Events

Second Annual Travelling Meeting of the *XYdigitale* Project and the *XY* Journal

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For almost 20 years, several events have radically, and in our opinion permanently, changed the scientific publishing. For example, in 1997 was born *Web of Science* [1]; in 1999 starts *Open Access Initiative* [2]; in 2002 was signed the *Budapest Open Access Initiative* [3], followed in 2003 by *Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities* [4] and in 2004 by the *Dichiarazione di Messina* [5]; also in 2004, Elsevier made *Scopus* available online [6].

The availability of information of all kinds and the possibility of finding it through search engines, has forced a shift in the center of gravity of our engagement with scientific texts, which is increasingly moving from libraries to our digital devices. Not everything is online or free available, and it is certainly possible to encounter a great amount of superficial or partial information–if not erroneous–but the direction is outlined: in the DOAJ database [7] in 2018, nearly 600,000 open access articles were catalogued out of a total of just under 2,500,000 scientific articles published globally [8]. Almost one every four scientific articles. *XY dimensioni del disegno* was a leading contributor to the scientific and cultural debate in the field of Drawing between 1986 and 2002. Thanks

to its continuous exploration of disciplinary boundaries it has represented a reference point for many scholars, as has all the innovative work of its founder and editor-in-chief Roberto de Rubertis, one of the most eminent figures in the field of representation studies. After an interruption of almost three lustrums, in 2016 the *XY* journal resumed its editorial activity with the subtitle *Critical review of studies on the representation of architecture and use of the image in science and art*, filling a void that in the meantime only the cycle of seminars of *Idee per la Rappresentazione* between 2007 and 2014 and a few other occasional events had inhabited [9].

Today's *XY* project has interpreted the most current instances of scientific publishing and in addition to the paper edition, published by the University of Trento and Officina Edizioni, it is published on an OJS platform entirely open access, does not charge authors publication fees, uses abstracts and keywords useful for indexing, and has full bilingual texts in Italian and English. As Giovanna Massari–head of the editorial staff and a long-time supporter of open access–recalls, the journal is only the backbone of the entire *XY digital* project, which also includes the series *I libri di XY* and *I quaderni*

di XY, as far as scientific publications are concerned, and the annual travelling meetings held in 2019 in Rome at the Aula Magna of the Department of Architecture of Sapienza University of Rome [10], and online in 2020, organized by the Department of Architecture of the University of Campania "L. Vanvitelli" and edited by Alessandra Cirafici, Paolo Giordano and Ornella Zerlenga [11].

If one compares the editorial of the last issue of the first series, ended in 2002, with the evolution of scientific publishing–and perhaps of the entire *modus operandi* in university research–that we outlined at the beginning, one understands that those years of pause have not passed without effect. Although changed in form by adapting to the new needs of the publishing context, the scientific project still stands out for the relevance and topicality of its approach. In fact, the years of interruption were a gestation that today demonstrates the validity of XY's scientific proposal as a theorem that was valid in the 1980s and 1990s and remains equally valid today.

As Vito Cardone recalled during the presentation of the new digital series, which he strongly supported, held at the University of Trento in 2015, since its first edition *XY* has always

Fig. 1. Flyer of the event.

emerged as a provocation, bordering on heresy, in a cultural context that perhaps in those years was not yet fully ready [Cardone 2016]. Research in the field of images among scholars of representation, on the other hand, has never been an exoticism or a pan-Sophic fancy, but a frontier context that has acquired its own acknowledgement over time.
This genealogy was briefly recalled at the opening of the online *2nd annual meeting of the digital XY journal* on 27 November 2020. On that occasion, it was recalled how *XY* has been a decisive reference for the growth of an en-

tire generation of researchers, encouraged by the magazine to explore new contexts in which to apply the domain of knowledge that the discipline of Drawing has codified over the years.
The meeting program continued with the presentation of the call in progress at the date of the event–with Franco Purini's intervention, who outlined five points for investigation on the theme of the current call *The geography of the image* [12]: 1) what is the image today; 2) the image as opinion maker; 3) who produces the images; 4) geographical declinations of the visual language; 5) what is the duration of images.

The mere examination of these five questions, as Fabio Quici has pointed out, seems to outline a program of scientific investigation whose development possibilities go far beyond what a journal issue can fully contain, and the debate that ensued proved this: numerous interventions, both by scholars personally involved in the journal and by authors who have contributed to it or are regular readers, opened up as many perspectives for the development of the proposed path. As an example, and to show how XY can raise deep research questions, let us mention only the first one.

We know that the scientific literature is full of attempts, almost never exhaustive, to define what an image is, and that even a scholar of the stature of James Elkins has found it easier to go down the road of *reductio ad absurdum* and try to define what an image is not [Elkins 2019] also following the promotion of the conference *What is an image?* held in Chicago in 2008 and the subsequent in-depth study in the book of the same name published in 2011 [Elkins, Naef 2011]. Partly because of the broad domain of studies that have images as their object (aesthetics, art history, visual studies and *Bildwissenschaft*, graphic sciences, semiotics, etc.) it is necessary to clarify the context of application of the question. From a geographical point of view, for example–in a partial short-circuiting between the first and the fourth question proposed by Purini–even the domain of the word 'image', from a linguistic point of view, risks fueling divergences, so much so that Bredekamp feels the need to emphasize that some of the differences between the approach of German-speaking and Anglophone art history or, Bredekamp feels the need to stress that some of the differences between German-speaking and English-speaking art history or, even more, between *Bildwissenschaft* and visual studies can be found in the semantic depth of the German word *Bild*, which includes 'image', 'picture', 'figure' and 'illustration' [Bredekamp 2003]. Or

like Fabrizio Gay who, speaking in the debate during the *XY* meeting, points out that the first fundamental distinction to be made is between the image object, the artefact, and the image as the form of the content, as already distinguished, for example, in Husserl's phenomenology in *Bilding* (the iconic thing) and *Bildobjekt* (the iconic object) [Calì 2002]. Therefore, on the seemingly simple question "what is an image", it is clear that there is still a lot of space for the setting up of an ontological discourse, for defining a domain of the field of study, and that we hope can be developed in the journal, as in other contexts.

Following the debate on the theme of the current call, which lasted over an hour, other themes were presented during the meeting as possible proposals for future calls. This second part is certainly a *unicum* in the scientific publishing panorama, and concretely clarifies what Ornella Zerlenga meant when, at the end of her introduction, she recalled how *XY* was a project accustomed to «speak in the plural rather than the singular». In fact, the epistemological model proposed by the journal is one of openness, listening, frontier, as we have already said, which would collide with a top-down direction, and which instead favors, instead, an open participation right from the phase of developing the ideas for the call for papers.

The theme presented by the curators of the meeting, *Freehand drawing*

as conceptual expression, proposes to investigate the role of autograph drawing as an intimate cognitive process, focused on a slow manual skill that allows an investigation of details (Zerlenga), an act of critical resistance against the overpowering of the pixel to find a new archetypal drawing (Giordano), with the need to address the problem of the incisiveness of graphic communication and expand the goal of a collective knowledge built through individual gestures–bottom-up–overcoming the limit of consolidated knowledge–top-down–also from an inclusive perspective (Cirafici). The subsequent proposals were: *Drawings of images, images without drawing* proposed by Lucio Altarelli; *The Trieste School of Experimental Psychology and Perceptology* by Gianni Contessi; *Resolution and definition of images* by Edoardo Dotto; *Cultural heritage, new technologies and society* by Manuel Franco Taboada and *Urgent drawings*, by Irene Cazzaro, Cristina Pellegatta and Starlight Vattano.

In conclusion, the plurality of the themes proposed, their evidently multi-faceted nature, once again demonstrates the value of the *XY*, a project that since 1986 has stimulated an entire scientific community to research for its own frontiers, not to consolidate them but to expand and bring the field of Drawing to unexplored places, often unexpected, rarely fruitless, but always scientifically stimulating.

Notes

[1] <http://www.webofknowledge.com/> (accessed 10 April 2021).

[2] <https://openarchives.org/> (accessed 10 April 2021).

[3] <https://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/> (accessed 10 April 2021).

[4] <https://openaccess.mpg.de/Berlin-Declaration> (accessed 10 April 2021).

[5] Today, the website of the 2004 Messina conference is no longer accessible, but the full text of the declaration is available on the website of the 10-year conference at the following address: <https://cab.unime.it/decennale/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Dich_Messinal-TA.pdf> (accessed 10 April 2021).

[6] <https://www.scopus.com/> (accessed 10 April 2021).

[7] The DOAJ *Directory of Open Access Journals* was founded in 2003. <https://doaj.org/> (accessed 10 April 2021).

[8] Source: National Science Foundation, <https://www.nsf.gov/> (accessed 10 April 2021).

[9] Although the cycle of seminars *Idee per la rappresentazione* was born and developed autonomously from XY, it is significant to note, in order to understand the commonality of scientific approach, that all the promoters of that fruitful experience are currently part of the scientific committee of the magazine.

[10] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFWd-V3BKbdw&t=1s> (accessed 10 April 2021).

[11] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZtBqP-zP6P4&t=4888s> (accessed 10 April 2021).

[12] <http://www.xydigitale.it/la-rivista-xy-dimensioni-del-disegno/la-nuova-serie-dal-2016/60-.html> (accessed 10 April 2021).

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