



46th International Conference of Representation Disciplines Teachers, Congress of Unione Italiana per il Disegno, UID 2024 (Roma | 11-12-13 September 2025)

**ÈKPHRASIS
descriptions in the space of representation**

The 46th International Conference of Representation Disciplines Teachers, jointly organized by Sapienza University of Rome and Roma Tre, proposes to the scientific community a reflection on the theoretical and methodological aspects related to the concept of *èkphrasis*. This term can today be considered in a broad and general sense; within Drawing, it involves both analogical and digital descriptive activities applied to different fields of knowledge.

The term '*èkphrasis*', considered since its origins (Hermogenes of Tarsus, 2nd century A.D.), denotes a rhetorical practice, an eloquent descriptive discourse, both written and spoken, capable of representing people, moments, places, times and many other things, with particular effectiveness, revealing details that refine knowledge. *Èkphrasis* has the quality of *enàrgeia*: the power of visual representation, which pervades the imagination of the user.

Specifically, in the field of Drawing, the earliest applications of *èkphrasis* certainly include the precise theoretical and methodological descriptions illustrating the practices of constructing and representing architecture, which can be found in treatises, especially in treatises written before press was invented, where precise and complete descriptions of the illustrations supported copyists working at their correct reproduction.

If we look at contemporary research in the field of Drawing, we find the conceptual imprint of *èkphrasis* in the two main digital methodologies, which are today the subject of widespread experimentation: procedural algorithmic description, expressed in the form of written or visual language, and, even more clearly, the 'prompting' of generative platforms based on Artificial Intelligence.

In both cases, an accurate and creative verbal description springing from theoretical principles and moving along methodological paths is the generating essence of a product which can be considered within the visual arts. Graphic, geometric, physical models are a few examples of the products that can be described and realized by this means.

Between these two extreme poles, which are first and foremost temporal (ancient and present), but also expressive (verbal and visual), as well as methodological (analogue and digital), there is a broad view, literature and scientific debate, which concerns and highlights a principle that is 'natively' clear to all of us Drawing scholars: the product of our work, of our 'art', describes and communicates, just like words, with its own language.

This principle can also be read in the phrases attributed to Simonides "Painting is silent poetry and poetry speaking painting" and to Horace "*Ut pictura poësis*." These words that have been repeatedly taken up and debated over time with alternating fortunes, in the ongoing search for the definition of spaces of reciprocity and irreciprocity between the domains of the verbal and those of the visual.

We are thinking of the assertion of the full autonomy of the visual advocated by Leonardo and in later times by Konrad Fiedler, as well as the conservative and delimiting thought of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and again the new and visionary openings of William John Thomas Mitchell and Gottfried Boehm, expressed in their epistemological debate between "pictorial turn" and "iconic turn."

These are but a few of the highest examples of a dynamic and multidisciplinary wide-ranging debate, within which the term *èkphrasis*, originally referring to a unidirectional descriptive relationship between verbal and visual, appears to encompass a broader, more general and omnidirectional form. And this makes it plausible to use the term to refer to any expressive form of description and representation, between verbal and visual and between visual and verbal.

In this scenario, the space of Drawing assumes wider boundaries, disclosing new horizons and inviting the scientific community working in the field of Drawing research to reflect on the transformations of their competences. This expansion occurs while maintaining intact the discipline foundations and knowledge, which generate flows of theoretical and speculative knowledge, today declined according to the indications of the latest deliberated declaratory.



Therefore, UID 2025 Conference aims at focusing on the punctual description of the theoretical, methodological and applied aspects of research in the field of Drawing, asking whether analyses, constructions, generations, conducted through Drawing itself, can be considered expressions of *èkphrasis* useful for the refinement of knowledge. Similarly, UID 2025 questions whether drawings, images and models, even in their mutual representation, can be considered forms of *èkphrasis*, as timely visual, theoretical and methodological descriptions aimed at revealing new knowledge and generating unexplored paths and suggestions.

FOCUSES

The here proposed focuses are intended to host papers that exemplify ongoing or completed research paths, as well as research projects and utopian ideations, which may also explore unexplored fields, new languages for dealing with knowledge, cultural intersections and multidisciplinary activities.

The articulation, at the same time qualitative and temporal, of the focuses aims at emphasizing the theoretical, methodological and applicative peculiarities that characterize research within Drawing, focusing on memories of the past, challenges of the present and visions for the future.

Here are the three planned focuses:

Memories of the past

Challenges of the present

Visions for the future

Memories of the past

The focus is on research inherent in time and past actions, aimed at the investigation, protection and enhancement of environmental and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. In particular, and in an illustrative manner, the attention is here oriented on architectural heritage, both built and intangible, environment and landscape, treatises, historical cartography, history of representation, history of sciences and arts, recognition of cultural identity, and identification of theoretical foundations that represent a useful legacy for the implementation of contemporary values of knowledge.

Challenges of the present

The focus aims at investigating a research that observes the new needs of contemporary society offering answers to the issues that are opening up, making use of innovative theoretical, methodological, and operational activities, usually interdisciplinary in nature. These activities cover topical issues such as sustainability, inclusion, communication, accessibility, standardization, physical prototyping, and digital modeling.

Visions for the future

Predictive and predominantly original research finds space within this third focus. This research is predictive in nature and predominantly original in nature, oriented toward defining and testing experimental activities aimed at opening up new spaces of inquiry that can be considered frontier; research that explores imaginative and utopian perspectives in the relationship between the sciences, arts and disciplines that concur toward common ends, experimenting with methods, techniques and languages for ideating, prefiguring and designing.

Call for Papers: **October 2, 2024**

Full paper submission*: **January 8, 2025**

Full paper acceptance: **March 5, 2025**

The UID has decided to adapt to the international procedures for the selection of full papers of up to 15.000 characters, skipping the presentation phase of the abstracts. Therefore, it is required the complete essay in Italian or the author's native language (if French, English, Portuguese, Spanish, German), max 15.000 characters including spaces and max 12 images+1 cover image (cm 13,7×5,6), excluding: abstract of max 1.500 characters (English and author's native language), max 5 keywords (English and author's native language), bibliography.

Contact: convegnoid.2025roma@gmail.com