

The Futurist's Perception of the Body

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Introduction¹

In this research, I focus on Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944), who is the founder of the Italian avant-garde movement Futurism, particularly on his physical perception of the body. I assume that his physical sensibility is a fertile source of the inspiration and the evolution of the arts. Generally, they have considered that Marinetti's main interest exists in the machine rejecting humanity. However, through the reinterpretation of his manifestos, I'd like to exhibit how his acute physical and spiritual sensibility laid foundations to create the Italian avant-garde arts.

Marinetti was a tireless poet, a sleepless idea man and provocative propagandist. Indeed his first manifesto of 1909 begins:

¹ I dedicated my PhD Dissertation to a study of the dancing body in Italian Futurism, through a careful reading of the numerous futurist manifestos. Particularly, I focused on the *Aerodance (Aerodanza)* of Giannina Censi (1913-1995), a futurist ballet dancer. I treated its studies, focusing on the innovations which laid the foundations of modern dance. In fact, the emotions felt by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti himself under the stimulus of speed and noise were the consistent themes of Futurism for which the flying machine was a source of inspiration for the new choreo art. In my PhD dissertation and other theses, I have examined the Futurist manifestos which will be cited in this research: see Sayaka Yokota, *La danza nel futurismo: Giannina Censi e la danza moderna* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Università di Bologna-Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2013); Sayaka Yokota, "Il corpo danzante del futurismo: storia dell'aviazione e tentativo di volare danzando," in *Danza e ricerca. Laboratori di studi, scritture, visioni*, no. 3 (November 2012): 61-83; and Sayaka Yokota, "La danza nel futurismo: la sensibilità corporea di Marinetti", in *Danza e ricerca. Laboratori di studi, scritture, visioni*, no. 6 (March 2015): 151-159.

We had stayed up all night—my friends and I—beneath mosque lamps hanging from the ceiling. Their brass domes were filigreed, starred like our souls; just as, again like our souls, they were illuminated by the imprisoned brilliance of an electric heart. On the opulent oriental rugs, we had crushed our ancestral lethargy, arguing all the way to the final frontiers of logic and blackening reams of paper with delirious writings.

Our chests swelled with immense pride, for at that hour we alone were still awake and upright, like magnificent lighthouses or forward sentries facing an army of enemy stars that eyed us from their encampments in the sky.²

In his excited state of mind, he generated a large number of manifestos and writings in rapid pace. In fact, a recent biography of Marinetti³ counts 96 bibliographic headings for manifestos signed by the poet from 1909 to 1944; 224 headings relating to prefaces; 158 headings for his collaboration with the third page of the Turinese daily “Gazzetta del Popolo”; 118 headings for “Poesia”, the Futurist journal which he himself edited; 68 unpublished works; and 367 critical reviews published between 1899 and 2002, and certainly more will be added following the Futurist centenarian in 2009.

Futurism, impatient with immobility and “pastism” (*passatismo*), and characterized by a leap forward toward the future, was influenced by the radical changes on the physical and sensory levels of the new century. In his manifesto of 1909, Marinetti states, “We stand on the last promontory of

² This manifesto, *The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism (Fondazione e manifesto del Futurismo)*, is published on the front page of a Paris daily paper “Le Figaro”, on February 20, 1909, date considered as a beginning of the Futurism. In reality other publications in Italy were preceded the Parisian version: on 5 February in Bologna, then in Naples, Mantua, Verona, Trieste and Rome. Nevertheless later Marinetti himself counts the publication on “Le Figaro” as his first manifesto. For this research, I examined original Italian manifestos, referring various original texts, facsimiles, photos, transcripts: *Manifesti, proclami, interventi e documenti teorici del futurismo*, ed. Luciano Caruso (Firenze: S.P.E.S., 1990); *Dossier futurista. 1910-1919*, ed. Luciano Caruso, (Firenze: S. P. E. S., 1991); *Futurismo Manifesto 100×100. 100 anni per 100 manifesti*, ed. Achille Bonito Oliva, (Milano: Electa, 2009); *Manifesti del futurismo*, ed. Viviana Birolli (Milano: Abscondita, 2008); and *Manifesti futuristi*, ed. Guido Davico Bonino (Milano: Rizzoli, 2009). English translations of manifestos are cited from *Futurism: an anthology*, ed. Lawrence Rainey, Christine Poggi and Laura Wittman (New Haven: Yale University, 2009).

³ See Domenico Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. Bibliografia* (Milano: MART, Skira, 2002).

the centuries! ... Why should we look back over our shoulders, when we intend to breach the mysterious doors of the Impossible?"⁴. Here, at the beginning of the Futurism, we can imagine the poet with his nerves extremely tense and awaking as an electric lamp, his body imposing at the tip of the centuries just about to break through the invisible doors of the unknown. By publishing Marinetti's manifestos, admittedly his words were sometimes overwhelmingly aggressive, but Marinetti continued to attempt to find the appropriate terms to express what he physically felt, namely the feelings and senses that did not exist before the intervention of the machine on our life.

Incidentally another aspect cannot be ignored: originally the Futurism was neither a political nor a programmatic question, but rather a case of breath, nerves, heartbeats, vibration and the thrilling of speed. Marinetti's ideology derives from a more bodily and intuitive sensibility than an artistic one. He moves from his consciousness of physical and spiritual life under the influence of revolution, through these perceptions of the body. On the other hand, the futurist, in collaboration with Marinetti, gradually increased their production in every field of art: literature, painting, sculpture, music, theater, architecture, photography, cinema, dance, fashion, and even cooking. It is significant that the different convention of futurists was focused on the human body and senses.

Concerning the social and political situation of that time, namely the situation of politics which Fascism was rendering aesthetics, Walter Benjamin rightly indicates in his *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936), that "Fascism, as Marinetti admits, expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology."⁵ Treating almost the same subject, I nevertheless try to focus on, from a very individual perspective, the sense perception of man and the human body.

⁴ Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism*.

⁵ Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in *Literary Theory: an Anthology*, ed. Julie Rivkin and Michale Ryan (Maiden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 1240.

1. Driving

Beginning with the first manifesto in 1909, *The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism*, let us focus on a totally new action for humans: that of driving, the first fusion of man and motor, which enabled man advanced with unprecedented speed.

Here, Marinetti makes reference to all the means of transportation developed through the Industrial Revolution: for example, the “racing car”, that is to say “a roaring automobile”, which is “more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace”; “adventurous steamships”; “locomotives” and “airplanes”. In particular, he describes his own personal experience of driving a car. And the most interesting aspect of his account is that he did not explain how to technically drive but to show what he felt through his body and sense.

We drew close to the three snorting beasts, tenderly stroking their swollen breasts. I stretched out on my car like a corpse in its coffin, but revived at once under the steering wheel, a guillotine blade that menaced my stomach.⁶

Marinetti, the driver, feels exposed to the threat of the steering wheel, which was, at that time, a bare long and thin pole sticking out from the bottom toward stomach of the driver. Driving was so adventurous and risky that he, in fact, caused an accident. But struggling to his feet from a ditch, his heart felt “deliciously slashed with the red-hot iron of joy!”

Let’s break out of wisdom, as if out of a horrible shell; and let’s fling ourselves, like fruits swollen with pride, into the wind’s vast and contorted mouth! ... Let’s throw ourselves, like food, into the Unkown, not in desperation but to fill up the deep wells of the Absurd.

⁶ Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism*.

Scarcely had I said these words, when I spun my car around as frantically as a dog trying to bite its own tail, and there, suddenly, were two bicyclists right in front of me, cutting me off, as if trying to prove me wrong, wobbling like two lines of reasoning, equally persuasive and yet contradictory. Their stupid argument was being discussed right in my path . . . What a bore! Damn! . . . I stopped short, and to my disgust rolled over into a ditch, with my wheels in the air. . . .

Oh! Maternal ditch, nearly full of muddy water! Fair factory drain! I gulped down your bracing slime, which reminded me of the sacred black breast of my Sudanese nurse. . . . When I climbed out, a filthy and stinking rag, from underneath the capsized car, I felt my heart—deliciously—being slashed with the red-hot iron of joy!⁷

We see the driver's maximum reactions to the car psychologically and physically even threatened by flinging out of the car. Psychologically, he feels unexperienced excitement as his internal organs, stomach and heart destroyed. Physically, his body is involved in strange actions; flung out, thrown out and knocked down, like fruits thrown into the mouth, spun with car, gulped down mud. This was a real human involvement in some unusual events, unimagined and unexpected in the past.

2. Multiplied Man

When Marinetti experiments with his own physical sensations in driving a car, that is driving a machine, he notices that man can be capable of communicating with a machine. "Communicate" means exchange information or share ideas or feelings. Therefore, an intentional act of man decided under the influence of machine.

⁷ *Ibid.*

In *Multiplied Man and the Reign of the Machine*, published in 1910, he states how mechanics treat machines like girlfriend, stating that “This is not just a fanciful image, but an impending reality that within a few years we will be able to confirm.”⁸ Also he comments:

Hence we must prepare for the imminent and inevitable identification of man and motor, facilitating and perfecting a continual interchange of intuitions, rhythms, instincts, and metallic disciplines that are absolutely unknown to the great majority of people today and are divined by only the most clear-sighted minds.⁹

Therefore, according to Marinetti, there are two types of man: the majority, does not notice what is happening around him; the minority, has a clear and keen sensibility with which he can intuit that interchanges between the machine and the human body. He writes in *Destruction of Syntax – Radio Imagination – Words-in-Freedom* of 1913:

Futurism is based on the complete renewal of human sensibility that has occurred as an effect of science’s major discoveries. Those people who today make use of the telegraph, the telephone, the gramophone, the train, the bicycle, the motorcycle, the automobile, the ocean liner, the dirigible, the airplane, the cinema, the great newspaper (the synthesis of a day in the world’s life) are not aware of the decisive influence that these various forms of communication, transportation, and information have on their psyches.¹⁰

⁸ This manifesto, *Multiplied Man and the Reign of the Machine* (*L’Uomo moltiplicato e il Regno della macchina*), signed by Marinetti, is published in a form of flyer in May, 1910. The text is republished on *Guerra sola igiene del mondo* in 1915.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ This manifesto, *Destruction of Syntax – Radio Imagination – Words-in-Freedom* (*Distruzione della sintassi Immaginazione senza fili Parole in libertà*), is distributed in Italian and French, dated on May 11, 1913. It is published on two numbers of Florence review “Lacerba”, on June 15 and November 15, 1913; and again on “Poetry and Drama” at London, in September 1913.

In this way Marinetti defines two very different human sensibility. In contrast to the null sense of the majority, Marinetti shows the renewed type as “the most clear-sighted minds” which are aware of the psychological and physical effects caused by technological inventions.

Also “a continual interchange” is indispensable because, in metropolitan life, in fact, physical movements and gestures don’t allow immobility. Man must bring his faculties to maximum speed. The medium that makes the fusion of man and machine possible is the evolution of the body itself. He reintroduces the concept of “clear-sighted minds” in *Geometrical and Mechanical Splendor and the Numerical Sensibility* of 1914.

Today, from the chaos of contradictory new sensibilities a new beauty is being born, one that we Futurists will substitute for the old, and one that I call geometrical and mechanical Splendor.

[...]

My Futurist senses first glimpsed this geometrical splendor on the bridge of a dreadnought.¹¹

In this manifesto, he proposes the destruction of syntax, the use of onomatopoeia and of mathematical signs in literature and the most fundamental element generating these operations is precisely “new sensibilities” or “futurist senses”. Furthermore, it is important that he does not talk about the outer appearance but the internal system of body. In fact, starting from the awareness of its possibility, he imagines man with wings. Let’s see *Multiplied Man and the Reign of the Machine* again.

¹¹ This manifesto, *Geometrical and Mechanical Splendor and the Numerical Sensibility* (*Lo splendore geometrico e meccanico e la sensibilità numerica*), is published in a form of flyer signed by Marinetti, dated on May 11 and 18, 1914, in Italian and French versions (*La splendeur géométrique et mécanique et la sensibilité numérique*). Then it is republished on “Lacerba”, on March 15, 1914 (*Lo splendore geometrico e meccanico nelle parole in libertà*), and again on April 1, 1914 (*Onomatopoeie astratte e sensibilità numerica*).

We believe in the possibility of an incalculable number of human transformations, and we declare without a smile that wings are waiting to be awakened within the flesh of man¹².

The day when it will be possible for man to externalize his will in such a way that it is prolonged beyond himself like an immense, invisible arm—on that day, Dream and Desire, which today are empty terms, will reign supreme over conquered space and time.

This inhuman and mechanical type, constructed for omnipresent velocity, will be naturally cruel, omniscient, and combative. He will be endowed with unexpected machines, of the kind we see kindling in the cheeks of mechanics, scorched and organs: organs adapted to the exigencies of an environment made of continuous shocks. Already now we can foresee an organ that will resemble a prow developing from the outward swelling of the sternum, which will be the more pronounced the better an aviator the man of the future becomes, much like the analogous development discernible in the best fliers among birds. You'll be able to better understand these apparently paradoxical hypotheses by considering the phenomena of externalized will that are continually manifested at spiritualist séances.¹³

In short, “the inhuman and mechanical type” is a “multiplied man” in his ability to have wings to fly with.

¹² In my opinion, it is very significant the fact that, only this time, Marinetti use the term *carne* (flesh) not *corpo* (body) to indicate the new physical system hidden under body (*nella carne dell'uomo dormono delle ali*). Marinetti images the wings within the flesh of body when the wings are invisible, mysterious and very intimate for man. It seems to me that he has really acute sense, because he prefer *carne* rather than *corpo* as material structure, possibly shoulder blades, to indicate the applicable physical part. We would remember that, in the Japanese avant-garde dance Butoh, they call dancer's body *niku-tai* (flesh-body), intentionally emphasizing the intimate, sensitive and internal part of human. With regard to the Japanese term *nikutai* and Futurist concept of body, see Yokota *La danza nel futurismo: Giannina Censi e la danza moderna*. I examined the Japanese philosophy of body in a European context in Sayaka Yokota, “‘Un autoritratto di migliaia di persone’: uno studio sui workshop di butō di Tadashi Endō, Sayoko Ōnishi, Yoshito Ōno,” in *Paesaggi corporei: percepire, scrivere, incarnare il mutamento*, ed. Tadahiko Wada and Stefano Colangelo (Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2015), 45-53; and Sayaka Yokota, “Butoh wo meguru Itaria no karada to kotoba (Corpi e linguaggi italiani attorno al butō),” in *In cerca delle voci. In onore del Professor Tadahiko Wada* (Tokyo: Wada Tadahiko sensei tainin kinen ronbunshu jikkouinkai, 2016), 315-327.

¹³ Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Multiplied Man and the Reign of the Machine*.

And he might be capable of externalizing his will, which is an abstract thing, in the form of a concrete but invisible limb. The transformation into a “hero with wings”, flight in the sky, was a sincere desire, finally made possible by aviation technology. Consequently the “multiplied man” is a multi-powered man not rejecting humanity but sharpening his immanent senses and multiplying his inner system as wings hidden under body. And in my opinion, it is of great importance to point out how his elaborate intellectualism emerge from bodily sensations which were personally experienced himself. Hence, the writings of Marinetti are not simple fantasy, but will be based on his real experience of hovering freely in the air.

3. Flying

If a “multiplied man” is evolved in his functions, he has wings and can fly. We can trace this image not from the world of fantasy, but from the dramatic experience of Marinetti himself, as his dream of flying in the sky came true at the International Air Show in Milan, in 1910¹⁴.

In the *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature* of 1912, he talks about this first flight.

Sitting astride the fuel tank of an airplane, my stomach warmed by the aviator’s head, I felt the ridiculous inanity of the old syntax inherited from Homer. A raging need to liberate words, dragging them out from the prison of the Latin period. Like all imbeciles, this period, naturally, has a prudent head, a stomach, two legs, and two flat feet: but it will never have two wings. Just enough to walk, take a short run, and come up short, panting!

¹⁴ The first air show in Italy realized in Brescia, in province of Milan, coincidentally the year of the foundation of the Futurism. Among the enthusiast spectators there was Gabriele D’Annunzio who tried to fly for the first time, on September 11, 1909. One year later, Giovanni Bielovucic (Juan Bielovucic), who is a Peruvian pilot of Croatian origin gave Marinetti a ride on his plane, on the occasion of the International Aerial Circuit in Milan, held from September 25 to October 2, 1910. See Mario Cobianchi, *Pionieri dell’aviazione in Italia. 1908-1914*, ed. Fiorenzo Longhi (Vignola: Vaccari, 2009, I pub. 1943); and Jeffery T. Schnapp, “Propeller Talk”, in *Modernism/Modernity. Special Issue: Marinetti and the Italian Futurists*, 1, no. 3 (September 1994).

This is what the swirling propeller told me as I sped along at two hundred meters above the powerful smokestacks of Milan.¹⁵

And again in *The New Religion-Morality of Speed* of 1916.

When I flew for the first time with the aviator Bielovucic, I felt my chest opening like a great hole through which all of the sky—smooth, fresh, and torrential—was deliciously plunging. Instead of the slow watered-down sensuality of walks under the sun and amidst flowers, you should prefer the ferocious and blood-tingling massage of the raging wind. Increasing lightness. An infinite sense of pleasure. You get out of the plane with an elastic and springy bounce. You've gotten something heavy off your back. You've triumphed over the trap of the road. You've triumphed over the law which forces man to crawl.¹⁶

Reading these Marinetti's reports of his first flight experience, we notice that his emphasis on the impact felt in the internal organs: particularly stomach and chest. Even before driving, just sitting in his car, he feels overwhelmingly excited so that a steering wheel sticks into his stomach. On the airplane sitting behind the pilot, he feels warmth of the pilot's head on his stomach. Similarly, at the moment of the foundation of the Futurism, his chest swells with immense pride; during the uncertain and unprecedented flight he feels his chest open and swallow all of the blue sky. Here we can find another comparison of ideal Futurist with "Pastist". The first simile is the figure of a man of Latin period who is walking slowly with his two flat feet to decorate syntax wasting time; by

¹⁵ This manifesto, *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature (Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista)*, edited by Marinetti and dated on May 11, 1912, is distributed firstly in a form of flyer in Italian and French, then published in Italian on "La Gazzetta di Biella", in October 12, 1912; and in German, on "Der Strum", in October 1912, in Berlin.

¹⁶ *The New Religion-Morality of Speed (La nuova religione-morale della velocità)* is edited by Marinetti in a form of flyer in Italian, dated on May 11, 1916; then published on "L'Italia futurista", on June 1, 1916, in Florence. The expanded French edition (*La nouvelle religion-morale de la Vitesse*) is published on "Le Futurisme", on October 1, 1922; and, in the same year, the Russian version is published on "Sovremennyj Zapad", in Saint Petersburg.

contrast, the second one is a man who actually flies emancipating himself from prison of the gravity.

Moreover, we can say that in the air Marinetti felt human will, as dream and desire to seek corporeal externalization, as a leap from the invisible to the visible, and as a huge invisible arm or a chest flooded with blue sky, exactly as he had wrote in *Multiplied Man and the Reign of the Machine* few month before his first flight. While he focuses on the physical externalization of inner stimulation, both internalization of his surroundings and the sensation caused by external phenomena are internalized within his body. He writes in *The New Religion-Morality of Speed*,

Speed detaches corpuscular man from corpuscular woman. Speed destroys love, vice of the sedentary heart, saddening coagulation, arteriosclerosis of humanity's blood. Speed hastens, precipitates the railroad-automobile-airplane blood circulation of the world.¹⁷

Here Marinetti states the key concept of the futurist body. The flow of blood is the internal speed of the modern human body simultaneously reflecting the relentless flow of trams, trains, cars and airplanes. In this way, Marinetti describes the interaction between the immanent speed within the body and transcendent speed.

About two decades later, his concepts of human physical perception evolved by flying with machine in the air are summarized in the later collective manifesto, *Manifesto of Aeropainting*, edited repeatedly from the end of 1920s to the beginning of 1930s, signed by Marinetti, Balla, Benedetta, Depero, Prampolini and other futurist painters of the second generation. Aeropainting is a series of futurist paintings made in the 1930s, which depict the flight of airplanes and the physical and spiritual sensation of pilots in the sky. Many Futurist artists had experienced acrobatic flights

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

before making the Aeropaintings, as Marinetti did in 1910. They also realized that it was necessary to experience the physical perception of flying in the sky to paint flight as a subject of their work. In *Manifesto of Aeropainting*,¹⁸ they say in fact,

3. the painter should not observe and paint except by participating in their very velocity;

[...]

7. every aeropainting simultaneously contains the double movement of the airplane and the hand of the painter which moves the pencil, brush, or sponge;

[...]

9. A new extraterrestrial plastic spirituality will soon be achieved.

In other words, the movement of the airplane is in harmony with the physical movement of the painter. And a plastic spirituality, not an imaginary spirituality, will be created by the painter-aviator.

4. Tactilism

In the former three chapters, we examined two completely new actions of the human body reported by Marinetti: driving and flying, and consequently an ideal multi-powered man with highest

¹⁸ The first version of *Manifesto of Aeropainting (L'Aeropittura. Manifesto Futurista)* is entitled *Prospettive del volo e aeropittura* and published on "Gazzetta del Popolo" in Turin, on September 22, 1929, signed only by Marinetti. Another new version, *La prima affermazione nel mondo di una nuova arte italiana: l'aeropittura*, with a sign of Marinetti at the bottom, is published on the front page of "Il Giornale della Domenica" in Rome, dated on February 1-2, 1931. A French version, *Le Manifeste de l'Aéropeinture Futuriste*, is published on "Comœdia", in Paris, on February 14, 1931. Afterwards, republished in Italian, on the exhibition catalogue, *Prima Mostra di Aeropittura dei futuristi Balla, Ballelica, Benedetta, Diulgheroff, Dottori, Fillia, Oriani, Prampolini, Bruna Somenzi, Tato, Thayaht*, at Galleria Camerata degli Artisti in Rome, from February 1 to February 10, 1931; this time, eight sign of other artists were added. This latest version is published on the catalogue in occasion of the exhibition, *Mostra futurista di aeropittura e di scenografia*, from October to November 1931, at Galleria Pesaro in Milan. Then, it is republished with some textual variation on "La Città Nuova", at Turin, on February 6, 1932; on the catalogue of the exhibition, *Esposizione d'Aeropittura*, at Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome, in April 1932; on "Futurismo 1932", in Rovereto, in the same year; on "Artecrazia", supplement to "Futurismo", in July 1932, at Rome; again, on "Futurismo", on November 1933, at Rome; and then in French, on "Stile Futurista", in August 1934, in Turin.

sensibilities and capacity of evolve his organs. The possible evolution of these sensibilities, described by Marinetti in some different way as “the most clear-sighted minds”, “completely renewed human sensibility” or “Futurist senses”, in other words extremely perceptive five senses, is summarized in one possibility to realize new arts. That is sense of touch, minor to other four senses.

After flying in the sky and getting a new sense perception, Marinetti conceived of “Tactilism” (*Tattilismo*), in 1921, as one of the future possibilities of human senses. As a new communication through epidermis, “Tactilism” involves exercises and activities that promised the “discovery of new senses” that would “carry the human spirit to unknown shores”. With Tactilism, exemplified below in Marinetti’s text, through a kind of ascetic training using “tactile tables”, a man can acquire an almost miraculous sensitivity, so that he is finally immersed in futurist sensations that had never existed before. However, “Tactilism” was underestimated by critics for a long time. A recent study of 2015 convincingly highlighted the importance of this manifesto as the second stage of the Futurist Movement¹⁹. In other words, Marinetti tried to restart Futurism, as he wrote “Period. And once again from the top.” And a new medium which realizes a new futurist invention of the arts was precisely the sense of touch, the sense that enables awareness through contact with hands, fingers or other body parts. Let us see some aspects of Tactilism.

Period. And once again from the top.

[...]

Last summer, at Antignano, where the Amerigo Vespucci Road (named after the discoverer of America) curves around as it follows the seacoast, I discovered Tactilism. Red banners were snapping over factories seized by workers.

I was naked in the silky water that was being shredded by rocks, by foaming scissors knives razors, among beds of iodine-soaked algae. I was naked in a sea of flexible steel that breathed

¹⁹ See Lorenzo Mango, *La scoperta di nuovi sensi. Il tattilismo futurista* (Bologna: Cue Press, 2015).

with virile, fecund breath. I was drinking from a chalice of the sea that was full to the brim with genius. The sun, with its long searing flames, was vulcanizing my body and welding the keel of my forehead, rich in sails.²⁰

In this way, he is totally immersed in water, as he did in the air once, and the feeling of his skin dominates his mind. Naked in the water and maybe closing his eyes and breathing deeply, he feels his surroundings only through the perception of his skin. In addition, he says:

But Tactilism, which I have created, is clearly distinct from the plastic arts. It has nothing in common with painting or sculpture, and nothing to gain or to lose in connection with them.

[...]

Tactilism, nevertheless, must avoid not only collaboration with the plastic arts, but also morbid erotomania. Its purpose must be, simply, to achieve tactile harmonies and to contribute indirectly toward the perfection of spiritual communication between human beings, through the epidermis. The distinction between the five senses is arbitrary; many other senses will soon be discovered and catalogued. Tactilism will promote these discoveries.²¹

Conclusion

So far we have seen Marinetti's concept of the evolution of the body in its faculty and development of sensations. In closing, if Marinetti was enchanted by the beauty of the machine, especially the car and the airplane, he himself participated with all of his strength in a rhythm of muscular moves, pulsations and heartbeats. He is convinced that the human body is able to "act" in the new field of

²⁰ *Tactilism (Il Tattilismo)* is published in a form of flyer dated on January 11, 1921. The French edition (*Le Tactilisme*) is introduced by Marinetti in Paris, on January 15, 1921, at Théâtre de l'Oeuvre and published on "Comoedia", on January 16. The following year, the Russian edition is published on "Sovremennyj Zapad", in Saint Petersburg; and the German edition on "Der Futurismus", in Berlin.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Futurist Arts as of the new medium of Tactilism. All such possibilities derive from an exceptionally acute sensibility of human body. In other words, Marinetti's bodily cognition is the most active sensor of the Futurist Movement.