

Points of View from Above

Pilar Chías Navarro, Andrea Giordano, Ornella Zerlenga

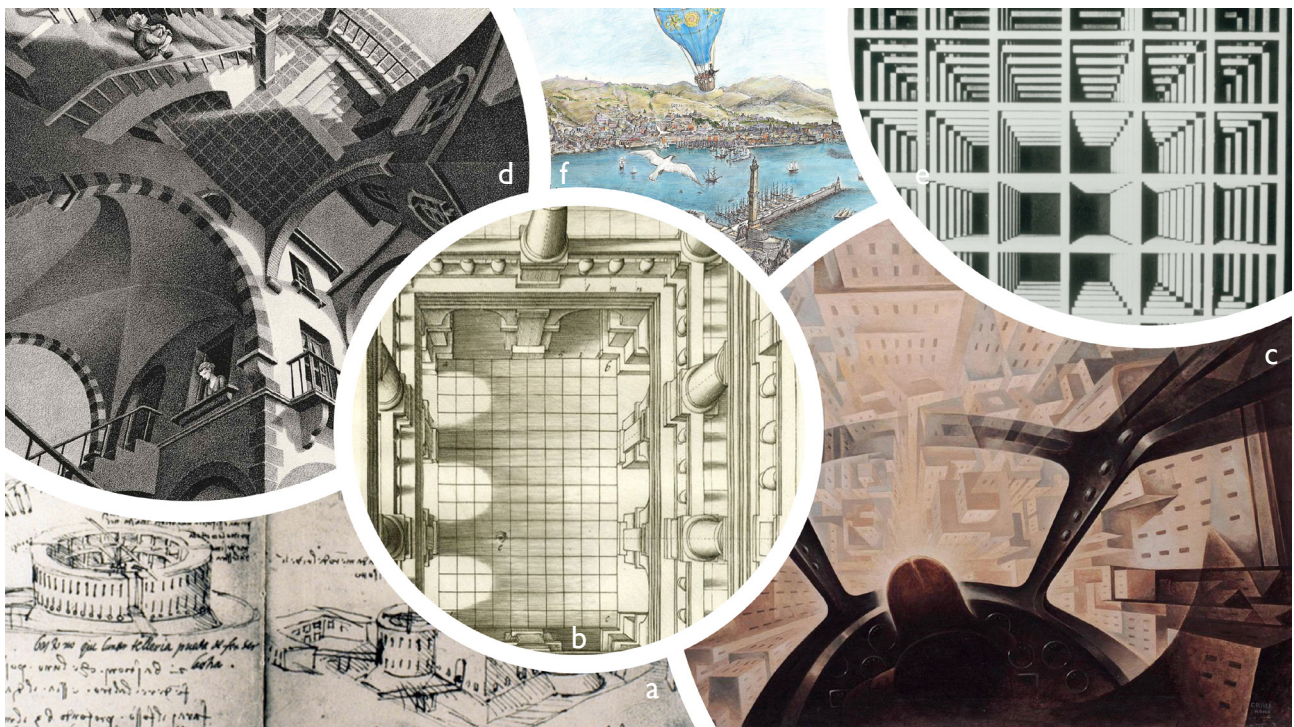
In the most general sense, 'point of view' means point from which something is imagined to be observed (an object, an architecture, a landscape, etc.). The concept of 'point of view' is in fact synonymous in terms of 'angulation', 'visual angle', 'perspective' and can correspond to a point that is both physical and figurative. It is no coincidence that in literature (which shares the act of narration with representation), 'point of view' means the angulation from which the narrator places himself and, in the descriptions, the concept of 'point of view' to return a classification on the storyteller's position in relation to what he is narrating. In this sense, the description is defined as 'mono-perspective' when there is a single angle of linear order and 'multi-perspective' in the case in which the description is 'seen' from multiple angles and, therefore, returns a non-linear trend. However, again, in a narrative there is also a 'spatial point of view', which depends

on the place where the author narrates and describes what he sees, as well as a 'temporal point of view', which follows the time of the description in moments different or at different stages. Nevertheless, above all, there is a 'subjective point of view' that is of a cultural, psychological and ideological nature, which invests the mental attitude of the person describing, from the cognitive to the emotional one.

However, all these definitions lead to a 'fixed point': the 'point of view' alludes to the act of pointing one's eyes on something. At the same time, it also contains in itself the choice of the narrator (here 'representative', in the sense of 'the one who draws') to place himself in a precise position from which to observe reality, which could 'appear' different if perceived from a 'different' point of view. This would arise doubts about the objectivity of the narration (in our case, of the representation), but it is not like that. The choice of the 'point of view' from which to

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Fig. 1. The privilege of viewing from above in the analog drawings of: a. Leonardo da Vinci, design sketches; b. Henry Hondius, *Instruction en la Science de Perspective*. La Haye, 1625, Tav. No. 29; c. Tullio Crali, *Incuneandosi nell'abitato*, 1939; d. Maurits Cornelis Escher, *Up and Down*, 1947; e. Sol LeWitt, *Between the Lines*, 1980; f. Sandro Miglierini, *Drawings of Cities Views from Above*, Genova and the Riviera, 1990.



observe reality and, therefore, describe it finds its foundation in the synthesis of the multidimensionality of the aspects to be represented, of the multiplicity of representation methodologies suitable for describing them, of the purpose of the representation itself, i.e. of the information that this must convey. In the geometric representation of reality, the position of the 'point of view' is a function of several parameters:

- the observation distance (finite or infinite) of the object from the picture plane of the representation (plane on which the image of reality is geometrically projected and delineated);
- the direction of observation and the disposition of what is being described referring to it (in the case of infinite distance);
- the height of the observer considering the ground (in the case of finite distance).

The definition of these elements makes it possible to determine several 'points of view' of the same reality, arriving at the construction of different figurative outcomes such as to totally abstract from the visual effect of three-dimensional perception, discretizing reality into two two-dimensional 'views' (method of double orthogonal projections: plans, sections, elevations). Otherwise, to perceptually allude to the three-dimensionality of reality investigated according to 'points of view' which extract the observer from the context (parallel or cylindrical projections method: axonometries), or which, on the other hand, 'immerse' him in the context (method of central or conical projections: perspectives).

Moreover, the repercussions that such thoughts on the 'point of view' can have in creative and ideational terms of the spaces –imagined or designed as digital hybridization with programs supported by Artificial Intelligence– are fundamental. In this sense, and it is a current debate, whose 'point of view' is it, the representative or the machine?

In addition, if the point of view belongs to the machine, from 'which' point of view (technological, cultural, and emotional) does the machine represent, translating words into visual images? In this sense, number 12 of the scientific journal *diségno* invites us to reflect on the configuration of graphic narratives created through 'points of view', which observe reality from above and decline the theme into four areas of interpretation:

- representational geometries from above (narratives that find their theoretical foundation in the science of representation);
- measuring territories from above (narratives that find their theoretical-practical foundation in the use of methodologies, techniques, apparatuses both analogical and digital);
- visual thoughts from above (narratives which, like the myth of Icarus, find their artistic-cultural foundation in the metaphor of a shattered ambition);

- representing landscapes from above (narratives that are based on the idea of 'landscape').

Based on the call for papers launched in October 2022, the choice of a suggestive theme (such as views from above) has opened up an interesting area of debate. Many scholars have participated both with theoretical-practical approaches and with ranging from the subjectivity of artistic production to the representation and enhancement of the landscape, as well as the objectivity and rigor provided by scientific research, gathering the various contributions about the aforementioned four themes.

In drawing up a synthesis of the essays selected according to the usual double blind review procedure, the first theme gathered reflections and case studies that focus on the *Representational geometries from above* (of architecture, city, and territory), whose narratives find theoretical basis in the application of the science of representation. Here, Corrado Di Domenico, associate professor at the Department of Architecture and Industrial Design of the University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli" in the disciplines of composition and architectural design, edits the critical premise. Within this first thematic block, the analysis of the urban views produced during different periods was the subject of the interesting contribution by Michela Ceracchi, Elena Ippoliti and Giovanna Spadafora. In the opinion that the cultural context influences the representation of elements and spaces of the city, the authors reflect on the relationships that characterize the actual graphic expression. The inspection of the Renaissance aerial views of Venice and Parma is, however, the object of study by Chiara Vernizzi and Chiara Finizza. In constituting a significant cognitive advance, their contribution reveals the existing limits in the representation between reality and artifice and, understanding the city as a functional unit, focuses attention on powerful and iconic elements such as the defensive walls. Although they are well known for their exceptional cartographic, historical and artistic value, the maps of the Vatican Museums and Palazzo Doria Spinola are the subject of the article by Michela Scaglione and Martina Castaldi, in which two sets of views are compared, expressive of the geographical/cartographic value of the time. The studies on this first thematic area conclude with the interesting contribution by Graziana D'Agostino and Mariateresa Galizia, about the configuration of the scene views for the Teatro Massimo Bellini in Catania, in which the different perspectives assumed by the spectators are compared with archival information and data obtained through careful research.

The second thematic block is dedicated to *Measuring territories from above* with the theoretical-practical aid of both

Fig. 2. The privilege of viewing from above in drone photography shots: a. Mexico City, hilly area; b. Group of zebras with shadows; c. Rio de Janeiro (Brasil), Christ the Redeemer taken from different angles; d. Bird's eye view; e. Bachir Moukarzel (aerial photographer), Dubai Miracle Garden, 2013; f. Montenegro, Adriatic coast, islet occupied by Hotel Aman Sveti Stefan; g. Vitaly Golovatyuk (in art Panvelvet, photographer), Hong Kong, composition of 43 shots from the drone Phantom 4 Pro.



analogical and digital methodologies, techniques, and tools. The focus is introduced by a critical reflection on the latest generation of technological progress and on the objectivity of measurement by Elia Di Nardo, managing director of Campania Sistemi Srl, a start-up with many years of experience in measuring and representing the territory through topography and geolocation systems, aerial photogrammetry and drone surveys. In this context, the article by Andrea Rolando, Alessandro Scandiffio and Mariavaleria Mininni addresses a very important aspect such as the documentation of the seasonal variations of the Lucanian landscape through satellite images. The goal set by the authors is twofold, namely to integrate geolocated information obtained with mobile applications, to use them in favor of sustainable tourism development and for the technological transfer of the experience to society. Based on the opinion of significant future possibilities of territorial investigation with systems based on remote sensing, Amedeo Ganciu's contribution advances the theme of modeling urban phenomena and territorial dynamics. Through captivating graphs and diagrams, the author reflects on a very topical aspect such as the collection and contribution of relevant and useful data for understanding trends and critical issues in order to determine the correct formulation of territorial planning programs. The theme of measuring territories from above is an occasion for critical reflection by Irene Ruiz Bazán and Gianluca Vita, whose contribution closes this focus. Faced with the considerable quantity/quality of the images obtained from various sensors used in remote sensing, the authors reflect on the changes introduced in the perception of geographical space, focusing on the phenomenon of Google Earth and on the relevant comparison with aerial photography.

The *Visual thoughts from above*, otherwise those narratives that, like the myth of Icarus, find their artistic-cultural foundation in the metaphor of a shattered ambition, constitute the field of study of the third focus. The introduction is the essay of the architect Cesare Battelli, mainly interested in research and experimentation in the field of art and visionary architecture. Such as Matias del Campo and Carlos Campos, Battelli is also known for being an illustrious exponent of the use of Artificial Intelligence in architecture and for considering this

digital context as the beginning of a huge paradigmatic shift in architecture. On these essential/existential themes, and attaining inspiration from the drawings for a project of a Brazilian architect, the authors Letícia Bortolo Martins and Ana Tagliari dwell on the importance of establishing the principles of an architecture in which people are the protagonists of the urban scene. The analysis of the selected documents returns a critical thinking capable of identifying the elements of the design as representations of ideas. The images of Rome between the two world wars are the subject of the interesting essay by Fabio Colonnese and Antonio Schiavo, whose iconographic repertoire highlights the critical use of drawings and/or photographs to represent the birth of a new sensitivity towards urban design. This focus ends with the contribution of Stefano Brusaporci and Luca Vespasiano, that, proposing a critical look at the use of the *camera obscura* in the sixteenth century, analyzes the view of the city of L'Aquila in the *Gonfalone*, whose graphic rigor allows us to reconstruct the main urban references points.

The last thematic section brings together the contributions related to *Representing landscapes from above*, finding foundation in the idea of 'landscape'. The introduction to the topic is by Luca Palermo, art critic and researcher at the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio, who intervenes on the aesthetic and ethical value of the representation of the landscape. In this sense, the essays collected in this topic decline the representation of the landscape in various ways. The stimulating reconstruction of the archaeological landscape of southern Rome is the object of study of Maria Grazia Cianci and Sara Colaceci. The authors, combining different methodologies and various sensors, provide complementary data of great interest and unpublished visions of a particularly important heritage complex. Different is the cut of the contribution of Alessio Cardaci, Pietro Azzola and Antonella Versaci that provides a great tourist potential and, at the same time, an unprecedented reconstruction of the place, focusing on a heritage that is acquiring more value, i.e. the strategic mountain pass and the defensive elements that were built on it. Last but not least, the accurate contribution of Lorenzo Grieco and Vanessa Mingozzi collects and explores the issues left open and those to be explored in the future.

Authors

Pilar Chías Navarro, Department of Architecture, University of Alcalá, pilar.chias@uah.es

Andrea Giordano, Department of Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering, Università degli Studi di Padova, andrea.giordano@unipd.it

Ornella Zerlenga, Architecture and Industrial Design Department, Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", ornella.zerlenga@unicampania.it