

Call for papers | *Studiolo* #21

Issue #21 of *Studiolo*

Art history journal

Theme (Dossier): EUROPE

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Published by the Académie de France à Rome – Villa Médicis, *Studiolo* is an annual art history journal dedicated to artistic production and circulation of images between Italy, Europe and the World, from the Renaissance to nowadays. It provides a space open to the cutting-edge research in all disciplines of art history, both in terms of its subjects and its methods.

Each issue includes a thematic dossier as well as various sections: *Varia*, open to off-themes proposals; *Débats*, devoted to historiographic issues; *Villa Médicis, histoire et patrimoine*, which focuses on the history of the French Academy in Rome as well as on the activities and conservation programs undertaken by the History of Art Department. Finally, in *Champ libre* section, *Studiolo* welcomes proposals from the year's residents at Villa Medici.

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Mounira al Solh, *A Dance with Her Myth*, 2024

watercolor, marker, charcoal, ink, acrylic, oil pastels and paper stitched on papyrus

Courtesy of the artist and the Sfeir-Semler gallery, Beirut/Hamburg

Over these past few years, Europe has been at the center of certain socio-political events that have dangerously revived the spectres haunting the "Old Continent". Tensions have surfaced once again that undermine the historical, geographical and administrative bases of this

multiply defined space. In *Studiolo* no. 21, readers will discover new critical thinking on Europe in the arts, which emphasises cross-disciplinary dialogue and the complex and contradictory nature of a space and an imaginary that are constantly changing.

As is well known, the term "Europe" does not simply designate a geographical area, but also a figure from Greek mythology. In the myth of Europa, Zeus, metamorphosed into a bull, kidnaps a young Phoenician princess named Europa, and carries her off to the island of Crete, where she gives birth to three sons, attains the rank of queen, and inaugurates a new lineage. At least two fundamental ideas emerge from this myth, which are confirmed by Horace in his *Odes* (III, 27): violence and utopia. Horace describes Europe in tears, lamenting the violence inflicted on her by the bull (which she does not yet know is Jupiter), but also founding a new dynasty. For she is associated with the origin of Crete and is predestined by Aphrodite to "bequeath her name to half the world".

It was only later that Europe became identified with a territory and as one of the three parts of the world. Allegories and personifications of Europe that showed the mythological figure linked to the continent of the same name spread widely from the fifteenth century onwards. This constituted a real shift, as the two sets of features and attributes came to be superimposed. The iconographies went hand in hand with an increase in visual and literary representations in which the cultural, political, ideological and historical aspects of Europe were expressed. However, the extent of the territory was never defined, such that in fact no one was able to determine Europe's borders precisely.

In the next issue of *Studiolo*, no. 21, the idea of "Europe" will be addressed from three distinct perspectives:

Images and imaginaries

In the better-known iconographic representations of Europe, the personified territory is linked to Athena-Minerva, goddess of war and peace, and to the personification of Rome, the goddess Roma.

It is interesting to extend this analysis to the forms and thoughts that attempt to incarnate the most utopian aspects of this figure and its allegories.

Often, then, the idea of strength predominates in the representations, narratives and illustrations, whether these relate to the myth or the territory of Europe. How is the violence contained in the utopias exercised, conveyed by the images (cartographic, symbolic, allegorical, etc.) and the texts (narratives, treatises, essays, manifestoes, etc.)? Can we apply these ideas to other corpuses - of objects, goods or materials? What visions of the future are reflected in these and other images of Europe? What do they reveal about power relationships? And lastly, how do they contribute to the construction of a Eurocentric discourse? What viewpoints and representations challenge it?

Concepts and representations

The imaginary of Europe is, however, far more varied than the array of mythological figures and personifications of the continent, for it also has a conceptual content. Witnessing the rise of empires and nations, and scientific and religious discoveries, Europe has chosen to ground itself in a set of values, which include a myth of progress and a claim to emancipate the individual. This in turn has given rise to groups, movements, alliances and currents of thought that have participated, affirmatively or critically, in the European project.

What role did art play in the development and dissemination of the idea of a European "modernity"? How was this utopian enthusiasm reflected in artistic production and discourses on art? In architecture and in synaesthetic research? What illusions or disillusion did artists and intellectuals have to face, or still do face? And what role do artistic representations of peoples, religions, landscapes and animals play in the ongoing rivalries and enmities between

States vying for world domination?

Beyond myth

Antonio Gramsci, writing in the first half of the twentieth century, was utopian when he claimed that "if in X years this [European] union is achieved, the word 'nationalism' will have the same archaeological value as today's 'municipalism'". We are witnessing, on the contrary, a dangerous retreat into a radicalised conception of the nation and national culture, which calls into question our myth of supra-national unity. The result is a large-scale reconsideration of the relationships between art, artists and the myths of Europe. What remains today of the very idea of a European cultural consciousness? How is the writing of European art history approached today historiographically? What discourses or counter-discourses characterise it? More generally, how can we analyse the role played, for example, by revolutions and avant-gardes in the illusion of an erosion of set schemas and borders? What does the history of exhibitions (major museum events, biennials, triennials, etc.) tell us about the diverse approaches to the concept of Europe?

This thematic section starts from the tension between utopia and violence, and the illusions and disillusionment present in the myths, concepts and representations of Europe. Incorporating multiple methodological and historical approaches, it will explore the wide range of meanings attached to "Europe".



Heinrich Bünting, *Europa Regina*, 1587
xylography, in *Itinerarium sacrae scripturae*, vol. 1, p. 12-13

We are pleased to announce that **Jana Graul**, Lecturer at the University of Hamburg and head of a research project on the imaginary of Europe in artistic representations and in discourses on art, have been invited as Joint Editors for this thematic section of **issue no. 21** of *Studiolo*, devoted to **EUROPE**.

Submissions can be composed in French, Italian or English and must be unpublished. In the **Dossier**, **Varia** and **Débats** sections, articles are expected to be between 30,000 and 80,000 characters long (including spaces and notes). In the last section, **Villa Médicis, histoire et patrimoine**, articles can be between 10,000 and 50,000 characters long (including spaces and notes). Images must be provided by the **authors and be free of rights**. Authors are responsible for formatting their articles in accordance with our [author guidelines](#).

Applicants are also invited to submit **an abstract**, and a **short bio-note** of its author (max. **800 characters** each), specifying the author's current position, affiliation and research, as well

as recent publications and e-mail address. Abstract and biography must be sent in a **separate document**.

All documents should be emailed in Word format to Patrizia Celli: patrizia.celli@villamedici.it.

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