



Introduction to the theme of
28th edition of Peano Foundation International Sculpture/Design Competition
DIFFERENT WORLDS
Travels, comparisons and explorations in the Third Millennium
remembering Marco Polo

Peano Foundation, like many other prestigious Italian institutions, in the year of the 700th anniversary from Marco Polo's death, intends to tribute the famous Venetian explorer - recognized for having written the first "reliable and complete report" of the East and for having contributed to the mutual knowledge between Asia and Europe – by dedicating him the 28th edition of its sculpture/design competition.

For almost thirty years, Peano Foundation (Cuneo, Italy) has been organizing a sculpture/design competition dedicated to the students of the Academies of the Fine Arts and the Schools of Architecture and Design.

The competition proposes each year a different theme to be explored which sometimes is concerned to the representations of universal elements and concepts - such as the Earth, the natural element of water, the beauty – and some others is connected to specific events of current affairs – for example, the 150th anniversary of the newspaper La Stampa, the covid pandemic or the war in Ukraine. The 2024 edition of the competition is dedicated to the theme of travelling, theme which, since 2013, is also institutionally promoted by Peano Foundation through the annual exhibition of carnets de voyage called «CuneoVualà».

The theme of travelling and exploring recalls that of crossing places to be meant, not only in a purely physical sense, but also as a melting pot of cultures, knowledges, languages and different mentalities which meet, blend and enrich and change together. In the Third Millennium the experience of travelling, visiting, meeting and exploring are often strictly connected to the phenomenon of shooting and posting on the social media and sometimes the all experience is filtered through those actions that precede, if not almost replace, the reality. For this reason, it becomes interesting to investigate and represent the different possible way in which we experience life in movement travelling through "different worlds".

The concept of movement has been present since classical times as a symbolic creative force. From Homeric Ulysses to nomadism and migrations, from mythological adventures to pilgrimages, from crusades to wars of conquest, from the Grand Tour to mass tourism, from scientific explorations by land and sea up to the conquest of space and virtual travels. The concept of travelling changes depending on the historical period, and it reflects desires, ambitions, fears and problems.

Talking about travelling and explorations it is impossible not to mention Marco Polo (Venice 1254 - 1324), an extraordinary traveller, writer, ambassador and merchant, and author of the Milione, the book where he reports his experiences at the court of Kublai Khan. As a great "ambassador" of fourteenth-century Republic of Venice, he played a significant role in Asia where he is well-known. His experience of more-than-twenty-year travelling had a considerable importance and a crucial role in connecting two distant worlds, the modern Europe and Asia, for some aspects still very distant nowadays. For this reason, the 700th anniversary from his death, is a very good occasion to reflect on topical issues: how to dialogue with other cultures without giving up one's own identity? How to regulate relations between peoples and Countries? How to transmit know-how and industriousness?

Peano Foundation, through the 28th ed. of sculpture/design competition, wants to encourage young people to relive the figure of Marco Polo beyond the legendary aspects for which he is universally known, taking his journey as an invitation to discovery, knowledge and understanding because, even if today every part of the world is easily reachable, the encounter with what is “other” than us can still arouse amazement and wonder, as it was at Marco Polo's age.

The theme of the journey/travelling has always been a theme deeply investigated by artists of all times in its several meanings: 1) adventure and discovery of new places (Paul Gauguin, Alighiero Boetti); 2) the rediscovering of nature and colors (William Turner, Claude Monet, Charlemagne Palestine) or relationship man/ landscape (Richard Long, Hamish Fulton, the exponents of Land Art and the Art in Nature movement); 3) spiritual/inside journey looking for oneself and one's roots (Lothar Baumgarten, Rirkrit Tiravanija); 4) travel as detachment, exile and abandonment (Fabio Mauri, John King); 5) representation of the world (Jan Dibbets, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Mario Ceroli, Luigi Mainolfi) but these are not the only possible ways the theme can be interpreted.

The theme “Different Worlds” can be interpreted, with maximum freedom of expressive means, in full autonomy and according to the subjective vision of the authors so that the user can read their thoughts and message in the work.