

Proceedings

Images of the Other World. Chronicles of Exiles in America [†]

Caterina Cristina Fiorentino

DADI_Dipartimento di Architettura e Disegno Industriale, Università degli Studi della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli, 81031 Aversa (CE), Italy; caterinacristina.fiorentino@unicampania.it

[†] Presented at the International and Interdisciplinary Conference IMMAGINI? Image and Imagination between Representation, Communication, Education and Psychology, Brixen, Italy, 27–28 November 2017.

Published: 24 November 2017

Abstract: This paper is the premise to an activity of research that it's no started yet; the research aims to investigate the production of the exiled by the nazi-fascism that attended one another, or have collaborated each other in the United States like they were used to do in Europe. The research aims to trace a cultural history of transits and weaves, such as telling the manner, content, and configuration, in the American society, of “bubbles” or “wrinkles”; in other words of intellectual spaces in which research projects, artistic experimentation and teaching were conducted; all activities that originated in the old Europe and which, after the forced exile, found the place and the ways to continue, through paths that were certainly influenced by the cultural and social context of the new world; a world composed by a multitude of different backgrounds, where the idea of unity and social justice, such as the fruitful and peaceful coexistence of diversity, remains an open discussion topic with uncertain solutions.

Keywords: urban images; image and imagination; identity

1. Introduction

The field of investigation is the large one of the storytelling of urban spaces; the area of interest is about the creation and diffusion of urban images; initial objects of the research are some images with which Constantine Nivola [1] returns his interpretation of Manhattan, along with a two works by Xanti Schawinsky [2].

The reference context of the research concerns the possibility to look at urban images as interpretive fragments that participate to a multi-voiced speech, in which different authors describe inhabited areas, architecture or people and objects, defining the character and the spirit of places—according to their personal poetic and to the choice of expressive tools and *media*—while they increase the popular imagination. Therefore, the object of the research is part of a dialogue in which the individual interpretations of urban spaces are arisen from personal contingencies and research, such as from the confrontation between personalities who find themselves in a foreign land and who look at the so-called new world with an exiled vision that describes places without subtracting, as is due to great artists, any declaration of social and political character, while has to deal with his personal research that is to be confronted, daily, with issues relating to economic survival and to the admission to artistic scene of the American market and museums.

In short, the object of the research is the construction of the urban and land images; in a broader sense is about the relationship between the given shape, the personal poetics and the communication of identity of places, that often are intertwined with elements of the collective imagination.

Approaching the understanding of an urban place, as well as its images—literary and figurative—involves the awareness of reading stories already made, interpretations already done; the representations of the city—cartography, maps, views, artworks, illustrations or projects—and the

literary passages, when referring to the urban, present a city-idea or an interpretation of the identity of places as a transmissible and communicable character. From here starts the investigation about the complexity of a place and the determination of the process of knowledge, the very discovery of complexity becomes a characteristic feature of contexts and urban structure, and it guides to the identification of the reading parameters and to the choice of the interpretative categories.

Since the end of 1800 [3], the conquest of American territories and the need to recall people for populate certain sites in order to gain economic value, gave rise to images where graphic elements were the result of a process of reducing complexity. Images that express the identity characters used by territorial marketing, are the result of stringent synthesis and simplification processes, for which signs and words are there to tell those elements that mark the differences because a site is due to be more appealing than another; however, if the elements that make a difference are just one of the features that distinguish one location from another, the identity of the sites is certainly much more complex and articulate and requires less restrictive forms of communication than those that are suitable for the market. So if the building of the collective imagination of the territories and the American cities was born together with the demands of marketing and occupation of the land; instead, the understanding of urban dynamics, flows and transformations—even if it is part of the market—is subject to independent investigation; in fact the history and the spirit of places are a more articulated reality that has to be compared with the construction of images and languages, in which the contradictions are present, as well as all those components that escape from excessive simplification for their intrinsic nature.

In this sense, either uniquely or when combined with the project and the dissemination of clichés, the images of authors who have dedicated themselves to artistic production together with literary texts make it possible to reflect on the complexity of interpretations, especially when these are put in relationship between them. The same considerations may apply to cinematographic frames, or to the great strength of photographic reportages; in both cases the selective cut is defined, either by narrative requirements or by the shooter; the considerations on interpretative and selective subjectivity are obvious and concern any type of image; but what remains interesting to investigate is the strength that some images, more than others, have in surviving and becoming imaginary; or the possibility that an interpretative subjectivity becomes an impression shared by parts of a community. Thus, research into urban images of American territories, as seen by the exiles of Nazi-Fascism, is a chapter of a wider articulation in which other aspects of the creation of urban images may arise; an area of inquiry could be reserved to what is expressed by clichés [4], seen as revealing gimmicks.

The production of some exiles by Nazi-fascism is, in fact, composed by images that interpret American reality, having as counterpoint to the texts of the literate, while telling about society and forms of overseas with the look of those who came forcedly from another world. The exiles were messengers and protagonists of the Bauhaus vision, or experimenters of the avant-garde European movements, they—once in the United States—created connections of various kinds; connections of relationships, of friendship and cultural sharing. These relations gave shape to research communities and to concordance of interests, in which solidarity and discussion produced poetic practices and the organization of contents for teaching at American universities.

There are even connections between various forms of expression that the exiles have chosen, from time to time, engaging the production of paintings, sculpture, interior architecture, graphics and editorial projects; depending on the job opportunities, the needs and possibilities of each one and in the name of the unit of knowledge and of the continuous experimentation of execution techniques that were a contribute to the dissolution of boundaries, imposed by the media used, or by restrictive academic classifications. In this sense, the images born on American land, after the exercise of racial laws in Europe, are a precious occasion to reflect about various aspects of the project of images concerning also the construction of cultural contexts arising from the comparison between the individual personalities of the exiles who acted, from time to time, within educational institutions, or in publishing, architecture or artistic production.

2. Things of the Other World

From this concise introduction, the contents of this contribution are articulated according to a necessary restriction of the field of inquiry; the proposal, therefore, takes into account some works by Constantino Nivola and Xanti Schawinsky. By these authors are presented some images that best express the relationship with urban and architectural spaces, but especially those in which their vision expresses more clearly the poetic condition and, therefore, the active participation of images in social life. In fact, the works selected are images that, made with different techniques and for different reasons, can be examined in their entirety, according to an interpretative cut that does not favor chronological contemporaneity but focuses on content; these are images that show urban spaces and, above all, are focused on interstices, overlaps, blur, indeterminacy, transitional, or the feeling of unbelieving that arouses from New York City, a mixed feeling of admiration and astonishment, without neglecting irony. The value of urban images by Nivola and Schawinsky may have more than one search result, it provides an obvious extension of the field of investigation, involving the production of other protagonists in the same cultural domains. In fact, the research can be directed towards the reconstruction of relations between the protagonists of a diaspora that has given rise to the re-composition of cultural contexts in other places than the early ones; or the investigation can proceed about how the presence of exiles on a foreign land has fertilized and orientated American culture and even about how the outcome of such hybridization is then returned to Europe; in fact, these are routes that follow in cross-directional directions. Along with this, the study and interpretation of the outcomes of these cultural contexts—which have produced images as critical expressions of concern and disagreement with the dominant culture and that, in schools and universities and also in the artistic institutions, have found their space—leads the search towards spaces of freedom for the exercise of personal poetics that have in common such a deep awareness of the meaning of artistic creation to be configured as dissident life experiences in opposition to a misunderstood sense of conformism.

Thus, with the images that the exiles return of American land, the debate on the images of the urban area is enriched with a critical aspect, in which the production of interpretations of the urban area goes beyond the representation of the descriptive made of physical, numerical, or traditionally functional data, and even beyond the expression of a design will that is immediately connected with the forms of the built or of what has to be built; because the works of exiles describe things in the other world: they are the an image-story about contradictions, injustice, uncertainty as a constant and, alongside all of this, the story about the conscious skepticism that comes out in facing something that is, at the same time, extremely seductive but also questionable, from the socially, communicatively and representative point of view. The images of this story are, in fact, the outcome of individual biographies and some common data that make the eyes of the exiles directed, at the same time, at and beyond an ocean; in this way the other world is, from time to time, in the east as in the west. In this sense, the initial and forced condition of exile becomes, with the passage of time and the modification of political conditions, an inalienable and non-erasable figure; this concerns not only their personal stories, but also our current culture; because from the end of the Second World War and later, with greater intensity since the Seventies of the Twentieth Century onwards, the cross-migration of works and authors, between the old and the new world, has led to paths whose cultural outcomes are still to be traced to define the content of the culture of dissidence or, better, of freedom.

Everybody's Drama

For what concerns the materials proposed in this paper, the focus is on some works by Nivola and Xanti Schawinsky, as partial examples of representations that can make echoes of what is found in the themes of literary texts. The intersection between signs and words gives rise to a deeper understanding of the interpretations of images that certain artists have produced looking and living American reality; as an example of biography it's possible to mention what George Grosz [5] wrote in 1946, in reference to the myth of the *uncle of America*, to the spirit of a *fairy-like world where surprising things happened*, or about the fact that, in order to choose to go to America one should be in troubles, in a big trouble like the one in which the Europeans have been and still were. But the link that here is

taken into account, amongst all the possible, is the one between Nivola and Elio Vittorini: they have been working together in Italy, when Vittorini wrote the introduction to *Una campagna pubblicitaria* [6], made for the typewriter Olivetti Studio 42, that was designed, among others, by Xanti Schawinsky [7]. The relation between Vittorini's literary, publicity and editorial works, and the production made by Nivola and Schawinsky, can be based—as a starting example to search, later in other texts [8]—on the work that he made for *Americana*, the anthology censored by the Fascist regime [9], and on the desire of Vittorini to make a film based on the novel of William Saroyan, *Myself on earth* [10]. Saroyan's tale was first published in the United States as part of a collection; that Vittorini translated in—*What do you think of America?*—for Mondadori in 1940. Here America is seen with the eyes of immigrants—of those who have not yet emancipated their condition—and is told through the lives of the marginalized, where geographies and the culture of origin make up a territory dominated by the imprudence of survival; a territory where Saroyan's land is identified with Frisco (San Francisco), with the place where he has his room, his books, his phonograph and his typewriter. The stories of Saroyan—*The daring young man on the trapeze and other stories*—have as protagonists Armenians, Jews, Poles, Chinese, Africans, Irish; they tell about people of many backgrounds, an argument that in the fascist era was scary for some and risky for the opponents of the regime and that, in the number 30 of "Il Politecnico", Vittorini reasumes—in a vision oriented by a momentum of eccentric optimism—comparing the image of the tower of Babel, painted by Brueghel, with that of a skyscraper: the image of hat tower, guardian of the legendary possibility of understanding between humans on this earth, shows together "bianchi con negri, arabi con ebrei, turchi e armeni, sloveni e italiani, boemi e tedeschi, inglesi con russi" which "impareranno a capirsi, e tireranno su fino all'ultimo piano la torre [...] per abitarla, una buona volta, al sicuro dai fulmini e dalle paure" [11]. In addition, Vittorini's interest in Saroyan's texts, along with that of other texts by American authors, is also a testimony to the use and importance of images in narrative; the photographs had the task of accentuating and strengthening the documentary shades of *Americana*, and this experience was coupled with the tenacity with which he conducted the story of the 1953 *Conversazione in Sicilia* [12]; close to these two experiences the importance of having the text that "walks" with images can be found in the pages of "Il Politecnico", as in the introductory text for *Una Campagna pubblicitaria* written for Olivetti. From here, the list of literary and images texts on American land can be enriched with examples of urban descriptions, along with the lives of exiles, refugees and immigrants; but to understand better and swiftly the interest in American literature and the look of Italian intellectuals on that world, it is appropriate to give space to what was explained, objectively and disenchanting, by Cesare Pavese, in an article in 1947, in which he writes: "verso il 1930, quando il fascismo cominciava ad essere "la speranza del mondo", accadde ad alcuni giovani italiani di scoprire nei suoi libri l'America, un'America pensosa e barbarica, felice rissosa, dissoluta, feconda, greve di tutto il passato del mondo, e insieme giovane, innocente". Per qualche anno questi giovani lessero tradussero e scrissero con una gioia di scoperta e di rivolta che indignò la cultura ufficiale, [...]. Per molta gente l'incontro con Caldwell, Steinbeck, Saroyan, e perfino col vecchio Lewis, aperse il primo spiraglio di libertà, il primo sospetto che non tutto nella cultura del mondo finisse coi fasci. Va da sé che, per chi seppe, la vera lezione fu più profonda. Chi non si limitò a sfogliare la dozzina o poco più di libri che uscirono oltreoceano in quegli anni ma scosse la pianta per farne cadere anche i frutti nascosti e la frugò intorno per scoprirne le radici, si capacitò presto che la ricchezza espressiva di quel popolo nasceva non tanto dalla vistosa ricerca di assunti sociali scandalosi e in fondo facili, ma da un'ispirazione severa e già antica di un secolo a costringere la vita quotidiana nella parola [...]. A questo punto la cultura americana divenne una sorta di grande laboratorio dove con altra libertà e altri mezzi si perseguiva lo stesso compito di creare un gusto uno stile un mondo moderni che, forse con minore immediatezza ma con altrettanta caparbieta, i migliori tra noi perseguivano. Quella cultura ci apparve insomma un luogo ideale di lavoro e di ricerca, di sudata e combattuta ricerca, e non soltanto la Babele di clamorosa efficienza, di crudele ottimismo al neon che assordava e abbacinava gli ingenui e, condita di qualche romana ipocrisia, non sarebbe stata per dispiacere neanche ai provinciali gerarchi nostrani. Ci si accorse, durante quegli anni di studio, che l'America non era un altro paese, un nuovo inizio della storia, ma soltanto il gigantesco teatro dove con

maggior franchezza che altrove veniva recitato il dramma di tutti. E se per un momento ci era apparso che valesse la pena rinnegare noi stessi e il nostro passato per affidarci corpo e anima a quel libero mondo, ciò era stato per l'assurda e tragicomica situazione di morte civile in cui la storia ci aveva momentaneamente cacciati.

La cultura americana ci permise in quegli anni di vedere svolgersi come su uno schermo gigante il nostro stesso dramma. Ci mostrò una lotta accanita, consapevole, incessante, per dare un senso un nome un ordine alle nuove realtà e ai nuovi istinti della vita individuale e associata, per adeguare ad un mondo vertiginosamente trasformato gli antichi sensi e le antiche parole dell'uomo. Com'era naturale in tempi di ristagno politico, noi tutti ci limitammo allora a studiare come quegli intellettuali d'oltremare avessero espresso questo dramma, come fossero giunti a parlare questo linguaggio, a narrare, a cantare questa favola. Parteggiare nel dramma della favola, nel problema non potevamo apertamente, e così studiammo la cultura americana un po' come si studiano i secoli del passato, i drammi elisabettiani o la poesia del dolce Stil Novo [13].

3. Public Space and Private Vision

On 31 December 1942, Nivola and Saul Steinberg celebrated together New Year's Eve and the fact that they were able to meet in New York after some years when Steinberg had been forced into difficult and unfair retirement moments at the Prison in Milan and then at a concentration camp on the Adriatic, one of those set up by Mussolini [14]. The interest in urban images that Nivola has produced, walking across New York City together and without Steinberg, lies in the fact that these representations can be associated with cultural and artistic pathways of other exiles and that they can also be interpreted through connections with literary texts, as mentioned above. Indeed, it is through relationships with the works of other authors that it's possible to open a field of inquiry about the foundation of a new language, based on personal reflections and common research, that is adequate to the communication of contemporary content and that has to be confronted with the fields of application—advertising communication, publishing, artistic experimentation, architectural solutions and didactic notes—to search for appropriate signs to the new world's content, to the themes of social and urban complexity, while retaining the relationship with the previous formation of the authors. The Nivola's signs are the result of a progressive thickening of strokes and are comparable to a language, a very personal idiom, as if it were a continuous text that alluded to a continuity of writing linear, a *text* that makes a chaotic space, confused with the perspective of the points of view, and that conforms labyrinths, that are expressive of the routes and the special relationship between interior and exterior of the city spaces. Nivola's images are representations of the streets, facades of buildings, cars and pedestrians; elements that compose an *unicum*, made of parts of a unitary speech in which they have the same weight and equal intensity; Nivola's continuous tract describes a simultaneous look, the possibility of perceiving that the surfaces of the canvas are the only limit imposed, but that the paintings may be infinitely composed; this is one of the most interesting issues in the works of Nivola that translate the New York City movement into thick and tangled signs, to tell us about incompleteness and impermanence, along with persistence.

3.1. The Crowded City

In 1947 Nivola made a trip to Italy, to decide whether to return to live there, where he wanted to divide his time between the city of Milan and his Sardinia; the letters he writes to his wife [15] during the trip show a progressive, gradual change in his projects that will end with the choice of living in the United States [16] where Sardinia will be replaced by Cape Cod [17]. In the occasion of this trip on the number 219 of "Domus", under the direction of Ernesto Nathan Rogers, are published pictures of two paintings by Costantino Nivola, these are interpretations of the city of New York, realized in 1943 [18]. The title chosen by "Domus", to describe the pictures of Nivola is *The crowded city* (Figure 1), which is described here: "rappresentano una qualunque via della city con le sue case, le sue insegne pubblicitarie, il suo traffico. Ma basta un colpo d'occhio per capire che giovano alla migliore comprensione della metropoli, dove gli individui sono ridotti a brulicare come scarafaggi.

Nivola ha saputo rendere il senso di una vita assurda, la sua penna ha centrato con intelligenza il problema” [19].



Figure 1. This is a detail taken from a drawing made by Costantino Nivola, that is part of a work named *New York*. Costantino Nivola, *New York*, 1943, paper pen, cm. 47 × 60.5; private collection. The drawings are published in the volume AA.VV., *Nivola. Dipinti e grafica*, Jaca Book, Milan, 1995, figg. 123–129.

3.2. Postcards

The birth of the illustrated postcard, as artwork in small format, dates back to the last decades of the 1700s, but since 1872 there are postcards illustrated as souvenirs and as a “relay” to show and tell about the natural and artistic beauties of the places: it is a continuous search and reaffirmation of symbols, of individual elements that are chosen to represent a much more complex and articulated unit; the illustrated postcards are therefore part of that synthesis process where some elements of the urban or natural landscape become more expressive of wider and, of course, more complex contexts. Nivola makes some works entitled *Postcards* [20], they are off-scale postcards, the size is about cm. 72 × 56, and are works that tell about Rome, Milan, New York and about America (Figure 2), with the alternation of color images—in which Nivola reproduces traditional views of monumental or memorable places—and with its stretch in white in black. With the *Postcards*, Nivola tells us about the contrast between the everlasting souvenir and the true life. With the black strokes, he traces the overlapping between urban spaces, architectures and travel flows; in one, he shows us the representation of the movement and the possibility of transformation against the stereotypes [21].



Figure 2. This is a detail taken from an opera by Nivola named *Postcard of America*. Costantino Nivola, *Postcard from America*, pen and pastel on paper, cm. 76.2 × 56, private collection; of the *Postcards* series, 1978, detail. The *Postcards* series is published in the volume AA.VV., *Nivola. Dipinti e Grafica*, Jaca Book, Milan, 1995, figg. 45–48.

3.3. The Unbelievable City

The unbelievable city of Nivola occupies the whole surface of paintings or drawings (Figure 3), it is an overflow, as well as the lines that portray it and as it transcends the same visual perception, coming out of the optical cone and continuing beyond the sheet; in fact, Nivola's city is a displayed and deployed, composed by dense curtains of closed shapes that pull together and cross over; the windows and the open spaces become blind eyes that cancels the human consistency, for which they claim to have been made. In its views, the city becomes a metaphor of a background without close-ups, a prospective deformation revealing the same force under which the consciousness of its inhabitants is flattened; are pictures referring to Henry Miller's literature, in which it is blasphemous to define the American as a society of free peoples [22].

These are images in which Nivola tells about the impossibility or its contrary, and about the unbelief or the surprise that a city like New York offers to those who are in the streets; roads that are present since the first images that Nivola does in the city of New York and that were indicated by colored arrows at the beginnings of its urban representations, and then, they lose their definition to become part of a continuous stroke in which full and empty—which usually conform city maps and visions—become one thing. For those roads, Nivola also walked along with Steinberg during their tours, and as well as with Ruth and his son Pietro [23]; these are roads where it is impossible to get lost, all ordered according to orthogonality, all numbered according to a progression; however, their street quality is less interesting than the flows, than the activities that animate them and the continuous movement that characterizes them; at least this seems looking at the works of Nivola; works in which the focus is on the interpretation of the urban symbols of Manhattan, intended as the protagonists of an uninterrupted activity that makes stunned or that arouses unbelief, and whether this is a positive proposition is still a topic to be investigated through the study of documents and bibliography, as well through the links between Nivola's artistic research—that began on his arrival in New York, and which continues even after the war—and the themes that engage the cultural

environment that also held appointments at the Del Pezzo [24] restaurant, where many European exiles were used meet.



Figure 3. Constantino Nivola, *The Unbelievable City*, Oil on Canvas, 1979 series; detail.

The Unbelievable City is a 1979 series made up of portraits of the city of New York, made by Nivola and part of the Mobil Oil collection (in 1981 and '82 Nivola designed sculptures for the Mobil Oil building in Washington); a paint of this series is currently part of the collection of Museo Nivola Orani, it was a donation from Mobil Oil and is also published on the museum's website: www.museonivola.it/en/museo/collezione/new-york-2 (accessed on 10 September 2017). *The Unbelievable City* series is published in the volume AA.VV., *Nivola. Dipinti e Grafica*, Jaca Book, Milan, 1995, figg. 38–40.

3.4. On the Road

Much is to be said about Schawinsky and it is still to be researched; on this occasion it's worth to mention—only to introduce a wider discourse—some of his works in which performance and therefore movement are the central elements of the poetic composition. In addition, these are works that explicitly relate to his text *About the Physical in Painting* of 1969, in which are listed, in 10 points, the examples of proceeding to execute artifacts in which performances and the choice of execution tools has an equivalent weight of the results [25]. Some of the Schawinsky experiments of the 1960s are part of the *Track series* [26], and they are more spectacular than others because they are made with a car; the process—a very personal interpretation of art *on the road*—is based on what he has already realized, or belongs to the research that sees him involved in performing events (*Dance painting*, 1957–195) and in the dissolution of boundaries compared to available media. The track images on canvas are mentioned in the sixth point of the list published by Schawinsky in 1969, and are described as follows: *Transfer of paint with the four wheels of an automobile driving over on canvas* [27]. Another image is *Bond Clothes* (Broadway) [28], which is part of a series of photographic images, made between 1950 and

'51, and which make use of the experiments that Schawinsky has conducted since the 1930s [29]. Photographic experiments done in America in the 1950s are images that «look both random and carefully composed. Some of them [...] bear titles that refer to their place of origin: they recall time exposures of nocturnal urban scenes in which movement is transmuted into an elongated band of light. Yet Schawinsky's composition remain thoroughly abstract; only their titles permit such representational associations [30].

4. In Itinere

As already mentioned, the contribution presented here is only the first approach to a work that is still to be done, it remains clear that the results are totally immature. It is supposed that only after research, even on archival sources, it will be possible to achieve to an interpretation of the *spirit of places* and of the "portraits" made by the exiles; always in the view of a research that considers the identity of places as a result of real occurrences and multiple stories. Research will tend to a reading that takes account of connections and crossings, showing a path of words and images, as a result of personal comparisons and poetics, in order to obtain a collection of urban space *interpretations* about American land. It is currently supposed that the result can contribute to the drafting of an Atlas_anthological thematic: an anthology composed of literary texts and images, from which it is possible to reconstruct the story of an itinerary; a journey *on the road* that leads from intimate and obscure interior as seen from a *rear window*, or from a garden [31] to the dunes of Cape Cod.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References and Notes

1. Costantino Nivola (1911–1988), for His Biography. Available online: <http://www.museonivola.it/costantino-nivola/biografia/> (accessed on 10 September 2017).
2. Xanti Schawinsky (1904–1979), for His Biography cf. *Xanti Schawinsky*; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst & JPR|Ringier: Zurich, Switzerland, 2015; p. 156. Exhibition Catalog Curated by R. Gygas, 21 Febbraio-17 Maggio, 2015, pp. 167–169; cfr. anche. Available online: <http://www.schawinsky.com/bio> (accessed on 10 September 2017).
3. Ward, S.V. *Selling Places*; Spon Press: London, UK, 1998.
4. Fiorentino, C.C. Silenzio, Loquacità e balbuzie. In *Puzzling. La Costruzione Dell'opera tra Progetto e Sospensione*; Curated by Fiorentino, C.C.; La Scuola di Pitagora Editrice: Napoli, Italy, 2012; pp. 40–84.
5. Grosz, G. *Un Piccolo si e un Grande No*; Grande Libreria Longanesi & C.: Milano, Italy, 1975 (first Italian edition 1948); first edition: *A Little Yes and a Big No*; Dial Press: New York, NY, USA, 1946.
6. *Una Campagna Pubblicitaria. Avanguardia Nella Tecnica*, by Leonardo Sinisgalli and Ufficio Tecnico di pubblicità Olivetti, Milano, Stampa S.A. Alfieri & Lacroix, 1939; document of the Associazione Archivio Storico Olivetti di Ivrea_AASO; text by Elio Vittorini, images by Costantino Nivola and Giovanni Pintori. Cf. Fiorentino, C.C. *Una campagna pubblicitaria*, in Fiorentino, C.C. *Millesimo di millimetro. I segni del codice visivo Olivetti 1908–1978*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2014, pp. 67–87.
7. *Olivetti Studio 42, Typewriter*. Design by Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini, Ottavio Luzzati and Xanti Schawinsky and for its debut communication: Costantino Nivola, Giovanni Pintori, and Elio Vittorini with Leonardo Sinisgalli.
8. This also refers to *la storia dei vinti* (the history made by won people), according to the texts of Simone Weil, Walter Benjamin and Franco Fortini. A theme shared by Vittorini who wanted to draw up a publication consisting of biographical interviews. Cf. Vittorini, E. Lettera al Padre, 22 December 1845. In *"Il Politecnico" di Vittorini*; Borrelli, M., Ed.; Oblique Studio: Rome, Italy, 2011.
9. *Americana* is an anthology that contains texts selected by Elio Vittorini, among the works of 33 American authors including: Irving, W.; Poe, E.A.; Melville, H.; Twain, M.; O'Neil, E.; Fitzgerald, F.S.; Boyle, K.; Faulkner, W.; James, H.; Hemingway, E.; Mr. Stein. Translators of the *Americana* team were: Vittorini; Pavese, C.; Piovene, G.; Morra, U.; Moravia, A.; Montale, E.; Linati, C.; Conti, P.G.; Fulchignoni, E.; Mr. Ferrara. Concerning *Americana*, cf. Marchianò, A. *Americana di Vittorini tra Audace Sconfinamento Letterario e Proibito Percorso Editoriale*. in Acts of the convention: *La letteratura degli italiani rotte confini passaggi*; XIV Congresso Nazionale della Associazione degli Italianisti, (Genova, 15–18 September 2010), papers published by

- DIRAS, University of Genoa, 2012. ISBN 978-88-906601-1-5. See also Manacorda, G. Come fu pubblicata "Americana". In Elio Vittorini, *Proceedings of the Acts of the National Conference of Studies, Siracusa-Noto, Italy, 12–13 February 1976*; Sipala, P.M., Ed.; Ermanno Scuderi; Greco: Catania, Italy, 1978; pp. 63–68.
10. Saroyan, W. *Myself upon the Earth, the Daring Young Flyng Man on the Trapeze and Other Stories*; The Modern Library Inc.: New York, NY, USA, 1941; pp. 51–66. Prima ed. 1934. Cf. Fiorentino, C.C. Me Stesso Sulla Terra. In *Congegni Sapiienti. Stile Olivetti il Pensiero Che Realizza*; Fiorentino, C.C., Ed.; Hapax editore: Torino, Italy, 2016; pp. 143–156.
 11. Vittorini, E. Le città del mondo. *Il Politecnico* **1946**, n. 30.
 12. Vittorini, E. *Conversazione in Sicilia*, Bompiani, Milano, 1941. This novel, for the first time, was published in batches in the journal "Letteratura", 1938–1939. The first editions in a single volume appeared with the title *Nome e lagrime*, Parenti, Firenze, 1941. In the 1953 was made the edition illustrated by Bompiani, with photographs by Luigi Crocenzi. Renato Guttuso's drawings, made in the Forties, were only published in 1986 for the Rizzoli edition. The Olivetti edition is was made in the 1973, it was strenna, with the photographic boards by Enzo Ragazzini.
 13. Pavese, C. Ieri e Oggi. *L'Unità*, 3 August 1947. Reprinted in: Pavese, C. *La Letteratura Americana e Altri Saggi*; Einaudi: Torino, Italy, 1959; pp. 193–196.
 14. For the Biography of Saul Steinberg. Available online: <http://saulsteinbergfoundation.org/chronology/> (accessed on 10 September 2017).
 15. Ruth Guggenheim Nivola (1917–2008) helped Nivola, Giovanni Pintori and Salvatore Fancello to Work at the Olivetti in 1936, after studying at the ISIA of Monza where they had met.
 16. Altea, G. Questioni di identità. In *Nivola. La Sintesi Delle Arti*; Altea, G., Camarda, A., Eds.; Ilisso edizioni: Nuoro, Italy, 2015; p. 127, notes numbers 168 and 169.
 17. Altea, G. *Questioni di identità*, in Altea, G., Camarda, A., op. cit., 2015, p. 121 Cape Cod, the Massachusetts peninsula rolling on the waters of the Atlantic Ocean is a place of voluntary exile and freedom; in addition to the events surrounding the lives of those who have chosen it as a place of choice, various literary texts have contributed to the construction of an imaginary linked to this place which, to this day, is part of a myth; just as it does for other places where men and women have gone for the sake of space for freedom and action and who have attracted, at certain historical periods, groups of people who, even in a different perspective, have found the impetus for their poetic personalities. From Altea, G. *Questioni di identità*, in Altea, G., Camarda, A., op. cit., 2015, p. 100: "una località che era meta estiva di diversi ex-maestri e allievi della Bauhaus. Vi trascorrevano le vacanze Walter e Ise Gropius, Breuer, Herbet Bayer, Moholy-Nagy e Xanti Schawinsky e, accanto a loro, altri esponenti della cultura americana e dell'emigrazione intellettuale europea cui Nivola era legato o con i quali avrebbe rapidamente stretto amicizia: Nicola e Miriam Chiaromonte, il giornalista Dwight McDonald, la scrittrice Mary McCarthy, l'architetto inglese Serge Chermayeff, l'artista Ungherese Györg Kepes, l'architetto austriaco Bernard Rudofsky, Steinberg e la moglie, la pittrice Hedda Sterne, una cerchia in parte coincidente con quella che si riuniva ogni mercoledì al ristorante Del Pezzo, nella 47esima, in occasione dei pranzi presieduti da Nivola, animati appuntamenti in cui si Incrociavano diversi ambienti della cultura newyorkese".
 18. Nivola, C. La Città Gremita. *Domus*, May 1947, p. 219. Cf. Altea, G. *Questioni di Identità*; Altea, G., Camarda, A., Eds.; Ilisso edizioni: Nuoro, Italy, 2015.
 19. Altea, G. *Questioni di Identità*; Altea, G., Camarda, A., Eds.; Ilisso edizioni: Nuoro, Italy, 2015; p. 122.
 20. Costantino, N. *Postcards: Cartolina da Roma, Cartolina da Milano, Cartolina da New York, Cartolina Dall'America*, pen and pastel on paper, cm. 76.2 × 56, 1978, private collection, printed in Licht, F., *La pittura*, in Ugo Collu, Alberto Crespi, Fred Licht e Salvatore Naitza, *Nivola. Dipinti e Grafica*, Jaca Book, Milano, 1995, figg. 45–48.
 21. Licht, F. *La pittura*; in Ugo Collu, Alberto Crespi, Fred Licht e Salvatore Naitza, *Nivola. Dipinti e Grafica*, Jaca Book, Milano, 1995; pp. 74–75.
 22. Miller, H. *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*; New Directions: New York, NY, USA, 1945.
 23. In a version of the painting *Times Square*, 1946, Nivola inserts the components of his family: himself, Ruth and his son. See Altea, G. *Questioni di Identità*; Altea, G., Camarda, A., Eds.; Ilisso edizioni: Nuoro, Italy, 2015; pp. 80–82.
 24. *Ibidem*. p. 100.
 25. Gyax, R. Forward and Backward. Process-Based Painting. In *Xanti Schawinsky*; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst & JPR | Ringier: Zurich, Switzerland, 2015; p. 125.

26. Xanti Schawinsky. *Transition*, 1960. Oil on Canvas, cm. 203.4 × 381.4 × 5.3. © Xanti Schawinsky Estate Zürich. Another Work Done with the Same Technique is: X. Schawinsky, *Come closer*, 1960; cf. Available online: <http://www.migrosmuseum.ch> (accessed on 10 September 2017).
27. Ibidem
28. Xanti Schawinsky. *Bond Clothes (Broadway)*, 1951. Photography in B/W, cm. 20.3 × 25.3, © Xanti Schawinsky Estate Zürich. Cfr. Available online: <http://www.migrosmuseum.ch> (accessed on 10 September 2017) e Cf. *Xanti Schawinsky*; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst & JPR|Ringier: Zurich, Switzerland 2015; p. 156; catalog of the exhibition curated by Gygax, R., 21 February–17 May 2015.
29. Cf. Fagone, V. *Nota Introduttiva All'opera Fotografica di Xanti Schawinsky*. In *Xanti Schawinsky. Foto*; Neumann, E., Ed.; Edizioni Benteli Verlag: Berna, Switzerland, 1989.
30. Gygax, R. Forward and Backward. Process-Based Painting; In *Xanti Schawinsky*; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst & JPR|Ringier: Zurich, Switzerland, 2015; p. 126.
31. In 1951, Costantino Nivola and Bernard Rudofsky designed and built the Nivola's garden in Long Island. In this regard it's worth to mention even the relationship between Nivola and Pietro Porcinai, designer of the green areas of the Olivetti factory in Pozzuoli. Cfr. Mereu, A., *Il Nivola Ritrovato. Un'artista tra l'America e il Mugello*, Nardini Editore: Firenze, Italy, 2012.



© 2017 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).