

Preface

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The publisher has done me the honor of asking me to write the preface.

He has chosen to illustrate it with Binh Pho's work of art.

This is the publisher's aim : *"We want to show a permanence in art, from the artists of the pharaonic dynasty down to the contemporary ones, passing by the Middle Ages cathedral builders. Their designs are all rigourously the same..."*

In this preface I would like to develop the following idea : in art, geometry is universal and timeless!

In Euclid's time (1st century B.C), a lot of mathematical problems were solved by geometry.

This is no longer possible today because of the complexity and precision required to reach, for example, a precise point in the eye with a laser beam.

From time immemorial, artists have created works destined to be admired; precision was not necessary.

Building geometric figures is very useful to solve the artists' problems, proportion being often the main difficulty.

Thanks to Robert Vincent's book we can discover, from Antiquity down to present days, that proportion requires the "mean and extreme ratio" known as the "Golden Section", the "Golden Number" or the "Modulor".

Those are the different names given to that unique proportion, according to the period, to the artists and their achievements. The ratio, now called "Phi", is worth 1.618... Phi is a number, the "Golden Number", and the proportion that brings it into existence is commonly called the "Golden Section". Why define it as "Gold", "Golden", "Divine"? Because that number undeniably exists in Nature: for example in the very heart of a simple thistle, in seashells, in flowers, and trees. Phi is a "jewel" comparable to gold. Moreover, it is within ourselves-which made it divine" in the eyes of Pacioli, a 15th century monk.

The ancient measurements were based on the body (inch, foot, cubit...) in the phi ratio. It is a "natural" proportion.

That is probably why it seems harmonious to man.

It is normal for experienced artists to have an accurate eye for that proportion and to respect it in a nearly instinctive way in their achievements.

Whether the author is aware of it or not, when a work of art causes emotion that is felt by everybody, its proportions are close to the golden section. So then, why not use the help of drawings made according to the golden number to set the elements of the work together, whether it is a picture, an object or a building? Phidias, Leonardo Da Vinci and the cathedral builders understood it. That exercise is in itself sufficient to "educate" the eye.

Robert Vincent has had the remarkable idea of presenting us basic drawings, simple drawings, very often novel and very well commented on.

They can be made by all, youngsters or senior citizens, and be adapted to all forms of art or to all kinds of achievements or buildings made with passion.

Thanks to this "operative" geometry, I believe such a book will give all the creators of pictures and volumes the desire and the possibility of rediscovering the harmonious beauty of Nature, always to be found even in its most unusual elements. And for those who do not create any work of art I hope they can find the picture and the explanation of the harmony resulting from the geometry of the Golden Section when they read this book or even just look at its pages which are so well illustrated.

Albert LeCoff, Philadelphia, 2003