

## Reviews

Domenico Pastore

### ***Dalla superficie al volume. Una lettura grafica dei Solidi di Cesare Leonardi***

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The study settled by Domenico Pastore in his book *Dalla superficie al volume. Una lettura grafica dei Solidi di Cesare Leonardi*, was conducted with the aim of promoting the knowledge of one of the key figures of Italian design: Cesare Leonardi. At the beginning of the 1980s, Leonardi focused on recycling and recovery operations of multilayer wood panels, used for the formwork of reinforced concrete structures, as a material for the construction of a variety of objects for domestic use. Leonardi anticipates –as Pastore observes in the introduction– some current themes of contemporary research based on the reuse of materials and on an artisan/authorial approach to reflection on the design project, also in terms of feasibility. In line with these issues, Leonardi’s ability is therefore highlighted in terms of a unique artistic research on the elaboration of the object-form using drawing as reported in the extensive and exhaustive design documentation. The outline of the book –organized in paragraphs and graphic elaborations– has an organization that comprises two parts: the first represents on the one hand a cross-section of Leonardi’s biographical events and summarizes his main research in the field of design. These were mainly centered on the expressive and structural possibilities of wood. In the second part, the investigation of his projects is analyzed, using not only the available bibliographic and iconographic material, but also elaborations and revisions.

The outcome of this research and re-working activity can take the form of a very in-depth academic/disciplinary investigation into the configurative genesis and creation of design objects on the Italian scene. This research is therefore a starting point for further and even more detailed elaborations that may, one day, guide the possible –and favored by many– reading of design from a generative point of view.

This study also makes use of a detailed and precise graphic analysis of the solids elaborated by Cesare Leonardi from 1983 to 1993. These complex objects were then modeled both digitally and through the creation of prototypes made with the use of laser cutting machines, during the teaching activities of the Design lessons, inside the three-year degree course in Industrial Design of the Polytechnic of Bari. These activities, carried out in the academic year 2019-2020, involved two architect tutors: Francesca Sisci and Luca Bifone. Furthermore, these elaborations were then the subject of an exhibition, entitled *METAMORPHOSIS –from surface to solid– redrawing Cesare Leonardi’s solids*. This exhibition, held in February 2020 in the Brunelleschi and Philibert Delorme Gallery of the ICAR Department of the aforementioned Polytechnic, aims the knowledge, outside the disciplinary boundaries, of a fundamental and influential personality of the twentieth century design. On the other hand, from the study presented by Pastore, the

personality of a designer with creative abilities emerges that the careful analysis of his works confirms as an emblematic exponent of the Italian and international scene. The work, therefore, is part of the study of the geometric-structural genesis of design objects also in transformative terms, understanding the Leonardo's ability to handle surfaces as dynamic configurations ready to be generated. In particular, from the adopted documentation and from the re-elaborations proposed by the author, it is possible to reach a complete understanding –albeit complicated due to the articulated and complex shapes that are found among the drawings– of the structural nature of the objects, also making the understanding of the objects completely adequate, with construction details (cuts, joints, assemblies). The book clearly highlights the process of implementing complex geometries that go beyond an elementary conception of design. In this sense, the study of surfaces plays a decisive role not only in the field of graphic representation [1]: “*non essendo realizzabile alcuna proiezione –mongiana, prospettiva o assonometrica– di una*

*qualsiasi forma dello spazio, senza che se ne conoscano la genesi geometrica e le proprietà configurative*” [Sgrosso 1996, p. 63]. In fact, the close link between the knowledge of surfaces, in their geometric essentiality, and the understanding, communication, representation of design objects, leads us to observe how this knowledge is also capable to stimulate the invention of innovative and original shapes, acting as a creative support for the entire design process. Therefore, from the study proposed by Pastore, new aspects of those same surfaces can be seen, whose only metric properties have long been considered, according to a reductive and simplistic evaluation. Surfaces thus assume a configurative role not only for architecture –existing or *in fieri*– but also for the design, connoting itself, at the same time, as the geometric structure of the shapes– entitled “solids” by Leonardo. For these reasons, the research conducted by Domenico Pastore is structured as a rational taxonomy. Far from being a formal scientific systematization of design and sharing of the idea of design that is determined by multiple

factors, not only by evidence visualization of surfaces, this taxonomy allows us to reflect on the following feature: the importance of the assimilation, by the designer who approaches it, of those concepts that make the shapes of the design itself not only recognizable, but also imaginable and projectable. Moreover, as anticipated, this investigation does not want to be limited to the simple identification and representation of these shapes everywhere present and essential to our civil life, but rather investigates their intimate geometric nature and the impact on implementation aspects. In fact, from the proposed extensive graphic apparatus, the importance of the study of the metric aspect is also evident. The metric aspect, in fact, establishes the material limits of the realization and therefore allows and controls the sizing of the configurations and their structural definition, without however exhausting their values or meanings, which can be deduced from the study of surfaces and mutual intersections.

Andrea Giordano

## Notes

[1] «Nella rappresentazione, tramite la comune riduzione al contesto grafico e ai suoi codici logicamente e storicamente istituiti,

può dispiegarsi ed esprimersi per intero il rapporto tra le dimensioni umane e quelle fisiche della materia, che nel progetto assume

forma e commensurabilità con la mediazione dell'elaborazione geometrica e numerica» [Ugo 1994, p. 188].

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