



<Tato (Guglielmo Sansoni) – Flying over the Coliseum in a Spiral [Spiralling] (1930).jpg>

MANIFESTO OF AEROPAINTING

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In 1908, F. T. Marinetti published *The Pope's Airplane*, the first lyrical free-verse exaltation of flight and the aerial prospects of our peninsula from Etna to Roma Milan Trieste. Aeropoetry was further developed in Paolo Buzzi's book *Airplanes* and Luciano Folgore's *Bridges over the Ocean* and Mario Carli's *Goats*.¹

In 1926 the Futurist painter and aviator Azari created the first work of aeropainting, *Perspectives of Flight*, exhibited in the Futurist Great Hall at the Venice Biennale.

In 1929 the painter Gerardo Dottori executed a miraculous Futurist aviator decoration for the airport at Ostia, depicting the impetuous thrust of airplanes in the skies of Rome with propellers fuselages wings transfigured synthesized and reduced to typical plastic elements.²

This work by Dottori, already well known for his great *Triptych of Velocity*, marks an important date in the history of the new aeropainting.

Contemplating the walls and roof of the Ostia airport, critics and the public have become convinced that traditional painted eagles, far from glorifying aviation, seem today like miserable chickens when set beside the torrid mechanical splendor of a flying motor which would certainly disdain even roasting them.

Mino Somenzi, drawing on the time spent in the cockpit together with the painter Dottori, who was intently taking notes on his aerial views, has been inspired with a precise conception of aeropainting. Among the many ideas advanced by me in the *People's Gazette* of 22 September 1929, I take note of one, that the sea has been vanquished as an artistic theme, that last great inspiring source for avant-gardists and innovators, and now everybody is up in the sky.³

With the *Perspectives of Flight* by Azari, the decorations at the airport in Ostia by Dottori, the aeropaintings by Tato, Marasco, Prampolini, Fillia, and Oriani,⁴ we are entering into the beautiful abstract synthesis of a new great art.

We Futurists declare that

1. The shifting perspectives of flight constitute an absolutely new reality which has nothing in common with reality as traditionally constituted by a terrestrial perspective;



2. the elements of this new reality are unstable and are constructed by perpetual mobility;
3. the painter should not observe and paint except by participating in their very velocity;
4. painting the new reality from on high requires a profound disdain for detail and the necessity of synthesizing and transfiguring everything;
5. all the parts of the landscape appear to the painter in flight as:
 - a) smashed
 - b) artificial
 - c) provisional
 - d) as if they had just fallen out of the sky
6. to the eye of the painter in flight all the parts of a landscape accentuate certain features of being
 - dense
 - scattered
 - elegant
 - grandiose
7. every aeropainting simultaneously contains the double movement of the airplane and the hand of the painter which moves the pencil, brush, or sponge;
8. The painting or plastic complex of aeropainting must be polycentric;
9. A new extraterrestrial plastic spirituality will soon be achieved.

In terrestrial velocities (horse, automobile, train), plants and houses and so on seem to hurl themselves at us, the closer ones more rapidly, more distant ones less so, forming a dynamic wheel within the frame made by mountains sea hills lakes, a frame which in turn also shifts, but so slowly as to seem basically still. Aside from the frame, there is also something else which occupies our attention, the horizontal continuity with the plane on which we are advancing.

In aerial velocities, instead, the panoramic frame and planar continuity are lacking. The airplane which glides dives goes into a climb etc. creates an ideal hypersensitive observatory suspended everywhere in the infinite, further dynamized by the very consciousness of motion which changes the value and rhythm of minutes and of seconds of vision-sensation. Time and space are pulverized by the lightning-swift awareness that the earth is rapidly spinning beneath the immobile airplane.

When the airplane is turning the folds of the fan-vision (green tones + brown tones + diaphanous sky-blue tones of the atmosphere) close up in order to hurl themselves vertically against the vertical line formed by the machine and the earth.

This fan-vision reopens in the form of an X when the plane dives, its only base now being the criss-cross of the two angles.

Landing creates a succession of V's that grow enlarged.

The Coliseum, seen from 3,000 meters by an aviator gliding in spirals, changes its form and dimension at every moment and successively enlarges all the faces of its volume in the act of showing them.

In a straight line of flight, at whatever altitude so long as it's constant, we may not be able to see what's beneath us but in front of us there appears a panorama A which gradually grows larger in proportion to our velocity, while further on we see a little panorama B that grows larger as we fly over panorama A, until we then discern a panorama C that gradually grows larger while A, already remote, and B, now flown over, are disappearing.

When the plane turns the viewpoint is always in line with the trajectory of the cockpit yet coincides successively with all the points of a complete curve, following all the positions of the airplane itself. In a turn to the right the panoramic fragments become circular and run toward the left multiplying and contracting, while as they sweep toward the left they decline in number according to the greater or lesser inclination of the airplane.

Having studied the aerial perspectives that are offered in front of the aviator, we should consider the countless lateral effects. All these have a rotating movement. The machine advances like an iron lance with two cogs that are gearing on one side and the other by means of the teeth of the two wheels that seem to spin in a direction opposed to that of the machine itself, and whose centers are located in all the points of the horizon.

These rotating visions succeed one another, merge, and interpenetrate the sum total of frontal spectacles.

We Futurists declare that the principle of aerial perspectives and consequently the principle of Aeropainting is an incessant and graduated multiplication of forms and colors with extremely elastic crescendos and dimenuendos that are intensified or swept away as they give birth to new gradations of forms and colors.

Whatever the trajectory method or conditions of flight, the panoramic fragments are each a continuation of one another, all connected by a mysterious and fatal need for superimposing forms and colors and yet conserving among themselves a perfect and prodigious harmony.

This harmony is determined by the very continuity of flight. Whence the dominant characteristics of Aeropainting which we have delineated. By an absolute freedom of imagination and an obsessive desire to embrace dynamic multiplicity with an indispensable synthesis, it captures the immense visionary and sensual drama of flight. The day is approaching when Futurist aeropainters will realize the Aero-sculpture dreamed of by the great Boccioni, a harmonious and meaningful composition of colored plumes offered to the paintbrushes of the sunset and the dawn and the long variegated bands of electric light.

