University *Singidunum*, The Faculty of Media and
Communications, Belgrade

DOI 10.5937/kultura1341101M

UDK 7.03

7.01

316.774

originalan naučni rad

HOW TO CREATE A PERFECT BEAUTY IN ART AND IN REALITY?

ON THE CULTURE OF BEAUTY, ITS CONTEMPORARY AND EARLY MODERN RAMIFICATIONS AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE ICONOGRAPHY OF *DOVE REAL BEAUTY* CAMPAIGN IN EARLY MODERN ART AND THEORY. AN ART HISTORICAL VIEW

Abstract: *Although history does not offer the dictate of beauty such as we encounter today in the industry of beauty, the notion of beauty in visual arts was not far from the contemporary issues. We may note that sensual beauty, during the long history of the culture of beauty, was taken as a reflection of a higher perfection. However, it originated from the nature and artists could improve the nature in their art by using various strategies to realize the beauty as perfection. Today, we encounter the same ancient and early modern ideals and strategies combined with new media, especially with the computer generated image. The concept of ideal beauty has not changed. The media have, and the development of the technology enabled an embodiment of purified and perfected nature, as well as a demonstration of the process*

of its surpassing – unfolding in front of our eyes – as in the case of the commercial for “Dove (Natural) Beauty” Campaign that may serve as an illustration of the ancient process of study, selection and idealization. The same concerns did not belong exclusively to the domain of visual arts, i.e. virtual worlds, but they also represented a set of more worldly, everyday life, subjects of discourses on beauty and the possibility of its achievement, as expounded in the seminal On the Beauty of Women, written in 1541 by Florentine humanist Angelo Firenzuola.

Key words: *culture of beauty, idealization, Dove commercial, Early Modern art and theory, new media vs. old media*

The starting point for my argument¹ is the notion that *mediology* broadly indicates a wide-ranging method for the analysis of cultural transmission in society and across societies, and that the *practice of mediology* is not a science, and as such may range across academic disciplines.² I shall find myself in the position of a *mediologist* (if I may) who is trying to find what has been missed in the ordinary *institutional partition of scientific disciplines*,³ certainly aware of the risk of being misunderstood and severely criticized for this futile, ignorant and clumsy effort.

The idea for this paper came several years ago, when I first saw the commercial titled *Dove Real Beauty: Evolution*. As an art historian, I was struck by the complexity of its content, as well as by the illustration, in it, of the concept of study, selection and idealization that, during the early modern era, was the process occurring only in an artist’s mind. I admit that I cannot even try to begin to cover all the nuances of possible interpretations, which such a simple video commercial inspires in an art historian, but I should like to try, and I am willing to place my head on the log of criticism.

I would agree, from the standing point of an art historian, and for the sake of the present argument, with the statement that the methodologies of *mediology* and its neighboring disciplines appear somewhat deficient in the matters of analysis of the

1 This paper was realized with the support of the Research Project sponsored by The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of The Republic of Serbia, IO 177009.

2 A shorter version of this essay was presented at *The 2nd International Interdisciplinary Symposium Philosophy of Media “Art and Media”*, Opatija, Croatia, September 19-22, 2012.

3 As implied by the writings of mediologist Régis Debray in his *Introduction à la médiologie*, Presses Universitaires de France – PUF, 2000. I do not intend to answer any of the questions asked by mediology, as I lack the necessary understanding of this discipline; especially not the question: How does an idea become a “material force”, and what are the social and institutional mediations that give media and communication technologies their cultural power?

essential nature of media,⁴ i.e. of their (often criticized) function to shape consciousness of “unconscious” individuals. Naturally, one such complex discipline attracts scholars from various fields of research, who either play active roles in creation of the contents of these ever “new” media, or act as their critics, or even try to decipher the less obvious aspects of the contents offered by the mass media. And, as such, it must rely on wider scientific platform.⁵

It has long been clear that the cultural matrix of our civilization has been defined by the presence of mass media with their potentials analyzed either in terms of affirmation, or in terms of caution and apprehension (even when scholars retain the cold objectivity).⁶ It seems to me, thus, that *mediology*⁷ is still hovering between these two positions.

The philosophy of media, on the other hand, is still in the making and its prospects are wide. I surely agree that the media are as old as human beings’ need to communicate, and that this is where the methodologies and expertise of sciences such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, history of art, etc., come into play. Because, only the true *adepts* can recognize the pertinent contents which, in various historical contexts, “worked upon” various “markets”, and contribute to our understanding of the phenomena attached to the mass media communication, which appeared as new paradigm in the discourses on contemporary culture, not so long ago.

In an analysis of the methodologies of *mediology* there also arose a question of the possibility to establish an *aesthetics*

4 Judging by the scholars whose papers are published in the proceedings of the International Symposium “Philosophy of Media”, held in Cres, Croatia, September 2011: *Kultura* 133, Beograd 2011.

5 See Pavletić, L. (2011) “Tko i kako istražuje medije”, *Kultura* No. 133, Beograd: Zavod za proučavanje kulturnog razvitka, pp. 203-211. However, it is not clear, from the contents of the papers presented at the aforementioned symposium, what is *mediology*: Is it a science whose object of research are media as such and their social roles? Or, on the other hand, their authors understand *mediology* as a wide-ranging method for the analysis of cultural transmission, etc. – as stated in the main text.

6 Members of historic avant-garde and neo avant-garde movements saw them as powerful means for promotion of new ideologies; we do not have to stress the contribution of Marshall McLuhan, Guy Debord and their followers. See Alić, S. (2009) *Mediji, od zavođenja do manipulacije (Media From Seduction to Manipulation)*, Zagreb, pp. 29-35; Vuksanović, D. (2007) *Filozofija medija (The Philosophy of Media)*, Beograd, Fakultet dramskih umetnosti; Vuksanović, D. (2011) “Filozofija medija vs. misliti medije” (“The Philosophy of Media vs Thinking the Media”), *Kultura* No. 133, pp. 13-25.

7 As it is understood by the scholars whose papers are published in, the aforementioned, *Kultura* No. 133.

of media,⁸ which would embrace all relating research areas, and which would be based on the premise that the concept of *aesthetics* (*aisthesis*) implies, more or less clearly, both the sensory perception and the process of learning (i.e., intellectual understanding). I believe that this is acceptable and that it justifies the establishment of an aesthetics of media of mass communication only if we take into consideration the fact that the contemporary media rely on intensive stimulation of senses, in their marketing of goods.⁹ On the other hand, if we assume that the notion of aesthetics revolves *around the notion of beauty* (essential, natural and artificial), as proposed by some of my colleagues,¹⁰ then I would suggest that it would not be appropriate to speak about an *aesthetics of media*, but about the *representations* of beauty in mass media, as well as about the criteria for its appraisal (appraisal of beauty, to be sure).

The experience of the history of art, with its objective (i.e., the complex analysis of the contents of visual messages and the changes they undergo over the course of time), may help us solve the subtle, and somewhat confusing, dilemma – touched upon above – and suggest the object of research *and* the methodology of the proposed *aesthetics of media*, acting as a *mediologist-art historian* and pointing to the possible crossing of certain scientific disciplines.

Early modern art theory would prove especially valuable, here. The contemporary tendency to constitute an aesthetics of media reminds of the need, felt in the early 15th century, to establish an apology for “painting” (i.e., illusion of reality on two-dimensional surface), to explain the language of image, from which there emerged both history of art and modern aesthetics. At the same time, there appeared attempts to define the laws and usefulness, i.e. purpose, of *image*, as well as to understand its potential to influence beholder (consumer) – based on the study of ancient sources.

This phenomenon coincided with the emergence of new civilizational code marked by the (mass media) technological revolution: Gutenberg’s press. Half a millennium later, we are facing the changes in the communication standards that resulted

8 Vuksanović, D. (2011) *Filozofija medija (The Philosophy of Media)*, Vol. 2, Beograd, Čigoja; Čalović, D. (2011) “U potrazi za estetikom medija” (“In Search for an Aesthetics of Media”), *Kultura* No. 133, pp. 42-55; *Umetnost kao medij masovne komunikacije (Art as Medium of Mass Communication)*, ed. Milosavljevic, A. (2011) *Kultura* No. 131.

9 It seems that “marketing”, selling, soliciting, is unavoidable context of mass media.

10 See Čalović, *op. cit.*

in the rise of new civilization – the rise we are witnessing and whose laws and purposes we are striving to define.

I may agree that new media help us understand old media, as proposed by some philosophers of media,¹¹ *but I would like to add that old, traditional, media could certainly help us understand new media*. Thus, it is not strange that, in the visual patterns with which operates the mass media industry, we recognize well-known historical patterns,¹² especially those that formed the foundation of the apology of painting¹³ and dealt with the issues, which belong to the domain of contemporary aesthetics: the concept of beauty.

Scholars mainly turn to the issues pertaining to beauty in art as representation of an artificial reality that served as a corrective of the natural appearance of things. Both “image” and beauty in art owe their apologies, even today, to ancient philosophy as *the* foundation of the development of art theory and art practice. Therefore, I feel that the “artificial” universes created by the mass media, although they might have not received their special theoretical framework yet, are *nothing more than the technological miracoli* in which the created meta-reality is divested of ancient moralizing deposit. They serve, I would suggest, as illustrations of the basic assumptions about the “purified beauty” that appeared as ideal in the Renaissance and the Mannerist art theories.

The Foundation of the Contemporary Concept of Beauty in Ancient Art Theory

We will turn to the interpretation of beauty in the early modern art theory and the possibility of its realization in art, as well as to the illustration of the process of idealization of nature, i.e. surpassing its deficiencies as it appears in a “Dove” commercial, titled *Dove Real Beauty: Evolution*.¹⁴ In addition, it is extraordinary that one method, described in old art theory, which could have been only imagined until today, is finally “aided” by a technological “novelty” which allows it to unfold in front of our eyes.)

11 Alić, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-28.

12 Milosavljević, A. (2010) “Ima li nam spasa bez *Domestosa*? *Docere i persuasio*: *Strašni Sud* u potrošačkom društvu” (“Is There a Salvation Beyond *Domestos*? *Docere* and *Persuasio*: The Last Judgement in the Cosumer Society”), *Zbornik radova Fakulteta dramskih umetnosti* 17, Beograd, pp. 209-217.

13 Or visual representation in general.

14 Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCn0jf46U>

Fig. 1. The natural facial features (left) of the model who appeared in the commercial for Dove Natural Beauty Campaign and her appearance after the processing of the digital image that appeared on a billboard (<http://www.parentingchatcafe.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Parenting-Chat-Cafe-Dove-Beauty-Girls.jpg>)

It is known that the cosmetic company “Dove” has been advocating natural feminine beauty and has been warning against the fallacious campaigns which are offering the potential consumers “a beautified reality” after only several weeks of use of special products for “beautifying of the world”, for almost a decade. Truth is that in *The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty* the natural beauty is being promoted,¹⁵ but in order to do so, a rhetorical turn is employed: the natural beauty is promoted by an illustration of the process of creation of an ideal beauty, such as the beauties that appear in the commercial tricks of the industry of beauty. The video clip in question is, paradoxically, titled “Evolution”:¹⁶ the development from the imperfection of natural beauty of an “ordinary” girl that one can meet in every alley, to a *perfect* representation of a likeness with rectified natural deficiencies. Thus, an ordinary girl becomes a *cyber-face* of a *meta-reality* with an intervention of skilled masters who are making cosmetic tricks added by sanction of Photoshop.

The history of mankind knows neither the dictation of beauty imposed on us by the industry of beauty, nor such industry of beauty that we know today. Nevertheless, the concept of beauty in art and artistic theory from antiquity to baroque¹⁷ was not far away from the “productivity”, “industry”, from its practical

15 See <http://www.dove.us/Social-Mission/campaign-for-real-beauty.aspx> This marketing campaign is subject to criticism, as well.

16 The video was created in 2006; it is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCn0jf46U>

17 Even to the Neoclassicism, at least in the formal sense (Prettejohn E. (2005) *Beauty & Art 1750-2000*, Oxford, Oxford University Press).

function and purpose – at least not in the domain of the visual arts – because that “industry” helped the creation of a nicer reality in general.

We owe the concept of ideal beauty to an ancient philosophy, although, in it, it was firmly tied to moral principles (such as beauty of the soul and what it creates in the sense of social relations and the role and functions of individual in society). The corporeal beauty was understood as a reflection of a higher perfection, it was sought for in nature, and originated from it, in the process of selection from the most beautiful of various natural models. It was reduced to a mean, to a common denominator, subject to mathematical laws. Nature was the model, the guide, but a skilled master (artist) could – rather, he was obliged to – surpass it and improve it by the canon of proportions, for example. This necessity to improve and to surpass nature, as well as the assumption that a human being can intervene in the matters of natural order of things, was clearly expressed in artistic theory, which dealt with the possibilities of its *realization* in art.

When speaking about the idea of beauty, we meet two basic concepts: beautiful (*bellum*),¹⁸ and imitation of nature (*mimesis*). Let us just remind that ancient philosophy offered a concept of autonomy of art in relation to ever-changing and imperfect reality, to nature: in both the platonic view that a work of art is inferior to nature because it only imitates it, and the Aristotelian notion that art is superior to nature because it improves upon the deficiencies of nature’s individual products, art confronts nature with a newly created image of beauty.¹⁹ However, faithful imitation of natural model was not a desired quality in art until the end of 19th century, and philosophers, poets and theorists were ready to praise a human figure, created by artist, and refined in such way to surpass the “truth”. It was not only that Polycleitus was the much praised sculptor who designed the canon of proportions, but even more praised was the painter Zeuxis, who when commissioned to paint the most beautiful woman of all, Helen, for Lucina’s temple in Crotona, asked for five most beautiful maidens in order to copy the most beautiful parts of their bodies. Thus, Zeuxis, known as the imitator of the natural

18 Short summary of the aspects of beauty implied by the Latin *pulchrum* i *bellum* is offered in Tatarkjević, V. (1980) *Istorija šest pojmov*, Beograd, Nolit, pp. 115-116.

19 See, e.g., Panofsky, E. (1960), *Idea: Ein Beitrag zur Begriffsgeschichte der alteren kunsttheorie*, Berlin, Verlag Bruno Hessling; Lee, R. W. (1967) *Ut Pictura Poesis. The Humanistic Theory of Painting*, New York W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.; Zurovac, *op. cit.*

models,²⁰ reconciled in his work the two opposite tendencies by surpassing the natural deficiencies in the process of selection of the most beautiful from what the imperfect nature offers. Moreover, the method used by Zeuxis was constantly referred to in ancient artistic theory at least as much as the Polycleitus' invention of the canon of proportions. Despite the devotion to imitation, ancient Greek thought was quite aware of the notion that artist's relation to nature is not only the relation of mere imitator, but also the relation of an independent rival who, with his creativity, freely corrects its necessary defects. In time, let us remind, there appeared the belief that the best art can survive without models perceived by the senses, and that, due to artist's imagination it can completely emancipate itself from reality (according to stoics). The Neo-Platonists went even further, as we know, claiming for artist's visions a special characteristic: these visions can confront the reality as altogether autonomous ideas, which surpass nature in their beauty, because they are identical with the very principles from which nature originates, and which are revealed in the act of intellectual contemplation.²¹

Fig. 2. Francois-Andre Vincent, *Zeuxis Choosing Models from the Beautiful Women of Croton*, 1789 (<http://www.wikigallery.org>)

The concept of close imitation emerged again in the 14th century in Boccaccio's praise of Giotto's realism,²² and it stayed with

20 Pliny (1960), "The Five and Thirtieth Book Discourseth of Painting, Colour, and Painters", *The History of the World, Commonly Called The Natural History of C. Plinius Secundus, or Pliny*, ed. Turner, P., New York-Toronto-London.

21 Panofsky, *op.cit.*; Plotin (1984), *Eneade*, Beograd, Književne novine pp. 59-80.

22 Boccaccio G. (1997) *Dekameron*, VI. 5, pp. 86-87. The inspiration came also from Pliny's writings about painters who created such convincing illusions of life that they deceived both men and animals. Pliny, *op.cit.*

the advocates of realism and with the artists who strove to catch the perfect illusion of the visible reality during the 15th century. The debate about this problem was a very important aspect of artistic theory, and it started at the beginning of the 15th century in Italy, with the emergence, in 1435, of the first humanistic treatise on painting by Leone Battista Alberti.²³ Speaking about composition, Alberti paid much attention to its harmony, which renders “grace in bodies which we call beauty”; disproportion, immediately warns us Alberti, creates “ugly appearance”.²⁴ Thus, in the process of composition of planes, one should ask for grace and beauty, and the most “certain and fitting way for one who wishes to pursue this” is “to take them from nature, keeping in mind in what way nature, marvelous artificer of things, has composed the planes in beautiful bodies”.²⁵ Speaking further, Alberti turns to the representation of human figure, whose body parts should be in harmony (“tutti i membri bene convengano”); and they will be if they are of the appropriate size, function, kind and color, and if they conform to the canon of proportions.²⁶ Writing about representations endowed with qualities, which surpass mere mimesis and which are to communicate certain deeper truths, Alberti introduces the notions of majesty and dignity, achieved when all “ugly” parts of a body, which are displeasing, are concealed. He reminded that ancient painters represented only one side of Antigone’s portrait – the one that did not show that he lacked an eye, and that Plutarch said that ancient painters, when painting their kings, did not want to seem that they had not noticed their deficiencies, but they tried to correct them whenever they could, holding on to similitude.²⁷

23 I am quoting Italian version of the text of 1436, available at Internet page http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it:6336/dynaweb/bibit/autori/a/alberti/de_pittura_volgare, because of its accessibility: Alberti L. B., *De Pictura (redazione volgare), Opere volgari*, ed. Grayson, C., Bari, Laterza, 1960-1973.

24 “Nasce della composizione delle superficie quella grazia ne’ corpi quale dicono bellezza. Vedesi uno viso, il quale abbia sue superficie chi grandi e chi piccole (...) simile al viso delle vecchierelle, questo essere in aspetto bruttissimo”. Alberti, “Libro II”.

25 “... maravigliosa artefice delle cose, bene abbia in be’ corpi composte le superficie”. Alberti, *op. cit.*

26 “E poi che la natura ci ha porto in mezzo le misure, ove si truova non poca utilità a riconoscerle dalla natura, ivi adunque piglino gli studiosi pittori questa fatica, per tanto tenere a mente quello che piglino dalla natura, quanto a riconoscerle aranno posto suo studio e opera. Una cosa ramento, che a bene misurare uno animante si pigli uno quale che suo membro col quale gli altri si misurino ...A me pare cosa più degna l’altre membra si riferiscano al capo.” Alberti, *op. cit.*

27 “Le parti brutte a vedere del corpo, e l’altre simili quali porgono poca grazia, si cuoprano col panno, con qualche fronde o con la mano. Dipignevano gli antiqui l’immagine d’Antigono solo da quella parte del viso ove non era

Fig. 3. Piero della Francesca, *Duke Federico da Montefeltro*, 1465-70, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence
(<http://www.wikigallery.org>)

In order to be able to do that, a painter should follow certain rules and explore nature and its actions, but he is not supposed to simply imitate reality – he should respect beauty, in the first place. Ancient painter Demetrius, Alberti reminds us, failed to obtain the ultimate praise because he was much more careful to make things similar to the natural than to the beautiful. This is why, therefore, one should choose those parts of the beautiful bodies that deserve most praise. However, this is the most difficult thing to do, because *beauty does not reside in a single body, but is rare and dispersed in many bodies*, so painter must discover and study it.²⁸ It is important to stress, nevertheless, that Alberti advises painters to avoid the custom of some who follow certain models and concepts in their minds. He cites the famous example of Zeuxis who did not rely on his own mind in order to achieve beauty because he thought that he would not be able to find everything he needed for the representation of beauty, and that he would not be able to find it in a single body.²⁹ Thus, beauty for Alberti depends on experience (it comes

mancamento dell'occhio (...) E dice Plutarco gli antiqui pittori, dipignendo i re, se in loro era qualche vizio, non volerlo però essere non notato, ma quanto potevano, servando la similitudine, lo emendavano.” Alberti, *op. cit.*

28 “Qual cosa bene che sia difficile, perché nonne in uno corpo solo si truova compiute bellezze, ma sono disperse e rare in più corpi, pure si debba ad investigarla e impararla porvi ogni fatica.” Alberti, *op. cit.*

29 “Fugge gl'ingegni non periti quella idea delle bellezze, quale i bene essercitatissimi appena discernono. Zeusis, prestantissimo e fra gli altri essercitatissimo pittore, per fare una tavola qual pubblico pose nel tempio di Lucina appresso de' Crotoniati, non fidandosi pazzamente, quanto oggi

a posteriori), and idea of beauty (*idea delle bellezze*) abides in mind that knows nature and universal laws and forms well. It was still early for Renaissance thinkers to emancipate from close observation of reality, although the example of Zeuxis may have implied it. This will be the legacy of next generation of theorists and artists that will introduce the notion of idea of beauty (*idea delle bellezze, bella idea*) which exists *a priori* in artist's mind and which he imitates.

In the 16th century the doctrine of imitation of *idea* did not squeeze out the older notion that art is close imitation of nature, but it soon dismissed the renaissance normative aesthetics, and it relied on the concept of design ("disegno"), the visible manifestation of artist's "concetto", which appears in his intellect.³⁰ In practice, the artist was advised to rely on firm foundations of the sensory perception – now not only on the perception of *real* nature, but also on the perception of the "purified nature" (i.e., the works of art).

Fig. 4. Jacopo Pontormo, *Martyrdom of San Maurizio and the Theban Legions*, c. 1530, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence (<http://www.wikigallery.org>)

In addition, he was to learn mathematical rules and proportion. However, these were not understood in terms of "tools" but in terms of foundation for practical skills and his own reasoning. Thus, the study of nature was still unconditional because it

ciascuno pittore, del suo ingegno, ma perché pensava non potere in uno solo corpo trovare quante bellezze egli ricercava, perché dalla natura non erano ad uno solo date, pertanto di tutta la gioventù di quella terra elesse cinque fanciulle le più belle, per torre da queste qualunque bellezza lodata in una femmina." Alberti, *op. cit.*

30 Worked out by Vasari in "Introduction" to *Lives* of 1568: Vasari, G. (1991) *Le Vite dei più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architetti*, Roma, Newton Compton Editori s.r.l., pp. 73-78. By the way, we can note an inconsistency in the use of terms *intelletto* and *animo* in the art theory of the 15th and the 16th centuries.

offered “scientific” method, or the way to achieve artist’s idea, but its reproduction was now labeled “ritrarre”, as explained in the treatise on perfect proportions by sculptor Vincenzo Danti. At the same time, what we could consider as equivalent to imitation (i.e., to mimesis) – “imitare” (Lat.) now assumed the meaning of the *reproduction of reality as it was supposed to be seen*.³¹ An artist should follow the rules offered by the nature, but to act as *creator* and to work according his own invention, i.e. his “inner design” (*disegno interno*), as Federico Zuccari defined it in his famous *Idea*.³² That *design* is the concept, the idea, which is born in artist’s intellect, according to which he can act and which he can “realize” in his medium.³³ Zuccari went ever further and, in an extraordinary passage, explained the origin and the reason for this inner design, which is the real evidence of man’s divine nature, because it allows one to produce a new world and compete with Nature: “God ... wished to (...) endow [man, A.M.] with the ability to form an inner Design, in his mind, so that he can know all the creatures and that he can create within himself a new world (...) moreover, with this Design, almost imitating God and living with the Nature, he can produce infinite number of *artificial things that resemble the natural, and aided by painting and sculpture make new Heavens that can be seen on Earth* [italic A.M.]”³⁴ However, as opposed to God’s, man’s Design originates from the senses, that is, from the world

31 “Il Ritrarre sarebbe il perfetto mezzo ad eseguire l’arte del disegno: se non fusse, che queste cose, le quali la natura, e l’arte produce, sono come ho detto, le più volte imperfette e di qualita, e di quantità, per cagione di molti accidenti. Tutte le forme della natura intenzionali in se stesse sono bellissime, e proporzionatissime, ma non tutte le volte la materia e atta à riceverle perfettamente, e sopra questo mancamento, che la materia il piu delle volte non riceva la forma si distende il modo dell’ operare con la imitazione, come accenai nel principio (...) E così quell’ artefice, che col mezzo di queste due strade [in fact, “ritrarre” and “imitare”, A.M.] camminerà nell’ arte nostra, cioè nelle cose, che hanno in se imperfezione e che harebbono à essere perfette, col imitare, e nelle perfette col ritrarre, sarà nella vera e buona via del disegno.” Danti V. (1567), *Il primo libro del Trattato delle perfette proporzioni*, Cap. XVI, Firenze, pp. 57-62.

32 His treatise was published in Rome in 1607; Zuccari returned to the scholasticism and interpreted human creation in strictly Neoplatonic terms. Here, we are quoting from Zuccari, F. (1768) *L’ Idea de’ pittori, scultori ed architetti*, Roma, Nella Stamperia di Marco Pagliarini.

33 “... il Disegno interno in generale è un’ idea e forma nell’ intelletto rappresentante espressamente e distintamente la cosa intesa...” Zuccari, *op.cit.*, I, Cap. III, 8.

34 “... Dio, volle anco darli facoltà di formare in se medesimo un Disegno interno intellettivo, acciocchè col mezzo di questo conoscesse tutte le creature e formasse in se stesso un nuovo Mondo (...) ed inoltre acciocchè con questo Disegno, quasi imitando Dio ed emulando la Natura, potesse produrre infinite cose artificiali simili alle naturali, e col mezzo della pittura e della scultura farci vedere in Terra nuovi Paradisi.” Zuccari, *op. cit.*, I, Cap. VII, 18:

perceived through the senses, from the nature imitated by art. The reason for it is that "... the inner, artificial, Design and art continue to make artificial things in the same way Nature does (...) Nature is lead to its own aim and to its own actions by an intellectual principle (...) it achieves its aim with ordered means. And, since art sees the same [method, A.M.] in its actions, mostly aided by the said Design, Nature can imitate art, and art can imitate Nature."³⁵ We should note that "beautiful", which (roughly) appears as an alternative to "idea", during the 16th century, because of the strong influence by the Neo-Platonism on artistic theory, again assumed that Neoplatonic metaphysical meaning of the visible manifestation of good, and represented a reflection or ray of light shining from God's face, which we cannot explain in further detail, here. The idea of beauty, which, traditionally, consists of the harmony, which creates grace, in reality, became subject to individual judgment of an artist who possesses perfect ideas of phenomena in his mind.

The complexity of the mannerist discourse about the nature of artistic creation and the nature of beauty was proven by another philosophical tradition,³⁶ clearly defined in dialogue on painting titled *Aretino* by Venetian humanist Lodovico Dolce).³⁷ After defining art as imitation of nature, adding that the best master is the one whose works are closer to it,³⁸ Dolce redefines the aim of art noting that painter must work a lot in order not only to imitate nature, but also to surpass it.³⁹ Dolce discusses two ways in which

35 "(...) il Disegno interno artificiale e l'arte istessa si muovono ad operare nella produzione delle cose artificiali al modo, che opera la Natura istessa. E se vogliamo anco sapere perchè la Natura sia imitabile, è perchè la Natura è ordinata da un principio intelletivo al suo proprio fine ed alle sue operazioni; onde l'opera sua e opera dell' intelligenza non errante, come dicono i filozofi; poichè per mezzi ordinarî e certi consegue il suo fine; e perchè questo stesso osserva l'arte nell' operare, con l'ajuto principalmente di detto Disegno, pero e quella può essere da questa imitata, e questa può imitar quella." Zuccari, *op. cit.*, I, Cap. X, 28:

36 Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-11, thinks that this trend emerged with the appearance of Dolce's treatise, although this statement is subject to deeper analysis.

37 Dolce L. (1557), *Dialogo della Pittura intitolato l'Aretino*, Venezia. For reprint, translation and commentaries, see Roskill, M. (2000) *Dolce's Aretino and Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento*, Toronto, The Renaissance Society of America.

38 "... la Pittura non essere altro che imitatione della Natura: e colui, che più nelle sue opere le si avvicina, è più perfetto Maestro." Roskill, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

39 "Deve adunque il Pittore procacciar non solo d'imitar, ma di superar la natura. Dico superar la Natura in una parte: che nel resto è miraculoso, non pur, se si arriva, ma quando visi avvicina. Questo è in dimostrar col mezzo dell'arte in un corpo solo tutta quella perfetion di bellezza, che la natura non suol dimostrare a pena in mille. Perchè non si trova un corpo humano così perfettamente bello, che non gli manchi alcuna parte. Onde habbiamo esempio di Zeusi... (then follows the story of Zeuxis)". Roskill, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

painter can represent life not as it is, but as it should be. He can go directly to nature, and choose the most beautiful parts from a number of individual phenomena, in order to create a composite figure more perfect than the existing one (the method of Zeuxis). Painter can also derive perfect model from nature, such as Apelles and Praxiteles who made their famous representations of Aphrodite according to Prine, the most beautiful courtesan. However, a modern artist, Dolce claims, cannot find a standard of perfection in one woman, because nature is never without deficiencies, even under the best conditions. Should an artist like to represent the nature as more beautiful than it is by improving its deficiencies, he must follow the study of antiquity. Because, antiquity is that ideal nature to which painter strives and “ancient statues embody complete artistic perfection, and may serve as exemplars for the whole of beauty”.⁴⁰

Fig. 5. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Slave*, c. 1513, Musée du Louvre, Paris (http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/m/michelan/1sculptu/giulio_2/slave52.html)

40 “Devesi adunque elegger la forma più perfetta, imitando parte la Natura. Il che faceva Apelle, il quale ritrasse la sua tanto celebrata Venere, che usciva dai mare ... da Frine famosissima cortigiana della sua età; et ancora Prasitele cavò la bella statua della Venere Gnidia della medesima giovane. E parte si debbono imitar le belle figure di marmo, o di bronzo de’ Mestieri antichi. La mirabil perfetion delle quali chi gusterà e possederà a pieno, potrà sicuramente corregger molti difetti di essa Natura, e far le sue Pitture riguardevoli e grate a ciascuno: perciocchè le cose antiche contengono tutta la perfetion dell’arte, e possono essere esemplari di tutto il bello.” Roskill, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139.

It is worth noting that when Dolce advises painters to imitate beautiful statues of ancient masters (“le belle figure di marmo o di bronzo de’ Mestieri antichi”), he does not have in mind such imitation per se; it should be a means to an aim. So, if – as we assume – painter does not only merely copy ancient statues, but uses them with discretion as criterion for ideal achievement, he could just as well achieve the perfect beauty as if he followed the first and less uncertain method of “improving upon nature with the means taken from nature herself” without dangerous turning to the perfect standards of ancient art. Dolce does not say that one method is better than another, and he would probably agree that a good artist can successfully combine the selective imitation of nature with skillful adaptations from antiquity.

The concept of the perfection of nature developed to the point that famous theorist of art from the 17th century, Giovanni Pietro Bellori, stated that the Trojan War was, in fact, not fought over a woman, Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, but over of a statue.⁴¹ This is because, according to Bellori, nature cannot create such perfect beauty; it can exist only as a creation of man, in which all imperfections of nature are corrected and surpassed.⁴² Although a work of art, according to Bellori, is based on the very essence of nature and natural forms, it surpasses nature’s individual and specific creations by perfecting its forms. Study – selection – idealization are three basic steps in the creation of perfect models, of perfect natural order, of perfect beauty, and it was recognized as the process of working of ancient masters. This is where the very artificiality of beauty

41 “Ma non fù così bella costei, qual da loro si finse, poiche si trouarono in essa difetti e riprensioni; anzi si tiene ch’ ella mai nauigasse a Troia, ma che in suo luogo vi fosse portata la sua statua, per la cui bellezza si guerreggiò dieci anni.” Bellori, G. P. (1672), “L’Idea del Pittore, dello Scultore, e del Architetto. Scelta delle bellezze naturali superiore all Natura”, *Le Vite de pittori, scultori et architetti moderni, Parte prima*, Roma MDCLXXII, pp. 6-7.

42 I would like to stress that the discourses on beauty in art and nature are not as simple as they may seem. Ancient notion that beauty produces beauty and beautiful actions had not been forgotten. In his treatise on beauty Torquato Tasso expressed the view that Helen could not have been beautiful because her physical beauty was the cause of the ten-year-long war: “... Elena non sarebbe stata bella, perché ella mosse l’Asia e l’ Europa a guerreggiare e fu la fiamma e la ruina de l’antichissimo regno troiano (...) l’incontinenza de gli uomini e l’impudicizia de le donne può dare occasione a le rapine e a le guerre; laonde forse, s’ Elena fu impudica, non fu bella, perché la bellezza è sempre congiunta con l’onestà, e con la voce greca *tò kalón* altrettanto il bello quanto l’onesto è significato...” Tasso, T. (1616) “Il Minturno ovvero della bellezza”, *Opere non piu stampate del Signor Torquato Tasso*, raccolte e pubblicate da Marc’ Antonio Foppa, Roma MDCLXVI, p. 274. So, even when perfect beauty can be found in reality, she must not lack the inner quality understood by didactic and moralizing tradition.

abides, as it was conceived of in the history of art and artistic theory.

Nature, speaking in the Neoplatonic terms, cannot preserve perfect forms because they are subject to decline because of the inconsistency of matter – especially human beauty. Thus, what nature cannot achieve, art can – it works more accurately, as Bellori suggested. He summed up and took to full fruition what until the late 16th century was ordinary way of thinking about art in Italy, as the cradle of art theory. Moreover, in his announcement that the outer nature need to be the source of those ideal concepts that are object of artistic imitation, redirected the theory of painting, after its platonic mannerist train, to Aristotelian tradition which survived until modern era, as artistic imitation of Idea or of the mental image of beauty, which artist possesses in mind, and which originates, as in the case of Zeuxis, from merging of the most beautiful parts of various individuals.

So, Bellori redefined the Idea that is to be imitated by an artist, not in the terms that would be recommended by a Platonist, but as an image of the selected and beautified nature formed by painter in his imagination,⁴³ according to the empirical method of Zeuxis. This painter, being without useful apriori presence of the platonic idea in his mind's eye, before he painted Helen's ideal beauty, made a composite mental image of the basic perfections of his five beautiful models. Truth is that, at the very beginning of his discourse, Bellori described, using platonic terms that bring into memory the writings of his mannerist predecessors, Idea as "*esempio della bellezza superiore*" in artist's mind, comparing

43 "Quel sommo ed eterno intelletto autore della natura nel fabbricare l'opere sue maravigliose, altamente in se stesso riguardano, costitui le prime forme chiamate Idee, in modo che ciascuna specie espressa fù da quella prima Idea, formandosene il mirabile contesto delle cose create... li nobili Pittori e Scultori, quel primo fabbro imitando, si formano anch'essi nella mente un esempio di bellezza superiore, e in esso riguardando emendano la natura senza colpa di colore e di lineamento. Questa Idea, ovvero Dea della Pittura e della Scoltura aperte le sacre cortine de gl'alti ingegni de i Dedali e de gli Apelli, si svela a noi e discende sopra i marmi e sopra le tele; originata dalla natura supera l'origine e fassi originale dell'arte, misurata dal compasso dell'intelletto diviene misura della mano, e animata dall'immaginativa dà vita all'immagine. Sono certamente per sentenza de' maggiori filosofi le cause esemplari ne gli animi de gli Artefici, le quali risiedono senza incertezza perpetuamente bellissime e perfettissime. Idea del Pittore e dello Scultore è quel perfetto, ed eccellente esempio della mente, alla cui immaginata forma imitando si rassomigliano le cose, che cadono sotto la vista (...) l'Idea costituisce il perfetto della bellezza naturale, e unisce il vero al verisimile delle cose sottoposte all'occhio, sempre aspirando all'ottimo ed al maraviglioso, onde non solo emula, ma superiore fassi all natura, palesandoci l'opere sue eleganti e compite, quali essa non è solita dimostrarci perfette in ogni parte..." Bellori, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-5.

it with ideal pattern that exists in God's intellect as the divine example of the created world. Thus, "*cause esemplari*", or ideal types, according to which artworks are formed, also exist in artists' minds, in the perfection of the eternal beauty. Bellori announced that the origin of *idea* is in nature (*originata della natura*) and he defined it as the perfection of natural beauty (*il perfetto della bellezza naturale*). He does not leave a doubt that he was not thinking about Idea as an archetype of beauty that exists *apriori* in metaphysical independence, but *aposteriori* in the process of selection from artist's real experience of nature.⁴⁴ Furthermore, *idea* manifests its superiority in relation to the factual *natural truth* through the selected *artistic truth*; artistic truth, in turn, originates from the natural truth (*originata della natura supera l'origine, e fassi originale dell'Arte*). The concept of "selected artistic truth" brings into mind Dolce's admiration for antiquity, which affected Bellori as well. However, Bellori saw ancient statues, unlike Dolce, as objects of imitation in their capacity to serve as famous examples produced by artists who deserve admiration by subsequent generations exactly because they imitated the Idea of beauty selecting the best from nature. The example of antiquity, thus, teaches modern artist that he can be as successful as ancient artists if he contemplates beautiful Idea of what he is to represent.⁴⁵

*Angelo Firenzuola, On the Beauty of Women.
No Perfect Beauty, but Desirable Features*

The above considerations, however, quoted only in sum and a small portion of the corpus of old artistic theory, were not far away from more practical concerns. Although it was difficult, until today, to surpass in reality the natural deficiencies, they were objects of thought in everyday life. Aristocratic culture that emerged at the beginning of 16th century inspired a whole series of complex treatises written in the form of dialogues, which aimed at classification and codification of everyday life of the elite, demonstrated the knowledge of interlocutors and developed from casual chatting on various subjects.

44 "Tutte le cose ... dall'arte ... hanno principio dalla Natura istessa, da cui deriva la vera Idea." Bellori, *op. cit.*, pp. 10.

45 "Ci resterebbe il dire che gli antichi Scultori avendo usato l'Idea meravigliosa, come habbiamo accennato, sia però neccessario lo studio dell'antiche sculture le più perfette, perche ci guidino alle bellezze emendate della natura; ... li Pittori e gli Scultori, scegliendo le più eleganti bellezze naturali, perfettionano l'Idea, l'opere loro vengono ad avanzarsi e restar superiori alla natura, che è l'ultimo pregio di queste arti, come habbiamo provato. Quindi nasce l'ossequio e lo stupore de gli huomini verso le statue e le immagini, quindi il premio e gli honore degli Artefici: questa fù la gloria di Timante, di Apelle, di Fidia, di Lisippo." Bellori, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

That was also the case of *On the Beauty of Women* by Angelo Firenzuola,⁴⁶ initiated by a conversation in which participated four ladies; they were joined by several men, one of which, Celso, took the role of spokesman. In the first book of the treatise, Firenzuola (i.e., Celso) repeats the already known views about beauty, which cannot be found in only one body, and stresses that the beauty of a woman is the highest gift bestowed on mankind by God, and that it must be considered precious.⁴⁷ Beautiful woman is one who pleases all people, not only some. However, in order to possess the perfect beauty, a woman needs many things – there is rarely one woman who possesses half of the necessary qualities.⁴⁸ In which part of the body is beauty best shown? The answer is: in “the face” that may be seen by all.⁴⁹ And beauty is the harmony of parts that differ among themselves and are proportionate. Firenzuola paid due attention to this issue explaining and suggesting the measures of proportion – on the basis of his own impression, as he admits.⁵⁰ He concluded: “... and since nature rarely conforms [to measures, A.M.] we shall leave them to the painters who, with a stroke or two of the brush may lengthen or shorten them as seems good to them.”⁵¹ After a long discourse about individual parts of the body and their functions, Firenzuola, wrote about perfect beauty of woman, composing her face of beautiful individual parts, like Zeuxis who forms an image in his mind. Firenzuola started with causes of imperfections of natural models, the concept without which (as we displayed above) one cannot deal with the problems of artistic creation and beauty, and he noted that Nature is generous to the mankind. Nevertheless, everyday experience teaches us

46 Firenzuola A. (1548), *Delle Bellezze delle Donne intitolato il Celso*, Firenze (available non-paginated at <http://digilander.libero.it/bepi/bellezze/bellezze.htm>); this work was dedicated to Cosimo I de' Medici in 1541.

47 “... la bellezza e le donne belle, e le donne belle e la bellezza meritano d'esser comendate e tenute carissime da ognuno; perciò che la donna bella è il più bello obietto che si rimiri, e la bellezza è il maggior dono che facesse Iddio all'umana creatura...”, Firenzuola, *op. cit.*

48 “... quando e' si parla d'una bella, e' si parla d'una che piaccia a ognuno universalmente e non particolarmente a questo e a quello (...) è ben vero che, a voler essere bella perfettamente, e' ci bisognano molte cose, in modo che rade se ne trovano che n'abbiano pur la metà...” Firenzuola, *op. cit.*

49 “... in luogo eminente, accioché meglio si potessero riguardare da ognuno (...) la faccia (...) è (...) la propria sede della bellezza”. Firenzuola, *op. cit.*

50 However, Firenzuola adds, the possession of a “measured beauty” is not an absolute necessity, since it is enough to have “others” think that someone is beautiful because that one has that “something” which lends her grace and attaction.

51 “Sonci molte altre misure, le quali, perciò che poco importano e la natura ancora l'usa rade volte, noi le lasceremo a' dipintori, i quali con una pennellata più e una meno le possono allungare e accortare come torna lor bene.” Firenzuola, *op. cit.*

that Nature, when it comes to individual cases, is avaricious and miserly because She does not give everything to everyone, but She gives some things to someone and some other things to someone else. This is why ancients, Firenzuola reminds, represented her as a female figure with many breasts, from which men can take only a mouthful at a time.

Fig. 6. Benvenuto Cellini, Nature, sketch for the seal of Accademia del Disegno, detail, Firenze, 1560, British Museum, London (www.wga.hu/html/c/cellini/7/06graphi.html)

This means that, although we need many things, we have to toil to *acquire or beautify or preserve them with art, industry and wit*. And since the channel out of which the milk (the nutrient) flows is narrow and hardly a drop of milk can come forth at once, we can conclude that Nature does not bestow her favors easily and lightly, but “grudgingly one on each and one at a time”. This is why everybody has a flaw: the one who has fine stature does not have a pleasing face; or one has lovely eyes, but bad complexion, and similar.⁵² Since this is the case, in

52 “... la natura è stata sempre larga e liberale donatrice delle sue grazie allo universale e comun gregge degli uomini; non di meno in particolare e’ non pare già che sia intervenuto il medesimo, anzi possiamo affermare per isperienza cotidiana che ella sia stata molto avara e molto scarsa (...) ella ha ben dato ogni cosa sì, ma non a ognuno, anzi a fatica una per uno. La qual cosa volendo gli antichi poeti dimostrare, la finsero una donna piena di mammelle, delle quali non ne potendo lo uom pigliare più ch’un capezol per volta, non può tirare a sé se non una picciola parte del suo nutrimento. E inoltre, se voi considererete bene la natura della poppa, voi troverete che, ancor ch’ella sia di quella ubertà e abbondanza che sa ognuno, non però ne getta il latte in bocca da per sé, ma bisogna suggerlo; che non significa altro se non che in di molte

order to imagine a perfectly beautiful woman, or at least mostly beautiful, we need to take the most beautiful parts of many women (like Zeuxis) – in this case of the four ladies engaged in the conversation:⁵³ “... each of you gives me her part for the portrait of my chimera of beauty.”⁵⁴

It is significant that Firenzuola added what he considered appropriate colors of the face to the *correct facial features* that can be geometrically constructed and mathematically measured, about which he wrote in his first book. In order to make a beauty perfect, thus, her tan has to be fair yellow with certain lustre.⁵⁵ Her hair should be of good quality and fair, like gold or honey, or sun, waving, abundant and long. Forehead must be fair and wide, and serene – without wrinkles and powder, calm. The line of the brow must not be flat, but curved like arch. Such forehead and brows add to the lustre of eyes that should be like two stars shining in the sky. The globes must be clearly seen and white with hue of flax, and although some praise black eyes, others blue, Firenzuola states that, according to the general consent, brown eye are the best because they give gentleness and kindness, as well as alluring charm. Ears are supposed to be of nice shape, light ruby, but should not be soft and thin. Temples should be white and flat, not hollow, as they are a sign of “weakness of the brain”. Cheeks should be fair and should begin as white as snow, but where their roundness swells, their color should increase in rosiness. Nose is the most important of all other parts, Firenzuola stated, because the one who does not have a beautiful nose does not have beautiful profile.

cose bisogna che noi o per acquistarle o per abbellirle o per mantenerle ci affatichiamo con arte, industria e ingegno. E perciocché il canale donde esce il latte è stretto e a fatica ne viene una gocciola per volta possiamo considerare che volser dire che la natura non dà le grazie ne' particolari doppiamente, ma a fatica una per uno, a una per volta.” Firenzuola, *op. cit.*

53 To be sure, beside possessing certain beautiful features they illustrate the “scarcity” of the nature.

54 “... perciocché così come la chimera si imagina e non si trova, così quella bella che noi intendiamo fingere, si imaginerà e non si troverà; e più tosto vedremo quello che si vorrebbe avere per esser bella, che quello si abbia, non dispregiando per questo la bellezza di voi che sete qui presenti o delle altre che non ci sono; le quali, se bene non hanno raccolto in loro lo intero, nondimeno ne hanno tal parte, che basta loro per esser accarezzate e anche per esser tenute belle.”; “... però ciascuna di voi mi darà la parte sua per il ritratto della mia chimera.” Firenzuola, *op. cit.*

55 The colors are: “... il biondo, il lionato, il negro, il rosso, il candido, il bianco, ili vermiglio e lo incarnato ...” Firenzuola, *op. cit.*

Fig. 7. Antonio dell Pollaiuolo, *Portrait of a Lady*, c. 1465, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/c/cellini/7/06graphi.html>)

It must be of proper size (same as forehead), narrow and straight, turned up a little at the tip. The lines of nostrils should be almost invisible, but clearly defined. The color of the nose should be similar to that of the ears. The lips, “source of all sweetness” should be rosy and small, not large, not very thin, not very thick. Chin should be round, tinged with tender rose and red. The throat is most beautiful when it is long, slender, soft and light, like in a dove whose neck is of gold and purple. Reminding, though, throughout the discourse, of the fact that there is no perfect beauty among women, and that every one of his interlocutors has some desirable features, he concluded that a woman is aided in the concealment of her natural imperfections by both make-up and dress⁵⁶, and he adds: “... however, when art is not aided by nature, it is of small accomplishment (...) and to conclude, I shall say that nature is the mistress of beauty, and art is her maid.”⁵⁷ We may ask ourselves: are these not the same features and colors we find in beautiful faces today, too?

So, solving the dilemma, which emerged at the level of everyday experience, although Firenzuola is the man of the 16th century

⁵⁶ He also warns against the false use of make-up, which cannot create beauty, but only to conceal the imperfections.

⁵⁷ “... nondimeno, quando l’arte non ha l’aiuto dalla natura, la fa poco, e quel poco riesce male (...) E però concludendo diremo che la natura è la maestra delle bellezze e l’arte è una sua ancilla...” Firenzuola, *op. cit.*

(at least in the matters concerning beauty), he was sensitive to what is possible and attainable. He also demonstrated, as taking part in a conversation started by women, his adherence to the Aristotelian tradition according to which Nature is the necessary means for creation of perfect beauty, without which a skillful craftsman, an artist, cannot direct his actions.

Instead of a(n Impossible) Conclusion

New Questions Arise to Propose Future Discussions

In this paper, I tried to demonstrate that the Dove commercial, which I referred to, is a useful from a standing point of a historian, representation of the ancient process of study-selection-idealization, even if its creator had no theoretical knowledge of, or even interest in, the ancient speculations on perfect beauty. I also tried to remind us all that is seems to me that, over the course of time, one and the same idea of artificial beauty has been nourished, the one that we – *in the present day* – are facing whenever we are watching the contents that suggest the existence of a meta-reality offered us by the mass media transmitters. We are overwhelmed by that reality, and it serves as a reminder of our general imperfections rather than as inspiration to contemplate a better reality.

Today, in the “industry of beauty”, art seems to have returned to its ancient meaning of *ars (technē)*, without an abstract aesthetic goal. Each day, we face artificial beauties presented to us by the mass media. Today, with the growing number of “beauty hunters”, aided by the substantial financial potential, the ideal of beauty is being understood in practical terms, and its material realization is seemingly possible, meaning that it is accessible to majority of people. The industrial creation of beauty, far away from being reduced to cosmetic industry or to use of computer image, exists owing to the wider development of technology – such as plastic surgery, which actually introduced the correction of natural deficiencies. The concept of ideal beauty had not changed. Media had, and the development of technology allowed the embodiment of purified nature and the representation of the process of surpassing the nature, thus introducing artificiality into the real space and time.

The “Zeuxis” of today, the one sitting in front of a computer monitor with a “mouse” in his palm, who uses, with a sense of ease, the physically absent brush in various shapes, which selects the natural deficiencies, is not in need of five maidens. He needs only one ... or none.

Let us open one more problem worthy of some future discussion, and ask: Is a present-day artist (or art, for that matter) – taking into consideration the contemporary technological advancement – slipping back to the “craft”, to skill, reviving, at last, the concept of “*technē*”, i.e. of “ars”, which originally was not meant to denote artworks in the contemporary sense of the term,⁵⁸ but every product of acting purposefully according to certain norms? Are we witnessing the development of a *meta-technē*, by which the technique, craftsmanship, re-conquered the domain of self-sufficiency?⁵⁹ The judgment of the “artist”, of the creator of the computer-generated physical beauty, returns to the inner concept or to the models that are already clearly built into the subconsciousness (aided, of course, by the media of mass communication) whose undisputed “beauty” is a matter agreed upon *a priori*. Thus, the purified beauty that resides in our aesthetic experience is fully at work.

And, again, we do not appreciate naturalism: which woman really wishes to look like the opulent “Dove”-beauties?

In art, naturalism has never been a welcome quality – not even when the nature was acknowledged as an artist’s guide.⁶⁰

Fig. 8. Dove Beauty Campaign: Dove Beauty Curves (<http://www.dove.us/Social-Mission/campaign-for-real-beauty.aspx>)

Even when it was cherished, it served as *an* extra means of expression, if only to inspire empathy and expose this imperfect

58 Those with the “aura” bestowed on them by the art world. See, e.g., another excellent analysis of the concept of image, etc.: Belting H. (1994), *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image Before the Era of Art*, Chicago.

59 Only seemingly unexpected turn reflected in insisting on craftsmanship in the mannerist artistic theory – the most untalented can learn, and the most talented has to learn rules. However, on this, some other time.

60 Let us remember, briefly, Carravaggio’s example.

world as the place of the embodiment of the Divine Providence. Nature, corrupted and imperfect, was taken as unfit, and naturalism was empty when it was used for its own sake, without a content – the alluring content, that is – which is like a beautiful idea of a beautiful reality that pleases the eye.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Alberti, L. B. (1435) *De Pictura (redazione volgare), Opere volgari, Cecil Grayson (Ed.), Bari, Laterza, 1960-1973* (available at http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it:6336/dynaweb/bibit/autori/a/alberti/de_pictura_volgare)

Firenzuola, A. (1541) *Delle Bellezze delle Donne*, (available at <http://digilander.libero.it/bepi/bellezze/bellezze.htm>)

Danti, V. (1567) *Il primo libro del Trattato delle perfette proporzioni di tutte le cose che imitare e ritrarre si possono con l'arte del disegno*, Firenze.

Tasso, T. (1616) “Il Minturno overo della bellezza”, *Opere non più stampate del Signor Torquato Tasso*, raccolte e pubblicate da Marc' Antonio Foppa, Roma MDCLXVI

Bellori, G. P. (1672) “L' Idea del Pittore, dello Scultore, e del Architetto. Scelta delle bellezze naturali superiore all Natura”, *Le Vite de pittori, scultori et architetti moderni, Parte prima*, In Roma, Per il Success. al Mascardi, Con licenza de' Superiori, MDCLXXII

Panofsky, E. (1960) *Idea: Ein Beitrag zur Begriffsgeschichte der alteren kunsttheorie*, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, Nr. 5, Berlin, Verlag Bruno Hessling.

Pliny (1964) “The Five and Thirtieth Book Discourseth of Painting, Colour, and Painters”, *The History of the World, Commonly Called The Natural History of C. Plinius Secundus, or Pliny*, ed. Turner, P., New York-Toronto-London.

Lee, R. W. (1967) *Ut Pictura Poesis. The Humanistic Theory of Painting*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Barasch, M. (1985) *Theories of Art. From Plato to Winckelmann*, New York.

Belting, H. (1994) *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image Before the Era of Art*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Debray, R. (1995) *Vie et mort de l'image*, Paris, Gallimard.

Debray, R. (1996) *Media Manifestos: On the Technological Transmission of Cultural Forms*, London, Verso.

Debre, R. (2000) *Uvod u mediologiju*, Beograd, Clío

Roskill, M. (2000) *Dolce's Aretino and Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento*, Toronto, The Renaissance Society of America, Toronto.

- Prettejohn, E. (2005) *Beauty & Art 1750-2000*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Zurovac, M. (2005) *Tri lica lepote*, Beograd, Službeni glasnik.
- Vuksanović, D. (2007) *Filozofija medija*, Beograd, Fakultet dramskih umetnosti.
- Alić, S. (2009) *Mediji, od zavođenja do manipulacije*, Zagreb, AGM.
- Milosavljević, A. (2010), “Ima li nam spasa bez *Domestosa*? *Docere i persuasio*: *Strašni Sud* u potrošačkom društvu”, *Zbornik radova Fakulteta dramskih umetnosti* No. 17, Beograd, Fakultet dramskih umetnosti, pp. 209-217.
- Vuksanović, D. (2011) *Filozofija medija*, tom 2, Beograd, Čigoja štampa.
- Milosavljević, A., ed. (2011) *Umetnost kao medij masovne komunikacije*, *Kultura* No. 131, Beograd: Zavod za proučavanje kulturnog razvitka.
- Pavletić, L. (2011) “Tko i kako istražuje medije”, *Kultura* No. 133, Beograd: Zavod za proučavanje kulturnog razvitka, pp. 203-211.
- Čalović, D. (2011) “U potrazi za estetikom medija”, *Kultura* No. 133, Beograd: Zavod za proučavanje kulturnog razvitka, pp. 42-55.

Ангелина Милосављевић Аулт
Универзитет Сингидунум, Факултет за медије и комуникације, Београд

КАКО СТВОРТИТИ САВРШЕНУ ЛЕПОТИЦУ У УМЕТНОСТИ И У СТВАРНОСТИ?

О КУЛТУРИ ЛЕПОТЕ И ЊЕНИМ САВРЕМЕНИМ И
НОВОВЕКОВНИМ СХВАТАЊИМА, КАО И О ЗАСНИВАЊУ
ИКОНОГРАФИЈЕ КАМПАЊЕ *DOVE REAL BEAUTY* У
НОВОВЕКОВНОЈ УМЕТНОСТИ И УМЕТНИЧКОЈ
ТЕОРИЈИ. ЈЕДАН ПОГЛЕД ИСТОРИЈСКО-УМЕТНИЧКЕ
ПРОВЕНИЈЕНЦИЈЕ

Сажетак

Иако историја не открива диктат лепоте какав данас намеће индустрија лепоте, појам лепог, барем у домену ликовних уметности није био далеко од реализације и од данас понуђених стандарда. Телесна лепота је била схватана као одраз вишег савршенства, али је била тражена у природи, и од ње је потицала. Селекцијом најлепшег из разних природних модела, она је редукована на заједнички именитељ, на средину. Природа је била модел, водич, али несавршена, и вешти мајстор је могао да је поправи, и њену савршенију слику реализује у уметности. И данас се у индустрији лепоте негују и исти идеал и исте стратегије које знамо из старије праксе, с тим што је у употребу ушла компјутерски обрађена слика. Концепт идеалне лепоте се није променио. Медији јесу, а развој технологије је омогућио и отеловљење прочишћене природе и откривања процеса њеног превазилажења пред нашим очима, уводећи артифицијелност у стварни простор и време, као у реклами за кампању пропагирања природне лепоте компаније *Dove* која илуструје древни процес студије селекције и идеализације у уметности. Но, није само уметност, односно уметничка теорија, била средиште занимања и предлагања савршених модела. Оне су, чини се, биле јасан одраз друштвених тенденција, односно занимања аристократске средине у којој су се постављала питања и предлагале могућности превазилажења природних недостатака у жена, али и мушкараца, као у делу Анђела Фиренцуоле, *О лепоти жена*, из 1541. године. Овај рад представља само један од приступа темама које отвара култура лепоте.

Кључне речи: *култура лепоте, идеализација, реклама за Dove, уметност и уметничка теорија 15. и 16. века, нови медији vs. стари медији*