

# **The Human Face Mirror**

**Massimiliano Ciammaichella**



The theme of the *correspondences* between the real and the human face portrait activates a system of relationships that are both personal and linked to the relational patterns we deal with on a daily basis. It is about proprioception and its coherent reproduced image, but it is also connected to the expectation triggered by one's own aesthetic seen from someone else's eyes. This may be true for individuals represented in a photograph, in a painting or in a drawing made by other subjects than us, to whom we lend our physicality in order to have it transferred to the chosen support frame; but what happens when we construct a self-portrait?

If the term *correspondence* implies a reciprocal relationship—in this case, mediated by the device in which the act of recognition begins the graphic composition of a precise idea of self—, then the practice of self-portraying requires a continuous transfiguration process for which the face imprinted in the static image is the synthesis of a multitude of faces and possible expressions, which often we are unable to recognize because we are made of our diachronic forgetfulness and, despite living in the present, we are prone to wear and tear. In the light of these conditions, when we are asked to make a self-portrait, we face a crisis: we tend to attribute to our technical incapacity the non-fulfilment of the task, sometimes thinking that the *myth of Narcissus* does not belong to us, some others preferring to remain in the shadows. Therefore, it is the denial of personal staging, which is impartial in the credible reflection of the instilled image that also infuses our essence. That is due to the belief that we cannot present ourselves at the best of our abilities, so it makes us abandon the challenge.

Yet the design “is the ability to ride a bike”, we all can master it and, as Betty Edwards teaches, we must learn to see. In this sense, the author proposes a series of exercises, including the self-portrait, with the advice of using an inverted image to abstract the level of recognition.

It is indeed very difficult to identify the subject represented in an upside-down photograph or illustration. That is because “[...] What simply happens is that the left hemisphere [of the brain] in front of this task renounces to face it”. Therefore, learning to draw means to stimulate the right hemisphere and if it is true that to do so we must know how to see, the drawing of the self-portrait requires the ability to know how to watch

2

Stefano Ferrari, *Lo specchio dell'Io*. *Autoritratto e psicologia* (Roma: GLF Editori Laterza, 2002), p. 34.

3

Patrizia Magli, *Pitturare il volto. Il Trucco, l'Arte, la Moda* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2013), pp. 128-129.



1



2

4

Federico Fioravanti, "Il selfie di Claricia." Accessed October 7, 2018. <http://www.festivaldelmedioevo.it/portal/il-selfie-di-claricia>.

1 Self-portrait of Matteo Paris, in *Historia Anglorum. Chronica majora*, 1250-1259. London, British Library, Royal MS 14 C VII, f.6r.

2 Self-portrait of Claricia, in *Psalter*, Late 12th-early 13th century. Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum

5

Alberto Boatto, *Narciso infranto. L'autoritratto moderno da Goya a Warhol* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1997), p. 18.

and know ourselves. According to Stefano Ferrari, this learning process goes hand in hand with the construction of the ego to which the self-portrait alludes, as “it calls into question our sense of identity in such a way that our ego (and the image that represents it) must be—so to speak—refreshed and reprogrammed”<sup>2</sup>. More generally, the artist’s self-portrait has satisfied the desire to convey a precise idea of identity and, as Patrizia Magli claims, this impulse oscillates between seeing and feeling themselves<sup>3</sup>, as well as the need to leave to posterity a trace of their presence which can only be synthesized in the performative act of performing.

Throughout history the self-portrait has become a real artistic genre of which is very difficult to date the origin; but since the Middle Ages authors’ figures of the illuminated codes have appeared, immortalized in the act of painting the block initial letter, concentrating and identifying themselves in their work as amanuensis and miniaturists. Usually they were monks who offered their calligraphic art and were shown while performing acts of humility and prostration, as for example in the case of Matteo Paris lying at the foot of the Virgin Mary, with his name and surname written above the back and published on the frontispiece of the homonymous *Historia Anglorum. Chronica majora* (1250-1259). [1]

They didn’t lack for nuns as well, and in some cases secular women such as Claricia, who published the *Psalter* at the end of the 12th century, one can find a collection of psalms now kept at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. The young woman is painted in a graceful pose, her hair is combed in long braids and she wears a dress with bell sleeves according to the fashion of the time. Her figure integrates the stem of the letter Q and probably, as Federico Fioravanti notes, she was a copyist who did not take the vows and offered her service as an amanuensis in the *scriptorium* of the abbey of the Benedictine nuns of Augsburg, in Germany<sup>4</sup>. [2]

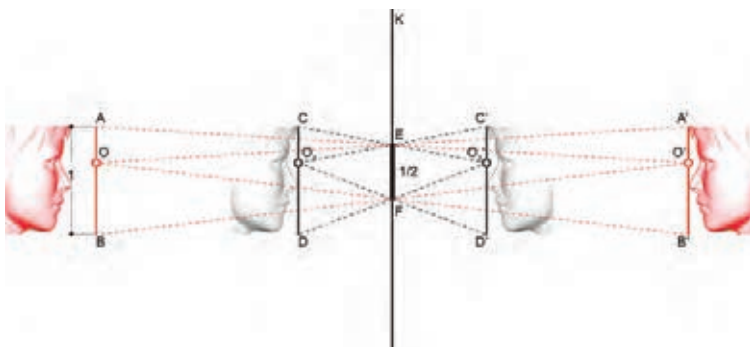
This practice of the incursion of the self continued also during the Renaissance. For example, Fra Filippo Lippi in the altarpiece of the *Coronation of the Virgin* (1441-1447 ca.), looks away from the scene represented to address it to the spectator. Positioned at the base of the composition on the left, he assumes a melancholic expression and his right hand holds his face absorbed in thoughts. According to Alberto Boatto, the artist’s choice is not pointed to self-congratulation—as the seventeenth century accustomed us—but is rather linked to a “measured assertion [...]. What strikes and persuades in these first self-portraits is the absence of any vainglory and the calm sober affirmation of oneself as human beings”<sup>5</sup>. Conversely, the myth of Narcissus who reflects his own image in the obsessive and contemplative act of looking from the shore of the spring is evoked by the predominant use of convex mirrors, which appear, for example, in the *Andolfini spouses*



3

6

Luciano Bellosi and Aldo Rossi eds. *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architetti. Di Giorgio Vasari* (Torino: Einaudi, 1986), pp. 815-822.



4

7

James Hall, *The Self-portrait. A Cultural History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2016), p. 32.

3 Portrait of Marsia, in *De Claris mulieribus, traduction anonyme en français, Livre des femmes nobles et renommées*, 1403. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France

4 Massimiliano Ciammaichella, *Human face measure*, 2018

by Jan Van Eyck (1434), revealing who is hidden in front of the surface of the painting, or in the self-portrait of Parmigianino (1524).

About this work, which became the *identity card* of the artist—because it was greatly appreciated by Pope Clement VII who invited the artist to immediately join him in Rome—Giorgio Vasari speaks with great enthusiasm, defining the Parmesan painter Francesco Mazzola as a man with a beautiful face<sup>6</sup>. The artist portrayed himself by employing a barber's mirror in a small room with a skylight. The portrait suffers from the distortions reflected by the curved support, including the left hand on the foreground. But the face of the young man remains intact: he has brown hair and eyes; the complexion is rosy, and the semi-closed mouth reveals a slight smile.

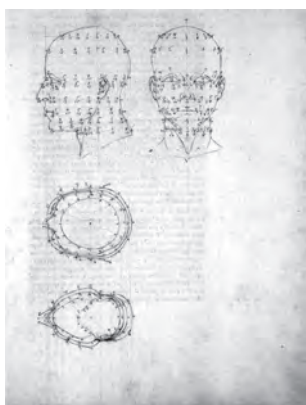
The mirror also appears in what James Hall defines as the first self-portrait of an artist, contained in the 1403 French reissue of work which Boccaccio dedicated to the biography of 106 famous women—*De Claris mulieribus* (1361-1362)—, where “[...] It shows the ancient Roman artist ‘Marcia’ sitting at a table in her luxuriously appointed workshop gazing at the reflection of her head in a small convex mirror. Boccaccio probably based her on Iaia, one of six women painters mentioned by Pliny: Iaia’s self-portrait [...] is likely to have been painted using a mirror made of polished metal. The circular image on Marcia’s mirror is being scaled up unto an over-life-size, flat, rectangular painting that includes her neck and shoulders. The tip of her brush touches her painted red lips, as if to suggest that her second self will speak at any moment. The *mise-en-scène* insists emphatically that artists are perfectly capable of amplifying and clarifying partial images derived from round and/or convex mirrors, and adapting them to a different format”<sup>7</sup>. [3]

Unfortunately, the name of the miniaturist is unknown, however, Marcia seems to know the scale relationships that exist between the real and the mirrored image: our face reflected on a flat mirror is always half the size of the real one, regardless of our distance from the mirror. This assumption is easily confirmed and demonstrated [4]. We can assume  $K$  as the profile plane of a mirror and  $AB$  the length of a face whose eye is in  $O$ . The distance of  $AB$  from  $K$  is the same as the alter ego  $A'B'$ , beyond the mirror, thus the projection of  $AB$  and  $A'B'$  in  $K$  is equal to half of each of them. The same applies to the  $CD$  segment, which illustrates the approaching of a face to the mirror and its virtual  $C'D'$  clone.

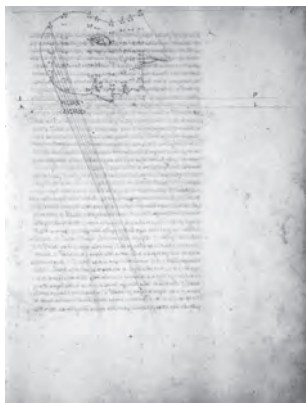
Leonardo Baglioni and Riccardo Migliari reflect on similar considerations in a refined article dedicated to the origins of perspective and the use of mirrors as fundamental tools for reducing the real space in the plan. Starting from the concept of visual pyramid, they state that it is possible to build two more: “with vertexes that are horizontal and



5



6



7

5 Albrecht Dürer, *Self-portrait*, 1484. Vienna, Graphische Sammlung

6, 7 Piero della Francesca, human head projections, in *De prospectiva pingendi*, before 1480, (P, c. 61r) and (P, c. 65r). Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana

8

Leonardo Baglioni and Riccardo Migliari, "Lo specchio alle origini della prospettiva. The mirror at the origin of perspective," *Disegnare idee Immagini*, no. 56 (June 2018): 45.



symmetrical transpositions of the vertex of the first pyramid. Having established the positions of the vertexes we can move the mirror backwards and forwards until, through trial and error, the oblique edges of the side pyramids coincide with the diagonals of the squares reflected in the mirror. The distance between the observer and the mirror is equal to half the distance between the observer and one of the vertexes of the side pyramids. Or else we could maintain the same distance between the observer and the mirror and increase or decrease the distances between the vertex of the main pyramid and that of the side pyramids until the relative oblique edges coincide with the diagonals of the square”<sup>8</sup>.

The mirror, therefore, is an instrument to understand reality and determined the birth of perspective, meant as the science of representation. Just think of the process that took the name of *costruzione legittima* (legitimate construction), which is due to the empirical practices of Filippo Brunelleschi who, in 1413, employed a 30cm side square wooden board, with a hole through which he could look at the image of the facade of the Florence baptistry reflected in a mirror parallel to the board itself.

Between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries there is a flourishing proliferation of treatises on perspective: Leon Battista Alberti dedicated the treatise *De pictura* to Brunelleschi in 1435; Piero della Francesca wrote the *De prospectiva pingendi* and *Libellus de quinque corporibus regularibus* at the end of the century; Luca Pacioli drew much from this work by publishing the *De Divina proportione* in 1509; Jean Pélerin completed the *De Artificiali Perspectiva* in 1505; Albrecht Dürer built and experimented with perspective machines and in 1484 painted his own self-portrait at the mirror by silver-tip on paper [5]. He was only thirteen.

Far from wanting to make a complete examination of the many treatises published during the Renaissance, it is still worth remembering how the history of modern perspective is conditioned by the use of the flat mirror and how this instrument has become an integral part of portraiture. In fact, the same authors of perspective treatises wonder about the human body measurement, with particular regard to the geometry of the face. For example, Piero della Francesca dedicates the third book of *De prospectiva pingendi* to the measurement of bodies and focuses on the most complex figure to be represented in perspective, the face, and perhaps he even portrays himself as an example. The first operation is the representation of the orthogonal projections of the head, which is subsequently sectioned with parallel and orthogonal planes in order to obtain a grid of curves whose points become object of measurement and are given by the intersection of the visual rays that depart from a projection center [6-7]. The definition of the method allows him to obtain infinite configurations, ranging from orthogonal

9

Giovanni Careri, "L'artista," in *L'uomo barocco*, ed. Rosario Villari (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1991), 342-343.

10

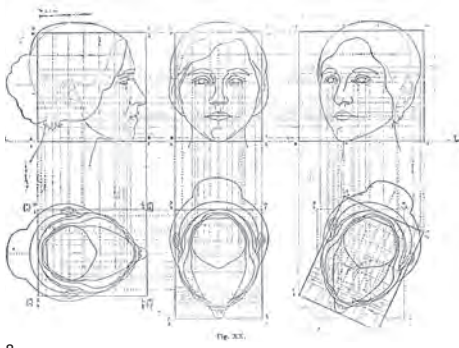
James Hall, *L'autoritratto. The Self-portrait. A Cultural History*, 142-143.

to oblique perspectives, to draw farther faces, taken from the bottom up and vice versa. In the proposed model the front view apparently adopts the laws of symmetry, clearing the ground to the study of human body proportions and harmonic relationships, introduced by Leonardo da Vinci in *Uomo vitruviano* (Vitruvian Man) and in his *Trattato della Pittura* (Treatise on Painting) (1498); by Luca Pacioli in the study of head proportions in the aforementioned treatise; by Albrecht Dürer in *Vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion* (1528), and by many others.

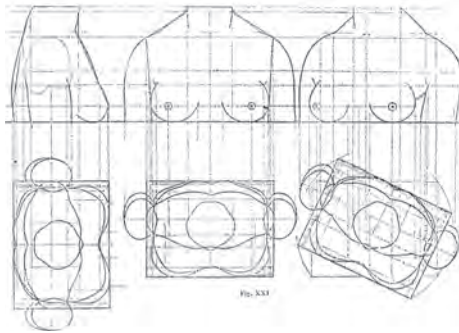
It is easy to deduce that the methods of architecture representation have governed both the proportional and aesthetic canons of the artefacts, as well as the features of those who designed and experienced them in different eras. Thus, the presence of the Vitruvian man has deified the concept of measurement of the 16th century space, becoming a model to which aim and re-launching the inhuman image of a perfectly symmetrical body.

The anthropocentrism—that influenced the Renaissance universe—evolved into the self-referential immensity of the Baroque artist, who used to mix with nobles and men of power when portraying them in his representations, unveiling the face of the scene director. This is the case of Diego Velázquez, who in 1656 portrayed the Spanish royal family in *Las Meninas*. This painting leaves room for different interpretations, certainly orchestrated by the artist and announced by the deceptive reflections of the mirrors in the room, which interrogate the viewer making him feel part of the fiction. In this way the self-portrait lures the gaze of the other, making him feel within this sort of *tableaux vivant*, in “a form of representation that no longer finds its foundation in imitation but is given as pure representation. A representation that has a value as it produces positive, pathetic or cognitive effects; capable of finding an adhesion, and no longer for its analogical correspondence to a pre-existing stable reality”<sup>9</sup>.

Generally, there are many 17th century artists who play to integrate their directorial presence in the works produced, exalting the work spaces in which they act wearing the best uniform suitable to be shown also from behind, as Jan Vermeer does in *The art of painting* (1666-1668). Regarding Vermeer’s oil painting, James Hall recalls that the painter’s studio was small and placed on the top floor of his house; and in any case the work clothes could not be elegant<sup>10</sup>. But yesterday, like today, fiction benefits from self-esteem and undergoes the physicality of the protagonist to the performative act of the design of his image, which is distorted by the mastery of the means available to build it. When the face performs, both in a picture or in a photograph, the author tends to modify its connotations while maintaining characters of verisimilitude. Moreover, the artists and scholars of the twentieth century meditated on the canons



8



9

11

Gino Severini, *Du Cubisme au Classicisme. Esthétique du compas et du nombre* (Paris: J. Povolozky & Cte, 1921), p. 71.

of beauty and their objectification in terms of size and proportion.

For example, Gino Severini, without claiming to make a real treatise of descriptive geometry—as he clearly said—focuses on the study of harmonic relations inherent in nature and draws the orthogonal projections of his wife Jeanne's face and bust, published in his *Du cubisme au Classicisme* in 1921. In terms of his method, he declares: “[...] Because each section is the result of a common measure, of a single relationship that regulates the whole body, by making the same operation for each section, in the end the parts must coincide perfectly and [errors] are close to a fraction of a millimeter. So, I rotated by 25° the head taken as an example, then applied same rotation to the bust and I had no trouble in putting the head on the neck, then the arms on shoulders and so on. In this way the body is built piece by piece, like a machine. When all the parts are arranged with love and precision, then they are reunited, each having its function, and everything is perfect”<sup>11</sup> [8-9]. Severini's final considerations echo the rationalistic model of automation, intended as a solution to every problem. If, according to him, the construction of a human body is like a machine, two years later Le Corbusier uses the same arguments but substitutes the body with the house, intended a machine for living, as argued in *Vers une Architecture* of 1923.

In his essay *Il volto e l'architetto* (2008) Luca Ribichini focuses on the correspondence between the geometry of the face and the architecture of the *Savoie villa*, demonstrating how the Platonic ideal in the 1920s merged into the direct dialogue between painting and architecture that, for Le Corbusier, determines the compositional processes in a continuous plot. The modern human body synthesized within the features of the modulator dictates measurement and proportional relationships. References to proportion, the golden section and the principles of geometry, are ascertained in the theories of Matila Costiescu Ghyka, who in 1931 publishes *Le Nombre d'Or*. In his book, the Romanian mathematician—similarly to what Severini did—uses the image of his wife to legitimize the foundations of his theories, in this case focused on the study of the golden section. The photograph of Miss Helen Wills Moody's face is then subjected to the geometrization of a system of regulatory layouts, which, according to Ribichini, reminds one of the ground floor plan geometries of Villa Savoye.

As for the subject of this experimentation, Ghyka describes the face of his wife, stating that “it has the rare property of revealing a theme ‘related’ not only to the golden section but rather offers an ‘ideal’ canon strictly modulated for this purpose. It is not difficult to find also in the living ‘microcosms’ [of the photographs and the geometries found in them], as in the characteristics of the Olympic

12

Matila Costiescu Ghyka, Le Nombre d'Or.  
Rites et rythmes pythagoriciens dans le  
développement de la civilisation occidentale  
(Paris: Gallimard, 1980), p. 59.

13

See: [www.cindyjackson.com](http://www.cindyjackson.com).

tennis championess, the Platonic symphonies resulting from the inscription in the sphere of regular polyhedra and of the alternating pulsating budding of the starry polyhedra starting from the dodecahedron [...], geometric paradigm of the harmony of the Cosmos”<sup>12</sup>.

The geometries and *mathematic* of the face are connected in the Cartesian research of aesthetic perfection by Ghyka, however the principle of totalizing beauty, based on the rules of harmony and proportion, runs through the different periods of the history of art and arrives to us, after the desire to take the features of the perfect face prototype. This is independent from our original features, because the cosmetic surgeon can certainly be more generous than Mother Nature.

The American Cindy Jackson<sup>13</sup>, for example, underwent fifty-two interventions that allowed her join the Guinness World Records in 2011; her inspirational source coming from the observation of her Barbie collection in 1977. Jackson's transformations have evolved, and are all documented on the Internet: they speak of a designed image that is in want of overcoming the wear and tear of time, proposing itself as a reference model, so much so that today she is a successful testimonial and consultant for body care and risk prevention of cosmetic surgery. Today, the body designed for its transformation has to deal with an imaginary self-portrait that mirrors an aesthetic ideal to be achieved and personified, since it is still a temporary image that does not rise to temporal steadiness. Moreover, aside from social expectations, we can say that technological advancements and innovations in the medical field support the reference aesthetics and image with which we relate to others is precisely what is brought in question. Thus, the aesthetic perception of the self and its performance can't be conceived as the results of a path that necessarily leads to the definition of a univocal synthesis image. If in the past the analogical instruments allowed one to translate the connotations of a re-adaptable face in bidimensional drawings, the current technological wave aims on at physical, and digital, constantly evolving presence. Every self-portrait speaks to the era when it was produced and can be compared to ideas of temporary makeup and the prosthesis, to the design of the tattoo covering the skin, to the technologies that coexist with the body, both exogenous and endogenous, to the subcutaneous grafts, to more or less invasive transformations to which we subject it.

Body artists have worked in various ways of transforming identity and the human Body, but since the 1920s a specific attention to the *bionic* and *post-human* has paved the way for some extreme practices. In 1991, the British artist Marc Quinn made self-portraits with his own blood, frozen inside transparent casts, and every five years produces a new sculpture to document the processes of his aging; during



10



11

10, 11 Marzia Avallone, *In Carne Sancti - San Sebastiano II*, photographic performance, La Pelanda - Macro, Roma 2017. Assistant: Eugenia Monti (Darkam), Photo credits: Marta Petrucci



the following decade the Australian artist Stelarc has experimented in *The Third Hand* project the insertion of an additional mechanical arm, governed by stomach and legs muscles in the act of writing the word *Evolution* obsessively; the French artist Orlan distanced herself from Body Art, undertaking the road of *Carnal Art* as a way to reflect on the concept of beauty's slavery. For *The reincarnation of Saint Orlan*, since 1990 the artist has undergone a long series of surgical interventions to personify the reassuring iconic models' aesthetics of the figurative arts, then she decided to change course by having two silicone implants on the sides of her forehead. This reconsideration should denounce certain intolerances towards popular beauty standards, but the persistence of the prosthesis coexists with her current image, historicizing a face that displays many years less than her age.

Albeit oriented towards performing arts, the young artist Marzia Avallone arrives at her 2017 work *In Carne Sancti* through less invasive practices. In this case the construction of the self-portrait is compared to the staging of a possible other-than-self, in a wide-ranging project that includes seven interpretations of the martyr's figure according to an interpretative coding oscillating between classical iconography and performative action and is intended as an act contaminating the whole process.

*In Carne Sancti - St. Sebastian II* moves from the assumption that in medieval texts the figure of the martyr was described as the one who raised our human condition [10-11]. Stripped by a multitude of arrows and therefore subjected to the sufferings of mortal life; San Sebastian is an *exemplum*. As a symbolic image of the tormented body, he is not only the exaltation of one's own suffering but also, he who masters the resistance to arrows, pain and death. In the artist's interpretation, the stress is placed upon the concept of pain and its overcoming: it is not a suffering body to be exposed but one that is an accomplice and participates in the action which frees itself from the narrative precepts that have accompanied it during the very long path formalized by Christian iconography. In the performance, an arrow is sewn on the chest by expert hands, using needles and suture thread. It is an isolated, autonomous and ostentatious embroidery that outlines a short circuit among body, envelope and imposed sign, which can be recognized as a distant reinterpretative memory trace.

In this sense, it is possible to affirm that the self-portrait, today as much as yesterday, actualizes the return of the *repressed* and is a mode of the *uncanny*, intended as Sigmund Freud defined it in *Das Unheimliche*, in 1919. Thus, the image that we embody does not necessarily reassure us, and what we recognize as familiar can make us uncomfortable, because the face is "an instantaneous occurrence of multiple heterogeneous



12

14

Patrizia Magli, *Il volto raccontato. Ritratto e autoritratto in letteratura* (Milano: Raffaello

Cortina, 2016), p. 23.

15 Stefano Ferrari, "Le dinamiche del perturbante nella psicologia del ritratto," in *Il volto, il ritratto, la maschera*, ed. Elisabetta Baiocco (Siena: I Quaderni, 2000), 59-73.

16

For deepening: Massimiliano Ciammaichella, "Tożsamość Cyfrowa. Autoprezentacja w Second Life," *Autoportret* 1, no. 52 (Winter 2016): 68-73.

17

[secondlife.com](http://secondlife.com); [highfidelity.com](http://highfidelity.com).

18

Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, 1956), p. 10.

19

See as example the following software list, any are free: *Colmap* ([colmap.github.io](http://colmap.github.io)), *Micmac* ([micmac.ensg.eu](http://micmac.ensg.eu)), *3DF Zephyr* ([www.3dflow.net](http://www.3dflow.net)), *Recap* ([www.autodesk.com](http://www.autodesk.com)), *Agisoft PhotoScan* ([www.agisoft.com](http://www.agisoft.com)), *PhotoModeler Scanner* ([www.photomodeler.com](http://www.photomodeler.com)), *ContextCapture* ([www.bentley.com](http://www.bentley.com)), *RealityCapture* ([www.capturingreality.com](http://www.capturingreality.com)).

events. In fact, its morphological conformation is constantly tested by the inner movements that modify its expression”<sup>14</sup>. According to Stefano Ferrari, for the artist both portrait and self-portrait trigger a projective identification mechanism in the chosen model<sup>15</sup>. It comes back the problem of self-identification in the produced image, of the other-than-self-empathizing, of the double and of the mirror of deception or reality.

Then, what does the self-portrait mean to all of us?

During the last twenty years we have found ourselves communicating with others through filters, more or less truthful, capable of speaking about us independently from our physical presence. The acting skills that are proper for each of us are often conveyed in forms of telepresence that require all of our skills as builders of our double through digital representation tools capable of portraying us in a very short time. We can then interpret our role by means of 3D digital avatars, immersing ourselves in the different virtual worlds of the Internet. We generally design them so that they assume our features, molding them around desired aesthetic ideals<sup>16</sup>.

*Second Life* and *High fidelity*<sup>17</sup> are only two among many performance spaces where we can go on stage through moving images that simulate attitudes, poses: propensities to credit self-complacency based on others’ approval. After all “[...] When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be”<sup>18</sup>.

As for the perfectible three-dimensional clones, we can equip them with image-based modeling tools capable of translating the spatial coordinates of different photographs that can simultaneously capture a body to easily generate an avatar and provide it with a high-resolution texture<sup>19</sup> [12]. But the photographic portrait, interpreted in the static fixity of the synthesis image of the face, is one of the main business cards through which we introduce ourselves in social networks and in other contexts. Those who assume to design the perfect selfie usually employ his or her smartphone according to a corollary of postural attitudes that immediately declares social status. The use of filters and manipulatory tools for every shot reveals the failure to accept oneself through the features we would like to assume, but do not possess. In these cases the fictional manipulation of a body, which is subjected to the longing of showing itself, crashes down through the exhibition of the ineffable retouching of its functional insecurities.



In conclusion, we have seen how the story of the self-portrait begins its narrative from the desire to show oneself and to underline the social status of belonging. If in the Middle Ages the amanuensis and miniaturists felt the desire to immortalize themselves in their works to emphasize the importance of the craft—and the artists followed the script of religious faith obsequiously in the acts of prostration of the self—the Renaissance man defined himself by the measure of his own anthropocentric universe: physical and spatial. Differently, the 17th century counts upon the deception of the actorial *mise-en-scène*.

In all cases, the control of one's own image was entrusted to the reassuring projective rules of mirrors capable of controlling their measure, but also of distorting expectations. Simultaneously, *Descriptive Geometry*, understood as a science of representation able to describe the morphology of artefacts, independently of its mere nominal 19th century origins, has encoded in restitutions the connotations of someone who has been submitted to its rules.

Our contemporary world has accustomed us to instruments of representation capable of simulating the third dimension of our real physical belonging, and the construction of the self-portrait has become a desire within everyone's reach. Today the verisimilitude of the mirror image—and the desired one—has enslaved us to the manifold identity transformations that the body is able to realize.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baglioni, Leonardo and Riccardo Migliari. "Lo specchio alle origini della prospettiva. The mirror at the origin of perspective." *Disegnare idee Immagini*, no. 56 (June 2018): 42-51.
- Baldacci, Cristina and Angela Vettese. *Arte del corpo. Dall'autoritratto alla Body Art*. Milano: Giunti, 2012.
- Barbieri, Giuseppe. *L'inventore della pittura. Leon Battista Alberti e il mito di Narciso*. Vicenza: Terra Ferma, 2000.
- Bellosi, Luciano and Aldo Rossi eds. *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architetti. Di Giorgio Vasari*. Torino: Einaudi, 1986.
- Boatto, Alberto. *Narciso infranto. L'autoritratto moderno da Goya a Warhol*. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1997.
- Boccaccio, Giovanni. *De Claris mulieribus, traduction anonyme en français, Livre des femmes nobles et renommées*. Paris: BNF, 1403.
- Careri, Giovanni. "l'artista." In *L'uomo barocco*, edited by Rosario Villari, 329-353. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1991.
- Ciammaichella, Massimiliano. "Tożsamość Cyfrowa. Autoprezentacja w Second Life." *Autoportret 1*, no. 52 (Winter 2016): 68-73.
- Claricia. *Psalter*. Germany: Augsburg, Late 12th-early 13th century. <https://art.thewalters.org/detail/26205>.
- Dürer, Albrecht. *Della simmetria de i corpi humani, Libri quattro. Nuouamente tradotti dalla lingua Latina nella Italiana, da M. Gio. Paolo Gallucci Salodiano. Et accresciuti del quinto libro, nel quale si tratta, con quai modi possano i Pittori, & Scoltori mostrare la diuersità della natura degli huomini, & donne, & con quali le passioni, che sentono per li diuersi accidenti, che li occorrono. Hora di nuouo stampati*. Venezia: Domenico Nicolini, 1591.



- Edwards, Betty. *Il nuovo Disegnare con la parte destra del cervello*. Translated by Mary Archer and Daniela Prasso. Milano: Longanesi, 2011.
- Ferrari, Stefano. *Lo specchio dell'io. Autoritratto e psicologia*. Roma: GLF Editori Laterza, 2002.
- Ferrari, Stefano. "Le dinamiche del perturbante nella psicologia del ritratto," in *Il volto, il ritratto, la maschera*, edited by Elisabetta Baiocco, 59-73. Siena: I Quaderni, 2000.
- Fioravanti, Federico. "Il selfie di Claricia." Festival del Medioevo, Perugia. Accessed October 7, 2018. <http://www.festivaldelmedioevo.it/portal/il-selfie-di-claricia>.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Das Unheimliche*. Bremen: Europäischer Literaturverlag, 2012.
- Ghyha, Matila Costiescu. *Le Nombre d'Or. Rites et rythmes pythagoriciens dans le développement de la civilisation occidentale*. Paris: Gallimard, 1980.
- Gizzi, Chiara. *De prospectiva pingendi. Piero della Francesca*. Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2016.
- Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, 1956.
- Hall, James. *The Self-portrait. A Cultural History*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2016.
- Le Corbusier. *Vers une Architecture*. Paris: Cres, 1923.
- Magli, Patrizia. *Il volto raccontato. Ritratto e autoritratto in letteratura*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina, 2016.
- Magli, Patrizia. *Pitturare il volto. Il Trucco, l'Arte, la Moda*. Venezia: Marsilio, 2013.
- Melchior-Bonnet Sabine. *Storia dello specchio*. Translated by Mariachiara Giovannini. Bari: Dedalo, 2002.
- Morini, Simona. "Le avventure del volto." *Rescogitans*, 351, 2009. <http://www.rescogitans.it/main.php?articleid=351>
- Pacioli, Luca. *Divina proportione: opera a tutti gliingegni perspicaci e curiosi necessaria oue cias-cun studioso di philosophia: prospettiua pictura sculptura: architectura: musica: e altre mathematicae: suavissima: sotile: e admirabile doctrina consequira: e delecterassi: co[n] varie questione de secretissima scientia*. Venezia: M. Antonio Capella, 1509.
- Paris, Matteo. *Historia Anglorum. Chronica majora*. St Albans: Part III, 1250-1259. [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal\\_ms\\_14\\_c\\_vii\\_f001v](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_14_c_vii_f001v)
- Ribichini, Luca. *Il volto e l'architetto*. Roma: Gangemi, 2008.
- Schneider, Norbert. *Il ritratto nell'arte*. Translated by Paola Bertante. Koln: Taschen, 1995.
- Severini, Gino. *Du Cubisme au Classicisme. Esthétique du compas et du nombre*. Paris: J. Povolvokly & Cte, 1921.