

The following paper aims to highlight how the art market at a global level has introduced and, in the long run, consolidated aspects and results due to the profound changes that have taken place following the pandemic in today's society in which the virtual predominates. As a result, the use of remote communication has greatly intensified and led to major transformations in the strategies of leading auction houses, in particular, Christie's and Sotheby's, with a consequent rise in profits, as well as a decidedly reassuring public reaction. There is also mention of online art fairs, such as WopArt, and new artistic expressions that testify to changes in styles and genres in the artistic sector, which include street art and digital art. Finally, within the context of the peculiarities of these artistic products and cycle of activities, the priority is to develop a science in which interdisciplinarity, as a synergy of the human sciences and experimental sciences, represents the result of uniting different skills outside scientific and geographical boundaries.

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND TELEMATIC COMMUNICATION IN ART DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: SOME DISTANCES SAVE, OTHER DISTANCES UNITE

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1. Introduction: the culture of narcissism: competition based on appearance

In present-day society, in which the virtual predominates, the illusion is offered that everything is within everyone's reach. Anyone can become someone, beautiful, rich, famous, which in today's measure of value, is often mistaken for "happiness". So the opportunities of social networks have become electoral manifestos, not so much for the proclamations that appear in them, but more for the choice of the reassuring images that can be published to propose oneself to the public. The general public, such as that of the Internet, the largest ever audience, is naturally more attracted to success stories than to real but sad events. Success is the only topic that attracts the public's attention. They want to win, but without asking themselves what winning means, because they are immersed in the culture of narcissism in which there are not only influencers, but all of us. They want praise from other people, knowing that the competition to obtain it has become very difficult and winning the contest depends on the exhibition of happiness, fun and success.

Consequently the question is: "How can you put a limit to this competition based on appearances?"

The answer is: "By commitment to the real world". In this regard, the pandemic is thought to have changed many things. It is a moment of transition which may even mean the end of the narcissist wave since, with the ongoing pandemic, there is no reason to draw attention to oneself: the nothingness to which culture refers has possibly already been contradicted by history.

While physically we were kept apart during lockdown, the Internet helped us to stay connected in some way, keeping us in touch with each other as citizens and not only as dealers in appearances. In fact it is not social media that is to be blamed, but the mercenary culture and commodification of the images for which they have become a vehicle. Among other things, the Internet is not only image, it is also text. The history of blogs can be traced back to a combination of two elements: words and images, while, to return to narcissism, it is image above all that dominates the Internet in people's wishes and ambitions. Thus, our body has become an object of public debate and of a culture based on extreme simplification.

If we really want to come out of this situation and be better for it, why not take an authentic opportunity to restore dignity and make space again for fear, pain, sadness, and despondency?

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There is then another aspect to underline.

Meanwhile technology provides us with new forms and opportunities for building relationships and communicating online, the tapping on our phones has become incessant, representing a way of asserting one's existence and one's mutual closeness: virtual interaction at a distance.

It is true that fragmentary textuality, typical of telematic communication, is different, and requires different abilities and competences than those of traditional writing. On the one side, writing, on the other, texting, messaging, chatting, social networking: the principal difference is the de-structuring of the text. Text messages are not only brief, but also incomplete: individual characters of a much longer text constitute a whole dialogue – at a distance.

This is what really distinguishes texting from writing: emoticons have been replaced by emojis and gifs, short messages are sent with photos, videos and audios.

But in the face of this observation what follows is disappointment. More and more frequently we realize that search engines can influence our behavior online. Algorithms can exercise some form of control which is different to the one-to-many medias and can even become uncontrollable.

It is the result of the various ways of transmitting information referable to the changes in communication that have occurred over the years.

From a first temporal phase in which the relationship is between two subjects interacting with each other, that is, one-to-one (face to face), to a second phase, in which the interaction through mass media is one-to-many.

It is worth mentioning television and press which communicate a one-way message which has a much wider response from users, but a lesser degree of personalization of the message. Then there is the more current category, screen to face (one-to-one, many-to-many, one-to-many), which refers to the Internet which is a versatile instrument of great interactive communication.

This latter goes back to what was previously highlighted regarding search engines, which can influence people's online behavior.

In fact in this digital age, communication is via technological interface: computer, smartphone, etc. in which the user communicates actively and is able to interpret moods, needs, feelings, by giving comments and opinions online and social media, thus gaining considerable importance. Events show how bugs in the system, through software which simulates human activities (bot, short for robot), can influence people.

Digital power allows users to enter the technological interface with customized messages sometimes inciting them to make rash gestures.

It is also evident that, in the face of this type of perversity of social media, there is the problem relating to its use to violate laws or distort the democratic system in some way.

But if it is true that democracies are in a state of tension between freedom of expression and respect for the rules, it is equally true that there are no rules and digital power feeds on this lack of rules to grow even more.

Those who are responsible for defending the interests of the community, which range from hearing everyone's opinions to not seeing the risks institutions are open to, react more slowly than today's technology and markets.

It has always been like that, but it cannot be used as an alibi.

How can one regulate oneself on these issues?

Are we making enough efforts as educators and trainers of public opinion to strengthen the critical spirit of the operators and make them aware of the demagoguery of the web? If we begin to find answers to these questions, we could move on to the next phase of using the Internet: that of a mature digital society.

2. The art market during the pandemic

How and to what extent has the above been applied and interpreted in art?

Globally, there have been epochal changes in the art market with the pandemic, which have accelerated its transformation: many galleries have closed, art fairs have been seriously affected and turned to virtual alternatives, museums, in particular American ones, have become a risky path of “deaccessioning”, that is, of selling art works to support acquisitions funds and the like, auction houses, on the contrary, fared better in 2020 and 2021 than in 2019, fundamentally as a result of digital auctions.

The best and most important auction houses, Christie’s and Sotheby’s, have in fact implemented new strategies.

Christie’s has adopted a “global formula of selling”, that is the “total sales” of high quality works of art also through hybrid formats involving technology and expertise, with immediate payment in cash and free evaluation.

Sotheby’s has adopted a strategy of cross-category selling, in which, their auctions offer a selection of complementary art works with initial attractive prices, proposing a mix of paintings, sculptures, installations, street art, photographs, design, jewels.

In Italy too, the two leading auction houses, Pandolfini and Ponte, did not disappoint expectations.

Sotheby’s interest, especially in virtual auctions, has focused on historicized works, with an excellent promotional bibliography, regardless of era. The auctions have favoured among others: Morandi, Schifano, Boetti, Melotti, De Chirico.

In the case of Christie’s, the market has rewarded the medium-high economic segment for artists with a national market. The short list of requested names has grown longer and longer: among the artists, Boetti, Schifano, Accardi, Lai and others.

Other auction houses include Finarte, which in 2020 chose a digital solution to promote and sell their works, thus diversifying and fostering customer loyalty.

But there have been other reasons which have determined extremely positive results and a decidedly reassuring reaction from the public due to the particular given to what were once niche sectors, such as philately, books, jewels, designs.

Therefore, despite the pandemic, in 2020 financial statements closed positively compared to 2019, in addition to reconfirming the considerable impulse of private negotiations with significant investments in artworks made online.

3. Among the online art fairs: Work on Paper (WopArt)

Among the art fairs which have become a winning activity, an emblematic example is represented by WopArt, an international art fair that is held annually in Lugano, Switzerland. In 2020 the fifth edition of WopArt, dedicated to art works on paper, was postponed from September to November.

Because of the worsening pandemic, the organizers have opted to make it a “virtual fair”. A courageous decision and a rewarding one, because the market-exhibition, which should have finished on 27 December 2020 continued through to 10 January 2021, because it was so successful. Online entries from 26 November to 15 December were in the order of about 40,000 with an average visiting time of 4 minutes. Using their mouse, visitors could enter the virtual exhibition, moving around freely inside the three-dimensional context to view the art and browse the stands of 45 international galleries with 400 works on display. In fact the virtual exhibition, seen in a completely automatic manner, links the chosen path and the viewed works to the program.

Even during the holiday period of forced lockdown, collectors were able to visit the six pavilions to look for good investments. The works of art ranged in price from 600 euros to one million, determining rumors about the sales and negotiations among the various gallery directors.

Among the historical masterpieces to be sold were: drawings, watercolors, paper works, paintings and many others, which appeared on numerous virtual walls. Choosing a selection of works, interested buyers could write to the gallery directors who, after lockdown, would take the works to their premises without any obligation. There was also the possibility to enjoy an exciting walk around the virtual pavilions of the fair, in addition to those of the sponsors, such as Bnp Paribas, Eberhard or Swiss Logistic Center, accompanied by the organizers' carefully selected background music. Works by Klimt, Léger, Fontana, Picasso, Accardi, Kokoschka, D'Orazio, etc. could be admired, while at the same time, symphonies and songs by some of the great musicians from different historical periods played.

The story of WopArt, opened in 2016, has continued to respond to the needs of enthusiasts seeking to defend a niche segment of the art market. The segment is that of works on paper support which over the years have become highly collectible, both in terms of quality and price. It is on paper that ideas take shape. For some artists it is a temporary support on which to sketch their preparatory drawings, used to create more complex works. But paper, sometimes regarded as not being a very noble support because it is within everyone's reach, can also be used to create masterpieces conceived to live their life on this support.

The 2021 edition of WopArt held in Lugano in Switzerland at the Exhibition Centre, was a special edition, called "Extra Time Exhibition", because it represented a return to on-site presences after the success of the 2020 on-line edition.

It was designed as a festival, as an interlude leading up to the 6th edition in 2022. The list of the various events includes exhibitions, conferences and debates, particularly relating to the transformation of the art market after the pandemic.

Foundations and galleries presented unpublished works of contemporary, modern and ancient art and could discuss these works on paper with collectors and visitors alike: a market which currently allows collectors and enthusiasts to find pieces by both established and emerging artists.

The theme of the 2020 edition was "Fluidity": a concept, of "fluid, with no reason to belong, which – it has been said (Hermann Hesse) – "captures the essence of our time. Just as it is not possible to bathe twice in the same water, so the soul of art lives as if suspended in the life in between."

Conferences and discussions were held with artists, curators, merchants and art historians; worth a mention were the exhibition of watercolors by a literary personality, the Nobel Prize, Herman Hesse, some masterpieces from the BNP Paribas Swiss Foundation collection, a number of selected works by emerging artists and a variety of photographs chosen from the thousands that were available.

4. Street art and patronage in contemporary art

Equally important, though limited to this short account, is another expression of our times and our "surroundings", street art, which redesigns our neighborhoods and enhances the suburbs. In fact, on the outskirts of the big cities, there is clear evidence of a change in style and genre in the artistic sector which has affected the urban and sub-

urban fabric in which they were shaped, with the aim of changing it, and starting from the peripheries full of narratives, ideas and stories to be told.

But can this art genre – street art – really affect the communities that inhabit those neighborhoods, experience them, and at times even tolerate them? To do so, it not only has to act, it has to interact with the urban fabric. And it is especially young people who must be attentive toward the cities, intervening whenever possible, by saving them from being abandoned and telling the stories about the citizens and their feelings.

But there is another aspect to consider as the artistic expression of a reality that operates in the places described previously, even though they are in areas and zones adjacent to those connected to street art: the patronage of contemporary art on the part of large companies such as Arnaldo Energia, Cdp Immobiliare, ENI, TIM. In this case, the artist must be able to draw inspiration, for his imagination, from the company's production processes which, in turn, must be able to acquire the necessary tools to read reality in an original and innovative manner. Within the context of this patronage, an Italian excellence, the result is that there is reciprocal support between art, entrepreneurship and the public sector, a moment of integration between genius, economy and ethics, a principle of identity in our culture.

The resulting artwork displays a complex reality where humanism, innovation and technology, communicate with each other and constantly intertwine, demonstrating how the encounter between art and business is not only still possible, but necessary, because it heralds new and stimulating points of view.

But it is also true that we must try to forget the division between center and periphery, otherwise a sort of judgement and distance is created, and authenticity is lost. Its representation must be considered from the point of view of the characters and returned through the artwork. Empathy and sharing the feelings and lives of these artworks come into play, so that they become known and are preserved. What remains for the authors of these products is the experience, bringing about a growth and transformation in their vision of the world.

In redesigning the aesthetics of the cities, street art occasionally emerges from its anonymity and creates encounters with daily activities involving the inhabitants; by bringing together street art, environmental education and projects for green spaces, attention is directed toward the nature and native species of the territory, sparking a dialogue with the murals on the management of public space which belongs to everyone.

The inhabitants where the artwork is depicted feel special in some way, and proudly start to take care of it with collaborative community spirit.

However, though art does its job, for a real change to happen, external interventions by local management and administration are equally important: this is how to begin to tell the story of the neighborhoods, also in a different key compared to how they have been told in the past.

5. Digital art

Artificial intelligence is becoming more and more dominant in the operative components of our life, and, in an unstoppable historical process, it is also true for artistic expression. One achievement relating to technological progress, that historically may represent an opening for the future, is the use of NFTs (abbreviation of non-fungible tokens) in digital art: in simple terms they represent certification of ownership of a digital asset and is unique. This innovation in the art market means anyone who buys an NFT

artwork, acquires a digital work, not a material one, but gives them the possibility of demonstrating their right of ownership and is guaranteed by an IT protocol that facilitates the negotiation.

In today's art world, there are digital artists have been producing authentic works for some years, and other artists who reproduce works by other authors also on the internet, creating consequent problems of distinguishing them from the authentic works to establish their authorship, determining their unauthorized distribution also online.

On the contrary the current innovative NFT has the particular and significant aspect of being able to trace the work back to its author(s), thus guaranteeing its authenticity. To make an NFT drop, a term which indicates the exact date and time of the sale of an artwork, there are platforms where online auctions of digital art are held. The works to be sold at auction have no bidding base, so they go to the first highest bidders. If demand exceeds supply, lots are drawn in a kind of virtual lottery to decide. Some hours before the drop, bidders can also chat online with the author. We therefore speak about "programmable art", an art movement that is evolving because the sale of artworks stored using "blockchain" technology, a kind of digital ledger that can be shared, but cannot be altered, has increased exponentially in recent years, and by entering corporate collections such as Visa and Coca Cola, winning over important personalities, including well-known auction houses such as Christie's and bringing about advances in modern technologies with high-definition screens, projectors, virtual reality viewers.

6. Young artists' creativity during the Covid-19 pandemic

We turned to three graduates from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Moscow, Anna Kazmina, Daria Zhestyрева and Alina Glazun, young, but already well-known artists, to ask them their opinion on problems of creativity during this difficult period in life. The girls live in different countries and cities: Anna lives and works in Beijing, Daria in New York, Alina in Moscow.

Anna teaches at the college of the Academy of Arts of Beijing in the field of contemporary art. The whole situation unfolded before her eyes. The most difficult thing for Anna as a teacher and artist was, in her opinion, the restriction on the social space of communication: the usually crowded classrooms at the college were empty, the students who usually chattered non-stop started to avoid any type of contact, everything seemed to freeze like the landscape that surrounded them. Anna walked with her baby through deserted places where there was nothing but dry grass and a freezing wind. But, Anna says, it was fantasy that saved her from this loneliness, as well as a state of extreme concentration.

Alina says the same thing: for her the pandemic became a period of finding an inner balance and harmony once more. Alina only works at home where she is extremely happy. In this context, the pandemic hardly affected her lifestyle at all.

It was essential that all three young artists went back to drawing. Daria, who is used to thinking about paintings or huge installations, noticed that she had started to draw in a new way. She says that in order to stay sane, she started to create one (or sometimes two) digital works of art each day, inspired by the experience of Bleeple Crap (also known as Mike Winkelmann, an American graphic designer), a multimedia artist who created a work of digital art every day for more than 10 years continuously. It turned out to be a great way to focus, learn new techniques and, in general, find inspiration for more works. Art, Daria confidently says, remains a source of inspiration and a strength for the future. Whatever happens, art lives on because it lives inside us.

The psychological depression Anna experienced during the first months of the pandemic in Beijing deprived her of the strength to create pictures because in Anna's opinion, creating is an activity that requires a great deal of energy: complete immersion in your work, dedication, a way to "forget" oneself when material, significance and form consequently become a multidimensional understanding of oneself. But human beings, as we know, adapt to any situation: Anna continued to draw on paper, then moved to other formats and materials.

The period of the pandemic led these young artists to choose a new creative material. In one case, for example, the prevailing conditions – the lack of the usual studio and only the small space in the flat – led Anna to work with ecological raw materials.



Figure 1. Anna Kazmina, *A sore tree* (polymer clay, gold leaf - 65x19x14 cm), 2020.

Previously She had previously worked in a large-scale laboratory, experimenting with various materials, transforming the place into a sort of battlefield – canvases, paper, pigments, glue, building equipment – where naturally the words of the great A. A. Akmatova come to mind: "If you only knew from what rubbish/ poems unashamedly grow".

A significant factor in the life of our young artists was communicating via the Internet with their ex-classmates from the Faculty of Arts of the State University of Moscow. In 2019 Anna made sketches of some future sculptures but was unable to find the best way to express her creative idea. "A suggestion from a sculptor friend helped me to learn about polymer clay and it was the ideal solution in such limited working conditions", Anna says. She acquired a new freer creative state, exchanging thoughts with people from the artistic sector with whom there had been no constant contact before the pandemic. Before, everyone had been immersed in their usual round of business and when the social cataclysm happened, their conscience passed to another level which was clearly and evidently reflected in their creativity (Figure 1).

Daria, instead, focused entirely on the creation of multimedia art, something she had wanted to do for a long time; it was time to throw herself headlong into a realm full of possibilities that would challenge analogous limitations. Speaking about the real world, Daria believes that we should not forget the importance of the technology that surrounds us. This fact changes not only the face of the world but also the very idea of it. Today, when we create a

work of art, to make it easier for the spectator to understand it, you have to study those languages in which communication takes place face to face and search for the connections it has with the past, and so become a “medium” which reveals a picture of the future and its images.

And this is the reason for the online NFT (Not Fungible Tokens) frenzy that has become such because the world has changed a lot, immensely. Art is necessary in order to record the truth confidently, to dream of new realities and, ultimately, to change the world. And this has become more than possible during lockdown because we learned about the importance of public art. This art form moved from the streets to the Internet and, despite the fact access to it appeared to be the result of hopeless idleness, it actually represented an innovative artistic expression.

An artist gathers experience, impressions, and all those thoughts and feelings which, when combined, give birth to the final artistic product. While she was teaching in the years of the pandemic, Anna noticed that what the students had previously conceived together grew in conditions of solitude and concentration. Both her earlier ideas and the later ones of her students, as well as the way in which their work was produced during the pandemic, had given a more mature result.

Alina’s work process during the pandemic followed her usual way of working from home. International projects had been suspended, joint projects had been postponed indefinitely, agreements for public art cancelled, but the request for private pieces re-

mained stable. Collectors continued to replenish their collections. The number of buyers increased, people who buy works of art to the best of their ability, without posing as experts, without considering art in terms of investment. There were also people with money that had only become available because of travel and entertainment. Cooped up in their homes, they decided to concentrate on embellishing their houses, to try out something more than just a poster or a beautiful floor lamp and so discovered the affordable art market of young artists. “I was very satisfied with my income during the pandemic”, Alina says.

The pandemic period has had a different impact on the life and work of our young artists. Alina Glazun writes that the pandemic has given her great impetus: teaching us to take more care of ourselves and our loved ones, to simplify our actions, thoughts and desires, to become a calmer, more coherent and more joyful person (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Alina Glazun, *Untitled (mixed media)*, 2020.

Daria Zhestyрева observes that the pandemic brought to the surface feelings of isolation, uncertainty and fear of future instability because of suspended projects and exhibitions, but then became a truly unique moment to focus on our wellbeing and the opportunity it gave to broaden our learning through online resources, to trust in the journey we have chosen and to be motivated in our creativity. These were the important conditions that became reality. Daria notes that “under the pressure of uncertainty of the new reality we had to face, it was definitely a unique opportunity to accept ourselves and focus on our work”.

In spite of the lockdown, exhibitions were held both in galleries and in digital spaces throughout the whole pandemic. Daria noticed that during this period it became easier to communicate with other artists and creators; everybody needed help, and everybody was happy to help. The world has changed and such a change in routine has brought about a change in the vision of the world. A great many concerts and exhibitions took place online. “By exploring meta-spaces, online galleries and artistic projects of gamification, that is, according to the logic of gaming”, Daria says, “I met a lot of artists with new ideas and visions and became a part of this new trend. The request for multimedia art derives mainly from the fact that the artist does not work with the material as such, but with the physical interpretation of the energy, with something that is similar to the potential of sensuality and which, at the same time, gives the outline for the kinetics of the movement” (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Daria Zhest, *Classical color burn* (Oil on canvas, 170x200 cm), 2021.

Daria perceives the period of the pandemic with sobriety. Indeed, she says: “the poles have simply shifted: simple things have become unusual, expected situations have become unattainable, but there is no real difference. If you are driven by an idea, you should consider all of this as a change of time in a window of opportunities, observe and leave.

At the beginning of the pandemic, I was seized by a kind of childish mischievous joy due to the fact that the world had stopped. As if before it there was not enough time for anything, everything happened too quickly and the FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out)

became an integral daily feeling, the local expression of a fairytale about lost time: it is fundamental not to miss anything important in this crowded city. There were many reasons that made me realize it was time to change the way I felt about my job, about myself and our communities. Many things that previously seemed important, now seem to be irrelevant. My perception of time has changed, space itself has been reduced to the boundaries of our home, but doors have opened to completely new situations. In some way, the winter and the silence made themselves felt. A feeling of infiniteness, the absurdity of the situation and uncertainty started to hit us literally, reflected in the waves of mass anxiety: it became quite dangerous to live in New York, peaceful protests turned into attacks, ideological conflicts, prejudices, the destruction of small enterprises, fires and robberies. An absurdity: at 10 pm on a Saturday night, Times Square, where it is usually impossible to squeeze through the crowds of tourists, theatre and concert hall goers, was completely empty. You are seeing an unimaginable picture, just you and a huge number of flickering screens advertising goods that shout: *Time to grab me! We have released something new! Buy, buy, buy!* And there is no one to see it, to feel it. Theoretically, such desperation has always existed, but now it can be seen close up. Undoubtedly a unique experience”.

7. Integrating knowledge and correct communication

The imagined idea is invisible at first, even though it is visible to the innovator, but then takes shape and becomes visible in a product, a service, a process: exactly like the effect of the evolutive path of scientific research. In Einstein's words: “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution”. A community of experts who encourage exchanges between art and science, fueling discussions in an engaging full immersion, contribute to ensuring that artistic creation – whose sublime character of exceptionality is attributed to the previous idea imagined by the artist which he then transforms into a finished product – is integrated into the experimentation and technological innovation which is the prerogative of the technician.

In other words, creation is not a solitary event, a private revelation, but a complex and transversal construction. That is why, in art, what is needed is an interdisciplinary dialogue between the human sciences and experimental sciences which involves their integrated know-how.

It is also true, as Saint Augustine points out “*Confessio ignorantiae gradus est scientiae*”, confessing ignorance is a step towards science. The humbleness of acknowledging what we don't know is, therefore, the basis from which to start.

This, essentially involves social responsibility, which is part of science, that is, the extreme attention to be given to what is communicated, without failing to respect data and competences and providing information that is correct and complete.

In art we refer to various topics of historical, technical, conservative, economic, legal, social, managerial and also mercantile-market interest, for which IT methods and means represent a decidedly valid support in the dissemination of information.

In this manner, with respect to its previously mentioned imagination, knowledge of the art work from the previous evaluation, even when considering the sublime aspect of exceptionality, and peculiarity of the artistic creation, gives rise to an equally important cycle of activities, involving social networks, the web, a digital revolution. And it is the latter activities which, especially during the long period of the pandemic, have fostered exchanges and opinions.

The result is a new indispensable knowledge which gives rise to new opportunities and an equally important cycle of activities in the art field, creating new business and social models driven by a more anthropocentric innovation.

8. Conclusion

In the context of the aforementioned peculiarities of the artistic product and cycle of activities, there is a consequent step which follows that of the interdisciplinary dialogue between the human and experimental sciences mentioned above: the consequent phase of synergy between the sciences relating to interdisciplinarity.

Therefore, we are speaking of interdisciplinarity, not simple ambition but a fundamental priority for the development of science that goes beyond scientific and geographical limits, thus representing the joint fruit of competences and experiences in a virtuous circle where reason and truth cooperate. It follows that, if it is true that art is the expression of beauty, it is equally true, to quote Plato, that “Beauty is the splendor of the truth”. In other words, beauty in this context does not refer to the aesthetic value of an object, but its hidden message and ineffable content in real life (Truth). However, centuries later the French writer Paul Valéry replied: “The definition of beauty is easy; it is what leads you to desperation”.

In conclusion, it is possible to affirm that interdisciplinarity in art is the result that combines truth and beauty.

Biographical notes

Salvatore Lorusso was formerly a full Professor at the University of Bologna. He is a Foreign Member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences; Emeritus Professor of the Cultural Heritage Institute of Zhejiang University (China); formerly a Visiting Professor at the Academy of Social Science of Zhejiang University, China; Visiting Professor of the Faculty of Arts, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia; formerly vice-president and Councilor of the Società italiana per il Progresso delle Scienze (SIPS, established in 1839). He is Direttore Generale of the Accademia della Cultura Enogastronomica. His biography appears in the 2016 Marquis Edition of Who's Who in the World. He is the author of over 440 publications in national and international journals and 24 volumes and monographs covering commodity science, cultural heritage and environmental issues. In 1997, he founded the Diagnostic Laboratory for Cultural Heritage at the Ravenna Campus of the University of Bologna and remained head of the Laboratory for eighteen years. In 2001 he founded the historical-technical Journal “Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage” of which he is Editor-in-Chief. His scientific work deals mainly with the study of the “system: artifact-environment-biota” and diagnostic, analytical, technical and economic evaluation within the context of the protection and valorization of cultural and environmental heritage.

Aleksandre Lobodanov was born in Moscow on September 7, 1950. He graduated in 1973 in Romance Linguistics at the Faculty of Humanities at Moscow State University (Lomonosov). He is professor of History of the Italian language (1997); chair of semiotics and general theory of art at the same university (2003) and founder and dean of the Faculty of Arts (2001). He is the author of 16 monographs on problems re-

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