

# Editorial

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This issue of the journal, edited by Pilar Chías Navarro, Andrea Giordano and Ornella Zerlenga, takes us back to a conceptual aspect of vision, that is, a particular point of view that 'looks at' or 'narrates' the world of things from above. Indeed, the editors wish to specify in the introduction how, in both literature and drawing, representation actually constitutes the act of storytelling. The point of view is the eye of the narrating subject, who constructs his story through effective and instrumentally useful languages. And, indeed, the world seen 'from above' takes us back to various literary classics from all eras in which the point of view rises, shifts, or is overturned with great expectations and at times against all logic. The first is *Le Petit Prince* (1943), narrated by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry who, having dropped down from who knows where in outer space, free from the preconceptions of 'false knowledge,' tells of the sight of small distant worlds where space and time take on very different variables seen from Earth; there where sunsets could be as many as forty-three in a single day, contrary to the laws of numbers and astronomy. Another novel that takes us back to unusual and daring visions is *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884) by Edwin A. Abbott, in which the vision of a new horizon is both knowledge and terror, just as the poor Square of

Flatland, a two-dimensional world, cries out when he is taken aloft to learn about the third dimension: "'When I could find voice, I shrieked aloud in agony, 'Either this is madness or it is Hell.' 'It is neither,' calmly replied the voice of the Sphere, 'it is Knowledge; it is Three Dimensions'" [1]. And finally, we cannot fail to mention Lewis Carroll, [2] the Oxford mathematician author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* [Carroll 1865] and a contemporary of Abbott, who, perfectly aware of the change the scientific world was preparing for, leads Alice "through the looking-glass" [Carroll 1871] into the world in which each object creates its own space (a kind of little theory of relativity). The dimensions in which Alice 'travels' are those of the telescope that lengthens and shortens, and which functions as a magic word to elude time and space, or at any rate to evade their laws.

Reading these novels represents a continuous challenge to the rigor of rationality opposed to a world closed in its knowledge and logic, rules that man's desire for knowledge has always sought to transcend, from the classical myth of Icarus, to the flights of the Montgolfier brothers (Joseph-Michel 1740-1810; Jacques-Étienne 1745-1799) and to the transatlantic flight completed in 1927 by Charles Lindbergh (1902-1974).

The space within which these legendary flights and feats take place is the air, a free space where the destiny is fulfilled of those who detach their shadows from the ground and, at the same time, experience, the ecstasy of open vision and the anguish of falling. This is why art has always played an important role in the view from above, embodying suggestions, desires and frustrations, a metaphor for seeing beyond the projection of the present, because what is certain is that every great discovery is driven by an insatiable curiosity.

The proposal formulated by the editors reflects, on the one hand, the desire to retrace the scientific foundations of drawing, where theoretical and technical aspects of the discipline are combined, and, on the other hand, the anxiety of knowledge and the strong intermingling of art and science that, more than a hundred years ago, found great expansion thanks to the figurative avant-gardes.

An issue devoted to the history and innovation of the discipline of drawing, in which the nature and the artifacts of the world reside in the depths of the beholder's eyes and take shape thanks to the cultural, historical, technological and social construction of a gaze that is never neutral, but always conditioned by expectations, certainties and ideologies that are as profound as they are, at times, unconscious. Between desire and innovation, prefiguration and planning, the view from above proves to be a critical tool of knowledge, but also a capacity for synthesis and utopian thinking. Chías Navarro, Giordano and Zerlenga, teachers aware of the importance of the scientific foundations of drawing and with a deep knowledge of descriptive geometry, propose a vision both theoretical and innovative, to return in this issue, through the selected contributions, an exercise of reflection on the superstructures that condition the observation of what surrounds us, be it landscape, architecture or artistic expression. Thoughts, essays and reflections between advanced technologies and profound specula-

tions that allow advancement on the path of knowledge and awareness for a reasoned analysis of places, an indispensable premise for responsible projects.

The columns, which are part of the established structure of the magazine, are kept on a level consistent with the theme of the issue. The image chosen for the commentary and described at the opening of the issue by Concepción López González proposes Piet Mondrian's famous work *Composition A: Composition with Black, Red, Gray, Yellow and Blue*, while, for the *Readings/Rereadings* column, Bruno Taut's book *The City Crown*, commented by Daniele Colistra, seemed an appropriate choice.

As always, there are reviews of recently published books and of the events sponsored by the Unione Italiana per il Disegno (UID) that took place between late 2022 and the first months of this year.

We also report that in this issue some changes have been made related to the editorial structure, due to the fact that two very young researchers, Sonia Mollica and Sara Morena, have joined the editorial staff.

Issue 13 of the journal, edited by Paolo Belardi and Massimiliano Campi and titled *The Present of Architectural Drawing* is already in preparation. A topic that intends to foster critical and theoretical reflections on the role assumed by drawing in the architectural design activity performed by those protagonists who have become affirmed on the international scene in this first part of the millennium (2000-2023) because, beyond the technological skills imposed by the use of digital software, what always stands out is the need for a cultural direction aimed at not confusing the means with the ends.

In wishing you an enjoyable read, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the realization of this issue, from the authors to the editors, reviewers, journal manager, editorial board, and editorial staff.

## Notes

[1] "When I could find voice, I shrieked aloud in agony, 'Either this is madness or it is Hell.' 'It is neither,' calmly replied the voice of the Sphere, 'it is Knowledge; it is Three Dimensions open your eye once

again and try to look steadily.": Abbott 1885, p. 122.

[2] Lewis Carroll is the pseudonym of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898).

## Reference List

Abbott, E.A. (1884). *Flatland. A Romance of Many Dimensions*. London: Seeley & Co. <[https://books.google.it/books?id=u8HOxy7IQYUC&printsec=frontcover&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.it/books?id=u8HOxy7IQYUC&printsec=frontcover&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)> (accessed June 23, 2023).

Carroll, L. (1865). *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. London: Macmillan and Co.

Carroll, L. (1871). *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*. London: Macmillan and Co.