

TEMPUS FUGIT

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I drew with DRAWING PEN. And what is a drawing pen, you may ask. Well, it is like a very elementary metallic pen to draw perfectly straight lines on the paper, after loading it with black Chinese ink, with the help of a square and a bevel. And to draw the curves the compass and the moustache. Names and instruments of the last century, or even better, of the last millennium.

I drew with GRAPHOS. And what is a Graphos, you may ask again. Well, in theory it was a gadget that improved with Germanic style the imperfect drawing pencil. In theory it was able to draw the most perfect lines (I must confess that with both instruments I always got lost in ink).

I drew, and maybe you still do, with the ROTRING. It seemed that it was already unbeatable. Although I was still getting lost in ink. And we all had suspicious marks on our wrists where we tried the first touch of that divine pen, as Teutonic as the Graphos.

And both the Rotring and the Graphos, as well as the drawing pen, slid whispering through the tracing paper which, besides being translucent and expensive, was difficult to handle and always ended up breaking where it should not have. Then, once the dressing was done, they proceeded to make the copies in huge diabolical machines that smelled like lightning. Well, ammonia, which is the same thing.

I still have neat collections of labeled rolls with the originals of the execution projects. Those rolls of tracing paper will have crystallized and will break when someone opens them. That's why I don't open them.

And in the same little wooden boxes where the drawing pens and Graphos and Rotring pens rest, rest the dry inkwells, and the two-color Pelikan erasers and the somewhat nicked razor blades. Antiques? Antiques that, so close in time, we are astonished to think that they have already disappeared.

Then came a long time, calm and diffuse at least in my memory, I don't know about yours. The thick computer that burst into our lives gray and chubby is now, thin and portable, the invader, the winner of the communication battle. That which we call infographics or more accurately, ARCHIGRAPHY. I still don't believe it.

I have titled this text TEMPUS FUGIT, like what we were today, which passes so quickly, and what we are tomorrow because tomorrow is already here. Time flies, "TEMPUS FUGIT" as the Latin precept says.

And now, at the dawn of this third millennium, the computer is already dominating everything without any possible discussion. How could anyone say otherwise? I don't have a car or a television or a cell phone or a watch. But I can't, even if I wanted to, not have a computer, a website and flickr. And when I try to leave everything closed for a

couple of days, the return is worse. It's such an avalanche that it's better to give in and keep the computer every day. Like a good husband.

NO MORE BOOKS

There are many, many more books being published than ever before, but people read very, very little. Taschen and Phaidon inundate us with glossy, quasi-pornographic images, and only a few of us take refuge in books of poetry in which we still let our crocodile tears fall.

I can assure you that these days I am enjoying as never before the rereading of Homer's *Odyssey* in a magnificent translation of the year 51 by Luis Segalá. And like Ulysses I have broken off with a strong hand a leafy branch to cover my vernal parts when I have heard the songs of Nausica and her slaves who, after taking off their veils and playing ball, have discovered me sleeping in the dense jungle, the beautiful daughters of Zeus. More than once my tears have wet the pages of this simple edition, good, beautiful, cheap and more than recommendable. Published by Austral de Espasa Calpe. And the version by García Calvo is also great. They are like treasures, like a gift.

And meanwhile the children scatter the gold of their time in front of the screen, the computer screen. This morning I went into a store on Barquillo Street. While the clerk was attending to other customers, his son, a little boy of 8 years old, was furiously attacking the keys of the computer whose screen was attracting all his attention. It was only when I tried to take a photo to illustrate this conversation that the child, astute, stopped.

THERE ARE NO MORE NEWSPAPERS. Even if people buy them, they buy them, they don't read them. They only look at them or keep them. The brief free newspapers, pure advertising, that are offered to us in the morning in the Metro know it well.

THERE ARE NO MORE CASSETTES. Dead collections that have lost hope of resuscitation remain mute, well ordered. Their neurotic collectors have lost the game.

What will some of us do with our thousands of slides that we will never use anymore? Gone are the hours before any lecture when one would select them one by one in front of the lamp. I still remember with what youthful emotion, after appearing in Philadelphia to give a lecture on my work at the University of Pennsylvania, and because I had my wonderful slides in 6x6 format, I had to meet with Robert Venturi who was the only one there with a projector for the said 6x6. Very cordial, he lent me his projector and a great anecdote to tell. And now I only go with that little thing they call Pen Drive (to tell the truth I always carry my couple of DVDs in my pocket, just in case).

And my stupendous 6x6 Hasselblad, the cult object of my generation, which cost me so many sacrifices despite being so expensive, presides at the bottom of my crowded shelves like a mummy, so little it moves, so little I move it. What will become of the development houses that took so much care in their work?

And the COMPUTER is the king. There are screens of all sizes and colors and prices. And if the huge pixel screens preside over Times Square in New York and Trafalgar Square in London, in the Madrid subway, the Nevirs are advertised, the ones with the lion, so small and pretty and cheap, so tempting. On the plane and on the AVE (high-speed train), people carry their laptops on their laps. But also in the popular ALSA buses of Castilla or in the COMES of Andalusia, all are people with laptops on their laps. In the storage room of my house and yours, there is a pile of old, fat, gray computers with a thousand dusty cables, which we have not decided to throw away. Are you aware that not even 5 years have passed? It is not that time "flees", it runs, it is that it runs away.

And what do our children do? Or rather, what do you do? Dedicating thousands of hours a year to this new screen entertainment. Just out of curiosity, do the math and you will be amazed. And the fact is that this is unstoppable.

I was signed up for FLICKR a little over a couple of months ago and we have already celebrated in my Studio with pacharán the 50,00+ visits last week. Amazing.

I decided to make my last exhibition in Madrid with only a DVD projecting the images on a sheet from behind. Because of the Economy of means and the "less is more" and the "more with less", and so on. The DVD contained 3,333 original drawings. And the operation was so cheap that they edited 3,333 copies of which they gave me 2,000 that I now give and send by mail with a simple stamp of 0.42 euros.

When I look up my name on GOOGLE, I am frightened to see the avalanche of references made to me. There I have discovered things about myself that I didn't know, or that I had forgotten about.

And although I have had a WEB page for a long time, www.campobaeza.com, as I think it can be improved, I have hired a Swedish architect who worked with me some time ago, to try to put up the best web page in the world. So great is my faith in these means. I am so clear about the importance of COMMUNICATION.

And I have foreseen in my new web page to have LINKS with different levels of definition of all my projects. From the first sketches to the most complete constructive details of the Execution Project, and even of the later developments.

My collaborators get angry with me and scold me and try to convince me of the intellectual property rights that all this entails. I reply that it seems more logical to me to make available to everyone what one has done. It is not a matter of generosity but of the most overwhelming logic.

The central theme is COMMUNICATION.

Although I am not an Almodovarian, I have to admit that the scene of Carmen Maura in the telephone booth, where at the same time the words of the answering machine are heard, the person who recorded them passes in front of her live and direct, is great and sums up very well the current INCOMUNICACION.

And the COMPUTER, and ARCHIGRAPHY with it, is all about COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION.

COMMUNICATE, TRANSMIT, CONNECT

Cervantes knew it well when, after finishing the first part of Don Quixote, he had it translated into English by Shelton, so that a few years later, Jefferson, who in addition to being President of the United States was an architect, could scold his daughter Maria for "not reading Don Quixote".

And he is not far behind Keats, the poet, when he dedicates a beautiful poem to Chapman for having translated Homer into English. And what's more, this translation was done by Chapman in the same years that Shelton was translating Don Quixote.

COMMUNICATE, TRANSLATE, UNITE. LINKS, BLOGS, WEBS, I PODS, PEN DRIVES

Just a few years ago, we were in the "last century" and even worse, in the "last millennium". And you are all so old that you were born in the last century. Or to look at it positively, we are not only at the beginning of the 21st century, but it is our third millennium. Yours and mine.

A lot has happened, a lot is happening and a lot more will happen. TEMPUS FUGIT. A time that, besides being golden, must and can go hand in hand with us.