

Negotiating 'Culture', Assembling a Past
the Visual, the Non-Visual and the Voice of the Silent Actant

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to describe and analyse the processes surrounding the creation of a scientific visual representation, where, both in the practical creation of this visualisation and in the way it is communicated, those actants which amount to what we call 'culture' or cultural value, are enrolled or ignored. Trying to answer if a broader set of non-visual cultural properties can be identified and their influence described, and if history can be visualised without displacing our knowledge of the past in favour of a popular representation thereof, I trace the interaction between client, artist, technology and target audience.

Although the audience is not permitted to take part in the meetings and walk the floors of the studios, and thus seem to remain silent, I argue nonetheless that their voices *are* heard during the assembling of a visual representation. Furthermore, offering the audience a tool is not enough to entice them to form their own ideas and exercise influence: although often presented as a visitor-empowering pedagogic technique which invites different interpretations of the material at display, the interactive technology offered by museums and educators is a tool of conformity which disciplines the audience and must therefore be treated as such.

An object is not an entity which can be separated into artefact and context, but a hybrid made up of associations spread over both space and time. To describe this, and capture how visual representations can represent 'culture', I have developed an analytical vocabulary where the absolute limitations of an artefact or phenomenon is the point of departure. As the vocabulary of limitations demonstrates, limitations constitute the borders of an expression and permit an explanation of how associated actants are shaped by these borders into what we have come to refer to as 'culture'.

This doctoral thesis is based on the following articles:

- 1 Frizell, Santillo B. and Westin, J., 2009. "Displaying Via Tecta: Visualisation and Communication". In: H. Bjur and B. Frizell, Santillo (eds.) *Via Tiburtina. Space, Movement and Artefacts in the Urban Landscape*. Motala: Swedish Institute of Classical Studies in Rome, 219-230.
- 2 Westin, J. and Eriksson, T., 2010. "Imaging the Sanctuary of Hercules Victor". In: F. Bernardini and D. Santarsiero (eds.) *Archeomatica* (2), 2010: 58-62.
- 3 Westin, J., 2009. "Interactivity, Activity and Reactivity: Thoughts on Creating a Digital Sphere for an Analogue Body". *ED-MEDIA 2009 Proceedings*, 2009: 814-819.
- 4 Westin, J., 2011. "The Interactive Museum and its Non-Human Actants". In: E. Silvéen (ed.) *The Journal of Nordic Museology* (1), 2011: 45-59.
- 5 Westin, J., 2012. "Towards a Vocabulary of Limitations: the Translation of a Painted Goddess into a Symbol of Classical Education". In: L. Smith (ed.) *The International Journal of Heritage Studies* (1), 2012: 18-32.
- 6 Westin, J., 2012. "Loss of Culture: the Lady and the Fox". In: J. Knight and A. Weedon (eds.) *Convergence: the International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 2012.
- 7 Westin, J., 2012. "Inking a Past". *Forthcoming*.

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