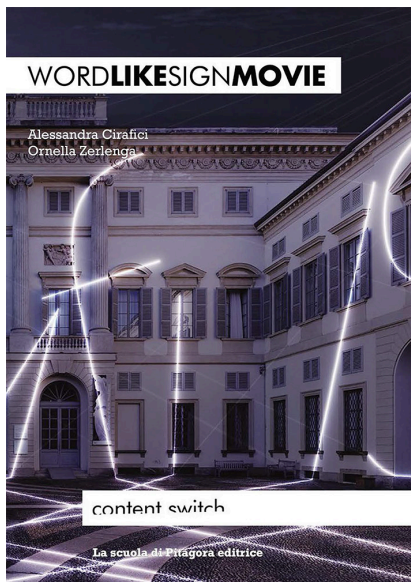# *Reviews*

Alessandra Cirafici, Ornella Zerlenga
WordLikeSignMovie. Content switch

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The pages of the book by Alessandra Cirafici and Ornella Zerlenga, immediately reveal the central theme of the reflection, that related to the 'word' considered in an intertwining of signs, spaces, languages and media.

Only by leafing through the volume, from the paratextual elements to the pages of the central body, it is possible to detect information and clues, articulated in a balanced alternation of texts and images, which well allude to the topics, cultural visions, approaches of the research presented in the volume.

For this reason, I think it is interesting to develop the review of the book trying to present the themes as they gradually emerge in the succession of its parts.

In this cognitive process it is possible to appreciate the clarification that the topics treated gradually take on, but also the relevance that they express, right away, thanks to the skilful use of the specific languages and codes of that precious set of pages that make up the 'threshold' of the book.

On the cover, therefore, the central theme of the volume, represented in the title *WordLikeSignMovie*–a chain of terms represented without solution of continuity that well interprets the idea of connection between the typologies of the linguistic sign–receives a semantic reinforcement from the effective authorial image, the laser installation site specific *Adaptation 2016* by Arthur Duff, created in the entrance courtyard of the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Mi-

lan. A further refinement is provided by the *Content switch* subtitle which, introducing the idea of change, signals a significant methodological trait, a sort of gradual re-orientation which, as confirmed in the preface, outlines the path of theoretical reflection in favor of multiple and thematic intersections.

It is, as the authors write, "a progressive, modulated and conscious 'change of program'", a sensitive opening towards new scenarios fueled by technological innovation and the continuous evolution of creative thinking.

In the index of the book, the sequence of contributions, organized around three main parts—essays, interviews, workshops—, each developed through a double point of view—two authors for the essays, two for the interviews, two for the design 'descriptions'—, offers an interesting nuance of gaze on what is addressed. In particular, the chapters *Scrittura in 'carta'* e *Scrittura in 'video'*, respectively edited by Alessandra Cirafici and Ornella Zerlenga, propose an articulated theoretical reflection on the 'word' in relation to a plurality of expressive forms and to diversified modes of use / interaction, outlining a thought that seems to be partly preliminary, partly consequent to the research and experimentation developed in the didactic workshops.

The interviews with Anna Maria Pugliese and Arthur Duff highlight some founding topics of their researches, noting, in particular, the originality of the artistic

vision with respect to central issues in the debate on contemporary visual languages, which also involve the disciplines of the project related to visuality.

The contributions of Alice Palmieri and Vincenzo Cirillo, respectively authors of the essays *La grafica della parola. Declinazioni e sperimentazioni* and *Il disegno delle video-esperienze*, provide a detailed description of the theoretical-methodological process of the workshops. *Content switch: website* is a presentation text of the website collecting the results of the experimental research.

In this general framework, the chapters *Scrittura 'in carta'* and *Scrittura 'in video',* each divided into four writings, are certainly central. Therefore, I would like to point out some themes particularly useful for understanding the disciplinary point of view at the basis of the research presented in the volume and which certainly refer to some of the main issues of contemporary theoretical debate.

Following the index, in the chapter *Scrittura 'in carta'* by Alessandra Cirafici, the theme of pluridisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, now pervasive in multiple design fields and intrinsic to graphic design, seems to be one of the founding elements of the research proposed, an essential feature of the theoretical premise and of the design experimentation developed in the activity of the workshops. Connected to this aspect is then the theme of hybridization of languages, supports, techniques, as well as that of the context transition of the visual project–from surface to space–which also implies a passage of scale of the artifacts.

In this vision, in which the graphic signs seem to take the form of an elastic material available to be molded even in the fruition phase, some theoretical references are included to the theme

of interaction and interface, respectively process and filter for accessing a repertoire of products, services, works, etc. ever wider and more articulated.

Definitely current the reflection in which Alessandra Cirafici, also recalling Christofer Fryling theoretical approach, proposes 'visual research' as a design methodological process oriented to 'problem finding', or to the definition and formalization of questions through which imaging and thinking about possible future scenarios. The essay concludes with the introduction of the design experimentation developed with the artist Anna Maria Pugliese on 'poetry', that is, on the word as sound, rhythm, graphic sign, image and much more; an opportunity, as Alessandra Cirafici writes for "navigating in collaboration with other knowledge, other cultural and creative attitudes", which has also triggered interesting semiotic considerations.

Finally, in the essays *Questioni di lettere, Dialoghi a distanza* and *Flowing. Flussi di memorie*, with reference to the training activity of the workshop developed with the students of the Design a Communication Course of the University of Campania 'Vanvitelli', the author underlines the conceptual and operational relationships with the work of Anna Maria Pugliese, and points out a widespread experimental attitude which, in a dimension of dialogue with digital type design, echoes the research of the avant-gardes and visual poetry.

A significant interdisciplinary vision emerges that sees the exploration of reworking processes about words, verses, thoughts, memories proposed in the artist's performance; a suggestive translingual tendency emerges aimed at identifying new codes, products and communication channels to expand the possibilities of fruition of the work,

making it accessible even in a deferred time, precisely a 'remote dialogue'.

In the chapters developed by Ornella Zerlenga starting from *Scrittura in 'video'*, the theoretical reflection shifts to the processes triggered, in art and visual communication, by the video technique where space and time are connected, as the author emphasizes, "according to discontinuous, interstitial, brief, interactive and, above all, immersive logics".

Among the many topics dealt with, I remember, in particular, the references to the enhancement of the body dimension in the work fruition–as a consequence of the involvement of multiple sensory channels that create dynamic and interacting information flows–and of the temporal dimension intrinsic to the video product. Arguments also put by the author in relation to the right for all to enjoy art, recognizing precisely in the multisensory and immersive experiences a fundamental contribution towards accessibility.

In the text *Arte & Schermo. Video-grafica* the reflection is oriented to the relationship between writing and video, with references to the video-poetry experiments of the 80s-90s of the twentieth century and to videography, of which some fundamental evolutionary episodes are also reported.

Fascinating is the theme relating to the dialectic between writing and space, both the one that takes shape within the video product, through the application of animation to the footage, but also that which can be experienced in real space, for example through the interaction of projections of marks on architectural surfaces.

In the *Percezione & Sensazione. Video-ambienti*, with reference to the idea of "video-environment or sensitive environment, together, multimedia, inter-

active, immersive", Ornella Zerlenga opens the reflection on the active role of the user, often co-author of the work, and on the different forms of overlap between real and virtual (virtual reality / augmented reality) also introducing, in a theoretical perspective that includes central issues in the contemporary philosophical debate, considerations on the ethical implications related to the development of some sophisticated technological applications.

Finally, in the chapter *Scrittura & Workshop. Video-esperienze*, the author presents the workshops *La memoria come strumento di coscienza creativa* and *WordLikeSignMovie*, developed with multimedia artists Anna Maria Pugliese and Arthur Duff, that offered an opportunity of reflection and experimentation on video-poetry and video-environments for the students of the *Laboratorio* of Graphic Creations of the *Corso di Laurea Triennale in De-*

sign e Comunicazione (*Dipartimento di Architettura e Disegno industriale* of the Università degli Studi della Campania 'Luigi Vanvitelli').
A book, therefore, which between research and project verification addresses current issues not only in the disciplinary specificity of representation, but also, transversally, in all areas of contemporary creativity.

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