

# IMMAGINE. IDENTITÀ. L'ESTETICA DELL'ARTE CONTEMPORANEA NELLA CONSERVAZIONE DELLE SUPERFICI<sup>1</sup>.

EMANUELA SORBO<sup>1</sup>, MARCO CHIUSO<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Università Iuav di Venezia (IUAV), Santa Croce 191, Tolentini, 30135 Venezia, [esorbo@iuav.it](mailto:esorbo@iuav.it)

<sup>2</sup> Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per le provincie di Lucca e Massa Carrara (SABAP-LU), Piazza della Magione, [marco.chiuso@beniculturali.it](mailto:marco.chiuso@beniculturali.it)

## ABSTRACT

The image of cities is determined most decidedly by the surfaces of architecture, which, from one period to the next, reflect oscillations of taste. Surfaces become the reflection both of the culture within which designers operate and of the culture of the community at large. The conservation's role is to take heed of the needs of the community over time.

There are many physical factors of this transformation, which remains on the borderline between demands of a cultural nature and aesthetic experience. In particular, the greater attention being paid to perceptibility of the distinct parts exacerbates the relation at the borderline between, on the one hand, the edge of the lacuna in the plaster work – conserved as a sign of the passing of time – and, on the other, the still intact parts – with picturesque and, at times, practically Disney-like effects.

In the submitted paper, this acceptance on the part of the community – of lacune, fragmented plaster and the roughness of surfaces – is interpreted in terms of the consolidation of an “informal aesthetics” as adopted by such artists as Alberto Burri. One's relations with matter, and expression of the rending or the breaking of matter, become the measure of the relationship that arises over time, considered as a concept linked not to history but to authenticity.

In respect of this condition, Damien Hirst's exhibition, “Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable” (Pinault Collection, Venice 2017) provides perfect expression of this borderline area between image and authenticity. The exhibition's recovered fake ‘treasures’ are sculpted in three forms: as emerging from the underwater excavation campaign, restored (conservation) and as ‘redeemed’ in the forms presumed to be original. This ambiguity of choice shows how restoration has become a part of popular culture, as representation of the work, figuring as a factor whereby breakages, fragmentation and decay play a role in the process of acknowledgement of the authenticity of a given work. The aim of this paper is to investigate these elements starting out from aesthetical analysis of the history and the theory of restoration and conservation, from the postwar period, and verifying this attitude in a number of contemporary case studies (e.g. the Fortezza fortress by M. Scherer, W. Dietl and R. Riller; the Quai de Branly museum in Paris by J. Nouvel; the CaixaForum in Madrid by Herzog & de Meuron; Neues Museum in Berlin by D. Chipperfield; Kolumba Museum in Cologne by P. Zumthor, the Santa Marta complex in Verona and the Gonzaga Ducal Palace in Guastalla by M. Carmassi).

**Key-words:** cultural heritage, theory of restoration, conservation science, architectural restoration, cultural memory

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