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The Uselessness of Drawing

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I do not know whether drawing is still a practice useful for design and architecture.

Certainly, it is no longer an irreplaceable practice; free-hand drawing, which used to mark the beginning of the design process, can be replaced by a computer visualization, by the construction of models in paper or wire or plasticine, by very effective photomontages, or even by lists of more or less emphasized words that begin to lead us into a maze of possible alternatives, of piazzas, of alleyways, of bypasses...

I have always been fascinated by drawing as a magical practice that connects us in a simple manner with what is and what is not, with the things that exist and can be touched on the one hand, and with geometric abstractions of hopes for a somewhat different world.

Drawing is natural daily practice; a bit like breathing, doing yoga, meditating in silence, or running in the park in the morning.

It is not a pragmatic or functional tool; rather, it resembles playing the guitar, which is ostensibly useful for making music but is actually for creating beautiful thoughts, for trying to achieve the perfection of a chord, or for letting loose with the freest and most unregulated of improvisations.

Drawing is easy because it manifests itself in unimagined possibilities: in fact, drawing ultimately serves to understand things better and to bring us closer to the mystery of beauty. I happen to draw before, during, and after the design process. I draw, with spontaneous insistence, all the little details of the products to be presented to companies, but these details come back to mind during the process of

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modeling and prototyping, and then also when the products are ready in their beautiful boxes to be displayed in stores and sold. I also continuously draw the light that hits them and shapes them and makes us see them from all possible angles as always different, and the shadows that are generated all around them, and then I start talking to those things and sometimes they talk back to me, but instead of using words I use drawing.

Drawing, then, really serves me to understand them, those things, in depth, to tiptoe into their souls and to feel them, somehow, alive.

I have been drawing and teaching for many years, and I often wonder whether drawing should be taught to students of architecture and design; to me, drawing seems useless from a strictly functional point of view, it just needs to be practiced to understand when it is capable of generating wonder.

To me, it seems important to tell students how drawing can generate, for any designer, a more sophisticated sensibility. So I tell them about the love I have always had for the practice of drawing, the music that helps me keep the right pace depending on the size of the drawing and its level of obsession, and then at the end we talk about the most important issue: when can we say that a drawing is finished?

And we never agree on that, and we've never been able to come up with a commonly shared rule.

But we did draw up a list of the infinite kinds of drawings we can make, and this list made us dizzy, due to an unsuspected broadening of horizons.

Together we discovered that drawing fascinates us precisely because it has many forms, it adapts to all people and situations while offering us multiple opportunities to understand it and to make it our own.

There is the very fast drawing, which fixes an idea that perhaps might otherwise slip away, and which possesses the seed of epiphany.

There is the very well-reasoned drawing, in which we try to make everything fit together precisely, and at times we succeed, even though that is very difficult.

There is the drawing that asks questions and the drawing that presents us with the answers.

There is the airy, unfinished drawing, which prompts us to imagine barely evoked worlds, and there is the one driven by horror vacui, which fills all the corners of the page.

There is the drawing of obsession, the one that is always repeated the same but with a few slight changes, because it wants to prove an unobjectionable thesis; there is the drawing that is done in a moment; there is the drawing full of second thoughts, erasures, and adjustments made as we go along, to achieve a perfection that will never truly be achieved.

There is the drawing in black and white, that superimposes itself on reality while slightly distorting it, capable of accompanying us into a simplified world in which all the variations of gray describe the nuances of penumbra and chiaroscuro and contrast; there is the drawing made of a single line that starts on the left and ends on the right and offers us the beauty of a naked body or a tree or a small building that changes the skyline of the hill.

In short, there is a drawing for each of us and, especially, a drawing for all hours of the morning and night, a silent drawing and one that you immediately realize had music accompanying it, and a drawing that becomes painting and a drawing that remains drawing at all costs and a drawing that is nothing but the sum of all the millions of drawings in our lives and which, in the end, as Jorge Luis Borges said, is nothing but our self-portrait.

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Fig. 1. Mario Trimarchi Design, *Altars offering fire to the gods*.

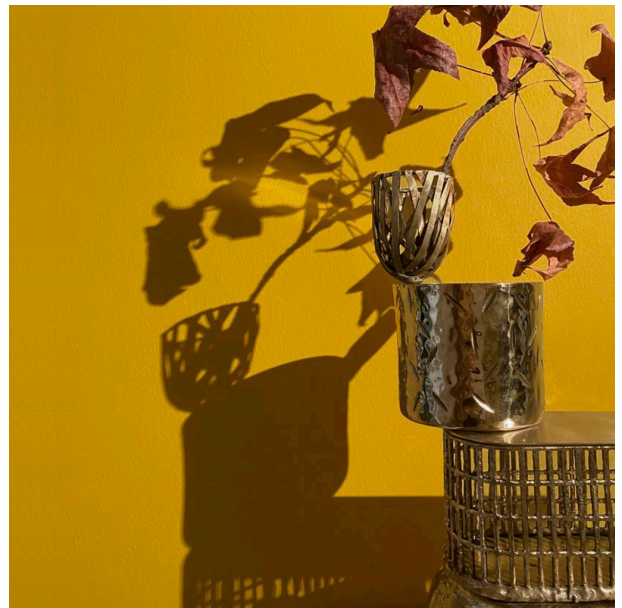
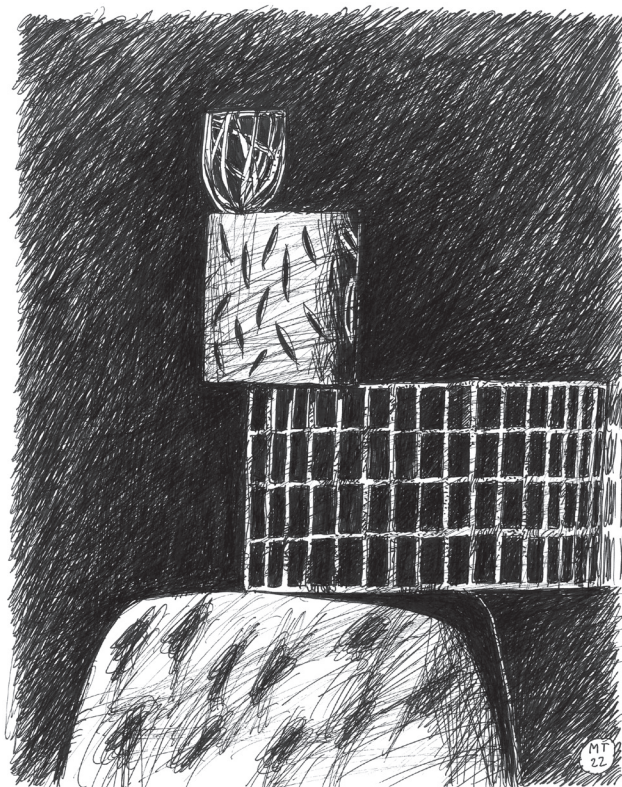


Fig. 2. Mario Trimarchi Design, *Close to the edge*.

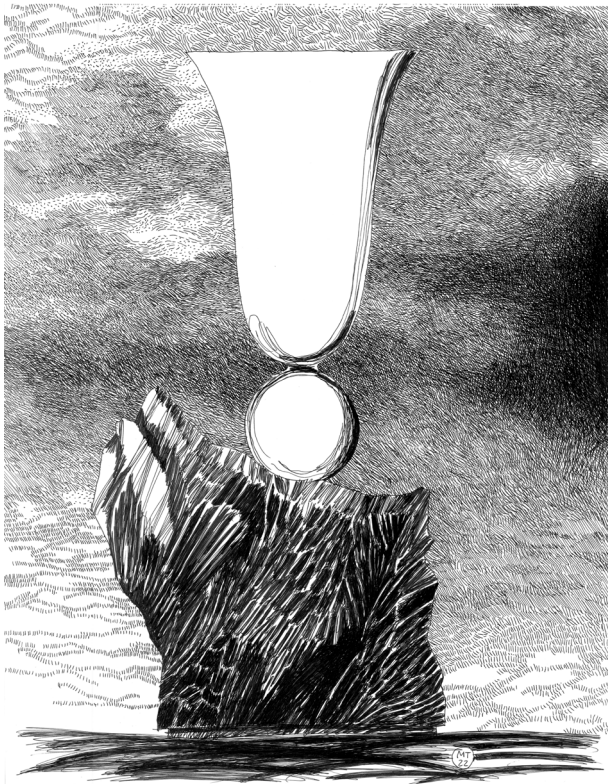


Fig. 3. Mario Trimarchi Design, Ossidiana, Alessi.

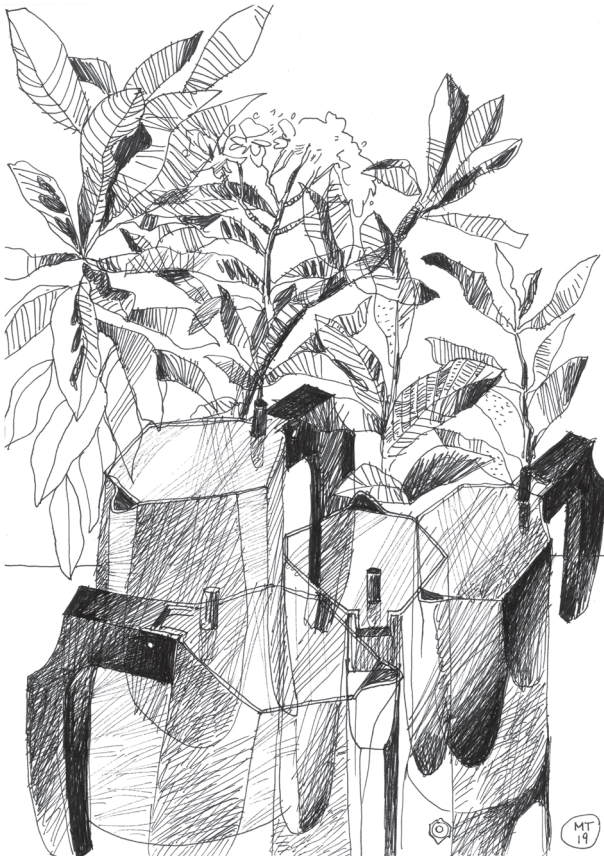


Fig. 4. Mario Trimarchi Design, Drops, Pasabahçe.

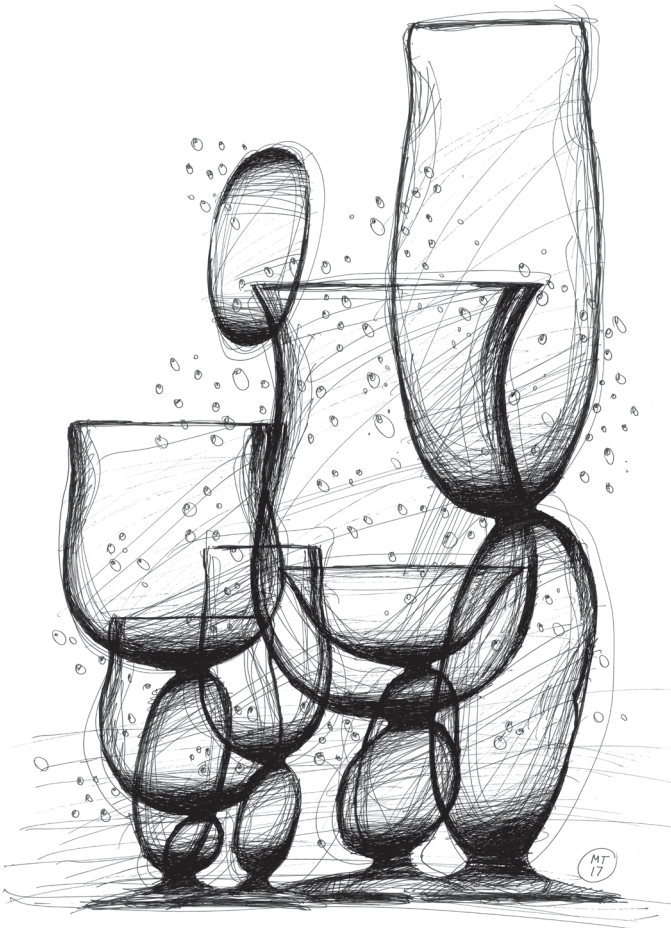


Fig. 5. Mario Trimarchi Design, Istante.

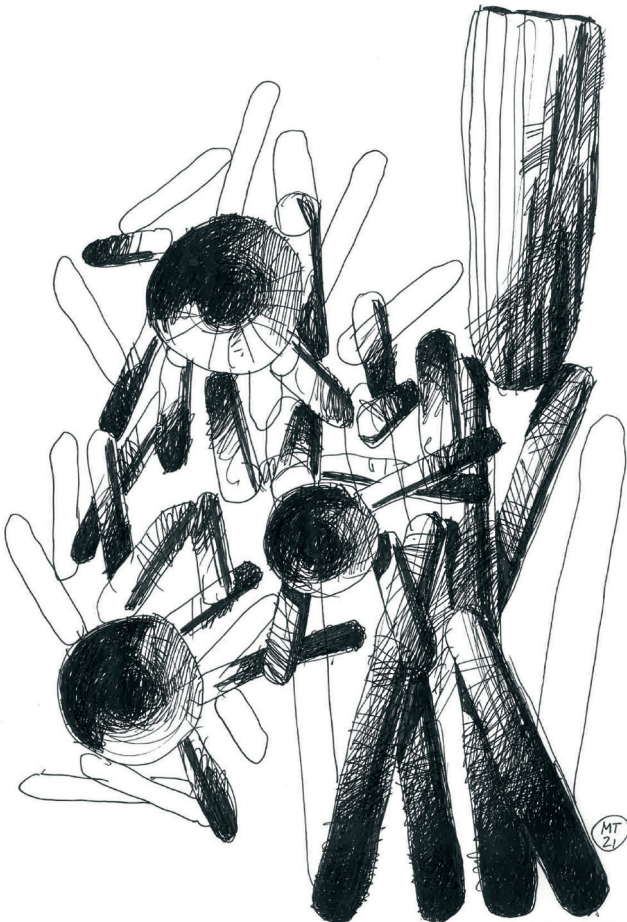


Fig. 6. Mario Trimarchi Design, Swan, Hansa.

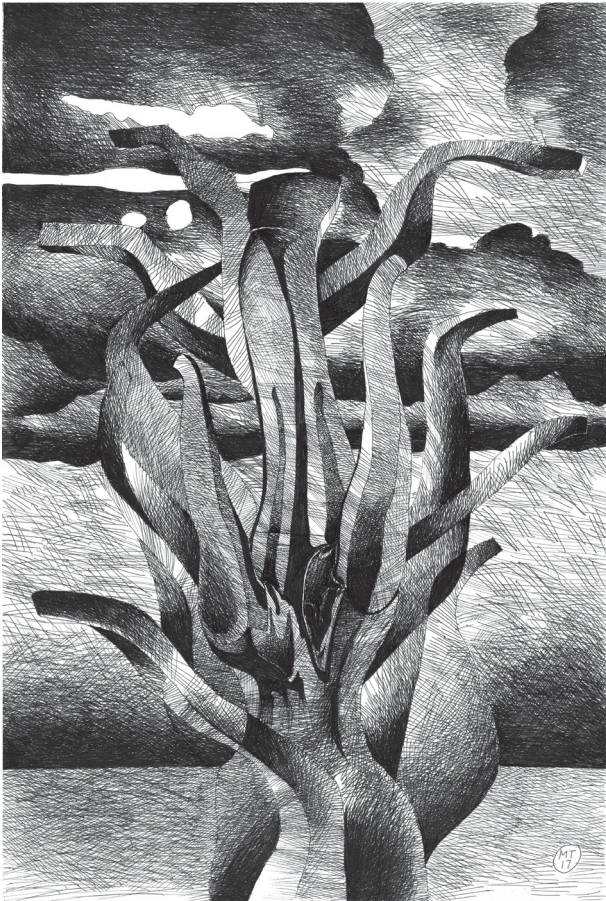


Fig. 7. Mario Trimarchi Design, Samotracia, De Castelli.

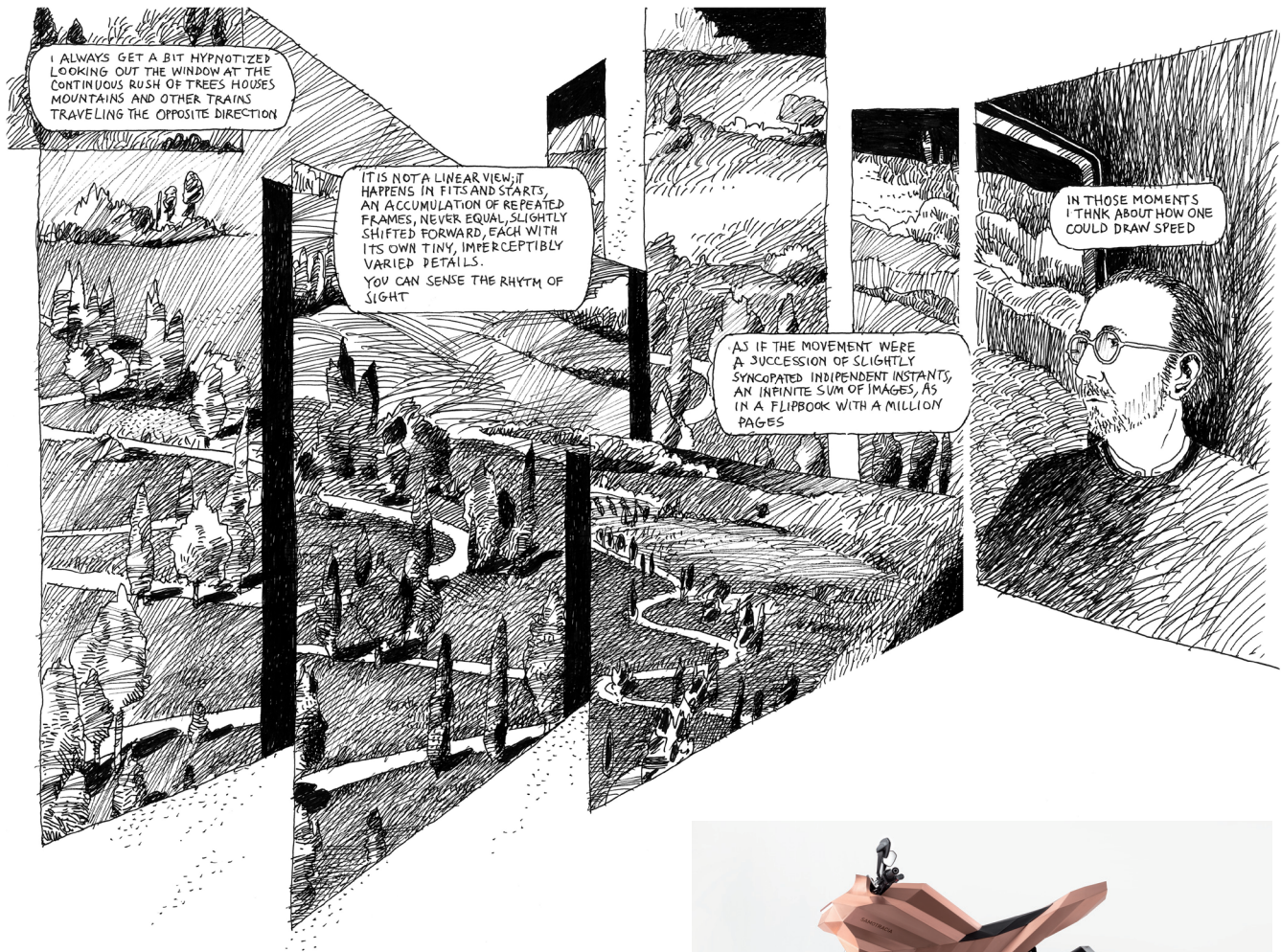


Fig. 8. Mario Trimarchi Design, *Terrae motus*.



Fig. 9. Mario Trimarchi Design, (Un)balanced, Pasabahçe.

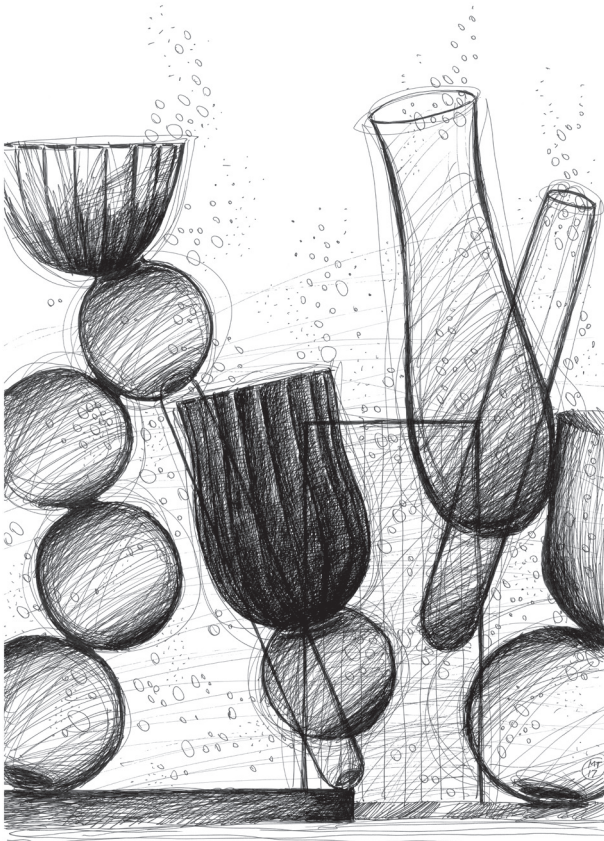


Fig. 10. Mario Trimarchi Design, *Il tempo della festa*, Alessi.

