MAKE IT VISIBILE!

Fabio Fornasari & Sveva Avveduto

We present the first results of a research project, that studies and produces objects to implement new models and perspectives of art in education and research. The part we present is a medium, a narrative technology in constant evolution. We use a narrative path as an experimentation field to test and verify connections between social space and the construction of world images building a specific language in the narrative dimension of research.

Fig 1. Screen layout of the images found in the selected period in the browser MAKE IT VISIBLE©

Fig 2.

Fig 3. A confirmation of what is supposedly from the reading of images. The internal roads in the country are organized on the visual center of the tower. Another highlight from the series of photos: unmarked roads are reconstructed from the vision of episodic photographers that load on the network.

There are questions that we attempt to answer since a long time. What are the real challenges of contemporary art? What are its relations with society, history, culture, science and technology?

Where will our "obsession" for interactivity and technology lead us? After the consumer society and the era of communication, does art still contribute to the emergencies of a rational society? How art resists dominant homologation? Where is the conscience? And then, how do we remember?

Science approaches results by theorems, almost aphorisms, the literature builds sinuous prose. But sometimes the opposite can be true and the language of science is almost poetry. Art communicates with us through a visual and tactile thinking. All this revolves around one goal: to enlighten the reality, make it perceptible to our senses.

The task of this work is just that: to make visible our "conscience" settled into the Net, following its tracks into "a time".

Making the invisible of science visible, occupies a good part of contemporary physics and astrophysics at first through the inductive reasoning, then through technology. Making reality more visible through technological and artisctic tools is part of our work.

Explainig what we intend to do could be very simple: a search engine that operates on a stock of images uploaded to the Net, and aggregates them in "paths" that are tied to space and time. But we believe it is interesting to argue the meaning of an operation that sees the world as a building site that produces images in continuous construction.

This work stems from a simple idea: it is impossible for humans to understand their long history without being aware of how over time they came together around the forms of consciousness that are the result of continuous sedimentation.

This is what in general we call culture.

In the formation of culture, has had a significant role both the study of the reality of things, and the making a series of conceptual tools that have led to the identification of samples, examples and models that, once defined and verified, we have been able to use as samples, as a real measurement system to watch and observe everything around us according to this ideal.

The encyclopedia and the museum have been considered the two major conceptual tools, real architectures that have the task of giving structure to knowledge, make it visible and shared for a common review, to represent the models to be used to make comparisons.

The reality in all its forms can be measured and subjected to reference models.

This view of knowledge and culture is coupled with a vision of science ready to prove everything through the experimental method, towards a unique result. Since several decades we have a different awareness: science is not able to provide conclusive evidences, it is always falsifiable. Rather it is a means to understand the world and the universe around us, and then it adjusts continuously (Tattersall 2008).

If we intend to think about the history of culture, of mankind and its step on the skin of the planet, there are no experiments to conduct. Only one thing is possible: we can only observe the traces left behind, and put into a continuous relationship past and present. An interpretation that has a relational attitude: only through a system of qualitative and quantitative comparisons of the traces, you can have an interpretation of cultural history (Diamond 2006).

The styles of scientific and humanistic thought require mutual interpenetration.

There is no discontinuity in what happens around us. The idea that science and philosophy or, more generally, all the humanities are separate, falls into an old approach that divides fields of science and reasoning, that has no sense nowdays.

Technology is designed as a means to reach an end (Brian Arthur 2011) and in this sense, language is a technology which in turn uses other technologies. What we learned is that all technologies are set all togheter. Are not concluded in their external form, but there is continuity with other technologies included in them, combined.

For technology we mean a combination of knowledge, practices, techniques that come from applied science, communication and art.

In this sense we can say that we are writing more and more using technologies. And we also refer to technology when we talk about images: those related to the production of photographs, those related to the loading of them in the various social networks or institutional sites that host them. We refer to them also when we use a tool that allows us to navigate this body of images over time, associated with the space in which they were produced. Google Earth or Picasa, for example.

We're not talking about a hard technology, a technology that tends to overcoming the idea of "human" in a key of "body". We are rather thinking of a software, a search engine that thinks for us, and with us, the way we look at things stored in the Net. We are no longer in a time where you must fill out the Net of contents, but in a time where you have to work on the quality of landscape produced. You must make your way through this vast sea of contents uploaded on the Net.

After all, the sense of this work is to provide a tool to reconstruct the tracks within the historical context of the visions in the network path, and how this activity leaves us a legacy to continue to live the present and the future of our dwelling in the world.

Facing through pictures, routes and maps of the most interesting topics appeared on the Net. Following the joints of the medium over time, its constants and its evolutions. These are the aims of Make it visible, an atlas that seeks to make explicit the links of the vision, to look at the world with technology, geography, travel, literature, theater and other media, as well as with social relations, spaces, rituals. In other words, the consciousness of a place. This work establishes links and correspondences between images, photographs and geography, related to a time that is not just accumulation, but that can be browsed, scrolled and get across. Like a time machine for the visions.

The nature of this work would be to tracing a path.

A road in the visual consciousness of the world. The place of consciousness is the dynamic life of the whole person or the whole animal immersed in life itself.

Human experience is never alone: it takes place in the world with other individuals. The process of consciousness, as that of life, is a dynamic process that involves the world. We are at home in our surroundings. We are out of our heads.

Science, just like history. It can not be taken for granted, firm, fixed. The historical discourse is never born, it always starts again anew.

Why this focus on time, history and its way of developing?

Technology is the result of project, of design, and any technology, any design process is defined first of all in relation to time and place in which it was produced.

The pictorial turn is also well established: the images are considered by any science and discipline a proper language, turning upside down the view that considered images as somewhat misleading, as bearers of a degraded knowledge (Mitchell, 2007)

This change has now led to a simultaneous presence, visible to anyone, of the drawer full of photographs taken on the planet.

The meaning of the images is intimate and internal to the same image. But today we are interested in having the perception of a consciousness that is shown in the world and on the world.

Once the photos were just "snapshots". Today the use of geo photos made the same world a " snapshot". But living the instant removes time. And it is his limit. It leads to forget to put the space of vision in the appropriate time.

What is needed is a thought that may find in a technology a tool to make sure that all this does not become a trash for narcissistic images, but the image of same consciousness of the world. Metaphrasing-Wittgenstein: if he tinks that the human body is the best image of the human soul, then the collection of visions of Panoramio, taken as a "corpus", that is the selection and organization of the whole "corpora" that have a qualitative relationship, is the image of the consciousness of those who live in a place.

An image, produced as a thought full of meaning, emerges only if you keep the whole body immersed in its environment, dynamically.

If the avatar embodies our being in the Net taking us away from our real body, the many visions that each of us now deposited in the Net, in the "virtual" (digital) dimension of planet Earth, are more and more referring to the reality of personally experienced situations, in other words are pieces of consciousness that join with those of others within a timeless mosaic, that has lost the very idea of time. The reality in all its forms can be measured and subjected to reference models.

For centuries we have discussed the idea of presence and the idea of simulation and simulacrum.

In the act of depositing a visual memory, the idea of presence is already inherent in the vision that allows to offer the image the vision to everybody, on the one hand narcissistically, and on the other as evidence of an act of conscience and an act of living and inhabiting.

We are no longer at the dawn of that time. We are inside its adolescence. We are growing inside that time, and on growing we feel the need to organize things differently. To compute, for example.

But which images are we talking about?

We are not taking care here of images of high cultures, of painting, for example, but of the images produced on travelling, the images associated to leisure, to a glance made free from the history of photography.

In this sense, the idea of continuity, vicinity, fractures and survival, that, after Warburg, we applie to the world of images, changes its status as images are often linked to the daily visions or visions of the sublime (meaning the emphatic visions that the public shares on the Net, for example those of sunsets. The landscape reinterpreted in a postcard). People shoot pictures having in mind images taken by others, that often become survivors in their visions. Images shared and participated.

The images speak and make us speak. Always. But the images uploaded to the Net, are not a synthesis, are things not acts. Acts performed by anyone, without giving them any merit. Thanks to the Net and its resources, this is the time that seems to have given at least one answer to the problem of becoming visible. At the beginning of the third millennium, this need has been solved for any representation. If for someone the goal is then to see everything, but also to have everything, for the anonymous crowd it is just to be seen (Virilio, 2005).

All this is now possible and it is even more not only as an opportunities but also as an experience.

The word experience includes thinking, feeling, as is manifested in the perception of the world before us.

The earth, our planet, thanks to technology has become a thinking thing. Our consciences are intertwined, interconnected. But we need historicizing in order to build a sense of all this thinking, remembering, otherwis it is nothing more than background noise.

Any science can not do without using the tools needed to perform research.

These instruments are the result of sedimentation of intelligence applied to building them. In other words of technology.

In front of an image, we are always facing the time (Didi-Huberman, 2000).

Looking at pictures in the Net is like looking at the frame of an open door: it is not hiding anything.

Any image, as recent it may be, finds a re-signification through time. The image becomes the object of a special obsession that binds its meaning to a past that constantly reconfigures it. This happens for every single image placed on the Net.

The construction of meaning in memory, builds up a new meaning to the viewer. It puts at stake the consciences of the beholder and of the picture felt as consciousness, as perceptive experience that represents the world as it has been seen.

Perhaps what we are presenting in the end is the disease which claims to be his own therapy: look, see, recognize!

References and Notes:

1. _Viviana Gravano, Paesaggio attivi. Saggio contro la contemplazione (Milano, Costa e Nolan, 2008)_
2. _Georges Didi-Hubermann, L'immagine insepolta, (Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2006)_
3. _Georges Didi-Hubermann, Storia dell'arte e anacronismo delle immagini(Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2000)_
4. _Ian Tattersall, The World from Beginning to 4000 BCE (Oxford, University Press, 2008_
5. _Alva Noë, Perché non siamo il nostro cervello, (Milano, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2010)_
6. _Giacomo Rizzolatti and Corrado Sinigaglia, So quel che fai. Il cervello che agisce e i neuroni specchio (Milano, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2006)_
7. _Carlo Ginzburg, Miti emblemi spie. Morfologia e storia (Torino, PBE Einaudi, 2000)_
8. _James Hillman, L'anima dei luoghi (Milano, Rizzoli, 2004)_
9. _Paul Virilio, L'arte a perte de vue (Paris, Editions Galileé, 2005)_
10. _Giuseppe Marcenaro, Fotografia come letteratura, (Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 2004)_
11. _Barrow John D, The book of Universe, (London, The Bodley Head, 2011)_
12. _Stephen Hawking, The Grand Design, (New York, Bantam Books, 2010)_
13. _Brian Arthur William, The Nature of Technology. What is it and How It Evolves, (New York, Simon and Schuster, 2009)_
14. _William J. Thomas Mitchell, Pictorial Turn. Saggi di cultura visuale (Palermo, duepunti, 2007)._