

*Systèmes d'Orientation dans le Voyage curated by Monteoliveto Gallery*

Presentation by Carolina Lio

Lucia Amalia Maggio's practice is based on a conceptual and theoretical structure, on drafts and analysis of the physical space in which she builds installations designed to change our perception of the place.

She starts from the historical salvage of the discovery and colonization of territories and probes the matter of orientation. Her fields of study are the measurement of the world and the creation of reference patterns and frameworks to map the space turning it from reality to model. From this area of reflection, it begins an analysis on how to build a reverse procedure. That is how to build a space starting from its mathematical orientation plane.

What happens when from the model you want to go back to its original? Is it possible to change to reverse running and draw the world starting from its geographical abstraction? Do the map and the place have a one-to-one relationship that can be read in both directions? It is obvious what kind of information we lose by translating a place into a theoretical structure. But do we lose information when we move from this back to the real space? As she acts directly on the physical location, Lucia Amalia Maggio splits and rewrites it with site-specific installations that make the real space the portrait of its map; or rather she superimposes the transposition of the mathematical system designed to measure and manage it. Through the basic symbol of the Rose of the Winds, the artist creates branching structures, which alter the space and force us to a rational reading of the world. In this solo show, the artist works on the sense of contrast between the strict mathematic rules created by humans for orientation, and the idea of sailing in the open sea without any landmarks. Her site-specific installation comes from the scheme of the constellation Ursa Minor (ideally imagined on the ceiling of the gallery) from which they have been installed seven conical structures of thread and plexiglass.

The projection of the two-dimensional diagram of the constellation in a three-dimensional structure, creates an additional layer through which the viewer must read and interpret the space. Each structure is illuminated from above to recall the similarity to the nightly maritime orientation, and they have been positioned at different heights above the ground, depending on the greater or lesser proximity of the corresponding astronomical star to Earth. To make visible the mathematics, geometric, regular structure of the geographical sciences, does it mean to superimpose a contrived idealization on the natural world, or rather to just make evident a physical order that would exist anyway? The viewer is invited to reflect on these dynamics without excluding his historical awareness. Indeed, it forms part of the exhibition route the representation of the "Carta Pisana" (XIII century, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale), one of the first papers in which it has been marked the geographic grid. Furthermore, to answer these questions, one has to deal not only with the physical impact between the body and place, the perception and the geometric theory, but also with the social and historical meaning of "orientation". The conquest of the place, its "domestication" with rules that make the experience of traveling traceable and then repeatable, creates a link between geographical and historical route. The maritime orientation – privileged point of view in this exhibition – inevitably brings to mind the trade routes of the ancient world and an idea of colonization which involves repeated "round trips" facilitated by math coordinates. Therefore, a drawing on paper and the ability to manage it, became political power. Combine the real world to its geographical representation, thus creates a stratification of levels and an interpenetration of readings that appeals to the personal depth of the viewer and his awareness on the relationship of physical and cultural world from a vast history. The combination of several physical planes and space leads to an interpretation that extends under a perspective of time and also the approach to this complex stratification, inevitably by the question of how the representation of something – in this case the world – contributes to create it. The combining of the real world with its geographical representation thus creates a stratification of levels and readings that appeals to the personal depth of the viewer and to his awareness on the physical and cultural relationships of a world with a vast history. The union of several physical and spatial planes leads to an interpretation which cannot be separated even from a temporal perspective and the approach to this complex stratification inevitably passes through the question of how the representation of something – in this case the world – contributes to create it.