

## **“OLD-NEW”**

### **Introduction to the 17th edition of Peano Foundation International Sculpture Competition by Manfredi Di Nardo**

Since when man became self-aware, he learnt to narrate his individual and social life through the concept of time: the succession of single personal happenings, which are organized through the concepts of “before” and “after”, defines the perception of everybody's own personal life in the same way in which the succession of "past", "present" and "future" defines the history of the humanity.

Since ever the philosophy wonders if the marking of the time is something real or just an habitus taken on by man with the aim to register its presence on Earth. Taking for granted the acceptance of the time concept as part of our objective reality, we realize that the concepts of “old/young”, “ancient/new” are born to define the opposite antipodes of a continuous flow: what yesterday was "new", today it is "old" - or maybe "ancient" - and who once was "young", he has become inexorably "old". These concepts narrate the becoming of the civilization and they are applicable both when we celebrate the progress of the humanity and when we recall with nostalgia the memories of old age keeping their validity in the succession of generations: both in the patriarchal societies where the old people benefit of the highest respect and consideration; and in the new-evolved system of society where old people risk to become considered useless because of their difficulty to adapt to the latest requirements of progress.

This general introduction aims to guarantee the highest exercise of creativity to all the participants to the 2013 edition of Peano Foundation International Sculpture Competition: everybody is free to analyze and develop the subject of the competition in the most personal way based on his/her own interpretation and sensibility.

Starting from the dichotomy “old/new”, somebody will decide to focus on the generational gap which defines the contrast between parents and sons and which is quite a common topic in contemporary literature. In the last fifty years, indeed, west societies emphasized the rift, if not the end, of the traditional intergenerational solidarity which was based on the specific roles of the youths and the adults: we can say that this process started around 1968 when young people started to question not only the authority, but also the prestige of the adults. Nowadays, in years of recession, many observers underline how the economical interests of the two generations have become opposite and contrasting: this is not only a problem of different mentalities but also a struggle for survival. This gap is well-represented also by political dialectics in which, riding the excitement of public opinion, slogan as “the new which moves forward” and “scrapping” have been launched.

Somebody else, trying to go beyond the social context they belong to, will give to the topic a more universal meaning. In Italy, where the birthrate has almost a zero growth, the population is growing old and the young people are becoming almost a species to be preserved; Japan has the oldest population of the world. But in many African and South-American countries, three fourth of the population is under thirty: how can we think that so different societies can be similar? In this sense, the “old” and the “new” cannot be considered a merely question of age.

Somebody else will decide instead to opt for an aesthetic interpretation to the topic giving to the word “old” the meaning of “antique” and to the word “new” the meaning of “trendy”: this is quite a common

interpretation which can be applied not only to the world of fashion (outmoded vs modish) but also to any aspect, object and attitude of daily life. The perception of the “new” is often suggested by others as consequence of marketing strategies; but what could it be if not a unmixable blend of advertising-induced needs and real ones? Should we considered “old-fashioned” who still loves the vision of multicolor books in libraries and reject the immaterial reading offered by I-Pads? Should we consider “trendy” who totally commits himself with IT-communication tools and social networks up to replace his physical social life with them? When we talk about the objects which are part of our daily life we cannot define them “old” or “modern” just on the basis of their belonging to old or young people.

The students of Fine Arts who decide to participate to the competition will give some answers to the possible questions raised by the topic chosen for the 2013 edition. In the meantime Peano Foundation, which is so sensitive to this theme, is renewing the collaboration with some local youth associations in order to continue fostering the exchange between the “old” meaning the long-standing experience and the “new” meaning the enthusiasm. From this collaboration only copious and luxuriant fruits will ripen.