

## **A Walk Through The Fields**

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## **A WALK THROUGH THE FIELDS**

### **Abstract:**

There are contexts where it is possible to create an immediate contact with the different forms of design, that better help to understand this side of the project and at the same time to provide the analysis of the contemporary. For these reasons we have taken in examination these border fields. We will undertake a path between the visual and performing arts and architecture from the particular point of view of emphasizing the strong interdisciplinary character of design, in spite of their functional diversity, while addressing the dimension of problem solving regarding the proposed questions. Design, as it arranges a complex of expressed facts, might then be in an area appearing freer from residual problems because actually it's capable of provoking unusual experimental plot. We'll also see how the extent of these interrelations constitute the vast panorama.

### **5 Keywords:**

Contexts, immediate contact, border area, interdisciplinary, experimental intrigues.

### **Introduction:**

this document deals with the tacit questions in the syncretistic tendency which aims to put in the curriculum different interdisciplinary aspects, often transmitting also dyscrasias that not obvious evaluations hide.

I'll try to analyze if students could find a real link between University reality and the deep changes that the new ways of contact with these questions are causing into the world. Is it possible to teach without transmitting unconscious prejudices? Which kind of approach is possible?

### **Paper:**

A didactic path is often an experience. The contexts here discussed are interconnected because they can be useful as a process through which this approach theory attempts to a more immediate participation. An educational method, which tries to convey elaborate conceptions not only logic, evasive, through a direct involvement, both to the fields they belong to, together with their methods, and to the psychological point of view of the environment-beneficiary feedback. The educational path here discussed is a phenomenological design itself, related to the experience of staying "inside" the project. Consequences and technologic problems occurred during the stage of my testing ideas, have begun guidelines to the students involvement in the workshops. Testing experiments faced

with important conceptual questions. They try to take consciousness of the “today” questions in experimental terms: still not questions, but possible “problems” of the future. The last one is a fundamental aspect to people who are devoted to design, architecture and art. People who shouldn't have a paradigmatic education, but researchers capable to open new horizons such as the scientist, the artist, the philosopher. University should educate intellectual people not only how to find a problem solving as the traditional educational paradigm, but who leads the students to face fundamental questions which are often left out because not considered so important on the educational point of view. As we know it's contradictory to involve a first year student with the syllabus. In the last years the cultural scene of design, and education of our society is deeply changed, becoming extremely dynamic and varied. Study syllabus are strict and vague: It not only can't envisage the many social cultural students background with their different way of learning, but it isn't able to consider changes of our times. Besides, the world of technology and design has yet reached young people much time before the educational world has done. Introducing a new educational means. It is also important to ask itself how, what in which we believe is really important. Therefore it's fundamental to make an attentive analysis of the present. All we pass on should be still a lasting value to people whom is addressed. Thinking that is much better sitting down the w.c. now than before is absurd, and if we realize that throughout the centuries its ergonomics is never changed, is really a big conceit. As a consequence, if I ask myself this question, I have necessarily to address to science or science fiction. Therefore I have to go out of the common coordinates problem-method-solution.

The new generations find a world completely different as to the previous one. In this sense, teaching methodology has to realize these changes.

It's necessary to observe that the birth of the modern concept of design comes into a time of a wider production and greatest industrial consumer growth. Therefore the need, of analysing such problems in order to be solved, makes us to realize the state of the world related to its questions and needs. The basis of the need idea, have first of all to consider that the student doesn't have neither that world nor those needs that a method proposes whereas the new generation of students press for consumption as never before in the history of mankind, the world they find is living a heavy crisis caused by the decreasing, by the ageing, by the overproduction and by climate change. Modern young people haven't the power to face these problems like the previous generations. Informative media evolution together with the using of new materials, has brought the rise of a new kind of metamorphic objects. The function of these sensible

objects, made often the coming of other new functions rather than the “requirement” of new solutions. Architecture may be considered a sort of bridge towards arts where it owns its architecture. These aspects merge ever more. Therefore a teaching programme runs the risk of transmitting a frozen idea of the so said “Architectural truth” or the general idea of the design and the relationship between them....To propose new problems nowadays, means to produce new worlds, the frontiers of the possible, much better those of the impossible, are vanished. The Science-Fiction is in trouble. I propose an approach to design as exercising of the problem without solution, a didactic methodology of the “Why” which remains on the threshold.

### **Problem problem.**

Our society is overpowered with solutions, to invent weak problematic underlines the lack of reasons. Men who lived before gave solutions with acts and objects defined through centuries of accommodation. It is better a good problem than a bad solution, it is better living with a good problem than in a society full of idiot. For this reason we will try to overturn the scientific procedure of the methodological approach. The first thing to do is to ask ourselves what a problem is, rather than trouble ourselves about how to train the students to search a solution around a problem. The economic and industrial post-war development, is over. In those years the Pop Art movement arose, plastic become the most important material used for every thing. Beyond, Futurism, Dadaism, Bauhaus experiments, design develops its various natures from those origins: The object of common use, the toy, the educational toy, the virtual multiple kinetic with visual researching targets the making of objects through the rational solution of problems through minimum gestures and operations. Our present is living a crisis the effects of which must be contextualized in this project such as one of the implicit elements like gravity or other likely determining in changing nature and project goals. Consumer media appeal has got its climax. While the world is buried by every kind of rubbish, people is pressed to buy needless things, advertising is not more an external moment of this project, integral part of the design which has its goal in the figure of the consumer. Things which are a luxury symbol are seen as easily achievable by all people. Vacuum cleaner with their pseudo philosophic “*ergo sum*” the same with cars and other products. Of course, the “problem solving” has to consider it. Through this idea , new generations of students have found our critique conscience which can teach them to be different consumer of ideas, products, then promoter of a new project sense. What is a need? It should start from here in order to analyse and to comprehend where a real problem is, instead of inventing

it. We will make a path nearer to their world. Art, architecture, science, speak the same languages. They express ideas through recognized structures, shared in the context from which they come, but, at the meantime sharing common elements with other context. “Talking” about design we can’t forget the several problems of subject analysis from which it comes and whom it addresses. Students we refer to, have this internal world a polarized panorama, of which we will hold when we’ll deal with “problems” and “solving”. Part of our analysis dealing with definitions such as context, reality, language, problem will have to consider the aspect of technique which has lost the simple value of “material”. What that was defined concrete, static, mute, has been transformed in something full of generative contents and new paradigm capable to upside down the traditional methodological praxis. They create a meta project. They function as bridges between contextual areas shared before and difficult to face and give the possibility to new contextual areas to contain new projects. An example from another context is genetic engineering which is technique science devoted to problem solving but at the same time producing new ones. New ideas on corporeity, laws, and technique. In this extremely variegated panorama, there the trend to present technological and scientific works as “Research” cause their implications in the artistic and architectonical contexts even if no concrete ideas are supported. ideological “truth” are put forward.

*Si dà spesso per scontato che una comprensione  
Chiara e distinta di nuove idee ne preceda, e dovrebbe  
Precederne, la formulazione e l’espressione istituzionale.  
(.....)questo non è però il modo in cui si sviluppano i  
Bambini piccoli. Essi usano parole, le combinano,  
giocano con esse, finchè giungono ad afferrare un  
significato che era sfuggito loro. E l’attività iniziale di  
gioco è un presupposto essenziale dell’atto finale della  
comprensione. Non c’è alcuna ragione per cui questo  
meccanismo dovrebbe smettere di funzionare nell’adulto.  
(Paul Feyerabend, *Contro il metodo*)*

The main point is made up of a severe tendency which addresses itself to science and technique as referring points to the artistic production. Researchers commit the wrong to find inside them a confirmation to their artistic works. This thought is contradictory because it gives the wrong idea of finding the truth in the “irrefutable facts of science.” From science it should be useful to take the idea of the constant

experimentation towards changing goals. Dealing with our target, we will try to delineate a dialectic dimension. You can put in evidence how the last century was plenty of artistic movements, political and social revolutions, scientific and cultural discoveries the consequences of which are still everlasting. Architects, designers, artists worked at the same project creating movements and programmatic manifestos even if different in sensibility and peculiarities. Polyhedric figures converged in single protagonists without qualification in those fields. It was Lazlo Moholy-Nagy who realized a continuity line among Art, technique, design, and science as visual researcher. New aesthetics are deeply marked by implications which derive from those historical movements. These elements are equivalent and contemporary, subjective and objective at the same time. During the first years of the twentieth century between revolutions and manifestos two distinct tendencies even if apparently very similar appeared: The project is characterized by a rational method, oriented to the improvement of the social and cultural human life conditions., the other tendency discovers synaesthetic qualities of forms and color perceiving, opening to the subjective and intimate nature of the planning stage. The goal of this one being heavy of implications, becomes no limits experimentation, and , often, without realizing hope. It challenges the bourgeois objectification in the profitable predicting at the organic, complex, indefinite application forms of *non euclidean* geometry. These thesis were untimely to the technologies of the time. Recently we have noticed that , after a technological and cultural evolution, they could be reliable paths. In this sense our target is to exploit that moment as peculiar to increase imagination in what is experimental. The action area is what is constricted between the possible and conjecture, the rash and admissible, the objective and the subjective.. The last one is the most affected by the cultural and technological changes. Then it becomes the real circle of interest and the effective operative possibility for people who are planning. Therefore this is a very important working-out ideas and didactic study moment. Under certain aspects the Twentieth century may be considered a futuristic century. People who recognized themselves under the avant-garde movement, may be defined futurist. *A Town of Three Millions of Inhabitant* by Le Corbusier, is an utopian and rationalist example where the panorama seems to be a futuristic one, where the solution is only the excuse to the problem. For this reason it may be considered a science-fiction work. Many artistic objects rise to provoke, next become real contents for new needs, then new solutions. An example of it is *La Sedia per Visite Brevi* 1945 by Bruno Munari, the use of which was considered “*Impossible*”

(The chair was greatly slanted), it was a criticism to more and more frenzied life and an invitation to stay few time in case of no welcome visits. On this basis at the present day we find similar chairs down Paris underground, just the arrival of the next train. Other example is *The Monument at the Third International* by Tatlin, never realized, cause technological, political and economical questions made define it just a fantastic fluttering .

At the present complex and daring asymmetries like those ones, are seen in a different way.

Besides, we know that his Letatlin, designed for a study on the human flight through the use of objects which never reached their goal. Probably ,what we love, had something of absurd and incongruous, during its realizing. Each solution is source of a problem .

Another important question is the concept of spatiality, today at the centre of a greatest interest for many different reasons. Often, spatiality is undergone to the passive jargon by the current dictionary: an example to all is the term of “Interactivity”

*Gli ambienti non sono contenitori, ma  
Processi che mutano totalmente il contenuto*  
(Marshall McLuan, *Percezioni*)

These vagueness often spread wrongs given by primary not peculiar evaluations. Aspect filled of materiality which will take us to perceptions observations strictly lied to consciousness.

These aspects are fundamental to study, to experiment , to comprehend planning elements having the goal to best comprehend the present theories, changing and concepts regarding the material approach.

### **Material and Immaterial, Analogical and Digital, Real and Virtual.**

We will take in examination photography particularly the digital image because it resumes a series of notion such as appearance, physicality, objectuality etc . The digital image could be related to the concept of photography during the nineteenth century, however, at the present , the meaning of the term “digital” has produced a metaphorical utmost degree of the concept of spatiality as immaterial, virtual, interactive place, even of digital as final act of the same materiality. Far from a simple shock. Nicholas Negroponte, a master of digital image, in his work *Essere digitali* outlines the difference between atom and bit. In nineteenth century thanks to Einstein and Heisemberg terms such as “physical” and “substance” are deeply changed. Can we still sustain this dichotomy and

the following consequences? There is a gap between before and after. That is given by the coming of *digital era*. There are a whole professional categories shared by the acceptance of the digital or of the analogical. Somebody talks about digital autonomy which could permit the realising of independent world from reality, then in this sense “virtual”. We are in front of ancient concepts such as mimesis and freedom of expression. Here begins our analysis. We could say that digital is analogical, a referring point may be images. Digital method is based on the same principles of physics from which the traditional photograph comes, otherwise it couldn’t be visible. A photograph can live inside a negative film, it can give us informations only if incident light passes through it. On silver salt paper, kept in the dark room, it will not be visible, when we open the window, it appears, the “file” opens. Light gets the surface, the virtual is shown. The same happens when we believe inside the computer something exists, so we talk of “virtual”. We believe we can do it to recall the real ectoplasm potentially, never totally real and outward. This act gets the evocation power, a sort of recalling to life, to thought. It is supposed by a pre-existing the immanence of which is presumed by the relationship between the machine and me. *Analogy* I think that the imagine is inside. You switch on the computer and you see again an open page which makes the light to enter, the same light, the electromagnetic emanation which permits to show the same “all day long reality” more than its emanation on a paper surface. “Bit” are translated in something of visible by an electromagnetic frequency shareable and shared by all over the world, the physics codex which shows itself sometimes as photon, sometimes as light or sound or yet as substance.

#### **Physics of memory.**

The “fixing” aspect on the support, shows its analogy with the past dimension proposing and with the question of memory and duration. Whoever wants to keep an archives of images and texts, will have wardrobes full of the same file. On the other side, with the coming of “new technology” the informative, changing polisemic aspect of spatiality as place where events are performed (see theatre) and transformed, is emphasised. The direct involvement of the spectator to the Kinetics dimension not more as a passive observer, comes from the first futurism, where architecture, scenography, toys objects, showed an enjoying dynamical to interaction to entertainment. Through Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, Dadaism flew into analytic and meditative kinetics, a sort of mentalist which is one of the qualities of the current spaces become sensible, changing and alive.

#### **The Mind.**

This study finds its roots in the cybernetic, analysing the relationship between computers and some deep areas of brain and psyche as our extension capability, as horizon of material and virtual meanings.

Mind works gives to itself meaning and asking about new functions. Language, is the virtual aspect of this aspect.

With the growing up of the digital allegory, analogical grows up the same. Is more the analogical which follows the digital or is it the contrary?

New paradigm of relationship: spatiality as happening. A video installation is bright information whose the cinematic content can realise sceneries. Light itself is information, its content may change time, text and object as if it was "virtual". Supposed that light doesn't exist without a material referring on which reflecting, and which the same object is a shape of the same light energy through which it shows itself, interactions between various element of which nature contexts are made up, are implicit.

Furnished with our path the following will offer some research experiences and planning

Moments which have been presented to workshops and which are new approaching hypothesis to first year didactic studies.

**a) *Vettori***, (vectors) overview of research on space, time, consciousness, it is a study that conceived and realized a device for retrieval and reproduction in 360°: the movie camera *Sincronottica*. *Vettori* is perceived as an internal environment proceeding in consecutive instants, advancing as on a vehicle in movement. First conceived for theatre it became an object of elaboration in various workshops for their articulated aspects and the involvement they achieve. The resulting spatial perception is quite stimulating. This path including many different mental technological, conceptual, artistic, and expressive design implications, has been the reference point to a didactic path. The workshop set to the Architecture faculty of Catania centre of Siracusa in 2004 all week long involving first and second year students.

**Targets :**

To realize an exploration of the spatiality concept on different levels: physical – sensorial, conceptual, technological, and artistic approaching scientific and philosophic questions. We have tried to deal with areas where the didactic path of the design was not intended as something else to be solved. Expressive field, free from the specific planning interest. With the goal to reach a constructive utility. Space related to our ability of "listening it" as plastic form full of invisible symbols and constant

modulations. Moving the problem to the design, that is to say to that project which doesn't solve anything apparently. That doesn't change your life, anyway it is heavy of a new quality problem to be solved and rich in further development. Design as experimental challenge which involves many different aspects of thinking, of building, of imaging.

**Methods:**

- a) Moving the attention on the awareness of your own conscience.
- b) Realising a meditation on the relationship between internal space and the external one.
- c) Exercising in promoting experimentally new problems and technological devices to realise the projects.
- d) Exploring and discovering new areas of the design between art, architecture, performing arts.
- e) Observing The space-temporal flow.
- f) Trying a comparative approach between the human perceiving system and the animal one.
- g) Fluid representation of space.

**Ways of exercising:**

- 1) Realising plastics through the analytic quality with regards to space-time, distance, and becoming.
- 2) Three-dimensional computerised representation in animation-evolution
- 3) 3D Representation considering the six coordinates
- 4) Images containing real spaces and building , adjustment through the preferential visual.
- 5) Shooting video /meditation. Identifying a use of device to get a personal time-space and evolution.
- 6) Involvement in final setting up exhibition to the Civic gallery of Contemporary Art.

fig. 1

fig. 2

fig3

fig. 4

fig. 5

fig.6

**Issues:**

We observed how high students involvement was through their works out, both as “actors” of an idea and with regard the possibility to find corroboration in their experimentations, where more the question was free, more they were insecure. The participation to a final exhibition was very important: it put in evidence how the involvement of the student is determining because he get out from the traditional didactic contexts, to open to the world at different levels.

**b) C.I.C.O. : Composition Individualized in Continuous Operations.****Materials and Methods:**

Method favouring the discovery of new forms in existing objects creating composite solutions. Proposed approach analyzing forms and the creation of associations between very different contexts and objects. Ambiguity and continuity between objects on a different scale; a never – ending exercise. The discovery of different formal contents is favoured in the existing object without priority between utility objects, art, architecture and nature.

Improving observation faculty towards the analysis of the existing; on objects, materials, structures, reinforcing the proportional leaps perceiving of scale and context favouring the realizing of an internal path to the planning process regarding the studying and to the analysis of revealed structures .Developing the ability to produce new objects with very different goals and quality, including volumes dimension.

**Paths:**

- a) Observation of structure through the snapping and the photographic framing , the sense of volume, shadow and range.
- b) Precise analysis of the object and secrete structure discovering
- c) Observation of the possible correspondences in the relationship between two or more objects.
- d) New objects and structures with different functions.

**Typology of practicing:**

- 1) The student was asked to make a series of photographic snapping, framing a detail of different objects, architecture structures etc.. to realize a sum of these objects which placed on a new one.
- 2) Through a editing video software, student was asked to realize a result evolution, with fading, transparency, with a consequentiality which reached a visual meaning coherent in

equilibrium, form, structure, symmetry and asymmetry volume and, in some cases of function.

- 3) It was asked to reach a volumetric value of synthesis therefore the evolution of the process gave the advancing sensation of the system till the final result of the summary in all coherent.

fig. 1

fig. 2

fig. 3

### **Issues:**

We have observed the possibility to connect through the analytic perceiving of the form, meanings, structures and relationships in a wide way. At the attentive observing of the structures followed a wide range of relationships between sense, content, meaning, hypothesis and discovering approaching at media using.

### **Conclusions:**

We may conclude by stating that the time when one could define an expressive field through a singular technique by means through which it manifested referring to a consolidating tradition, these belong today to regions with ill-defined borders trespassed almost by necessity beyond the possible dictate from various factors of historic order, technology and esthetic. That which in the past represented an exception has become routine procedure. If it then expoandas from a part, the range of technical interest for theatre, architecture, art, etc.. all in all for design as a system of approach in general, a well extended field of designation is needed, not one limited to a particular area of connoted origin.

The didactic approach, to involve the first year student , should contemplate a series of openings to experimenting contexts, arguments and world of the contemporaneity. This favours the continuity between the didactic and the world of project in its different forms. These contexts and approach favour the goal.

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