Events

Immagini?
Transdisciplinarity of Drawing

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The discipline of Drawing has always dealt with innumerable questions concerning vast areas of knowledge; representation in its purely scientific aspects, the History of the discipline itself, the built or natural or prefigured environment and, more generally, Cultural Heritage, as well as the new and increasingly advanced digital technologies and, lastly, the aspects of visual culture. For some time, scholars in the field of Drawing have requested opinions, contributions, "points of view" from other scholars who, although they do not belong to the specific scientific area of Drawing, augment the knowledge on the themes and issues that Drawing poses.

An important attempt at multidisciplinary "openness," to be honest, had already taken place in the 1980s when Margherita De Simone inaugurated in Palermo the fortunate season of the *Spring Seminars* involving scholars of the caliber of Maurice Cerasi, Salvatore Mazzamuto, Tommaso Giura Longo, Vittorio Gregotti, Tomás Maldonado, Rosario Assunto, and, subsequently, in 2006, when a group of then-young teachers of the area of Drawing proposed the *Ideas for Representation* annual seminars intended to stimulate reflection on the role of representation in current times through interdisciplinary

contributions, seen almost as a necessary step for discerning new horizons of research.

This "necessity" is "necessary," and the rhetorical figure is certainly helpful, especially when the disciplines of Drawing go beyond the boundaries of the Faculties of Architecture and Engineering to offer and exhibit their own contribution, and their own potentials, in educational structures in which the direct relationship with construction is absent; in places where the nature of Drawing is understood only in its purely pedagogical form.

The *Immagini?* Conference (fig. 1), well-organized in Bressanone at the Faculty of Education of the Libera Università di Bolzano by Alessandro Luigini, Demis Basso, Stefano Brusaporci, Enrico Cicalò, Massimiliano Lo Turco, Valeria Menchetelli, Matteo Moretti, Chiara Panciroli, Daniele Rossi, Maria Teresa Trisciuzzi and Daniele Villa, was a moment of confrontation on the broader theme of "Image/Imagination" intended by the organizing committee, as written in the flyer of the conference, almost as a pretext for triggering an interdisciplinary confrontation by «whoever is convinced that Knowledge is a heritage in progress, always open, which is built first of all by formulating questions for surpassing limits

and borders. And the question which gave rise to the conference was rather simple: how do scholars working in different disciplinary fields investigate the relationship between image and imagination? Thus the scholars of representation, visual communication, education, psychology and many others were invited to discuss a common field of research, in which everyone moves in a different way.

It is precisely this "cohabitation" that makes the relationship between image and imagination a fully interdisciplinary, or rather, transdisciplinary field: the world of the image and the visual is a world in which all the disciplines listed above rightfully express their own theories and practices, also legitimized by the mutual recognition of all-too-occasional interactions».

Starting from this question, after the welcoming remarks, opening address and speeches by the keynote speakers, eighty-eight papers were presented in the four parallel sessions organized during the two very busy days. Paul Videsott, Dean of the Faculty of Education, and Vito Cardone, President of the UID, Unione Italiana per il Disegno, in presenting their greetings, highlighted the multidisciplinary nature of the Conference, hoping that this would not only give rise to new ideas for reflection,

Fig.1. *Immagini? The poster of the Conference.*

but also trigger collaborative research processes among teachers of different sectors, also in relation to the teaching of Drawing in the Schools of Education. To the non-neutral objectivity of the term "image," the organizing committee joined the much more subjective term "imagination," probably to also identify an evident term of interdisciplinary contact; for this reason, the interventions aroused multiple interests legitimizing the validity of the initiative. In fact, experiments concerning the impact and the construction/manipulation of images by children aged two to four, as presented by pedagogues and psychologists (Molina, Frezzotti, Cardellini), were joined by "stories and events of the imagination" regarding architecture (Palestini, Romor, M. Rossi, Massari, Pastore, Spallone), street art

(Zerlenga), "pure visibility" (Sdegno), "art therapy" (Borgherini), scenography (Centineo), use of the media for knowing and understanding (Casale, Ippoliti), visual perception (Garofalo), semiotics of artifacts (Gay, Cazzaro), narration (Quici).

This important event organized in Bressanone stemmed from the conviction, as written by the organizing committee in the flyer, that «the image in the 21st century is digital, pervasive, rapid. It is an image filtered by mobile devices, both incoming and outgoing, which is produced, consumed instantly and delivered first to anyone (even those who we do not know, and perhaps would not want to know) and then to a stationary oblivion, relegated into a condition of unattainability (the temporal proximity relationship being broken) in which it is however impossible to completely erase its traces. The image in the 21st century is a space. It is a visual space, formed by known dimensions but whose depth is to be discovered, in which we act and build relationships through imagination. The image in the 21st century is immersive, in a constant balance between the three-dimensionality of fruition and the two-dimensionality of the projection.

The image in the 21st century is, even more than before, the preferential vehicle for the development of imagination and conception, for the typical conformation of figurative creativities (architecture, painting, comics, visual design, infographics, etc.). The image in the 21st century, today, is a visual experience that produces a gaze that leads to the imagination».

If this is true, it is possible to ask the question: does a non-immersive space, even non-digital, not of rapid use, which can instead be investigated calmly, still

exist? A "slow" space that induces to reflections that have the time of their duration; a visual space that can show a search for meaning. Or is everything referred to rapid fruition?

At the end of the day, Oliviero Toscani, almost a guest star of the conference, somehow gave an answer to these questions. «Almost everything we know today, we know because we have seen images», said the Milanese photographer, «and these images do form our conscience, our judgment and our morals. History has existed from the time photographic images first existed, before that moment, there were 'deceptions,' drawings, paintings... If a camera had existed then, perhaps the Bible and the Gospels would never have been written» [1].

With his extensive portfolio, the photographer of Benetton, Chanel, Fiorucci and Vogue chose to completely disregard other forms of art, exalting the photograph as the only expressive form, not taking into account those "deceptions" of which he obviously lacked the tools for verifying their impact. Fortunately, photography as a tool for constructing images, imaginary and imagination was clearly delineated by Nicolò Degiorgis who, with slow rigor, presented his research on the "hidden" Islam and also the methodological construction of a photographic exhibition that, starting from the painting by Simon de Myle depicting Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat (fig. 2), which concerned current issues such as integration, the search for identity and the fragility of democracies, while suggesting to visitors a reinterpretation of the concepts of *Heimat* (homeland) and fatherland (fig. 3).

The work of this photographer from Bolzano showed that there are no fences or narcissisms and that photo-

graphy has a close relationship with the history of art, of which it is a part, and not a mere object of commodification. The multiplicity of the subjects dealt with during the conference does not allow a complete description of its structure and contents, but certainly leads to a consideration not only of a disciplinary nature but, above all, related to didactic aspects.

In his lecture, Vito Cardone pointed out how, twenty years ago, the teachers of Drawing also faced the challenge of teaching study courses in Education, often reaching very positive results.

That drawing has a pedagogical role is known to all and it is enough to say that it is an expressive modality; a language. Franco Purini, in a 1983 paper, stated that the professor of Drawing is a «primary teacher: he introduces students to a discipline so complex as to be extraneous to most of them even after graduation, and he must abandon them as soon as they are able to produce only an uncertain babble. He is precluded from fully teaching grammar; he can scarcely hint at a syntactic 'step.' He is therefore a censored and halved elementary teacher who must not forget that in the etymology of the word *disegno* (drawing), *designare* (designate), that is, to choose after giving meaning to things, hides all that is important in the profession of architect» [Purini, 1992, p. 347].

To Alessandro Luigini, and to all the other members of the conference's organizing committee, we must give the credit of having emphasized that Drawing, once again, is instrumental, as Martin Heidegger defines the "thing" in *The Question Concerning Technology* [Heidegger 1976].

Fig. 2. Simon de Myle. Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat, 1570. Oil on canvas.

Fig. 3. Luca Turi. The Vlora alongside the quay in Bari, 1991.

Notes

[1] See <https://www.facebook.com/IMG2017/videos/1734634106557015/> (accessed 2018, February 17).

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