bowness, *The conditions of success: How the modern artist rises to fame* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1989).

[23] S. Rolnik, "Molding a Contemporary Soul: The Empty-Full of Lygia Clark", in R. Carvajal, A. Ruiz (eds.), *The Experimental Exercise of Freedom: Lygia Clark, Gego, Mathias Goeritz, Hélio Oiticica and Mira Schendel* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999), pp. 55-108.

Reverse Engineering Michael Baxandall's Pictorial Plot

Leonardo Impett / Peter Bell

Durham University / Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg

Introduction

The Annunciation of Gabriel to the Virgin Mary is one of the most widely-depicted stories in Christian art – perhaps, we might conjecture, the most widely-depicted dialogue in the West, embodying the start of the New Testament itself.

There are at least tens of thousands of extant depictions of the annunciation – the same story re-told tens of thousands of times, over twenty centuries. A gift for comparative narratology, and beyond the wildest dreams of that kind of computational literary criticism that has become known as Distant Reading. Of course, a number of visual topoi, conventions and formulae have been developed over the centuries: the order of the scene (generally left-to-right),[1] the use of architecture (columns, walls, gardens), and so on. Despite its rich temporal structure, the Annunciation has a kind of curious spatial stability.

Michael Baxandall, in his discussion of the *Period Eye*, reminds us of this problem by comparing different Annunciations from the early Renaissance with a contemporary sermon by Fra Roberto da Lecce, in which the story is divided into five stages, the *Conditions of the Virgin*.[2] By Baxandall's own argument – that the Quattrocento observer follows Alberti's advice to deduce the "movements of the soul from movements of the body'" – these are *gestural* conditions, with the movements of her body suggesting emotional reactions and interactions that pin the figure of Mary to a particular narrative stage or another. Starting from Baxandall's stages, we suggest moving backwards: from gestures, to *conditions*, to temporal scaffolds.

Digital Gesturing

"The painter is a professional visualizer of the holy stories, and the effective unit of these stories is the human figure", writes Baxandall. And for Baxandall, these holy stories largely take place through the figures' movements and gestures: Leon Battista Alberti ("movements of the soul are recognized in movements of the body")[3] is quoted alongside the dance master Guglielmo Ebreo ("The virtue of dancing is as an action demonstrative of spiritual movement"). In keeping with his rhetorical bent, Baxandall recommends paying particular attention to the gestures of the "medieval type of popular preacher" in the Quattrocento – noting that Italians would have understood Latin sermons largely by following the hand movements of the preacher.

Yet, gestures actively resist description – Baxandall recounts Leonardo da Vinci's struggle:

> [Leonardo] insists again and again on the need to distinguish one sort of movement from another, he naturally finds it difficult to describe in words the particular movements he means: he planned to describe the movements of 'anger, pain, sudden fear, weeping, flight, desire, command, indifference, solicitude, and so on', but never actually did so.

The poverty of the European lexicon to accurately describe gestures – another of Baxandall's recurring concerns[4] – can be effectively sidestepped by using precise geometrical descriptions of these gestures. The richness of computational descriptions of gestures can be seen in Hollywood computer graphics, in which gestures can be directly transcribed from an actor to the animated character with no verbal mediation.

In previous work, we had both attempted to capture human artistic gestures through computational analysis in extremely different contexts. Peter Bell's previous work[5] focused on the four illuminated versions of the 'Mirror of the Saxons' (*Sachsenspiegel*), the foundational treatise of German law, where each legal case is illustrated with a gesturally explicit diorama (fig. 1). The figures

and gestures of the Sachsenspiegel are depicted in a clear, standardised way, allowing a computer to easily recognise and collate examples. They are a pictorial code, like the garments and letters that accompany them; and are well-described by discrete categories rather than continuous geometric variables.

Another work by Leonardo Impett had attempted, instead, to establish a 'taxonomy of passions' in the gestures contained in Aby Warburg's *Bilderatlas*, attempting to gain some understanding of the Warburgian concept of *Pathosformel*.[6] Unlike the Sachsenspiegel project, those images were not analysed automatically, but hand-annotated with skeletons which showed the pose of each human figure. These morphological-statistical calculations are blind to the iconography, age, gender, musculature, physiognomy, medium, etc. of the depicted figure.

The gestures in the present project, on which we report some preliminary findings, are a combination of both approaches: the gestures are extracted automatically by computer, as in the Sachsenspiegel project; yet they follow the measurement approach of the Warburg project, consisting of continuous multidimensional vectors of whole-body articulation rather than discrete categories of hand gestures. This approach is only possible thanks to recent advances in computational pose estimation, which allow to automatically estimate the geometry of human bodies from a single image, without the use of markers or multi-view photography, previously common in motion capture technology. For our experiments on the Annunciation, therefore, we used the Realtime Convolutional Pose Estimation (RCPE) model by Cao et al.,[7] implemented in Python and Caffe.[8]

Five Clusters of the Virgin

As a central case study for the Period Eye, Baxandall considers what a contemporary religious audience would have expected from professional visualisations of the holy stories. The same pious public had their own interior visualisations of these events: the contemporary "experience of a painting was… a marriage between the painting and the beholder's previous visualizing activity on the same matter". An important part of the Period Eye, therefore, is to know what kind of internal visualization might have been produced.

Although Baxandall explores novel sources in very different fields of social life – law, dance, commerce – the construction of the Period Eye is grounded in rhetoric, his major research axis. In a passage on the Annunciation, he refers to the sermons of Fra Roberto da Lecce, who scholastically dissects the gospel text to construct five emotional and behavioural stages of Mary – clarifying the "fifteenth-century feeling for what, on the level of human emotion, happened to her in the crisis the painter had to represent". Fra Roberto thus divides Mary's reactions into five chronological categories:

1. Conturbatio - Disquiet
2. Cogitatio - Reflection
3. Interrogatio - Inquiry
4. Humiliatio - Submission
5. Meritatio - Merit

Following four prototypic examples, Baxandall argues that these Marian chronological steps "very exactly fit the painted representation" of the Annunciation:

> Most fifteenth-century Annunciations are identifiably Annunciations of Disquiet, or of Submission, or – these being less clearly distinguished from each other – of Reflection and/or Inquiry. The preachers coached the public in the painters' repertory, and the painters responded within the current emotional categorization of the event.[9]

Baxandall's hypothesis is explicit: that the 15th-century Florentine patron, painter, and beholder saw the Annunciation through these five phases (or at least through a temporal lens of which these phases are a manifestation). It makes little sense to attempt to prove or disprove his thesis statistically: one can always find exceptions, and the association of individual images to the categories above is – as we have found – extremely personal. These five stages are a kind of temporal scaffolding, a rhythm to the Annunciation that may or may not be specific to the Quattrocento. Reflecting on wider depictions of the Annunciation – inside and outside Florence, inside and outside the Quattrocento – our aim is to use these five stages as gestural landmarks in the narrative and emotional space of the Annunciation: to dissect the movements of the soul through the movements of the bodies.
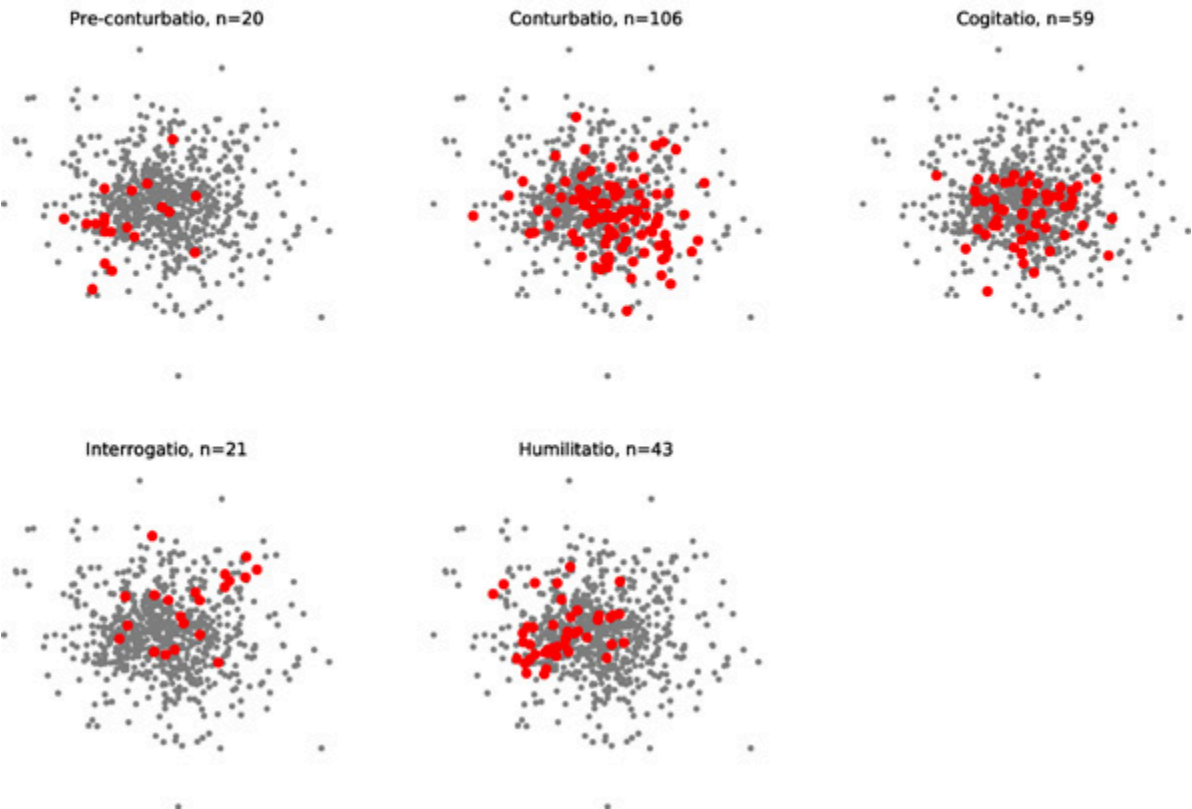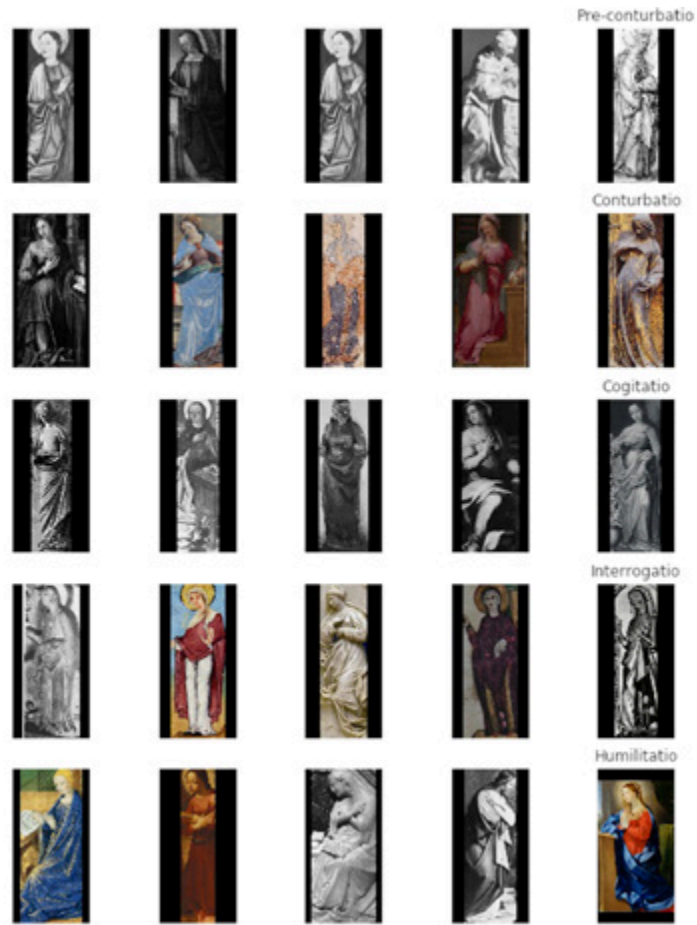
Fig. 1. Annotated stages of Mary.

Baxandall's reading of Fra Roberto gives us a precise rhythmic structure to the Annunciation scene, in this instance explicitly from Mary's perspective. It is linked to, but distinct from, the Gospel text. What might these stages look like through a digital lens? Are they really specific to 15th-century Italy, or do they simply describe the events of the Gospel? In short: what other temporal structures exist?

The first step in our study – as is so often the case in Distant Reading – was the large-scale annotation of our Annunciation dataset. Baxandall's sequence is an extremely gestural one, so our first thought was that the Stages of Mary are essentially Clusters of Mary. We hoped, for instance, that we might find some similarity in the geometric pose of the body amongst all the *Interrogatio* Maries (a raised arm), or the *Conturbatio* Maries (a twisted body), etc. So, we took the Maries whose poses had been detected by machine and annotated their 'stage' using Baxandall's taxonomy: *Conturbatio*, *Cogitatio*, and so forth.

We can then create a kind of 'gestural similarity plot', in which figures with similar poses appear as points close on the map. In truth, however, the distribution is extremely messy. *Conturbatio* and *Interrogatio* do show some kind of small statistical separation, but the others are quite indiscernible. Adding back the images, we can see that although they might not translate into Fra Roberto's phases, many of the images grouped by pose do make sense: in one instance, we see the cluster of variations of the seated Mary from the Santissima Annunziata, the miraculous image in Florence.

We tried a dozen other ways of rearranging the data, and the outcome is always the same: clusters of similar poses do not correspond to Maries of the same phase. Two questions emerge from this statistical naivete:

1. If Baxandall's stages are not gestural formulae, what are they? Are the gestural formulae too implicit or indistinct to be detected automatically, or are these stages simply a regional and temporary phenomenon?
2. What about the other 5,000 detected figures; how ought we to make sense of Gabriel?

For Gabriel, our solution was a cartographic one: to map out the space of possible gestures of Gabriel, and mark out fifteen different common groups of poses. But again, these are gestural formulae, not stages.

Going back to the first question: what are Baxandall's stages? They imply a certain gesture, perhaps a certain expression (surprise, thoughtfulness, acceptance). However, in reality, they are a temporal structure. Baxandall's categorisation is the classic narratological distinction between the chronology of *fabula* (the gospel of Luke) and *sujet* (an image's eventual realisation of one of the phases).
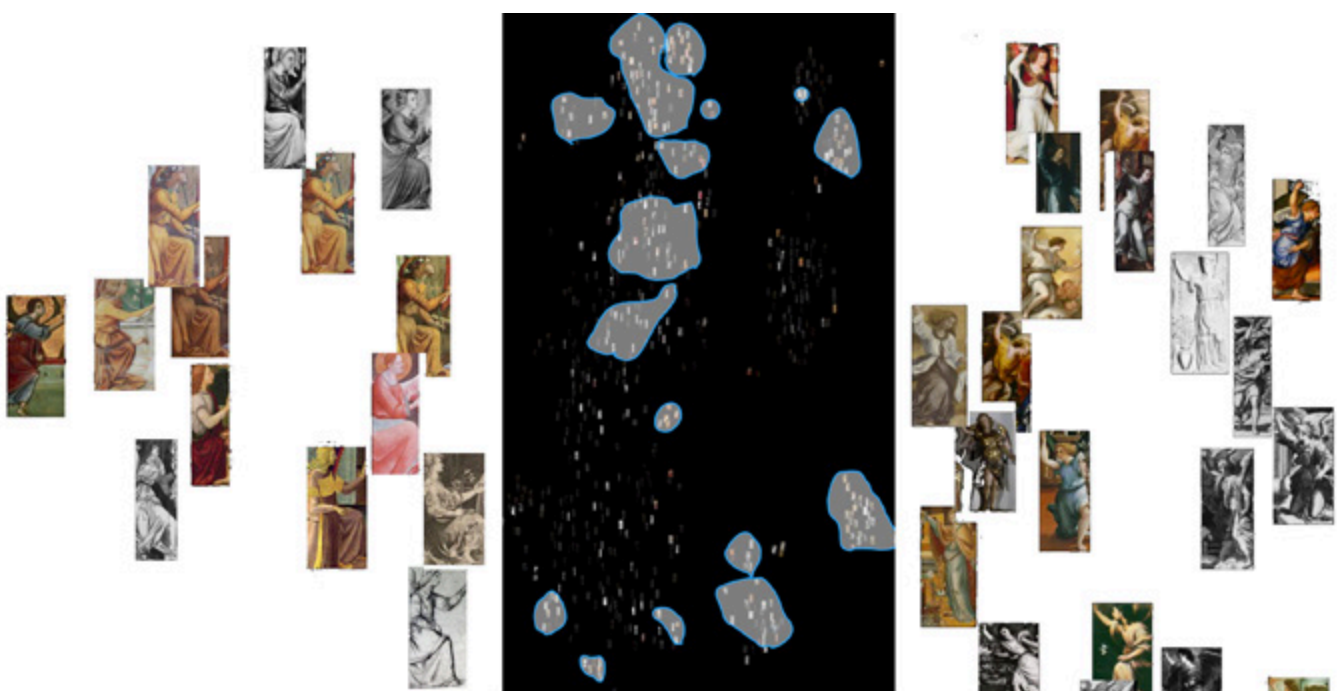
Fig. 2. Clusters of gestures of Gabriel.

Baxandall takes his stages from Fra Roberto's sermons, and so it is no surprise that this temporal structure is anchored quite regularly to the textual rhythm of the Gospel itself. So, *Conturbatio* is Luke 28-30, *Cogitatio* is 31-33, and so on.

know this from experience, but it is not obvious from the text a priori. It is not only a separation between dialogue and narration: a number of other spoken lines ('Don't worry Maria', 'You will conceive', 'How is that so?', etc.), arguably those

Tab. 1.

Gospel of Luke (1:)	Fra Roberto/Baxandall Stages of Mary	Feo Belcari, Sacra Rappresentazione of the Annunciation (stanza)	Image-texts (frequency)
26	-	1	1
27	-	1	0
-	-	2-43	0
28	I (Conturbatio)	44	139
29	I (Conturbatio)	44	0
30	I (Conturbatio)	44	0
31	II (Cogitatio)	45	0
32	II (Cogitatio)	45	0
33	II (Cogitatio)	45	0
34	III (Interrogatio)	46	0
35	III (Interrogatio)	46	4
36	-	47	0
37	-	47	0
38	IV (Humilitatio), V (Meritatio)	47	16
-	-	48	-

Baxandall could very well have chosen a different 15th-century Florentine text on which to build his metronome, such as Feo Belcari's Sacra Rappresentazione of the Annunciation [this is the 1465 version]. Belcari's play lasts for 48 stanzas of 8 lines each: Gabriel gives a prologue in line 1, but it is not until stanza 44 (of 48) that the dialogue between the Angel Gabriel and Mary starts.

Belcari's strong prologue has to do with the stage machinery that accompanies Gabriel: the woodcut on the title page of Belcari's play shows Gabriel twice, the first time while descending in the mandorla and then again performing the Annunciation. Compared to this deformation, Baxandall's stages look very similar indeed to the gospel.

It may not be possible to add images of the Annunciation to this diagram, but many of our images of course do contain fragments of the Gospel text, in the form of small scrolls, gilded speech, and so forth.

So, we have a large number of 'Ave Gratia Plena', and some 'Ecce ancilla domini'. We might

most important to Baxandall's phases, are never transcribed. We get Gabriel's first line, Mary's last line, and nothing else. So, the scrolls and written speech in our images give us another kind of temporal compression, the start and end of the dialogue. The objectification of the main message (from dialogue into scroll) is itself a temporal compression. We have an idea of the temporal distance between Gabriel and Mary, through these texts, and of the direction of causation between the two.

How to measure such a distance for images without writing? We had plenty of annotations of Mary; our next attempt was to annotate Gabriel. To do that, we needed a schema, and this is what we came up with. It aims to be quite superficial and unambiguous – much less rich and descriptive, to be sure, than Baxandall's – but also to contain a hint of temporal structure.

So, we annotated a (smaller) dataset, based on both Baxandall's categories and our own schema for Gabriel. For a truly contextual understanding of individual decisions, we should
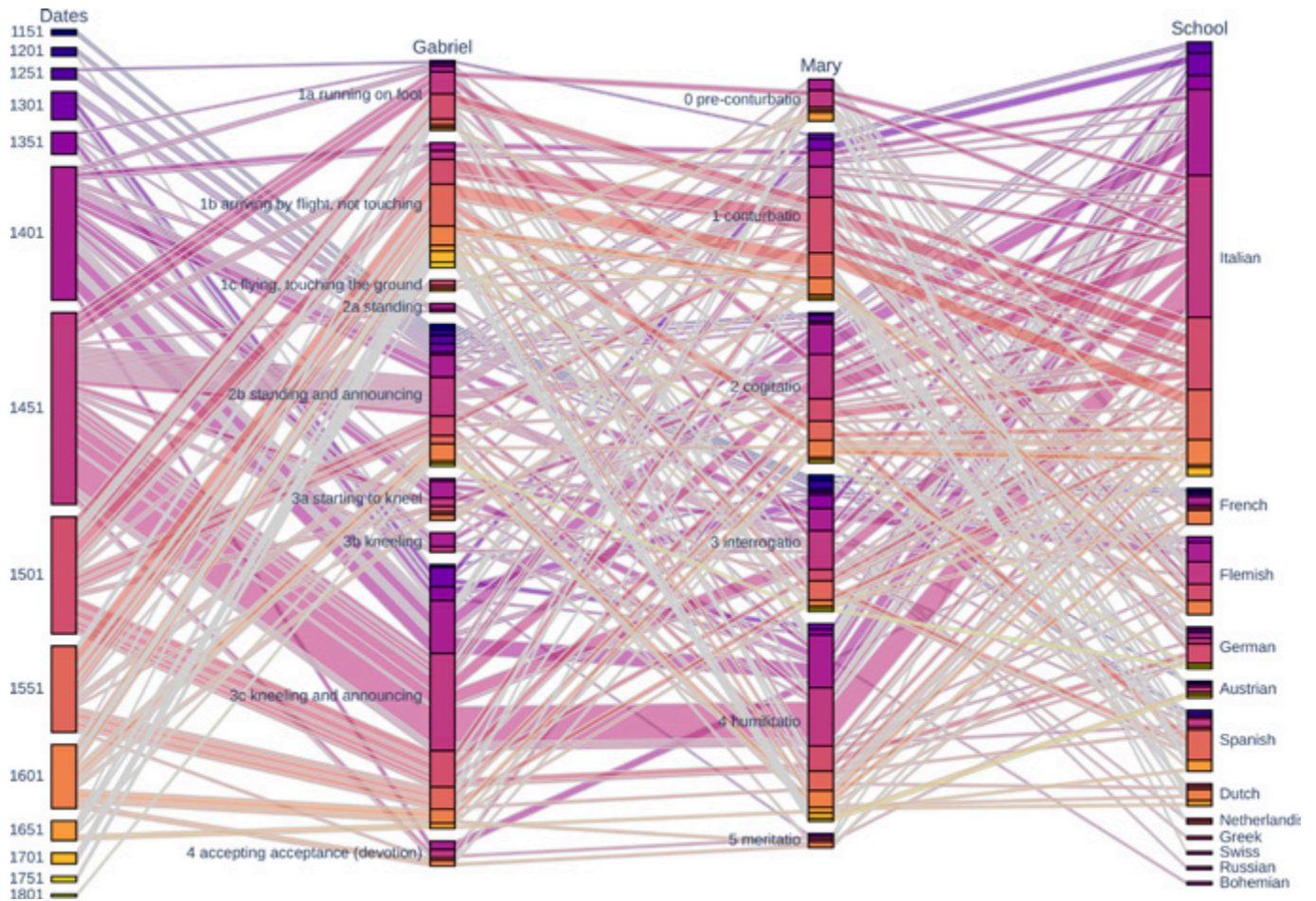
Fig. 3. The Annunciation as a knot caught amongst various times.

take every possible datum into consideration: plot-time and historical time, image-space, and geographical overlap. Unfortunately, it starts to look rather complex. Didi-Huberman referred to the Annunciation's "most improbable temporality" as caught in "a knot amongst various times, distributed across time, or even disjoint in their ontological order",[10] – and in fig. 3 below we get a glimpse of that knot.[11]

Let's try for a minute to untangle the knot. Below, we show the potential combinations between the 'stages' of Gabriel and those of Mary – not in the whole data, but rather during a century. The width of the connection between each stage of Gabriel and of Mary indicates the frequency of them appearing together.

In the 15th century (fig. 4a, above), there seems to be a strong association between a kneeling Gabriel and a Mary in *Humilitatio*. On the other hand,

the line between, say, Gabriel running and *Humilitatio* is very small, because there iss only one 15th-century instance of that combination in our dataset. On the other hand, in the 16th century (fig. 4b), we see a large increase in the amount of flying Gabriels, which become mostly associated with *Conturbatio*.

We could of course make an endless list of these patterns, and with a much larger dataset we could consider dissecting the spatial dimension alongside the chronological one. But these are all just descriptions of patterns, not interpretations or explanations of them, which is the real work. Our *distant viewing* of Annunciations has shown that Baxandall's taxonomy resists being mechanised, possibly for historical and methodological reasons; nonetheless, it provides a framework for dissecting historical developments in the scene's iconography and temporality.
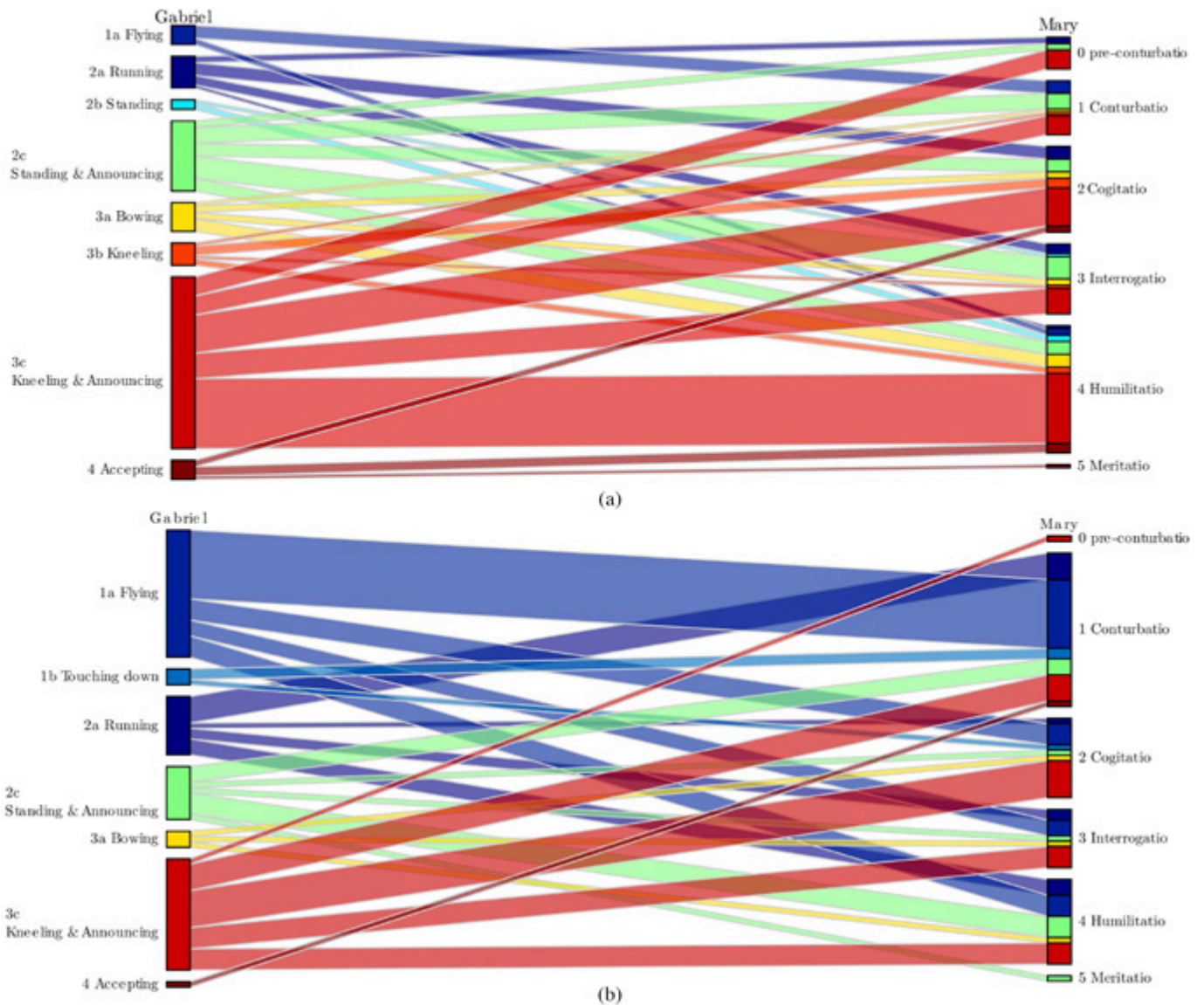
Fig. 4(a). Interaction in the gestures of the Annunciation in the 15th century; and **(b)** in the 16th century.

Notes

[1] With important exceptions, see D. Denny, *The Annunciation from the Right* (New York: Garland, 1977).

[2] M. Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 65.

[3] Although commonly associated with Alberti, it is also common in Medieval thought; see J-C. Schmitt, *La raison des gestes dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990).

[4] M. Baxandall, "The language of art history", *New Literary History* 10, no. 3 (1979): pp. 453-465.

[5] P. Bell, J. Schlecht, B. Ommer, "Nonverbal Communication in Medieval Illustrations Revisited by Computer Vision and Art History", *Visual Resources* 29 (2013): pp. 26-37.

[6] L. Impett, F. Moretti, "Totentanz. Operationalizing Aby Warburg's Pathosformeln", *New Left Review* 107 (2017): pp. 68-97.

[7] Z. Cao, et al., "Realtime multi-person 2d pose estimation using part affinity fields", *CVPR Proceedings* (2017).

[8] Available at https://github.com/ZheC/Realtime_Multi-Person_Pose_Estimation.

[9] M. Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, cit., p. 55.

[10] G. Didi-Huberman, *Fra Angelico: Dissemblance et figuration* (Paris: Flammarion, 1990), p. 129.

[11] Readers familiar with Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* – the founding text of narratology – might notice that the logic of the diagram is the same as Propp's, in his chart of potential combinations between consecutive narrative formulae.

Digital Curating and Ephemeral Artworks: Three Case Studies

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What happens when a project for an artwork is rejected? Or when a work of art is destroyed, stolen, or lost? How can the institution exhibit and preserve its ephemeral heritage? Does the ontology of this kind of object/project/artwork change? How does digital culture allow improving museum practices for the enhancement of this type of new cultural objects?

This paper delves into these questions. It aims to offer a cross-section of the contemporary exhibiting and creative system, where the idea of immateriality seems to be claimed through a digital rereading. By exploring the way in which concepts of immateriality and ephemerality are experienced, performed, and represented, this paper thus studies three specific cases: an exhibition (*The Gallery of Lost Art* - Tate Gallery, London, 2012), an art project (the *Incompiuto Siciliano* by Alterazioni Video), and a museum (the Museum of Refused and Unrealised Arts Projects - MoRE).

When the Ephemeral Meets the Digital

"What is at stake is not conservation of the past but the fulfilment of past hopes".[1]

The museum institution is living its fourth revolution. Called 'digital',[2] this revolution stems from the redefinition of the concept of heritage[3] and the increasing use of new technologies in museum practices. These two closely associated factors have led to a further characterisation of museology processes. Indeed, the "frenzied bulimia of wanting to preserve everything"[4] of contemporary society seems by now "thinkable even though it is not possible"[5] thanks to the progressive dematerialisation of the collections. At the same time, this utopia of storage ("archiving impulse")[6] reflects the appearance of other cultural objects (both tangible and intangible) and, consequently, of new forms of heritage. Ultimately, new elements to be preserved and new methods of conservation and exhibition take shape within museum institutions whose digital dimension is becoming more and more marked.

The result is a series of new methods and hybrid projects that end up invading the current museum system: platforms for archiving that turn into display settings, digital interfaces conceived as exhibiting paradigms or transitory exhibitions in virtual spaces. The digitalisation process[7] of the museum system has finally turned the notion of ephemerality (immaterial, unfinished, temporary) into a theoretical object. Several exhibitions and artistic contributions are currently probing this conceptual transformation by insisting on the heuristic potential of the 'ephemeral'. The ephemeral, understood as an epistemological category, acts both as an artwork and an exhibiting device.

Among others,[8] *Unbuilt Roads: 107 Unrealised Projects* is a case in point. Founded in the late 1990s by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Guy Tortosa, the archive collected (at least until 1997, when it was finally published) descriptions of unrealised artworks by several artists, such as Vito Acconci, or Rosemarie Trockel. In 2006, the project turned into the Agency for Unrealised Projects: a research program focused on the exhibition process of the unfinished artwork. For this program, Obrist worked in collaboration with the digital platform e-flux and the Serpentine Gallery in London by seeking to document and display unfinished works through the creation of a growing digital archive. Being both a research subject and an exhibiting tool for exhibition display, here the unfinished is exploited from both a creative and a theoretical point of view.

The exhibition *Salon des Refusés* (2003) is another example of this: organised by Roberto Pinto at the Fondazione Bevilacqua la Masa, in Venice,

the show was dedicated to unrealised projects of public art made by artists such as Lucy Orta, Bert Theis, Sislej Xhafa, and Alberto Garutti. Besides being considered as a conceptual subject, here the idea of the unfinished also served to investigate the features of the curatorial practice in itself. However, while this show tried to answer to the question of how to display and represent the ephemeral, *Invisible Art about the Unseen*, at the Hayward Gallery, in London, in 2012, used a traditional exhibiting paradigm instead. Here, the show exhibited invisible and hidden artworks, by defining an aesthetic category and thus tracing its history. From Yves Klein to Roman Ondak, the exhibition insisted on the bypassed impulse to produce visible objects in favour of the exploration of other communicative possibilities for art making.

The list of this kind of projects[9] is extensive, and this confirms the interest shown in this type of aesthetic-conceptual reflection which recognises a true creative potential in the condition of being 'unrealised'. Whether censored, forgotten, postponed, impossible, or rejected, invisible, not finished, these projects form a unique testament to the speculative power of non-action.[10] Yet, in the recent debate regarding the potential of digital curating, the idea of the unfinished has also acquired a critical role concerning the new exhibition methods, forms of spatial fruition, and exhibition design practices.

An Exhibition: *The Gallery of Lost Art*, Tate Gallery, London, 2012[11]

The exhibition was conceived as an archive, an exhibiting platform, and a source of documentation. This immersive and online one-year show told the stories of over forty masterpieces of modern art that have been lost due to destruction, censorship, or decay. It was divided into ten categories (stolen, destroyed, rejected, unrealised, put aside, disappeared, degraded, reworked, censored) and sought to represent ten types of missing works. Although the selected artworks no longer existed, the exhibition provided a specific display paradigm in which various documents were organised within a virtual space where beholders could wander at will. Each work was thus presented via a table containing the remains left behind (archive photographs, press articles, reviews, eyewitness reports, sketches, and personal letters). There, fictional beholders were shown looking at those

materials, leafing through documents, reading related texts, and watching films on laptops. A specific soundscape then completed the rich exhibiting context. The virtual exhibition space was designed as a kind of digital scenography that implicitly invited real visitors to explore the various evidence of the missing artworks within a meta-space. Besides, the site also provided a platform for interaction, discussion, and commentary on the subject of lost art as a whole by offering visitors a place for engagement, private study, and reflection. Despite being a digital exhibition, *The Gallery of Lost Art* lasted for one year, before going lost itself.

By focusing on artworks that can no longer be seen, this exhibition explored the digital capability to bring these lost pieces back to life – not as virtual replicas but through visual evidence and the stories surrounding them. The result is a new way of looking at art: an immersive website in the form of a large warehouse where visitors can explore the evidence laid out for them. This exhibition exploited the heuristic potential of the ephemeral by considering it not only as a source of creativity but also as an exhibiting paradigm in itself. Here, documents, although they retain their original status of visual evidence, contributed to give life to a new exhibiting hypothesis that ended up becoming the real work of art.

An Art Project: The *Incompiuto Siciliano* by Alterazioni Video

"[…] ruins in reverse is the opposite of the 'romantic ruin' because the buildings don't fall into ruin after they are built, but rather rise into ruin before they are built".[12]

The *Incompiuto Siciliano*[13] is a non-profit project created in 2009 by the Italian artist collective Alterazioni Video, based in Milan. For ten years now, they have been describing the phenomenon of unfinished public works in Italy from a new perspective: by collecting, mapping, and photographing more than 750 unfinished architectural sites scattered throughout Italy. They thus identify architectural artefacts (skeletons of unfinished aqueducts, or bridges, roads, and viaducts with no beginning nor end) whose construction has been suspended due to design errors, political choices, bankruptcy, or lack of state subsidies.

From an ontological point of view, these structures, often risen in the middle of nowhere, appear as sculptural forms without any architectural or social function. Even before any practical use, they thus turn into contemporary ruins of unfinished building sites, thanks to their being catalogued. Also, in these anonymous sites, the concept of place loses its social and cultural identity by ending up being denied. Eventually, it could be considered a 'third landscape' which, while referring to "[...] a space expressing neither power nor submission to power",[14] becomes a means to read and acknowledge the Italian history of the 20th and 21st centuries. However, although they lose their first function, these monoliths, and the places they occupy, also become witnesses of the past. Like contemporary ruins of an architecture 'of the abandonment', they define a specific archaeology of the future.

From an artistic point of view, these unfinished structures, although functionally useless, find a form of aesthetic completeness by being transformed into sculptural objects. Detached from the Italian social and political context, they turn into an aesthetic form thanks to their condition of *non-finito*. Here, the conflict between 'form' and 'function' seems finally resolved, while the lack of function becomes a form of art in itself.

From a technical point of view, once they are collected and located, unfinished sites are then exhibited mostly through photographic reproductions. Here, photography does not just play the role of a documentation tool but allows to transpose and suggest the aesthetic value of these sculptures thanks to the idea of reiteration and census. Simultaneously, the project has also created a kind of digital cartography of the unfinished, so that visitors can digitally locate the abandoned sites, while physically experiencing the places by wandering inside of them.

A Museum: The MoRE (Museum of Refused and Unrealised Arts Projects)[15]

> The ideas itself, even if not made visual is as much a work of art as any finished product. All intervening steps – scribbles, sketches, drawings, failed work, models, studies, thoughts, conversations – are of interest. Those that show the thought process of the artist are sometimes more interesting than the final product.[16]

The term 'virtual' stems from the medieval Latin *virtualis* and the Latin *virtus*, 'excellence, potency, efficacy'. It means: 'being something in essence or effect, though not actually or in fact'. Only after 1959 did the term start to identify the quality of something that does not physically exist but is made to appear by software. The notion of the unfinished is implicitly close to that of the virtual – if the latter is understood in its primary sense of 'potential', and not in its connection to the digital. Like the project, which refers to the first writing of what one intends to do, the notion of virtual can designate what has all the necessary conditions for its actualisation.

This observation is the basis of the MoRE: a museum dedicated to refused and unrealised art projects. Founded in 2012, this young and digital museum does not have a brick-and-mortar architectural structure, but rather lives on the net, and tries to give room to the hundreds of proposals by artists that have never been made into the projected work of art, thus remaining unrealised and invisible in the public sphere.

The MoRE exploits the virtual space as an exhibition site and digitally collects, preserves, and exhibits works of the 20th and 21st centuries, which have not been made for various reasons (censorship, rejection in a competition, lack of funding, change of intentions, utopian spaces). Far from being the simple virtual platform of a museum with a physical and architectural seat, the MoRE is a digital institution, a museum/website that has appropriated the digital language to make it an instrument of conservation, exhibiting, and mediation. Via the Omeka digital platform (specially designed for the collections archival and the implementation of digital presentations), this museum organises its activities into virtual spaces. Its collection, entirely accessible in the form of a digital archive, is composed of documents – all donated by artists – which can be consulted thanks to markers identifying reasons for their non-realisation.

By focusing only on sketches, notes, drawings, renderings, and architectural overviews used for the first study of possible artworks, the MoRE appropriated the idea of the unfinished to make it a new heritage object to be collected and preserved. A dual displacement thus emerges: while documents go concretely from a material condition to a digital one, they also live an ontological transformation leading them from the virtual

state of potential work to that of an artwork in itself. In other words, the project ontologically changes thanks to the digitalisation of the museum process and to the mechanisms of spectatorial apprehension that such a process puts in place. Indeed, the digital exhibitions organised by this museum develop thanks to the diegetic nature and literary or schematic structure of the projects. Their graphic nature engenders a reading process of imagination that makes use of the cognitive abilities of the beholder to turn the project into artwork.

From this point of view, the MoRE's collection should be considered not only as a series of images or digital documents, but mainly as a structured archive of autonomous artworks that find, through their being digital, a new identity, a new status. As a digital platform that preserves and exhibits at the same time, the MoRE goes beyond the mere process of acquisition, and generates the hybridisation of the museum process which, through the reassessment of the notion of project, ends up "aestheticising the document".[17]

The awareness of this change in status also inspires a new form of exhibiting paradigm. Indeed, by presenting documents that take advantage of the digital culture to experience an innovative artistic identity, the MoRE museum exploits the digital space as an exhibiting interface. However, it takes advantage of the spatial architecture of the web only partially, considering it as a simple instrument of dissemination. Instead of arranging the projects inside a theatrical digital scenography, as was the case for *The Gallery of Lost Art*, the MoRE exhibits projects which are previously selected, within a specific thematic exhibition, by showing them in the form of archived works. In doing so, it defines an exhibiting protocol that uses the intangible state of spatial design and digital set-up modalities to aestheticise the archive.[18]

Conclusion

The cases analysed here highlight the heterogeneous nature of the unfinished, and its various uses within an exhibition or a creative context, but they mostly allow us to insist on an epistemological hybridisation made possible by the digitalisation of the museum process. Indeed, the study of the London exhibition has offered an occasion to rethink the modes of exhibition of the ephemeral through a digital perspective, by probing the capabilities of the digital exhibition design to create new methods of spectatorship apprehension and experience. Thus, the case of the *Incompiuto Siciliano* has shed light on the value of the unfinished and its heuristic potential that not only turns a negative condition into a valued one, but also generates a new epistemological category. The case of the MoRE, in turn, by showing how new museum strategies try to probe the value of ephemeral heritage (by fostering new exhibition, valorisation, and conservation methods), has claimed the ontological turn undergone by the notion of project, which turns into an artwork in its own right. The latter, thanks to a digital process, indeed loses its nature of preparatory work to acquire the status of full-fledged artwork. As such, the MoRE museum seems to claim the articulation between the virtual space and the museographical practices to define a new museum ontology.

However, in addition to its specific case studies, the present paper has tried to question the notion of new museology in the digital era, by fostering the concepts of both the virtual and the ephemeral. Thus, the virtual, being able to simultaneously be a place of conservation, of production of content, and an exhibition space, ends up investigating the ways new technologies promote the preservation and promulgation of intangible heritage. At the same time, it assesses how to take advantage of these practices vis-à-vis the present museum system and the notion of the ephemeral. The latter, in turn, ends up appearing both as a "figurative object",[19] i.e., an archetypal cultural universe that does not refer to the real world, and also as a "theoretical object"[20] that allows to shape and hypothesise new strategies of exhibition and creation.

Eventually, by insisting on the heuristic potential of the digital in current museological processes, the articulation between virtual space, art system, artistic production, and museum processes, will further the enhancement of the ephemeral as a new cultural object to preserve and share.

Notes

1 M. Horkheimer, T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. xvii.

2 Y. Bergeron, "Musées et muséologie: entre cryogénisation, ruptures et transformations", in F. Mairesse, ed., *Nouvelles Tendances de la muséologie* (Paris: La documentation française, 2016), p. 240.

3 Since 2004 and the ICOFOM conference on intangible heritage. See *Museology and Intangible Heritage II*, 20th International Symposium of ICOM (ICOFOM Study Series, 2004).

4 S. Chaumier, "Pourquoi la muséologie ne devra plus être une composante du patrimoine", in F. Mairesse, ed., *Nouvelles Tendances de la muséologie*, p. 68.

5 R. Robin, *La mémoire saturée* (Paris: Éditions Stock, 2003), p. 441.

6 H. Foster, "An Archival Impulse", *October*, no. 110 (2004): pp. 3-22. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3397555.

7 P. Levy, *Qu'est-ce que le virtuel?* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1998); C. Paul, ed., *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond: Curatorial Models for Digital Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); B. Graham, S. Cook, *Rethinking Curating: Art After New Media* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2010).

8 See also the *ARtour* project at the Stedelijk Museum or the exhibition *WeARinMoMA* at the MoMA in New York. https://v2.nl/archive/works/artours; http://www.sndrv.nl/moma/. For further information, see P. Bianchi, "Estetica del virtuale. Spazi senza luoghi in tempi aboliti", in C. Dalpozzo, ed., *L'altro volto del reale. Il virtuale nella comunicazione e nelle arti contemporanee* (Milano: Mimesis, 2020).

9 For further information, see M. Scotti, "*Unbuilt art*. Appunti per un dibattito sul non realizzato", *Ricerche di S/Confine. Oggetti e pratiche artistico / culturali* no. 3 (2014): pp. 19-30.

10 Not all the projects were meant to be carried out; specific works have deliberately been left incomplete by the artists in order to claim the potential of their unfinished state.

11 Visit the website: https://galleryoflostart.com.

12 R. Smithson, "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic", *Artform* (December 1967): p. 72.

13 Visit the website of Alterazioni Video and the one of the project: http://www.alterazionivideo.com, http://incompiutosiciliano.org/index.

14 C. Gilles, *Manifeste du Tiers paysage* (Paris: Sujet Objet, 2005), p. 9.

15 Visit the website: http://www.moremuseum.org/omeka/. For further information, see F. Zanella, "Per un museo del non realizzato. Pratiche digitali per la raccolta, valorizzazione e conservazione del progetto d'arte contemporanea", *Ricerche di S/Confine. Oggetti e pratiche artistico/ culturali* (2014): p. 3. https://www.ricerchedisconfine.info/dossier-3/dossier3-2014.pdf.

16 S. Lewitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art", *Artforum* no. 5/10 (Summer 1967): pp. 79-83.

17 A. Bénichou, "Ces documents qui sont aussi des œuvres...", in A. Bénichou, ed., *Ouvrir le document. Enjeux et pratiques de la documentation dans les arts visuels contemporains* (Saint-Étienne: Les presses du réel, 2010), p. 47.

18 For further information on the MoRE museum, see P. Bianchi, "Nouvelles stratégies digitales. Musées numériques et digitalisation du virtuel", in *Revue Histoire de l'art* no. 84/85 (Paris: APAHAU/Somogy éditions d'Art, 2020): pp. 133-144.

19 P. Francastel, *La réalité figurative* (Paris: Denoël/Gonthier, 1965).

20 H. Damisch, "Hors cadre: entretien avec Hubert Damisch", *Perspective* no. 1 (2013): pp. 11-23.

Edmond de Belamy or *Bel Ami*: The Rise of the 'Non-Artist' vs. the Artist's Retreat

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"A Romanesque crucifix was not regarded by its contemporaries as a work of sculpture; nor Cimabue's *Madonna* as a picture", affirms Malraux while reflecting on the new attitude towards the works of art that museums have imposed on viewers, recognising in them a sort of alchemical power that is able to "transform even portraits into 'pictures'". Following this reasoning, he comes to wonder "What do we care who the *Man with the Helmet* or the *Man with the Glove* may have been in real life? For us their names are Rembrandt and Titian".[1]

At the very end of this gallery envisioned by Malraux, one could foresee the *Portrait of Edmond Belamy*, the first work of art created by AI to be auctioned at Christie's (October 2018), which sold for a surprising $432,500. The picture shows the blurred figure of a man, obtained through a system based on a selection of portraits from Western art history since the Renaissance to the present. It is signed at the bottom right with the formula that generated it – min G max D Ex[log(D(x))] + Ez[log(1–D(G(z)))] – suggesting that the algorithm should be credited for the artwork. Printed on canvas, the picture was actually produced by the Paris-based collective Obvious, formed by Hugo Caselles-Dupré, Pierre Fautrel, and Gauthier Vernier, three students with no background in the fine arts.[2]

The *Belamy* series was created by an algorithm composed of two parts: "On one side is the Generator, on the other the Discriminator. We fed the system with a data set of 15,000 portraits painted between the 14th century to the 20th. The Generator makes a new image based on the set, then the Discriminator tries to spot the difference between a human-made image and one created by the Generator. The aim is to fool the Discriminator into thinking that the new images are real-life portraits".[3]

The name *Belamy* hides a tribute to Ian Goodfellow, who invented the Generative Adversarial Network (GAN),[4] the system used by Obvious: his surname could be translated as 'Bel ami' into French.

This name weirdly echoes de Maupassant's 1885 novel with the same title, which chronicles Georges Duroy's rise to power from a poor cavalry officer to one of the most successful journalists in Paris: a brilliant career achieved by manipulating people. The novel is dotted with references to the theme of the double, weaving a subtext that shapes Bel-Ami's non-authentic character. His upcoming social climbing is metaphorically condensed in one scene: Duroy goes up the stairs to reach his future boss' home. He rented an elegant suit and, passing in front of a mirror, he does not recognize himself; he gradually gains self-confidence as he moves up the stairs, until he observes himself in a mirror on the third floor with an air of satisfaction, exclaiming: "Voilà une excellente invention" ('Here is a perfect invention').[5]

A concrete product of Western art tradition, the *Belamy* portrait seems to also fall into the category of Conceptual art, even though the outcome is formally far from its intellectually derived aesthetics. As for the issue of authorship it poses – a collective delegating the creative act to an algorithm able to emulate, in a way, human creativity – it represents an extreme step in the divergent path that has pitted the artist as 'thinker' against the artist as 'maker'. For many centuries, artists/craftsmen have sought a more individual role; the Renaissance was a turning point, as the artists' proper names started to spread regularly.[6]

Since the 19th century, galleries in Europe have started to classify their collections according to a chronology of individual masters, abandoning a taxonomy of genres: this arrangement represents a way of understanding the artists' individual talent that still contains a reflection of that 'monograph model', as Guercio has pointed out: "The life-and-work model presented the artist both as

an individual empirically linked to a body of work through historical facts and as a personality created solely by that body of work".[7] This work/artist equivalence reached its peak with the convergence between artistic creation and authentic manifestation of the self during Romanticism.[8]

But what happens if the identification of the artists' persona in their oeuvre becomes obsolete, when the unitary essence of the individual cannot be conceived anymore? What if, when in front of a work of art, we do not even know the name of its author, or if it is a fictitious one?[9]

This essay proposes a selection of practices and projects from Europe and the US which are based on virtual identities that ideally trace the shifting of values suggested by Malraux, while anticipating the issues raised by the *Belamy* series; each case below makes the aforementioned questions more pressing.

In 1920, the first appearance of Duchamp's female alter ego, Rose Sélavy,[10] was seen in a signature next to the word 'COPYRIGHT' inscribed at the base of *Fresh Widow*, a sculpture consisting of a scale model of a French window with its glass panes covered in black leather. Nesbit considers this piece pivotal in her essay *What Was an Author?*[11] where she explores how the evolution of copyright law in France had mirrored the notion of authorship over the years. For a long time, the recognition of the presence of a human intelligence imprinted in the work had been the necessary condition for distinguishing a cultural object from an industrial one. Therefore, the use of any kind of technology (including photography) was excluded from copyright protection until 1957.

No reflection of the artist is visible in Duchamp's window, there is no originality in the design, nor a single culturally certified material in evidence: all the requirements that would allow to consider it a cultural object are missing. However, Duchamp's claim to copyright was not intended to mediate the distinction between culture and industry, rather it showed that the two could become confused. "The non-cultural object could be appropriated; culture could stomach the alien"[12] – Duchamp seems to alert us, while effacing the self at each step of the work and having it signed by a fictitious persona. A few years later, he stopped making art to play chess. Actually, he was still making art, but had come to the conclusion that if artists wanted freedom, they had to keep out of the public eye: "[…] the only solution for the great man of tomorrow in art is to go underground".[13]

If, on the one hand, the cult of artistic personas has significantly increased in the last decades, on the other many artists seem to have put Duchamp's advice into practice in different ways. Some artists have attempted to elude the art system by resorting to a strategy that has responded to the imperative of 'dematerialization' – of the object, first, and of the artist, afterwards. Identity practices have entered the language of art: strategies of anonymity and camouflage, appropriation, and withdrawal, question the artist's 'authority' by replacing the actual self with a fictitious persona or a collective (inspired by the early Soviet ones), breaking the equivalence between work/artist/expression of the self/authenticity. In the same way as it had happened to the 'dematerialized' art object, the market invariably managed to capture and absorb even the most elusive artist who tried to slip away from it.[14]

"The artist ceases to be an image producer and becomes an image himself" according to Groys,[15] who coined the definition of 'self-design' to describe this transition of the artist to the virtual domain.

John Dogg is the pseudonym of a mysterious artist invented in 1986 by Richard Prince and the art dealer Colin de Land.[16] Like Prince's, John Dogg's oeuvre is rooted in US culture and its clichés, as he chooses the car and its components, especially the tire, as the protagonists of his visual universe. As a metaphor for an off-road journey, the spare tire is moved from the back of the car to the wall, enclosed in a metal shell, engraved with the artist's name written as either 'DOGG' or 'GGOD'. The tire represents the perfect object to criticize the many artists who in the late 1980s resorted to processes that were considered sclerotized, like the decontextualization of everyday objects, as well as appropriation, with Prince being one of its first and most important representatives. What makes John Dogg's production significant is its caustic approach to the market, in which the meaning of the work is distorted by moving the focus from the object to the personality of the artist. John Dogg reveals this market effect by the use of the inverted pun 'GGOD' expressed in his name.

This experiment is deeply intertwined with Prince's appropriation concerns within postmodernism. The appropriation of an already existing picture necessarily makes the focus of the work

shift from the object to the author. While developing his most iconic practice, Prince also built a nebulous, fake mythology around his personal story:[17] the starting point of both his visual work and self-narrative is fiction. He carved out for himself the role of simulator, which stands somewhere between creator and copyist, trying to bring the attention back to images. Can the repetition of fiction bring us back to reality? "I find the best way for me to make it real is to make it again"[18] is Prince's reply.

Issues of authorship resonate with Gregor Schneider's experience.[19] For over twenty years, he lived and worked in his house in Rheydt (Germany) which he transformed into *House u r* through extensive yet imperceptible interventions: he erected rooms inside rooms, closed or opened windows, moved walls. The *House* was made public in 2001, with his participation at the Venice Biennale, for which the artist transferred large parts of the house's internal architecture to the German Pavilion. At the entrance of every epiphany of the *House*, the name 'Hannelore Reuen' was written on a nameplate. Who is that?

An interview between the two was published:[20] "Who are you?" is the question Schneider repeatedly asks Mrs Reuen, the mysterious lodger of the ground floor of his house, along with other questions that investigate her relationship with the artist, in a surreal splitting of Schneider's self into the interviewer, the subject of the interview, but also the interviewee.

"How did it happen that Gregor Schneider rented you an apartment?" he asks, and she replies: "Simple. He didn't want to be disturbed any more.

I was supposed to keep people away. It started with people asking: who lives on the ground floor? [...] That bothered him. So, I had to move into it".[21]

From the interview, readers learn that she is an experiment the artist wanted to carry out, that he used her name in exhibitions to avoid those he did not wish to participate in. Hannelore Reuen seems to embody Schneider's escape route from public relations, a proxy forced to answer to the questions, to perform on his behalf in order to divert the attention from the real Schneider – who, since the beginning of his career, at a very young age, developed a practice of camouflage and isolation, through the construction of hiding places, an impulse that was fulfilled with the *House u r.*

If, for artists, the invention of an alter ego becomes a way to distance themselves to practice criticism, the opposite happens too: critics or art professionals take on the role of artists.

In 2006, the non-profit exhibition space Triple Candie in New York presented *Cady Noland Approximately,* the first survey devoted to Cady Noland's oeuvre. The project consists of objects made in collaboration with four artists, based on sculptures by Noland, and recreated from images of her works found on the internet and in catalogues. "Though an attempt was made to replicate the original artworks as faithfully as possible, they are not reproductions – the press release informs us – they are inevitably approximations, largely due to lack of information on the works".[22] Noland, whose best-known works are installations made from beer cans, flags, worker's tools filled with explicit socio-political content – no reflection of the artist is explicit – ceased making art in 1994,

Fig. 1. John Dogg, *Ulysses DOGG*, 1987. Rubber and engraved stainless steel, 28x28x8 1/2 inches. Edition of 4, with 1 AP. (Courtesy of the 303 Gallery, New York).

Fig. 2. John Dogg, *Ulysses GGOD*, 1987. Rubber and engraved stainless steel, 28x28x8 1/2 inches. Edition of 4, with 1 AP. (Courtesy of the 303 Gallery, New York).

Figs. 3-4. Gregor Schneider, *u r 44, HANNELORE REUEN. ALTE HAUSSCHLAMPE*. Life action, room within a room, construction made of blockboard on a wooden construction, 1 door, light-bands, parquet floor, white walls and ceiling, 1 figure/life action (742x567x350 cm (LxWxH)). Galeria Foksal, Warsaw, Poland 06/03/2000-08/03/2000 rebuilt 2003. © Gregor Schneider/VG Bild-Kunst Bonn.

despite being acclaimed. She cut ties with galleries and refused to cooperate with them, even if she still exercises tight control over the exhibitions and publication of her extant work.[23]

In a review of this exhibition of surrogates, Saltz curiously noticed: "The ideas are interesting […] yet the show falls flat. Ironically and significantly, the problem isn't that these are para-Nolands; it's that the room feels so visually inert and lackluster. In a way the show makes one believe in artistic aura again". [24]

Another noteworthy exercise that questions the author's position in collaborative practices and the exhibition format is *Solo Show* by the fictitious artist Robbie Williams, a project conceived by Natascha Sadr Haghighian,[25] whose disruptive work is articulated in research-based projects aimed at the deconstruction of prescribed formats and institutionalised systems of production, including the artist's identity.[26]

The exhibition brings together a sound installation and different objects that resemble fences for a jumping contest, but their traditional structure is replaced by materials that playfully refer to contemporary sculpture.

Behind the alleged author, Robbie Williams, there is actually a large group of professionals and *Solo Show*, despite the title, is the result of a collaborative effort. This project was made in cooperation with Mixedmedia Berlin, a company that helps with the manufacturing and production of artworks and was developed through a conversation with its director Uwe Schwarzer. The purpose is to reveal, document and discuss the different working processes of this company, which basically replaces the artist's hand and remains invisible to the public.

From their conversation[27] a reflection emerges concerning the fragmentation and disappearance of the author, where to draw the line that separates the idea – presented by the artist – and the

fabrication – provided by the company – considering that the final object consists of both.

Schwarzer acts as a translator from the artist's imagination to concrete reality and points out the fact that the objects they produce are different from the ones people would get from a specialized company. According to Schwarzer,

> When one looks at an industrially produced door from a distance of two meters, then it looks super. But if you look at it from ten centimeters away, it doesn't look so good anymore. This is what you get from a specialized company that makes doors for apartments or for offices. But more often than not, this doesn't satisfy the artist. It has to look even better than a real door, like an ideal door.[28]

In response, Sadr Haghighian comments: "Basically, you have to produce a hyperreal object which in terms of this high quality doesn't exist in reality, which looks, however, as though it does correspond with 'reality'".[29]

Robbie Williams and *Edmond de Belamy* cause a short circuit, and yet they are two sides of the same coin: the work of artisans who try to concretely produce the unreal object existing only in the artist's mind, and a machine that recognizes and emulates the human, imperfect nature of a portrait made by the artist's hand.

To generate Belamy's portraits, Obvious did not invent the code but borrowed it from Robbie Barrat, a young artist and programmer who uploaded his algorithms on the internet for open-source use, and whose paintings are very similar to those of the Belamy's series. AI's shared nature and the exclusionary vocation of the fine arts collided in AI's thunderous debut at Christie's, which led to a controversy over the true author, shedding new light on the discourse of authorship and of where it resides.

Notes

[1] *Le Musée Imaginaire* was written in 1947 and then included as the first section of *Les voix du silence*, 1951. English edition consulted: *The Voices of Silence* (New York: Doubleday, 1953), pp. 13-14.

[2] Obvious is not the first author to use this algorithm to create paintings, but its work was the first to be auctioned.

[3] H. Caselles Dupré's explanation in "Is artificial intelligence set to become art's next medium?" in Christie's website (12 December 2018). https://www.christies.com/features/A-collaboration-between-two-artists-one-human-one-a-machine-9332-1.aspx.

[4] The system, invented in 2014, is modeled on the network of neurons in the human brain and uses these neural networks as 'generative' models to create plausible new data. Goodfellow's novelty consists in introducing a second network in the system that can interact with the first in order to obtain satisfactory results, providing the machines with something akin to an imagination.

[5] G. de Maupassant, *Bel-Ami* (Lausanne: Éditions Rencontre, 1961 [1885]), p. 41.

[6] It is no coincidence that the first artists' biographies came to light in the 16th century: Vasari's *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* (1550) set a life-and-work model which remained unchanged for centuries in Western culture.

[7] G. Guercio, *Art as Existence: The Artist's Monograph and Its Project* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006), p. 6.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

[9] For the reflection on authorship proposed in this contribution, Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author" (1967) and Michel Foucault's "What Is an Author?" are essential.

[10] In this first appearance, the name is spelled with one 'r'; later the name would become Rrose (signifying 'eros').

[11] M. Nesbit, "What Was an Author?", in *Yale French Studies* 73 (Fall 1987), republished in M. Nesbit, *The Midnight Tempest Essays* (New York: Inventory Press, 2017), pp. 9-41.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[13] C. Tomkins, *Marcel Duchamp. The Afternoon Interviews* (New York: Badlands Unlimited, 2013 [1964]), p. 67.

[14] "Escape was temporary" claimed Lucy R. Lippard in her 1973 introduction to the famous *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, bitterly noting the rapid assimilation by the art system and market of the most radical, intangible experiences.

[15] B. Groys, "Self-Design and Aesthetic Responsibility", *e-flux journal* 7 (June 2009). https://www.e-flux.com/journal/07/61386/self-design-and-aesthetic-responsibility/.

[16] Colin de Land was the founder of Vox Populi, and then of American Fine Arts, Co. in New York, whose activity was marked by an unusual anti-commercial ethos.

[17] See his backdated interview with J.G. Ballard, supposedly published in *Punch magazine* in 1967, revolving around a missing identity and a sort of odyssey, nurturing that disorientating aura that surrounds the viewer's reading of his work.

[18] R. Prince, unpublished typescript: "The Closest Thing to the Real Thing" (1982) quoted in L. Phillips, *People Keep Asking: An Introduction*, in L. Phillips, ed., *Richard Prince*, exh. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992), pp. 21-53.

[19] I owe this indication to Roberto Cuoghi.

[20] *"He is Never Going to Get Out"*. An interview with Gregor Schneider and Hannelore Reuen in the "Haus u r" in Rheydt, in *Gregor Schneider*, essay by Paul Schimmel (Milano: Charta, 2003), pp. 181-204.

[21] *Ivi.*

[22] *Cady Noland Approximately: Sculptures & Editions, 1984-1999* (2006), press release of the exhibition on Triple Candie's website: http://www.triplecandie.org/Archive%202006%20Cady%20Noland.html.

[23] No monograph has been published and it is rare to see her sculptures in person, apart from a recent retrospective at the Museum für Moderne Kunst (MMK), Frankfurt am Main, 2019.

[24] J. Saltz, "Invasion of the Art Snatchers: Unintentionally playing the roles of Rupert Pupkin and Masha in *The King of Comedy*", in *The Village Voice* (May 17-23, 2006). Also published on Triple Candie's website: http://www.triplecandie.org/Triple%20Candie%20About%20Press%20Cady%20Voice%20051706.html.

[25] The exhibition *Solo Show*, curated by Andrea Viliani, was on display at the Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna (MAMbo) in 2008, at e-flux in New York in 2013 and at Museion, in Bolzano, in 2014-15.

[26] See the online platform: www.bioswop.net, a database for art professionals to borrow and exchange resumes, with the purpose of devaluing the use of biographical data, like the country of origin, as credentials for marketing. When she was invited to represent Germany at the 2019 Venice Biennale, Natascha Sadr Haghighian changed her name to Natascha Süder Happelmann and presented herself wearing a stone mask, having an actress speak for herself.

[27] *SOLO SHOW*, PT.1, IINN PPEERRPPEETTUUAALL PPRROODDUUCCTTI IOONN, 2013, published as part of *SOLO SHOW*, an exhibition by Robbie Williams at e-flux in New York, 2013.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[29] *Ivi.*

SESSION 9

Voyage

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Notes on the Underground: The Subterranean Voyages of Giorgio Vasari and António Vieira

Maria Berbara
Representations of Brazil in Italy in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries: Between Domestication and Ferocity

Alexander Gaiotto Miyoshi
The Emigrants *(1910) by Antonio Rocco: A Voyage of a Painting and Its Painter*

Paolo Rusconi
Attraction and Artistic Mobility Patterns in P.M. Bardi's Brazilian Way

Gerhard Wolf
Beyond the Voyage

Introductions to Session 9
From Florence to São Paulo via Marozia

The link between the two parts of the Congress, *Motion: Transformation* and *Motion: Migrations*, can be found in this final, ninth section, titled *Voyage*, a theme that entails both movement and transformation, the congress' two fundamental concepts, and which can be explored in different ways. Indeed, the theme can be applied to both people and objects; it is real and metaphorical; and it does not fall within any strict definition as it permeates several different fields of knowledge and human sciences, from literature to music. It can be found in many forms of art and even cinema, which with its mythopoeic and semiotic mechanisms (the images following one after another) introjects the key elements of a story-journey: time, space, and transformation.[1]

Travel and literature have been closely connected since the days of Homer, when he wrote his poem *Odyssey*: in both, we can see a "similar exploration, deconstruction, and expedition of the world and self".[2] In classical literature, the journeys undertaken by Odysseus and Aeneas each had a purpose: for Ulysses, it was to return home; for Aeneas, it was to search for the promised land, far from his home in Troy. For the former, the journey brought the hero back to the beginning, having accumulated along the way knowledge he never would have developed – to the same extent and breadth – had he not left Ithaca to participate in the war against the Trojans. After all, upon his return, he finds himself in a different Ithaca to the one he had left behind. While Aeneas's journey involved similar hardships, plights, and obstacles, these were faced in foreign lands and amongst unknown people, leading him to complete his mission far from where he had departed. Ulysses has inspired several literary works over time, the most famous being *Ulysses* by James Joyce, published in 1922. In this novel – as is well known – the protagonist, inspired by the ancient hero, represents man's adventure into the world. A little more than

twenty years later, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno revived the myth of Ulysses in *Dialektik of Aufklärung* (1947), making Odysseus a metaphor for the condition of the bourgeois Enlightenment. If, in the artistic field, the iconographic fortune of the *Odyssey* knew no solutions of continuity starting from Greek art, it was the illustration in Joyce's masterpiece that offered the opportunity to the most disparate artists of the 20th century to try their hand at *Odyssey* themes and characters.[3] More generally, it can be said that the Homeric poem has worked for contemporary artists in different ways: to confront the classic, to talk about themselves as well as their own times through the lens of social and ideological instances (remember, for example, the *Odyssey* project conceived by Ai Weiwei between 2015 and 2017).

In music, the interest in Homer's Odysseus has been equally prolific. In addition to Claudio Monteverdi's very famous opera (*Il ritorno di Ulisse in patria*, 1640) and Charles Gounod's music for Françoise Ponsard's tragedy *Ulysse* (1852), I would also like to mention that the fascination with Homer's hero can even be found among Italy's most renowned singer-songwriters of the 20th and 21st centuries. I am thinking especially about *Odysseus* by Francesco Guccini (2004), whose protagonist openly declares that he does not belong to the sea, even if the gods of Olympus and his fellow men have urged him to sail the seas, and he thanks Homer for having assured him "an eternal life enclosed within verses, rhythms, a rhyme [...]", offering him "the infinite joy of landing in previously unknown ports".[4]

The fate of Virgil's hero is more modest in comparison. Let us focus on Aeneas, taking inspiration from Virgil's poem through the incisive iconographic patency of a truly unique image in which we find a briefly summarised compelling account of the travel experiences described in Book I of *Aeneid*. I am referring to an engraving by Marcan-

Fig. 1. Alberto Savinio, *Ulysse et Polyphème*, 1929. Oil on canvas, 65x81 cm, MART 989, VAF 0666. Rovereto, Mart, Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Collection VAF-Stiftung.

tonio Raimondi designed by Raphael and known by the title *Quos Ego* (B. XIV, 264-268, 352). The artist's literary source comprises five hexameters composed by the Roman poet Vomanius, distributed across five plates in the form of epigraphs: two pairs are located at the sides, below and above the upper and lower friezes respectively, and a single plate at the centre of the lower frieze, arranged in a way that divides it into two distinct scenes. If we focus on the scene in the upper right corner, we can recognise Ilioneus and the other Trojans imploring Dido (I, vv. 520-558) to welcome him and his men – who had spent too much time at sea, at the mercy of the wind – and to allow them to repair their ships so that they can continue on sailing to Italy and Lazio.[5] Some of the words in this conversation with the queen, which takes place in the presence of Aeneas (who is in-

visible because his mother Venus had enveloped him in a thick mantle of mist), stand out for their surprising relevance to today:

> Queen, to whom Jupiter has granted to found a new city, and to put the curb of justice on haughty tribes, we, unhappy Trojans, tempest-driven over every sea, make our prayer to you: ward off the horror of flames from our ships; spare a pious race, and look more graciously on our fortunes. We have not come to spoil with the sword your Libyan homes or to drive stolen booty to the shore. No such violence is in our hearts, nor have the vanquished such assurance. [...] What race of men is this? What land is so barbarous as to allow this custom? We are debarred the welcome of the beach; they stir up wars and forbid us to set foot on the border of their land.[6]

By choosing to include the *argumentum* of Book 1 on the folio, Raphael referenced literature and placed it, together with painting and sculpture, under the aegis of the engraving. Therefore, the latter became a complete work of art that overcomes the clash between word and image. After all, to cultured men and artists in Rome during this time, engravings must have seemed to be the expressions and tools of a revolution in the field of communication, comparable to what happened in the 20th century with cinema. The latter provides an encapsulation of painting, theatre, music, sculpture, architecture, dance, landscape, man, visual imagery, and words, according to the enthusiastic definition of Sergej Ejzenštejn.[7]

With Claudio Magris, you could say that the journey as a symbol of the continuous movement of knowledge is closely linked with the precariousness of the methods and tools with which cultures presume to understand and judge one another. For art historians, the journey (of artists, patrons, collectors, and even objects) has contributed to surpassing the conceptual bounds of the notion of *school*, helping to comprehend the never-ending trajectory of the coming and going of people, ideas, and things, during which the original qualities of the starting point are subjected to considerable transformations and reciprocal exchanges at the time of one's arrival and return. Please note that I purposefully did not speak of influence(s), as I share the reservations expressed by Michael Baxandall regarding this hierarchical and limited term.[8] Recently, I was able to examine the inadequacy of the notion of "school" when I looked at the Spanish drawings conserved in Emilio Santarelli's collection donated to the Uffizi in 1866.[9] The artists operating in the Mediterranean, specifically in Spain and Italy, participated in a constant exchange that was quite varied depending on the timing and personal experiences. I am thinking, for example, of "los italianos escurialenses" Federico Zuccari, Luca Cambiaso, Pellegrino Tibaldi, and Giovanni Battista Castello, known as Bergamasco;[10] those who know anything about these artists' careers in Italy, first and foremost Tibaldi, cannot but conclude that from an artistic point of view, during their time at the Monasterio del Escorial (Monastery of El Escorial), they were not entirely Italian, nor were they entirely Spanish, rather they were "escurialenses".

They belonged to a place that was, above all else, a melting pot of encounters, exchanges, and

Fig. 2. Marcantonio Raimondi, *Quos Ego* (B. XIV, 264-268, 352), c. 1515. Vienna, Albertina Museum, inv. 1971/361.

expectations (on the part of Philip II), where the artists' reactions to their journey were not limited to the experiences they had during their travels from Italy to Spain (or vice versa) but continued through the creation of an original and common style. It is for this reason that studying drawing in 16th-century Spain meant undertaking a continuous journey, intended to expand geo-cultural borders and knock down barriers of prejudice. I would also like to mention the rather emblematic case of Jusepe (José) de Ribera, known as Lo Spagnoletto. Even though he was the only Spanish painter to be represented in the Florentine collection since its foundation, he was categorised in alphabetical order alongside Italian artists by Filippo Baldinucci (the first curator of the Medici collections on behalf of cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici)[11] in the 1670s.[12] Only later on, towards the end of the 19th century (starting in 1890, with Pasquale Nerino Ferri, who at the time was the director of the then Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe della R. Galleria degli Uffizi), was Lo Spagnoletto considered an exclusively Spanish artist;[13] nonetheless, he remained long described as either Ital-

Fig. 3. Pellegrino Tibaldi, *Christ Presented to the People*, c. 1586. Fresco. San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Monasterio del Escorial, Escorial.

ian or Spanish in many 20th-century catalogues. Even the nickname El Greco, as Domínikos Theotokópoulos was known, is rooted in contradiction: the artist was Greek, as his pseudonym indicates, and lived in Italy before arriving in Toledo, where he blended the artistic traditions of his homeland with those of the countries he travelled in to create his evocative works of art, thereby achieving a personal and completely original style, both ancient and modern. The artist seemed to imbibe the very essence of the places where he spent his life and developed his skills, expressing it in an artistic style that could not be confined to one specific

country; nevertheless, he was often classified as a Spanish artist. Even the historian Fernand Braudel, in *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, when speaking about the "Mediterranean of the sky" that stretches above the "Mediterranean of land and water",[14] dedicates a brief and intense paragraph to the artist that inextricably ties him to Toledo: "Above Toledo, the Atlantic humidity contributes in winter to bring those turbulent and dramatic skies of storm and light painted by El Greco [...]".[15]

Ribera and El Greco may represent exemplary cases of the inconsistencies and contradictions we come across when cataloguing artwork each time we favour taxonomic descriptions that divide the cultural phenomenon into single segments that are never exhaustive despite their individual importance.[16] This can especially be seen when shifting from the critical analysis of an artist's monographic studies to the analytical exposition of his/her body of work in miscellaneous tools such as some exhibition catalogues and permanent collections. Conversely, nowadays the ideal museum should be working to overcome the most rigidly unaltered interpretations of the word "school", by leaving behind its national acceptation and, more importantly, knocking down the forced cultural "customs" of 19th-century nationalism. The final objective that I believe is necessary to address is the expansion of museums and a more global circulation of culture, in line with the continuous exchanges between European and non-European countries fostered by historic, economic, and social circumstances.

"Travel teaches disorientation, to always feel like a foreigner in one's life, even at home; but being a foreigner amongst foreigners is perhaps the only way to truly be brothers. For this reason, the purpose of travel is men; [...]".[17] It was undoubtedly the choice to explore a world different from our own (and at the same time, so similar to it thanks to the phenomenon of Italian immigration) that led us to work together with our Brazilian colleagues to hold these two parts of the congress in Florence and São Paulo.

In addition to our intention of fostering a cultural exchange between the two countries (and beyond), it is important to ensure future prospects for our current work. In my opinion, this two-part congress highlights a fantastic and visionary element that is inherent in the journey from Florence to São Paulo. If we want to have an idea of the journey that awaits us and of the one we have already

Fig. 4. Jusepe (José) de Ribera, called Lo Spagnoletto, *Cruci-fixion of Polycrates*, c. 1649. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabi-netto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, inv. 10097 S.

Fig. 5. Domínikos Theotokópoulos, called El Greco, *View of To-ledo*, c. 1599-1600. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, H.O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H.O. Havemeyer, 1929, inv. 29.100.6.

partly undertaken through our work together, we must emphasise that the destination of this jour-ney is the respect for diversity, the recognition of similarities in our diversity, and the respect for the planet as a manifestation and implicit conse-quence of our view as it expands to include seem-ingly different places and peoples. At this point, I am tempted to build an invisible city, like the one described by Italo Calvino. For a brief moment I thought about Marozia, which consists of two cit-ies, the rat's and the swallow's. Both, Calvino ex-plains, "change with time, but their relationship does not change; the second is the one about to free itself from the first".[18] The invisible city to be built, even only in our imagination following our

work together, should instead be different and re-gain a form that the author describes as "crystal-line, transparent as a dragonfly";[19] not for a brief moment, as it happens in Marozia, but for much longer. It should exist independently from the con-stant presence, in our cities, of an almost irrecon-cilable dualism between the beauty that pervades them and its constant desecration. We are used to facing this polarity that arises, more or less openly, in metropolises around the world; however, like the inhabitants of Marozia, we prefer to interpret the Sibyl's prophecy as a forewarning of an enduring season of swallows taking flight to trace "with their wings' blade the curve of an opening horizon".[20]

Marzia Faietti

Notes

[1] I quote from M. Tirino, *Cinema e viaggio. Tre prospettive d'analisi tra scambio simbolico, sociologia dell'immaginario ed economia turistica* (online, 2010), Academia.edu. https://www.academia.edu/2174831/Cinema_e_viaggio_Tre_prospettive_danalisi_tra_scambio_simbolico_sociologia_dellimmaginario_ed_economia_turistica. (Accessed March, 2021).

[2] C. Magris, *L'infinito viaggiare* (Milano: Mondadori, 2005), p. XV ("un'analoga esplorazione, decostruzione e ricognizione del mondo e dell'io").

[3] A recent exhibition dedicated to Ulysses comprehensively illustrates the never-ending fortune of this figure throughout

the centuries: see G. Brunelli, et al., eds., *Ulisse. L'arte e il mito*, exh. cat. (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2020).

[4] www.francescoguccini.it/discografia/ritratti. ("un'eterna vita racchiusa in versi, in ritmi, in una rima", "la gioia infinita di entrare in porti sconosciuti prima").

[5] R. Jones, N. Penny, *Raphael* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 183 and no. 26, p. 252, instead analyse Aeneas's first speech to Dido (referring to vv. 595 et seq.), since the profile of the male figure is very similar to that of the figure that in *Morbetto* (B. XIV, 314, 417) by Raimondi, in their opinion, represents Aeneas.

[6] "o regina, novam cui condere Iuppiter urbem iustitiaque dedit gentes fraenare superbas, Troes te miseri, ventis maria omnia vecti, oramus: prohibe infandos a navibus ignis, parce pio generi et propius res aspice nostras. non nos aut ferro Libycos populare Penates venimus aut raptas ad litora vertere praedas; non ea vis animo nec tanta superbia victis. […] quod genus hoc hominum? quaeve hunc tam barbara morem permittit patria? hospitio prohibemur harenae; bella cient primaque vetant consistere terra" (I, vv. 522-529, 539-541): see *Virgil. Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid, Books 1-6*, tr. H. Fairclough, rev. G.P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 298 (Latin text); p. 299 (English text).

[7] The judgment is formulated by Ejzenštejn in 1947 in the paper *Always ahead (like an epilogue)* in which he strongly reaffirms his full confidence in cinema: see M. Faietti, *«una specie di intricata matassa». La linea grafica di Sergej M. Ejzenštejn*, in M. Faietti, P. Nardoni, E.D. Schmidt, eds., *Ejzenštejn. La rivoluzione delle immagini*, exh. cat. (Firenze: Giunti, 2017), p. 43.

[8] M. Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention. On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 58-62.

[9] M. Faietti, *Per una storia globale del disegno «El dibujo en España» nell'età di Carlo V e Filippo II*, in M. Faietti, C.T. Gallori, T. Mozzati, eds., *Spagna e Italia in dialogo nell'Europa del Cinquecento*, exh. cat. (Firenze: Giunti, 2018), pp. 18-37.

[10] Definition by A. Pérez Sánchez, *Museo del Prado. Catálogo de dibuios. Dibujos españoles siglos XV-XVII* (Madrid: Alfiz, 1972), p. 13.

[11] On Cardinal Leopoldo, collector of drawings, see R. Aliventi, et al., *Una "muta historia": la storia dell'arte per immagini nella collezione di disegni di Leopoldo de' Medici*, in V. Conticelli, R. Gennaioli, M. Sframeli, eds., *Leopoldo de' Medici. Principe dei collezionisti*, exh. cat. (Livorno: Sillabe, 2017), pp. 116-131, with previous bibliography.

[12] F. Baldinucci, *Listra de' Nomi de' Pittori, di mano de' quali si hanno Disegni* (1673-1675), Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Post., 97: see M. Fileti Mazza, *Storia di una collezione. Dai libri di disegni e stampe di Leopoldo de' Medici all'età moderna*, Soprintendenza Speciale per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico ed Etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della Città di Firenze. Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi. Inventario Generale delle Stampe, II (Firenze: Olschki, 2009), p. 234 (there were four drawings in 1673, and nine were added by 1675).

[13] P.N. Ferri, *Catalogo riassuntivo della raccolta di disegni antichi e moderni posseduta dalla R. Galleria degli Uffizi di Firenze* (Roma: presso i Principali Librai, 1890), pp. 862-863.

[14] I consulted F. Braudel, *Civiltà e imperi del Mediterraneo nell'età di Filippo II* (1949), 2 vols. (Torino: Einaudi, 2010), I, p. 238, where the two phrases "Mediterraneo aereo" and "Mediterraneo di terra e d'acqua" (Italian translation by C. Pischedda updated to the fifth French edition of 1982) can be found.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 240 ("Sopra Toledo, grazie all'umidità atlantica, l'inverno è responsabile di quei cieli offuscati, patetici, tempesta e luce, dipinti dal Greco […]").

[16] See M. Faietti, *I disegni di scuola napoletana agli Uffizi dall'Ottocento a Walter Vitzthum*, in F. Solinas, S. Schütze, eds., with the collaboration of M. Epifani, N. Iodice, V. Carpita, *Le Dessin Napolitain*, Actes du colloque international Ecole Normale Supérieure (Roma: De Luca, 2010), pp. 308-309 (pp. 297-312).

[17] C. Magris, *L'infinito viaggiare*, cit., p. XX ("Viaggiare insegna lo spaesamento, a sentirsi sempre stranieri nella vita, anche a casa propria, ma essere stranieri fra stranieri è forse l'unico modo di essere veramente fratelli. Per questo la meta del viaggio sono gli uomini; […]").

[18] I. Calvino, *Le città invisibili* (Milano: Mondadori, 1993), p. 155 ("cambiano nel tempo; ma non cambia il loro rapporto: la seconda è quella che sta per sprigionarsi dalla prima").

[19] *Ivi* ("cristallina, trasparente come una libellula").

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 154 ("con la lama delle ali la curva d'un orizzonte che s'allarga").

Voyage: Misplacement and Foreignness

When proposing the notion of 'voyage' for the Italy-Brazil session at the 35th CIHA – Florence in 2019, we invited our speakers to reflect on the various dimensions of travelling, one of them being the transfer and relocation of objects, concepts, and people.

In this respect, we would like to add two more terms that might give new meanings to objects, concepts, and people that move from one place to another: 'misplacement' and 'foreignness'. They may characterize the condition of an object, for instance, having as an immediate consequence its loss.

For example, let's consider the artworks by non-Brazilian artists of the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo (MAC USP), Brazil.[1] They have always been exhibited as part of the highlights of the Museum's collection. However, they are conveyed as misplaced objects which ended up in Brazil by chance, and do not have clear connections with the experience of modernity or modern art, neither in the country nor elsewhere. In the two general catalogues of the collection published by MAC USP, the first in 1973 and the second in 1986,[2] they appeared grouped under the label *Obras estrangeiras* ('Foreign Artworks') and *Acervo Internacional* ('International Collection'), respectively, and they were in both cases separated from the section dedicated to Brazilian artworks.[3] The use of the term 'foreign' to define artworks attributed to non-Brazilian artists is something Brazilian art historians and critics inherited from the context of the São Paulo Biennial, which had award categories in painting, sculpture, and works on paper divided into non-Brazilian and Brazilian artists. According to the Biennial's regulations, the latter were either those who held a Brazilian citizenship, or those who had been living in the country for at least two years[4] – a very fluid concept if one considers that, in the first half of the 20th century, Brazil faced strong waves of immigration.

The most common word used for 'foreign' in Portuguese is *estrangeiro*. Contrary to the definition of 'foreign' in English, *estrangeiro* has some other quite exceptional meanings in Portuguese. *Estrangeiro* can refer to someone who does not belong to a family or a group, or to someone who does not know the laws, customs, and culture of his/her own country. Among its synonyms, there are a few words that carry a negative meaning, like 'stranger', 'exotic', 'alien', and 'outlander'. Transforming words into actions, and without giving deep thought to them, it just seemed quite natural for Brazilian art historians to adopt the strategy to deal with such objects as not pertaining to Brazil. They were there, but they did not really concern the local narration of art, and there was no reason to devote any effort to research them: this was a task for 'foreign' art historians, who would know more about these objects. By assuming that they ended up in Brazil by chance, art historians overlooked the fact that they were put into circulation in the international art market due to the very specific (and violent, for that matter) circumstances of World War II. The fact is that neither Brazilians nor non-Brazilians know more about them, yet these works that seemed to be totally misplaced from their original context tell us a lot more about the history of modernity.

One recent case study is Boccioni's original plaster cast of *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, now in the MAC USP's collections. For many years, the museum has preferably displayed the bronze cast belonging to its collections, to show to its audience an example of futurism as an avant-garde movement. However, *Unique Forms…* is in the only piece of art illustrating futurism at MAC USP, and it cannot properly exemplify futurism as a movement in its various meanings. This is exactly the opposite of what went on when the MoMA, in New York, presented its earlier, very bright, shiny bronze cast in their gallery dedicated

to futurism. This is probably the best-known version of Boccioni's *Unique Forms…*, and it is not rare to see art experts talking about Boccioni's sculptural work having the MoMA's bronze sculpture in mind, and not the original plaster cast now in the MAC USP's collections – even though the latter is the actual piece conceived and exhibited by the artist in his lifetime, since all the bronze casts were posthumously made.

Recent research MAC USP undertook on Boccioni's *Unique Forms…*, with the collaboration of non-Brazilian specialists,[5] has made clear how important it is to consider the work's provenance and material history when interpreting it, as well as when evaluating the place it occupies in the history of modern sculpture. It revealed how

Boccioni's sculpture was promoted in the aftermath of World War II as an unblemished symbol of Italian avant-garde art, and helped Italy be reintegrated into the international art system and valued by both Brazilian and US collectors. *Unique Forms…* is not misplaced. It is indeed a testimony of the network of relations in the international art system, which then helped build a certain idea of avant-garde in the second half of the 20th century. Finally, the dismissal of its materiality is very revealing of the political power of institutions and their leverage over the discourse on visual arts and art history as a field of scientific research.

Ana Gonçalves Magalhães

Notes

[1] For the museum's collection online, see: www.acervo.mac.usp.br.

[2] See W. Zanini, ed., *Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo: Catálogo geral das obras* (São Paulo: USP, 1973); and A. Amaral, ed., *Perfil de um acervo: Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: MAC USP/Techint, 1988).

[3] This is not a specific way of classifying a museum collection in a catalogue. Ever since the invention of the catalogue as a guide to a museum's collection, the school and

later the nationality of the artists were the criteria by which they were organized and documented in museum collections, therefore to list them in the catalogues.

[4] See L.G. Machado, ed., *I Bienal Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo*, exh. cat. (São Paulo: Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, 1951), p. 25.

[5] See A.G. Magalhães, R. McKever, eds., *Boccioni no Brasil: Reavaliando "Formas únicas da continuidade no espaço"* (São Paulo: MAC USP/Edusp, 2021), bilingual edition. Upcoming.

The "Orient" in the West: The Japanese Architect Itō Chūta's Travels in the Ottoman Empire and Its Challenge to the Oriental Narrative

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In September 1904, the Japanese architect Itō Chūta (1867-1954) was in Cairo, Egypt. Here, he had an experience for the first time that made him rethink his notion of *Saracen* architecture, which would correspond to today's so-called "Islamic" architecture. It was in Sultan Hassan's Mosque, with four *ivan*s of enormous scale, about which Chūta commented on his field note "モスクとは見えず doesn't look like a mosque".[1] Actually, today this masterpiece of Mamluk architecture is known to have some Byzantine influence, especially in its use of color marbles in the *mihrab*. In this same city, Chūta's idea of a Christian church was also upset by his visit to the Coptic Church of St. Virgin Mary, on which Chūta noted "教会とは思へず doesn't look like a Christian Church".[2]

Chūta noticed a similar ambivalence in the Greek port of Pireás (Piraeus), where he could not decide whether the atmosphere was "Turkish" or "Greek". According to him, the appearance of the city was "strangely Turkish", with the people speaking Turkish, and shops and food just like in Turkey. He even noted that "Or, Constantinople could be strangely more Greek".[3] For Chūta, who had read European discourses on Greek architecture before, in Japan, this ambiguity, or cultural overlapping, was a real discovery.

Born in Yonezawa in 1867, one year before the Meiji restoration, in a family of medical doctors, Itō Chūta was a person of double background – raised in feudal Edo tradition in his early childhood, he received a Western style architectural education at the Tokyo Imperial University, established by the new Meiji government (fig. 1). In one of his notebooks from his school days, we can observe handwritings both in English and Japanese, measurements in inches, meters, and *shaku*, a traditional Japanese measurement system. This shows that Western knowledge was not always immediately acceptable for a young Japanese architecture student, and that he needed some time to

digest it (fig. 2). The gap between his graduation project at the University of Tokyo, a Gothic cathedral, and his first commission after his graduation, the Heian Jingu Shintoism Shrine, clearly shows this duplicity: what he had learnt at school was not at all applicable in the real world. Japan was in the middle of a process of change. In this paper, I will explore how a travel experience affected Itō Chūta"s formulation of the notion of "World Architecture", and especially of the place of "Oriental" (*Tōyō*) and "Islamic" (*Saracen-Kaikyō*) styles

Fig. 1. Itō Chūta's portrait (1867-1954) taken at the photographer Nicolaïdes' studio in Istanbul in 1904. (Ito Family Archives).
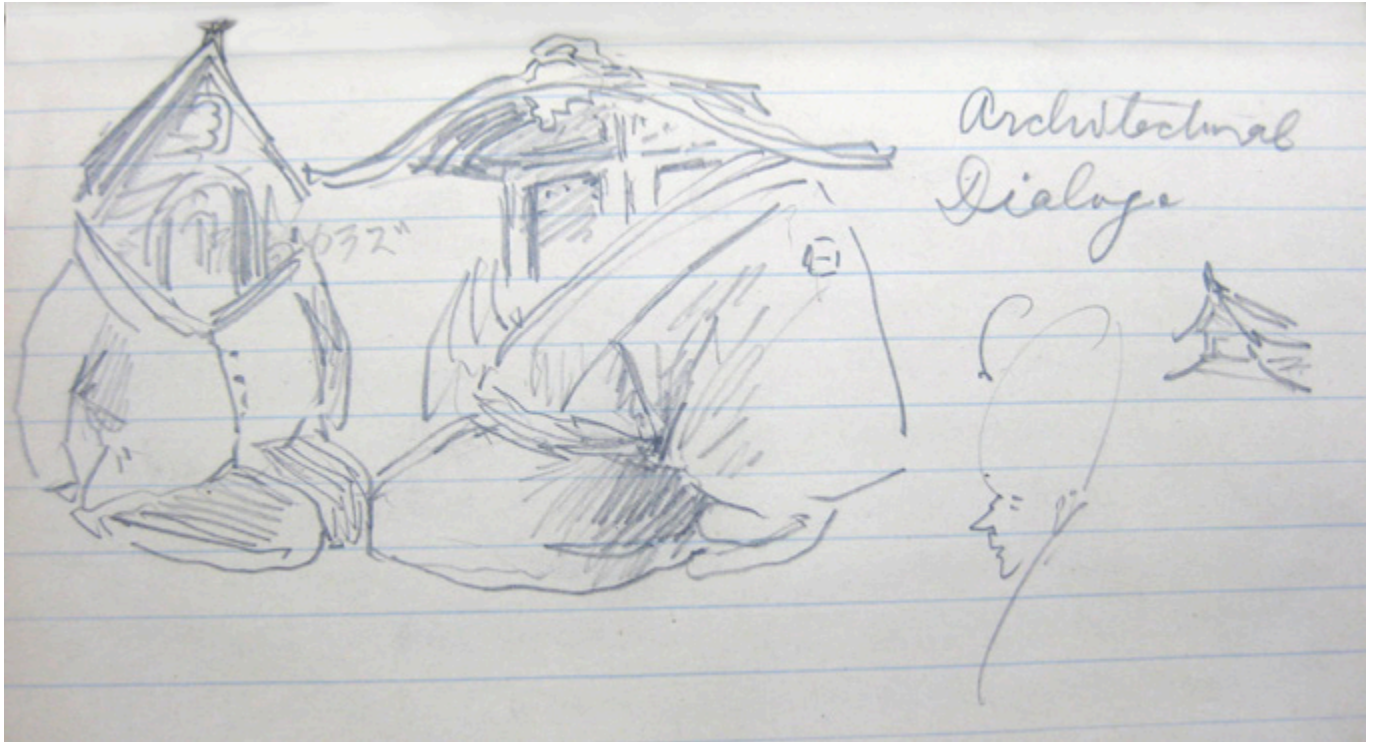
Fig. 2. "Architectural Dialogue". From Chūta's drawings of his student days. Department of Architecture, Graduate School of Engineering, the University of Tokyo.

in this context. I believe this can give some ideas to the debate on global history of art today.

Conceptually, the notions of "Oriental" (*Tōyō* 東洋), "Islam", and even of "architecture" were foreign and problematic from the Japanese perspective. Chūta was in fact the intellectual who created the Japanese word *kenchiku*, to translate "architecture". While trying to conceptualize and document the Ottoman heritage, he did not stand in the usually dominant position of the Western subject, who represented and observed the subaltern "Oriental" objects. His background and commitments brought him to shift constantly between the roles of subject and object, observer and observed, dominant and subaltern.

He is known to be the first Japanese architectural historian, and he introduced the notion of "architecture" as a fine art to Japan, by proposing its translation into Japanese, *Kenchiku* – literally "structure construction" – instead of *Zōka* ("house making"), criticizing the latter because "house does not include all kinds of built structure". According to his article issued in 1894, the Society of *Zōka*, as well as the Department of Architecture at the Tokyo Imperial University, changed their names.[4] Chūta was only 27 years old at that time.

One of his major achievements is his doctoral thesis 「法隆寺建築論」 (A Treatise on the Architecture of Hōryū-ji Temple) published in 1893.[5] In this thesis, Chūta theorized the possible influence of Greek architecture on the Hōryū-ji Temple in Nara, a masterpiece of Japanese architecture from the 7th century, which today is also known as the oldest surviving wooden structure on earth. Chūta's basis for this argument was the *enthasis* observed in the columns of middle gate of the Hōryū-ji Temple and the proportional similarity between Hōryū-ji and Etruscan temples. In his argument, Chūta stressed that the *enthasis*, the slight swellings at 1/3 of the column's height of Greek architecture, has gradually expanded to the East via India, the heartland of Buddhism, where the traces of Hellenistic influence on the heritage of Gandhara had already been studied by British scholars.

The idea of connecting the origin of Japanese architecture to ancient Greece, regarded as the apex of a hierarchical system of Western classical architecture, automatically secured a higher rank in the Western system. The thesis was also Chūta's personal challenge to the marginality of Japanese architecture in the Western discourses on architectural history of the period, typically represented by James Fergusson's comment

in his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* published in 1876.[6] Ferguson stated that Japan lacked permanent buildings, a sense of magnificence and a connection with the building races of mankind. Although it was published only in Japanese, Chūta's attempt to "nobilitate" Japanese architecture by appropriating Western criteria instead of looking for a supposedly original paradigm may be regarded as a first stage of Japanese self-representation.

Itō Chūta's originality was not only his thesis, but also his demonstration for which he followed the traces of *enthasis* throughout Eurasia. After leaving Tokyo on 29 March 1902, he traveled for three years and three months through China, Burma, Malay, India, Sri Lanka, the Ottoman Empire including Egypt, then Greece, Italy, Germany, Austria, France, Britain, and the United States. Thanks to Chūta's patient advocating and planning, this trip was financed by the Japanese Ministry of Education, which normally funded only academics going to study in the West. Itō Chūta's trip had a more specific goal – to study the architectural heritage of the region as part of a research trip to "China, India, and Turkey (the Ottoman Empire)". His choice of heading to Asia and the Middle East was quite exceptional at that time for an associate professor at the Tokyo Imperial University, where everyone had to comply with the unwritten commitment of studying in the West to attain the status of professor.

The Russo-Japanese War broke out while Chūta was in Sri Lanka in February 1904. He had to change direction to Istanbul via Europe despite his plan of travelling via Afghanistan, Iran, and Armenia.

On 8 May 1904, Itō Chūta arrived in Istanbul, where he asked for the direct permission of Sultan Abdülhamit II to visit various regions in the Ottoman lands (fig. 3). Although he was later decorated with the third rank *Mecidi* medal, documents preserved in the Prime Minister's Ottoman Archives tell that an assistant professor from Tokyo Imperial University was nevertheless regarded with suspicion by the Ottoman authorities as he was considered a possible spy during the Russo-Japanese War. In the Ottoman Empire, which had no official relationship with Japan, Chūta benefited from the Anglo-Japanese alliance signed just 2 years before. After almost 3 months of waiting, at the end of July, Chūta finally obtained permissions and left for an inner-land trip to visit Ankara, Kütahya, and Konya. From here, because of tick

attacks and the heat of the Anatolian summer, Chūta was forced to change his traveling route to Izmir, on the Aegean coast of today's Turkey, instead of continuing his trip in Armenia and Iraq. Actually, the Ionian monuments of Ephesus, Miletus, and Didymoi in the Ottoman Empire were the first examples of "Greek Architecture" Chūta encountered. Chūta's serious concern with the examples of *enthasis* can be observed from the drawings, measurements, and reference books on the pages of his notebooks.

Chūta embarked upon a voyage around the Mediterranean that went from Izmir to Alexandria, with calls in Chios, Piraeus, and Candia (Heraklion, Crete). After visiting Egypt, he took a ship passing to Jaffa (Tel Aviv) via Beirut and, on the way back to Istanbul, he went through Damascus, Aleppo, Mersin, and Tarsus.

Actually, Chūta's trip was seriously affected by the ongoing Russo-Japanese War; Chūta was lucky to be in the Ottoman Empire, a longtime enemy of Russia at that time. Although it was officially neutral, people were overwhelmingly on the Japanese side, feeling sympathy for this small
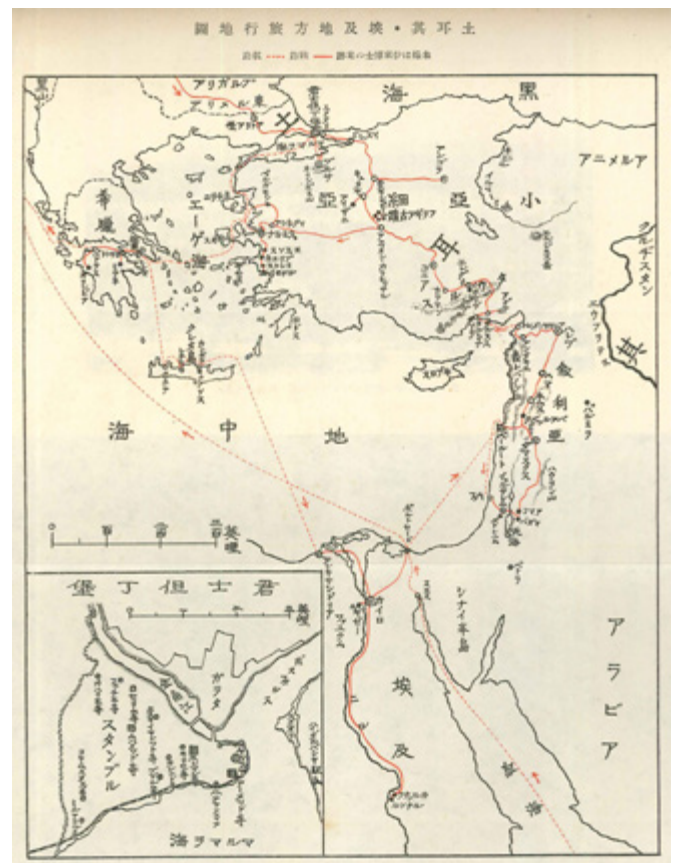

Fig. 3. Chūta's route map in the Ottoman Empire drawn by himself. From *Itō Chūta Kenchiku Bunken*.

country in Asia that challenged for the first time the Russian giant. "A Japanese" traveling in the Ottoman Empire at that time had a special meaning and aura.

Among the three ports where he landed in the Eastern Mediterranean, Chūta describes Crete as "worth seeing", praising its landscape as "the most beautiful among all islands".[7] As soon as he landed, the local people gathered around him gazing as if he were an animal of a rare species. Actually, he was just Japanese. In another city, people were disappointed to see that Chūta was not very strong and muscular because they expected a Japanese to be huge, well-muscled, beating all the Russians, who were considered "incomparably fierce".[8] When we look at Chūta's anthropological studies on local people, we understand that Chūta, who believed to be gazing himself, was in turn gazed as an object.

After visiting Egypt, Chūta took a Russian ship from Port Said to Jaffa, in Palestine. In his travel diary published in Japan, Chūta states that the reason was just to save time, "I just couldn't wait until the following Egyptian ship came",[9] but obviously he had an adventurous temperament. In personal correspondences, such as a postcard to his wife from Jerusalem, Chūta wrote "It was funny to see the Russians so surprised".[10] On board, of course he was widely noticed and talked about by all passengers and crew. One of them even came to him specifically to say that "We are enemies in the Far East, but here both you and I are Children of God, just like brothers. I hope you will be conscious of that".[11] Chūta took a first-class cabin during this time, although, being a modest scholar, he usually used a second-class one. At dinner, of course, nobody spoke about the War but, according to Chūta, other four first-class passengers – a German archaeologist, a merchant from Hamburg, an Austrian consul, and an Italian – all sided for the Japanese, and sometimes the Russian captain remained strangely isolated on his own ship.

The news of a Japanese taking a Russian ship soon reached Beirut, where Chūta came across a man who criticized him for being "too daring".[12] Chūta's answer was that "It is not at all an adventure, but the same as to buy things in a shop run by a Russian". Chūta seemed to even enjoy being gazed. He was surely conscious of being gazed in public and tried to represent himself in an international context. When we look at his imaginative drawing entitled "General Oyama chasing Kuropatkin[13] in the field of Manchuria, Dr. Itō studying ancient architecture in the field of the Turks", we understand that this architect regards himself as a representative of Japan in the Ottoman Empire, as General Oyama did in the battlefields of Manchuria.

Apart from encounters and perceptions, traveling throughout the Ottoman Empire marked a turning point for Chūta's notion of architecture. While Chūta spent eight and a half months traveling across the Ottoman lands, he had the chance to study not only *enthasis* but also various aspects of a non-classical architectural heritage such as Hittite, Lidian, Coptic, Seljukid, and Ottoman architecture.

In Jerusalem, he noticed the same 11th century Chinese mirrors he had seen among the collections of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, that were discovered here. In Damascus, Chūta met with a bishop and asked him about the ancient Syriac inscriptions on the 8th century Nestorian Stele, of which Chūta himself had made a copy in the old capital of Changan. In Aleppo, he drew and photographed the figures of the Chinese imaginary animals *quilin* and *Fenghuang* on a mural painting in an Aleppian mansion that is preserved now as one of the masterpieces of the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin: the "Aleppo Room" (fig. 4). All these experiences encouraged him to rethink the flow of culture as not going from Greece to Japan, as he used to consider it, but as a more reciprocal, dynamic, and polycentric relationship.

After visiting Europe and the United States, Chūta finally came back to Japan in June 1905. At the end of that same year, he started a course entitled *Tōyō Kenchikushi* ("History of Oriental Architecture") at the University of Tokyo. The concept of *Tōyō* 東洋, in Japanese, literally means "the Eastern side of the Ocean" and was relatively new for the Japanese scholarship at that time. Like the word *kenchiku* that Chūta himself proposed for "architecture", *Tōyō* merely emerged in Japanese academic terminology as the translation of the Western word "Orient / Oriental", on which serious studies were improving in Western scholarship, especially by German scholars such as Ferdinand von Richthofen or Friedrich Hirth.

According to the archival sources at the University of Tokyo, the first course on the history of Oriental Architecture in Japan held by Itō Chūta consisted as follows: six hours for Buddhist architecture in India, one for Jain Architecture in India, six for Hindu Architecture, one for Persian

Architecture, eight for Chinese Architecture, one for Architecture of Korea and Manchuria. Finally, Chūta dedicated 15 hours to *Kaikyō* 回教 (the so-called "Islamic") Architecture.

During the first day of the course, Chūta defined the notion of *Tōyō* as follows:

According to the existing architectural historiography, Egypt is the beginning, followed by Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance. Muhammedan style is inserted among them and India is described as a completely different thing. Indo-China, China and Japan are out of concern. Even according to the system recently proposed, Islamic, Indian, Japanese style etc. are treated separately as "non historical". But this is a system envisaged by foreigners and it cannot be the same as our Japanese point of view. Especially, a definition like "non-historical" is not legitimate: there are important historical relations if it is well studied. Different histories are always related to each other, so that East and West cannot be separated clearly.[14]

When we look at his later formulation of a "Theory of Architectural Evolution" in 1909,[15] we understand that for Itō Chūta, the travel experiences to the "West" of Japan were a discovery of "Eastern" architecture. His ideas of the "different histories related to each other" and "overlapping borders", which may be topics of debate today, surely developed during his trip, and especially during his stay in the multi-cultural Ottoman Empire. His double background and switch between the roles of subject and object, observer and observed, dominant and subaltern, brought him to create these theories. Travel experiences that question a standard way of seeing and thinking can challenge established visions and bear fruitful rewards to an architect of the past, and also to art historians today.
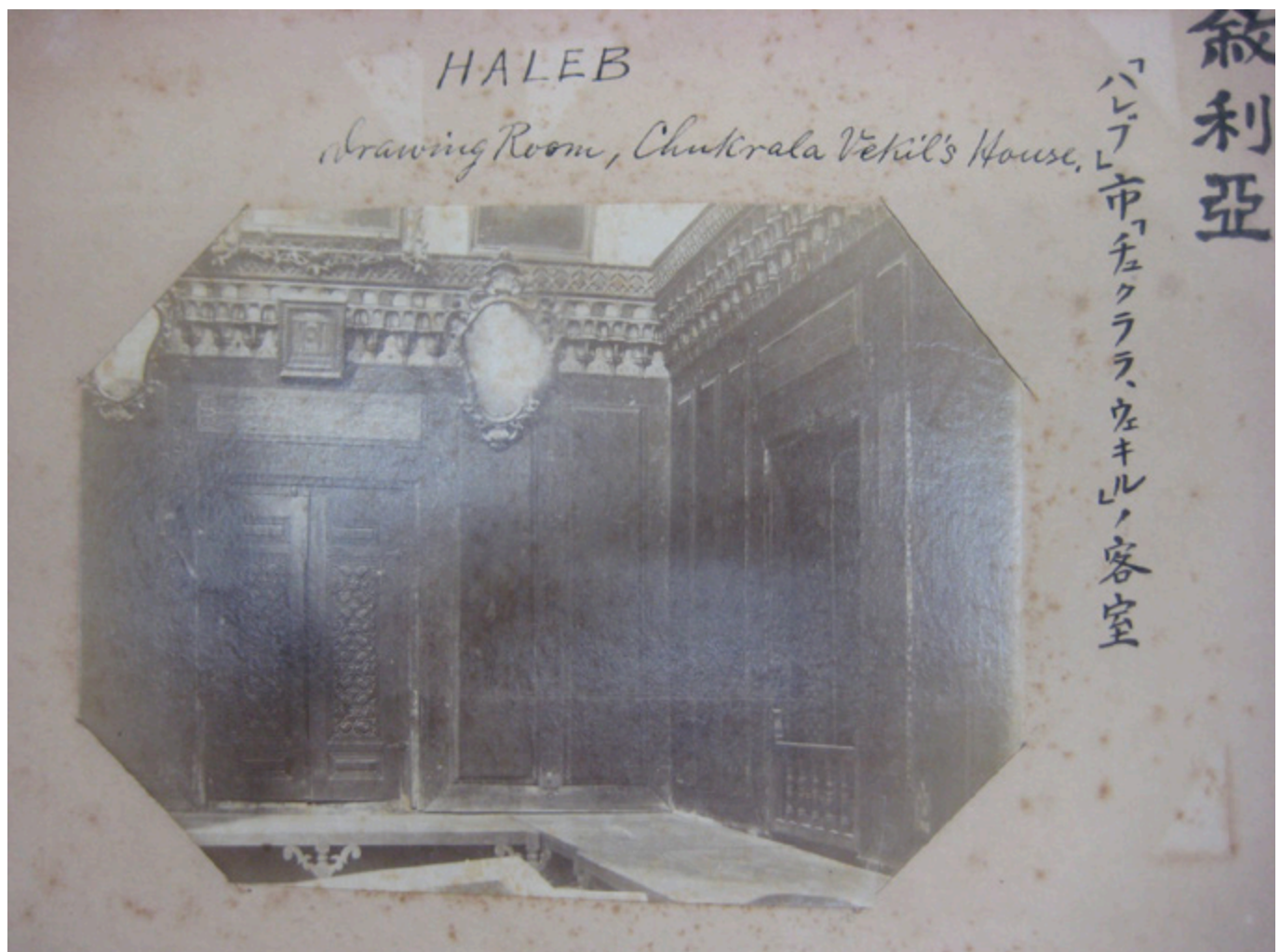
Fig. 4. Chukulala Vekil's house, photo taken by Chūta in 1904. Earliest known photo of the famous 'Aleppo Room', Department of Architecture, Graduate School of Engineering, the University of Tokyo.

Notes

[1] Itō Chūta, *Field Note*, vol. 10, Architectural Institute of Japan.

[2] *Ivi.*

[3] 伊東忠太「希臘旅行茶話」、『伊東忠太建築文献　』第五巻、昭和10年、龍吟社、東京、p. 609 (Itō Chūta, "Girisha Ryokou Sawa" ('Conversation over the Tea on the Travels in Greece'), *Itō Chūta Kenchiku Bunken* (*Architectural Writings* by Itō Chūta), vol. 5, 1931, Ryugin-sha, Tōkyō, p. 609).

[4] 伊東忠太「「アーキテクチュール」の本義を論して其譯字を撰定し我か造家學會の改名を望む」『建築雑誌』　8, no. 90 (1894-06-28): pp. 195-197 (Itō Chūta, "Aakitekuchuru no Hongi wo Ronjite sono Yakuji wo Sentei shi Waga Zouka Gakki no Kaimei wo Nozomu", *Kenchiku Zasshi* 8, no. 90 (1894-06-28): pp. 195-197).

[5] 伊東忠太「法隆寺建築論」『建築雑誌』7, no. 83 (1893-11-28): pp. 317-350 (Itō Chūta, "Horyu-ji Kenchikiron", *Kenchiku Zasshi* 7, no. 83 (1893-11-28): pp. 317-350).

[6] J. Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (London: John Murray, 1876).

[7] 伊東忠太「土耳其•埃及旅行茶話」、『伊東忠太建築文献　　』第五巻、昭和10年、龍吟社、東京、p. 540 (Itō Chūta, "Toruko Ejiputo Ryokou Sawa (*Conversation over the Tea on the Travels in Turkey and Egypt*)", *Itō Chūta Kenchiku Bunken*, vol. 6, 1931, Ryugin-sha, Tōkyō, p. 540).

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 537.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 548.

[10] A postcard from Chūta in Jerusalem to his wife Chiyoko in Tokyo, 20 October 1904, Architectural Institute of Japan Collection.

[11] *Itō Chūta Kenchiku Bunken*, cit., pp. 548-549.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 555.

[13] Aleksey Nikolayevich Kuropatkin (1848-1925), a Russian General, served as Imperial Minister of War between 1898 and 1904.

[14] Itō Chūta Archives, University of Tokyo. The original text in Japanese was translated by the author.

[15] 伊東忠太「建築進化の原則より見たる我邦建築の前途」『建築雑誌』23, no. 265 (1909-01-25): pp. 4-36 (Itō Chūta, "Kenchiku Shinka no Gensoku yori Mitaru Wagaho Kenchiku no Zento" ('The Future of Our Country's Architecture from the Perspectives in Principle of Architectural Evolution'), *Kenchiku Zasshi*).

Notes on the Underground: The Subterranean Voyages of Giorgio Vasari and António Vieira

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We usually consider mobility in the early modern era as a horizontal movement undertaken for pilgrimage, diplomacy, *Wanderlust*, trade, or the expansion of empire.[1] On cartographic images recruited as banner heads for the requisite academic event on "global" early modern art history, lines of longitude, latitude, and sailing routes indicate – perhaps all too felicitously – location and the possibility of voyaging across the earth's surface.[2] I would like to focus on a different mode of travel, one that involved descending into the ground, to encounter what lies in the depths of the earth, or to penetrate these depths entirely and re-emerge at a place beyond them. Transpiring in both physical and symbolic domains, these subterranean voyages figured in the writings of an admittedly odd pairing of authors. The first is Giorgio Vasari and his biographies of artists, the *Lives*, first published in Florence in 1550.[3] The second is the Luso-Brazilian preacher and theologian António Vieira and his preliminary book to the *History of the Future*, conceived in the 1640s, left unfinished, and published in Lisbon in 1718, some two decades after the author's death.[4] A theological work about the destiny of the Portuguese Empire, the *History of the Future* is certainly not a treatise on visual arts. However, recent research has proposed how Vieira's oeuvre constitutes an invaluable yet largely untapped primary source for formulating a transatlantic colonial art theory.[5] Now the pairing of Vasari and Vieira, as mentioned, is incongruous. Aside from a few references, Vasari's work has little to do with Portugal and its overseas territories. Vieira, as far as I know, did not refer to Vasari in his many letters and sermons. Yet what both texts share is an interest in subterranean voyages that follow routes to an ordained vision of history; in turn, this history gives access to the future through art and material culture, which function as the concrete means to peer into abstract notions of time. Taking sub-terranean mobility into account also reveals how the discipline of art history tends to conceive its own future as "exploration", keeping in mind that the verb *explorar* in Portuguese means both "explore" and "exploit".[6]

Time and the Underground

In *Notes on the Underground* (1990), the historian of science Rosalind Williams argued that the subterranean is often the setting of the future: it is the site where the future is imagined, and the location of its infrastructure.[7] Williams' point of departure was Lewis Mumford's study of the machine age, *Technics and Civilization*, published in 1934. Inspired by dioramas of salt and coal mines at the German Museum in Munich, Mumford considered mining as both a quintessential metaphor and a practice of modern technology. "The mine […] is the first completely inorganic environment to be created and lived in by man", Mumford wrote, and "the miner must work by artificial light even though the sun be shining outside; still further down in the seams, he must work by artificial ventilation, too: a triumph of the 'manufactured environment'".[8] Urban environments of modernity depended on structures underground. In 19th-century Paris, galleries enclosing water systems, gas lines, and steam pipes were tourist attractions for those who wished to see the subterranean infrastructure of modern life above.[9] Telegraphic cables spanning the Atlantic Ocean and, encased in rubber harvested from Southeast Asia, were likened by some authors to an invisible technology.[10] By compressing time, telegraphic signals pulsating deep in the sea would facilitate communication and accelerate the arrival of future worlds. The telegraph routes pictured on maps from the early 20th century form a circuit analogous to voyages of early modern exploration, which laid down the communication networks for expanding colonial empires.[11]

The advent of Western modernity has long been associated with horizontal movement across the globe. In his recent book *Heaven on Earth*, T.J. Clark suggests that depicting the human condition as earth-bound acquired urgency in the climate of growing secularization in the Renaissance. In what Clark refers to as "Ground-Level Painting", Renaissance artists reflected on bipedalism, the ability to walk upright on two feet, to point to the affective and erotic dimensions of personhood.[12] One canonical Renaissance work of art – Masaccio's *Expulsion* in the Brancacci Chapel – that Clark would consider an example of "Ground-Level painting" leads us, furthermore, to connect bipedalism with the advent of human time. Banishment from paradise on foot coincides with the beginning of human history, death, and exploitation: for Adam and Eve, thus begins the process of aging; for earth, its cultivation East of Eden.[13] At the same time, the representation of the Fall – and the expanse of Earth, that awaits Adam and Eve – is a pretext to demonstrate humans' ambulatory and navigational capabilities. But for Vasari and Vieira, the world *beneath* the ground gives access to a different type of temporality, one concerned with notions of modernity and the future.[14]

Giorgio Vasari and the Underground

In the Renaissance, architects undertaking restorations and artists interested in the artworks of antiquity embarked on excavation campaigns. By tunneling into the earth, they brought to light long-buried material artefacts. The products of these subterranean journeys did not elicit a strict classical revival but formed the basis of what Vasari called the *maniera moderna*, "the modern manner". "Through seeing antiquities excavated out of the earth", Vasari states, artists discovered models to spur style to attain its summit.[15] In other words, artists were compelled not only by the sight of the artefacts themselves, but by the prospect of an ancient world emerging from the ground. The dirt and roots frequently surrounding 15th and 16th-century depictions of ruins not only register the passing of time; they also in-

Fig. 1. *Holes* in the Sala della Volta dorata (Room 80), after 64 CE. Roma, Domus Aurea, Palatine Hill. (Photo by Marco Ansaloni).

dicate the subterranean origins of new artistic growth, the possibility of classical art's resurrection for future time.[16]

In some excavation campaigns, sculptures were brought up out of the earth into artists' view; in other cases, artists physically entered into the ground to draw what had been found there.[17] Around 1480, as Vasari recounts it, the refurbishment of San Pietro in Vincoli revealed the ruins of the Domus Aurea, the "Golden House" of the Emperor Nero.[18] Subterranean chambers revealed ceilings painted with fantastical combinations of human and animal forms. To study these antique paintings, called "grotesques" after the grottoes where they were found, Renaissance artists descended into the underground ruins with pulleys and ropes. The openings through which they were lowered are still visible. Two holes, resembling potholes from the street, pierce the ceiling of Room 80, known as the Volta Dorata (fig. 1).[19] To study these grotesques, artists transformed themselves into burrowing creatures to reach a strange, artificial space.[20] Vasari recounts that along with Raphael, the artist Giovanni da Udine was "struck with amazement at the freshness of these works, especially since they had been preserved there for so long a time". Vasari describes that the paintings were neither "touched nor seen by air, which along with time, consumes all things, through the changes of the seasons".[21] Under the earth, the two artists experience an environment where *tempus* – both in the sense of chronology and weather – is suspended.[22] The underground is impervious to decay. The subterranean is not a site of decline but an "unfallen" space.

Grotesques spur artists to combine and juxtapose parts of zoomorphic and botanical entities to create forms which are, as Vasari puts it, "beyond the bounds of possibility".[23] Grotesques provided Renaissance artists the license to flout, or at least to challenge, the rules laid down by classical precedents.[24] At times, they were referred to as *bizzarie*, a term also applied to script originating from the New World.[25] Grotesques appeared not only in frames and borders but even in major pictorial fields. This shift from margin to center produces what Michael Squire describes as "frame-games of artistic illusion" in which the "surrounding" becomes the "surrounded". These ornamental forms "pose questions about the relations between reality and two-dimensional replication".[26] A prime example of this visual play are Luca Signorelli's frescoes for the Cappella Nova in the Orvieto Cathedral: in one of the scenes, we see a philosopher peering out of a roundel to witness the End of the World, which takes place above him (fig. 2).[27] Immediately next to the philosopher swarm grotesques that animate and intimate levels of depth to the surface of the otherwise flat surface of the depicted panels. "Are these phantasmagorical figures *there*", Squire asks, "or are they *not* there – at least from the perspective of this subjective figure (himself painted into this make-believe world)?".[28]

Setting aside this question, we can imagine that in his twisted posture, in the act of coming through a hole to behold something astonishing that takes place in a world beyond, the philosopher recreates the experience of the artist studying the grotteschi of the Domus Aurea. It is as though Signorelli has tipped the picture, so that the viewer too can virtually enter subterranean depths and emerge from this aperture. Like those artists who were crawling and breaking their backbones in the depths of the Palatine hill, the prophet stretches backwards to see the grotteschi, which are juxtaposed with the End of Time unfolding above. The contorted figure especially recalls a line in a period poetic account of this subterranean adventure: "We crawl along the ground on our stomachs [...] appearing more bizarre than the grotesque".[29] In Signorelli's fresco, the figure's contorted pose mirrors the curvilinear patterns of the grotesques surrounding him. In entering the subterranean, "artificial" space, the artist's or philosopher's body becomes subject to its different logic, which enables greater freedom from the constraints of biology and time.

António Vieira's Antipodes

Vasari portrays subterranean exploration as time travel in service to the visual arts. His text opens up the possibility to explore other instances of voyages underground, even in texts not usually included in the art theoretical canon. In the *History of the Future*, Vieira figures himself as a seer gazing at the destiny of the Portuguese Empire.[30] His imaginative travel, informed from a life of voyaging between Portugal, Brazil, and Italy, takes him from the confined space of his library down into the depths of the earth – not physically, but through his imagination.[31] He begins with an extended metaphor comparing time to an image of a globe:

Time, like the world, has two hemispheres. The upper and visible one, which is the past, the other *lower and invisible, which is the future*. In the middle [...] are the horizons of time, which are the instants of the present where we are living, where the past ends and the future begins. From this point our history takes its beginning, in which will be discovered for us new regions and new inhabitants from this second hemisphere of time, which are the antipodes of the past. Oh, what great and rare things there are to see in this new discovery.[32]

In this passage, time is imagined as the globe whose equator is imagined as a type of live wire separating past and future. Instead of envisioning the future in a linear fashion as a point in the far distance, Vieira locates the future *beneath* the present. Throughout the *History*, Vieira metaphorically develops the hidden and buried position of future time. He likens, for instance, the imperative to reach the future to the process of building anew: "When the architect wants to remodel over the old and ruined, he also begins by scraping, undoing, demolishing, and getting to the foundations, and

Fig. 2. Luca Signorelli, *Unknown Man (generally called Empedocles)*, 1500-1503. Fresco, post restoration. Orvieto Cathedral, San Brizio Chapel. (Photo Scala / Art Resource, NY).

then, on a new foundation he raises a new frame and new building". Deploying the ancient *topos* of *Deus artifex*, Vieira declares "So does, and does constantly, the Supreme Creator and Artificer of the world". The new building necessarily depends on the buried and hidden foundation that lies underneath. Like those artists digging into the ground commemorated by Vasari, returning to the foundations of culture is a means to jumpstart time, be it artistic or prophetic, into the future.

Elsewhere, the opposite side of the earth – synonymous to the point of arrival of the future – is described through the figure of the antipode. Etymologically, the term combines the idea of *anti* (opposite) with 'pod' (foot) to designate "those who have their feet against our feet", inhabitants who live on the opposite side of the globe. Thinkers sometimes conflated the antipodes with Austral, a mythical land of the south whose existence balanced the lands to the north (fig. 3). Vieira acknowledges that early Christian authors, such as Lactantius and Augustine, disputed the notion that peoples and places might exist on opposite sides of the earth. "As to the fable", Augustine writes in *The City of God*, "of those who imagine that there are people of the antipodes [...] where they are positioned towards us so that they step on the ground with the feet turned around towards ours, as ours are to them, it is in no way credible". Yet this inability to fathom the existence of the antipodes only further anticipates, Vieira suggests, their eventual discovery by the Portuguese.[33]

Specifically, Vieira locates the antipodes in Brazil: he justifies the land's antipodal position through his reading of the Old Testament, which is informed through the filter of his own missionary experience in the Americas. "Having seen the people, walked the lands, and sailed the waters that this text speaks of", Vieira states, "one comes to understand".[34] His discussion focuses on several verses in the book of Isaiah, commanding travel to a land "beyond the rivers of Ethiopia". According to Vieira, this passage ordains Portuguese presence in the New World. He writes, "By the text of Isaiah, one understands Brazil, because Brazil is the land that is directly behind Ethiopia". If the earth is a globe, he continues, their places on the circle position Brazil immediately "behind" Ethiopia.[35] Vieira is, of course, wrong. Ethiopia is diametrically opposite to somewhere in the Pacific. Because of the relative area of the earth's surface that is covered by water as compared

with land, the antipodes of any land point most often fall in water. Vieira's own point of reference in Brazil, Maranhão, the site of his missionary activity, is opposite to somewhere near the Philippines. Yet Vieira insists he can uncover the world of this prophetic future through the metaphorical act of excavating. "We who study and work in the knowledge of Holy Scripture", he states, "are more or less all digging (*mais ou menos todos cavamos*)". This interpretative work of digging is then linked to the divinely mandated labor of traversing the sea by the Portuguese and their arrival to the New World: "And in the end", Vieira writes, "there is that last one for whom such for-

Fig. 3. Allain Manesson-Mallet, *Globe Terrestre; Carte ou Planisphere general du Monde, woodcut.* In *Description de l'univers, contenant les differents systêmes du monde, les cartes generales & particulieres de la geographie ancienne & moderne … Tome premier* (Paris: 1683). (Photo © John Carter Brown Library, Brown University).

tune was reserved and who, always at the end, discovers the treasure almost effortlessly".[36]

Vieira bolsters his exegesis by correlating the verses in Isaiah with the topography encountered during his missionary work in northeastern Brazil. In Maranhão, he writes, "to 'walk' means constantly sailing [...] through roads, alleys, and plazas of water".[37] Vieira also reads the verses from Isaiah as proleptic allusions to artefacts fashioned by the native peoples in the region of Maranhão. The Old Testament prophet declares that in the land beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, the peoples would have "ships with wings" and "cymbals with wings". For Vieira, the ship with wings (*navium alarum*) refers to the indigenous

Fig. 4. Joannes de Laet, *Tamaraca* (Tamaraca or maracá, a dried gourd, showing the seeds inside). Woodcut. In *Nieuwe wereldt ofte beschrijvinghe van West-Indien* (Leiden: Elzeviers, 1630). (Photo © John Carter Brown Library, Brown University).

practice of decorating canoes with feathers.[38] What Isaiah calls cymbals, Vieira suggests, is the "maracá", an instrument made from a gourd, shaken to herald festivals, dances, or war (fig. 4).[39] In Vieira's view, these small-scale objects in scripture ordain long-distance voyages around the globe. Vieira finds the justification for his locating the future in Brazil embedded in the details of material culture which are "discovered" there. Markers of indigenous culture serve, to a foreigner, as physical evidence that the prophecy of conquest and conversion will be fulfilled.

CIHA: The Next is Below

Vieira declares that the printed words of scripture "paint vividly the originals of that which has to be done, as if foreshadowed".[40] Print is prophecy. If we imagine Vieira in the act of reading the Bible, we can almost see in his mind the printed type descending through the page and leading to a picture of Brazil, to its topographic features such as waterways, the fabrication of things such as maracás. For the artists in Vasari's account, who descended into the earth-filled rooms beneath the hills of Rome, grotesques provided "vivid originals" for what they had to do to advance style forwards. For both authors, subterranean voyages enact the inevitability of history, a history that imagines its future to recount and justify its own actions in the past and present.

Why is this vertical mobility important? At CIHA, there seems to be a question that underlies every session, every talk: what is next? Often, the real protagonist of much art history is not an object or culture, but rather the frantic search for the new on the horizon. But this impulse can result in something not unlike the zeal that propelled missionary and mercantile voyages for the sake of "the Silver and the Cross," as the filmmaker Harun Farocki entitled his film on the colonial mining center of Potosi.[41] What would art history look like if we not only acknowledged voyages across the surface, but historicized the desire for access to the future through what emerges from the ground: the minerals inside the earth, the black and brown bodies enslaved to extract them, the grotesques that provided a theoretical placeholder for understanding otherness? To move art history forward, we must first reckon with the histories submerged *beneath* the earth, so that we can assess our own movements forward without assuming they are inevitable acts of destiny.
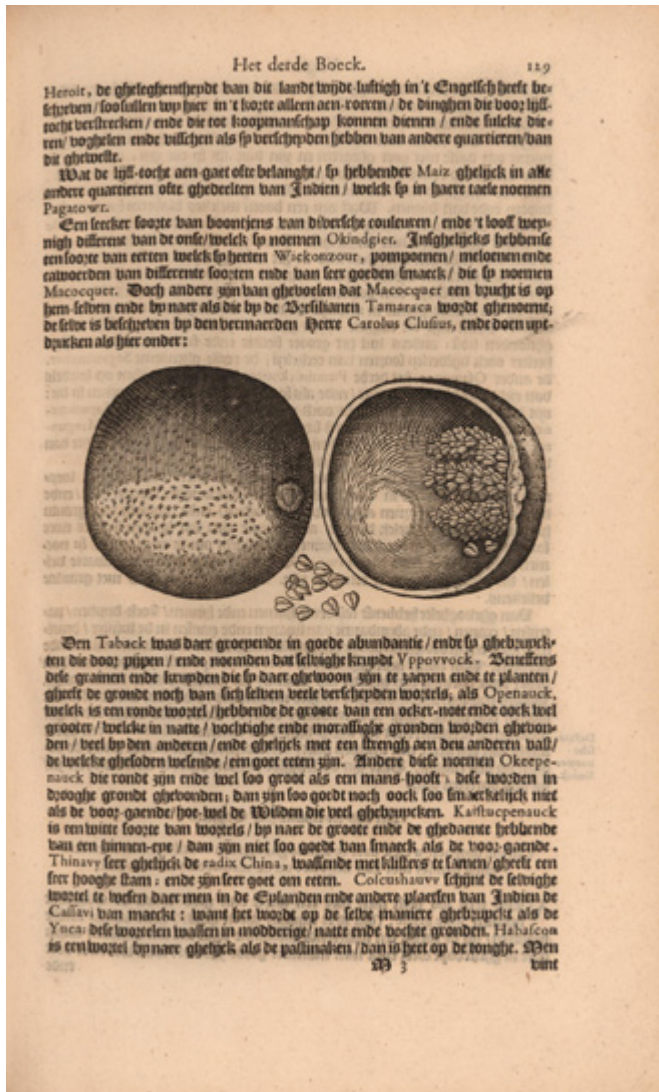
Notes

1 On the historiographic underpinnings of early modern mobility in art history, see D. Kim, *The Traveling Artist in the Italian Renaissance: Mobility, Geography, and Style* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 2-7.

2 For an institutional analysis of the "global" in the research and teaching of Renaissance art history, see the essays by Lia Markey, Claire Farago, Marie Neil Wolff, as well as the roundtable discussion in D. Savoy, ed., *The globalization of Renaissance Art: a critical review* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

3 For recent reevaluations, see D. Cast, *The Ashgate research companion to Giorgio Vasari* (London: Routledge, 2016); F. Jonietz, *Das Buch zum Bild: die Stanze nuove im Palazzo Vecchio, Giorgio Vasaris* Ragionamenti *und die Lesbarkeit der Kunst im Cinquecento*; I. Rowland, N. Charney, *The Collector of Lives: Giorgio Vasari and the Invention of Art* (New York, NY: Norton, 2018).

4 On the history of the writing and publication history of the *History*, see A. Valdez, "Vieira between *History of the Future* and *Clavis Prophetarum*", in L. Lima, A. Megiani, eds., *Visions, Prophecies, and Divinations: Early Modern Messianism and Millenarianism in Iberian America, Spain and Portugal* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 215-226.

5 J. Baumgarten, "The theological debate on images between Italy and Portugal: Bartholomew of Braga and Antônio Vieira", in M. Berbara, K.A.E. Enenkel, eds., *Portuguese humanism and the republic of letters* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 219-242. For a recent assessment of early modern Lusophone art theory, see A. Russo, "Francisco de Holanda and an art history of the universal", *The Art Bulletin* no. 102 (2020): pp. 37-65.

6 As observed in a review of a recent translation of Clarice Lispector's short story "A menor mulher do mundo" published in the collection *Laços de família* (1960). See M. Edwards, "Benjamin Moser and the Smallest Woman in the World", in *The Los Angeles Review of Books* (August 16, 2019). https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/benjamin-moser-and-the-smallest-woman-in-the-world/. (Accessed May 18, 2021).

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8 L. Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1934), pp. 69-70. Cited in R. Williams, *Notes on the underground*, cit., p. 5.

9 S.-C. Tseng, "Nadar's Photography of Subterranean Paris: Mapping the Urban Body", *History of Photography* no. 38 (2014): pp. 233-254.

10 J. Tully, "A Victorian ecological disaster: imperialism, the telegraph, and Gutta-Percha", *Journal of World History* no. 20 (2009); pp. 559-579. *Gale In Context: U.S. History.* https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A213856508/UHIC?u=upenn_main&sid=UHIC&xid=05f3a80e. (Accessed May 18, 2021).

11 P. Satia, "War, Wireless, and Empire: Marconi and the British Warfare State, 1896-1903", *Technology and Culture* no. 51 (2010): pp. 829-853.

12 T.J. Clark, *Heaven on Earth: Painting and the Life to Come* (New York, NY: Thames and Hudson, 2018), pp. 74-128.

13 See James Clifton's observation that the landscape background varies according to the gender of the Adam and Eve in "Gender and Shame in Masaccio's Expulsion from the Garden of Eden", *Art History* no. 22 (1999): pp. 637-655, here pp. 639-640.

14 On caves housing sibyls, prophets, and oracles. V. Dora, *Landscape, nature, and the sacred in Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 176-202.

15 G. Vasari, *Lives of the painters, sculptors, and architects*, tr. G. Vere, ed. D. Ekserdijian (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), I, pp. 617-618. Cf. G. Vasari, *Le Vite de più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani* (Firenze: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550), p. 557.

16 This observation might be brought to bear on the prominence of vegetation in the drawings of ruins or the role of antiques in sculpture gardens. See L. Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000); K. Christian, *Empire Without End: Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, c. 1350-1527* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010); C. Brothers, *Giuliano da Sangallo and the Ruins of Rome* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022).

17 For an excellent overview of the Renaissance reception of the grotesque, see M. Squire, "'Fantasies so Varied and Bizarre': The Domus Aurea, the Renaissance, and the 'Grotesque'", in M.T. Dinter, E. Buckley, eds., *A Companion to the Neronian Age* (London: Blackwell, 2013), pp. 444-464. On the lexical and conceptual slippage between the grotto and the grotesque, in Italian, German, and French, see R.R. Anderson, "Beitraege zur Geschichte des Wortes Grotesk", PhD. dissertation (The Ohio State University, 1958); D. Scholl, *Von den "Grottesken" zum Grotesken: Die Konstituierung einer Poetik des Grotesken in der italienischen Renaissance* (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2004).

18 G. Vasari, *Le Vite*, cit., p. 557: "Non molto dopo, cavandosi da San Piero in Vincola fra le ruine et anticaglie del palazzo di Tito per trovar figure, furono ritrovate alcune stanze sotterra, ricoperte tutte e piene di grotteschine, di figure piccole e di storie, con alcuni ornamenti di stucchi bassi".

19 On the mechanics of descending into the Domus Aurea, see N. Dacos, *La découverte de la Domus Aurea et la formation des grotesques à la Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), pp. 9-13; F. Salmon, "Charles Cameron and Nero's Domus Aurea: 'Una piccola esplorazione'", *Architectural History* no. 36 (1993): pp. 69-93, here pp. 78 and 84; N. Dacos, *Roma quanta fuit ou l'invention du paysage de ruines* (Paris: Somogy Éditions d'Art, 2004).

20 As the author of the poem *Antiquarie prospetiche romane*, written before 1500, described it: "In every season the rooms are full of painters. Here summer seems cooler than winter [...] We crawl along the ground on our stomachs, armed with bread, ham, fruits and wine, looking more bizarre than the grotesques... Each person resembles a chimneysweep, and our guide [...] shows us toads, frogs, barn-owls, civet-cats and bats, while we break our backbones on our knees". As cited in M. Squire, "'Fantasies so Varied and Bizarre'", cit., p. 448. Cf. *Antiquarie prospetiche romane*, ed. G. Agosti, D. Isella (Milano: Guanda, 2004): pp. 129-32: "Dogni stagion son piene dipintori / piu lastate par chel verno infresche / secondo el nome dato da lauori/ Andian per terra con nostre ventresche / con pane con presutto poma e vino / per esser piu bizarri alle grottesche / El nostro guidarel mastro pinzino / che ben ci fa abottare el viso elochio / parendo inuer ciaschun spaza camino / Et facci traueder botte ranochi / ciuette e barbaianni e nottoline / rompendoci la schiena cho ginochi".

21 G. Vasari, *Le Vite*, cit., p. 557: "Per che andando Giovanni con Raffaello, che fu menato a vederle, restarono l'uno e l'altro stupefatti della freschezza, bellezza e bontà di quell'opere, parendo loro gran cosa ch'elle si fussero sì lungo tempo conservate: ma non era gran fatto, non essendo state tócche né vedute dall'aria, la quale col tempo suole consumare, mediante la varietà delle stagioni, ogni cosa".

22 This suspension of time in both the sense of weather and time contrasts with period depictions of Rome as subject to the vagaries of passing time and fluctuating atmospheric effects, the latter of which was associated with insalubrious conditions. See R. Wrigley, *Roman fever: influence, infection, and the image of Rome, 1700-1870* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013);

D. Kim, "Mal'aria: Style, mobility and »influence« in Italian early modern art theory", *kritische berichte* no. 42 (2014): pp. 82-98.

²³ As Vasari did commenting on the work of Polidoro da Caravaggio and Maturino da Firenze, two artists who frequently incorporated grotesque motifs alongside figural scenes in their façade paintings. Cf. G. Vasari, *Le Vite*, cit., pp. 559-560.

²⁴ A. Payne, "Mescolare, *composti* and Monsters in Italian Architectural Theory of the Renaissance", in L.S. Tarugi, ed., *Disarmonia, brutezza e bizzarria nel Rinascimento* (Firenze: Franco Cesati, 1998), pp. 271-289.

²⁵ D. Kim, *The Traveling Artist*, cit., pp. 114-121.

²⁶ M. Squire, "'Fantasies so Varied and Bizarre'", cit., p. 454.

²⁷ On this figure, by tradition identified as Empedocles, and its incorporation within the larger program of author portraits, see S.N. James, *Signorelli and Fra Angelico at Orvieto: Liturgy, Poetry, and a Vision of the End-time* (London: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 78-90.

²⁸ M. Squire, "'Fantasies so Varied and Bizarre'", cit., p. 454.

²⁹ *Antiquarie prospetiche romane*, cit., p. 129: "Andian per terra con nostre ventresche / con pane con presutto poma e vino / per esser piu bizarri alle grottesche".

³⁰ For editions of the work, see A. Vieira, *História Do Futuro: (Livro Anteprimeiro)*, ed. J.J. Van Den Besselaar (Münster: Aschendorff, 1976), I-II; A. Vieira, *História do Futuro e Voz de Deus ao Mundo - Volume 1. Tomo 3*, ed. P. Calafate (Lisboa: Circulo de Leitores, 2014). Citations will be taken from the latter. Recent studies include J.J. Van Den Besselaar, "Erudição, espírito crítico e acribia na História do Futuro de Antônio Vieira", *Alfa* no. 20 (2001): pp. 45-79; A. Valdez, *Historical Interpretations of the Fifth Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); M. Abrão, *Lembra-te do Futuro: a teologia de António Vieira à luz da História do Futuro* (Recife, PE: Universidade Católica de Pernambuco, 2012).

³¹ A. Vieira, *Six Sermons*, ed. and tr. M. Silva, L. Brockey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 12.

³² K. Kottman, *António Vieira's Preliminary Book to the History of the Future* (Durham, NC: Lulu, 2018), p. 107; A. Vieira, *História do Futuro*, cit., p. 67: "O tempo, como o Mundo, tem dois hemisférios: um superior e visível, que é o passado, outro inferior e invisível, que é o futuro. No meio [...] ficam os horizontes do tempo, que são estes instantes do presente que *imos vivendo*, onde o passado se termina e o futuro começa. Desde este ponto toma seu princípio a nossa História, a qual nos irá descobrindo as novas regiões e os novos habitadores deste segundo hemisfério do tempo, que são os antípodas do passado. Oh que de cousas grandes e raras haverá que ver neste novo descobrimento!".

³³ K. Kottman, *António Vieira's Preliminary Book*, cit., p. 246; A. Vieira, *História do Futuro*, cit., p. 183.

³⁴ K. Kottman, *António Vieira's Preliminary Book*, cit., p. 264; A. Vieira, *História do Futuro*, cit., p. 197.

³⁵ K. Kottman, *António Vieira's Preliminary Book*, cit., p. 265; A. Vieira, *História do Futuro*, cit., pp. 198-199.

³⁶ K. Kottman, *António Vieira's Preliminary Book*, cit., p. 204; A. Vieira, *História do Futuro*, cit., p. 148.

³⁷ K. Kottman, *António Vieira's Preliminary Book*, cit., p. 266; A. Vieira, *História do Futuro*, cit., pp. 199-200.

³⁸ K. Kottman, *António Vieira's Preliminary Book*, cit., p. 269; A. Vieira, *História do Futuro*, cit., p. 202.

³⁹ E.S.C. Lima, "The *maracá* in the beginning of European contact: its role in Tupinambá society as a religious token and musical instrument", *Revista Música Hodie, Goiânia* no. 15 (2015): pp. 234-224.

⁴⁰ K. Kottman, *António Vieira's Preliminary Book*, cit., p. 152; A. Vieira, *História do Futuro*, cit., p. 104.

⁴¹ H. Farocki, "Das Silber und das Kreuz", in A. Creischer, M.J. Hinderer, A. Siekmann, eds., *Das Potosí-Prinzip. Wie können wir das Lied des Herrn im fremden Land singen. Koloniale Bildproduktion in der globalen Ökonomie* (Köln: Walther König, 2010), pp. 37-39.

Representations of Brazil in Italy in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries: Between Domestication and Ferocity*

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In a famous engraving, the Florence-based Flemish artist Johannes Stradanus depicted Amerigo Vespucci – the navigator the American continent was named after – awaking an allegorical representation of the new world (fig. 1). Stradanus' print unites several iconographical elements that conform to a stereotyped construction of the newly found lands: exotic and fantastic animals, indigenous artifacts – such as the hammock or the feather headdress –

and a scene of cannibalism in the background. In spite of the violence implied by some of these elements, the allegory of America shows docility as she responds to the navigator who, in turn, enlightens her with the symbols of his civility and legitimacy: the Southern Cross stamped on a banner attached to a cruciform pole and the sailors' astrolabe.

I would like to begin this paper by briefly analyzing two aspects of this engraving: the insertion

Fig. 1. Theodor Galle after Stradanus, *America, Nova Reperta* series, c. 1589. Engraving. London, The British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

of iconographical elements connected to Brazil, and the contrast it expresses between domestication and ferocity. As for the so-called Brazilian iconography, I will actually refer to the societies that inhabited the region we presently know as Brazil and, in this sense, make special reference to the Tupi, who lived in the coastal zone. Within this category – the Tupi – groups inhabiting the vast region stretching from the Captancy of São Vicente to the mouth of the Amazon came to be collectively known as the Tupinamba.[1]

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the features of the Tupi played a major role in the European ethnological imagination and in the creation of a stereotyped construction of the 'New World' in general. In paintings, prints, and reliefs, the Tupi are almost always represented either naked or half dressed. They usually wear feather headdresses, bands around their ankles, arms, and waist, bustles, and sometimes their body is covered in feathers. They often carry the *maracas*, a ritual percussion instrument, a bow, and arrows. Among the weapons commonly associated to them there is the *ibirapema* – a wooden club often used by the Tupi to execute their enemies in rituals – which, in Stradanus' print, appears leaning against the tree on the right. In book prints, as well as in earlier maps, the Tupinamba are often associated with cannibalism and with objects such as butcher tables, grills (the *moquém*), or cauldrons in which human body parts are being cooked (fig. 2). These associations frequently appear in the background of allegorical representations of the American continent, such as, for instance, the famous engraving by Adriaen Collaert after a design by Maarten de Vos.[2] Since the 1980s, anthropologists and historians have pointed out how these Tupinamba attributes could serve as a *pars pro toto* valid for the representation of the whole American continent.[3] In the Italian peninsula too, Tupinamba attributes could become a metonym to signify the whole American continent. In his famous *Iconology*, Cesare Ripa significantly employed, once again, the formula "feathers, arrow, bow and cannibalism" to depict America.[4]

Besides as emblems and allegories, depictions of the Tupinamba appeared in many other formats, again in the Italian peninsula. Aldrovandi, for example, included two representations of this society in his *Monstrorum Historia*, one of which specifically pictured chieftain Cunhambebe, who fought with the French against the Portuguese

during the French occupation of Guanabara Bay, in present-day Rio de Janeiro, in the 1550s.

The second element of Stradanus' print which I would like to comment on is the tension between what appears as a docile allegory of America ready for the conversion and iconographical elements signifying violence and degeneration, such as the fantastic animals, the spit with human limbs or the *ibirapema*. From a European viewpoint, the allegory of America with Tupi attributes seems to live in a state of adamic innocence, but, at the same time, she transgresses the most basic rules of nature by committing crimes as abhorrent as cannibalism.

In his book *Innocence Abroad*, Benjamin Schmidt examines how the image of indigenous innocence is, at least partially, a Dutch formulation meant to damage the reputation of Habsburg Spain later in the 16th and 17th centuries.[5] On the other hand, the American savagery – especially cannibalism – also served the purpose of political

Fig. 2. Theodor de Bry, *America*, part III (Frankfurt, 1592), p. 127. © Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (87-B24379).

and religious attacks within Europe, with Protestants and Catholics mutually accusing each other of being far worse than the Tupinamba – who, in this context, become a kind of rhetorical figure. Especially after the Reform, the perception of Americans was definitely very much connected to intra-European relations and conflicts. American societies could serve, in Europe, as a basis for comparison valid to define and measure the cruelty of other Europeans. This process could happen, basically, in two ways: either through analogy – for example, Catholics who insist on the real presence of Christ during the Eucharist could be compared to barbaric cannibals[6] – or, by opposition, by presenting Amerindians as the innocent victims of European colonizers.[7]

Stradanus' print was produced in the late 1580s, decades after Vespucci's famous feats, and in a moment when Europe was ravaged by internal wars. What was the situation like at the beginning of the century, when Europeans were starting to arrive in the American continent and trying to make sense of what they saw and experienced? How can one retrace the genealogy of this iconographical construction?

Let us go back to the first prints accompanying the editions of Vespucci's writings. The Florentine probably travelled to coastal Brazil very shortly after the official date of its 'discovery' by Pedro Alvares Cabral in April 1500. Between May 1501 and September of 1502, while at the service of Dom Manuel of Portugal, he reached – according to the letters written by or attributed to him – the north-eastern coast of South America, and from there went south to present-day Rio de Janeiro. Two of these letters were published during his lifetime: the first of them, later named *Mundus Novus*, had been sent from Lisbon by him to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco Medici and described his voyage to South America at length. A couple of years later, the second letter, known as *Letter to Soderini*, would also be published. In the second half of the 18th century, three other letters – known as *familiari* – were discovered.[8] Vespucci's description of coastal Brazil includes the melodious singing of birds and the fragrant smell of plants. They were so beautiful, he wrote, "that we thought we were in a terrestrial paradise".[9] Contrary to Columbus, who assumed that the terrestrial paradise was situated southeast of the Gulf of Paria, Vespucci believed he had reached it in Brazil. He also mentions his efforts to identify the southern pole star,

as well as the Crux. As for the peoples, Vespucci observes that they are cannibals, walk around entirely naked, and have no king, commerce, nor religion; on the other hand, they are brave warriors, live according to nature, and most of the times, treat Europeans with friendliness. The topic of ingenuousness appears many times in his descriptions and not just in relation to the inhabitants of present-day Brazil; when talking about those who lived in the Bahamas, for example, he writes: "they were all timid people of small intellect; we did what we liked with them".[10] The *Mundus Novus* became a best seller; between 1503 and 1506, it was printed in different European cities no less than 12 times, in Latin. Almost twenty translations in Dutch, German, French, and English appeared in the following ten years. Before the half of the century, the two Vespuccian letters appeared in more than 60 editions.[11]

Vespucci's description of South America as a terrestrial paradise resonates in many of the engravings that accompanied these earlier editions. In the frontispiece of the fourth Latin edition of the *Mundus Novus*, for example, two Amerindians are represented standing next to each other, naked, with a tree in between – a composition that, clearly, goes back to representations of Adam and Eve. The front page of a German 1506 edition, in which the couple appears next to the king of Portugal, is even more explicit.[12] But the most famous stamp to ever accompany a *Mundus Novus* edition is the one published in German, in 1505/1506, by Johan Froschauer.[13] In this print, for the first time perhaps, it is possible to identify attributes and attitudes that would conform to the stereotyped perception of Brazilians in general, and the Tupi, in particular, in keeping with the descriptions provided by Vespucci: the feather ornaments and clothes, face piercings, partial nudity, and, last but not least, the representation of cannibalism. In this print, as well as in Stradanus' engraving, innocence and barbarism coexist.

Let us return, now, to the previously mentioned print by Stradanus. The representation of Vespucci is actually part of a series, the *Nova Reperta*, which includes 19 engravings depicting various recent inventions or discoveries. They were printed for the first time with the renowned types of the Galle atelier, in Antwerp, in the late 1580s. Lia Markey has pointed out that the iconography of Stradanus' engravings is firmly connected to Florence: all the prints in the series were dedicated to

the members of the Alamanni family; Stradanus was at the service of the Medici court; and the Florentine Accademia degli Alterati, to which Luigi Alamanni was connected, had the discovery of the New World as a main topic of discussion and allegorical elaboration. As for the Medici family, Markey convincingly argues that Stradanus' prints evoke the interests of the Grand Duke Ferdinando during the first year of his dukedom.[14] Ferdinando, a former cardinal who had become Grand Duke after the sudden death of his brother Francesco in 1587, collected American objects such as featherwork and hammocks and planned the creation of an outpost in the New World mainly for the production and trade of sugar. In 1608, in fact, he would finance a Tuscan expedition under Captain Robert Thornton to explore northern Brazil – but the colonial project would be halted after the Duke's death the following year. As stated by

Giuseppe Marcocci, this was perhaps the most organic attempt by an Italian state to create an institutional structure that could be fully integrated in the new global order.[15]

On the frontispiece of the print series *Americae Retectio* – dedicated to Columbus, Vespucci, and Magellan – Stradanus represents the discovery of America as an Italian endeavor. Flora and Zephyr, symbolically connected to Florence, Janus and a pelican (a symbol for Genoa), and Oceanus present the globe under portrait medallions with the effigies of the Florentine and Genoese navigators Columbus and Vespucci. The scene floats above a cartographic representation of Italy including both Genoa and Florence.[16]

Specific references to the region of Brazil appear in the engraving dedicated to Vespucci in the *Americae Retectio* (fig. 3). Here, the navigator is represented proudly standing on the deck

Fig. 3. Adriaen Collaert after Stradanus, *Amerigo Vespucci, Americae Retectio* series, c. 1589. Engraving. London, The British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

of his ship as he watches the sun rise over the discovered lands. The waters surrounding him are filled with fantastic creatures and mythological characters, the most preeminent ones being a couple of half-sea monsters, half-American cannibals. Both the feather headdress and the human limbs on a spit derive from the Tupi iconography. Ancient mythology, here, has been combined by Stradanus with the representation of American cannibalism in order to create monsters that are both new and old, native and foreign. Stradanus may have become acquainted with Tupinamba artifacts such as the *ibirapema* and the feather clothing in the Medici collection, which nowadays is part of the National Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology. In other prints accompanying the editions of his writings too, the persons depicted on the shores to which Vespucci's caravels arrive at are, undoubtedly, the Tupinamba, such as, for example, in a 1505 German edition printed in Nuremberg.[17]

In sum, even though Italian states did not actively participate in the colonization of the Americas, the representation of the continent in connection to Italy – either in images made by Italian artists, or that represented Italian navigators or political entities – should also be understood against the background of Europe's internal conflicts. In the first half of the 16th century, the representation of America in Italy was particularly expressive – surely in connection with the publication of travel literature by Italians, including the Vespuccian letters. In these writings, the inhabitants of present-day Brazil played a particularly important role.

Even though they were seen as idolaters and cannibals, they also embodied, especially in some texts and images, the quintessential 'noble savage'. Their innocence in texts such as the ones by Vespucci, and later by Jean de Léry or Montaigne, would relativize their cruelty: Europeans, as these writers would state, are far crueler.[18] They were strongly connected to cannibalism, one of the most ancient and strongest Western metaphors for savagery and otherness. In the second half of the century, during the so-called religious wars, their cannibalistic rites could be paralleled to what Protestants considered the Catholic theophagic belief in the veracity of the transubstantiation, but also be compared to representations of war and massacres happening inside the continent.

In the particular case of Vespucci, it must not be forgotten that he was in the service of the king of Portugal Dom Manuel I and, at least during his third and fourth voyages to the continent, he was under the command of a Portuguese – Gonçalo Coelho – on a Portuguese ship sailing to the regions that, according to the Treaty of Tordesillas, belonged to Portugal. It is only natural, in this sense, that the Tupi would play a prominent role in the prints we have analyzed here. The fact that, from a European viewpoint, their degree of civilization was the lowest possible – no king, no law, no faith[19] – meant that the Tupi societies could provide metaphors valid to indicate both innocence and savagery. While Vespucci's writings were in tune with other Iberian travel accounts, many of these – most notably Pero Vaz de Caminha's letter to Dom Manuel of Portugal[20] – would not be published until much later.[21] Todorov argued that it
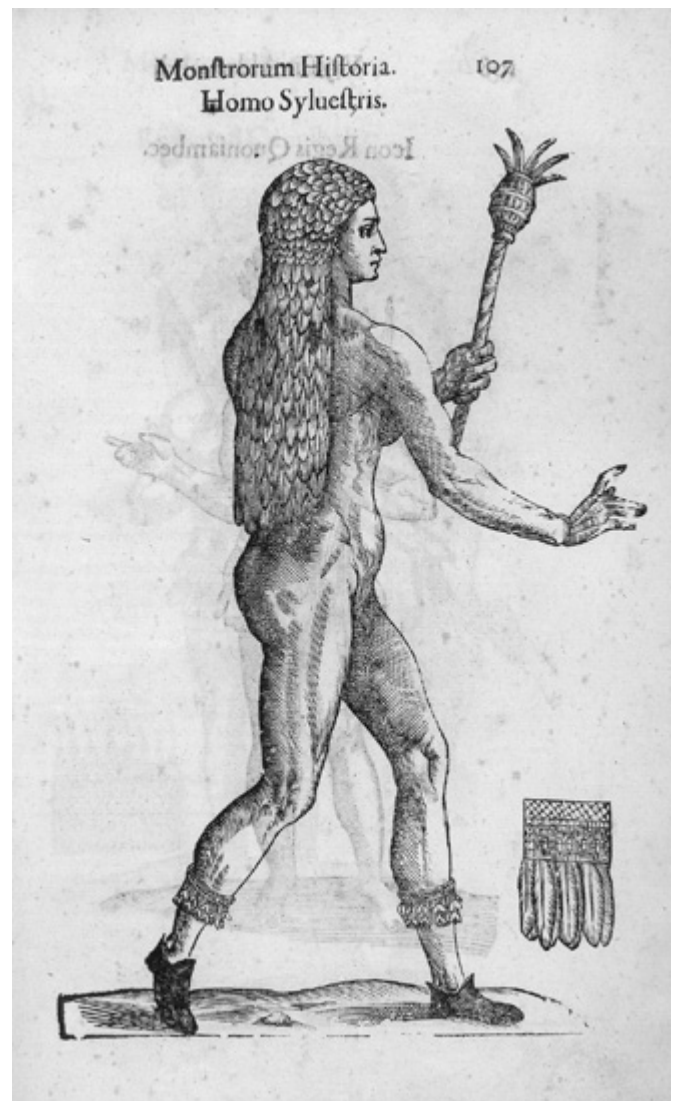

Fig. 4. *Homo sylvestris*, in U. Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum historia*, Bologna, 1642. © gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

was the excellent oratorical quality of Vespucci's letters that made them so extraordinarily famous in the very same years in which the world as Europeans knew it was being redefined.[22] The illustrations that accompanied their multiple editions were very efficient in adapting the novelties of the 'New World' to traditional European rhetorical and visual paradigms such as the wild man or the iconography of Adam and Eve. These adaptations would survive well into the 17th century, when, for example, Aldrovandi represented the *homo sylvestris* (fig. 4) as a naked figure adorned with feathers and holding a *maraca*, the Tupian ritual instrument.

Notes

* This is an abbreviated version of a paper included in the book *Artistic Interactions Between Italy, Spain, and the Americas (1500-1750)*, edited by Lisandra Estevez. The book is scheduled to appear in 2022 (London: Routledge).

[1] See J.M. Monteiro, "The Crises and Transformations of Invaded Societies: Coastal Brazil in the Sixteenth Century", in F. Salomon, S. Schwartz, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas* 3, part 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 977.

[2] See, for example, the print in the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York, available at https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/385674 (January 15th, 2021).

[3] As a matter of fact, the anthropologist William Sturtevant coined the term 'Tupinambisation', which was subsequently used by other scholars. See W. Sturtevant, "La 'tupinambisation' des Indiens d'Amerique du Nord", in G. Thérien, ed., *Les Figures de l'Indien* (Montreal: Université du Québec, 1988), pp. 293-303. See also S. Poeschel, *Studien zur Ikonographie der Erdteile in der Kunst des 16.-18. Jahrhunderts* (München: Scaneg, 1985), 186 ff.; F. Lestringant, *Le Huguenot et le sauvage. L'Amerique et la controverse coloniale en France au temps des guerres de religion (1555-1589)* (Paris: Diffusion Klincksieck, 1990), p. 251, and P. Mason, *Infelicities. Representations of the Exotic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 86ff.

[4] C. Ripa, *Iconologia* (Padova: Lepido Pietro Paolo Tozzi, 1618), p. 353. There are variations of this print.

[5] See B. Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[6] For example, the Calvinist Jean de Léry, in the 6th chapter of his *Histoire d'un voyage*, compares the Catholic admiral Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon's belief in the dogma of transubstantiation to the habit of raw meat-eating *Ouetacas*, or Guaitaca: "[…] ils vouloyent neantmoins, non seulement grossièrement, plustost que spirituellement, manger la chair de Iésus-Christ, mais qui pis estoit, à la manière des Sauvages nommez *Ou etacas*, dont ils la vouloyent mascher & avaler toute crue". See J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* (Genève and La Rochelle: Antoine Chuppin, 1578), pp. 77-78.

[7] See M. Berbara, "Um olhar sobre a crueldade na primeira época moderna. O método de execução tupinambá e a tortura pre-mortem durante as guerras de religião", *Atas do XIV Encontro de História da Arte da Unicamp* no. 14 (2020): pp. 38-49.

[8] For a recapitulation of the current scholarly work on Vespucci, including the question of the letters' authenticity, see Angelo Cattaneo's introduction to the book *Shores of Vespucci. A Historical Research of Amerigo Vespucci's Life and Contexts* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2018).

[9] See F.J. Pohl, *Amerigo Vespucci, Pilot Major* (London: Frank Cass, 1966), p. 78. This passage is from the so-called "Letter from Seville", one of the three *familiari*.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[11] See C. Masetti, "L'immagine del Nuovo Mondo nelle xilografie delle lettere a stampa vespucciane", in *Vespucci, Firenze e le Americhe.* Atti del convegno di Studi (Firenze, 22-24 novembre 2012), ed. G. Pinto, L. Rombai, C. Tripodi (Firenze: Olschki, 2014), p. 191.

[12] See S. Colin, "The Wild Man and the Indian in Early 16th Century Book Illustration", in Ch. Feest, ed., *Indians and Europe. An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1987), pp. 5-36; Y.A. Chicangana-Bayona, "Visões de terras, canibais e gentios prodigiosos", *ArtCultura* 12, no. 1 (2010): pp. 35-53; and C. Masetti, "L'immagine del Nuovo Mondo", cit., pp. 183-215. These authors discuss the reuse of woodcuts representing Adam and Eve in the Vespuccian engravings; Colin further suggests that these illustrations associated the inhabitants of the American continent to the iconography of the wild man.

[13] In January 2021, the image could be accessed at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cannibalism_in_the_New_World,_from_Vespucci.jpg.

[14] See L. Markey, "Stradano's Allegorical Invention of the Americas in Late Sixteenth-Century Florence", *Renaissance Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (2012): pp. 385-442.

[15] G. Marcocci, "L'Italia nella prima età globale (ca. 1300-1700)", *Storica* 60 (2014): p. 35.

[16] In January 2021, the image could be accessed at https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1869-0213-221.

[17] In January 2021, this print could be accessed at https://www.akg-images.fr/archive/Das-sind-die-new-gefundenen-menschen-(..)-2UMDHUZLWDC.html.

[18] See M. Berbara, "Um olhar sobre a crueldade", cit. On the history of cruelty in Europe in the early modern period see the 6th chapter of D. Baraz, *Medieval Cruelty: Changing Perceptions, Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003).

[19] In 1587, the Portuguese colonist and writer Gabriel Soares de Sousa presented a variant of the expression *sem fé, sem lei, sem rei* ("no faith, no law, no king") when he stated that the Tupi language does not have the letters F, L, nor R. See J. Monteiro, *Tupis, Tapuias e Historiadores. Estudos de História Indígena e do Indigenismo*, PhD dissertation (University of Campinas, 2001), p. 19.

[20] Vespucci's writings also bear strong resemblances to the anonymous sea pilot's report of Pedro Álvares Cabral's voyage to Brazil. See Ana Paula Avelar, "Amerigo Vespucci's *Mundus Novus* and the Exotic Perceptions of the Other in Sixteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Portuguese Historiography", in A. Cattaneo, *Shores of Vespucci*, cit., p. 62.

[21] Caminha's letter was published in 1817 in Manuel Aires de Casal's *Corografia Brazilica, ou Relação historico-geografica do Reino do Brazil*. It is currently kept in Lisbon's Torre do Tombo (https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/details?id=4185836).

[22] T. Todorov, *The Morals of History* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1995), p. 99ff.

The Emigrants (1910) by Antonio Rocco: A Voyage of a Painting and Its Painter*

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Picturing Migration

The subject of this essay is how migrant people are portrayed. It focuses on *The Emigrants* (1910),[1] a painting over a hundred years old, portraying men, women, and children with heavy luggage on their shoulders. The author is Antonio Rocco, a painter born in a small Italian coastal town, Amalfi.[2] Both Rocco and *The Emigrants*, together with other artworks by him, left Italy and arrived in Brazil in 1913. Following a series of exhibitions in São Paulo, they won over the public. In 1918, the government of the State of São Paulo decided to buy *The Emigrants* to add it to the collection of the State museum, the Pinacoteca do Estado, its current holder. This essay discusses the features that make *The Emigrants* by Rocco an extraordinary representation of its kind, possibly the most critical painting on the issue of migration up until then.

An Exceptional Matter

Why is such an important subject as the massive Italian migration at the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th century – a subject historically coincident with Realism, the artistic movement committed to representing social issues – fairly rarely represented in the visual arts? The question was asked by Regina Célia da Silva, although in the field of fictional literature, which, likewise, does not have many works on the matter.[3]

The best-known narration with immediate, large, and lasting international success is the short story *From the Apennines to the Andes*, a tale about an Italian boy who crosses the mountains and the ocean, travelling from Italy to South America, trying to find his mother. The tale belongs to Edmondo De Amicis' famous book *Cuore* (*Heart*), published in 1886. Friendship and loyalty are its *moto*, with a focus on children's education. But one of its strongest messages, besides the goal to educate the young generation, is to defend the political unification of Italy. The short story on the migrant boy, driven by the love for his mother, and not by material necessity, is just a dot, a neutral remark to the migration issue.

The only real novel on the subject from that time, *Sull'Oceano* (*On Blue Water*), was written again by De Amicis and published in 1889.[4] However, just like *Heart*, *On Blue Water* is mainly a defense of the unification of Italy, and its characters also come from different parts of the country, but this time they are literally 'on the same boat'. As a matter of fact, except from the impressive beginning describing people and events at the port of Genoa, the whole story is developed inside a ship. And even the illustrated editions by Arnaldo Ferraguti only have engravings depicting scenes inside the ship. The one on the frontispiece, on the other hand, is a sort of abstract to the book, representing the migrants on the steerage in a moment of rest. Similarly, other engravings depict women and men of different social classes and ages in situations that accentuate a sense of apparent drift.

Resilience and Misfortune

Indeed, in the book, there are several moments showing resigned people, and some of them are even funny. On the other hand, there is no relevant mention of the danger, discomfort, and injuries that may happen during the voyage, in which many passengers, sometimes overloading the vessel, could pass away due to disease or malnutrition.[5] In short, *On Blue Water* does not describe any situation in which a person's health has been drastically compromised by the voyage, nor the worst-case scenario in which a passenger dies on the Atlantic.

In the same way, in visual representations, there is at least one case, although in a slightly softened version, belonging to a public collection in Brazil: *The Wreck of the Sirio* (1918),[6] by the Brazilian painter Benedicto Calixto. It was exhibited one year after the merchant steamer S.S. Sirio

sank off the coast of Spain, during a voyage from Genoa to South America. More than two hundred or maybe three hundred people died, and the captain was one of the first to abandon the ship. The event caused a commotion in both the Old and New World, leading to the creation of countless songs and verses, as well as Calixto's painting, maybe the only large one of its kind (although its subject matter is not so much the drama of migrants as the meekness, sense of duty and, finally, the heroism of the priests on the deck). Yet, excluding the scenes of fear and despair of the migrants on the boat, there are no representations of dead people.

Misfortunes at work have been the subject of a slightly higher number of artistic representations. *Victims of Labour* (1882),[7] by Vincenzo Vela, depicts a group of miners carrying the body of a deceased colleague. The high relief is a tribute to the dead workers at the Gotthard railway tunnel, in Switzerland. Many Italian migrants were hired there. The picture touches the topic of migration, but the actual subject is the condition of the labor class. *The Miners* (1905),[8] by Antonio Rocco, is a similar painting with regard to the theme, although its moment and composition are different. Not only does it show sympathy to the workers, but it is also a kind of realistic depiction of a real life-threatening situation. That is the difference in how migration is portrayed: at that time, substantially different from ours, there were no representations of death, no terrible images on this theme. The absence of such elements is understandable: not producing tragic pictures of migration and not propagating them were a way to avoid discouraging migrants from pursuing their quest for a better life.

Spreading Promising Omens

The painting of Italian migration generally complements this pattern of good omens. In the large composition by Raffaello Gambogi,[9] compassion and tenderness are undoubtedly prominent. It emphasizes the separation of a family, but there is no melodrama. The human expressions show melancholy and resignation more than any other feelings. Surely for the depicted people life goes on, even with difficulties and uncertainties. The pre-boarding time is significant in showing the safety of their native land, the moment when they have to resolutely face the inevitable fate.

In a larger painting, Angiolo Tommasi has included many more characters:[10] a mother nursing her baby, a pregnant woman, and several children. However, in a way, just like Gambogi, Tommasi supports the pro-migration propaganda with the relatively ordered composition within an actual chaos, reinforcing the recommendation of the authorities in the manuals for Italians to behave in their new homes. The basic concern of the Italian government until Fascism, according to Ana Chiarini, was to keep religion, the family, and the homeland alive, by representing Italy as a suffering mother at the departure of her children, begging them not to disappoint her, and to remain Christians.[11]

Wandering Photographs

The large paintings by Gambogi and Tommasi belong to Italian museums. Their public acquisition and display legitimate them widely, reinforcing a sort of official image. A stronger role was played by the photographs of migration. Their diffusion was even more effective, and most of them were made with a clear goal of attracting manpower to a developing economy. This was the case for a magazine financed by the Brazilian State of São Paulo[12] building the narrative of a plain voyage in which every obstacle is overcome, with no setbacks. The magazine *O Immigrante* illustrates the benefits foreign migrants would achieve if they chose a new destiny in São Paulo.

The photographs of *O Immigrante* invariably show migrants safely on the land, organized for the promised life. The buildings are large, modern, and clean. However, the differences between photos and reality could be very considerable. Not everyone was welcomed decently. The magazine was more helpful for employers and the government rather than for foreigners. The former sought to reassure the local population, frightened for the arrival of exotic people. It is not surprising that, in these pictures, the faces of migrants appear providentially as small dots.

Quite on the contrary, Lewis Hine's photograph series on Ellis Island presents the outline and shading of the faces, showing true, individualized people, with garments from their own countries, looking straight at the photographer. Hine's photos, often made for socialist organs, are much more anthropologically sensitive and humanist than most others on the topic. Susan Sontag compares Hine to Walker Evans, pointing to their "more impersonal kind of affirmation, a noble reticence, a lucid understatement", the

Fig. 1. Antonio Rocco (Amalfi, Italy, 1880 - São Paulo, SP, 1944), *The Emigrants*, 1910. Oil on canvas, 202x231 cm. São Paulo, Collection of the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo. Purchased by the Government of the State of São Paulo, 1918. (Photo by Isabella Matheus).

refusal to "express himself", "without heroic inflection".[13] In the words of Peter Seixas, "the images [Hine] produced reveal genuine, if fleeting, relationships with his non-English speaking subjects".[14]

Rare Approaches

Although the faces in Rocco's painting are not as sharp as in Hine's series, they have some features in common. They share an unusual empathic attitude towards the people depicted, and, besides this, Rocco chose the very moment of departure from the port, like Gambogi and Tommasi. However, Rocco made the migrants walk directly towards us, confronting us, and we do not see the ocean. Gambogi and Tommasi, on the other hand, show the clear and bright water, with the ships on the horizon, denoting a conquered area, suggesting confidence. Gambogi and Tommasi had been active fifteen years before Rocco, a time when the financial incentives for voyages were higher, and the adversities the emigrants faced fewer. On the contrary, when Rocco painted his canvas, Italians could no longer count easily on subsidies for travel. Shipping companies and migration agents exploited migrants more and more, and the governments often seemed concerned about the nation's image, but rarely about their own people. In this

Fig. 2. Antonio Rocco (Amalfi, Italy, 1880 - São Paulo, SP, 1944), *The Miners*, 1905. Oil on canvas, 111x132.7 cm. São Paulo, Collection of the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo. Donation by Raymundo Magliano Filho, 2009.

respect, Rocco's work moves away from the others. Not only is the pictorial surface more turbid and darker, as the painting is much more related to an iconography of the labor class movements, as Steinlen and many others have elaborated, and if we look in detail at Rocco's, it gets even more similar to a type that *The Fourth State* (1901)[15] by Pellizza da Volpedo emblematizes. Both paintings have similar compositions, especially because, in a literal quotation, Rocco traces the silhouette of the leader's legs from Pellizza's painting. Yet, Rocco's work has specific features, with different treatments and purposes, and there are outstanding parts: the closed green gate on the upper right, a possible allusion to the homeland itself, as well as the slightly curved floor with diagonal lines

which looks like a wavy rug expelling the migrants out of the frame, directly to us viewers.

Diverse Destinations

Unlike Gambogi's work, donated by the artist to the city of Livorno,[16] and Tommasi's one, integrated in the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome, the painting by Rocco was not acquired by any Italian museums. This is a possible indication of something disturbing in Rocco's work, perhaps unsuitable for such a subject. Although awarded in Italy, Rocco's painting had to wait years to be bought, and by a foreign museum, in 1918, in Brazil. In this case, quite differently from the others, the picture of migrant people moving forward towards the observer could suggest a welcoming to

them, in a moment when some Italians, in São Paulo (almost three quarters of its population were Italian migrants), were treated as dishonest or arrested for being strike leaders. Also, the Brazilian and Italian governments, in 1918, were involved in important commercial and political affairs.[17] And, besides the patronage to the arts, by buying Rocco's painting, the São Paulo government sent out a clear sign: that white people from Italy could be one of the best elements of the Brazilian 'melting pot', to 'purify' the 'ideal Brazilian'. There was also an extensive campaign against massive displacements of internal populations in Brazil. An article entitled "Immigration and Undesirable", published in the *Revista do Brasil* a couple of months before Rocco's painting has been acquired for the Pinacoteca, described Brazilian people from the north east, the internal migrants also known as *retirantes*, as weak, unhealthy, and incapable for the good development of the nation.[18] But the article also referred to foreign populations from the Far Orient, such as the Japanese, that had been arriving massively in Brazil since 1908, but mostly the Chinese, who were described as inferior and treacherous people, undesirable for the 'improvement' of the Brazilian race.

Italian immigration into Brazil declined sharply in the 1920s and 30s, when the Brazilian government finally encouraged internal migration, which in turn stimulated different artworks such as the ones by Tarsila do Amaral and Candido Portinari.[19] The latter is well known for the visual representation of the *retirantes*. Renewed pictures of refugees, for once rawly marked by hunger and misery, took the lead in the collective image of the nation.

Complementary Bibliography

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Prof. Antonio Rocco. Exposição Póstuma de Pintura (São Paulo: Galeria Itá, 1947).

Photo credits: Isabella Matheus.

Notes

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[1] Oil on canvas, 202x231 cm, Pinacoteca do Estado, São Paulo.

[2] Antonio Rocco (Amalfi, 1880-São Paulo, 1944) received a scholarship from the Accademia di Belle Arti di Napoli in 1904, where, in 1905, he received the 1st Prize for *The Miners*. In 1910, he participated with *The Emigrants* in the *LXXX Esposizione Internazionale di Belle Arti* in Rome. See M. Bignardi, *I Pittori di Maiori. Artisti della Costa di Amalfi tra XIX e XX secolo* (Amalfi: Centro di Cultura e Storia Amalfitana, 2005), pp. 171-178.

[3] R.C. Silva, *Em alto-mar: narrativa de uma travessia*, MA dissertation (São Paulo: FFLCH-USP, 2006), p. 5.

[4] E. De Amicis, *On Blue Water* (New York and London: Putnam's Sons, 1897).

[5] A. Trento, *Do Outro Lado do Atlântico. Um Século de Imigração Italiana no Brasil* (São Paulo: Nobel/Istituto Italiano di Cultura di San Paolo Instituto Cultural Ítalo-Brasileiro, 1989), pp. 44-45.

[6] Oil on canvas, 160x222 cm, Museu de Arte Sacra, São Paulo.

[7] Plaster sculpture, 332.5x255x66 cm, Museo Vincenzo Vela, Ligornetto, Switzerland.

[8] Oil on canvas, 111.3x132.7 cm, Pinacoteca do Estado, São Paulo.

[9] *Emigranti* (1894), oil on canvas, 146x196 cm, Museo Civico Giovanni Fattori, Livorno.

[10] *Gli Emigranti* (1896), oil on canvas, 262x433 cm, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Roma.

[11] A. Chiarini, *Imigrantes e italiani all'estero*: os diferentes caminhos da italianidade em São Paulo, MA dissertation (Campinas: IFCH-Unicamp, 1992), pp. 5-6.

[12] *O Immigrante* (N.1, Year 1, São Paulo, January 1908).

[13] S. Sontag, *Sobre fotografia* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2007), pp. 42-43.

[14] P. Seixas, "Lewis Hine: From 'Social' to 'Interpretive' Photographer", *American Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1987): pp. 382-385.

[15] Oil on canvas, 293x545 cm, Museo del Novecento, Milano.

[16] Museo Civico Giovanni Fattori, *L'Ottocento* (Pisa: Pacini, 2008), p. 178.

[17] "NO BRASIL - A embaixada italiana", in *O Estado de S. Paulo* (Sunday July 14, 1918).

[18] B.M. de Souza, "Immigração e indesejaveis", *Revista do Brasil* IX, no. 34, a. III (October 1918): pp. 133-148.

[19] Tarsila do Amaral, *Segunda classe* (1933), oil on canvas, 110x151 cm, priv. coll., São Paulo. Candido Portinari, *Os retirantes* (1944), oil on canvas, 192x181 cm, MASP, São Paulo.

Attraction and Artistic Mobility Patterns in P.M. Bardi's Brazilian Way*

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What does remain of Pietro Maria Bardi's great work of cultural dissemination on the two sides of the ocean? What about its legacy? And why bring up once again the story of a man whose life spent between Italy and Brazil spanned the whole of the 20th century?

Especially in today's world, the actions of a man identified with that century's views can hardly cause a stir. We look upon his approximations and amateurism with disapproval and are wary of the shadows of the past that amass around his name; his political leanings, or rather, his Fascist past, and a certain impenetrability in the account of his life as an art dealer (fig. 1). His silences and ambiguities marked the whole course of his life, yet, upon his death in 1999, they did not blot his profile as sketched out in the Italian or Brazilian obituaries.[1] But then his cultural merits are at least as important as his opacities.

The 30 years since the publication of Tentori's biography[2] have not gone by without a change in our understanding of Bardi's adventure and its context. Historians have started to study Bardi – slowly, but they have. We have several lines of research both in Brazil and in Italy by young and more mature scholars. Events such as the conferences organised in Campinas by Nelson Aguilar[3] and the crucial work conducted at the USP by Ana Gonçalves Magalhães[4] have shed new light on the context of Bardi's South American travels.

We now know almost everything about Pietro Maria Bardi's arrival in Brazil thanks to Viviana Pozzoli's studies.[5] We thus have new information about the organisation of the first MASP (Museu de Arte de São Paulo) through the studies of three young researchers: Stela Politano,[6] Luna Lobão,[7] and Marina Martin Barbosa.[8] With regard to the relationships between the Museum of São Paulo and the history of design in Brazil, we might mention works by Milene Soares Cará,[9] Maria Claudia Bonadio,[10] and Débora Gigli Buonano,[11] and in particular Ethel Leon's essay dedicated to the Instituto de Arte Contemporânea.[12]

I cannot forget to mention the studies of Eugênia Gorini Esmeraldo,[13] Luciano Migliaccio,[14] Rodrigo Otávio da Silva Paiva,[15] and Aline Coelho Sanchez Corato.[16]

Nevertheless, I remain personally convinced that there is much still to be explored, starting from an examination of the recently reorganised personal archive at the Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi and, most of all, an analysis of a large number of fragments of Bardi's personal writings which, although they may not provide us with a biography in the true sense of the word, bear witness to his interest in setting out his recollections in his mature years, to take final stock of his own existence.[17]

The exciting sensation of living a second life and the image of Brazil that Bardi interiorizes and communicates are frequently evoked in the afore-
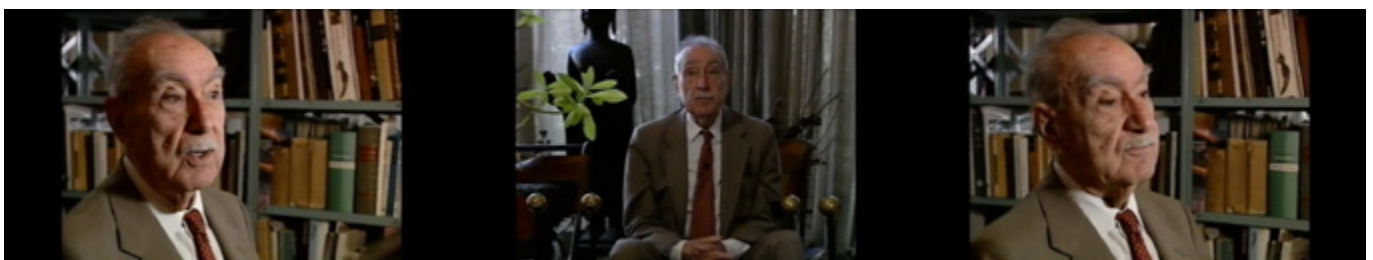

Fig. 1. Frames from *Pietro Maria Bardi. L'avventura dell'arte,* directed by Giampiero Gasparino, 1992.

mentioned piles of notes by Bardi. One of these, which is unpublished and can be dated to the 1980s, is extremely interesting and introduces us right to the topic addressed:

> I had a vague penchant for South America, which I had visited in '33, having taken to Buenos Aires an exhibition of Italian architecture, which was shown at the Museum of Fine Arts and inaugurated by the President of the Republic, General Justo.
>
> As the crossings took in the cities of Recife, Salvador, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo (Santos) I had the chance to form an impression of Brazil, because of quick visits that the passengers were able to make as the ship unloaded and took on provisions. Rio and São Paulo taught me what the tropics were. All new for a sedentary type.
>
> When deciding on my Brazilian adventure, those visits influenced me, as my curiosity had never known any limits. I chose Rio de Janeiro as my base, and things went unexpectedly well for me.[18]

The passage recalls a distant memory, thus using the register of a 'happy ending'. Nevertheless, not only does it highlight a circumstance that has received little attention on the part of historians, to which we will return later – that is, Bardi's first trip to South America, between November 1933 and February 1934[19] – but it also tells of the fortune of an Italian joining his new Brazilian community of residence.

Bardi in Brazil. A Biographical Approach

The case of Pietro Maria Bardi after 1946, the year of his arrival in Rio de Janeiro and subsequent permanent move to Brazil, seems particularly significant in this regard: first of all, it represents a case of successful emigration. "Things went unexpectedly well for me", writes Bardi, with a certain irony, hinting at that degree of imponderability of the biographical path that would be a dominant trait of his initial actions in the New World.[20]

His decision to settle in Brazil took shape slowly at a time when, according to data provided by the sociologist Maria Arminda Do Nascimento Arruda, the level of foreign immigration to São Paulo was quite low.[21] Everything happened during the specific context of several commercial and cultural exchanges, and diplomatic missions between Italy and South American countries, after the II World War.[22]

As I have already mentioned, Bardi formed an initial idea of Brazil in 1933. During his trip to Buenos Aires, not only did he stop off at Bahia and Rio de Janeiro but, as he recounted in his late autobiographical memoirs in the 1980s, he also made a stop for a day in Santos and was accompanied by car to visit the metropolis in the uplands.[23]

His impression of Brazil in October 1946 was quite different; upon disembarking in Rio de Janeiro, he seems more aware of the country's cultural potential. In an interview with *Pensamento da America* on November 24,[24] Bardi claimed familiarity with modern Brazilian art through North American publications[25] and a fragmentary knowledge of the poetry of Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Vinícius de Moraes, and Jorge de Lima through Giuseppe Ungaretti and the international magazine *Poesia*.[26]

The interview makes no mention of a clichéd Brazil based on *Banana da Terra* and *Banana Split* for export use, made fashionable by Hollywood, and rapidly accustomed to the South American nation itself.[27] There is no reference to mainstream exoticisms, but rather a spontaneous interest in locally developed architecture, starting from so-called 'colonial' architecture.[28]

Other statements that he would later make to the Brazilian and Italian press also reveal respect for the cultures of the host country. However, they also lay emphasis on the idea of a civilising mission in which the myth of modernisation acquired a preeminent place.[29] Through his words, an overlap transpires between a modernist European cultural model and the contemporary image that he was forming by himself of the São Paulo metropolis: modern, progressive, and a prototype of a hybridised identity.[30] His integration within the productive and professional system of the city seemed easy and inevitable and hence a campaign of relocation of other Italians to Brazil began, by making it possible to profit from certain selection and artistic career processes within the MASP. For a number of Italian artists, settling in São Paulo became a kind of professional training, while Bardi acted as an intermediary, thereby creating a network of relations that would facilitate his being embraced by the Brazilian artistic scene.[31]

Bardi's Network and the Transnational Circulation of Italian Artists

The arrival of Roberto Sambonet and Gastone Novelli, the professional relations with Giancarlo

Palanti and Bramante Buffoni, the friendship with Anna Maria Fiocca, Luiza Sambonet, and the architect Giancarlo Gasperini, the long-distance collaborations with Emilio Villa, Ettore Camesasca, and Gio Ponti are just some of the names that reveal Bardi's effective role as an intermediary between the two worlds. I cannot forget to mention the important and decisive collaboration with his partner, Lina Bo Bardi.[32]

In particular, the experiences of the artists Sambonet and Novelli are well suited to illustrate these examples of artistic commuting and crossover languages developed at the MASP during the 1940s and 1950s. When Sambonet started teaching drawing at the IAC (fig. 2), the school was part of that circuit of global education supported by the great masters of modernism, a laboratory that fostered a sort of artistic hybridism, with European immigrants and Brazilian teachers in its teaching staff.[33] By that time, Bardi had already commissioned Sambonet to design the Museum's poster,[34] a tangle of lines from which a tropical forest of palms and *samambaias* sprouted, new and exotic accents for a modernist model that, in my view, Sambonet knew well, as he had the chance to see it at the Bardis' collection, that is, *Felsentempel* (*Templo de Rocha*) by Paul Klee.[35] Yet, it is often the drawings for fabrics which reveal an unequivocal ascendency of the native models. The fabric's motif[36] reproduced here can be traced to the well-known prototype of the *brise soleil* of the Ministério de Educação e Saúde in Rio de Janeiro.

Fig. 2. Roberto Sambonet in 1949, in *Massaguassù. Figuras e paisagens pintadas no Brasil*, São Paulo. Museu de arte de São Paulo, 1949.

Both the poster and the fabric delineate attitudes that were recurrent in the decade between 1940 and 1950 amongst artists, designers, and architects around the idea of tropicalisation. The success of the Brazilian architecture was conveyed first through the exhibition *Brazil Builds* at the MoMA in 1943,[37] and subsequently through the monographic issues of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* of 1947[38] which had a considerable impact on modernism. We might call them 'processes of reverse hybridisation', to which Bardi made a significant contribution.

The sounding board for this modernist, tropical wave was the magazine *Habitat*, the museum's house organ prior to *O Museu de arte de São Paulo*, a monthly bulletin published from 1954 onwards. The journal was certainly the tool of an intricate system of global circulation of modernist content and a learning place for a new group of Brazilian readers who saw culture as a hallmark of social differentiation.[39] Its mission was to create an artistic taste for the 'new people', those emerging metropolitan social classes among whom the demand for consumer goods was increasing considerably during those years. In this sense, it is possible to understand the museum's intense activity in the fields of fashion and industrial design as a machine for fabricating a new idea of modernity by moving models and objects of Brazilian ethnographic culture towards the mass-produced item or towards 'fine' art.[40] The basket produced for La Rinascente[41] in 1956 illustrates, therefore, this prototype of reverse hybridisation and superficial cross-contamination between the European sensibility and the elaborations on local products. In fact, it reveals the study of forms and materials of popular Brazilian artefacts collected during his travels in the inland and on the coast.

Gastone Novelli, who was invited by Bardi to teach at the IAC[42] (fig. 3), was another of the leading figures of this artistic moment:[43] his time was split between producing ethnic ceramics, unique pieces for the Galeria Ambiente and Tenreiro,[44] imitating Morandi, a highly-esteemed artist within Bardi's circle,[45] preparing himself to engage with the abstract-concrete artistic movements of São Paulo and with the masters of the IAC, such as Leopoldo Haar.[46] But he also designed exhibition stands and artistic and decorative objects such as the brooch displayed in a boutique in Rua Augusta, a fashion store founded by three Italian partners.[47]

Artists such as Sambonet and Novelli had a regular line of development at their disposal, dictated by the modernist programme of Bardi's school, and together they were able to draw upon a vocabulary that was alien to them, combining elements, materials, and traditional forms in a new way.

This is not to say that everyone shared the same enthusiasm for the artistic situation in the metropolis or for Brazil. In 1953, Novelli wrote to his mother: "…my work is going well, thank goodness, and I shall certainly return to Italy at the end of 1954. If I see that I can remain there in acceptable conditions I shan't return to Brazil again as it's a country that I don't like much".[48] The memory of Brazil subsequently re-emerged in his work in the 1960s. By this date, however, the influence of Claude Lévi-Strauss' *Tristes tropiques* was widespread among European intellectuals and, in Novelli's case, had been contaminated by the events of a number of ethnological expeditions that he had come to know during his stay in the South American country.[49]

Bardi himself, for whom the season in which the exciting sensation of living a second life had ended, embarked on a more conscious reflection upon the work of adaptation to indigenous cultures, which he had conducted in a far less conscious manner in the 1950s, by commencing a phase of historical synopses concerning Brazilian art in the 1970s and 1980s, with historical exhibitions such as *A mão do povo brasileiro* and *A arte do povo brasileiro*.[50]

As we know from a group of late letters from the 1980s, Bardi did not lose the desire to preserve his memory of the beginnings and the possibility of a return to Italy.[51] In any case, once again, it is possible to consult unpublished autobiographical material to confirm the feeling of attraction towards the place that was to be his home until the end of his days. During a final visit to Milan,

Fig. 3. Gastone Novelli and Lis Maria Carvalho Brisolla at the MASP 1954 (?). São Paulo, Private Collection.

in 1989, he wrote: "After my forty years of Brazil I feel like a citizen of that country. I thus end up speaking about dear São Paulo, a mystery of grandeur, an enigma of power".[52]

While clearly Bardi's sensations fit closely with those of the emigrant, torn between the nostalgia for the country of origin and a feeling of belonging to the new one, it is still necessary to evaluate his work in relation to that more or less structured 'system' of mobility of post-war Italian artists.

Notes

* The text presented here is the transcription of the speech held in Florence for the CIHA Conference *Motion: Transformation* (Session 9) on September 6, 2019. A different version of the text was published in the art journal *Modos. História da Arte: modos de ver, exibir e compreender*. See P. Rusconi, "'Un'idea del Brasile". Pietro Maria Bardi's second life', *MODOS* 4, no. 1 (2020): pp. 241-253.

[1] See, for example, P. Rusconi, "Pier Maria Bardi, critico tra avanguardia e fascismo", *Il Gazzettino* (October 2, 1999); P. Panza, "Bardi, padre del razionalismo dimenticato", *Corriere della sera* (November 10, 1999); J.M. Mayrink, "Pietro Maria Bardi 1900-1999. Masp perde seu criador", *Journal do Brasil* (October 2, 1999).

[2] F. Tentori, *Pietro Maria Bardi con le cronache artistiche de "L'Ambrosiano" 1930-1933* (Milano: Mazzotta, 1990).

[3] The conference was organised in Campinas, Universidade Estadual de Campinas – UNICAMP – Auditório do IFCH September 12-13, 2011. The conference proceedings were published in November 2019. I would like to mention the introduction by Nelson Aguilar which offers much food for thought about the historiography dedicated to Bardi.

See N. Aguilar, ed., *Pietro Maria Bardi. Constructor de um novo paradigma cultural* (Campinas: Unicamp editora, 2019).

[4] A. Gonçalves Magalhães, ed., *Modernidade Latina. Os Italianos e os Centros do Modernismo Latino-americano* (São Paulo: MAC USP, 2014).

[5] V. Pozzoli, "1946! Perché Pietro Maria Bardi decide di lasciare l'Italia e partire per il Brasile?", in *Modernidade Latina. Os Italianos e os Centros do Modernismo Latino-americano*, cit.; V. Pozzoli, "Lo Studio d'Arte Palma: storia di un'impresa per il commercio artistico nell'Italia del dopoguerra", *ACME* 69, no. 2 (2016): pp. 145-173.

[6] S. Politano, *Exposição didatica e vitrine das formas. A didatica do Museu de Arte de São Paulo*, MA thesis (Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, 2010).

[7] L. Lobão, "A missão artística do primeiro MASP: um estudo da concepção de Pietro Maria Bardi para os primeiros anos do MASP", in N. Aguilar, ed., *Pietro Maria Bardi, Constructor de um novo paradigma cultural*, cit., pp. 189-201.

[8] M. Martin Barbosa, *MASP e MAM: Percursos e movimentos culturais de uma época (1947-1969)*, PhD dissertation (Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, 2015).

[9] M. Soares Cará, "O MASP, os Bardi e o design no Brasil", in A. Gonçalves Magalhães, ed., *Modernidade Latina. Os Italianos e os Centros do Modernismo Latino-americano*, cit.

[10] M.C. Bonadio, "A moda no MASP de Pietro Maria Bardi (1947-1987)", *Anais do Museu Paulista: História e Cultura Material* XXII, no. 2 (December 2014): pp. 35-70.

[11] D. Gigli Buonano, *O olhar curatorial de Pietro Maria Bardi nas exposições de design no MASP*, PhD dissertation (Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie de São Paulo, 2016).

[12] E. Leon, *IAC. Primeira Escola de Design do Brasil* (São Paulo: Blucher, 2014).

[13] E. Gorini Esmeraldo, "Bardi, jornalista e criador de um grande Museu de arte", in N. Aguilar, ed., *Pietro Maria Bardi, Constructor de um novo paradigma cultural*, cit., pp. 203-223.

[14] L. Migliaccio, "Pietro Maria Bardi no Brasil: história, crítica e crônica de arte", in A. Gonçalves Magalhães, ed., *Modernidade Latina. Os Italianos e os Centros do Modernismo Latino-americano*, cit.

[15] R.O. da Silva Paiva, *Max Bill no Brasil* (Berlin: Verlag 13, 2011).

[16] A. Coelho Sanches Corato, "Além do "silêncio de um oceano". Ideias de Brasil nas representações de um crítico e de artistas e arquitetos italianos depois da Segunda Guerra Mundial", *Anais do Museu Paulista: História e Cultura Material*, XXIV, no. 2 (August 2016): 187-215.

[17] I thank Eugênia Gorini Esmeraldo for showing me the transcriptions of a series of notes handwritten by Bardi in the 1980s. With these transcriptions, Dr. Gorini Esmeraldo, who worked alongside Bardi, has done an extraordinary job of recovering and increasing documentary materials of no secondary importance. The quotes of the documents follow the numbering given by Dr. Gorini to the transcriptions (they will be indicated as Arquivo Pessoal Eugênia Gorini Esmeraldo). An interesting work on the activity of Pietro Maria Bardi as a journalist in the 1980s can be found in Pedro Caroline Gabriel's thesis, *Pietro Maria Bardi, cronista em revista: 1976-1988*, MA thesis (University of São Paulo / FAU USP, 2014).

[18] Arquivo Pessoal Eugênia Gorini Esmeraldo, *Texto 9*. All quotations from the writings of P.M. Bardi and G. Novelli were translated by the Author.

[19] Some references appear in Laura Moure Cecchini, "The Nave Italia and the Politics of Latinità: Art, Commerce, and Cultural Colonization in the Early Days of Fascism", *Italian Studies* 71, no. 4 (November 2016): p. 466; and in M. Martin Barbosa, "Masp e Mam: percursos e movimentos culturais de uma época (1947-1969)", PhD dissertation (University of Campinas, University of Venice, 2015), pp. 24-28. For a detailed discussion on Bardi's first trip to South America, see P. Rusconi, "Pietro Maria Bardi's first journey to South America. A narrative of travel, politics and architectural Utopia", in V. Galimi, A. Gori, eds., *Intellectuals in the Latin Space during the Era of Fascism.*

Crossing Borders (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 57-84.

[20] Bardi's intent about a possible and definitive return to Brazil was not, at first, predictable, so his possible return to Italy was to be put off until the achievement of an economic goal. In fact, the project of organizing artistic events, until 1947, spread all over the South American countries.

[21] M.A. do Nascimento Arruda, *Metrópole e Cultura. São Paulo no Meio Século XX* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 2015), second ed., pp. 56-57.

[22] V. Pozzoli, "1946! Perché Pietro Maria Bardi decide di lasciare l'Italia e partire per il Brasile?", cit.

[23] See Arquivo Pessoal Eugênia Gorini Esmeraldo, *texto 9* and *66*. The primary coeval source of this initial trip to São Paulo, is the *Amer* manuscript, currently held at the Biblioteca e Centro de Pesquisa do MASP. Eugenia Gorini Esmeraldo developed her PhD thesis on this manuscript. E.M.B. Gorini Esmeraldo, *Amer a primeira América de Bardi. Diário de bordo de P.M. Bardi (1933-1934)*, PhD dissertation (Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, 2020).

[24] O. Schneider, "Arte italiana e arquitetura brasileira. Exposição de antigas pinturas italianas – Obras de notoriedade universal – Inconfundivel a arquitetura brasileira – Faltam instrumentos de expressão – Uma palestra com o Prof. Bardi", in *Pensamento da America*, suplemento panamericano de *A Manha* V, no. 11 (November 24, 1946): p. 160.

[25] Bardi probably refers to the successful publications organised by the MoMA of New York during the 1940s, such as *Portinari of Brazil* (1940) and *Brazil Builds* (1943).

[26] Bardi refers to the Magazine number 3 *Poesia* dated 1946, in which Ungaretti had organised a large anthology of Brazilian poetry starting from Indios fairy tales to Vinícius de Moraes. See G. Ungaretti, ed., "Poesia Brasiliana", in *Poesia* 3/4 (January 1946): pp. 188-231. Concerning the Brazilian literary publication in Italy by Ungaretti, see G. Lanciani, ed., *Il Brasile di Ungaretti* (Roma, Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato: 2003).

[27] J.F. Liernur, "Fiebre tropical. Nuevos trayectos y nueva geografía en la cultura arquitectónica internacional como consecuencia de la Segunda Guerra Mundial (1940/1960)", in J.M. Pozo, H.G.-D. Villarìas, eds., *Viajes en la transición de la arquitectura española hacia la modernidad* (Pamplona: T6 Ediciones SL, 2010), pp. 49-57.

[28] "É interessante observar – prossegue o prof. Bardi – com que facilidade e espontaneidade uma arquitetura se adapta ao ambiente. Digo isso com particular referência a arquitetura brasileira. Encontro nela aspectos curiosíssimos. Ella è inconfundivel, e por isso acho errado chamà-la 'colonial', devendo ser chamada "brasileira". O. Schneider, "Arte italiana e arquitetura brasileira", cit., p. 160.

[29] Consider for instance Bardi's interest in founding a Brazilian encyclopedia on the model of the Italian Enciclopedia Treccani. See P.M. Bardi, "Un'enciclopedia brasiliana", *Fanfulla* (May 11, 1951).

[30] M.A. do Nascimento Arruda, *Metrópole e Cultura. São Paulo no Meio Século XX*, cit., pp. 61-87.

[31] F. Fernandes, "Deslocamentos Milão-São Paulo: estrangeiros na cidade", in A.L. Duarte Lanna, F. Arêas Peixoto, J.T. Correia de Lira, M.R. Amaral de Sampaio, eds., *São Paulo, os estrangeiros e a construção das cidades* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2011), pp. 497-520.

[32] The last part of the paper anticipates some results of an ongoing research developed during the organisation of the exhibition *Italiani sull'Oceano. Storie di artisti nel Brasile moderno e indigeno alla metà del '900* held in Milan, MUDEC, from March 25 to July 21, 2016. The publication, ed. by Paolo Rusconi (in preparation), gathers contributions by Elisa Camesasca, Ana Gonçalves Magalhães, Viviana Pozzoli and Marco Rinaldi.

33 E. Leon, *IAC. Primeira Escola de Design do Brasil* (São Paulo: Blucher, 2014), pp. 38-49.

34 *Visite o Museu de Arte de São Paulo*, 1951, Poster, Milan, Archivio Roberto Sambonet. On Sambonet, see E. Camesasca. "Dalla linea al colore. L'attività pittorica di Roberto Sambonet", in M. Iannello, ed., *Roberto Sambonet. Artista e designer*, (Milano: Casva, 2016), pp. 19-31 and M. Iannello, "Un matto delle giuncaie: Roberto Sambonet grafico e designer", in M. Iannello, ed., *Roberto Sambonet. Artista e designer* (Milano: Casva, 2016), pp. 33-93.

35 Paul Klee's work in Lina Bo Bardi's collection is published in the magazine *Habitat* 15. See *Habitat* no. 15 (March-April 1953): p. 46. After being displayed in Milan in the Mazzotta collection, the work is currently in the Art Institute of Chicago.

36 *Fabric with grid pattern*, 1952 printed cotton, produced by Mappin Stores, São Paulo, Milan, Archivio Roberto Sambonet.

37 J.F. Liernur, "Fiebre tropical. Nuevos trayectos y nueva geografía en la cultura arquitectónica internacional como consecuencia de la Segunda Guerra Mundial (1940/1960)", cit., pp. 49-51.

38 The deep impact of number 13-14 Brésil in *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (September 1947) about the young community of Italian architects at the Politecnico of Milan was reminded to me by Piero De Amicis during a meeting in 2015. When reading the word *Brasile* published in the Italian Treccani Encyclopedia, we can see that the 1948 update had some photos about Brasilian architecture taken from the French magazine.

39 A. Maiolini Mesquita, "A presença estrangeira em Habitat (1950-54) e Mirante das Artes, Etc. (1967-1968)", in A.L. Duarte Lanna, F. Arêas Peixoto, J.T. Correia de Lira, M.R. Amaral de Sampaio, eds., *São Paulo, os estrangeiros e a construção das cidades*, cit., p. 529.

40 M.C. Bonadio, "A moda no MASP de Pietro Maria Bardi (1947-1987)", *Anais do Museu Paulista: História e Cultura Material* XXII, no. 2 (December 2014): pp. 59-62.

41 Basket, bag designed by Sambonet for La Rinascente department stores, [1956], wicker, produced by Vittorio Bonacina, Milan, Archivio Roberto Sambonet.

42 Some outline and contents presented by Novelli in the courses held at the IAC, are published in *Gastone Novelli. Scritti '43-'68*, ed. by Paola Bonani (Roma: Nero, 2019), pp. 66-74.

43 M. Rinaldi, "Arte per l'architettura: Novelli in Brasile (1949-1954)", in P. Vivarelli, ed., *Gastone Novelli 1925-1968* (Genève-Milano: Skira, 1999), pp. 30-39.

44 P. Bonani, "Mondi, montagne, segni di terra. La scultura di Gastone Novelli", in P. Bonani, M. Rinaldi, A. Tiddia, eds., *Gastone Novelli. Catalogo generale. 1. Pittura e scultura* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2011), pp. 69-70. On art galleries in São Paulo see M.L. Bueno, "O mercado de galerias e o comércio de arte moderna: Paulo e Rio de Janeiro nos anos 1950-1960", *Sociedade e estado* 20, no. 2 (May-August 2005): pp. 377-402; J.A. Pereira da Silva, *O mercado de arte moderna em São Paulo* (São Paolo: Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, 2017).

45 See "Morandi", *Habitat* no. 5 (October-December 1951): pp. 14-16.

46 The relationships between Novelli and Brazilian concrete artists are addressed in M. Rinaldi, "Il viaggio della farfalla. Temi e immagini della pittura di Novelli", in P. Bonani, M. Rinaldi, A. Tiddia, eds., *Gastone Novelli. Catalogo generale. 1. Pittura e scultura*, cit., pp. 47-49.

47 Including the future well-known fashion designer Livio De Simone. I was given this piece of information by Giovanola Ripandelli in 2016.

48 Rome, Archivio Gastone Novelli, Gastone Novelli, *Letter to his Mother* (Margherita Mayer von Ketschendorf), [1953].

49 In this regard, it is worth mentioning that Novelli's archive hosts a handwritten photo album comprising personal photographs taken during his journeys in Brazil (1948-1949) and a series of photographs of the Roncador-Xingu ethnographic expedition led by Francisco Meirelles (1946).

50 See *A mão do povo brasileiro* (São Paulo, Museu de Arte de São Paulo, April 1969) and *A arte do povo brasileiro* (São Paulo, Museu de Arte de São Paulo, April 9-27, 1986). For a discussion on these exhibitions, see L. Migliaccio, "Pietro Maria Bardi no Brasil: história, crítica e crônica de arte", cit. and C. Maroja, "Displaying Whose Modernity? The Bardis and the Museum of Art of São Paulo", in F. Frigeri, K. Handberg, eds., *New Histories of Art in the Global Postwar Era* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

51 In this regard, see the letters sent by Bardi to Carlo Belli during the 1970s and 1980s, now kept at the Belli Fund at the Archivio del '900 MART in Rovereto.

52 See the Arquivo Pessoal Eugênia Gorini Esmeraldo, *Texto 71, Ricordo di Milano*.

Beyond the Voyage

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Beyond the voyage: this means beyond the CIHA conference in Florence and the present session held in autumn 2019, which was to open trajectories for the second part of the 35th Congress in Brazil. Splitting the conference into two was a means to create bridges and foster dialogues, with art history having transformed itself into a transcultural or global field, research agenda and practice. The title of the Florentine Venue *Motion: Transformation* might seem less politically charged than the São Paulo part *Motion: Migration*, but, in reality, 'transformation' is a multifaceted and indeed politically relevant term, as many contributions to the congress have shown.

One wonders why the Roman poet Publius Ovidius Naso, who lived in the time of Augustus – who transformed the Republic into the monarchical 'Principate' – was forced into exile to the Black Sea. Did this not happen because he wrote the *Metamorphoses*, the book of *Transformations*? Related to processes in time and a world in permanent mutation, it questions the stability of bodies and orders (e.g., love, nature, art, politics, law and the passages between them) sometimes in a 'biopolitical' perspective. This is, one may suppose, a strong reason for expulsion, and for Ovid a forced voyage or migration, an experience he explores poetically in the *Tristia*. More generally speaking, critical thinking and critical 'play' can be related to dynamics of *transformation* which are often extremely challenging and complex, liberating or oppressive, material or mental, environmental and social.

While changing the transcription of my presentation – a few volatile thoughts in conclusion of the congress – in the past tense, I am aware that its title and the whole 'operation' has assumed a new value and meaning, given the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in spring 2020. What I was aiming at in the short lecture about traveling (as a transformative practice) was highlighting four strands of investigation: a) art historical versus touristic traveling, b) Travel, Ecology, Nature, c) the points of contact between tourism and migration, followed by d) a case study on Liguria, concentrating on Infrastructure, Technologies of Traveling and Transport. All these 'strands' are obviously still relevant, but the situation has profoundly changed and what should and has started to be discussed is the future of the 'voyage', of traveling as such.

"We Are Not Tourists": Art Historical Traveling

While I cannot engage with the latter, I will also not be able to elaborate on four chapters here. Rather than addressing the topic of the traveling artist, my interest would be that of the traveling art historian. Indeed, most of the speakers in Florence were travel companions of a conference, departing after it in various directions. Art history is a travel discipline, as anthropology and others are, many art historians do a kind of fieldwork. There have been some famous traveling art historians and there are famous art historical travels, think of Aby Warburg in New Mexico and Arizona. Art historians often do not travel alone, as in many places the study of art history requires so-called 'excursions'. In fact, it is extremely interesting to see art historians traveling together as a didactical practice – and we should also critically think about it. What are the behaviors and the 'gestures' of those involved in these excursions? How do they engage with the so-called local scholars of a place visited? In the European or the North American academia, for example, excursions to or summer schools in Florence have a long tradition. Interestingly also, art historical travel practices and distances have changed, or new modes were introduced over the last two decades, connected to the transcultural and global 'opening' of the field. Site visits, for exam-

ple, regard hubs, contact or conflict zones, (colonial and other) collections, or follow historical, commercial, religious and other kinds of routes or itineraries. The Getty Foundation (and others) has fostered collaborations of such kind regarding India and Central Asia, the Caucasus Region, the broader Mediterranean or Eastern Europe, while other programs have taken place in the Americas. I say all this as complementary to the preceding brilliant contributions of this session, starting with the trip to the West of the Japanese architect and architectural historian Itō Chūta, who bridged the travel of the artist and that of the scholar.

Being an observant inhabitant (as a foreigner) of a city highly exposed to mass tourism but also to the presence of art historians and art historical excursions, I could study the interrelation of both groups (of unequal numbers). It seems to a certain respect as if we speak of enemies, while they often share the necessity to stand in front of the same picture or statue and to visit the same site, blocking each other's view with quite different levels of attention or times of observation. Besides, many art historians work in the tourism industry, some become museum curators and directors, they are and must be interested in the flux and numbers of tourists and visitors in general, and there are other points of contact. More generally speaking, a stronger participation of art history in or dialogue with critical tourism studies would be desirable. The history of travel and travel literature has long been studied by the discipline; in academic research, mostly with the intent to learn about the reception history of monuments, and also, more specifically, about their state in a certain historical moment. It would certainly be worthwhile to take part in the discussion on the touristic 'value' of monuments and sites as well as the narratives related to them. Touristic approaches are part of the actual 'life' and management of monuments, and besides seeing them (sometimes for good reasons) as disturbing art historical approaches, the latter may include a consideration of the former, and open a conversation or cooperation with the civic or private stakeholders, with art historians potentially among them. In my eyes, tourism – in its wide-ranging historical and contemporary global declinations – needs to be addressed already in the training of art historians (including the history and role of travel photography and 'imaging' in general).

Travel, Nature, Ecology

My presentation had a second chapter about ecologies and traveling, which I only summarize here. It started with questioning the gazes of pilgrims and emperors, traveling and describing the world in religious or imperial terms or being at the center of literary or pictorial journeys. One may think of the Mogao cave paintings of Dunhuang, at an important crossroads in the desert in western China, with the depiction of the most famous travel to the West in Chinese culture, that of the Monkey King. In the caves you also find depictions of sacred topographies in or as natural settings, and those of travelers (monks) on their way to these sites. These cave paintings allow us to study conceptualizations of space and of 'globalization' (or *topomimesis*) of sacred spots in pictorial geographies, maps and landscapes. Not distant in time but in space is the Madaba Map from the 6th century, in Jordan, a floor mosaic displaying important Judeo-Christian sites in a map of the Holy Land. One of the most interesting people who traveled to this area almost two hundred years earlier is the nun Egeria (from Gaul). She was an observant traveler, interested in the flora and the fauna – as many other pilgrims and travelers in a transcultural perspective. Egeria was extremely curious, she went to the Sinai desert and described a view from the mountains in her account in form of a letter, unique in Latin literature before Petrarca.

Studying the 16th century world of empires, one finds an extreme interest in investigating the flora and fauna of conquered territories, for example reading the autobiography of the first Mogul emperor Babur (1483-1530) describing his departure from his gardens in Kabul to the campaigns in India. One gets the impression that apart from military conquests, his major interest is the flora and fauna of the subcontinent, and later the Mogul court is strongly engaging with nature: wine, fruit, animals and much more. This was for sure a political agenda, as in other empires or other political orders, involving concepts of dominion over nature as well as dynamics of transcultural exchange or the exploitation of colonized territories. One could shift the attention to systems of knowledge and the traveling scholars of the 16th to 19th century, for example European botanists taking advantage of colonial infrastructures ask for the ways and media of collecting, documenting, of classifying, for pictorial representations and transfer, or also cultivation of plants. In short, there are more trave-

lers art historians are interested in than artists. Various kinds of protagonists, techniques, modes of graphic and literary description, infrastructures, etc. form and take part in a multifaceted visual culture of 'traveling' which certainly is an important issue of a transcultural art history, concerned with transformation by all means (for example that of landscapes and environments themselves).

Tourism and Migration

Finally, in the third part of my contribution I wanted to indicate a research topic which should involve art history more strongly, but also needs to be considered in new ways, given the experience of the pandemic. I am sure this will be addressed in São Paulo, whereas the round table which took place in Florence and is published in this volume raises the point of critical thinking about tourism and its ecological impact or ignorance with a look to the performance "Sun & Sea (Marina)" by the collective of artists Neon Realism in the Lithuanian pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2019). What I mean is the urgent need to 'confront' tourism and migration, which has already been done regarding social and political contexts, but only by very few studies in art history. There are the visual cultures of migration and tourism as such, both have their photographic icons that are often concerned with ship and coasts / beaches (the refugee boats in the Mediterranean and the cruise liners in Venice), and are critically approached in photography and art in general. Regarding migration, I want to mention a conference at the KHI on *Migration and Photography*, and the exhibition *Objects of Migration, Photo Objects of Art History: Encounters in an Archive* by Massimo Ricciardo (curated by Costanza Caraffa and Almut Goldhahn).

In my presentation, I was suggesting two potential case studies, to discuss confrontations or intertwining of tourism and migration: the role of hotels and of mobile phones. Regarding hotels, Lisbon is of particular interest in various moments since the 1970s, when after the end of Fascism (Estado Novo) and the independence of Angola, Mozambique, and other colonies, in 1975 more than half million settlers, many of whom born in the colonies, were brought by airlift to Portugal, often in precarious economic conditions, in a country fighting for the establishment of a new political order, and marginalized in Europe. In the times of the oil crisis, tourism was severely hit, and many of the so-called *retornados*, who had no

family in Portugal, were hosted in hotels, of all levels. There is a famous photograph by Rui Ochôa showing people (mostly men) holding a banner saying: "We don't want hotels, we want houses and jobs". The story can be continued by other chapters: the gentrification of Lisbon as boomtown of tourism in the 2000s, branding (as it has been defined) its own colonial history; the role of rich Angolan investors in the 2010s; and the migration of hundreds of thousands of people from the ex-colonies to the city in recent years, where they live under extremely difficult conditions in suburban areas, while the houses in the city center have been transformed into tourist accommodation. Gonçalo Fonseca is one of the photographers who works with and documents the conditions of migrants in Lisbon. (And there are entire branches of the tourism industry specialized in MLT ('Migration-led Tourism') and VFR ('Visiting Friends and Relatives')). Regarding hotels and also in general, Athens could be compared to Lisbon, even if the dynamics are different. I just want to name the Hotel City Plaza – which became famous in 2016 – a former hotel squatted and transformed to provide housing to 400 migrants with a concept of community building and self-administration, including also photography projects with migrant children such as "We are City Plaza", with the photographer Xiaofu Wang and others.

The second case study, which I want to at least mention here, would aim to analyze the role of mobile phones in dynamics of migration, allowing the production, processing, transmission and storage of images, and much more. When people are asked what they need, they may say water, fruit, a plug-in to charge the phone and a wi-fi connection. Smartphones are extremely important for the whole organization of traveling, and obviously also the access to music, news and so forth. They are one of the most important belongings of migrants and the only connection with families, often spread globally, but also to the places left or the memories of their lives. Smartphones have a role in changing forms of memory, individual as well as collective, mobile memories with mobile phones, being part of the mobility and also motility of people, involving new relations to sites and places. They are *Bilderfahrzeuge* ('image vehicles'), to use Warburg's term, in their own right. Analyzing digital clouds of images related to migration or doing respective fieldwork with individuals or groups is

a challenge for visual studies or new iconology (*Bildwissenschaft*) and may involve many disciplines; in any case, art history should take part in such projects. And not to forget my comparative approach, smartphone images produced, processed and exchanged in touristic traveling could be confronted with them and/or studied in their own right: how do they (in a wider historical perspective, photography in general) condition or change the perception of sites? What are the implications of quickly changing technologies and data processing for museums and the management of heritage and so forth? These are questions that will play a role in the discipline and in future CIHA conferences.

Given, However

Given, however, that in my eyes art history is not exclusively *Bildwissenschaft*, but also concerned with material objects, architectures and sites, I would have liked to devote a conclusive chapter to bring the argument of my short considerations back to physical environments, infrastructures, technologies and aesthetics of traveling, confronting them obviously with imaginations or the *imaginaire* of voyages (for example with moving images, as Marzia Faietti put it in the introduction of this session), speaking of roads, landscape architecture (including flora) and frontiers, and perhaps also of suitcases, mobile perception, viewpoints or flights. But there is no space for it here, and probably also not enough elsewhere, one single author also unable to do so… And, as I said in

the beginning, what is now at stake is the future of traveling as such, which we need to discuss in physical and virtual meetings.

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POSTER SESSION

Imago Signorum: The Doctrine of the Microcosmic Man in Illustrations Between the 14th and 15th Centuries

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Abstract

This poster aims to analyze how the iconography of the zodiacal Vein man, between the 14th and 15th centuries, impacted the debate on the problem of the preponderance of stars in the daily life of man. Thus, one should look at the relationship between the concepts of macrocosm and microcosm and the uses and functions of astrological images in the early modern period. Starting from this problem, this poster presents the idea that the understanding of the world, at the time, was directly linked to a will of cosmic ordering and orientation, in an attempt to establish relations with the unknowable. For this reason, it is necessary to pay attention to the understanding of the concept of melothesia, which is the division of the human body according to astral inflows, and how it affects a whole theoretical debate about astral determinism in human daily life. Finally, this poster looks at how the applicability of the zodiacal Vein man was connected to the debate between astral fatalism, which everyone was bound to endure, and the rise of the problem of knowledge linked to human free will.

Keywords: astrology, zodiacal Vein man, iconography.

Results

The *Imago Signorum* type bears iconographical elements deriving from the zodiacal man and the venous man at the same time. This new image is currently titled *zodiacal Vein man*. These illustrations use the figure of a single man to show, in a concise and efficient way, the visual data necessary for the analysis of the stars and the human body. Thus, these images demonstrate how the production and circulation of medical-astrological manuscripts, almanacs, and calendars were becoming complex in their formation. The *Imago Signorum,* which was conceived to illustrate the theoretical structure of the human body, reveals, with the predominance of iconographic types such as *Homo Signorum* or even *Homo Venarum* (fig. 4), that the figurative repertoire also reflects this complexity. The *Quinta Ymago* of the *Liber Cosmographiae* is, precisely, the zodiacal Vein man. The image combines teachings about the impact of the zodiac on the body, while describing the locations of the major veins where bleeds should be performed. The zodiacal Vein man (fig. 1), shows 32 red arrows pointing at the various parts of the man's figure, identifying the 32 major veins in our body. The *Homo Signor* – identified

Fig. 1. *Zodiacal Vein man. Liber Cosmographiae*, 1408. Cambridge, The Wren Library, Trinity College, MS R.15.21, f. 15v.

Fig. 2. Limbourg brothers, *Zodiacal Vein man. Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, Illustration, 1416. Chantilly, Musée Condé.
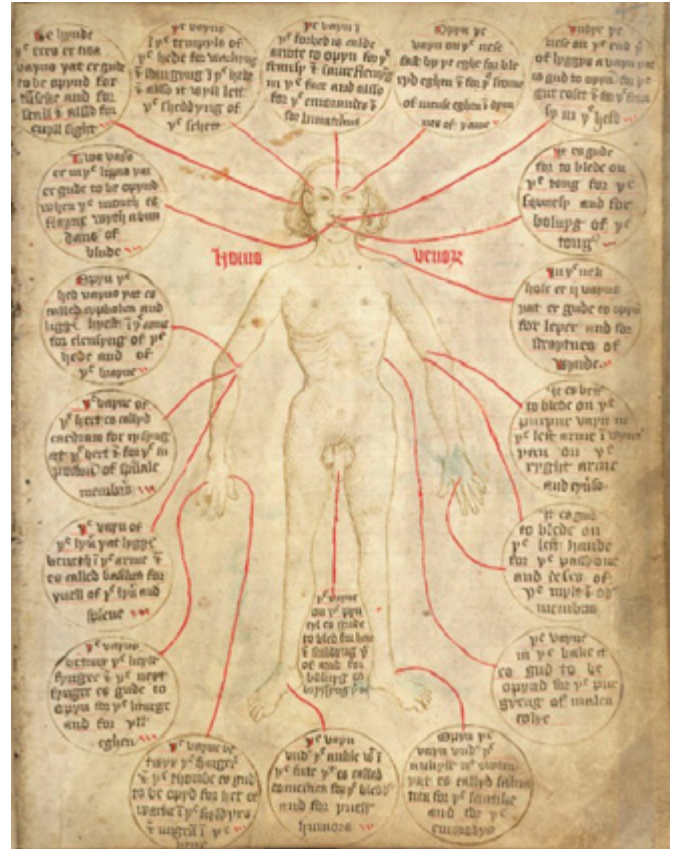
Fig. 4. *Homo Venarum. Guild Book of the Barber Surgeons*, c. 1486. London, British Museum, MS Egerton 2572, f. 50r.
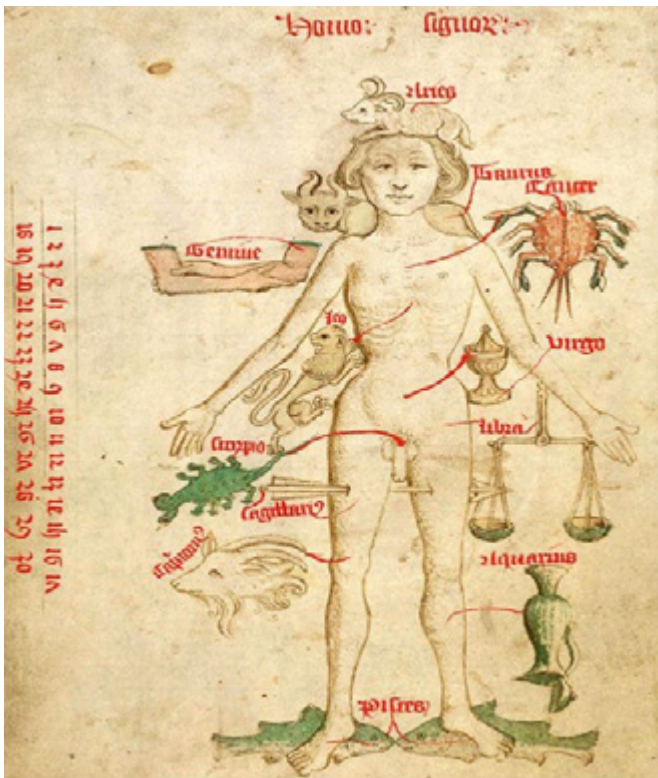
Fig. 3. *Zodiacal man. Guild Book of the Barber Surgeons*, c. 1486. London, British Museum, MS Egerton 2572, f. 50v.

by the inscription above the illustration (fig. 3) in the center of the composition – is surrounded by the twelve zodiac signs that, this time, are not on his body. Red lines connect each sign to a body part. Finally, the interpretation of the figure of the zodiacal man in fig. 2 undoubtedly reveals a close relationship with ancient astrology. This illustration had a strictly medicinal purpose, since it described how the planets could threaten a body part or organ according to its correspondence with the sign that governs that part of the body.

Conclusion

The astrological images are inserted exactly in this process where a distance between cosmological world and man is created. Its function is circumscribed in the dynamisation and effort to elaborate 'meaning' in the relations between the impact of astral inflows and the elements of nature. The images reveal the need of men for spiritual guidance through the cosmos. The configuration of the images into diverse expressive forms highlights the mythical basis of cosmological knowledge, since it demonstrates the presupposition of an

essential causality for the thought. Therefore, the *Imago Signorum* and its iconographic bases concatenate, above all, how the symbolic experience of man in relation to the firmament engenders a mechanism that employs the conservation of the polarity between astral thought and the forming scientific thought. The iconography of the zodiacal Vein man is an attempt to conform to images as each element and cosmological movement is embedded in earthly structures in order to create a possible link between the suprasensible dynamics and the sublunar world.

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Symbolism of Afro-Latin American Religions in Visual Arts

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This paper aims to discuss how the symbolism of the Afro-Latin American religions Candomblé[1] and Santeria[2] is represented in visual arts. Exploring the role of Afro-Latin and Afro-Caribbean American art is crucial to truly appreciate the African diaspora.

Learning about these religions is very important when attempting to understand the influence of African culture in Latin America. The Cuban artists Ana Mendieta, Magdalena Campos-Pons, and Lili Bernard, and Brazilian artist Ayrson Heráclito were inspired by Santeria and Candomblé and made explicit references to them in their works. Some of these artists practiced Afro-Latin American and Carribean religions themselves; among the most popular themes depicted in their works, there are deities, ceremonies, rituals, and symbols. The artists' attempts to capture the vibrancy and energy of these religions in their art effectively introduced them to the rest of the world, bringing national and global recognition to them.

Fig. 1. Lili Bernard, *Carlota Leading the People* (after Eugène Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830), 2011. Oil on canvas, 182.88x152.4 cm. Cuban Artist based in Los Angeles.

The originality of these Latin American artists is reflected in the identity of the art and larger cultural origins of the region. These artists explored the relation between Afro-Latin American and African cultural identities, memories, history. The Atlantic slave trade, namely the transportation of millions of Black people from Africa to the Americas, is yet another theme employed by these artists to reflect on Afro-Latin American culture since colonization.

The artist Ana Mendieta created a film documenting a performance called *Untitled (Blood and Feathers #2)*, in 1974. In this performance, Mendieta made references to Cuba's Santeria rituals, ceremonies, and practices. The film shows Mendieta standing naked on a sandy bank. She covers her body with animal blood and, after that, with white feathers. Ultimately, she stands in a bird-like position. Mendieta used blood as material in several artworks.[3] Blood, feathers and the naked body are evocative of the Santeria ritual; as a matter of fact, blood and feathers from animal sacrifices are used in both Santeria and Candomblé practices. Blood is used to purify the body and soul.

Multi-disciplinary artist Magdalena Campos-Pons made references to the African diaspora and African roots in her oeuvre. In her 10-panel Polaroid series *Abridor de Caminos* (*The One Who Opens the Path*), she represented a Santeria ritual. The title is inspired by Elegua, who is the protector of Yoruba deities, and celebrated in Cuba. He is the messenger between humans and deities, one of the most important orishas. In this series, Campos-Pons represented herself as Elegua, and the photography focuses on parts of Campos-Pons' body. Other objects in the photos are associated with symbolism alluding to the orisha Elegua, such as the *garabatos*[4] used in the Santeria ritual. One of the photos shows a section of Campos-Pons' legs marked with red stripes that represent the scarification rite. The colours used

Fig. 2. Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, *Abridor de Caminos* (The One Who Opens the Path), 1997. Photography. 67.7x41.4 cm.

in the photography – red, black, and white – are associated with the symbolism of Elegua.

The artist Lili Bernard explored the legacy of colonization, race, and gender, and incorporated Santeria symbolism inherited from Yoruba in her oeuvre. Her work, *Carlota Leading the People*, from the series *Antebellum Appropriations*, is a reinterpretation of Delacroix's *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (1830). Black characters were inserted in her painting, with references to Cuban history and slave revolts. Carlota, a black woman, is portrayed in place of Delacroix's allegory of Liberty. Carlota was a Yoruba slave who led a revolt against slavery on the Triunvirato farm, Matanzas, Cuba, in 1843. She is portrayed bare-chested, wearing a yellow dress and carrying a rifle and a machete covered in blood, marching at the head of the battalion standing over corpses of white people. Bernard wanted to show how Black women played an important role in the leadership of slave revolts in the colonial period. Another interesting point in Bernard's work is the reinterpretation of classical artworks through Afro-Cuban people's narratives.

Carlota and Firmina were two women who led the slave rebellion. Firmina is portrayed in a blue dress with a thin white band, and her breasts are showing; blue and white are the colours which represent *Yemanja*, the spirit of water and fertility. Next to Firmina is a black man kneeling at

Carlota's feet; he has a halo over his head with the name *Sao Lázaro/Babalu-Aye* written on it. It is a reference to the Cuban Saint Lazarus (San Lázaro) represented in Santeria as orisha Babalu-Aye. In order to practice their religions in secret, Afro-Cubans chose a Catholic saint, namely San Lázaro, who best represents the African god of healing. A boy with guns, dressed in red clothes, with a halo on which *Eleguá* is written, is represented on the right of Carlota. In Santeria, Elegua is perceived as a deceiving or impish boy. On the left of the painting, a young and robust man with a drum in his hand and a hat represents the orisha Oshosi. He is associated with the spirit of the forest. Behind Carlota, we see another woman in red clothing, raising a sword, with a halo on which *Oya Yansa* is written. The orisha Yansa is a warrior who fights the fiercest battles. The colours associated with Yansa are red and black. A Ceiba tree with flowers, which is considered a sacred tree and is used in Santeria rituals, is represented in the background.

Ayrson Heráclito's work shows influences from Afro-Brazilian rituals. His performance *Burburu II* is inspired by *Obaluaê* deities, gods of healing. During the performance, Heráclito throws popcorn over the bodies of the participants: popcorn is a symbolic element in Afro-Brazilian rituals, as it is supposed to purify the body and soul. Accord-

Fig. 3. Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Blood and Feathers #2)*, 1974. Performance. Film, Super 8 mm, shown as video, projection, colour. Duration: 3min, 30sec. London, Tate.

ing to Adriano Pedrosa, "Heráclito's approach is often conceptual. He has an ongoing interest in the orisha – spirits that reflect the manifestation of gods originally coming from the African Yoruba religion – and how their codes are constructed through food and composed in language".[5] His work is very important to understand the relating theme of African ancestry in Brazil.

Understanding the role of Candomblé, Santeria and Yoruba in Latin America is crucial to truly appreciate the African heritage, as well as the driving force behind this region's new ideas in art. In conclusion, this paper intended to show that Black art in Latin America exists, also highlighting the magnitude of the impact of African roots on Latin American art, thus its hybridism.

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Notes

[1] An Afro-Brazilian religion originating in West Africa which combines Catholic practices with Yoruba traditions.

[2] Santeria is a religion combining Yoruba beliefs with aspects of Catholicism.

[3] See *Untitled* (Chicken Piece), 1972; *Untitled* (Rape Scene), 1973.

[4] Hooked walking sticks.

[5] A. Pedrosa, *Ayrson Heráclito*, 21 May 2015. https://artreview.com/2015-futuregreat-ayrson-heraclito. Accessed 12/10/2020.

Fig. 4. Ayrson Heráclito, performance, *Buruburu II*, 2013. Photography on cotton paper, 135x108 cm.

18th-Century Foreign Artists in Courts

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In recent decades, the role of visual discourse as a tool for political leaders has changed from one that is merely illustrative to one that is a key element in strategies of soft power. Although this can be analyzed on a case-by-case basis, it is more significant to examine the dynamics occurring simultaneously in various imperial courts worldwide. Along this line, recent historical approaches to 18th-century politics insist upon the general importance of the interest in the foreign as a feature of modernity. Courts addressed this theme from different vantage points: from the exoticism of French *chinoiserie* to foreign artists being encouraged to take residence in courts. This paper aims to identify different patrons of foreign art production in 18th-century courts, focusing on the second perspective. From the presence of Nepalese or European artists working for the Chinese emperor Qianlong, to the French painters in Ottoman Istanbul, they were all behind the hybridization process of the visual discourse promoted by empires to highlight a pluralistic concept of cosmopolitanism. Meanwhile, European courts put forward an entirely different approach; while Italian artists and architects were easy to find in any court, e.g., Luca Giordano or Francesco Sabatini in Madrid or Giacomo Antonio Quarenghi in Saint Petersburg, American or Asian examples were not – with the exception of the case of Ta-Che-Qua in London during the second half of 18th century. A similar phenomenon can also be found in those courts with wide-ranging colonial relationships, including the European courts installed in viceroyalties in the Americas and Asia. On the one hand, the presence of foreign artists in those courts during that time was largely inconsequential, except for their crucial role as engineers in New Spain, New Grenada, or Peru. On the other hand, local artists, those who rarely reached beyond metropolitan circles, e.g., Juan Patricio Morlete in New Spain or Francisco Javier Matís in New Grenada, were common. All these wide-ranging examples will be compared from a specific perspective: how their presence changed the visual discourse of courts, inspiring a modernistic and pluralistic approach. This will allow us to overcome nationalistic historiographical discourses, and especially the Eurocentrism common in analytical frameworks. The crucial aspect is not how European decorative patterns or models reached the rest of the world, as has been often addressed, but rather how disconnected courts chose similar approaches to foreign cultures at the same time. Although this as-of-yet precarious framework requires further examination in forthcoming studies, it will contribute to a common perspective in writing about global art history.

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Ambiguous Gestures: Iconography of the Archers Between Europe and the New World

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Archers shooting at a Herm (c. 1530), omitted by Giorgio Vasari and Ascanio Condivi in their biographies of Michelangelo Buonarroti (1550, reedited in 1568, and 1553 respectively), is one of the most enigmatic graphic works attributed to the Florentine master (fig. 1). Its date of conception, intended destination, realization of the unfinished drawing, former owners, and origin of the inscriptions on the reverse of the folio remain unclear, as well as its iconography, which has never been fully deciphered. Although the literary source for this drawing is the object of a debate that is still open, several specialists state – taking into consideration a theme largely explored by Michelangelo in other probable contemporary drawings, such as *Children's Bacchanal*, *Three Labours of Hercules*, or *Rape of Ganymede* – that this is an allegorical composition that distinguishes two forms of love, carnal and spiritual, both related to the transformative power of feelings. Indeed, the contrast between the agility with which the archers move – associated to the two *putti* that blow on the fire flames in the same direction as the arrows – and the stillness of the sleeping Cupid seems to emphasize the pathetic (thus bipolar) dimension of love.

Despite the uncertainties surrounding this drawing, we know that the *Archers* had great impact throughout Europe, specially thanks to a print probably made by the French engraver Nicolas Béatrizet (c. 1540-1560), active in Rome, who completed Michelangelo's drawing with a key element: he added the bows and arrows that were absent in the original work (fig. 2). This integration seems to underline, in the print, the intensity of the naked body in motion, conciliating the violent and erotic dimensions of the image. Wilde, for instance, suggested that the message of the drawing could be summarized in a moral lesson, according to which "blind and passionate desire will not reach the true target" (1978: 152). From the vocabulary employed by Wilde, is it possible to imagine that, in the second half of the 16th century, Michelangelo's drawing became a paradigm of the "cynegetic formula" (Burucúa, Kwiatkowski 2014)? In any case, it is not surprising that this engraving has provided a range of plastic solutions to represent affective intensity, as has happened already with Michelangelo's works since the discovery of the *cartone* for the *Battle of Cascina*, from which Béatrizet also made several prints. The fresco representing archers at-

Fig. 1. Michelangelo, *Archers shooting at a Herm*, c. 1530. Red chalk, 21.9x32.3 cm. Windsor, Royal Collection.

Fig. 2. Nicolas Béatrizet (attr.), *The Archers* (after Michelangelo), c. 1550. Engraving, 24.2x35.4 cm. London, The British Museum.

Fig. 3. André Thevet, *Les Singularités de la France Antarctique*, 1557, Paris, BnF – f. 321, Les Amazones et ses victimes.

tributed to Girolamo Siciolante (made between 1556 and 1560, removed from its original location and today displayed at Galleria Borghese), as well as the personal *impresa* of Alessandro Farnese (published in *Le imprese illustri* (1566) by Girolamo Ruscelli), exemplify the different interpretations of Michelangelo's drawing. Likewise, the famous *Mercurio volante* (1580), by Giambologna, for example, can be considered a reinterpretation of the archer in the foreground. It is worth recalling that the ancient deity is directly associated with movement and speed.

The motif of the group of archers moving is also present in several illustrations of the Native Peoples of the New World, symbolizing their warlike and 'savage' nature, since some editions of Amerigo Vespucci's pamphlet (*Mundus Novus*, 1503). The theme reappears in several prints from *Les Singularités de la France Antarctique* (1557) by French cosmographer André Thevet. One of these prints, which represents how the 'Amazons' treated their enemies, had a significant impact, and was once again reproduced in *La Cosmographie Universelle* (1575), by the same author (fig. 3). In this engraving, we may observe that the main motif of the archers is resumed, as well as the character blowing on the fire. The theme of the violence and cruelty of Native Americans is largely explored by the literature and by French cartography at the time of their ephemeral colonial enterprise on the Brazilian coast. It reappears, among other documents, in the important *Cosmographie Universelle* (1556), by Guillaume Le Testu, where it is possi-

ble to see rival groups facing each other, with a tree as a central axis. Considering that the images of the New World were freely translated according to European figurative models, to what extent could we admit that Béatrizet's engravings had provided the plastic solutions for the engraving representing the Amazons in Thevet's work? How and to which extent the dissemination of images of Native American people has transformed artistic problems such as movement and the mythological nude? What are the semantic implications of the transformation of the pathos of love into pathos of violence? Is this an example of the 'inversion' of the meanings of the form?

In Medieval iconography, the act of shooting arrows has an ambiguous connotation. In the *Roman de la Rose* (13th century), for example, Venus shooting an arrow at Pudor's statue is central to Pygmalion's erotic narrative. On the other hand, the 'antipestilential' function of the cult of

Fig. 4. Michelangelo, *Last Judgement - St. Sebastian*, detail, 1537-1541. Fresco. Vatican, Cappella Sistina.

St. Sebastian, especially after the terrible plague epidemic in 1348, reinforces the analogy between arrow and disease, to which Homer's *Iliad* (scroll 10) and Psalm 37(38) provide a solid iconographic source. Maybe it is not by chance that in the *Last Judgement*, painted by Michelangelo, the figure of St. Sebastian evokes the gesture of shooting an arrow, though without a bow (fig. 4), as in *The Archers* (Hirst 1989: 111). In both cases, the arrow is a pathetic element strongly associated with the transformation of the appearance of the body. In this research, we can observe that the relationship between the erotic (the archers) and the necrotic (the indigenous cruelty) seems to be built on the theme of speed and movement (of both the body and arrows) as a catalyst for the transformation of emotions.

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Giovio's and Vasari's Who's Who: Pinturicchio's Mural Paintings as Models for Paolo Giovio's Portraits

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In this paper, I discuss how the portraits collected by the 16th-century humanist Paolo Giovio and some paintings in the so-called *Giovio Series*, now displayed in the Uffizi Gallery, were both created based on frescoes by the late 15th-century painter Pinturicchio.

Portrait Collection of Paolo Giovio and the Giovio Series

Paolo Giovio (1483-1552) is famous for having collected more than 400 portraits of *uomini illustri*. Giovio displayed the portraits in a building called the *Museo*, located on the shoreline of Lake Como. The paintings in this collection were made by copying the portraits of *uomini illustri* from frescoes and tombstones, among other artifacts. Giovio's collection attracted the interest of rulers of other states, and Cosimo I de' Medici had copies made of the portraits. In 1552, Cosimo I sent the painter Cristofano dell'Altissimo to Como to copy these portraits, and he collected about 280 of Cristofano's copies, the core of the Uffizi's portrait collection known as the Giovio Series.

Giovio attached elogies to the portraits displayed in the Museo, and in 1546 and 1551, he published two volumes of the *Elogia* containing these elogies. The 1551 volume was republished in 1575, accompanied by woodcut prints made based on Giovio's portraits.

Giovio's *Elogia* and Vasari's *Le vite*

In the second quarter of the 16th century, Giovio was part of the Roman intellectual circle of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, along with Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574). Vasari's *Le vite* shows that the two men intellectually stimulated each other. In his autobiography, Vasari wrote that he decided to write *Le vite* in response to being suggested to write a collection of biographies of artists similar to Giovio's *Elogia*. Furthermore, the 1568 edition of *Le vite* includes a list of works in Cosimo I's portrait collection; thus, it is certain that Giovio's *Elogia* and Vasari's *Le vite* originated from a shared idea, that is, listing great historical figures, and that the portraits selected by Giovio to supplement the accounts of these subjects reflected their shared interests.

In addition, it is reasonable to presume that they attempted to find and identify – often incorrectly – the *uomini illustri* depicted in the portraits

Fig. 1. Charles VIII in Giovio's *Elogia*, published in 1575.

in the Vatican buildings, as confirmed in the biography of Fra Angelico in Vasari's *Le vite*. While describing the Chapel of the Sacrament in the Vatican Palace, Vasari wrote that *uomini illustri* were portrayed there in frescoes, though the chapel was later destroyed. Thus, if Giovio had not copied these portraits for his Museo, they would have been lost. This passage provides evidence on the fact that they appreciated the frescoes in the Vatican buildings and engaged in the intellectual pursuit of identifying the people who were portrayed in them.

Two Fresco Paintings by Pinturicchio

Next, I am going to show that two frescoes painted by Bernardino Pinturicchio (c. 1456-1513) became the models for Giovio's portrait collection, as a result of Giovio and Vasari's intellectual pastime. Alexander VI, born Borgia, had ordered Pinturicchio to execute two mural paintings for Vatican buildings. From 1492, Pinturicchio painted a series of frescoes in the Borgia Apartment of the Vatican Palace and, in the mid-1490s, he completed another in Castel Sant'Angelo.

Fig. 2. Cristofano dell'Altissimo, *Charles VIII*. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Giovio Series.

The fresco in the Borgia Apartment is a well-known work by Pinturicchio, but the one in Castel Sant'Angelo has not survived. Alexander VI had the the castle rebuilt in 1492, and a new tower and a loggia were included in the project. These buildings were demolished in the early 17th century; unfortunately, the fresco that Pinturicchio painted in the loggia was also destroyed. However, a document states that it included portraits of famous persons of that period. In that document, Lorenz Behaim (1457-1521) copied the inscriptions added to six scenes in that fresco. The mural paintings portrayed historical events that had occurred in Rome in the mid-1490s. In 1494, king Charles VIII of France invaded Italy and entered Rome. The pope and the French monarch met several times at the Vatican, and six scenes from these meetings were selected as themes of the fresco. After the two met, the French king displayed an amicable attitude towards the pope. At the end of January 1495, he withdrew from Rome on condition that he succeed to the throne of the Kingdom of Naples, and that the Roman Curia hand over Gem, prince of the Ottoman empire (also referred to as Djem, Cem, or Zizim). Pinturicchio immediately depicted the scenes in which the crisis threatening Rome was resolved.

According to the inscriptions recorded by Behaim, in addition to the pope and Charles VIII, the frescos portrayed other figures, including the two new French cardinals, Prince Gem, and Cesare Borgia. In the biography of Pinturicchio, Vasari mentioned that the painter portrayed some prominent persons of the time: he described people who were involved in the French invasion, although they were not mentioned in the inscription, such as Niccolò Orsini, Giangiacomo Trivulzio, and the younger siblings of Cesare Borgia. What is very interesting for us is that there is a significant difference between the inscription on the fresco and the writings of Vasari, and consequently in the way the portrayed persons were chosen. For example, Prince Gem and the new cardinals, Philippe de Luxembourg and Guillaume Briçonnet, were included in the inscription. Consequently, they should have been cited in Vasari's work, but they were not, while other *uomini illustri* were included. Therefore, it can be presumed that Vasari selected the portrayed persons not according to the inscriptions, but rather to his own interests.

It is particularly interesting that the *uomini illustri* listed by Vasari were individuals included

Fig. 3. Cristofano dell'Altissimo, *Prince Gem*. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Giovio Series.

Fig. 4. Figure painted by Pinturicchio in the Borgia Apartment.

in Giovio's portrait collection, and it is possible that Giovio and Vasari shared the same information on the identity of the individuals depicted in the frescos. Giovio's *Elogia*, published in 1575, included a xylograph of a portrait of Charles VIII, and the text clearly states that the portrait was drawn based on the fresco in Castel Sant'Angelo (fig. 1). This demonstrates that some of the portraits in the *Museo* were copied from the Pinturicchio's frescos. Similarly, the portrait of Charles VIII in the Giovio Series undoubtedly stemmed from the same works (fig. 2). For this reason, it can be pointed out that some portraits in the Giovio Series (e.g., Pope Alexander VI, Niccolò Orsini, and

Giangiacomo Trivulzio), also mentioned in Vasari's *Le vite*, could have originated from the Pinturicchio's frescos. This hypothesis is also supported by the fact that the portrait of Prince Gem in the Giovio Series derives from a portrait of a Turkish man found in another fresco of Pinturicchio: the *Disputation of St. Catherine of Alexandria*, located in the Borgia Apartments (figs. 3-4).

In summary, the fact that, despite the inscription of the frescoes, Vasari assumed that these people were portrayed in the fresco, reflected the intellectual task shared by him and Giovio: namely, gathering information about the *uomini illustri*.

The Anti-Urbanism Discourse in the Paintings of George Ault and Other Precisionists

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Abstract

Concentrating on the case study of George Ault (1891-1948), the paper traces the extent to which some of the cityscape representations of American Precisionist[1] painters have contributed to the production and articulation of the anti-urbanism discourse in American culture.

Artists like George Ault, Georgia O'Keeffe, Arnold Wiltz, Francis Criss, Louis O'Guglielmi, and John Atherton displayed views of anti-modernization by establishing their narratives along two strategies that were regulated by two trajectories: firstly, in rendering an eclectic technique by combining surrealism, realism, and abstract art idioms, these artists were able to create a fantastic or semi-fantastic world, thus distancing themselves from reality; secondly, they managed to fabricate a discursive narrative by presenting the antagonistic relations between past and present, country and city, personal fantasy and collective experience

Fig. 2. George Ault, *January, Full Moon*, 1941. Oil on canvas, 61x80 cm. Kansas City, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

that were deeply embedded in their engagement with the social and political concerns of the time. Besides, biographical accounts were presented to explore the intertextual influences behind their anti-urban sentiments, and how all this pathos – that was immersed in the ubiquitous zeitgeist – was able to translate into a highly comprehensive, yet exclusive, pictorial form of expression for which Ault and other painters are renowned. Additionally, these artists' examples were informed by – and, in turn, helped locate precisely – some major European modern art movements yet to be deeply analyzed, including the transatlantic migration of Symbolism, Surrealism, Neo-Romanticism, Abstract art, Cubism and the renewed interest in Realism from the 1920s to the 1950s. By considering these artists' engagement with cityscapes as linked to their implication in anti-modernism, this essay identifies an overlooked strand of artistic expression that drew upon modern life experiences, personal fantasies, anxieties towards modern cities to negotiate the competing imperatives of innovation and accessibility from the 1920s to the 1950s.

Fig. 1. George Ault, *Hoboken Factory*, 1932. Oil on canvas, 50.8x55.9 cm. Washington, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

Fig. 3. George Ault, *Construction-Night*, c. 1923. Oil on canvas, 74.6x54.6 cm. New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery.

Fig. 4. George Ault, *New Moon, New York*, 1945. Oil on canvas, 71.1x50.8 cm. New York, Museum of Modern Art.

Results

Throughout the 1920s until the 1940s, the United States saw a dramatic transformation in its cultural and ethical dimensions that was triggered by the development of modernization and industrialization. Cityscapes have been, without a doubt, the most spectacular and breathtaking vistas to be-discovered by artists who, at that time, were pro-foundly drawn to the ever-changing modern land-scape. In rendering the images of skyscrapers and factories in their artworks, Precisionists employed the most contemporary emblems. However, the inner logic of this art movement remains contra-dictory and intricate, due to its various attitudes toward modernization and urbanization – that is to say, artists depicted their own cityscapes out of entirely different motivations. I will argue that an anti-urbanization tendency run through the whole of Precisionists' artworks.

The abstruse tradition of anti-urbanism – an overt legacy of distrust, suspicion, and prejudice towards urbanization – has been an ever-lasting sentiment exhibited by American philosophers and thinkers. The pursuit of nature and mystery beyond the ordinary experience that comes from Tran-scendentalism has been consequently achieved and strengthened through frequent references to the joys of nature and the moral superiority of rural life. Artists like George Ault, Stefan Hirsch, Fran-cis Criss, and Georgia O'Keeffe materialized their ambiguous and ambivalent thoughts concerning the modern city in their artwork. Their propensity towards anti-modernization and anti-urbanization was conveyed through a specific juxtaposition of artificial light and moonlight, the extreme explo-ration of architectural forms, and a deserted city space that appears in surrealistic undertones, with a sense of suspension dominating the scene. In artworks like *Hoboken Factory* (1932), and *Night: Construction* (1923), George Ault immersed himself into a metaphysical world built with oversimplified, yet powerful forms mainly consisting of squares and rectangles painted in chiaroscuro. In *January: Full Moon* (1941), on the other hand, the image of a mysterious barn set against a dark, blue-toned sky symbolized an obscure yearning for the pre-mod-

Fig. 5. Georgia O'Keeffe, *New York Street with Moon*, 1925. Oil on canvas, 122x77 cm. Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza.

ern era and the act of resistance against a rapidly expanding industrial age. Also, both in Ault's *New York: New Moon* and O'Keeffe's *New York Street with Moon*, the two artists showcased the inner tension between the industrial product, that was symbolized by artificial light, and the natural view, symbolized by the moon. By displaying moonlight coming from a remote distance, behind the artificial lights, the artists suggested a well-acknowledged portent in a promising, modernized world: that the development of modernization will eventually weaken the representation of nature and exert its overwhelming influence upon it.

Consequently, a shared, regional tendency toward romanticism, sentimentalism, and nostalgia arose among artists who had been active in Preci-

sionism. Its distinctive mixture of eclectic realism and abstract art has facilitated and initiated the development of a unique dimension of an Americanized style in modern art.

Conclusions

1. A self-contradictory trend exists within the Precisionist art movement, especially for the anti-modernization and anti-urbanization sentiments shared among its artists.
2. In rendering multiple artistic styles, including Surrealism, Cubism, Expressionism, and Realism (whether they be descriptive or visual), these artists managed to establish an Americanized style in the context of early modern art before the era of Abstract Expressionism.
3. The paradoxical relations between urban and rural, modern and pre-modern, content and form were exhaustively examined throughout all stages of Precisionism.

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Note

[1] Precisionism was the first indigenous modern art movement in the United States, and an early American contribution to the rise of Modernism. The Precisionist style, which had first emerged after World War I and was at the height of its popularity during the 1920s and early 1930s, celebrated the new American landscape of skyscrapers, bridges, and factories in a form that has also been called "Cubist-Realism".

A French Royal Reliquary With the Image of the *Arma Christi*, the so-called *Libretto*

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Abstract

A polyptych reliquary containing a series of relics of the Passion of Christ, the so-called *Libretto*, bears an image of the *arma Christi* and seems to have been used for private devotional purposes. On its central panel, the relationship between the images and the relics shows a different character compared to other reliquaries from the same period. The typical 'alliance' that it reflects is based on its high-profile political background and its owners' privileged position. It also seems to have had a function in the context of the courtly milieu.

The series of relics of the Passion of Christ, which have been part of the collection of the French royal family and venerated in the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris, is generally considered to have been scattered and partly lost during the French revolution. However, not many know that a reliquary containing this collection in almost perfect state still exists. This reliquary, the so-called *Libretto*,[1] was made in Paris in the late 14th century on commission of the French king Charles V to be presented to his brother, Louis I of Anjou. Several years after the death of its possessor in Italy, the *Libretto* was found in the inventory of the Medici family[2] and is currently located in the Museo del Duomo, Florence.

The *Libretto* consists of a small, foldable gold polyptych with six panels set with gems and decorated with enamel. The tiny dimensions explain its high mobility. On the central panel, various shapes of the instruments of the Passion were cut out so that viewers could see the relics on the inside.

Before the French king Louis IX brought the relics to Paris, they were formerly enshrined in the Pharos chapel, the court chapel of the Bucoleon Palace in Constantinople, which was built to represent the prestige and authority of the Byzantine emperors. After the fall of Constantinople in 1204, during the Fourth Crusade, these relics passed into the hands of the emperor of the Latin Empire.

However, under the rule of Emperor Balduin II, the Latin Empire was struck by severe financial difficulties which led the emperor to borrow money from the Republic of Venice, using the relics as collateral. The relics were given to the French king Louis IX, who paid off the debt and transferred them to Paris from 1239 to 1242.

To house the relics, Louis IX built the Sainte-Chapelle near his residence on Île de la Cité, Paris. The French royal family placed high importance on these relics to strengthen their authority, following the example of the Byzantine emperors. Later, architectural copies of the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris were built in many places and were allowed to be called Sainte-Chapelle if they fulfilled specific requirements, e.g., they housed the same Passion relics.

The *Libretto* contains a relic of the True Cross in the center. Initially, reliquaries for the relic of the

Fig. 1. *Libretto*, late 14th century. Florence, Museo dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, detail, central panel.

Fig. 2. *Libretto*, 24.4x14.0x1.5 cm. Pure gold, crystal, Balas ruby, pearl, mica.

Fig. 3. *Libretto*, 6.0x7.5x2.0 cm. Pure gold, crystal, Balas ruby, pearl, mica (closed).

Fig. 4. *Libretto*, 24.4x14.0x1.5 cm. Pure gold, crystal, Balas ruby, pearl, mica (rear side).

True Cross were mostly made in Byzantium and were called *Stauroteke*. For staurotekes made in Byzantium, the relics – except for the True Cross – were always covered to hide them from the believer's gaze. In contrast, in Western European panel-type reliquaries, the relics surrounding the True Cross are visible, and each one can be identified through the help of inscriptions. However, the central panel of the *Libretto* show the relics contained inside in a completely different way.

On the central panel of the *Libretto*, there are several crystal windows in various shapes that show the relics on the inside. The shapes of the openings are almost identical to the images called the *arma Christi*.[3] Before the *Libretto*, the images of the *arma Christi* were mostly widespread as visual symbols or talismans, mainly in book illuminations or panel paintings, independently from the devotion for the relics of the Passion. Using a term employed by Belting, in this reliquary, the image of the *arma Christi* forms a reciprocal "alliance"[4] with the relics of the Passion. On the *Libretto*, each image of the *arma Christi* forms the outline of a window through which a relic is visible: by looking into these images or windows, the viewer can see the *real objects*, namely, the relics.

In the *Libretto*, the image of the *arma Christi*, which was basically a means of evoking the Passion of Christ in various ways in private devotion, is reunited with the relics of the Passion. These relics are archetypes of the images of the *arma Christi*: through this integration, the images were believed to possess the power to produce miracles. On the contrary, the relics of the Passion, which lost their original imagery due to being handed down over several centuries, gained a means of conveying their original aspect as relics not by means of an inscription, but rather through outlined images reproducing their original appearance.

Concerning the devotion for relics, people believed that being in the presence of a relic meant being in the presence of the Holy or *Virtus*. As opposed to other *arma Christi* images in manuscript illuminations or panel paintings, each image of the *arma Christi* on the *Libretto* enclosed the corresponding relic, thus ensuring the real presence of

the Holy or the presence of the *Virtus* in the image of the *arma Christi*.

The *Libretto* is a reliquary that no one was allowed to possess, except for members of the French royal family. For Louis I of Anjou, it had various functions:

1. It was a prayer book-like reliquary for practicing private devotion;
2. It was proof that he had a great authority, stemming from the French royal house;
3. It created the same sacred space as the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris;
4. It guaranteed his safety and salvation by the power of God;
5. It was a means of showing the holder's conspicuous consumption, due to its high material value and the uniqueness and holiness of its relics.

These various composite functions made the *Libretto* an uncommon work and a very original reliquary in art history.

Notes

[1] C. Innocenti, ed., *Ori, Argenti, Gemme: Restauri dell'opificio delle pietre dure* (Firenze: Mandragora, 2007), pp. 116-123 (with bibliography).

[2] M. Spallanzani, ed., *Inventari medicei 1417-1465: Giovanni di Bicci, Cosimo e Lorenzo di Giovanni, Piero di Cosimo* (Firenze: Associazione 'Amici del Bargello': Studio per edizioni scelte, 1996), p. 146.

[3] B. Fricke, "Reliquien und Reproduktion: Zur Präsentation der Passionsreliquien aus der Sainte-Chapelle (Paris) im Reliquiario del Libretto (Florenz) von 1501", in *Reproduktion: Techniken und Ideen von der Antike bis heute. Eine Einführung*, ed. J. Probst (Bonn: Reimer, 2011), pp. 37ff.

[4] H. Belting, *Image et culte: une histoire de l'image avant l'époque de l'art* (Paris: Cerf, 1998), pp. 404-407.

Between Art and Fashion: 16th-Century Costume Books Today

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Overshadowed by the prominent people in his family for decades, in his work about world clothing and customs (*De gli habiti antichi, et moderni di diverse parti del mondo*, Venice, 1590) Cesare Vecellio revealed why he had created such an artifact: to please those interested in visual arts. Therefore, the images that represent the population of his hometown or people from the least known regions in the globe were probably useful to artists at the time. The world was shown as a system of visual classification of its 'citizens', and the book was able to delight and teach the public about how to identify people's personal characteristics and human character through the contours of regional clothing. Vecellio's biography was reevaluated by critics at the beginning of the 21st century. However, his engravings – as well as those that make up the universe of costume books[1] – remain on the sidelines of contemporary studies, especially in Brazil.

In addition to the discussion about the circulation and iconographic reception of 16th-century costume books, my recent research has pursued an unprecedented analysis on how the public can access this material today.[2] What has changed in the process? How have scholars manipulated images and framed the work of these artists in broad narratives? It is astounding to notice that, even though the content of the book had not been created for 15th-century citizens to copy costumes and styles shown there, throughout the years it started to be timidly claimed by the History of Costumes, and no longer by the History of Art. The aim of this brief presentation is to share my

Fig. 1. Cesare Vecellio, *Altre donne di Venetia, mentre si fanno biondi i capelli*, in *De gli habiti…* (Venice, 1590) / Cesare Vecellio, *Autres femmes de Venise pendant qu'elles rendent leurs cheveux blonds*, in *Costumes anciens…* (Paris, 1859-60) / Auguste Racinet, *Dame vénitienne teignant sa chevelure en blond* (n. 13), in *Le costume historique…* (Paris, 1888).

research, highlighting the main findings about this methodological shift.

Systematic knowledge about the History of Costumes emerged in the last decades of the 19th century. There is a strong presence of 16th-century iconography[3] of costume books in the work *Die Trachten der Völker in Bild und Schnitt* (1871) by German Carl Köhler. In 1926-8, Emma Von Sichart rescued this work from falling into oblivion and launched a reprint (*A History of Costume*), reducing its historical context and eliminating many of the images. In the only example left of Köhler's images (called *German Women's Dress, Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*), we notice that Köhler chose to recreate the picture by Hans Weigel and Jost Amman, simplifying many details of the clothing.

In France, Albert Racinet's *Le Costume Historique* (1888) was one of the first publications to offer a broad temporal and geographical perspective, creating an inventory of different styles and cultures. Like Köhler, Racinet reworked the characters of the costume books by changing some elements and arranging new compositions for the figures of the 16th century. For instance, he created his own version of the illustration (fig. 1) comparing two editions of Vecellio's work and using an innovative technique known as chromolithography. Although the Italian author represented many regions of the world, Racinet relied only on the content representing Vecellio's context, namely, Venice. In addition, the use of colors that do not exist in the originals confirms that, when dealing with these narratives, readers should be cautious.

Nicolas de Nicolay's travel account of an expedition to the East is mentioned by Racinet in order to represent Turkish customs from the 16th to the 18th centuries, whose figures have been transformed into archetypes of the Islamic world over the decades. Except for Nicolay's characters, which are to be found at the border between Europe and Asia, the reader does not find any 'extra-European' content of the costume books in these textbooks. The Brazilian public had access to the writings of Köhler more than 100 years after its publication and was able to approach Racinet thanks to an edition by Melissa Leventon (*História ilustrada do vestuário*, 2009), even though the material is not shown in its entirety, nor in its original form (fig. 2).

After this incorporation of the present in works of the past, some landmark books appeared to fill

Fig. 2. Nicolas de Nicolay, *Gentille femme Turque estant dans leur maison, ou Sarail*, in *Les quatre premiers...* (Lyon, 1567) / Nicolas de Nicolay, *Mulher dentro de casa*, in M. Leventon, *História ilustrada...* (São Paulo, 2009).

the gaps of their predecessors: they were written by François Boucher (*Histoire du costume en Occident de l'antiquité à nos jours*, 1965/2010) and James Laver (*A concise history of costume*, 1969, published in 1989 in Brazil). Boucher prioritized original clothing and textiles but recognized the importance of costume books as 'a new source of documentation for the Renaissance wardrobe'. However, he did not include visual examples, apart from the paradigmatic Nicolay – no longer recreated as in Racinet/Köhler but reproduced from a copy of the French collection.

The few illustrations in Laver's book are enough to demonstrate an important turning point in this sort of literature on the History of Costume, namely, an attempt to recreate a less elitist environment by recovering information about an 'extra-nobility' content. For example, Jost Amman is recognized for having revealed the daily life of the 16th-century middle classes. In the following decades, several authors began to question the so-called 'reference works', exploring new critical approaches beyond the descriptive and evolutionary writings of the past, e.g., R. Barthes, G. Lipovetsky, G. Riello, D. Calanca, etc. Two different trends can be recognized in the publishing world: the first includes studies with an accentuated theoretical depth, but with minimal iconographic contributions, whereas the other consists of large, illustrated manuals almost completely decontextualized.

Fig. 3. *Museu da Moda de Canela* (MUM-Brazil) a display of garments inspired by the 'Renaissance 1431-1710'. (Photo by L. Carvalho, 2017).

History of Fashion = History of Costume?

Despite the methodological shift in the authors of the current publications, as compared to those of the late 19th century, Brazil deals with a discrepancy between internationally published works and those available in the Brazilian publishing market. An example of the interest in deepening the historical studies in the Brazilian territory was the creation, in 2012, of the *Museu da Moda* (MUM) in southern Brazil, a museum that intends to reconstruct 4,000 years of the history of women's clothing in the West. Nevertheless, the same obsolete approach of the 'reference works' (Köhler, Racinet, etc.) is visually transplanted in this museum of replicas (Eurocentric, evolutionary, etc.). Even though categories can make the experience more didactic for the public, some other factors – such as the location, exorbitant ticketing prices, and poor marketing strategies – are still a problem to overcome in order to attract more visitors (fig. 3).

However, the lack of critical tradition and narratives that may legitimize the articles on the field are challenges faced by the Historiography of Fashion in general. Additionally, the way in which the content of 16th-century costume books has been presented in these manuals over time is emblematic of several problems concerning the broader History of Costume, namely incorrect historical periodization, a focus on the European elite, with peoples from America/Africa depicted as primitive and exotic, a confused notion of the invention and adoption of a form or style, etc.

My Ph.D. research[4] proposed a cross-cultural gaze to analyze this rich graphic production, since costume books are representative of the exchange of values and symbols among communities and built collective identities in the Modern Era. As I mentioned above, the visual alteration of the references was constant in this literature, through changes in models, according to the frequently stereotypical view of each author, the creation of new elements and archetypes, etc. In addition, we have noticed a gradual reduction in the use of these 16th-century engravings, especially in more recent editions of the consecrated authors. Moreover, from a scientific point of view, the most unique aspect of this production, that is, its geographical and social comprehensiveness, has been rejected by successive authors. If, on the one hand, selecting only the content of the creators' native land means valuing the set of information that may be considered more reliable, on the other hand, it means to consciously ignore the different readings regarding the 'Other'.

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Nicolas de Nicolay, *Les Quatre Premiers Livres des navigations et pérégrinations orientales...* (Lyon: Guillaume Rouille, 1567-8).

Auguste Racinet, *Le costume historique...* (Paris: Librairie de Firmin-Didot et Cie [1876-]1888).

Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi, et moderni di diverse parti del mondo...* (Venetia: Damian Zenaro, 1590).

Notes

* Ph.D. in Art History at Universidade Estadual de Campinas, in Brazil – supervised by Dr. Luiz Marques, and completed in July 2018. Mrs. Carvalho completed a one-year internship abroad, researching at *Gallerie degli Uffizi* (GDS), under the supervision of Dr. Marzia Faietti. She has participated to many international conferences with publications on her areas of expertise: Art History, History of Costume, Renaissance Art, and Early Printed Books. Full CV information: http://lattes.cnpq.br/1272736632934605 / I would like to thank Dr. Marques, Dr. Faietti, Dr. Giorgio Marini, and the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) for their support.

[1] Enea Vico, François Desprez, Ferdinando Bertelli, Nicolas de Nicolay, Hans Weigel, Jost Amman, Abraham de Bruyn, Jean-Jacques Boissard, Bartolomeo Grassi, Pietro Bertelli, and Alexandro de Fabri.

[2] I founded a digital catalog of all the costume books images: http://livrosdevestuario.blogspot.com.

[3] C. Vecellio, A. Bruyn, E. Vico, Weigel and Amman, etc.

[4] L.S. Carvalho, *Mapeando os livros de trajes do século XVI e a literatura de moda no Brasil* (Campinas: Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, 2018).

Projection of Maturity, Inventiveness, and Imagination in Roman Funerary Art: Analysis of the Altar of Iulia Victorina

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Abstract

The funerary altar investigated here was found near San Giovanni in Laterano and was built for Iulia Victorina, a Roman girl who died at 10 years and 5 months at the end of the first century AD. On the opposite sides of the altar, there are two representations of two faces that are physiognomically similar but of different ages, and each of them is crowned with astral symbols: in the younger representation, the girl is crowned with a crescent moon, whereas in the older one, with sun rays. This analysis seeks to reflect on the questions: what are the possible meanings behind the deification that the use of these two stars can symbolize in this funeral monument? What are the probable references used in the iconographic choices of this altar and what meanings can be understood from them?

Conclusion

The projection of maturity was a device that could have served to comfort the relatives (Rawson 2003: 360; Kleiner 1987: 81) through their loss, and also to reinforce the social standing of their family, indicating that the deceased, in the case of Iulia Victorina, had every chance of growing and developing in an excellent way, had her life not been interrupted by death.

In this monument, the association with the stars may have served as a consolation for the living by pointing to a possible survival among the stars, through the association childhood/maturity and moon/sun that possibly points to a climax. The association with deities, on the other hand, would enable to understand the memory of the dead girl as connotated with the attributes of the gods to which she is associated to (Moraw Kieburg 2014: 309), in order to create a negotiated and more positive memory of her brief existence.

Results

According to Janet Huskinson (1996: 92), if we consider that the image of the young woman is actually a representation of the older Iulia Victorina, this work can be understood as an example of a projection of maturity, similarly to the cases of Sulpicius Maximus and Gaius Petronius Virianus Postumus.

Concerning the celestial symbols that crown the heads of the female figures on the altar, it is interesting to note that the use of astral elements during the Roman Empire was already frequent between the Emperor and his family, and was a way for freedmen, in the funerary context, to em-

Fig. 1. First-century AD cameo of Augustus wearing the rayed crown. Köln, Römisch-Germanisches Museum.

Fig. 2. Funerary Altar of Q. Sulpicius Maximus, 94-100 AD. Rome, Musei Capitolini.

ulate the qualities valued by the elite and its culture, by associating them to their dead relatives (La Rocca, Presicce 2011: 431).

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Figs. 3-4. Funerary Altar of Iulia Victorina. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques et romaines.

The Re-fabrication of Napoleon in China (1900-1930)

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Introduction

Being one of the most famous modern Western historical figures, introduced systematically to China at the beginning of the 20th century, Napoleon Bonaparte was regarded as a hero of revolution, enlightenment, as well as of national revival. Chinese iconography presents a variety of pictorial forms depicting this figure, and with different political intentions. Being in the process of developing from a centralized feudal monarchy to a modern 'nation-state', China's appropriation of the images depicting Napoleon reflected the change in its political ideology under the influence of modernization and nationalism.

Chinaman at Fancy Dress
Ball as Napoleon.

The Chinese ambassador in Paris gave
a fancy dress ball on the occasion of the
Chinese New Year, and his son, Charles

HSING LING AS NAPOLEON.

Hsingling, appeared as Napoleon. —
Sphere.

Fig. 1. "Hsing-Ling as Napoleon", 1902. Engraving (left) and photograph (right). Washington, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

Materials & Result

Savior of the Empire

In 1902, a wood engraving was printed in a Western newspaper, accompanied by a short text informing readers that "the Chinese ambassador in Paris gave a fancy dress ball on the occasion of the Chinese New Year, and his son, Charles Hsing-ling, appeared as Napoleon". Later, a photo of this scene was distributed and offered more information (fig. 1). Hsing-ling (勋龄) mimicked every detail of Napoleon's figure, from his clothing to his gestures. Such an event, during a diplomatic occasion, and especially considering that he chose to dress as such a famous French historical figure before French guests, strongly conveyed a political statement which had also spread in China: The Qing Empire would become a powerful country again, if led by a great leader like Napoleon.

The Father in the Chinese Social Structure of 'Family-State'

In 1902, the Chinese newspaper *Xinmin Congbao* (New People Newspaper, 新民丛报) published *Napoléon Ier et son fils, le roi de Rome*, painted by Jean Baptiste Adolphe Lafosse (1810-1879), on the first page, in which Napoleon is holding his son in his arms (fig. 2). The editor-in-chief of the newspaper, the royalist revolutionary Liang Qichao (梁启超), always compared the Qing Emperor Guangxu (光绪, 1871-1908) to Napoleon. This picture was published after his Hundred Days' Reform (1898) failed and Guangxu was imprisoned, so the figure does not show Napoleon's imperial character but rather his dimension of man of private emotions. Thus, it is a metaphor for the Chinese traditional 'Family-state' system: The roots of a state are in the family, and the Emperor dominates the empire just like a father rules the family, passing on his power and spirit. Furthermore, since the illustration depicted the private sphere and life of the nobility, it also attracted the public attention towards this topic.

A Tragic Hero

One kind of depiction of Napoleon became well-known in China after 1908. Contrary to the glorious heroic portraits that Jacques-Louis David officially painted for the Emperor, this kind of representation, enveloped with tragic emotional turmoil, can be traced back to Paul Delaroche's 'vanquished Napoleon'. *Napoleon at Fontainebleau, 31 March 1814,* painted by Paul Delaroche in 1840, depicts

Fig. 2. Illustration of Napoleon, *Xinmin Congbao* (New People Newspaper, 新民丛报), issue 1, 1902, p. 1.

the Emperor sitting in despair after being informed that Paris had capitulated to the invading Coalition armies. Napoleon is described as the defeated general of the French troops, and his expression reveals a complex sense of desolate pathos. A postcard circulated around 1905-1907, based on a drawing by Fritz Rumpf (1888-1949), in which the figure of Napoleon was obviously inspired by Delaroche's. An interesting piece of information is that Rumpf had been to China as a soldier of the German army in 1907/1908 and 1913, he had stayed in the German-occupied part of China in Qingdao; perhaps his journeys helped spread the image of Napoleon in China. Later, a similar illustration was published on the first page of a series of Napoleonic illustrations, in a pictorial magazine called *Tuhua Ribao* (*Illustrated Journal*, 图画日报), in 1909 (fig. 3). This is a typical Chinese format composing words and images together. The content identified Napoleon in a Chinese way: most of the text focuses on his family, while only the final paragraph describes him as a heroic man.

Fig. 3. Comparison of three images. On the left: Paul Delaroche, *Napoleon at Fontainebleau, 31 March 1814*, 1840, 181x137 cm. Paris, Musée de l'Armée. In the middle: A postcard circulating around 1905-1907, created after a drawing by Fritz Rumpf. On the right: Illustration of Napoleon's life story, *Tuhua Ribao* (*Illustration Journal*, 图画日报), no. 24, 1909, p. 3.

At that time, there was a popular trend in China that consisted in comparing Napoleon to a very famous tragic hero in Chinese history, the Hegemon-King of Western Chu (西楚霸王, 232-202 BC), who had rebelled against the Qin Emperor, and then ruled over a vast area of the country for many years, but eventually he too was defeated and forced to commit suicide. Obviously, this comparison helped Chinese audiences understand Napoleon from their background and perspective.

Knocked off the Pedestal

After the Qing Dynasty was overthrown in 1911, the symbolic meaning of Napoleon as Emperor became less and less important during the Republican period. His figure was re-fabricated, including descriptions of his love affairs and scandals, to become a part of consumer culture, losing its mysterious and charismatic aspects. The caricatured figure of Napoleon was also used as an allusion to blame President Yuan Shikai (袁世凯, 1859-1916), who betrayed the Republic and restored the monarchy with himself as new Emperor. Here a list of some examples: *Composite head of Napoleon made out of naked girls* published in *Xiaoshuo Shibao (Fiction Times* 小说时报*)*, no. 21, 1914; an illustration showing *Napoleon's turtle* on his island of exile, in *Zhonghua Xiaoshuojie (Fiction Field of China,* 中华小说界*)*, 1914; *Yinmou (The*

Conspiracy, 阴谋*)*, an illustration for *Napoleon*, a new-style opera, *Tuhua Jubao (Illustrated Theater Magazine,* 图画剧报*)*, 30 November 1912.

Conclusion

This piece of research into the re-fabrication of the figure of Napoleon illustrates how 'image vehicles', *Bilderfahrzeuge* (Aby Warburg), began their journey in the Western world and were later adapted and evolved in Asia to become deeply influential in China's social change.

When Napoleon was introduced to the Chinese context, details of his image such as gestures, expressions, clothes, and his environment were interpreted in a new way, thereby gaining new meanings.

The newly created Napoleon had different political functions in different periods. He was depicted as the last hope of the Chinese Empire, but also as a model of national hero struggling to build a new country; later, he was also *consumed* by civil society as an entertaining figure and used to satirize the government.

The re-fabrication was not an isolated process. When Chinese intellectuals and politicians appropriated Napoleon for their political propaganda in their local context, they wished to use what they had learnt from this figure to resist the invasion of Western powers, thus building a 'Chinese national subjectivity'.

Between Object and Text: A Study on Local Reactions to *The Family of Man* in the 1950s and '60s

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Introduction

The Family of Man exhibition (*the FoM*), organised by Edward Steichen (1879-1973), was opened at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) in 1955. The exhibition presented 503 photographs taken by 273 artists from 68 countries. It was designed by architect Paul Rudolph (1918-1997), while the captions were selected by Dorothy Norman (1905-1997), and the catalogue was designed by Leo Lionni (1910-1999) and Steichen. I will show how the exhibition *the FoM* has been alive as an artwork since the mid-20th century up to today.

See the chronologies (tab. 1). The studies on *the FoM* exhibition have been developed from the following points of view:

1. *The history of the exhibition.* There are three periods:
a. The first period (1955-1965), during which the exhibition was on display and its reproductions travelled around the world.
b. The second period (1965-1994), during which the exhibition got dispersed and was not on display.
c. The third period (1994-Present). Since its restoration in 1994, it has been presented at Clervaux Castle in Luxembourg as cultural heritage (fig. 1).
2. *The critiques on the exhibition.* (They were first developed during the first and the second periods. Then, they have been developed since the presentation of the exhibition in Luxembourg in 1994).
3. *The history of the catalogue of the exhibition edited as a picture book*.

To these previous studies, I would like to add my own on the local reactions to the tour exhibition in the 1950s and '60s. I focus on them because the reactions published in the local media at that time were not contradictory to the history of the exhibition and the critiques. Local reactions were studied by the United States Information Service (USIS), one of the sponsors of the tour exhibitions, while *the FoM* was presented in the 1950s and '60s. The reputation of the exhibition had been considered a myth for a long time before it was revived in 1994. That is why it is important to study the reactions published during the first period, during which *the FoM* was shown to the public.

Firstly, I will discuss the history of the exhibition and the effect of the publication of the catalogue, which became an enduring record of the exhibition. The tour exhibition and the catalogue contributed to developing people's visions of *the FoM* by reproducing the original exhibition.

On the one hand, some critiques were written by consulting the catalogue and archive materials, without seeing the exhibition itself. On the other hand, since the restoration of the panels in the 1990s, studies on *the FoM* have been developed thanks to the contemporary presentation of the exhibition at the museum in Luxembourg.

Fig. 1. "The Family of Man", Clervaux Castle (Luxembourg). © CNA/Romain Girtgen, 2020.

Tab. 1. Chronologies of the exhibition and catalogue prepared by the author

	History of The Family of Man exhibition from 1955 to 2015		History of the exhibition catalogue
January 1955	Opening of The Family of Man exhibition at MoMA.	1955	Publication of the first edition.
September 1955	Opening of the travelling exhibition in Berlin.		
1955-1965	The travelling exhibition throughout the world.		
1956-1957	The travelling exhibition in Japan.		
1964	Donation of the panels of the exhibition by the US Goverment to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.		
1973	Death of Edward Steichen.		
1974	Partial presentation of the photo panels at Clervaux Castle.		
1989-1991	Project of restoration of the panels.		
1992	Presentation of the exhibition in Toulouse.		
1993-1994	The travelling exhibition in Tokyo and Hiroshima.		
1994	Opening of The Family of Man museum in Clervaux.		
21st century			
2003	Registration of The Family of Man exhibition under the UNESCO's Memory of the World program.		
2010-2013	Second renovation of the Family of Man museum.		
2013	Reopening of The Family of Man museum.	2015	60th anniversary edition.

The History of the Exhibition from 1955 to 1994

The original 1955 photo exhibition at the MoMA in New York consisted not only of works by the artists but also of the curator's editorial work. It was a great collection of works of photography developed in photojournalism. During its world tour from the 1950s to the '60s, the exhibition gained international reputation, but the photo panels were dispersed after the tour. Thanks to the catalogue, however, the exhibition remained alive in the memory of the viewers. The panels of the itinerant exhibition in Europe were given to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg by the US government in 1964.

From 1989 to 1991, the panels were restored. In 1994, *the FoM* museum was opened. Since then, the exhibition itself has kept *the FoM* visible through its material objects. With the photo panels following the 1955 design at MoMA, the museum in Luxembourg displays one of the reproductions of the whole exhibition.

The restoration of the exhibition has created an important transformation in the relationship between the exhibition and the viewer. Now, the exhibition is fixed at a single location and the viewer needs to go there to see it. As opposed to the collective experiences enjoyed by various societies in the 1950s and 60s, today each viewer enjoys their individual experience in the museum.

The Exhibition Catalogue Edited as a Picture Book[1]

The first version was published by the publisher Simon & Schuster in New York (fig. 2). At the same time, Steichen considered publishing the paperback version at low cost. It was edited by Jarry Mason, published by Maco press in 1955, and sold for 1 dollar. A photograph of *Peruvian Boy with Flute* by Eugene Harris (1913-1978), representing a musical element which exists in the exhibition as a whole, was used as the front cover of the catalogue (fig. 3). The catalogue has always been in print, even during the period when the exhibition was not displayed, and it has contributed to making the exhibition known to those who had not seen it. The 60th anniversary edition in 2015 was in hardcover format.
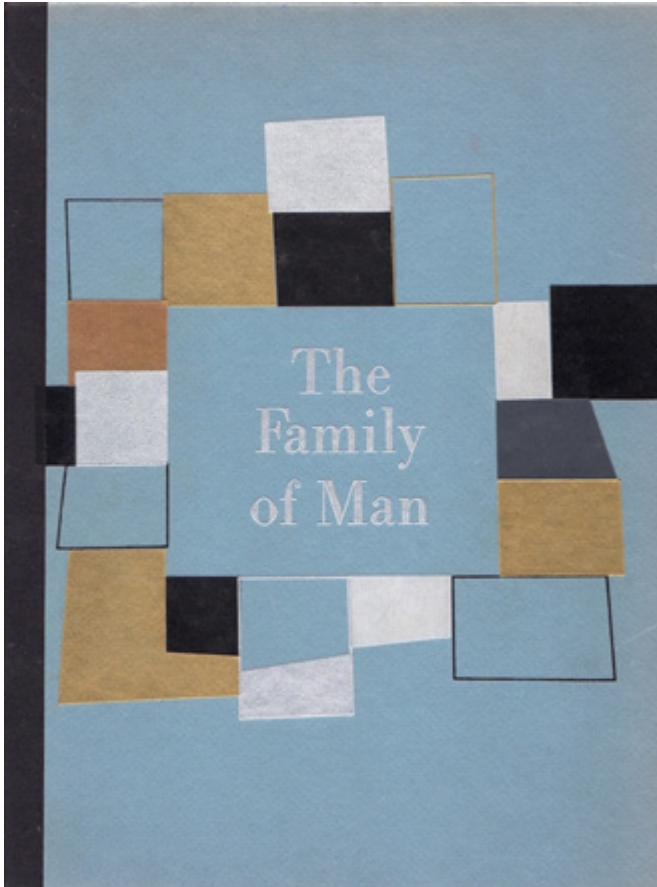
Fig. 2. Hardcover limited edition, Simon & Schuster, 1955.
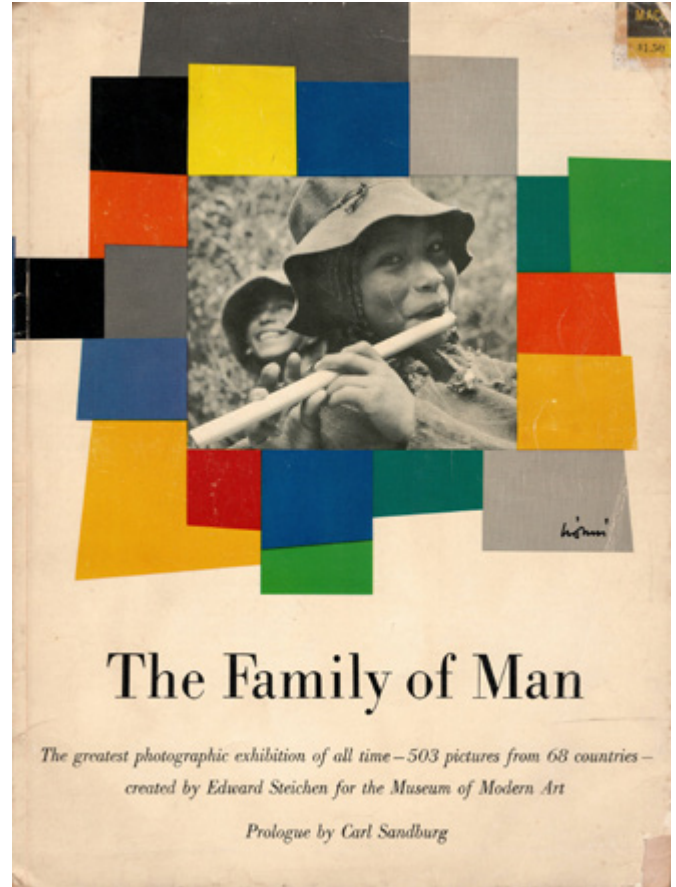
Fig. 3. Published for the MoMA by the Maco Magazine Corporation, Art Director Leo Lionni, Theme photograph of Piper by Eugene Harris, "Popular Photography", 1957.

The History of the Critiques on the Exhibition

Roland Barthes's 1956 essay *La grande famille des hommes* was translated into English in the 1970s. In the 1970s and '80s, some important critiques on *the FoM* were written on the basis of its archived documents,[2] as the actual material of the exhibition was already gone.

Ever since the exhibition was restored, it has become a reference point for the studies on *the FoM*. This static exhibition has also changed the nature of the critiques written on *the FoM*.

The exhibition was reproduced in about 10 different versions by the United States Information Agency (USIA) and presented in about 38 countries. The history of the tour exhibition was studied by E.J. Sandeen while the exhibition was being restored for display in Luxembourg.[3] Recently, the tour exhibitions have been studied with a focus on the local contexts where they were presented.

Conclusion

The catalogue and the critiques have kept *the FoM* alive in the memory of people. Since 1994 and up to today, the permanent exhibition of *the FoM* at the museum in Luxembourg has made it visible. Furthermore, the reviews published in the 1950s and '60s in various countries contributed to the development of critiques on the exhibition in the local contexts where it was presented.

Notes

[1] The detail of the publication was studied by E.J. Sandeen. E.J. Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition. The Family of Man and 1950s America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), pp. 73-74.

[2] C. Phillips, "The Judgment Seat of Photography", in R. Bolton, ed., *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1989), pp. 15-46.

[3] E.J. Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition*, cit.

KEYNOTE SPEECH

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Uncollecting India at the V&A: Colonial Artefacts and Their Afterlives

Uncollecting India at the V&A: Colonial Artefacts and Their Afterlives

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This paper tracks the fate of four large-scale architectural objects from the Indian collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. All four objects were collected from India towards the end of the 19th century, and all have one thing in common: visitors are not able to see them in the galleries today, and it is unlikely that they ever will.

In the 19th century, when these very objects arrived in the V&A (or in the South Kensington Museum, as it was then called), they were celebrated. Their arrival was projected as being part of colonialism's 'benign' concern for the preservation of Indian art, which often needed to be protected from Indians themselves. The scale of these objects also indexed the scale of the ambition of colonial engagement with Indian art. Ironically, this scale was to later become a key factor constraining their display. Over time, these artefacts receded from public consciousness, and by the 1950s – shortly after India achieved independence from British rule in 1947 – they had become unwelcome encumbrances for the museum. As a result, as we shall see, each object was taken off view for a different reason, and in a different way.

The V&A's Indian collection – and the changing fortunes of artefacts within it – acts as a barometer for the place of Indian (or any other "Other's") art in the entangled relationships between colonialism and museums. The V&A occupies a special place in this history because its Indian collection is the largest and most significant collection of Indian objects outside India. Heir to the collection made by the East India Company when it ruled swathes of India, it includes many artistically and historically significant artefacts that were gathered by purchase, commission, archaeological exploration and loot. Joined to this core are other parts of the collection that reflect Britain's changing interests in India: its concern with economically productive resources, ethnographically useful information, and latterly, objects of aesthetic value. Clearly, the history of display of this collection would offer many insights into the relationship between museums, collecting, and power. But while most museum histories focus on what is collected by or exhibited in the museum, this paper focusses on four museum objects that are *un*-collected, *not* exhibited, and will, I hope, shine a light on a darker and more hidden history of the museum and its relations with the affinities, aversions and tensions of colonial entanglements. At a time when the continued possession and display of colonial collections is provoking increasingly effective claims for restitution and calls for justice, the stories of these objects give us another route for understanding the universal museums' power which extended from acquiring artefacts to invisibilizing them at will.

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In December of 1870, a train of sixty bullock carts strained to carry 28 tons of material across the hilly and trackless terrain of Central India. Its cargo had come by ship from London to Mumbai, thence by train to the town of Jabalpur, and at that time was making its slow way over land. In a painting that commemorates the journey (fig. 1), we see the coolies trying to help the bullocks along the rutted path. There is an Indian supervisor in the foreground, better dressed than the coolies, who tries to give direction while a sahib on a horse, wearing a sola topee, calls instructions to him. Who were these people, what were they carrying and where were they going?

The man on the horse was Lieutenant Henry Hardy Cole, a young engineer in the Indian army who had recently been seconded to the Archaeological Survey of India. At first Cole was taking photographs and making drawings of monuments. When we see him in the painting, he had

been asked to make an entirely different kind of reproduction: full-size plaster casts of Indian monuments that could be sent to Britain to give audiences there a sense of the scale, monumentality and complexity of the sculpture and architecture of India.

The first item that Henry Hardy Cole was told to cast was the gateway of the stupa at Sanchi. In the books that were just beginning to be written on the history of Indian art,[1] this second-century Buddhist monument was greatly celebrated. At its heart stood a solid funerary mound, over 50 feet high. Made of mud and brick and faced with stone, this mound was raised over bodily relics of the Buddha and his disciples. The most eye-catching part of the monument, however, was not the mound or stupa, but the four sandstone gateways that guarded the entrance to a narrow circumambulatory path around it. Standing 33 feet tall, these gateways were covered with lively narrative relief sculptures that were probably made in the 2nd century CE and were among the oldest figural representations from India known at the time.

Charming in their own right, they were also valued because they offered a wealth of information about mythology, practices, and the material culture of the time.

To make the casts of one gateway, the party had to camp in the jungle for six weeks. Using the delicate gelatin moulding method, the gateway was cast in 112 separate pieces, which were carefully packed and shipped to London. These were not to be displayed but were used as the "parent cast" for further copies, one of which stayed in London while other copies were sent to Paris, Berlin, Edinburgh and Dublin. The copy that stayed in London was put on show at Albert Hall during the International Exhibition of 1871 and was later moved to the South Kensington Museum.

Cole's initial estimates for the project were for over 5,000 pounds, a huge sum to spend on *copies* of monuments when the colonial government was reluctant to spend any money on maintaining Indian monuments themselves. What then motivated the British government to invest in these plaster casts?

Fig. 1. Anonymous artist, *Transporting of materials from Jabalpur to Sanchi*, 1870-1874. Oil on canvas, 122.5x183.5 cm. © London, Victoria and Albert Museum. Accession no. IPN.904.

The making of the Sanchi casts reflected the 19th-century enthusiasm for gypsothecas or galleries of plaster casts. At this time, many European museums strove to be encyclopedic, wishing to amass collections that were "complete". There was a shared understanding of the great masterpieces that every collection should have. And instead of the cult of the original, there was a celebration of the new technologies that could turn out perfect replicas of original things. If photography was a new technology of reproduction that enabled documentation with unprecedented accuracy, new methods of three-dimensional reproduction seemed equally capable of producing impeccable copies of stone, metal and ivory artefacts through casts, electrotypes and fictile ivories.

As with many things in the museum world, the V&A, or rather its precursor, the South Kensington Museum, was the pioneer in championing these technologies of reproduction. Since the museum saw itself as a teaching institution rather than a temple of art, it had no hesitation in spending its money on acquiring a large number of plaster casts of major artworks, rather than focusing all its purchasing power on a small number of original pieces of art.

The impetus for the collecting of casts came from the Museum's first Director, Sir Henry Cole, a very influential figure in the art world of the time. At the International Exhibition of 1867, held in Paris, Cole persuaded the heads of 15 European states to sign an agreement to make and share reproductions of masterpieces and monuments in their territories. Cole believed this would inaugurate a new era of cooperation rather than competition between the major collecting nations. It is in the context of these developments that the plaster casts of the Sanchi gateways were commissioned.[2]

That an institution headed by Sir Henry Cole should arrange for the work to be done by Henry Hardy Cole is perhaps not a coincidence: the young Henry Hardy was the older Sir Henry's own son. But Henry Hardy Cole was no slacker benefiting from his powerful connections; he was earnest, and he worked exceedingly hard. After Sanchi, he volunteered to make casts of other Indian monuments for the South Kensington Museum. So numerous were the casts of Indian monuments that the younger Cole sent to London, that the elder Cole was able to plan an entire gallery that would display masterpieces of architecture from East and West through plaster casts. In 1874 the museum opened two Architecture Courts. The Court for Western architecture was dominated by Trajan's column; the other Court for Eastern architecture had the Sanchi gateway as its towering presence (fig. 2).

A few years after the cast of the Sanchi gateway reached London, the East India Company was dissolved. The Company that had begun in the 17th century as a commercial enterprise, and which had subsequently turned into a political entity that conquered and held power over much of India, had amassed a large collection of objects and artefacts which was housed in its India Museum. When the Company was dissolved, its museum was broken up, and the bulk of its collection was transferred to the V&A. This made the museum's Indian collection so large that it could not be accommodated within the V&A's own campus. The museum rented a building across the street and transferred all the Indian objects there. The East India Company's collection was amalgamat-

Fig. 2. The cast of the Sanchi East Gate in its first permanent installation at Eastern Casts Court in the South Kensington Museum in London in 1872. © Berlin, Museum for Asian Art, Photo no. 602342. (Courtesy of the Museum for Asian Art, Berlin).

ed with the V&A's own Indian and India-related possessions. The Indian plaster casts joined the rest of the Indian galleries across the street. As a result of this move, the exhibits in the V&A's main building became more Eurocentric; but London gained an impressive and extensive museum dedicated to the richness and diversity of Indian artefacts.

While the Sanchi plaster cast was making small journeys within South Kensington, its existence was to have a profound impact upon the original in India. Because there was a cast of the Sanchi gateway that could travel, the originals were able to remain on site. And this ensured that the fate of the Sanchi stupa was to be very different from the other major stupas of the same antiquity that were discovered and celebrated and studied in the colonial period. Today, if we were to visit the sites of Bharhut and Amaravati, other 2nd-century Buddhist stupas with richly carved gateways that were admired by colonial officials and antiquarians in the 19th century, we will find that almost nothing remains of them on the ground. Bharhut's sculptures were deposited in the Imperial Museum in Calcutta; Amaravati's carvings were divided among museums in India and Britain. But the ruins of Sanchi stayed in place and decades later, when archaeological policies evolved and the government began to consider conservation its duty, the presence of Sanchi's stones at Sanchi's site made it possible for the monument to eventually be restored.

Henry Hardy Cole anticipated this, when he declared, "when there exist the means of making facsimiles scarcely distinguishable from the original (it is) […] a suicidal and indefensible policy to allow the country to be looted of original works of ancient art". To him it was clear that there was no longer any need to deplete an historical site to enrich a museum. But the most influential British archaeologist in India thought otherwise. This was Sir Alexander Cunningham, a pioneering archaeologist and founder of the Archaeological Survey of India, the branch of government that to this day exercises authority over India's monuments. In Cunningham's view, the technologies of three-dimensional reproduction opened the very opposite course of action: now, he felt, no important objects needed to be left in remote sites in India or among its unappreciative locals. Instead, museums in India could all be given plaster casts of their former possessions while the originals, he urged, should all be sent to London.

In its time, a cast such as the Sanchi gateway was a wonder in itself, testifying not just to the qualities of a 2nd century monument in India but to the technical prowess and heroic labors of a group of Englishmen. Today, such 19th-century casts have become old enough to be treasured as historic artifacts of Victorian times. But between the early and the recent attitudes towards these casts, there is a history of reception that has not been so positive. In the middle of the 20th century there was a reorientation of museum attitudes; they became repositories of art rather than sources of information; their collections had to be composed of originals and reproductions became something appropriate to the museum's shop but not its galleries.

It was at this juncture that in 1955 the lease ran out on the building that the V&A had rented for the Indian collections. The artefacts all had to be reabsorbed into the V&A's main building. There, they were offered a much smaller gallery that was barely 10% of the existing gallery's size. The transfer of collections fell to a new Keeper of the Indian Section – W.G. Archer, who was a modernist and an aesthete to the core. For the cast of the Sanchi gateway – enormous, expensive to shift and to store, and not even an original artefact – Archer had little regard. Calculating that it took 5,000 pounds to make five casts, Archer worked out that the V&A's cast had cost a thousand pounds, and he determined that it would cost more than the cast was worth to simply dismantle it, pack it and transport it to the store. When the Indian collections moved out of their rented space, the Sanchi cast was simply left behind. Remaining with it were all the other reproductions that Archer disdained, including 100 other plaster casts of Indian monuments. And when the building was demolished, the Sanchi gateway and all its companions were reduced to rubble along with it.[3]

At first, the destruction of the Indian casts seems to reflect a mid-century shift of values away from reproductions and in favor of original works of art. Many museums dismantled their cast collections at this time, including those of Western art.[4] A closer examination of the V&A's history shows that the Indian casts were not the only ones imperiled by the changed attitudes towards originals and copies. The 'Question of Casts' was being raised as early as the late 19th century and in the 1930s. Eric Maclagan, the Director of the V&A, spoke of Trajan's Column as "a prodigious incon-

venience" and "an incongruous white elephant" and looked for ways to rid the museum of it.[5]

Yet there was a crucial difference in the way the museum dealt with the proposals to dispose of the European casts versus the Indian ones, and this difference clearly shows that the hierarchy of values that favored European objects over non-European ones was applied even to their reproductions. When the tide turned against casts, nobody took a precipitate decision about the removal of the European casts and the issue of their disposal was continuously deferred, moving from file to file and committee to committee; the museum strove to find a new home for these casts in another institution. How dissimilar this was from the situation of the casts from India whose fate it seems could be sealed by the tastes of one man. In this case, the institutional mechanisms did not give pause to think about responsibility to the past, to public property, or to the efforts of those who had labored over the casts, and did not try to preserve them, or find them another home, or put the brakes on the decision to have them destroyed.

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A similar pattern of enthusiasm followed by oblivion marks the next architectural object that I wish to discuss. This was a colonnade that came from the most celebrated set of buildings in India, about which practically every colonial official had rhapsodized (fig. 3). This was the only cluster of monuments that appealed enough to the East India Company – whose purse-strings were famously tight – for it to pay more than 600,000 rupees on their repair.[6] These privileged monuments were of course the Taj Mahal and other Mughal imperial buildings in and around the erstwhile Mughal capital at Agra. Our marble colonnade, inlaid with patterns in semi-precious stones, came from the palatial apartments commissioned by Shah Jahan (best known as the patron of the Taj Mahal) within the Agra Fort. How, when British authorities were willing to invest so much in the repair and upkeep of Agra's monuments, could sections of it still be packed up and shipped overseas?

Although the Company Raj had indeed been relatively generous towards the Mughal monuments of Agra, their history was still a checkered one, and the episodes of care of the monuments were interspersed with some shocking phases of spoliation and abuse. The most famous instance of this came when Francis Rawdon-Hastings, then Governor-General of India, visited the Agra Fort in 1815. Among the buildings he inspected was the Shahi Hammam or Royal Bath, which, he noted, was "lined and paved with marble inlaid in the same fashion as the Taj". But Hastings noted that one of the domes of the building was cracked and it was "incapable of being repaired without an expense which cannot be met". Anticipating that the dome would fall and would destroy everything beneath it, and claiming to be "anxious to rescue so delicate a work of art",[7] Hastings asked for the marble be stripped from the floor and the walls, and the baths and fountains be ripped out and sent to Calcutta where he lived.

On his way out of town, Hastings espied a massive Akbar-period cannon lying on the banks of the Yamuna river. This cannon, called Dhun-Dhwani, was reputedly the largest cannon ever made by the Mughals; a shot fired from it in Agra could reach Fatehpur Sikri 24 miles away. Hastings considered trying to take the cannon to Calcutta too, but unlike the imperial baths that very few people in Agra visited and would thus know about, the cannon was in full public view and his local advisors warned Hastings of the public reaction this would provoke.[8]

The gun was left alone, the marble was stripped from the hammam. But it is not clear where the marble went. At least some of the disassembled marble was still lying stacked in the fort when a subsequent Governor General Lord Bentinck visited the Taj in 1834. A fiscally prudent man, Bentinck ordered that this marble be auctioned to underwrite the costs of a pontoon bridge that the government was to build across the Yamuna river. To this good cause Bentinck added more money by melting down the huge cannon that Hastings had wished to carry off, selling its metal by weight.

According to Bentinck's biographer, it was this small auction of "marble lumber from a ruinous bath in Agra fort" that led to a wholly untrue canard that has been attached to Bentinck's name ever since.[9] This is, that Bentinck had planned to auction off the whole of the Taj Mahal for the price of its marble.

The notion that British authorities had planned to pull the Taj down has persisted in urban legend till this day. Was this rumor entirely untrue? Although denied by his biographer and some other historians, Bentinck's auction of the Taj is not just
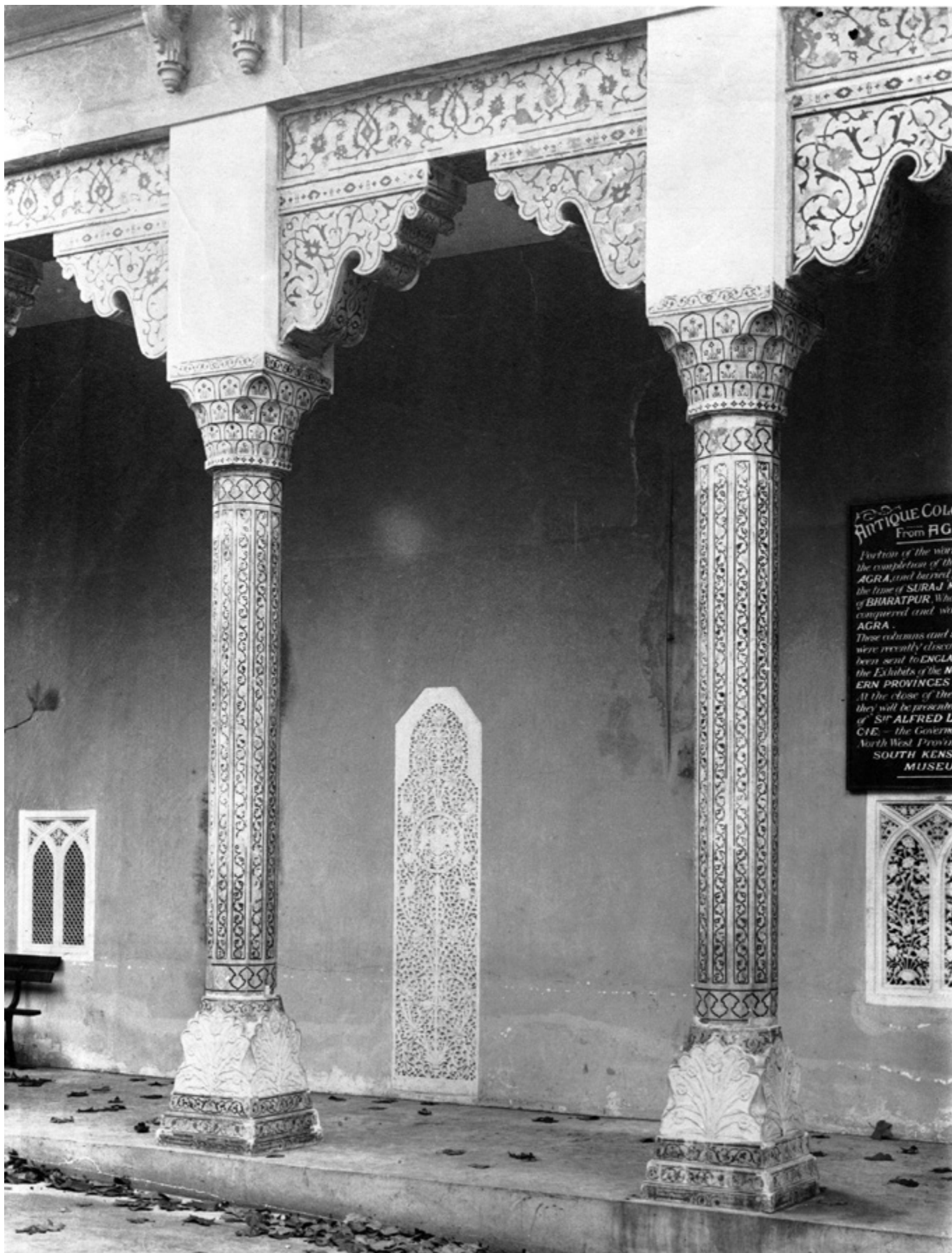
Fig. 3. Colonnade of white marble with pietra dura designs, formerly fronting the bathhouse (Hammam) at Agra Fort. Mughal, 1628-1658. © London, Victoria and Albert Museum. IS.167:1 to 22 -1886.

whispered by Indians but is discussed and criticized by several British travelers who were his contemporaries in India.[10] Bentinck's defenders would also have to contend with a recent interview with Seth Vijay Kumar Jain, a resident of Mathura, a city near Agra, who claimed that his great grandfather – the fabulously wealthy 19th-century banker Rao Bahadur Lakhmi Chand – was the one who had put in the winning bid in the auction for the Taj. According to his descendant, even though Lakhmi Chand won in the auction he was not allowed to take possession of the Taj because the news of the sale caused too much disquiet in the Muslim community in Agra; the authorities in London feared a riot between the Hindus and the Muslims and ordered Bentinck to cancel the auction.[11]

We may never know what actually happened in Agra in those years, what was taken by Hastings to Calcutta, or what was auctioned by Bentinck in Agra, but there certainly seems to have been a great deal of this marble going around, for some 45 years later in the 1880s, when Sir Alfred Lyall, Governor of the North-Western Provinces of Brit-

ish India, visited Agra Fort, he was able to find "a large number" of "marble pillars, inlaid with precious stones", simply "lying in the fort at Agra".[12] He sent five of these pillars with their brackets and beams to London. There, they were shown in the enormous Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886.

In the exhibition, the text panel that accompanied the pillars offered its own ingenious explanation of how these columns became available: they must have fallen when the Agra fort was attacked by an Indian ruler called Surajmal in the 18th century. This narrative shifted the responsibility for any damage or spoliation from British shoulders to Indian ones. According to the text panel, the pillars had been lying buried in the fort since Suraj Mal's attack until Lyall 'recently discovered' them. This text puts Lyall in the role of an explorer or archaeologist who was the rescuer rather than the despoiler of the colonnade.

In a brilliant article, the architectural scholar Ebba Koch does some detective work on this colonnade.[13] First, she finds more of its scattered fragments. Apart from the portion in the V&A to-

Fig. 4. Terrace between the Diwan-e-Khas (Hall of Private Audience) and the Hammam (Bath-house) in the Agra Fort. Mughal, c. 1628-1658. © Shantanu Jadaun, c. 2020.

day, there are pieces lying within the Agra Fort, in the Taj Museum and in the Lucknow Museum nearby, and four columns even hold up the portico of a government guest house in Agra.

Then she painstakingly reconstructs their original place within the fort and in doing so, she solves the riddle of why, in the heart of the exquisite imperial apartments made of delicately carved marble we come upon a startlingly blank brick-and-plaster wall (fig. 4). This is the exterior wall of the Hammam, from within which Hastings had ordered the marble to be stripped; clearly the operations disturbed not just the interior of the building, but also led to the dismantling of a loggia that had once stood along its exterior. We can gain an impression of the loggia's appearance from earlier paintings of the Agra Fort that were made before Bentinck or Hastings ever visited it (fig. 5). The painting is stylized and may not be perfectly accurate, but it gives us a sense of the missing pieces.

After the pillars were shown at the 1886 London exhibition, Lyall gifted them to the South Kensington Museum where they were exhibited in the extensive galleries of the Indian and Oriental Collections. These galleries, as was previously mentioned, were not in the main V&A building, but were in rented premises across the street from the main museum, where they occupied two stories of a long and narrow arcade. The Indian materials were spread among ten galleries, and there was room to show a number of very large exhibits here. When the V&A's Indian section had to be accommodated within the V&A's main building, there was no space to exhibit many of the large artefacts that the collection had earlier been able to put on show. We have seen how that move affected the Sanchi gateway. Unlike the plaster cast, the Agra colonnade was not destroyed but was put into storage where it has remained ever since.

In the 1980s, as Dr. Deborah Swallow led the V&A's project to renovate and reinstall the Indian collections as the Nehru Gallery, there seemed to be a chance for the colonnade to return to the limelight. She had the pillars examined by expert conservators, who restored one column, and gave an estimate for repairing the entire assemblage at 200,000 pounds.[14] Even as the museum was considering how to raise funds for this, the Nehru Gallery's designer decided he did not want to use the colonnade because it was too beautiful, and would distract viewers, taking their attention away from the overall design.[15] As a result, today, at the entrance to the Mughal section in the Nehru Gallery, we pass through another and less ornamental Mughal colonnade that the V&A possesses – this one from the Jahangir period, possibly from
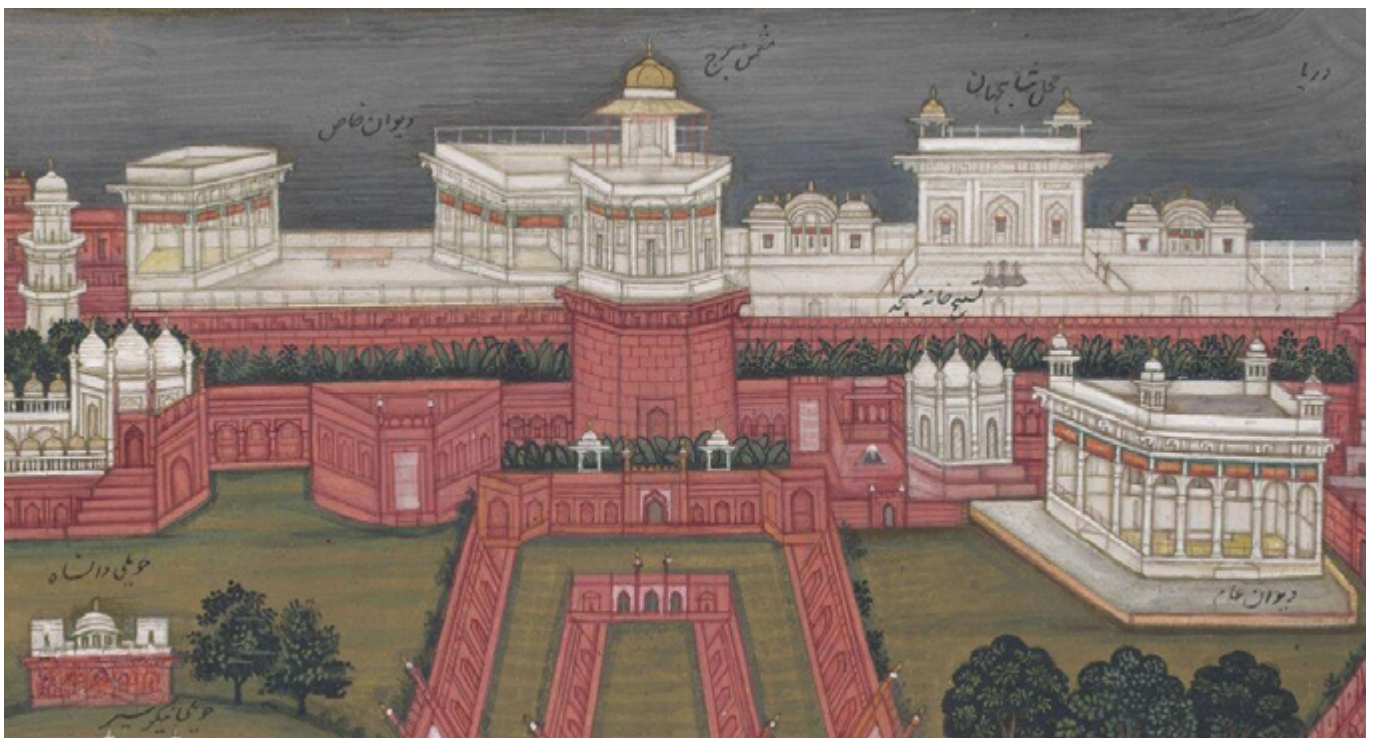

Fig. 5. Unknown artist, *The Red Fort, Agra with soldiers and animals*. Delhi or Agra, pre-1903. Watercolor on paper, 53.5x37 cm. © London, Victoria and Albert Museum. IS.153-1984.

Ajmer – while the colonnade from Agra remains in storage.

When the Agra colonnade missed its opportunity for being put on show, it moved from "storage" to "deep storage". In museum speak, "deep storage" means the object has gone into a place where it is safe but from which it is not very likely to ever emerge. Deep storage facilities are often well outside the city, where rental is cheap; and they are often underground, which offers safety and better temperature control. The Science Museum of London uses former mineshafts as deep storage sites. For our colonnade, deep storage meant moving from Battersea in London to a former military bunker in Salisbury.[16] There, the colonnade is stored under constant conditions of temperature and humidity. In this, the colonnade's fate is rather different from that of the monuments that remain *in situ* in Agra, that are absorbing atmospheric pollutants, becoming yellowed, having their surface abraded with acid rain. What is better, one wonders – leaving monuments to the fate of an inevitable degradation, or preserving their fragments but in ways that make it impossible for the objects to be seen or enjoyed?

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Let me move now to the third of my four architectural fragments which, like the Agra Colonnade, is unlikely to be seen or enjoyed by London audiences anytime soon. This is the Gwalior Gateway which, also like the Agra Colonnade, was first seen by Londoners at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886. Towering above its viewers at more than 60 feet and weighing 75 tons, this gateway attracted attention through its sheer size, though the fineness of the carving was also remarkable (fig. 6).

The strange fortunes of the Gwalior Gateway have been described by Deborah Swallow in an excellent essay, and in what follows I can do little more than simply paraphrase her.[17] As Deborah Swallow tells us, unlike the Agra Colonnade the Gwalior Gateway was not an antique object but was newly made in the manner of traditional Indian architecture. It owes its origin to the meeting of two Englishmen, Casper Purdon Clarke and J.B. Keith, in Gwalior in Central India in 1881. Purdon Clarke was a London-based architect, but his great flair for spectacle had drawn him into the circuit of international exhibitions, where he be-
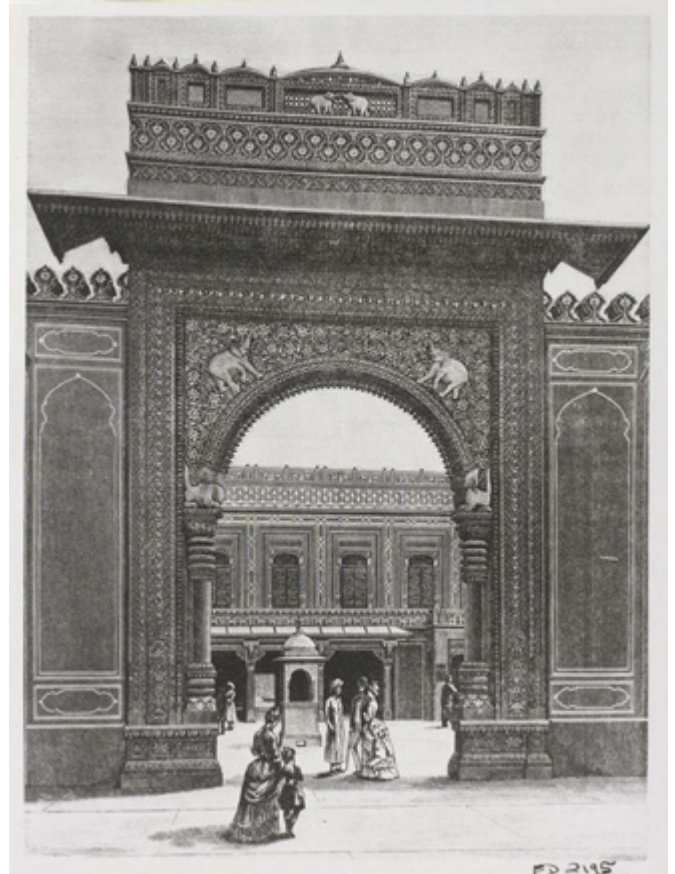
Fig. 6. The Gwalior Gateway constructed by Major Keith, at the entrance to the Indian Court of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886. © London, Victoria and Albert Museum. Archives FD 2195.

came a sought-after designer for pavilions and displays. After mounting a particularly successful Indian-style pavilion at the Paris Exhibition of 1878, Clarke was appointed the Special Commissioner for Indian Art for forthcoming exhibitions, and in the early 1880s he was sent to India with a sum of 5,000 pounds to buy objects to augment the South Kensington Museum's Indian collection. Museum records show that Clarke sent back 300 packing cases that contained more than 3,400 objects – among them the grey Jahangir period colonnade that stands at the entrance to the Nehru Gallery. But when Clarke visited Gwalior, the site of some splendid monuments, he came up against Major J.B. Keith who was stationed there as the Archaeological Survey's Curator of Monuments for Central India and Swallow tells us, "Here Keith would never have allowed him to seize any (original) architectural remains". Instead, Keith told Clarke that Gwalior had skilled stone carvers who could reproduce any historic carving and urged Clarke to commission some replicas of doorways

and *jali* screens from old buildings. In addition to the items that Clarke commissioned, on his own initiative Keith asked the Maharaja of Gwalior to support the production of a grand gateway that could also travel to exhibitions and serve as a spectacular advertisement of the great skills of Gwalior's stone-masons who were desperately in need of work.

This gateway, which he estimated should have taken two years to make, was completed in a mere four months. On completion it was dispatched to Calcutta to an International Exhibition that was held there in 1883, where it was mounted as the gateway to the exhibition grounds. While the Gateway was in Calcutta, the Maharaja of Gwalior wrote to London, offering the gateway as a gift to the South Kensington Museum. The museum accepted. Deborah Swallow records the subsequent consternation of the V&A's authorities when they received 200 boxes containing the dismantled parts of the gateway and realized the scale of the object they had just been gifted.

The Museum's own building was incomplete and there was simply no place to display something like this. The gateway remained in its boxes until it was loaned to the Colonial and Indian exhibition of 1886, where it was erected as the entrance to the Indian section. As Swallow notes, this was the only time viewers would see "the gateway in its full glory, visible for the first and the last time in an appropriate setting"[18] (fig. 6). Visitors passed through the Gateway to the Indian section, which was housed in a palatial pavilion whose walls, windows and ceiling were composed of elaborately carved elements produced by artisans from different parts of India. Designed by Purdon Clarke, the pavilion was not just a place to house exhibited products, but an exhibited product in itself, advertising the skills and design repertoires of Indian carpenters and stone masons from various parts of India. Exhibition catalogues detailed the cost to the viewer of ordering a similar product for his home. The hope was that these displays would stimulate trade. This economic objective lay at the root of colonial interest in Indian arts and crafts, but for Major Keith the matter had an urgent human dimension because he had developed sympathy and admiration for the Gwalior craftsmen, and he was seeing their livelihoods and their craft traditions perish before his eyes.

Keith was understandably upset when, at the conclusion of the exhibition, the Gwalior gateway was dismantled and returned to a storage shed in South Kensington. Now retired in London, Keith constantly lobbied the museum, writing letters to the authorities and publishing articles in the press, but to no avail. Then, when in 1899 the museum announced that it would be getting an extension to its building, Keith saw his chance. He redoubled his efforts to ensure that the gateway found a place somewhere within the expanded museum, suggesting that the continued neglect of the Gateway would cause a diplomatic incident with the Maharaja of Gwalior who had sponsored it. Privately, museum authorities referred to the enormous gate as "that beastly thing" but eventually they were goaded to find a place for the Gateway within one of the large new halls which had been designated for Oriental art. Even this rather grand gallery was not large enough for the whole Gateway, whose main pillars and archway were installed while the entire upper section remained in storage.

In the end, Keith's importuning was to rebound upon the Gateway in an ironically unfortunate way. For various reasons, the Indian collections never moved to the gallery where the Gateway was installed, remaining in their larger, rented quarters across the street. For some decades the Gateway's gallery exhibited an assortment of Islamic artefacts. But in the 1950s the plans for this space were changed; it would now be used for large-scale works by the Renaissance artist Raphael. The aesthetic of the Gwalior Gateway clashed with the Raphaels, and the decision was taken to cover the gateway up with a false front. Today in the gallery of the Raphael Cartoons, a protuberance in the wall is all that indicates that the main section of the Gwalior Gateway lies immured behind it.

The Gwalior gateway still survives, physically, in some form, and it holds the potential for a future resuscitation. But many similar artefacts that were collected alongside the Gwalior gateway were disposed of just as the Sanchi Gateway was. There was an entire three-story wooden housefront from Bulandshahr whose Mughal-style architectural elements were lavishly decorated with carved arabesques; there were delicate wooden mashrabiyyas and lacy screens carved in Punjab; there were walls of tile-work mosaic expertly made in Multan after 17th century originals. None of these were "reproductions" of the same order as the Sanchi

plaster cast; like the Gwalior Gateway, these were historicizing objects made in the 19th century by Indian artisans to advertise both past Indian glories and current Indian skills. At the time they were made, such objects were the raison d'être of the colonial museum enterprise, whose project it was to inventorize traditional arts and document currently available skills and convert them into a human resource useful to the colonial economy. But to the mid-century aesthetic of W.G. Archer, these, even if made by Indian artisans in the Indian mode, were all mere copies and scarcely worth more attention than a plaster cast. When the time came to vacate the old building, these things too were left behind, to be demolished with the building's demolition.

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In the institutional memory of the V&A the responsibility for the whole-scale destruction of Indian artefacts is laid at the foot of W.G. Archer, the Keeper who took charge of the Indian collections in 1949. He saw the V&A's Indian section as a miscellany of bazaar goods, and it was his ambition to reshape this into a collection of fine art. Many artifacts that Archer deemed to be "ethnographic" rather than "artistic" were gifted or sold cheaply to other museums; these were not works of "art" but they were at least authentic objects and deserved to find a home. But things that were copies, or that were recently made in imitation of older things, occupied a much lower position in Archer's estimation: they were inauthentic, and to him they meant nothing. And the worst of all were the inauthentic objects that were large – expensive to shift, difficult to store, they made claims upon the museum's resources that could not be justified.

But as we look back upon this mid-century moment and rue the loss of the beautifully carved jalis and building facades and think of the work of all the carvers in Gwalior and the masons and laborers who accompanied Henry Hardy Cole on his expedition to Sanchi being laid to waste, let us not lay the blame for the loss at an individual's door. It was an unfortunate co-incidence that the Indian section lost its expansive gallery space at the moment it gained a new Keeper who was a purist who valued only 'originals'. But the decision to dispose of this material was taken by committees which included the highest authorities of the museum. The museum's Director, Leigh

Ashton, and its future Director John-Pope Hennessey, then its Keeper of European Architecture and Sculpture, were part of the committees that sealed these objects' fate. Their concurrence that the large-scale effacement, immurement and destruction of Indian artefacts was sensible, defensible, and ethical museum policy, points to the central ironies of the entangled histories of colonial objects and colonial museums.[19] Artifacts are acquired with great avidity but once acquired, they are scarcely valued. It is the power to collect that is celebrated in the displays – and not the artefacts themselves.

In his essay on the history of the Indian collections, Robert Skelton recounts the peculiar fate of Indian art in British collections.[20] After the East India Company was dissolved its collections were divided, and though the bulk came to the V&A Museum, much was given to the British Museum and the British Library, and to Kew Gardens and the Natural History Museum as well. Regretting this scattering of an unparalleled collection of Indian material, many enthusiasts of Indian art dreamt of reuniting these in a grand structure on the Thames that would be a worthy host to London's Indian collections. But such dreams always woke up to cold realities, the fantasy of a vast building made on an imperial scale always running into the intractable issues of financing and real estate. Far from receiving an appropriately expansive home, the collections seemed to shrink within the museums where they were housed, accommodated in corridors, relegated to basements, gifted away to lesser institutions, and even deaccessioned and destroyed.

Somehow, in all the decades that Indian objects had so triumphally been collected and displayed, when glittering artefacts from India had been the spectacular centerpieces of so many international exhibitions, there remained an ambivalence in Britain about Indian art. Just as the British public never learned very much about colonial histories, they never developed an interest in the arts of their colonies. The machinery of knowledge-production did little to cultivate an enthusiasm for Indian art as *art* rather than as *possession*; signaling the acquisitive power of colonialism remained the core purpose of Indian artefacts on display. And perhaps after Indian independence the museums were only acting in tune with a public that was no longer interested in being reminded of an India that Britain no longer controlled. How else
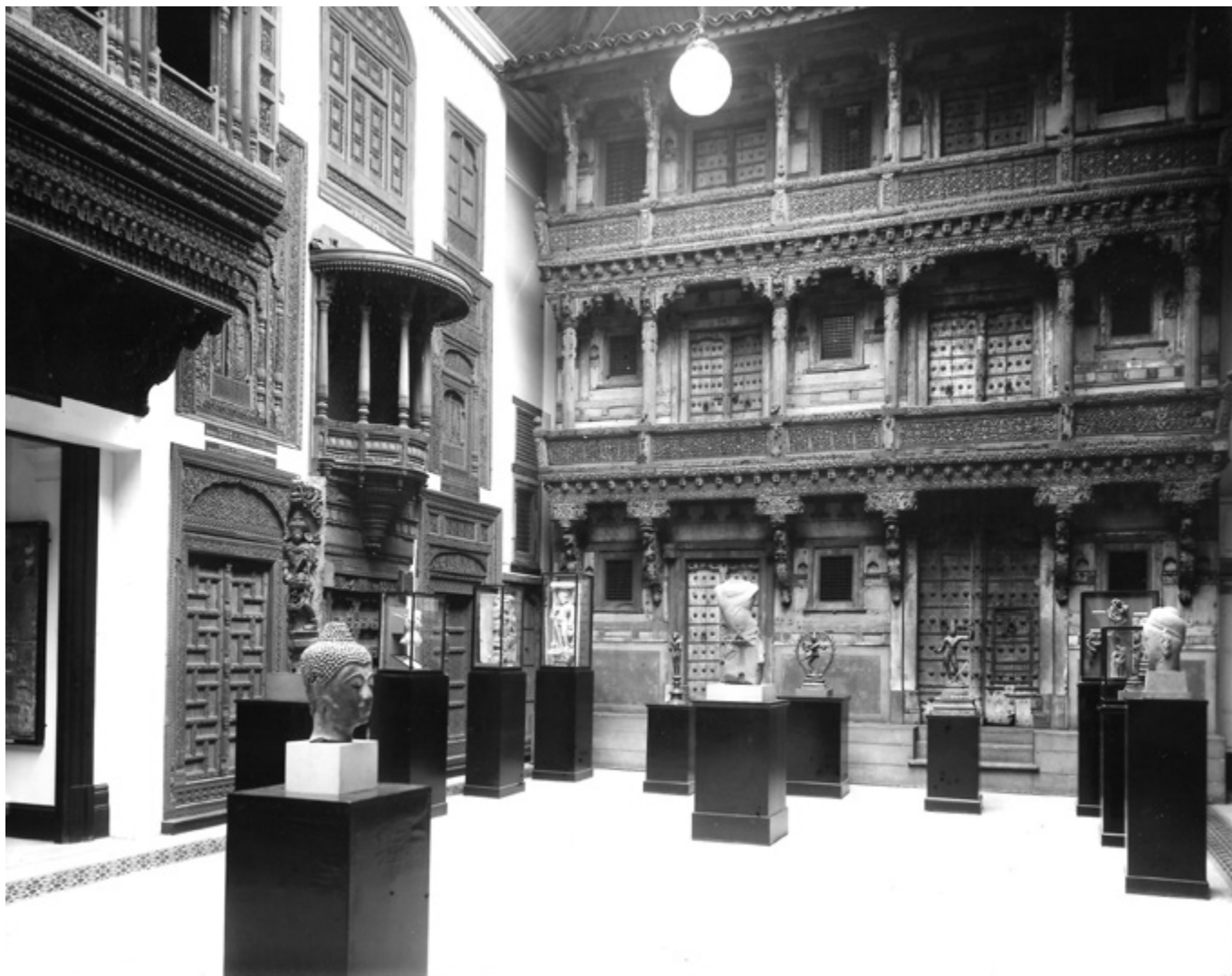
Fig. 7. Architectural artefacts on display in the Vestibule of the India Museum, c. 1907. The Ahmedabad House-Front occupies the entire rear wall. © London, Victoria and Albert Museum. Negative no. 75189.

can we understand the large-scale disposal, dispersal, and hiding away of Indian things?

*

Let me finish then with my final tale of travel which is a coming and a going, a journeying forth and a return. After my stories of objects demolished, hidden, immured – I hope this final and brief tale will provide a happy ending to this paper.

Among the 3,400 objects that Caspar Purdon Clarke sent home from India was a 17th century house-front from Ahmedabad. In the expansive Indian galleries that the V&A once had, this house-front occupied an entire wall alongside many other architectural exhibits (fig. 7).

When the space available to the Indian Section shrank in 1955, something had to be done with the architectural specimens. What were the chances that something as large as this house-front would ever be shown again? Working in the Indian Section under W.G. Archer was John Irwin, a textile expert who enjoyed a close relationship with the wealthy industrialist family from Ahmedabad, the Sarabhais. Themselves owners of important textile mills, the Sarabhais were also collectors of antique textiles, and were shaping what would become the finest textile museum in India, the Calico Museum of Textiles in Ahmedabad. In 1959, John Irwin arranged for the V&A to sell this house-front, acquired in 1883 for 200 pounds, to the Sarabhai for the price of 40 pounds. Now reconstructed, it forms part of the courtyard of the Calico museum complex.

There is poetry in this story of the Ahmedabad house-front: a piece of architecture, made for a

house in Ahmedabad in the 17th century, is facing demolition there and is packed up and taken to London in the 19th century; is no longer wanted or needed or likely to be shown there in the 20th century; travels back to Ahmadabad to be put on show in a museum there. There are aspects of the story that are ethically troubling and yet, there is the satisfying sense of an artifact having come "home", as it were.

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⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

⁹ J. Roselli, *Lord William Bentinck: The Making of a Liberal Imperialist, 1774-1839* (London: Chatto and Windus for University of Sussex Press, 1974).

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¹¹ According to his account, the Taj was auctioned not once but twice, and Seth Lakhmi Chand put in the highest bid both times. The first auction was cancelled because Bentinck was accused of not following proper procedure. The second auction was properly conducted when, according to Vijay Kumar, Lakhmi Chand put in a bid for four other properties in addition to the Taj. Archaeological authorities record at least one Mughal complex that came into the possession of Seth Lakhmi Chand. A walled garden near Agra that contained the tombs of Akbar's poet laureate Faizi and his sister Ladli Begum was bought by the Seth who is reported to have broken up the mausoleums, sold the marble and used the garden according to his own taste. S.M. Latif, *Agra Historical and Descriptive* (Calcutta: Calcutta Central Press Company, 1896), p. 25.

¹² Description of the Ornamental Screen for the North-Western Provinces and Oudh Court at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, July 10th, 1886; V. & A. File 47 (R.P.4339/1886).

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¹⁴ D. Swallow, "Conservation and Restoration of a Shah Jahan Period Colonnade" (Unpublished, 2014).

¹⁵ D. Swallow, personal communication, 21 March 2014.

¹⁶ In 2006, the decommissioned military depot at Dean Hill in Salisbury was sold to a private company that specializes in re-using redundant buildings. While overground structures here have been turned into office buildings, the underground bunkers are repurposed as secure, climate-controlled storage that is being used by several museums including the V&A, the British Museum and the Tate Galleries. 'Underground Storage Bunkers' Web page of Dean Hill Park Complex, Salisbury. http://www.deanhillpark.co.uk/bunker-secure-storage.php.

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ROUND TABLE

Motion/Transformation in Valerio Adami

Vera Agosti

Independent scholar

The main topics of the 35th CIHA Congress *Motion/Transformation* well describe very important aspects of the poetics of the international artist Valerio Adami, one of the major representatives of narrative figuration. Motion in particular as the idea of movement is very present in the work of Valerio Adami and is related to both space and time.

When looking at the concept of space, it is worth considering Adami's life: he was born in Bologna, Italy, but his family moved to Milan when he was still a child. Later, as an adult and artist, he travelled extensively with his wife Camilla, who had a great passion for exploring the world and meeting new people and cultures. Among their various experiences, they spent a few years in the United States, where they connected with several international artists, and in India, a country that was crucial for the artist. Even today, he always wears Indian cloths, of which he likes their brilliant colours and style. He is also much influenced by the legacy of Gandhi's thought. Of course, Adami often travelled for reasons associated to his work as an artist, for exhibitions and projects. He visited Cuba, Mexico, Brazil, Israel, Palestine, and many other countries. From all these trips, he retained much material for his drawings and paintings, never merely the reproduction of experiences and locations, but rather inner memories of particular moments, encounters, and places. As Valerio Adami himself wrote in *Sinopie*,[1] the book in which he explained his poetics, drawing is tidying up your thoughts, trying to sort and clean them. These thoughts may originate from a walk in the city, in the streets around his Montmartre house in Paris, or from a long trip to a distant and foreign country. Adami is able to transform the movement of all these travels and life into art. In his artworks, there are many representations of vehicles of different kinds: cars, trucks, motorcycles, sidecars, boats, sails, canoes, aeroplanes… because motion is really important to him and because of his life. He is also a very active man: he

loves classic cars, he is passionate about sailing, he took part with friends in rallies in the desert. He is fascinated by all means of transportation. Movement, trips, vehicles are turned into aesthetic forms thanks to the closed line he uses and favours. We go from real movement through the memory and the artist's thoughts and ideas to the immobility of the allegory. In addition, in paintings, colour introduces movement, as there is a sequence of tints and this is a way of reading the form, as stated by the artist himself.

Fig. 1. Valerio Adami, *I nuovi Argonauti*, 2009. Pencil on paper, 36x48 cm. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe. Courtesy of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism. It is forbidden to reproduce or duplicate the present artwork by any means.

Fig. 2. Valerio Adami, *Faits divers. Un viaggio come atelier*, 2011. Acrylic on canvas, 130x97 cm.

Fig. 3. Camilla Cantoni Adami in *Vacanze nel deserto*, 1971. Photo © ClovisPrévost.
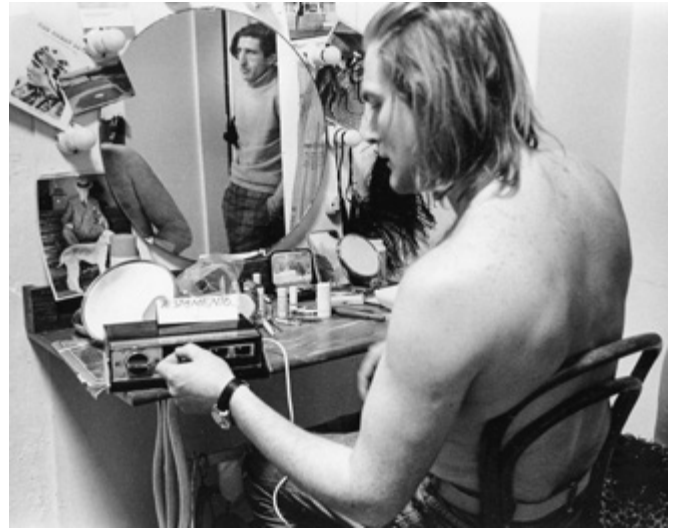

Fig. 4. Erró and Valerio Adami in *Vacanze nel deserto*, 1971. Photo © ClovisPrévost.

In Valerio Adami, motion is also connected to the concept of time. In his drawings, we can see everything. We can read past and present events and catch a glimpse of the future. There is a kind of unity of time, as Aristotle asserted with regard to tragedy. In fact, a sense of tragedy pervades the whole work of Valerio Adami. This unity of time is guaranteed by different levels of representation and narration. A clear example can be seen in the drawing donated to the Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe degli Uffizi (Department of Drawings and Prints of the Uffizi), whose title is very significant: *I nuovi Argonauti. (The new Argonauts). News from Palestine.* The 'news' in the title refer to current events that are however closely linked to the myth, the past. This is an aspect that is always a foundational element in his poetry.

Many of Adami's artworks feature representations of an empty room with a few objects. This leads the observer to muse on what may have happened there. The viewer cannot understand why those things are there. Someone may wonder who is about to enter the scene. There is a kind of suspense, of mystery in such images, a feeling that can be better understood by making reference to his experience as filmmaker.

In 1971, Valerio Adami wrote and shot a movie with his brother Giancarlo, the only one in his artistic career, *Vacanze nel deserto* (*Holidays in the desert*), featuring the artist Erró in the role of actor together with the writer, critic, and artist Dino Buzzati, and his wife and artist Camilla.

The interesting and unusual plot focuses on a man who is a collector of every single moment of his own life. Using a small hand-held camera, he records every instant of his existence until one day he notices how all the video frames of his life have become misplaced. Since that moment, there is no longer a recognisable timeline or a logical sense. The poetics of the fragment, as is very well exemplified in the movie, is indeed crucial in the philosophy of Valerio Adami and this is very evident in his drawings and paintings. This lack of a timeline and logical order between the different recorded moments leads the man to madness and to a new hypothesis of life. When watching the movie, the plot is never linear and clear, the audience must be directly involved in the story, so that they can see it and develop their own interpretation. Valerio Adami does not want to offer a perfectly set script with no possibility of any other reading, but rather he wants the viewer to play an active role in the process of the narration. This is a vital concept, and it is achieved thanks to this shift in time, the motion in time as it is used in the movie that becomes the same one we can find in most of his mysterious works: when we cannot really clearly understand what the subject, the scene, the situation are in the drawings and paintings, we are much more involved in the artwork. The artist draws us to imagine a future event, to invent who the portrayed characters are, what they are doing. Valerio Adami succeeds in this because he is also a great narrator of the life of man. He is inspired

by the myth, but he is also a sharp observer of the ordinary existence.

In conclusion, what is the essential and main motion in Valerio Adami? It is the natural and smooth movement of the arm, followed by the hand, holding a pencil while tracing a line on a sheet of paper, which is the mental space for the artist's thought.

Note

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Contemporary Art and CIHA. The Challenge of Transformation. An Informal Conversation

Thierry Dufrêne / Peter J. Schneemann

Université Paris Nanterre / Universität Bern

PS: It is a real honor to be asked to have a very informal exchange of ideas about *transformation* in the light of contemporary art with my old friend Thierry Dufrêne. Our conversation revolves around two perspectives: (1) The relevance of the concept of transformation as a challenge for today's art and society; (2) The potential of transformation with regard to the formats of research and communication in a framework such as the CIHA, with particular attention to the relation between contemporary art and transformation/research practices.

We agreed to participate in this event because we, Thierry and I, share a conviction: there is indeed an interdependence and correspondence between art historical perspectives concerning 'transformation' on the one hand, and artistic questions and artistic methodologies on the other. Moreover, we are also interested in the relevance of 'transformation' as a framing for our social reality, and in the way we perceive the environmental crisis. In what ways are transformative processes perceived? How are they experienced and negotiated? Or, to express these two questions differently, can art history address the contemporary moment, not only as it is witnessed by art but, more broadly, as a *transformative process* negotiated by social actors?

Of course, we know that the notion of *contemporary art* has become disputed in its link to the art world as a system one wants to get rid of. But still, the contemporaneity of contemporary art is, perhaps rather obviously, that moment when urgent issues or social phenomena become evident in artworks, in such a way that artists have translated a topic into a formal task – which in German might be called *künstlerische Aufgabe*. This endeavor, this mission, is what occurs when artistic practices transcend the illustration of a problem.

So, we put the contemporaneity of the term 'transformation' and the contemporaneity of art history in the foreground. We will talk about the

temporality inscribed in the term *transformation* as a figure of thought. Hopefully, we will find time to refer to transformation with regard to *materialities* as well.

Thierry, you found an interesting link between Florence and the painter Giorgio de Chirico.

TD: Yes, Peter, we are in Florence and I would like to start with an auratic event that took place nearby, in Piazza Santa Croce.

The young artist Giorgio de Chirico first became aware of a new way of seeing the world while visiting Florence at the age of twenty-one (in 1909), 110 years before our CIHA Congress. De Chirico wrote:

> on a clear autumn afternoon I was sitting on a bench in the middle of piazza Santa Croce […] I had the strange impression that I was looking at all these things for the first time, and the composition of my picture (*Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon*) came to me; and every time I look at it I relive the moment once again: the moment is an enigma to me, for it is inexplicable.

This 'illumination' or 'revelation' – as de Chirico called it – informed his paintings of the 1910s and 1920s of the so-called *pittura metafisica*.

In *Regole d'arte* (1980), Luciano Fabro wrote that "Art is the mirroring of one's own consciousness" and also that "art is doing, not only knowing, not only thinking, not only using, but doing, constructing the consciousness with things".

To come back to my example of de Chirico, on the one hand, there is the consciousness of the transformation of his vision ("the strange impression"), while on the other, there is the 'doing', the act of painting, of transforming things, of giving them a new appearance.

According to Fabro, the connection between consciousness and doing should be called 'Theo-

Fig. 1. Giorgio de Chirico, *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon,* 1910. Private Collection. (Photo by Paolo Baldacci).

ry'. Theory is the second step of transformation, after experience.

The concept of 'trans-form-ation' (prefix *trans*, *tra* in Italian), with two hyphens, proposed by the Italian CIHA committee for this Congress introduces a strong concept. Sixty years after de Chirico's transformation in Florence, fifty years before the CIHA Congress, the term and notion of 'trans-formation' was used in key contemporary art exhibitions, for example in Pontus Hulten's 1969 exhibition at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, entitled *Poetry Must be Made by All! Transform the World!* (a quotation by Lautréamont). Pontus did not use hyphens, but we could add them now: "Trans-form-the world".

I would like to conclude my first intervention with another quotation by Luciano Fabro, this time from 1988. You will see a clear change in his analysis and the subverted use of the metaphor of the highway, often used positively in a modern context:

The entire modern epoch rests on the idea of development. Our society is focused on the future, just as medieval society was focused on God. We are moving towards the future, that's our moral. We tell ourselves that we do everything for tomorrow. So we've done everything like everyone else has done on the highway: drive straight, keeping our eyes stuck on the cars ahead of us. Suddenly, after a whole series of tragic events – the last being Chernobyl, but before that there was the atomic bomb, etc. – the highway has disappeared from under our feet.

Suddenly, the highway disappeared...

PS: With Luciano Fabro you might have given a date to a fundamental shift in the perception of transformation: the Chernobyl disaster took place in 1986, and the avant-garde paradigms of transformation lost their innocence, in a way.

The avant-gardists and modernists focused on processes and temporalities in terms of change as progress. For them, transformation was linked to visions of Utopia. Historically, the avant-garde movements, and by far not only the futurists, have focused on transformation – on process – as opposed to the principle of preservation and their cultural institutions in the most radical ways.

In our current debates around the paradigms of sustainability we should remember this – how do we deal with this legacy? Subversion and deconstruction, hallmarks of 20th century avant-gardism, are under scrutiny and they no longer neatly fit with the heroic terms of radical activist engagement. Transformation is one of the oldest paradigms associated with the power of art. We have the link between the concept of transformation and concepts of progress and utopian futures.

What are the options when this utopian force is not only turning into a new nostalgia, but into a dystopian narrative, into a narrative of catastrophe? Or to phrase it differently, 'transformation' today tends to be understood as a euphemism for crisis and catastrophe. The entire temporal structure has changed. Aleida Assmann has rightly pointed out how the idea of transformation now touches geological times, the so-called *deep time.* I am tempted to say that the process of orientation of the avant-gardists, their interest in the ephemeral, is replaced by a perspective on the erasure of long-term development. We are neither talking about tomorrow as a utopian scenario, nor about the next generation, but about the imagination and prediction of the end of this planet. Shifts in the way transformation is conceived in the field of contemporary art correspond to transformations in both society and the environment. The feeling of crisis as a response to change has become increasingly relevant.

Thierry has indicated some of the layers within the notion of transformation and the way they have been addressed by artists and curators. I wonder if transformation as a defining term describing the power of art could also be discussed in accordance with the tensions inherent in the phenomena we are currently observing: these phenomena include many unstable and varied political issues, such as migration, gender, and environmental change.

Transformation turns out to be central to identity politics and environmental issues.

If we discuss paradigms of *movement* and *transformation* from a cultural perspective, they have to be positioned in relation to paradigms of *conservation* (*preservation*). Furthermore, we have to ask whether the concept of *sustainability* coincides with any of the terms previously mentioned in this equation.

There is a crisis unfolding which stems from the impression of a massive, uncontrolled transformation and this gives rise to the desire for cultural stability that is expressed through notions of conservation and sustainability. There is a tendency to delegate the task of stability and stasis to culture – with consequences on how we perceive ourselves as art historians. I am thinking of appeals to denounce interpretation and deconstruction as intellectual endeavors.

Thus, how is art translating the dissolution of conditions of stability and continuity, of a fixed set of roles? Certainly, the avant-garde concepts of liberation or revolution do not work so easily anymore.

Let's take a look at the 58th Biennale in Venice. Countless works explore or react to our current perception of reality, through their observations on change, catastrophes, ruin, loss, and absence.

A narration of loss can be seen in the pavilion of New Zealand and the project *Post Hoc* by Dane Mitchell, located in the Institute of Marine Science. A printer in the emptied library produces an endless flow of paper that names things that are gone, a never-ending list of categories that list bygone manifestations of nature and culture alike. Vanished things, extinct species form an index of decollecting. The status of the lists is ambivalent: loss of species, loss of languages, loss of glaciers but also loss of diseases. The work, installed in the empty library of the maritime museum, confronts us with the question of what to do with such real-time data. What is the motivation to read and distribute, to communicate such information? Read by an electronic voice, sent to the printer, and broadcast to the world. A kind of archival action that looks at the transformation of the world at the moment of disappearance of 'things': a kind of exploration of the world as a reversed process.

The list contains and continuously generates such a vast amount of information that it is impossible to ever perceive it in its entirety, as the list remains incomplete by default/nature.

We also wanted to focus on another pavilion that would question our role in observing the ob-

Fig. 2. Dane Mitchell, *Post hoc* (detail), 2019. Palazzina Canonica, New Zealand Pavilion, 58th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia. (Photo by David Straight).

servers of ecological disasters, observers that are not changing it.

TD: Yes, Peter, and it is the Lithuanian Pavilion, the one that obtained the Golden Lion.

As you said, Peter, during the crisis and search for new criteria, the main issue is not so much to transform the form – the world – but how the whole world of art and art itself will get transformed in order to offer some answers to the questions of the 'interesting times' (difficult, questioning times) we may live in.

Let's go to the Lithuanian Pavilion. It was neither located in the Giardini nor in the Arsenal, but rather in a military building, usually not accessible to the public. Through the window of the two-story building that hosted the Sun & Sea Opera-Performance (Marina), one could see a submarine. On the way from the entrance to the pavilion, visitors passed several signs demarcating the area as a 'military zone'. Upon arriving at the wooden gallery, our gaze is drawn to the floor below,

where we can see a sandy beach where singers and actors in swimsuits are pretending to be at the beach, accompanied by accessories such as: sunscreen, sunglasses, games, plastic bags, etc. Their songs had already guided us up the stairs, rather melodiously. But when we end up listening more attentively to the words, we notice the complete disconnect between the visual appearance of this scene of social happiness and the texts that express the agony of the planet and its inhabitants. All visitors film with their mobile phones and a bittersweet voyeurism develops between those who are lying down, looking up, and the spectators standing on the gallery, looking down. This juxtaposition creates a kind of mirror effect that returns the position of one to the other. It looks like a simulacrum in the sense of Jean Baudrillard, but the text and some stage games introduce a critical dimension that is soon obvious.

Sun & Sea encourages to act in the present with the peril of the future in mind, without ignoring the necessity of enjoying the artistic composi-

tion (the singing, the arrangements of colors, the materials, the dramaturgy, the lighting, the direction of actors, the scenography).

Indeed, most works with ecological messages show the horror of ruined landscapes. Here, pleasure and critical thinking are linked in a more subtle way: "educere/seducere"; "placere et educere" – said Molière.

The pavilion is very relevant for our topic of 'trans-form-ation' for two main reasons:

1. Its *hybrid form*: the form is an opera-performance – "tableau vivant" with texts by Stefan Helmreich, the researcher on new materialities, Marie Darrieusecq, a French writer, etc. Performers (singers, actors) come from everywhere in the world as well as from Venice.

2. The artwork is the result of a long-term and dialectical process of transformation of the presence of performance inside the Biennial. From Tino Seghal's "This is so contemporary!" (2005), his Golden Lion (2013), the German Pavilion during the last 2017 Biennial to this site-specific creation with a very specific encounter of performers and audience.

The Biennial works as a format which is able to welcome 'tests' of new artistic forms and in return, these forms 'test' the Biennial format itself.

PS: I think your remark on the "testing of new formats" is relevant also for the conception of the public. Their position as observers is today clearly challenged. In analyzing the Lithuanian Pavilion, Thierry presented a narration of impending doom that people waited for several hours to experience. The entire opera was presented in a loop. People only listened to a fragment, deciding for themselves when they had an idea of how it would continue – a phenomenon Boris Groys described as the beholders' acceptance that a performance or a video follows a time structure that one is not able to fully adjust to.

In my opinion, there is another element inherent to the performance which shows that contemporary art is looking for new formats to find ways to address the imperative to act in order to take responsibility, to question the role of the modernist beholder. In discussing paradigms of engagement, we talk about a shared environment, about situations as relational dimensions and physical contact.

There is evidence of the artistic desire to go beyond the *dispositives* of representation. The

Fig. 3. Lina Lapelyté, Vaiva Grainyté, Rugilé Barzdžiukaitė, *Sun & Sea (Marina)*, Opera-Performance, 2019. Venice Biennale (project curated by Lucia Pietroiusti). (Photo by Thierry Dufrêne).

idea of offering a setting that Christoph Büchel describes as "training-ground". I am talking about a scenography with bodily involvement, moments of social communication, where gestures are testing and changing attitudes. With regard to Thierry's remarks on the performance, one could refer to Alexandra Pirici, who conceptualized re-enactments of works of art, reviving the tradition of the tableau vivant as a social activity. Certainly, the most interesting contributions to transformations and environment go beyond depiction. Dance, performance, theater stay in the foreground when it comes to the exploration of scenarios and the imaginary.

It is at this point that we could explore the difficulties of introducing ethical issues into the autonomy of the artwork. I think the concepts of "situational ethics" by Pascal Gielen are of pivotal importance here. But let's focus on temporalities. The Lithuanian Pavilion already has a kind of strange reminiscence of past childhood holidays or a yellowed postcard, negotiating the future

with the language of nostalgia. But there are other examples that demonstrate this interest in the reworking of temporality, in working with inversions, reconstruction, and repetition.

The Swiss Pavilion housed the work by Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, titled *Moving Backwards*. The work asks us to consider a retroactive question: how would we be able to undo our fixed worldview and stereotyped representations in order to see new relationships and to invent new modes of coexistence? The concept explores the gesture of "moving collectively backwards". Their work produces a double inversion: it is a work of art that turns into its own documentation, a second-order presence that becomes the memory of its claim for potentiality.

Reenactment is another form of reconstruction that speaks to the temporally oriented transformative processes at play in contemporary art. There is often a nostalgic dimension to such projects, focusing on the legacy of the 1960s. We find this element in the revival of certain visual languages but also in the way historical artistic positions are celebrated in contemporary shows – think of the last documenta, specifically of the attention given to dancers like Anna Halprin. Both the temporality and the physicality of dance might be relevant here.

Above all, however, it is the concept of scenario (rooted in the film industry and in the field of fiction and playing an important role for the planning of military strategies) that implies the anticipation and testing of options: options we have to develop in order to act. The retrospective dimension of reenactment turns into a rehearsal and in a preenactment. This is similar to the way Eva Horn investigated the role of the arts in negotiating catastrophes. Scenarios are fictive, but allow us to envisage how we might act, or react, in the event of a real crisis.

What do you think, Thierry, of the notion of scenario, which you also used in our discussions on Pierre Huyghe?

TD: You are right. The notion of scenario is really fitting. Pierre Huyghe's work, *After Alife Ahead*, during the last *Skulptur Projekte Münster*, 2017, dealt with the question of ecology. The monumental artwork was located in a former ice rink. Again, we found the same characteristics in the work of Pierre Huyghe we had already experienced at the documenta 13 in Kassel and in his retrospective at the Center Pompidou in 2013, which we visited together: a construction in the middle of nowhere, in the wild, or reconstructed in the Center Pompidou, the ice rink, the presence of animals (bees, dogs), and high-tech machines, and the consciousness of an unstable system. Together with cancer cells, Huyghe placed bees, peacocks, and seaweeds inside the structure, by transforming it into an alive body and by animating it via an application of augmented reality.

The sensors, which are not visible, track the movement of the peacocks and the bees, as well as the levels of CO_2 and bacteria in the ice rink. An algorithm uses this data to calculate the average viability of the space and the cables buried underground and then transmits the information to an incubator containing cancer cells. When the space has a higher viability, it is the same for the box with cancer cells. When it has a lower viability, the algorithm slows down the rate of cell reproduction. Huyghe explains that the results are all profoundly interlaced but unpredictable and constantly evolving: it is exactly what interests me most about this work.

The application of augmented reality, which can be downloaded by the visitors, shows the floating pyramids which emerge and fill the space on the spectator's cells. A new pyramid is created every time a cancer cell splits, but when two pyramids are rather close together, they can also 'couple' and regenerate. However, when the ceiling opens, every pyramid disappears or 'dies', except for those that have a special strength, which is granted to them by an evolutionary algorithm built into the application.

Pierre Huyghe designed the system in such a way that the involved technology depends on natural factors, breaking down the traditional notion according to which technologies can somehow control nature.

This brings us to the notion of materiality. Artists treat it as a challenge. You have, Peter, an example with plastic and the way it is now considered very differently as opposed to how Roland Barthes treated it in his book *Mythologies* (1957) at the end of the 1950s. Now it is related to infection, defilement, contamination, impurity.

PS: Yes, the observations on how the temporality of transformations is dealt with in contemporary

Fig. 4. Pierre Huyghe, *After ALife Ahead*, 2017. Ice rink concrete floor, logic game, sand, clay, phreatic water, bacteria, algae, bees, peacock, aquarium, black switchable glass, conus textile, incubator, human cancer cells, genetic algorithm, augmented reality, automated ceiling structure, rain. (Photo by Peter J. Schneemann).

art might be further extended on the level of materiality. Again, we could develop a kind of dialectic, because the old alchemistic model of transformation, which is so important for modernity as well, seems to be reversed. In the 1960s, the art world loved new materials and transmutations. In the context of environmental criticism, transformation tends to denote and transcribe nothing less than processes of contamination and pollution – the loss of a natural state. The loss of purity triggers the fear of touch and of infection.

As the fragility of ecological systems is repeatedly underscored by the disruption and corruption caused by human activity, today, material transformation as transmutation easily takes on a negative tone.

A very old, ideologically charged opposition becomes evident: *purity* and *contamination*. Yet the hierarchy in this pairing of terms, whereby the pure is deemed more worthy than the contaminated, is highly counterproductive. Synthetic substances, pollution, the impure and the contaminated: here we have a transgressive discourse

that reacts to fixed notions of what ecological sustainability should be.

Referring to the temporalities hidden in transformation, we might recall again the fascination with new materialities and their transformative powers in the 1960s and 1970s.

Think of Roland Barthes' writing on plastic: that infernally eternal, and indisputably human substance that was once a source of wonder and is now widely understood as the death knell for any notions of purity. Barthes characterized plastic as the *material of the future* because of its very ability to take on all forms. Today its durability has become the very synonym of pollution. Barthes wrote of plastic that it is "more than a substance, [it] is the very idea of its infinite transformation. As its vulgar name indicates, it is ubiquity made visible; moreover, this is the reason why it is a miraculous substance: a miracle is always a sudden conversion of nature". I would claim that this optimistic outlook towards transformation has been 'darkened', so to speak. The potential of the utopian imaginary has been counteracted by the

dystopian implication of defilement that lies within this transformative power. Plastic is both a liberation and an abomination. Its durability poses a major problem for environmental protection. The synthetic, high-tech human materiality has contaminated all organisms, all environments. Yet, interestingly, the opposition of natural and artificial materiality that is built into the issue of microplastics is theoretical, for the term 'contamination', targeting a process that ostensibly leads to loss of purity and to a potentially harmful contact with the new substance, is similar to the term *hybridization* in that it implies a previous state of purity. *Purity* is nothing short of an ideological perversion, and the very opposite of a healthy ecosystem that thrives on diversity, symbiosis, and the interpenetration of organic systems. The boundaries between the natural and the artificial should not be restored.

Rather than a rarefied notion of purity, therefore, many artworks now offer us productive notions of blending, impurity, defilement, and contamination. The implications for the narrative of the environment are obvious – right down to political implications.

PS and TD

In which way might art historical research be informed by the way artists deal with processes of transformation? Art historians ought to pay attention to the close relationship between the topics of their discourses and the formats of communication they employ. Contemporary art always questions how the formats chosen for presenting ideas are in themselves partially constitutive of those ideas. CIHA's illustrious history makes it harder to question the formats that have been established to exchange ideas and to conduct research. Even though artists now tend to claim the term 'research' as a way to describe the format they use for a practice-based knowledge production, we, as art historians, show a certain fear of innovation.

When we, as CIHA secretaries, suggested that we question the established 19th century program of the CIHA congress, which uses a competitive bidding process to select a centralized national venue, we had recent developments in curating in mind. Shortly after our initial discussion, documenta attempted a demonstration of the kind of transformative motion we are interested in by using two venues. Although most of you might judge the resulting events in Kassel and Athens as a failure, they allowed a very fruitful discussion on the power of formats.

Innovative approaches in art historical academic institutions talk about field trips, about laboratories of intellectual discourse. However, we think there is still much to be learned from art: strategies of collectivity, participation, decolonization, paradigms of engagement and even of failure.

The engagement with two locations is a strong start and allows the congress, in its very format, to be open to the potential that might come from *contamination*.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The Session Program might be subject to change before the Congress
For updated information and program schedule, please see
http://www.ciha- italia.it/florence2019/
All participants are requested to show their badge both during the congress and at the social events entrance.
The Special events in the Salone dei Cinquecento are open to participants and public, subject to availability (max 300 persons). The Special guided Visit to the Museo del Novecento is open to partecipants, subject to availability (max 150 persons).

REGISTRATION

All Congress participants are required to register for the Congress. Full Congress registrants receive a Congress Kit with their badge, the Congress program and any prearranged special events tickets.
Onsite registration will open
on Sunday 1 September at 17:00.
Villa Vittoria - Firenze Fiera

Registration rates (VAT 22% included).

Deadline	Fee
May -June 2019	€ 200
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For the guided tours, please note that the Museum Visits and guided tours on Wednesday, 4 September and Thursday, 5 September are not included in the Congress rate.

For registration visit:
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CONGRESS AT A GLANCE

Date	Time	Events	Venue
SUNDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER	18:00 - 20:00	Opening Ceremony	Villa Vittoria *Sala Verde*
MONDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER	9:00 - 17:30	**Session 1** *The Mystical Mind as a Divine Artist: Visions, Artistic Production, Creation of Images through Empathy*	Villa Vittoria *Sala Onice*
	9:00 - 19:30	**Session 2** *Artist, Power, Public*	Villa Vittoria *Sala Verde*
	21:00	**Special event:** keynote speech by Kavita Singh (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) *Indian Monuments in Motion, In and Out of the Museum*	Palazzo Vecchio, Salone dei Cinquecento (open to the public)
TUESDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER	9:00 - 18:00	**Session 3** *Art and Nature. Cultures of Collecting*	Villa Vittoria *Sala Onice*
	9:30 - 17:30	**Session 4** *Art and Religions*	Villa Vittoria *Sala Verde*
	18:30	**Free visit to Museo di Palazzo Vecchio**	Palazzo Vecchio
	21:00	**Special event:** round table with Vera Agosti (Independent Scholar), Thierry Dufrêne (Université Paris Nanterre), Peter J. Schneemann (Institut für Kunstgeschichte - Universität Bern) and the participation of Valerio Adami	Palazzo Vecchio, Salone dei Cinquecento (open to the public)
WEDNESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER	10:00 - 20:00	**Museum Visits and guided tours**	Florence
	18:30 - 20:00	**Special guided Visit**	Museo Novecento
THURSDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER	9:00 - 18:30	**Session 5** *De/sign and Writing*	Villa Vittoria *Sala Onice*
	9:30 - 18:00	**Session 8** *The Ghost in the Machine: The Disappearance of Artists, Critics, Viewers?*	Villa Vittoria *Sala Verde*
FRIDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER	9:00 - 13:00	**Session 6** *Building an Icon: Architecture from Project to Product*	Villa Vittoria *Sala Onice*
	9:00 - 13:00	**Session 7** *Matter and Materiality in Art and Aesthetics: from Time to Deep-Time*	Villa Vittoria *Sala 101*
	10:00 - 18:00	**Session 9** *Voyage - Connecting Session between Firenze 2019 and São Paulo 2020*	Villa Vittoria *Sala Verde*
	19:00 - 21:00	**Official conclusion of the Congress and greetings of the authorities**	Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck- Institut

PROGRAM SCHEDULE BY DAY

SUNDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER

18:00 - 20:00
Opening Ceremony - Sala Verde

MONDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER

Session 1 - Sala Onice
The Mystical Mind as a Divine Artist:
Visions, Artistic Production,
Creation of Images through Empathy

CHAIRS

AKIRA AKIYAMA
University of Tokyo

GIUSEPPE CAPRIOTTI
Università di Macerata

VALENTINA ŽIVKOVIĆ
Institute for Balkan Studies, Beograd

9:00 - 9:30
Introduction

SPEAKERS

9:30 - 10:00
ALESSANDRA BARTOLOMEI ROMAGNOLI
Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma
The Painted Word.
Forms of the Mystic Language
in XIII-XV Centuries

10:00 - 10:30
CLAUDIA CIERI VIA
Sapienza Università di Roma
Beyond the Visible. Aby Warburg and
his Last Considerations about Images

10:30 - 11:00
MICHELE BACCI
Université de Fribourg
Holy Sites, Ecstatic Experience,
and Icon-Generating Visions

11:00 - 11:30
Break

11:30 - 12:00
GIA TOUSSAINT
Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel
Heart and Cross in the Works of Henry Suso

12:00 - 12:30
SERGI SANCHO FIBLA
École des Hautes Études en Sciences
Sociales, Paris
Representing the Trinity in Circles.
Between Iconography and Theology in
the Beatrice d'Ornacieux's (1303) Visions

12:30 - 13:00
TERUAKI MATSUZAKI
Tokyo Kasei Gakuin University
Kake-zukuri: A Japanese Building Type of
Mountain Religion for the Mystical Experience

13:00 - 14:30
Lunch Time

14:30 - 15:00
LAMIA BALAFREJ
University of California, Los Angeles
Mystical Visions in the Desert

15:00 - 15:30
PHILIPPE MOREL
Université Paris 1 Panthéon- Sorbonne
An Introduction to Spiritual Contemplation:
the San Bernardo's Vision from Filippino
Lippi to Fra Bartolomeo

15:30 - 16:00
RAFFAELE ARGENZIANO
Università degli Studi di Siena
*The "Represented" World of Colomba
da Rieti and Domenica da Paradiso*

16:00 - 16:30
Break

16:30 - 17:00
LAURO MAGNANI
Università degli Studi di Genova
*Imaginative Vision and Artistic Image:
from Meditation Tool
to Post-Experience Testimony*

17:00 - 17:30
Final discussion and conclusions

Session 2 - Sala Verde
Artist, Power, Public

CHAIRS

GIOVANNA CAPITELLI
Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Roma

CHRISTINA STRUNCK
Friedrich-Alexander-Universität
Erlangen - Nürnberg

9:00 - 9:30
Introduction

SPEAKERS

9:30 - 10:00
GAETANO CURZI
Università di Chieti - Pescara
*The Power of Images and Images of Power:
the Replicas of the Lateran Saviour
in Central Italy*

10:00 - 10:30
HANNAH BAADER
Kunsthistorisches Institut
in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut
*The King's Finger and the Mermaid's
Body. Gender, Power and the Sea*

10:30 - 11:00
GUIDO REBECCHINI
The Courtauld Institute of Art, London
Art and Persuasion in Paul III's Rome

11:00 - 11:30
Break

11:30 - 12:00
CARLOTTA PALTRINIERI
Medici Archive Project, Firenze
*The Social and Spatial Dimensions
of the Florentine Accademia del Disegno*

12:00 - 12:30
PRIYANI ROY CHOUDHURY
Humboldt - Universität zu Berlin
*Architecture as Visual Language
of Imperial Identity in Fatehpur Sikri*

12:30 - 13:00
FRIEDERIKE WEIS
Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin
*Unprecedented Images of Self-confident
Women in Mughal India*

13:00 - 14:30
Lunch Time

14:30 - 15:00
MARCO FOLIN / MONICA PRETI
Università degli Studi di Genova / Musée
du Louvre, Paris - Villa I Tatti,
The Harvard University Center for
Italian Renaissance Studies, Firenze

The Wonders of the Ancient World:
A Western Imagery in Translation

15:00 - 15:30
ROSLYN LEE HAMMERS
University of Hong Kong
The Power of Transformation: Qianlong's
Command of his Empire and its Cultural
Traditions in the Garden of the Clear Ripples

15:30 - 16:00
STEFANO CRACOLICI
Durham University
Lost in Darkness: The Hazy Origins
of National Art in Mexico

16:00 - 16:30
Break

16:30 - 17:00
LEONARDO SANTAMARÍA-MONTERO
Universidad de Costa Rica, Alajuela
From Colony to Republic: Political Images
and Ceremonies in Costa Rica (1809-1858)

17:00 - 17:30
ALEX BREMNER
University of Edinburgh
Propagating Power: Gender, Language,
and Empire in the English
Baroque Revival (1885-1920)

17:30 - 18:00
GIULIA MURACE
Universidad Nacional de San Martín
Art and Diplomacy. Projects for a South
American Academy in Rome (1896-1911)

18:00 - 18:30
YI ZHUGE
Hangzhou Normal University
Chinese Contemporary New Media Art

18:30 - 19:00
KATARZYNA JAGODZIŃSKA
Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Kraków
Between Museum as a Symbol and Museum
as a Forum. Power Relations in Building
Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw

19:00 - 19:30
Final discussion and conclusions

TUESDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER

Session 3 - Sala Onice
Art and nature. Cultures of Collecting

CHAIRS

MARCO COLLARETA
Università di Pisa

AVINOAM SHALEM
Columbia University, New York

9:00 - 9:30
Introduction

SPEAKERS

Panel 1. *Taxonomies*

9:30 - 10:00
DIMITRIOS LATSIS
Ryerson University, Toronto
Aby Warburg in Arizona: The Denkraum
[Thinking Space] of Nature and Art

10:00 - 10:30
EVA-MARIA TROELENBERG
Universiteit Utrecht
"No quill and no brush can describe this
splendor": Art, Nature and Developmental
Vision in the Age of the Suez Canal

10:30 - 11:00
ANJA GREBE
Danube University Krems
Art, Nature, Metamorphosis: Maria Sibylla Merian as Artist and Collector

11:00 - 11:30
Break

11:30 - 12:00
EMMELYN BUTTERFIELD-ROSEN
Clark Art Institute, Williamstown
Taxonomies of Art and Nature after Darwin

12:00 - 12:30
JOAO OLIVEIRA DUARTE
Universidade Nova de Lisboa
Archiving Nature. From Vandelli's Curiosity Cabinet to the Natural History Cabinet

12:30 - 13:00
Discussion

13:00 - 14:30
Lunch Time

Panel 2. *Against (and pro) Nature?*

14:30 - 15:00
ELIZABETH J. PETCU
University of Edinburgh
Form Does Not Follow Function: Bernard Palissy Imitates Natural Processes

15:00 - 15:30
MATTHEW MARTIN
University of Melbourne
The Philosopher's Stone - Art and Nature in Eighteenth-Century European Porcelain Production

15:30 - 16:00
STEFAN LAUBE
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Collecting the Other Way Round: From Collecting to Being Collected

16:00 - 16:30
Break

16:30 - 17:00
CHRISTOPHER HEUER
University of Rochester
Art of/as Inundation: Dürer's 1525 Flood

17:00 - 17:30
DIPTI KHERA
New York University, Institute of Fine Art
The Season for Art

17:30 - 18:00
Final discussion and conclusions

Session 4 - Sala Verde
Art and Religions

CHAIRS

MATEUSZ KAPUSTKA
Universität Zürich - Kunsthistorisches Institut

ANDREA PINOTTI
Università degli Studi di Milano

9:30 - 10:00
Introduction

SPEAKERS

Panel 1. *Animation*

10:00 - 10:30
CARLO SEVERI
École des Hautes Études
en Sciences Sociales, Paris
*'Parer vivo'. An Epistemology
of the Semblance of Life
in Renaissance Perspective*

10:30 - 11:00
EWA RYBALT
Uniwersytet Marii
Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin
*When and Why the Light becomes Flesh.
More about Titian's "Annunciations"*

11:00 - 11:30
Break

11:30 - 12:00
ZUZANNA SARNECKA
Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warszawa
*Divine Sculptural Encounters in the
Fifteenth-Century Italian Household*

12:00 - 12:30
CAROLINE VAN ECK
University of Cambridge
*Sacrifices Material and Immaterial.
The Survival of Graeco-Roman Candelabra*

12:30 - 13:00
Discussion

13:00 - 14:30
Lunch Time

Panel 2. *Alienation*

14:30 - 15:00
LEÓN GARCÍA GARAGARZA
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
NECUEPALIZTLI: Metamorphosis

*and Transformation in Mesoamerican
Art and Epistemology*

15:00 - 15:30
NAMAN AHUJA
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
*Ābhāsa (again) - External Images
for Self-Reflection and Capturing
an Inner Essence*

15:30 - 16:00
PAMELA D. WINFIELD
Elon University
*Visual Mimesis, Textual Nemesis:
Animation and Alienation in Medieval
Japanese Zen Master Portraits*

16:00 - 16:30
Break

16:30 - 17:00
JEEHEE HONG
McGill University, Montréal
*The Meditating Monkey: Animation
and Agency in Chan Buddhist Art*

17:00 - 17:30
Final discussion and conclusions

THURSDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER

Session 5 - Sala Onice
De/Sign and Writing

CHAIRS

LIHONG LIU
University of Rochester

MARCO MUSILLO
Kunsthistorisches Institut in
Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

9:30 - 10:00
Introduction

SPEAKERS

10:00 - 10:30
SANJA SAVKIC / ERIK VELÁSQUEZ GARCÍA
Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut / Humboldt Universität zu Berlin/ Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México
Arts in Letters: the Aesthetics of Ancient Maya Script

10:30 - 11:00
CHEN LIANG
Universität Wien
Signs from the "Celestial Thearch": Talismans in the Tomb-quelling Texts of the Eastern Han Dynasty

11:00 - 11:30
Break

11:30 - 12:00
BÉLA ZSOLT SZAKÁCS
Central European University, Budapest
Written on the Wall: Script and Decoration in Medieval Central Europe

12:00 - 12:30
JENS BAUMGARTEN
Universidade Federal de São Paulo
From Signs, Letters and Hidden Paintings: Creative Processes in Colonial Context in Iberoamerica

12:30 - 13:00
REBECCA DUFENDACH
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Moteuczoma Xocoyotzin Transformed in the "Three Texts" of the Florentine Codex

13:00 - 14:30
Lunch Time

14:30 - 15:00
HUIPING PANG
The Art Institute of Chicago
Nine Drafts for One Stroke (jiuxiuyiba): A Mural Painter's Underdrawings on Handscrolls

15:00 - 15:30
YU-CHIH LAI
Academia Sinica, Taipei
The Literati Baimiao Tradition Encountering European Drawings

15:30 - 16:00
EUGENIA BOGDANOVA-KUMMER
Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, Norwich
Modern Zen Calligraphy: NantenboToju between Past and Present

16:00 - 16:30
Break

16:30 - 17:00
TUTTA PALIN
Turun Yliopisto, Turku
Modern Disegno: Embodied Splendor of Lines

17:00 - 17:30
VIRVE SARAPIK
Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, Tallinn
In-between: Image, Picture and Sound-picture

17:30 - 18:00
ARTHUR VALLE
Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro

*Brazilian Pontos Riscados:
Spiritual Invocation, Nomination,
Geometric Thought*

18:00 - 18:30
Final discussion and conclusions

Session 8 - Sala Verde
*The Ghost in the Machine: The
Disappearance of Artists, Critics, Viewers?*

CHAIRS

RAKHEE BALARAM
University at Albany

FLAVIO FERGONZI
Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa

9:30 - 10:00
Introduction

SPEAKERS

10:00 - 10:30
KWAN KIU LEUNG
Royal College of Art, London
Visibility and Criticism in the Public Sphere

10:30 - 11:00
NADIA RADWAN
Universität Bern, Institut für
Kunstgeschichte
*Invisible Stories: The other Criteria
of Art Criticism in the Middle East*

11:00 - 11:30
Break

11:30 - 12:00
LING MIN
Fine Arts Academy of Shanghai University

*What is Lost in the Transformation
of Art Criticism in China?*

12:00 - 12:30
JOSÉ ANTONIO GONZÁLEZ ZARANDONA
Deakin University, Melbourne
*Destruction of Images;
Images of Destruction: Critical Stances
of Contemporary Heritage*

12:30 - 13:00
FRANCESCO GUZZETTI
Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa
*The Standard: Questioning Subjectivity
in the Early 1970s*

13:00 - 14:30
Lunch Time

14:30 - 15:00
LOLA LORANT
Université Rennes 2
*From Art Criticism to Art History,
Challenging the Environmental Denial
in the Writings of the Nouveau Réalisme
in the Transatlantic World*

15:00 - 15:30
MARIA DE FÁTIMA MORETHY COUTO
Universidade Estadual de Campinas
*Bringing the Spectator to the Foreground:
Julio Le Parc and Lygia Clark at the Venice
Biennials (1966 and 1968)*

15:30 - 16:00
PETER BELL / LEONARDO IMPETT
Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen
/ Bibliotheca Hertziana - Max-Planck-
Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Roma
*The Choreography of the Annunciation:
Reverse Engineering Baxandall's
Pictorial Plot*

16:00 - 16:30
Break

16:30 - 17:00
PAMELA BIANCHI
Université Paris 8
The Digital Presence of the Ephemeral:
Three Study Cases

17:00 - 17:30
SARA DE CHIARA
Sapienza Università di Roma
Edmond de Belamy or Bel Ami:
the Rise of the "Non- Artist"
vs the Artist's Retreat

17:30 - 18:00
Final discussion and conclusions

FRIDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER

Session 6 - Sala Onice
Building an Icon:
Architecture from Project to Product

CHAIRS

FILIZ ÇAKIR PHILLIP
Aga Khan Museum, Toronto

DARIO DONETTI
Kunsthistorisches Institut
in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

9:00 - 9:30
Introduction

SPEAKERS

9:30 - 10:00
SHARON SMITH
Arizona State University, Tempe

Of Architecture, Icons and Meaning:
Encountering the Pre-modern City

10:00 - 10:30
YU YANG
Kyushu University, Fukuoka
Shadows of Bright Houses: Photographs
of Architecture in Colonial Manchuria
(1900- 1945)

10:30 - 11:00
ELENA O'NEILL
Universidad Católica
del Uruguay, Montevideo
The Architecture of Eladio Dieste:
Challenging Technology,
Structure and Beauty

11:00 - 11:30
Break

11:30 - 12:00
MORGAN NG
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
The Iconicity of On-site Architectural
Drawings in the Renaissance

12:00 - 12:30
ALINA PAYNE
Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center
for Italian Renaissance Studies, Firenze
The Architect's Hand:
'Making' Tropes and Their Afterlife

12:30 - 13:00
Final discussion and conclusions

Session 7 - Sala 101
Matter and Materiality in Art and
Aesthetics: From Time to Deep-Time

CHAIRS

FRANCESCA BORGO
University of St Andrews

RICCARDO VENTURI
Villa Medici - Accademia
di Francia a Roma

9:00 - 9:30
Introduction

SPEAKERS

9:30 - 10:00
FABIAN JONIETZ
Kunsthistorisches Institut
in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut
Renaissance Dust

10:00 - 10:30
NICOLAS CORDON
Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne
*The Lifelyness of Stucco:
Materiality and Human
Presence in Early Modern
Decorative Systems*

10:30 - 11:00
BRONWEN WILSON
University of California, Los Angeles
*Lithic Images, Jacopo Ligozzi,
and the Descrizione
del Sacro Monte della Verna (1612)*

11:00 - 11:30
Break

11:30 - 12:00
AMY OGATA
University of Southern California,
Los Angeles
*Making Iron Matter
in the French Second Empire*

12:00 - 12:30
SIOBHAN ANGUS
York University, Toronto
*The Labor of Photography: a Materialist
Analysis of Occupational Portraits*

12:30 - 13:00
JEANETTE KOHL
University of California, Riverside
*'Matters' of Life and Death -
From San Gennaro to Marc Quinn*

13:00 - 14:30
Lunch Time

14:30 - 15:00
LILIANE EHRHART
Princeton University
Freezing Time: Marc Quinn's Self Series

15:00 - 15:30
JING YANG
Jyväskylän Yliopisto, Jyväskylä
*Chinese Art in the Age of the Anthropocene:
The Interconnectedness between Humans
and Non-human Entities*

15:30 - 16:00
NICOLE SULLY
University of Queensland, Brisbane
*By the Silvery Light of the Monument: Lucency
and the Dematerialising of the Memorial*

16:00 - 16:30
Break

16:30 - 17:00
STEFANIA PORTINARI
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
*Venice Biennale as World Map:
Cartographies, Geological Interventions,
Landmark Layers*

17:00 - 17:30
Final discussion and conclusions

Session 9 - Sala Verde
Voyage

CHAIRS

MARZIA FAIETTI
Gallerie degli Uffizi; Kunsthistorisches
Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

ANA GONÇALVES MAGALHÃES
MAC USP - Museu de Arte Contemporânea
da Universidade de São Paulo

10:00 - 10:30
Introduction

SPEAKERS

10:30 - 11:00
MIYUKI AOKI GIRARDELLI
Istanbul Technical University
*The "Orient" in the West: Japanese
Architect Ito Chuta's Travels in the
Ottoman Empire and its Challenge
to the Oriental Narrative*

11:00 - 11:30
Break

11:30 - 12:00
DAVID YOUNG KIM
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
*Giorgio Vasari and Antonio Vieira:
The Travels of Transatlantic Art Theory*

12:00 - 12:30
MARIA BERBARA
Universidade do Estado
do Rio de Janeiro

*Representations of Brazil in Italy
in the 16th and 17th centuries:
Between Domestication and Ferocity*

12:30 - 13:00
ALEXANDER GAIOTTO MIYOSHI
Universidade Federal de Uberlândia
*The Emigrants (1910) by Antonio Rocco:
Voyage of a Painting and its Painter*

13:00 - 14:30
Lunch Time

14:30 - 15:00
PAOLO RUSCONI
Università degli Studi di Milano
*"Un'idea del Brasile". Pietro Maria
Bardi's Second Life*

15:00 - 15:30
GERHARD WOLF
Kunsthistorisches Institut
in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut
Beyond the Voyage

15:30 - 16:00
Final discussion and Conclusions

16:00 - 17:30
Visit to the Posters Section

19:00 - 21:00
**Official conclusion of the Congress
and greetings of the authorities**
To be held at the Kunsthistorisches Institut
in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut,
via Giuseppe Giusti 44

POSTERS
Participants
(in alphabetical order)

JEFFERSON DE ALBUQUERQUE MENDES
Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro
*Imago Signorum: the Doctrine
of Microcosmic Man at the Illustrations
Between the XIV and XV Centuries*

TATIANE DE OLIVEIRA ELIAS
Universidade do Porto - Universidade
Federal de Santa Maria
*Afro-Latin America Religion,
Symbolism in Visual Arts*

PEDRO LUENGO
Universidad de Sevilla
Eighteenth Century Foreign Artists at Court

RENATO MENEZES RAMOS
École des Hautes Études
en Sciences Sociales
*Ambiguous Gestures: Iconography
of the Archers Between Europe
and the New World*

HIROKO NAGAI
Kyushu University
*Giovio's and Vasari's Who's Who:
Pinturicchio's Mural Paintings
as Models for Paolo Giovio's Portraits*

HAOXUE NIE
Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts
*The Discourse of Anti-Urbanism
in the Paintings of George Ault
and Other Precisionists*

IZUMI FLORENCE OTA
The University of Tokyo
- Université de Fribourg

*French Royal Reliquary with the Image
of the Arma Christi, the So-Called Libretto*

LARISSA SOUSA DE CARVALHO
Universidade Estadual
de Campinas
*Between Art and Fashion:
Sixteenth-Century Costume Books Today*

JAQUELINE SOUZA VELOSO
Universidade do Estado
do Rio de Janeiro
*Projection of Maturity, Inventiveness
and Imagination in Roman Funerary Art:
Analysis of the Altar of Iulia Victorina*

YUNING TENG
Universität Hamburg
The Re-Fabrication of Napoleon in China

YOKO TSUCHIYAMA
Waseda University
*Between the Object and the Text: A Study
on the Local Reactions on The Family
of Man Exhibition in the 1950s and 60s*

SPECIAL EVENTS

MONDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER

21:00
Palazzo Vecchio,
Salone dei Cinquecento

Keynote speech

KAVITA SINGH
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
*Indian Monuments in Motion,
In and Out of the Museum*

TUESDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER

18:30 - 20:00
Palazzo Vecchio

Free visit

21:00
Palazzo Vecchio,
Salone dei Cinquecento

Round table

VERA AGOSTI
Independent Scholar
THIERRY DUFRÊNE
Université Paris Nanterre
PETER J. SCHNEEMANN
Universität Bern, Institut
für Kunstgeschichte

with the participation
of VALERIO ADAMI

Special guided Visit

WEDNESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER

18:30 - 20:00
MUSEO NOVECENTO

MUSEUM VISITS AND GUIDED TOURS

Visit the conference website for complete information about registration, hours, options and fees.

WEDNESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER

Firenze
- Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana
- Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze
- Gallerie degli Uffizi, Galleria delle Statue e delle Pitture
- Gallerie degli Uffizi, Tesoro dei Granduchi
- Museo di Palazzo Vecchio
- Museo degli Innocenti
- Museo Nazionale del Bargello
- Museo dell'Opera del Duomo di Firenze
- Museo di Storia Naturale, Antropologia ed Etnologia - Università degli Studi Firenze
- Museo Novecento
- Museo Stibbert
- Opificio delle Pietre Dure
- Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies

THURSDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER

19:00 - 20:30
CENTRO PER L'ARTE CONTEMPORANEA LUIGI PECCI, PRATO

Support for the Congress activities was provided by the following young scholars:

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