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The universe of drawing, draws.

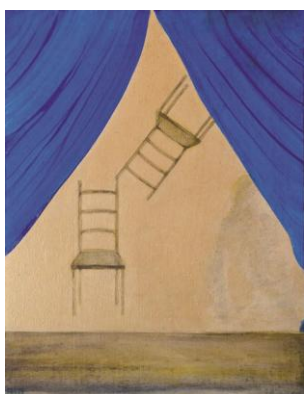
(For Emily Humphries paintings).

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*Man is an instrument the world uses
to renew its image continuously .*

(Italo Calvino)

Artistic text, a text of *scripture*, the *artext*, as I conceive it, moves away from ordering categories and escapes any cataloguing attempt at embalming it in the separate context of a temporal-spatial “real”. Thus the artext is a text that through the ever new play of signifiers refuses to be depository of an ossified significance. If that was not so what else would science, poetry, literature, philosophy, painting

itself, music, cinema, theatre if not precisely audacious abductions (ndt: reference to Peirce’ concept), scriptures of the impossible , of what it cannot be representable ? If not indeed impertinent attempts to reach out to touch things, to attain a rapport with the otherwise invisible, with what is other from the same, with what is alive and does not add up? Looking at Emily Humphries’ paintings, shapes of the invisible take form. Humphries’s works are full of recognizable signs, figuratively speaking, that tend to the non-visible, and carry themselves beyond their own boundaries, gradually disappearing under the eyes of the viewer. Their place is rapidly taken up by the iconic sign described by the American semiotic philosopher Charles S. Peirce. On the other hand it is the icon itself to play an extraordinary role in the signs system, as relatively and partially freer of the symbolic code as well as of the causality and the physical contiguity of *indicality* (Note of translator: in Semiotics *indicality* refers to on of the three main strands in the meaning making process).

The icon in that sense provides the creative hypothesis, opens the” eye of the mind” (Paul Klee), takes on a modelling role towards what becomes project, stratagem, design of aesthetic invention, through both the scientific abduction and the literary metaphor.

Capable of initiating an adventurous search, to outline a flight on the spot, a still moving, motionless and aimless, the iconic

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high-jacks the engine of a text outside the boundaries of representation, causing a derailment of scripture outside discourse limits, outside its tranquil and safe common places. The access to it is guaranteed by a faith idolizing symbolic signs, towards a total “de-territorialisation” (Gilles Deleuze): the only place and departure point through which it is possible to penetrate, cross and truly pass the line of the horizon. Humphries paints to explore ideas come from a place somewhere else, otherwise invisible, and this allows her to listen to this continuous iconic exploration, not totally knowable, lieu of the sign, sign which is indefinitely incommensurable. Humphries has decided to accept the challenge of multiplicity, of plurality and to therefore engage with complexity, the complexity of the achieved simplicity: choices that demand an infinite search. Thus Humphries’ signs refuse to lie on the canvas and her paintings are kept clear of the symbolic, of the indexical that could obstruct them and block them. It is to be said also that in Humphries’ paintings there are white regions within which the flux of signifiers intersect in the void of silence, in waiting for the word other, in the suspension of semantic texture. Just like white in painting, the musical “artext “4’33”, “Silence” that John Cage conjectures to listening is the proof of the feasibility of a musical piece literally inaudible, especially because it proposes what generally one is not disposed towards, for distraction, for lack of time, for prejudice, for presumption, in

other words the listening to silence. Usually silence is not considered as deserving listening to. Silence here is presented not as void of sounds but as becoming itself unrepeatable enunciation in the form of “hushing” and as such only perceived in the world of word, in the human world, only by man, by the one who is capable of listening not only of hearing (Michael Bachtin discerns between “silence” and “hushing up”). In that sense the “artext” is seen a permanent revolution, “*kata-strofé*” of a idolatric world, stage curtain (like those painted by Humphries in her paintings) which finally closes the representation, highlighting its static and aged character of the products, the images, the tortures, the spectacles she puts on the scene. The world of representation does not exclude gaps and cracks. The world is not only a whole of things, “the world of objects” but it is also the one of pictures, of music and books. Thus “the openness to listening”, to the outlook of “responsive understanding”, to the representation of voices, sounds, colours, lights, knowing how to seize their unrepeatability, their uniqueness, perceiving its trembling, its variation, its temporary nature, the uncertainty, the precariousness: this is indeed all that makes the world alive and re-creates it, reinvents it, renews it, continuously, endlessly, as if there was no end, without any conclusions, it is the scripture.

Scripture, vague, indefinite, indefinable and non designable – designs its orbit in the paper heaven appearing of sudden as a

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bewitched constellation in the halo of an image caught by a dreaming acrobat, a visionary whose gestures are writing and whose actions are tracing: a writer-artist, definable as “iconaut” . “Iconaut”, by the influence of intersemiotic transmigrations, well expresses the notion of one who has the ability to roam, acting by similarity, amongst *segnic* maps of iconicity, jumping from one icon to the other and another again, without ever allowing gravity to burden his gaze.

In Humphries’ paintings there are rarefied images looking for similarities that escape continuously, making it impossible neither to actually name them with authority nor to allocate a precise meaning to them. A stratification of universes here and there, rarefied and dense, overflows one painting to migrate into another. She proposes no specific representation; Emily Humphries does not adhere to the matrix of “this reality”: she works with it, re-placing it, reorganizing it, re-designing it until it portrays its being other. On the surface Humphries moves colourful and figures minutely described in thin and linear shapes. She traces the design of a universe that alternates parallel worlds incompatible with each other, worlds with no substance and , at once, visible at their complete volume.

What seems a specific thing or other is capable of transforming itself before your very eyes without continuity, preventing one’s gaze from dwelling and rest on an object clearly defined: an authentic attempt

to the principle of identity, characteristic specific of scripture, which separates it from transcription, and of painting that becomes scripture, distancing itself from representation.

In fact what Humphries does dissents from painting as representation, from painting that reduces and masks, that adulates and justifies remaining in the world of idols and stereotypes of mass persuasion. Sensitive to the inexpressible and the multiplicity, Humphries’ painting is scripture, figuration beyond representation, figuration not of what has no form, but figuration whose form finds nothing that may allow it a defining identification and certainly not definitive.

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