

DRAWING IN THE AIR

Writing in the water. Drawing in the air

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We are already in the third millennium. Because, although we are at the beginning of the 21st century, the truth is that we are not aware, almost nobody talks about it, that what we have really done is to change millennium. The future is already here, and it is ours. A future in which we architects draw in the air.

The first time I read Keats when I was still young, I was moved by that definition of himself as "here lies one whose name is written in water" that he proposed as his epitaph. And I could not imagine that in a very short time we architects, because of computer technology, would be drawing in ... the air. Because whether with Autocad or with other systems that appear, we are drawing in the air.

The rotring, which is the last gadget used to transfer our drawings to tracing paper, has disappeared from the face of the earth. I don't know anyone who uses them anymore, not even as a nostalgic act. And before the rotring, the graphos, and before that, the drawing pen. And with them the compasses and the mustaches. And the necessary tracing paper. Of all this there is no trace left. They are so useless today.

Are you aware of the universality of drawing in the air? From the first moment of its invoice through the new media, our drawings and our written words, are able to cross in a second the whole world. That world that we now have "at our feet" through the diabolical Google Earth. And to reach the moon if it comes to it. And it is that universality, real, palpable, effective, what fascinates me, and the main reason for this text.

Some of my collaborators refuse to put "in the air", at everyone's disposal, all my execution projects. And the rest of the documents, all produced with the computer. With numerous details very well worked and very well resolved. They say they are going to copy them. Well, let them copy them, I answer them. That's what they are for. That's why they are in the air. And it is not a question of generosity but of pure logic. It has to do something, or a lot, with what I have so often quoted from Ortega about how "man wastes and wears out technical instruments, but not artistic objects". And these drawings have something artistic, a lot of it.

And this is also valid for the sketches and small drawings that we architects make when we are developing a project, when we are giving shape, still in germ, to the ideas that generate our projects. In recent years I usually use a Pilot 0.4 to make these drawings and write my texts. Recently they scanned all my drawings from the collection of notebooks, small and large, in which I write and draw almost everything. And I was the first to be surprised. Those drawings "mine and only "mine" until then, passed to the air and were available to everyone. Also at my disposal because with this system I can see them again in a much easier and clearer way. When they go on the air, they immediately become universal. And one by one they are sent in a simple way with a simple email. And they all fit, thousands of them, on a pen drive or on a CD that, put in an envelope

and with a simple stamp, crosses the world in a jiffy. And all this, of course, also works, and with more reason than for drawings, for words.

If I started with Keats, I should end with T.S. Eliot who in his Four Quartets, more specifically in the beginning of the first one, Burn Norton, through the poem makes an interesting quasi-philosophical disquisition on past, present and future. I highly recommend it, and if possible in the perfect Faber&Faber London edition that I have on my desk.