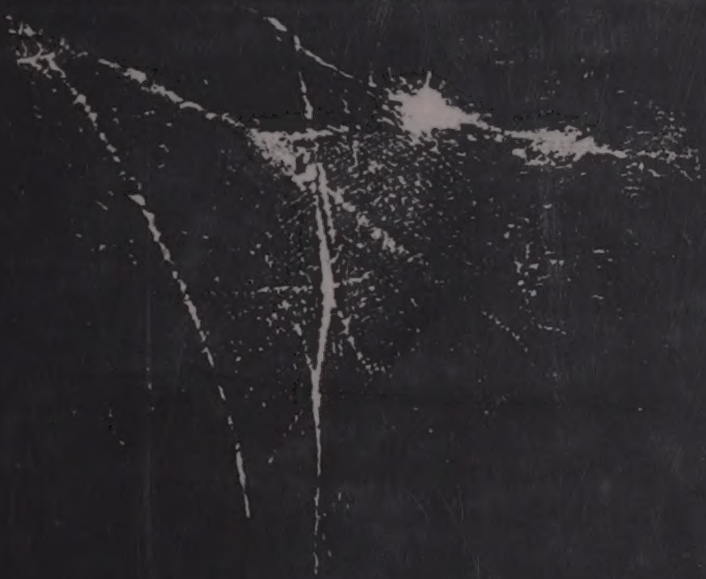


GABRIEL OROZCO



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GABRIEL OROZCO

with essays by

Yve-Alain Bois

Benjamin H. D. Buchloh

and an interview by Briony Fer

Nomadic in his life, always shifting in his practice, Gabriel Orozco is an artist who defies categorization. Working variously in sculpture, drawing, photography, installation, collage, painting, and video, he creates an art that is as diverse as the myriad issues it explores. Lyrical yet mundane, poetic yet commonplace, his works range from humble found and readymade objects, such as a deflated soccer ball or a city's collected waste, to carefully constructed sculptures, large-scale installations, and finely crafted terracottas. The ways we negotiate space and time and the relationships between objects and bodies are constant concerns for Orozco. Familiar objects such as a ping-pong table or an airplane ticket are appropriated and altered to reveal them as symbols of social exchange and geographical mobility; random, chance, and fleeting situations, such as breath on a piano or reflections in a puddle, are captured and given permanence through the gaze of photography. With such a simple economy of means, Orozco twists our conventional notions of reality and art, and opens our eyes and minds to the beauty within the most common of discarded objects, the most ordinary of everyday encounters, the most transient of passing moments.

This book is the first substantial monograph on the artist. Spanning his entire career, it includes all of Orozco's most significant works from the late 1980s to date. In a wide-ranging interview with Briony Fer, he discusses the impetus and some of the conceptual, cultural, and philosophical ideas behind his art. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh addresses Orozco's different forms of sculpture in light of twentieth-century precedents and postwar commodity culture, and considers how they manifest the changing status of object-subject relations; while Yve-Alain Bois explores Orozco's recent "return" to the traditional medium of painting, and analyzes the formal and structural logic of his canvases, in which he uses self-imposed rules to plot his compositions. With insightful, searching texts and hundreds of illustrations, this book is the definitive work to date on one of the most important and influential international artists alive today.





GABRIEL OROZCO

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presented at the Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City,
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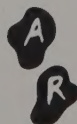
Cover: Untitled, 2001
Acrylic on paper, 20 x 20 cm

Back cover: From left to right,
Manuel, María, Gabriel, Gabriela, Magdalena,
Mauricio, Isabel, and Pilar, Acapulco, ca. 1979
Photo: Graciela Iturbide

pp. 2–3: Installing *My Hand is the Memory of Space*, 1991
Blue Star Art Space, San Antonio, Texas

pp. 8–9: *My Hand is the Memory of Space* (detail), 1991
Wooden spoons, variable dimensions

TURNER



CONACULTA • INBA

GABRIEL OROZCO

MUSEO DEL PALACIO DE BELLAS ARTES, INBA
TURNER

Mexico, 2006







Green Paper, 1991 (printed in 2006)
Fuji crystal print, 40.6 x 50.8 cm

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Four Points Expanded, 2005
Action with tennis balls, acrylic and water on canvas,
210 x 210 cm

And of course, as everybody knows who has ever played at games, the ones that are the most fun—to lose as well as to win—are the ones that are the hardest, with the most complicated, even dangerous, tasks to accomplish. And so it is that artists are generally not contented, either in the Orient or in the Occident, with doing merely simple things—and much soon becomes simple for an artist that for the rest of us would be difficult. The artist seeks the challenge, the difficult thing to do; for his basic approach to life is not of work but of play.

And so finally, now, this attitude toward art as an aspect of the game of life, and life itself as the art of a game, is a wonderfully joyous, invigorating approach to the mixed blessing of existence—quite in contrast to this of our Christian West, based on a mythology of universal guilt. There was that Fall, back there, in the Garden, and we have all been congenital sinners ever since. Every act of nature is an act of sin, accompanied by a knowledge of its guilt. Whereas in the Orient there is the idea of the inherent innocence of nature, even in what might appear to our human eyes and sentiments to be its cruelties. The world, as they say in India, is God's "play." It is a wondrous, thoughtless play; a rough play, the roughest, cruelest, most dangerous, and most difficult, with no holds barred. Often, it seems, it is the best who lose and the worst who win. But winning, finally, is not the aim; for as we have already learned in mounting the way "rich in pleasure" of the Kundalini, winning and losing in the usual sense are experiences only of the lower chakras. The aim of the ascending serpent is to clarify and increase the light of consciousness within, and the first step to the gaining of this boon—as told in the Bhagavad Gita, as in many another wisdom text—is to abandon absolutely all concern for the fruits of action, whether in this world or in the next. As the Lord Krishna on the battlefield said to the warrior prince Arjuna, "to the work alone are you entitled, never to its fruit...He who knows that the way of renunciation and the way of action are one, he verily knows."

Life as an art and art as a game—as action for its own sake, without thought of gain or of loss, praise or blame—is the key, then to the turning of living itself into a yoga, and art into the means to such a life.

Joseph Campbell,
Myths to Live By, 1972

Complicity in Time

“It motivates me to constantly situate myself at the beginning of a process, to be a beginner at something,” declares Gabriel Orozco, and these are just a few words that introduce us to the paradigm of a body of work that has enormously impacted the world of contemporary art.

I have followed the development of Gabriel since he was a child, carefully observing his work during each period. I have conversed with him over the years, and we have walked together, observing the projection of our shadows on the ground. And I have visited the various spaces where he has concurrently—for profound reasons—lived and worked, playing with and researching time, as well as the conditions of each site. I have also noticed the attention his work receives in museums and other high-profile spaces in the world of contemporary art.

Observing his fast-rising trajectory first hand has always inspired great wonder, accompanied by many questions. After a while, I am able to formulate answers to some of them, but others, like shooting stars, simply pass by in the sky, to later dissolve. There are many aspects of both his artistic and spoken language that unsettle, excite and exalt. All of this is transformed into an intellectual process that turns out to be particularly unsettling, attractive and transformative, as Gabriel himself says: “Important art regenerates the perception of reality, enriches it and transforms it.”¹

When Gabriel speaks about his ideas in words, I have the feeling he projects a deep conviction, a tremendous security and a fantastic provocation. He transmits such certainty that, suddenly, one imagines him to be an artist without doubts; however, he himself assumes vulnerability as an act of strength, especially in his piece *Piedra que cede* (Yielding Stone). As with all true art, doubt is latent. When these ideas are transformed into written or spoken words, they generate, as does the artwork, reactions and sensations that give off an enveloped congruency—one that assimilates thought, word and work—thereby strengthening every part of his creative expression.

Gabriel possesses an indisputable ability to abbreviate a universe of ideas and translate them clearly to a concrete plane. The internal processes of thought are, for him, an exciting map of the paths of knowledge. The materials and the importance the artist confers on the weight of space, is associated with a category of aesthetic exercises that, through an apparent simplicity of formal conception, generate multiple reactions in the spectator, ranging from absolute incomprehension to great intellectual and formal pleasure.

When faced with situations that awaken his curiosity, Gabriel submits himself to unbridled activity. The recurring inclusion of balls, footballs or spheres is intimately connected to his personal history, to the world of his childhood, the stage on which his great passion for soccer and ball games began. In his artistic evolu-

tion, the memory of his childhood is transmuted through constant exploration and a flow of ideas with which he discovers and constructs, for example, the various connotations a simple ball might have.

The artist associates the body with space, with a spatial-temporal interaction in which he recuperates the simplicity of marks left on materials after intervening with them. Orozco has a strong relationship with clay. *Mis manos son mi corazón* (My Hands Are My Heart) came about after observing activities in a brick-making workshop, as a result of that humid matter that is transformed into rectangles. The same bricks, upon being moved to another area, revive Gabriel's fascination when he sees them being passed by hand from one worker to the other, as if transformed into light balls. Clay is, after all, reminiscent of the past, and its organicness both unsettles him and brings pleasure. Feeling it between his fingers inspires him to produce figures with which he constructs a universe. Bodies, bones and functional objects take shape, their everyday image being connected to a sense of the sacred.

Upon appreciating the placement of objects in his installations—like the concave ceramics that were also made of clay—one perceives a sense of ritual associated with pre-Hispanic altars. But Gabriel concentrates on reconsidering the aesthetics of installation, disconnecting it from any anthropological or religious meaning. The sacred dissolves in the dialogue between matter and space.

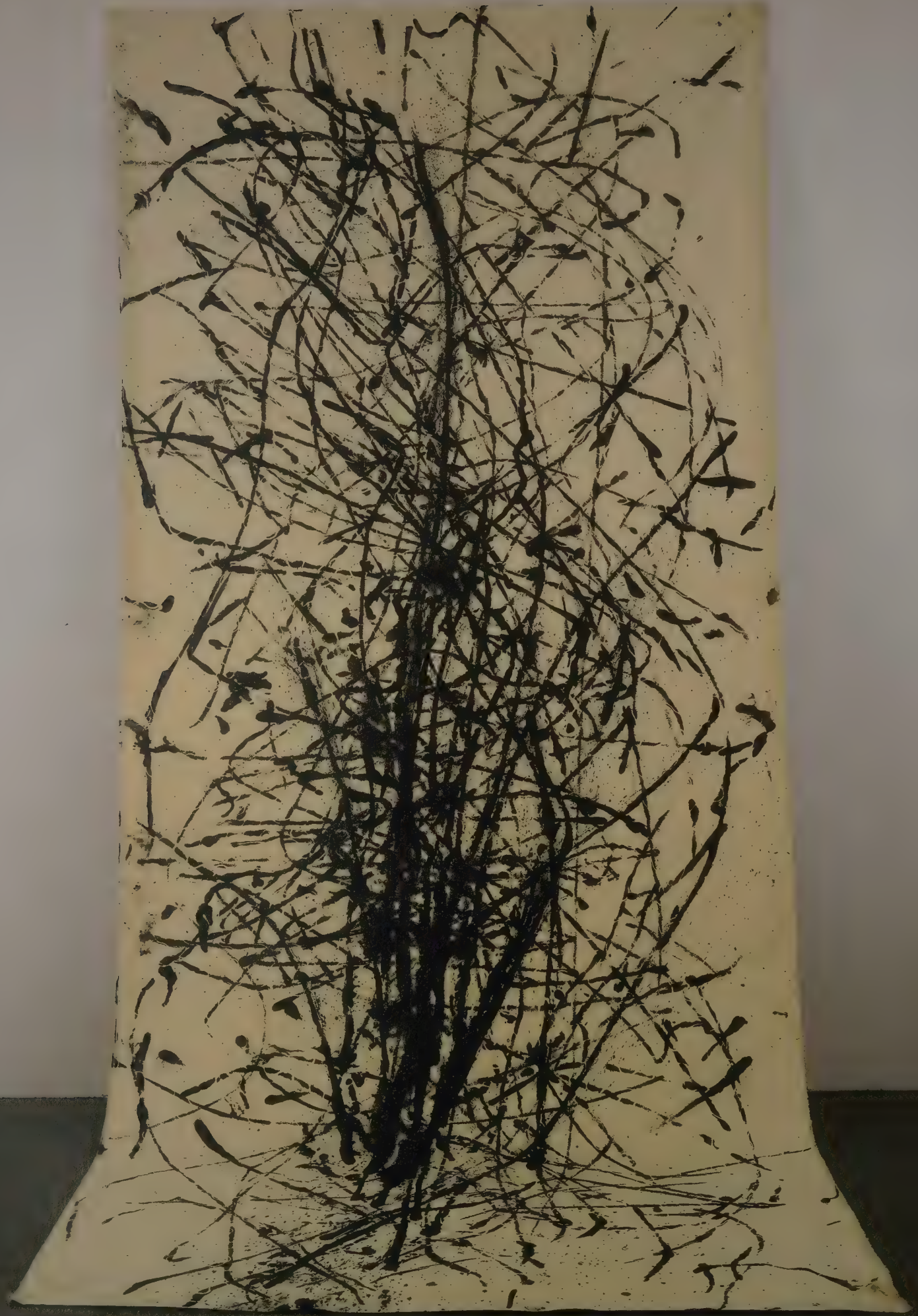
The presence of multiple marks of time on the world around us, so evident and complex, represent a revelation that Gabriel wishes to grasp and convert into a referent for plastic language, one in which matter is the vehicle for an idea and not an end in itself. Objects that pick up dust and garbage, others that become transformed and rot.

In his creative process, the significance of the table—a surface upon which one places important objects such as food—is emphasised. It appears that Gabriel formulates his table pieces as if they were ritual altars. A process that can take years to reunite, he himself calls these objects placed on table tops “relics,” and his assimilation of the process is reflected in the sentiment he experienced while working on the cranium *Papalotes negros* (Black Kites). He created this piece slowly due to the importance that resulted when drawing the eyes on the skull, one which especially intrigued him. Along with a rigorous intellectual focus, there also exists something ceremonial, a suggestive Mexicanness that is revealed in a number of his works.

Considering himself a Mexican artist is not an essential theme for Gabriel, and although he does not deny his origin, he manages to find a way of making his apparent indifference notorious. I believe this is an important aspect in the artist's creative life, clearly implicit in his development. He relies on a vision and universal experience, and this, combined with intelligence and astuteness, allows him to confront current history without betraying his original spirit.

In such a way, his roots, inevitably Mexican, grow and extend. However, he says: “What seems interesting to me today is how the artist acts in the world, how he lives and what political postures he takes.”² A statement that does not contradict his identity.





Within the framework of our dialogue of complicities, *La Serpiente* (The Snake) realized for the International Cervantine Festival (1991), as well as the cranium *Papaolotes negros* (Black Kites) (1997), *Carta Blanca* (1999) and *Mis manos son mi corazón* (My Hands Are My Heart) (1991) are but a few of the expressions inspired by an identity assumed and connected with the originary, the primitive and, thus, with ritual.

The artist shares a close connection with nature—and with objects inhabited with a cultural, political and social charge—via human intervention. Day after day, Gabriel deals with the imprint of the quotidian, in which he discovers his surroundings and transforms them. Encounters within his world result in the creation of work charged with memory, one that includes bones and ashes, scattered in cemeteries that appear to seize the originary substance.

The artist's immense curiosity for continually confronting a great variety of subjects that draw his attention, lead him to work with distinct materials in a very natural way, as well as to take liberal steps in realizing sculptures, paintings, photography and video, all forming part of a pathway, a passage that becomes a bridge to reality. He is not interested in following one line of thought alone, nor one technique. He jumps from one thing to the other with a great versatility, but also with a rigor that characterizes his plastic proposal.

His constant questioning of parameters through his intellectual heritage, infinite curiosity, talent and attitude toward art have led him to produce a surprising body of work that, on this occasion, will enter into dialogue with the public in an emblematic space such as the Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes.

The idea of presenting an exhibition by Gabriel in this venue is not recent; it is, rather, a project that has been forged over a number of years, that has taken shape over time and with sharp complicity. An on-going dialogue of conspiracies between friends and professionals.

Gabriel Orozco in the Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes is much more than an occurrence consistent with a life story; rather, it is the great possibility of ending a cycle with an indisputable exhibition of contemporary art that represents, without a doubt, an important event in the artistic and cultural life of our country.

I am pleased to participate in this event and I wish to welcome Gabriel with the certainty that this show, which palpitates throughout the museum, represents a conclusive resumé of a young creator's career, one whose proposal has captured international recognition.

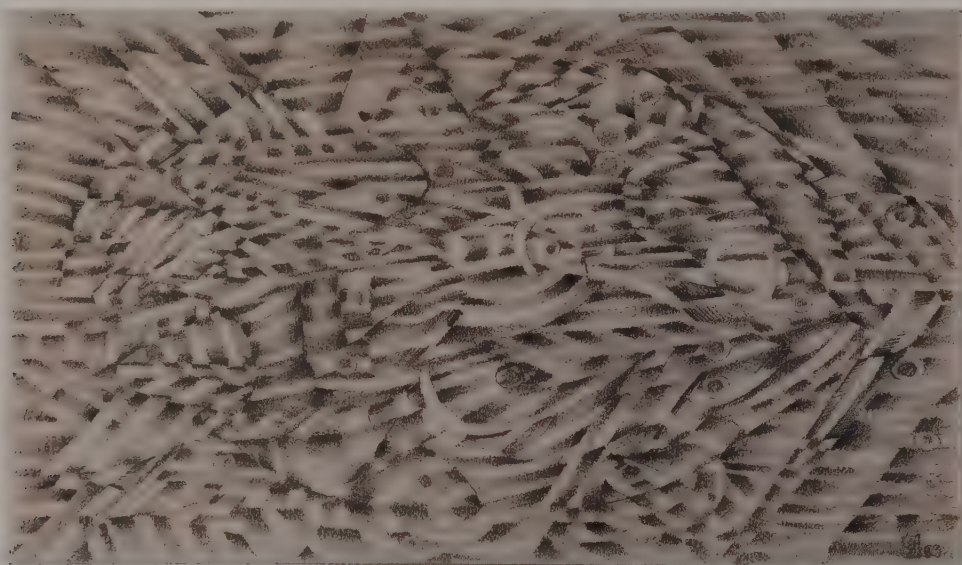
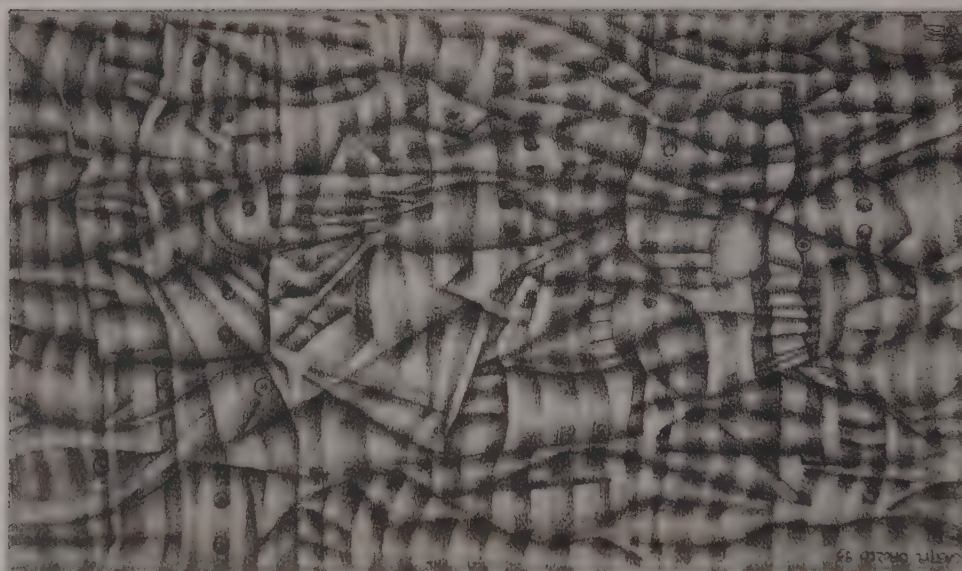
A travelling artist who passes through the world, he collects time, silence and emptiness only to translate them into the origins of an enlightening process.

Mercedes Iturbe,

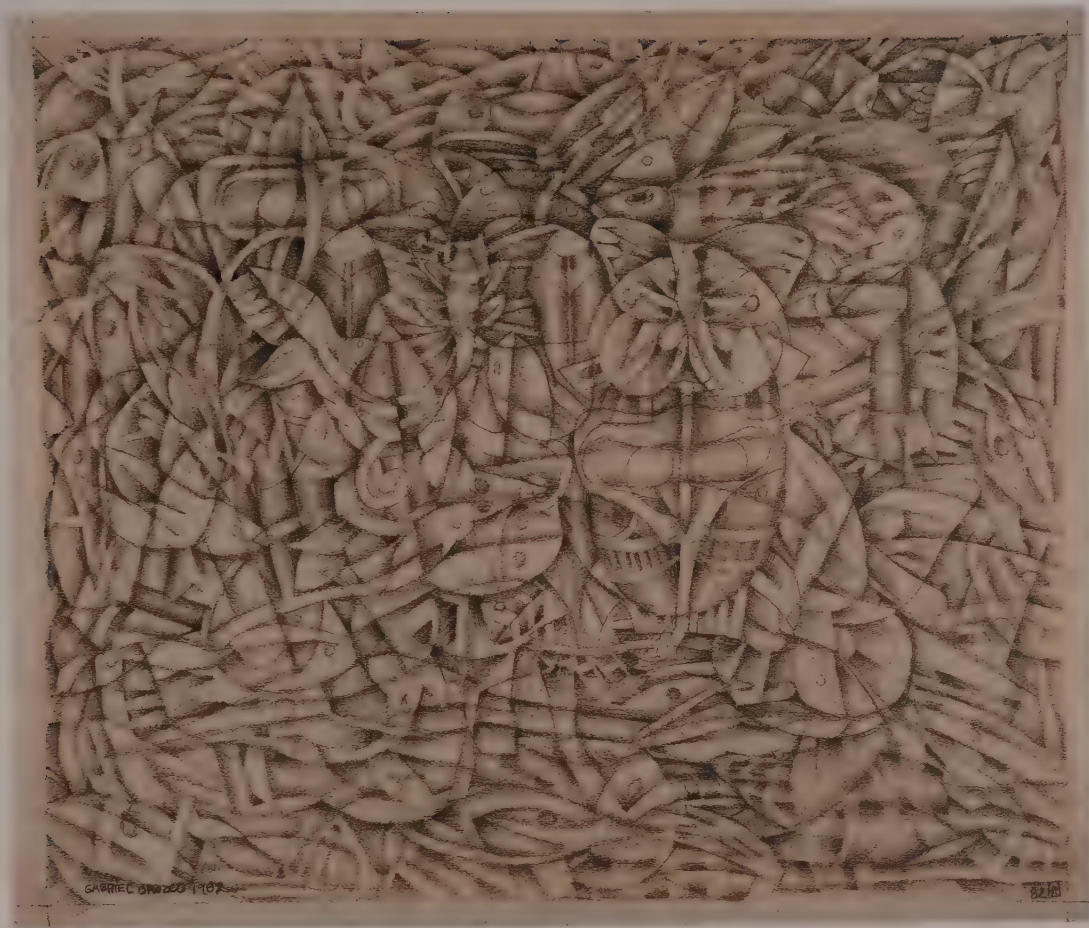
Director of the Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, August 2006

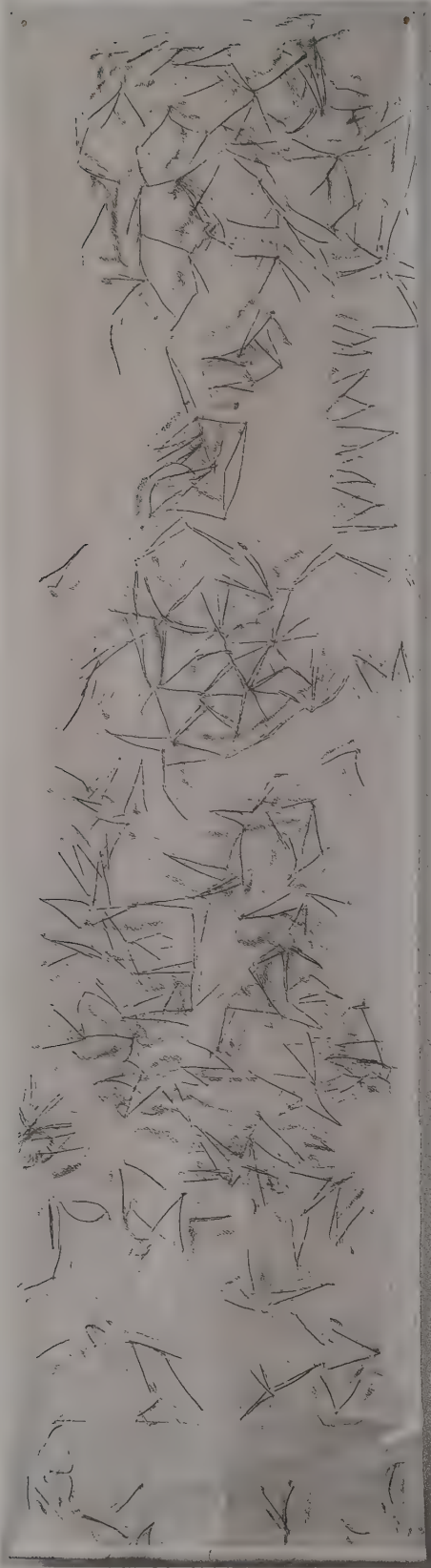
1. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Entrevista a Gabriel Orozco en Nueva York," in *Textos sobre la obra de Gabriel Orozco* (Madrid: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes/Turner, 2005), p. 95.

2. Ibid., p. 104.



Studies for *Organic Composition*, 1983
Pencil on paper, 10 x 17 cm each





Empty Spaces

Revising an artist's trajectory implies identifying the elements that comprise his or her work, for instance technique, theme and language. In order to refresh our reading of work that might already be codified by individuals from the artistic scene, it is necessary to analyse its components, and it is advantageous to direct the gaze toward those parts that might remain hidden. Gabriel Orozco (Veracruz, 1962) is a creator who finds himself at the peak of his career, at the height of a process that has taken him to inexorably new horizons. Thus, all prejudices aside, it is an ideal time to take a moment and observe the direction in which this Mexican author is headed.

Two principal conceptions of *space* stand out within the scientific paradigm of contemporary physics. The first sustains that space is an entity existing *per se*, which means that it has an ontological reality independent of matter. The second conception argues that space is relational, that it is a field emerging as a result of matter and its parts, whose realization happens in the surrounding area, in the movement or weight of its fragments. Gabriel Orozco is located in and produces his work from this latter zone: from within a finite world with laws, from within the surrounding area filled with "things" that revolve and stop. His pieces are products of reflecting upon these spaces, but at the same time they are operations in which the constituent parts of his universe are related.

In his life and artwork, Orozco cleans and saturates, subtracts and adds. He generates emptiness in order to fill it, to associate elements and charge them with strength. Forms, tensions and semantic connections emerge from this elemental gesture. It is the keen eye of an observer who watches, learns and speculates on the possibilities of his surroundings. With common materials and in their own context, this artist connects with the world, assuming the responsibility and implications of his acts.

Gabriel Orozco divides his production in two fundamental groups: the logical ordering of space and the entropic disorganisation suffered by a system of parts. Like the Greek philosophers Heraclites and Parmenides, Orozco develops distinct perspectives that regulate things and grant them reality. He does this to study the consequences of immobility and change, to see the possibilities of reason and to admire nature's course. As in the sixth and seventh centuries before Christ, when Heraclites' and Parmenides' disciples argued over the necessity of recognising natural flow, as well as the pertinence of granting a special place to the systemization of thought, the artist operated within this duality, on the margin between the drive of nature and the demands of the mind. For Heraclites, everything moved, flowed, changed and was modified without exception. The future to which everything is

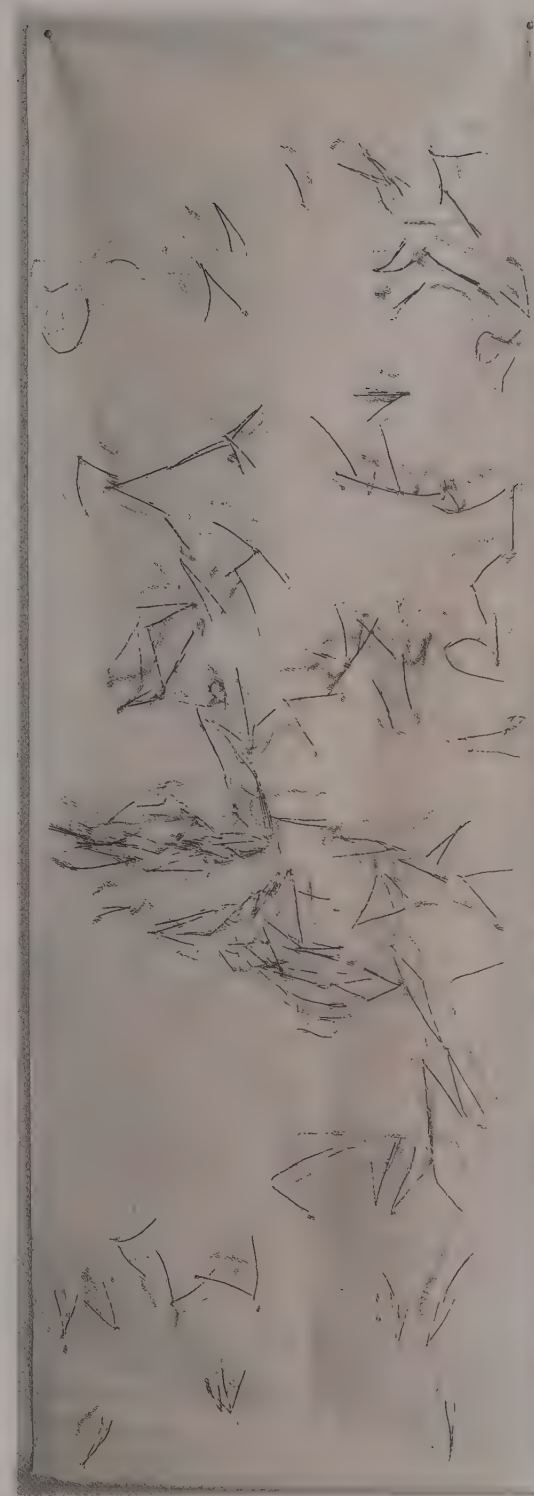
obliged, is characterized by a continuous passing from one contrary to the other. For Parmenides, absolute truth expressed *Being* and as such, it could not be corruptible, for if it were, it would proceed from *non-Being*. As such, change is not feasible because it implies a *future*: an irrational phenomenon. We have, then, the two positions: Heraclites postulating rotund evidence revealed to us through sensibility, and Parmenides defending the evidence to which we, rational beings, are obliged—that is, the rigor of logical science and abstract argumentation.

Taking the celestial heavens as Orozco's primary inspiration, entropy and geometry enter into dialogue with this universal system, in that both the former and the latter, in their own way, are metaphors for the reality we live in. Organization and disorder are produced within a totality of variables, all within a grouping of specific parts. To clarify this dynamic, the following examples are useful: the subject of entropy appears in pieces like *Piedra que cede* (Yielding Stone) in which the sculptural object accomplishes its mission only when changes result—that is to say, if external forms are incorporated in its structure, only later to be lost so new ones can be adjoined. Contrarily, order and geometric rationality are revealed in creations like the series of paintings entitled *Árbol samurai* (Samurai Tree), in which we appreciate a perfect intersection between circles, horizontal and vertical lines and a palette of limited colors. The complex composition of these paintings implies an ordered and stable construction.

In Mexico, Orozco occupies an emptiness that is now filled with his work and activism, with creations and pronouncements. With this, he rearticulates a system of dialectical and complex operations. Due to his projection and force, his work and career constitute a success in the recent history of Mexican art. The exoticized vision Mexico was subjected to for centuries deafened the dialogue with Europe, and between the Hispano Americans and the United States. As such, it became necessary to change the rules and play in a larger arena, in a more inclusive and tolerant ring. Orozco contributed to realizing this transformation and to initiating the construction of an ample social platform, to creating channels of communication that would open up a global dialogue. This allowed for the free circulation of artistic production of generations that followed. For this reason, Orozco is a committed precursor to the Mexican artistic scene, one who modified the mechanisms of cultural distribution, who changed the parameters for thinking, producing and selling art.

In this exhibition, as well as in this book, we are submerged in Orozco's creative operations, whose foundations reflect his artistic scheme. As such, we experience his work in a material and symbolic sense, in its technical and poetic dimension and in its political and aesthetic mission. The artist impregnates his pieces with rigor and mobility: he fills emptiness and creates a space.

Patrick Charpenel, *Exhibition Curator*, August 2006



Acicula IV, 2005
Graphite on Japanese paper, 200 x 69 cm



Indian Tree, 2006
Tempera and gold leaf on wood, 51 x 51 cm







Whale's Skull, 2006
Fuji crystal print, 50.8 x 40.6 cm





House and Rain, 1998
Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm





Total Perception, 2002
Fuji crystal print, 40.6 x 50.8 cm





Common Dream, 1996
Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm





Philips Lights, 1997
Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm













Cutting Rings, 2006
Fuji crystal print, 40.6 x 50.8 cm





Spider on Ancient Plate, 2005
Fuji crystal print, 40.6 x 50.8 cm















Gabriel Orozco

Interviewed by Briony Fer

Crazy about Saturn

Briony Fer: Gabriel, I would like to ask you first to say something about the position or space you wanted to occupy as an artist at the beginning of the 1990s. How would you describe your position at that time?

Gabriel Orozco: When I started to do my work in the early 1990s, my proposition was to deal with production and distribution and perception in a different way. I did not like mainstream 80s art, and I didn't believe in market movements and how they were producing and distributing work. I was skeptical of the 80s. I think it was a generational thing. I thought it was naive the way the media and popular culture were used. I wanted to use the infrastructure, the museums and galleries, in a different way and also to behave as an artist in a different way. I did not want to have a studio. I didn't want to have a big production machine. I wanted to deal with real life, with common things. Some of the results were surprising to people, from yogurt caps, or a shoe box, to oranges at MoMA, to the *Yielding Stone*. Imagine them next to more spectacular art and then you can see the position I wanted to take.

BF: And how did this position relate to your own previous work? By this time you had already abandoned painting. Yet you studied as a painter, you started out as a painter. And you have in the last few years taken up painting again, which we shall talk about later. You painted up to the point you left to spend a year in Madrid in 1985, and you even did some on your return to Mexico.

GO: I think I really stopped painting in Madrid. I did not like the kind of painting around in the 80s, the big formats, the German school of neo-expressionistic painting, which was very influential in Mexico. In a way I was not so much against painting, but against that kind of noisy, sentimental painting. We also had a neo-Mexican tradition in painting that was kitsch and empty.

BF: Even though when you returned to Mexico you carried on making paintings for a while, as well as making actions and interventions out on the street?

GO: I was taking fragments from Russian icons. I loved those paintings. I also like the objects, the thick wood, the abstract shapes, the gold. It is painting but with a readymade, conceptual approach. I didn't feel I was a painter. I was analyzing a painting, like a fragmented readymade and then presenting it. I did a show in Mexico of that work in 1989. Then I started to travel, and use photography more and more.

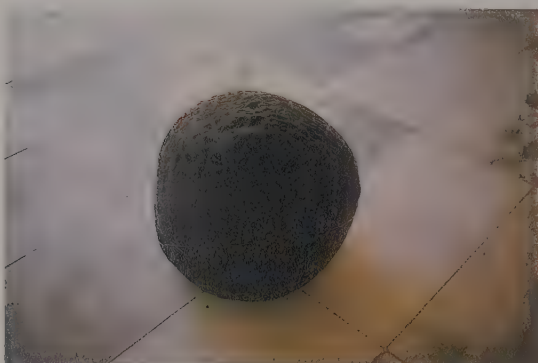
BF: When, then, did you begin to use photography?

GO: When I was in Madrid I didn't have a camera. The first time I used a camera I borrowed one from friends. It was when there was the earthquake in Mexico in 1985. Many of my friends were going out taking photographs. I



Home Run, 1993
Installation views of oranges set on office windowsills
across from the Museum of Modern Art, New York





Installation view of *Hammock between Two Skyscrapers*, *Lost Line*, *Dial Tone*, *Recaptured Nature* in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1993

took some photos of the earthquake and the ruins, many details. But I didn't like photography that much then.

BF: So when did a camera become a useful tool for you?

GO: When I lived in Brazil for four months in 1991. That was when I did *Turista Maluca* (Crazy Tourist), with the oranges in the market. I was working outside on the street much more consciously and systematically then. I started to use photography at that time, about 1989, when small automatic cameras came onto the market. Before that the cameras were too big. The portability of the camera was very important to me.

BF: You have spoken before about your exposure to Arte Povera when you were in Madrid, as well as to the more recent work of British sculptors like Tony Cragg. You could see these as sculptural alternatives to a minimalist aesthetic that has clearly never interested you. You have also spoken about the importance of John Cage to you—a vitally important figure to you still, I think, especially his ideas of chance. But you have not spoken so much about what you were exposed to in Brazil.

GO: I was following my girlfriend, that's why I went down to Brazil. But when I was there I was struck first by the physicality of the whole urban and natural landscape. My perception of my surroundings became much more sculptural than visual (even though I tend to be very visually orientated as a person). It was then that I got very interested in Brazilian art of the 1950s, like Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark. Before that I didn't know them. And I also got to know the work of contemporary Brazilian artists like Tunga and Cildo Meireles. I found I was in tune with other artists even though I was doing rather different things. I was not so close to Mexican artists then, even earlier conceptual artists. I was interested in sculpture, and in Mexico we haven't had a very strong tradition in sculpture since colonial times. Of course we have fantastic sculpture from the pre-Hispanic period, but less so after that.

BF: Did you see Lygia Clark's work in terms of sculpture, or action, or event?

GO: I was interested in the sculptural aspect of the objects she made, even in the most action-oriented work. What I wanted to see was the final object, and what intrigued me was their physicality.

BF: Can you say something about your relation to the material of sculpture? Perhaps you could begin by talking about the *Yielding Stone*, the work you made in New York in 1992.

GO: I was working in plasticine on something else. Trying to make a shape out of plasticine, I always ended up with a dirty ball. I went to the roof of my apartment and rolled it on the roof to try to get the imprints. In New York, you





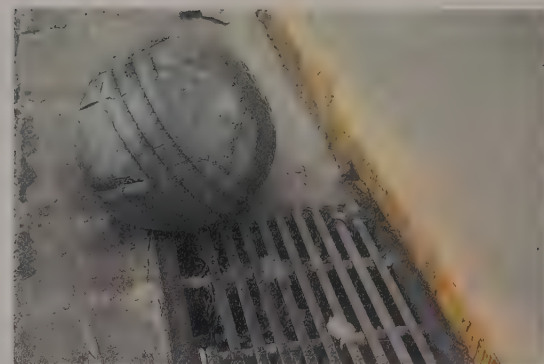
Yielding Stone, 1992
Plasticine, 36.8 x 39.4 x 40.6 cm

have this black material. When you rolled the plasticine in it, it got really dirty. I had to accept the vulnerability of the material in terms of shape and dirtiness. Plasticine never hardens. It's always changing, always dirty, absorbing all the dust and the imprints. Then I did it bigger, and made it my own weight. That was the limit I placed on it, my own weight, my body rolling this other weight. I didn't want to make any kind of performance out of it, only some photographs. BF: How would you describe the status of the photographs?

GO: This is an important parenthesis. I distrust the documentation of the 1970s, where the documentation was what ended up in the museum. Amazing things that were happening outside the museum ended up as relics afterward. I didn't like the way documentation came to look like the leftovers of a party. I try not to show documentation in that way. Not as an archive. I think the experience has to be a real one, interacting with a phenomenon not a representation of one. It has to be something concrete and three-dimensional. When I cycle through puddles on my bicycle, I am alone. When I place my breath on a piano, I am alone. I do not have an audience. The photo is a witness of this intimacy. It is very important that I don't carry a lot of things with me, that I am empty handed. So I work in these actions with the materials that I find. I find the oranges on the floor. I find a puddle. This is an important difference for the status of the photograph in my work from that of Conceptual artists in the 1970s. The status of the photograph hasn't got to do with scale or the size. The point is more about making something present, which, inevitably, can only be seen through the photograph. That status of inevitability justifies it.

BF: Perhaps your work points to a contradiction that was always there in Conceptual photography from the outset, but repressed. That is to say, you activate the space between the action and object and the photograph. In your work, it is hard to separate them out at a conceptual level, even though they exist in different media. For you, there seems to be no such thing as a single object. It's always already multiple. One event proliferates in time as well as different spatial contexts. Mobility triggers more mobility.

GO: That's the key of my intentions. I always say that the work doesn't end in the museum but keeps going. The problem with the document as a kind of evidence is that it is an end. It is somebody else's leftovers, which creates a kind of intellectual passivity. When you have an object like the *Yielding Stone* it is still "breeding" and "living" that substance. It is something like an animal with an organic presence. My photography, of course, is a document, but it isn't meant to end there, the event is still happening. You forget the





Breath on Piano, 1993
Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm





Cats and Watermelons, 1992
Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm

photograph, but see the phenomena, the puddle or the breath. The photograph is like the shoe box. It is a recipient. That is an important idea for me. It is a recipient for the spectator. The status of the document is secondary; the phenomenon is primary.

BF: How does that idea affect the way you have shown your work?

GO: The way I showed *Until You Find Another Yellow Schwalbe* (1995), which consisted of 40 photos, allowed you to walk along it, like putting a movie frame by frame in a room. It is always the same photo (of a yellow Schwalbe scooter) but at the same time it is not the same. It is not the same street. You can see the differences. Some are inverted and printed so they all point from left to right. There is a straight line so the spectator has to move, in order to activate the photographs. Of course, that doesn't replicate my movements, which were more like a labyrinth and took place over a period of three months. With my yellow Schwalbe, I would find another yellow Schwalbe and park next to it. I also like to see the work as a vehicle, and not only a recipient. A car is a vehicle, an elevator is a vehicle, the yielding stone is a vehicle. Photography is a vehicle in a way, a way of transporting an event from one place to another.

BF: In 1993 you were involved in a show in Kortrijk in Belgium curated by Catherine de Zegher. Can you say something about your working process for that exhibition? Did you make the work there or did you also use work that you had already made here in Mexico?

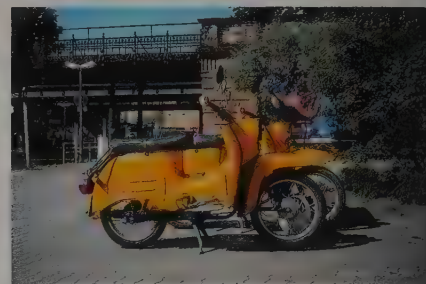
GO: It was a mixture. That was my first solo show outside Mexico. I took some works, some photographs from actions in New York, like the piece I made with watermelons in the supermarket from 1992, *Cats and Watermelon*. And I also did something different. In general I work with a combination of the two, and since then I have always done the same thing: I bring some works, I reproduce some works. I like to displace old works and see them again in a new context. I tend to combine all these different systems.

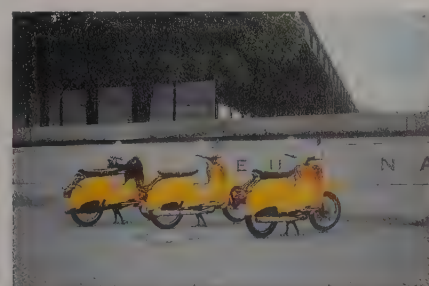
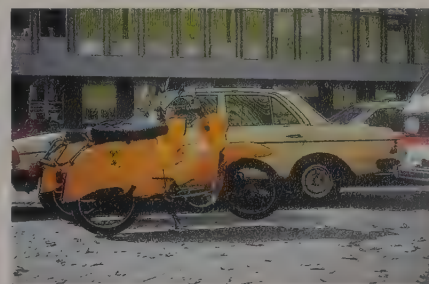
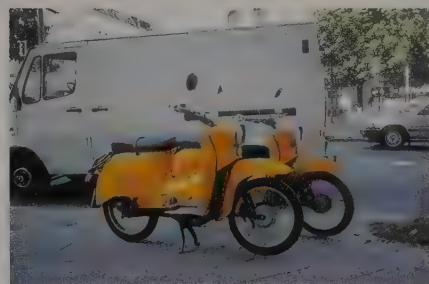
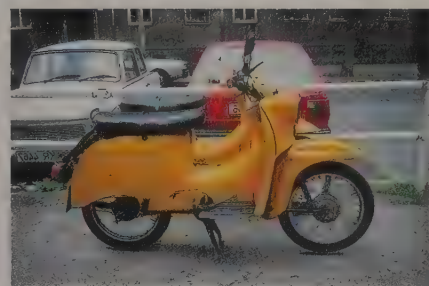
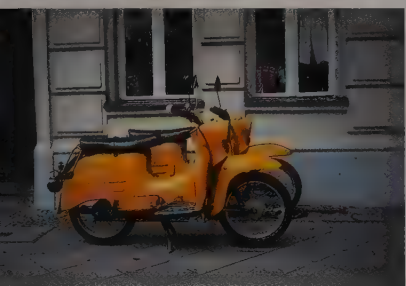
BF: Do you see making exhibitions as part of how you make your work?

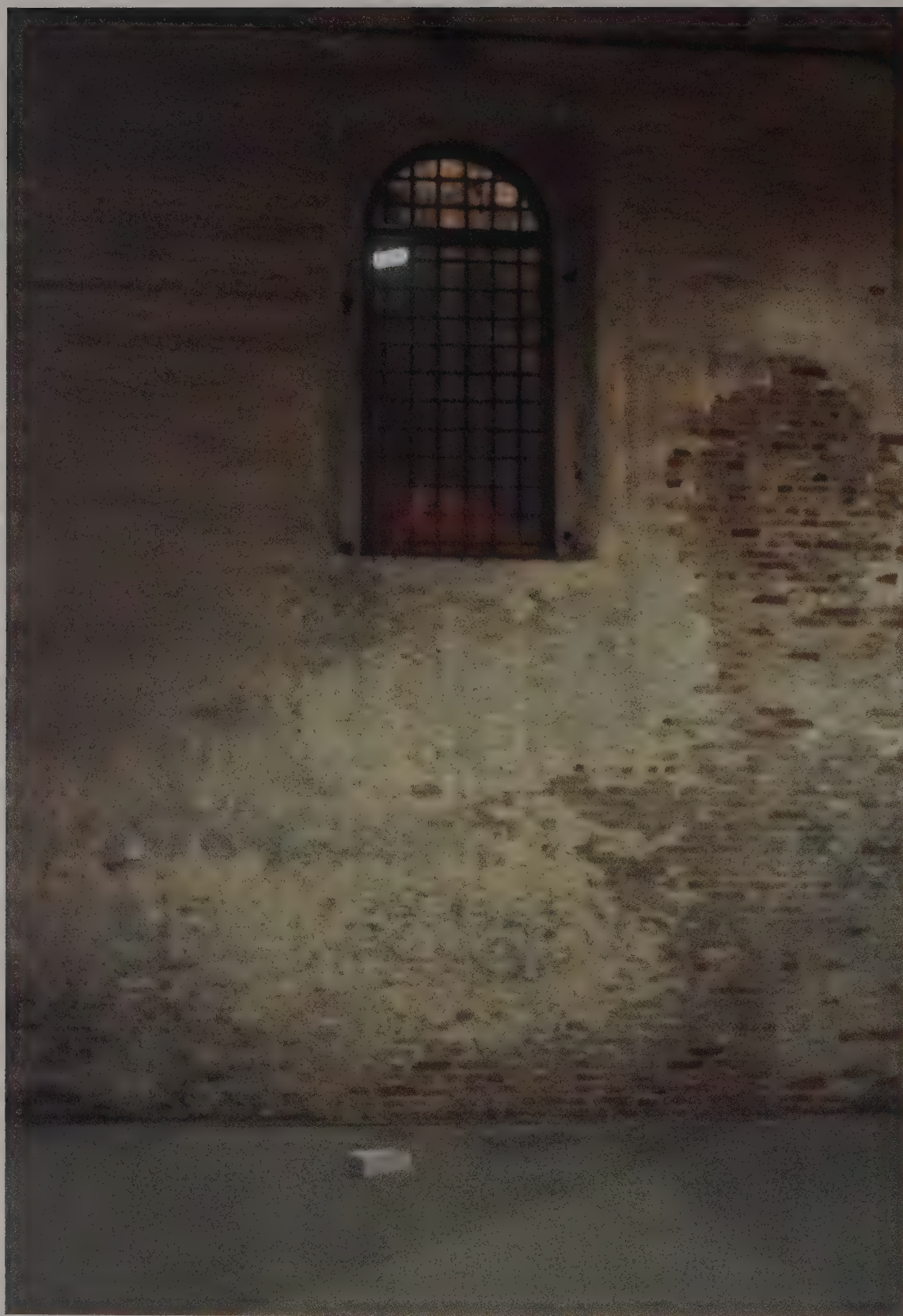
GO: It is true that most of the time, in the 1990s, the place of the exhibition was important for me. It was important to consider the specificity and duration of the work. Again, you can compare the 1970s, when a work was just for that space: what was called site-specificity. It was called *in situ* art. It couldn't travel. Yes, I want to make a work for a specific place but also for it to transcend that place and travel. Some travel better than others. The shoe box that I showed in the "Aperto" section of the Venice Biennale in 1993 has gone to many other places. And it maintains an awkwardness when it is shown



With his sister, Alejandra, in Parque México, Mexico City, 1968







Empty Shoe Box, 1993
Installation view at Aperto '93, 45th Venice Biennale

again. The yogurt caps from the Marian Goodman Gallery show in New York in 1994 are more difficult to reactivate when they travel. *The Atomists*, which were originally shown in 1996 in a gentleman's club in London, behave very differently out of the English context, making connections with a history of art rather than just British sport. It starts from a specific situation and then it starts to travel. It is important that the work gets out into the world and gets exposed to the erosion of different places. Specificity becomes a temporal development. That is true of all my work. It comes from a center, a cultural center. That doesn't mean a powerful cultural center. Every culture is a center and every culture is very local in many ways. And then it goes out into the world, and starts to travel.

BF: You lay great stress on this idea of beginning at a center in all your work. How does the idea of a center function in your work?

GO: The beginning is the center. When we think of a beginning we often think of a straight line—you start from a point and you go somewhere. But if you think of a center it can go and grow in multiple directions. When I say I always start in the center or nucleus, with the minimal unity, it is of course metaphorical. What is the center in a shoe box? An empty space, surrounded by a cardboard empty skin, emptiness around an inside. And then in between the yogurt caps the center is the body of the spectator. I removed the center of the Citroën DS. The paintings start from the center, grow from the center, and grow to cover the whole surface. When I first made the spitting drawings (which I made while I was in Kortrijk but did not show them), I was working out from the center. I found that adding elements took something away, obliterated something. This was a way of approaching a piece of paper that is also to destroy the center. It is the opposite of a vanishing point that holds the center. It was a radically different way of thinking about the center.

BF: When did this preoccupation with circles, balls, centers crystallize for you?

GO: I have been fascinated since childhood with the idea of the planets. I was crazy about Saturn because you have the unity of the ball of the planet but also the rings moving around it. So I was fascinated by this idea of permanent movement *and* unity in a spherical body. Second, the tendency I have always had to completely cover over a surface—right from my earliest drawing and painting—was a way of generating a totality, a texture, a unity. It was as if you could put the left and right sides of the paper together and make a cylinder or something, as if the flat surface of paper could become a potential sphere. The third is very simplistic: I loved football and since I was a child I was playing every kind of ball game—volleyball, basketball, but especially



Yogurt Caps (detail), 1994
Photo: Tom Power

Empty Shoe Box, 1993
Cardboard box, 15 x 33 x 20 cm



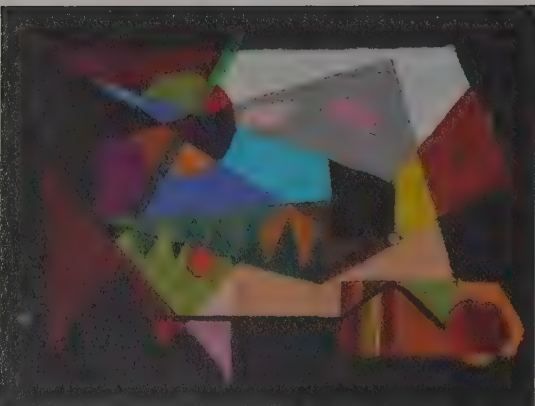












football. I loved the different kinds of ball, the bouncing, the permanent movement.

BF: Well, that brings us to *The Atomists*. This was the work you made for Artangel in 1996 in a London club, in which graphic elements are superimposed over photographs of sportsmen. Are they closer to drawing? How were they made?

GO: No, they are more like collage. The preparation of the work was based on newspaper photographs that I cut out. Then I imprinted a computer-generated drawing on top and colored it with wash by hand. So first it's a ready-made, then a mechanical imprint, then it's hand colored. I reproduced the image on a computer and made it bigger so the grain is enlarged and you can see the little dots as if they suddenly explode. Like an atom, the dot is the minimal unity of the photo. One dot divides into three colors, and the coloring of the graphic elements was taken from that. Then through those graphic elements, you cancel the movement in order to regenerate movement. Of course, there's a connection with some Constructivist collages and sports posters too. It is important that the bodies are life size.

BF: So they correspond with the size of the spectator looking at the work? So the circular motifs not only relate to the movement frozen in the photograph but also to the movement of the spectator in front of it?

GO: Yes, the geometric elements have a strange presence. They exist between image and spectator, relating to both.



Asprilla, the Newcastle United substitute, attempts an overhead kick despite the close attention of Calderwood at St James' Park yesterday. Photograph: Marc Aspland

pp. 66–67: *Yogurt Caps*, 1994
Four yogurt lids, variable dimensions
Installation view of his first solo show in
the Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

pp. 68–69: *La DS*, 1993
Altered Citroën DS, 140.1 x 482.5 x 115.1 cm

pp. 70–71: *La DS* (details), 1993

The Earth, 1975
Pastel on paper, 24 x 33 cm

Atomists: Asprilla, 1996
Impression in 3 parts on digital archive paper, laminated,
200.3 x 290.8 cm



BF: I want to ask you about the work you have called the *Penske Project*, which you did in 1998. It takes a rather different tack from *The Atomists* but it also says something about the way you like to recycle your work and the radical consequences of that recycling.

GO: Well, I rented a truck from the Penske Company and drove around New York. At every trash can and every dumpster I stopped and collected material. And I did the sculpture, the piece, right there, on the spot. The timing of the making was important, not just the collecting. I was not just collecting garbage. The timing was important for me to be making a piece with this material in the street where I found it. Of course, I don't have a studio and it was a way of thinking about a mobile, portable studio. I was alone with maybe sometimes one assistant and a bunch of tools and worked on the project for a month, making collages with objects. I made them on the spot but stored them in the truck, so the truck was for storage. It was a portable vehicle of the work and I just took Polaroids to remember how they were done. I then showed the pieces at the Marian Goodman Gallery. It was a weird show.

BF: Were the black-and-white game boxes also part of that same project?

GO: They were not made in the street and they were not shown in that exhibition. But I took the boxes and thought I could make with them a kind of sculptural drawing. I did them a bit later.

BF: So they were the leftovers from that project.

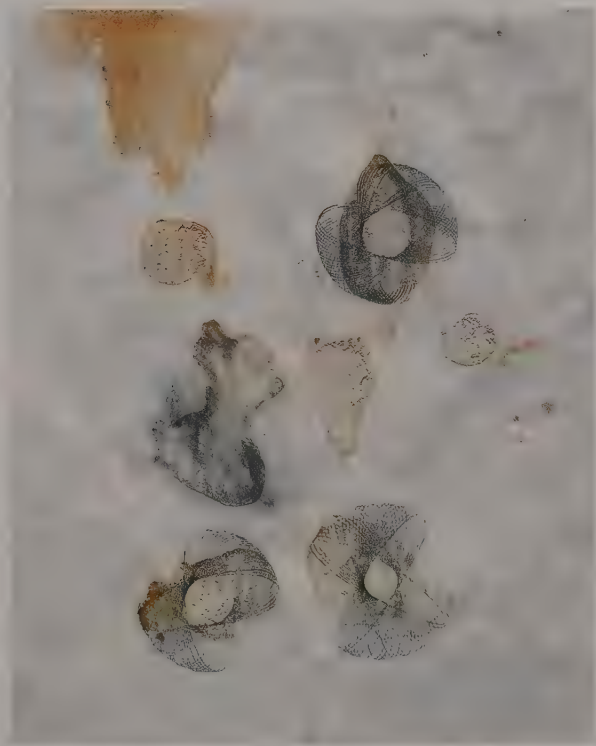
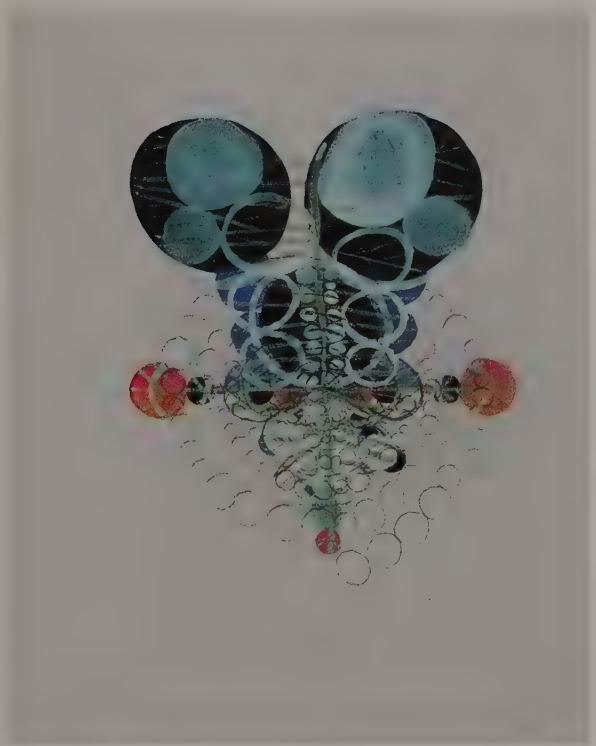
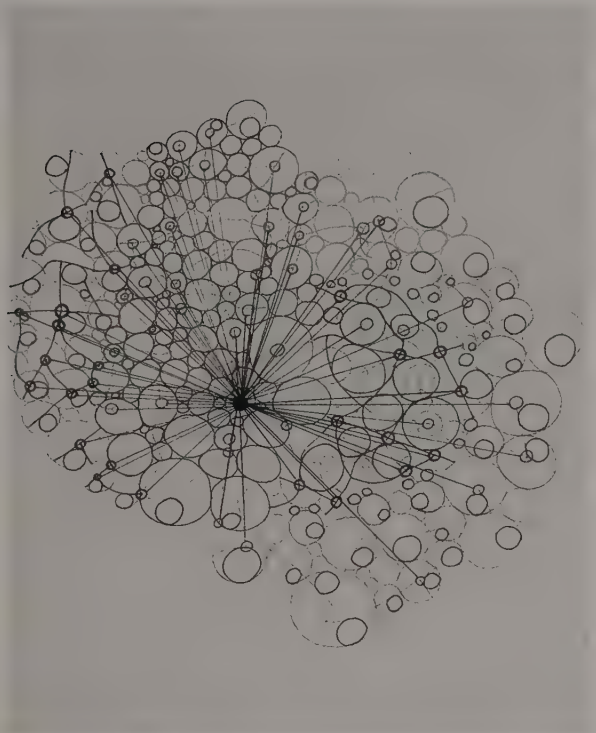


Saturn, 1975
Pastel on paper, 33.5 x 47.5 cm

With his soccer team, Florida neighborhood,
Mexico City, 1983



First Was the Spitting I, II, III and IV, 1993
Ink, graphite and toothpaste spit on graph paper,
41.9 x 32.4 cm each

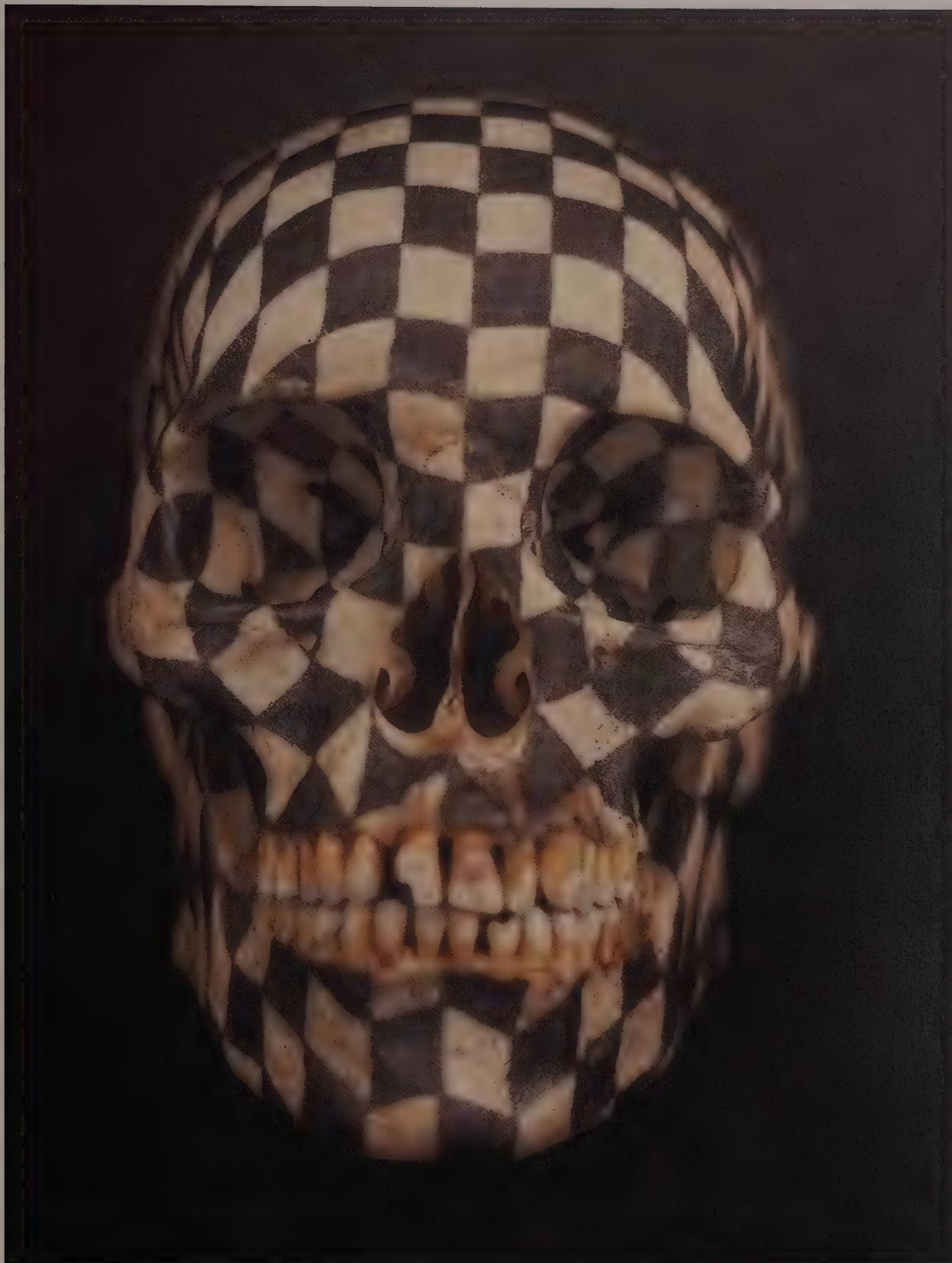


Untitled, 1993
 Triptych, acrylic, graphite, drawings of circles, marker on paper, 26.7 x 20.3 cm

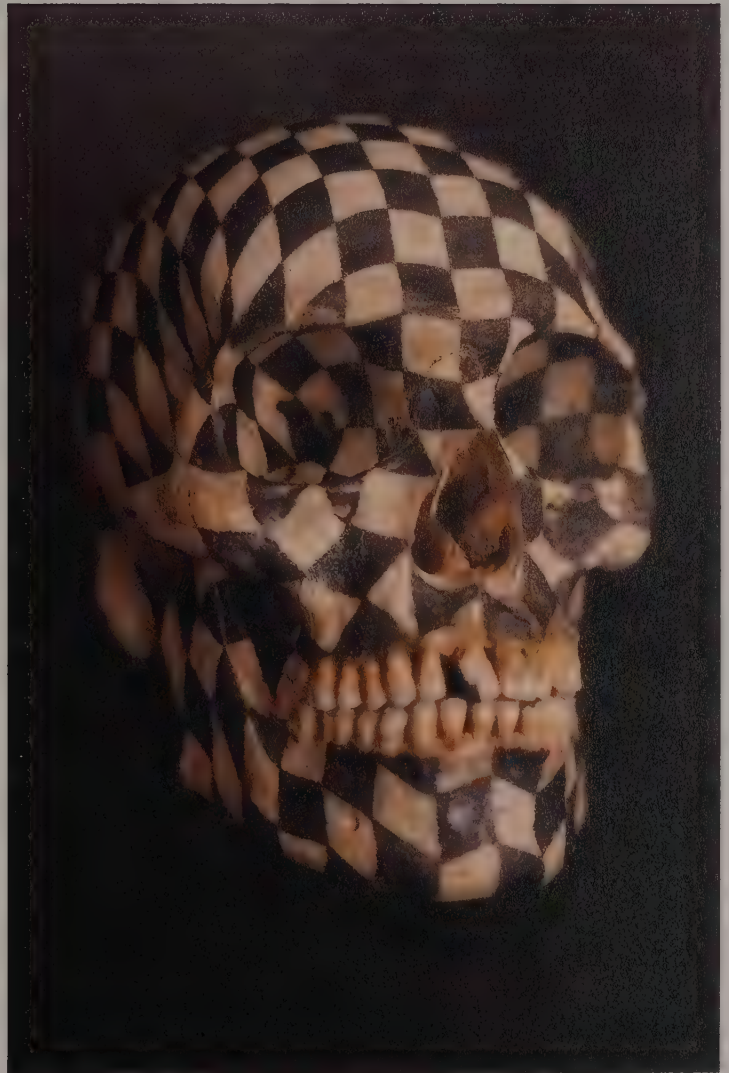
Untitled, 1993
 Ink, graphite and toothpaste spit on paper, 27.9 x 21.6 cm



Untitled, 2001
Acrylic on paper, 20 x 20 cm each









Griffiths, who now needs spectacles, gives a testing shot complete concentration

GO: They were the leftovers of the leftovers. They were boxes for educational films. I found them in the dumpster of a school. I made plasticine balls and inserted them into the holes that were for holding the film in place, pressing it and playing around with the plasticine balls. The stain of the black plasticine is important. So is the dirtiness and the traces of the action in the box.

BF: In what way are they games?

GO: They are not an institutionalized game. But like a game you invent in a specific situation. When I was a kid, I invented games. Those are my favorite games, the ones you make up. You adapt the games you learn to a different field, like playing volleyball between two cars, or the games I made in these boxes. Also you can see *Black Kites* as a game to explore the grid. At one point I thought of calling my paintings gameboards. They are all games I invent with my own rules.

BF: You have often used natural materials. As early as 1991 you used terracotta to make *My Hands Are My Heart*. But you have also used leaves, bone, and organic materials of all sorts. Your titles often point to nature too. Why invoke nature in your work like this?

GO: I have this tendency, which maybe I should avoid, but it is too late now. Many of my titles are nature-oriented: *Samurai Tree...Yielding Stone...Spine...Spume Tail*. I have always been interested in nature. Right from the start in my early drawings, which I did while I was still at art school, fish disappear in mythical confusion in the texture of drawing. If you set nature against architecture, I am always on the side of nature trying to eat architecture, as it does in Mexican ruins. Think of the jungle eating a pyramid. I love abandoned houses, with plants growing through the ruins. I see the tree, or the structure of the tree as a perfect organism, and as an example of sculpture. So too the internal structure of a fruit is very important for my understanding of sculpture. It grows and in the end you have a skin, growing out from the center. Therefore casting and molding don't interest me because they are just a skin around an empty inside, just a fake volume of something. In my ceramics there is a solid inside, or in the pots I am obviously thinking about a real emptiness, not just a fake emptiness.

BF: Nature is problematic for artists now because it comes with so much baggage. But for you it can obviously be separated from the sort of idealism in which it is usually couched. How?

GO: My first take is to say that I don't know what nature is. I don't know what is natural and what is artificial. Those distinctions between the natural and the artificial, the geometric and the organic—these are the extremes that



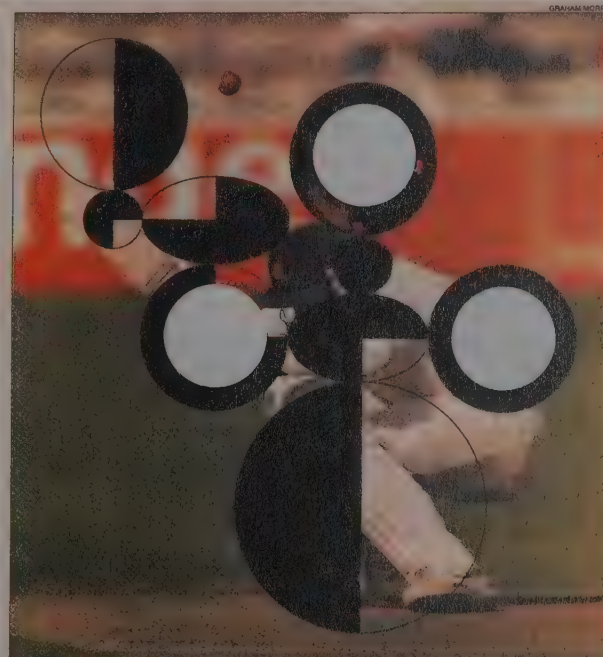
Crews battle to establish an early advantage at the start of the boys junior eights, which was won by Westminster, at Holme Pierrepont



Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on newspaper, 21 x 21 cm



Gallian ducks under a short ball from Giddins, who later dismissed him leg-before, at Chelmsford yesterday



Gallian ducks under a short ball from Giddins, who later dismissed him leg-before, at Chelmsford yesterday

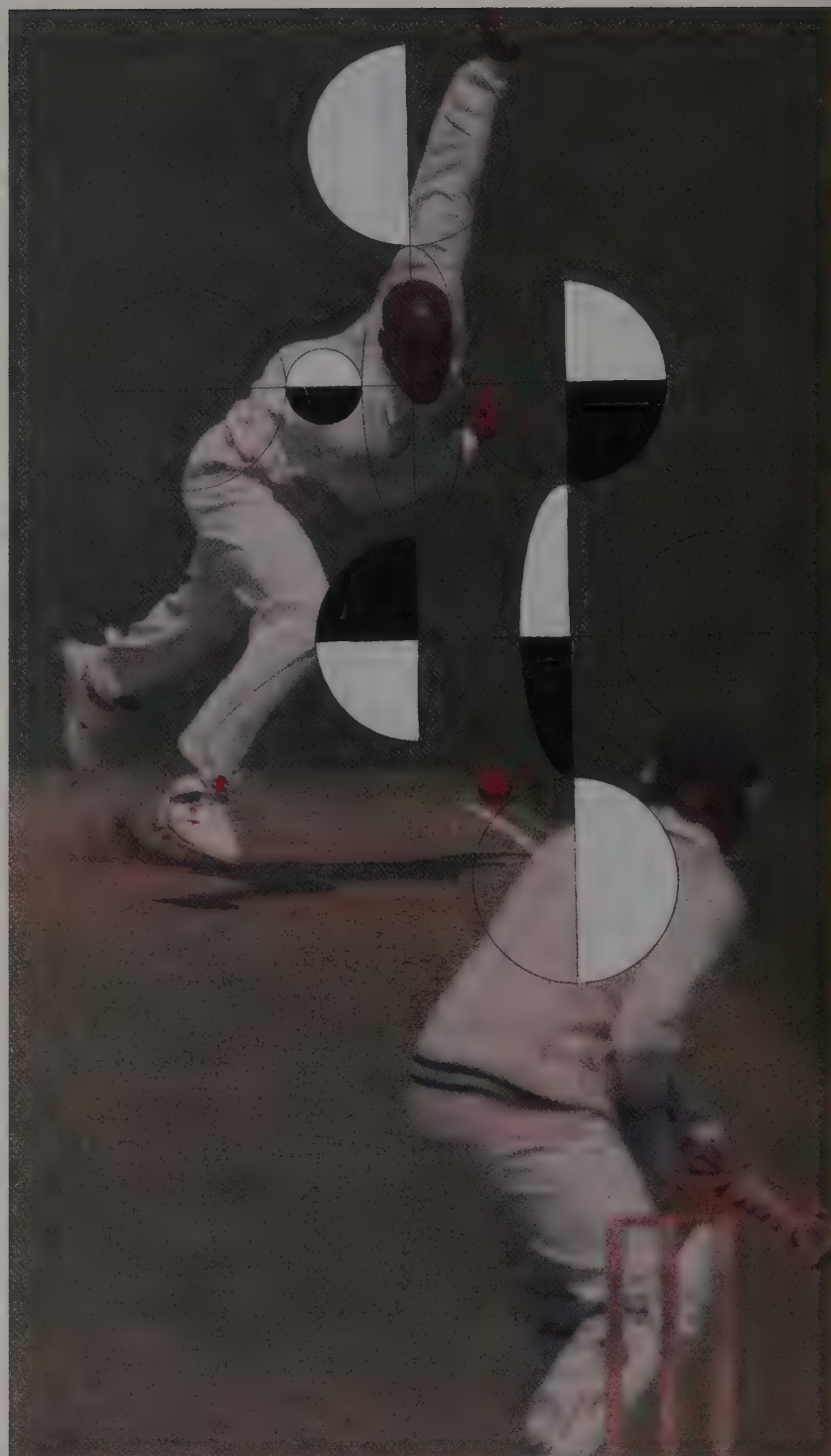
Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on newspaper, 20.4 x 16.3 cm

Atomist, 1996
Ink on Xerox color photocopy, 19.1 x 18.5 cm

Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on Xerox color photocopy,
19.1 x 18.5 cm

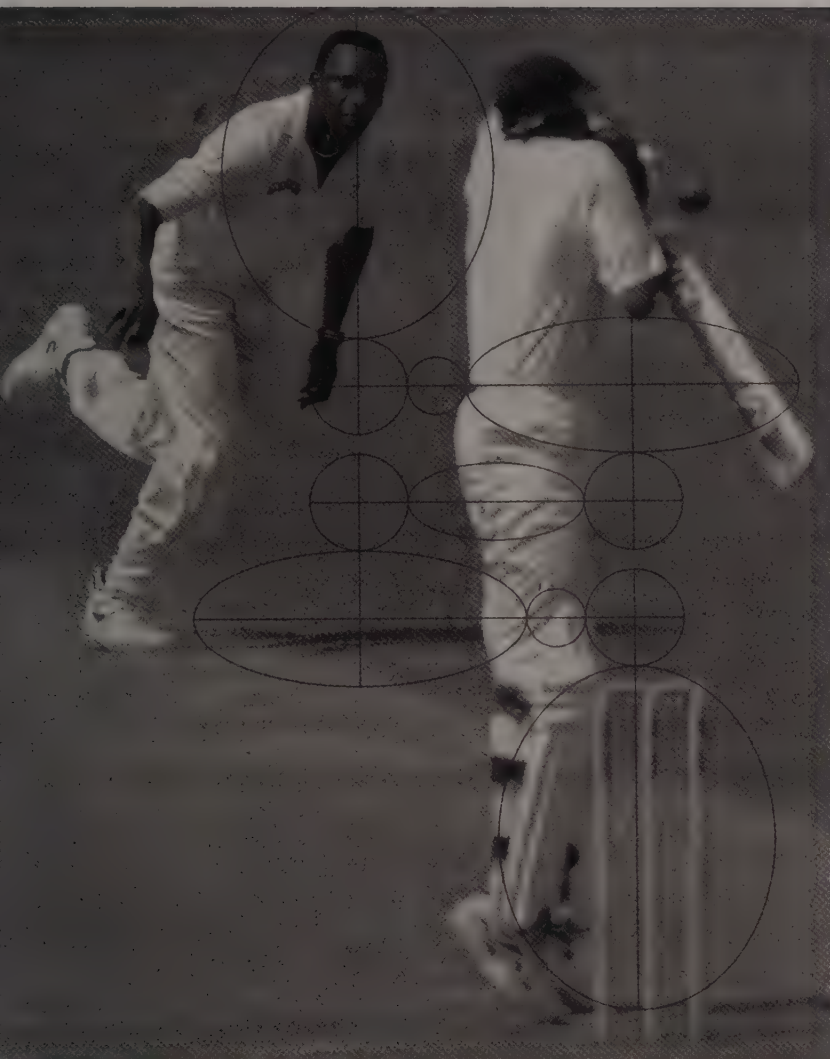


Star turn: Min Patel shows his wiles for Kent during their match against Yorkshire at Canterbury Photograph by ROBERT HALL



Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on Xerox color photocopy, 25.1 x 18.5 cm

Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on newspaper, 30.2 x 18.5 cm



Atomist, 1996
Ink on newspaper, 22 x 18.5 cm

Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on newspaper, 20.4 x 17.2 cm

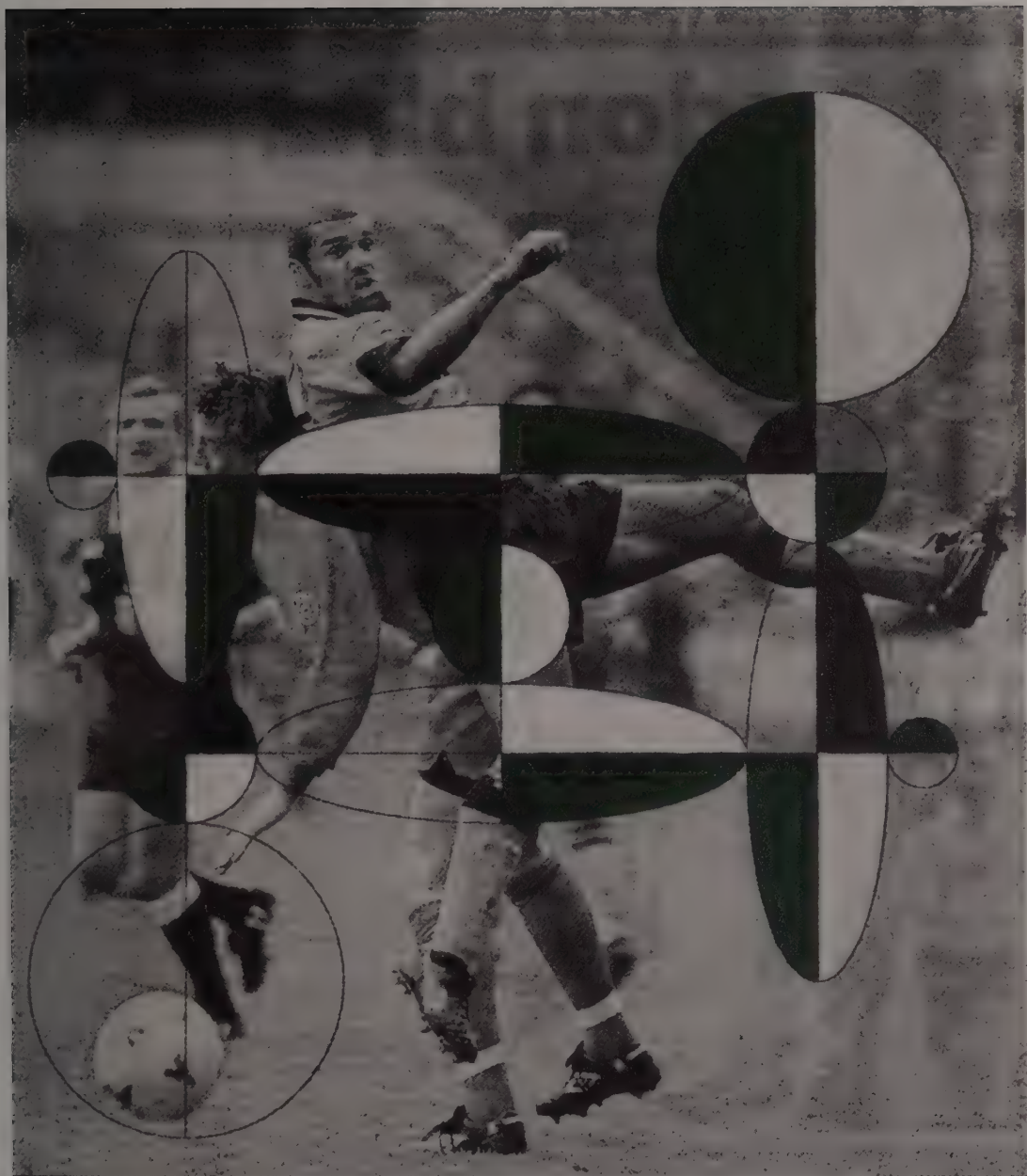


Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on Xerox photocopy, 20.4 x 26.4 cm

Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on newspaper, 20 x 26.1 cm

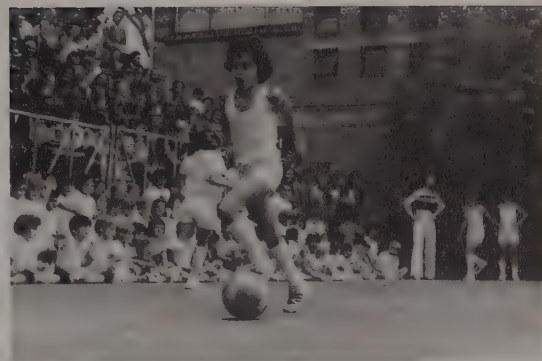
Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on Xerox photocopy, 19.4 x 21.6 cm

Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on Xerox color photocopy, 19.4 x 21.6 cm



...a-dos ... Don Goodman, Wolves' 25th-minute substitute, clambers to reach a header

PHOTOGRAPH: DAN CHUN



Atomist, 1996

Gouache and ink on Xerox photocopy, 20.4 x 17.2 cm

At the gym festival in his primary school, Cipatli,
Mexico City, 1973

Photo: Manolo García





we navigate. You can say that the drawing on *Black Kites* is a kind of technical drawing. You can see it as clinical. You could say that there is something clinical in the way *Moon Tree* inserted disks into each leaf. Something clinical inserted into the natural body. But natural can also be the Citroën DS. I use the car as if it were a fish or a natural body. It is a vehicle, but is also the idea of the seed. The Citroën DS is like a big seed. And so it is not clear what is artificial and what is natural, what is language and what are phenomena. BF What about the cultural symbols these things represent?

GO: Cultural symbols are traps. Yes a skull is Mexican. A Citroën DS is French. Or if you go to the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City you can find lots of circles. The Aztec Calendar is circular. There are many references to ball games in pre-Hispanic culture. But, no, that is not the point. My Citroën DS was a reflection on three-dimensionality, for example, on speed, movement, gravity. When you get inside the car you feel movement. You feel speed. You get compressed by the resistance of the wind. Yes, it is a cultural symbol. The Citroën DS stood for a kind of design utopia, but that was secondary for me.

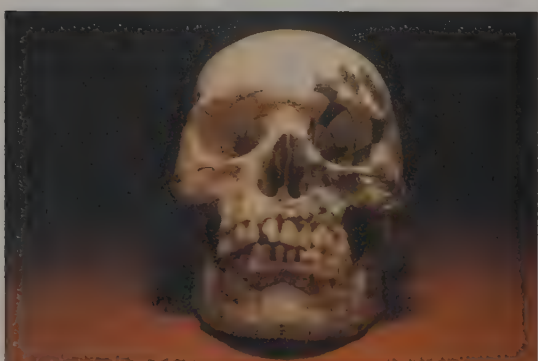
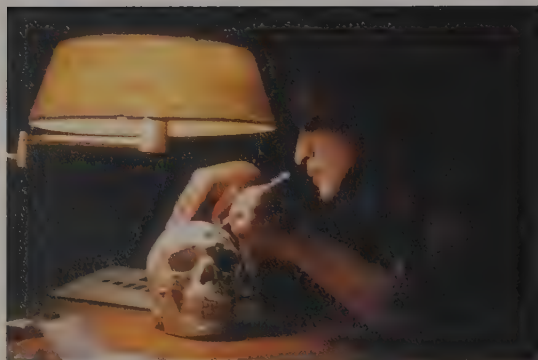
BF: What about the material, working on bone, or shell...is the material structural or symbolic?

GO: I think they are pure materials. With the shells, it's graphite, which is lead on bone. It's very contrasted: shiny on matt. But the bone absorbs the graphite. So does plaster. It has to do with a combination of materials that go well together. There is a tradition of decorating heads or shells in many cultures. I hope it's obvious that when I draw on a shell it is not a kind of decoration or tattoo on the surface, but to do with the structure—with the topography of the object. Sometimes the lines follow accidents or the grain. I am drawing and looking at the same time, following the shape of the body. In *The Path of Thought* (1997), that's why I took the photograph, somehow to see someone following the shape. I think I was drawing and comprehending the object through drawing. The drawing is a documentation of that.

BF: Materials like bone and shell have a particular resilience. They have particular connotations for thinking about time. Skulls have traditionally signified the fragility of human life. How do other natural materials you have used suggest temporality?

GO: When I made the *Mixiotes* in 1999, I made them for the *Market Economy* show here in Mexico City. This was the opening exhibition of the gallery I was involved with—and it took place in a fruit market. They are made from agave leaves with a rubber ball inside each one. They hang like fruits. They





have a structure of a seed or fruit, like the mesh pieces too. *Mixiotes* means a food you prepare with the leaf of a cactus around rabbit meat. I liked the word. And it was a very ephemeral material. I made it thinking it would not last more than a day, almost like a floral arrangement using very vulnerable materials. And then people took them home, and I kept some here in my place, and then I showed them in New York. There is something very physical in the making of small objects that I make with my hands with organic materials and shapes. But I also use very artificial materials in the same way—like the expanded styrofoam in the *Spumes*. In every material there is this possibility.

BF: These are hanging works. And you have always stressed the importance of gravity in your work.

GO: The point of gravity is always important for me. In the *Yielding Stone* you can make a perfect ball, but as soon as you put it on the ground it makes a flat imprint and through weight it starts to yield, pulling down the weight of the plasticine. I think I have a notion of sculpture in all my work—starting from the center, growing from the center. That center is a spine to the body, a centerpoint of gravity, which connects the body with the earth. A painter works with the idea of a vanishing point, with something flat and abstract, something in front of you. A sculptural mentality, on the other hand, is associated with the ground, from the floor upwards. If you think in spherical terms, you have to mix the two, both a vanishing point and a gravity point. That creates movement, too, orbital movement or centrifugal movement, a certain kind of turbulence, which is perhaps also why the sphere or the circle is for me the best way of showing both vanishing and gravity points. So in my paintings I am also thinking of the gravity point, the weight of a vertical axis, not only a vanishing point in the center.

BF: And hanging the pieces?

GO: Hanging a piece always talks about gravity. In the *Spumes* (2002), I used liquid styrofoam. You cannot touch it with your hands. It is toxic. So I made what you could call recipients, latex sheets that acted as recipients, almost like hammocks, into which we poured the liquid styrofoam. As it was receiving the rolling liquid latex, I was also controlling it as it moved, like a river flowing. I was playing with the timing. Then I did it again. What happened to the liquid involved a kind of topography. It had a lot to do with time, like lava. You can see the trace of time.

BF: I am interested in the move from something as material as much of your work is, something as material as the kneaded lumps of terracotta that have





been likened to amputated limbs or the *Cazuelas* (*Beginnings*)—the move from that to these pieces, the large styrofoam hanging pieces and the small mesh pieces, which are hung from the ceiling and full of air. They could also be seen as yielding in some way, but now to air currents rather than to the pressure of solid ground. I am curious about the way you use air as material.

GO: It is true that with the *Mixiotes* and the *Spumes*, which look like fishes or birds or bones or something, there is a lightness about them. They could be floating. It is true that the shape they have feels like wind is going through them and shaping the form. It is true that they could be eroded by the wind like rocks. I like the idea of erosion. If you think of my terracottas, they are masses of clay somehow eroded by the pressure of my body. The red ones resemble body parts. The black clay pieces are more about trying to make a kind of geometric movement and less like body parts. In these I throw the clay so it becomes very compact and then roll it around. They are more like the *Yielding Stone* in the way they are pressed against the ground into almost a diamond shape. Then there is also a work I made back in 1991 called *Recaptured Nature*. It was a rubber ball made from the inner tubes of the tire of a truck that I cut open like a doughnut, then sealed and inflated. I was trying to recapture the utility of the material. It was a very similar procedure to the one I used in the Citroën DS, cutting it in half, down the middle, and then the reconfiguration of the body into a new shape. It is also a kind of topological exercise of transforming something, a body or a geometric structure, into



Mixiotes in Tlalpan, 1999

Provisional studio for manufacturing *Spumes*,
DUMBO, Brooklyn, New York, 2003

With Philippe Piccoli, assistant on various projects
since 1993, in his provisional studio at DUMBO,
Brooklyn, New York, 2003
Photo: Bea Romeo

View of the opening for galería kurimanzutto at a stand
in the Medellín Market, Mexico City, August 21, 1999







pp. 96–97: *Spumes*, 2003
Installation view at Marian Goodman Gallery,
New York

Spume I, 2003
Polyurethane foam, 40.64 x 162.56 x 101.6 cm











a different shape, yet one that is essentially the same. In terms of mass and air, it is the same.

BF: There's the streamlining of the Citroën DS, too, which you have talked about as almost like a fish in currents of water. I wondered about the idea of the kites, which seems like an airborne equivalent to the *Yielding Stone*. In your photograph of kites in a tree, and in particular in your video *Jaipur Kites*, a kite responds to the merest pressure of wind currents.

GO: I never thought of that connection but one of the reasons I love those kites in India is that they are square. It is a very basic kite. Nowadays kites are very fancy. This is a very basic rhomboid—very basic and made of paper and wood and a thread. To see the sky full of these little squares all over the sky during the festival—fighting and playing—all day and long, was like seeing a shoal of fishes, or stars. You know when I did the *Yielding Stone* another title I was thinking of was a “wandering star,” which was the original name given to the planets.

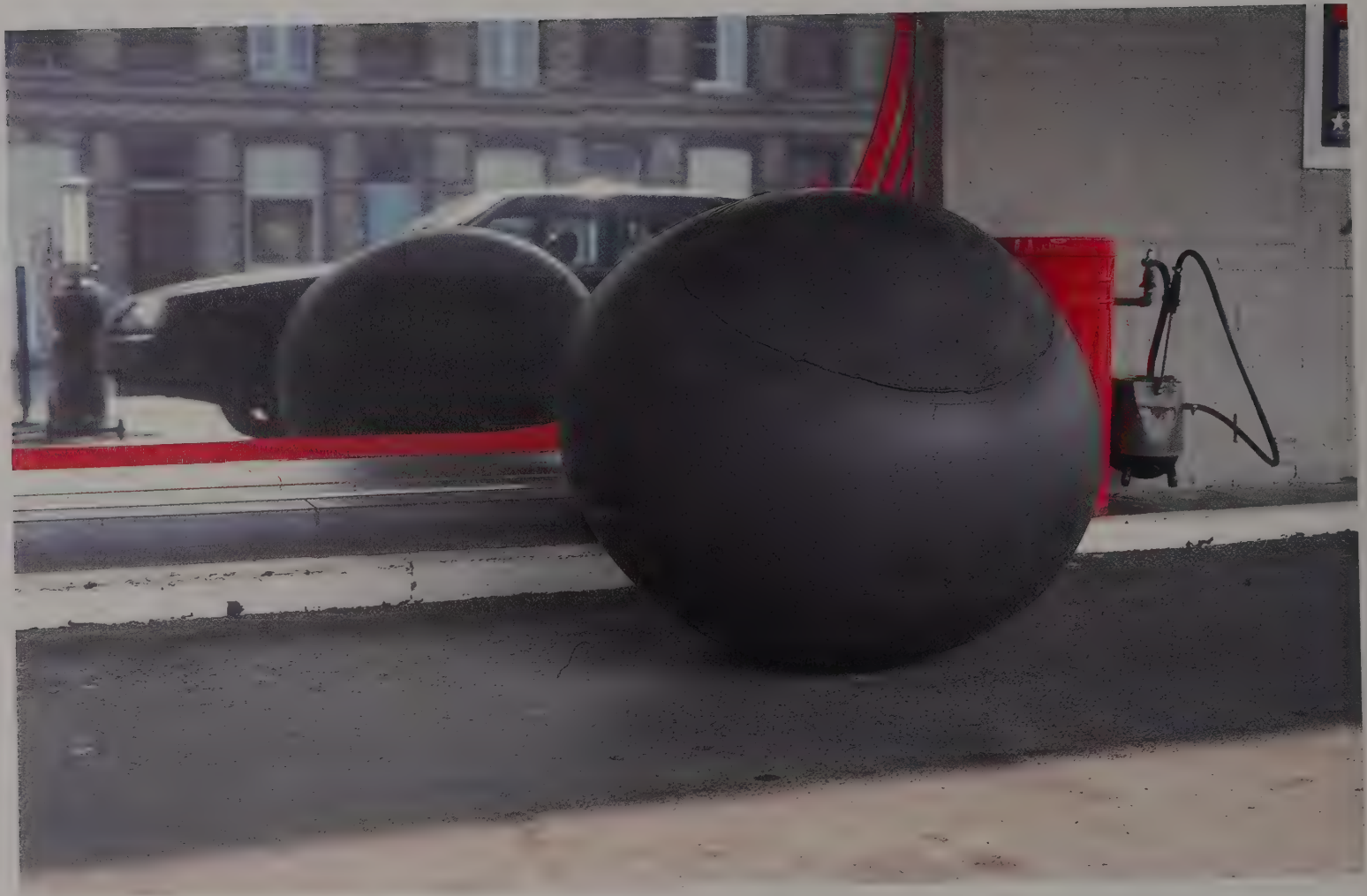
BF: Given how interested you have always been in mobile objects, and mobility and time, I wonder why you have not used video or film more?

GO: One reason that is very important is that I am interested in the mobility of the spectator. That is the mobility of the one who is activating the work in the museum space. I am not worried about my mobility, or the mobility of the planets. I know that. But what is interesting is how to express the movement and its reception by the spectator. The problem I have with video is that it is very static. You have to stand still. To use video and think you are really expressing movement and time I think is super naive...It is not interesting. It's a very linear movement.

BF: You made a series called *Kelly's Kites*. Do they connect?

GO: That was a joke. The idea of the kite is poetic. It is an instrument, an invention that could be used in science or communication but basically it is just a toy. I use that idea metaphorically all the time. I looked at some of Ellsworth Kelly's paintings, but I could not believe in them. There seemed to be the intention of generating an illusion of flatness or a phenomenological presence that did not work for me. I could see shrinkage in the canvas, some real physical things happening to the pure color on the canvas. Then I received a catalogue in the mail of a show he was having and I liked the reproductions better than the paintings. And I thought about remaking some three-dimensional movement in the reproduction of the flatness of the painting. So I began by cutting and pasting circular disks and then rotating them, generating shapes and configurations that were impossible in reality. It was





Recaptured Nature being inflated at the gas station in
Kortrijk, Belgium, 1992
Vulcanized rubber, 94 cm diameter approximately





a bizarre gesture on works that in reality I did not trust completely. The photographs had another physical status, and when I began to cut and paste, there was something interesting. Maybe the best way I found to express that was not to make a painting on the wall, but to make a kite.

BF: Is there a seed in that series of your own paintings?

GO: Not really, because it is something about the image that I am interested in with my paintings. I am trying to deal with the rotation of a body inside a flat plane. Not in the illusion of the body, but in the conceptual representation of an image. It is an abstraction, but not one that claims to be just a material phenomenon, but to be dealing with something else at the same time. Three-dimensionality, gravity, movement, light, symmetry, the organic and so on—that is, all the same issues I am dealing with in sculpture and photography. So it is very different from abstract painting or minimalism. It is not about visibility.

BF: You stress a kind of internal contradiction in your paintings, that they both are and are not paintings. That's also something you could say exists in all your work. In your hanging mesh pieces, for example, it is the (heavier) mesh that looks light and seems to defy gravity and the (lighter) polyurethane foam that obeys the pull of gravity. Maybe that is a bit literal, but what is interesting is that at every level such things stop behaving as contradictions in your work, I think, and act instead like very mobile and malleable reversals. But the ambivalence you have toward painting is crucial. After all, taking up painting again could seem a contradiction of your whole project up to that time. Can you explain how you came to make them? You showed the paintings for the first time at the Serpentine Gallery in 2002. How long had you been working on them?

GO: For about a year before that. But the circles and the structure were always there somehow. A lot of my drawings had been with circles. I showed them maybe for the first time at the Kwangju Biennale in 1995. People did not know what to say about them. And I made a light box. I wanted to use it as a sign for publicity for nothing. I used the low-tech signage that you find all over Korea. I made several but I just showed one.

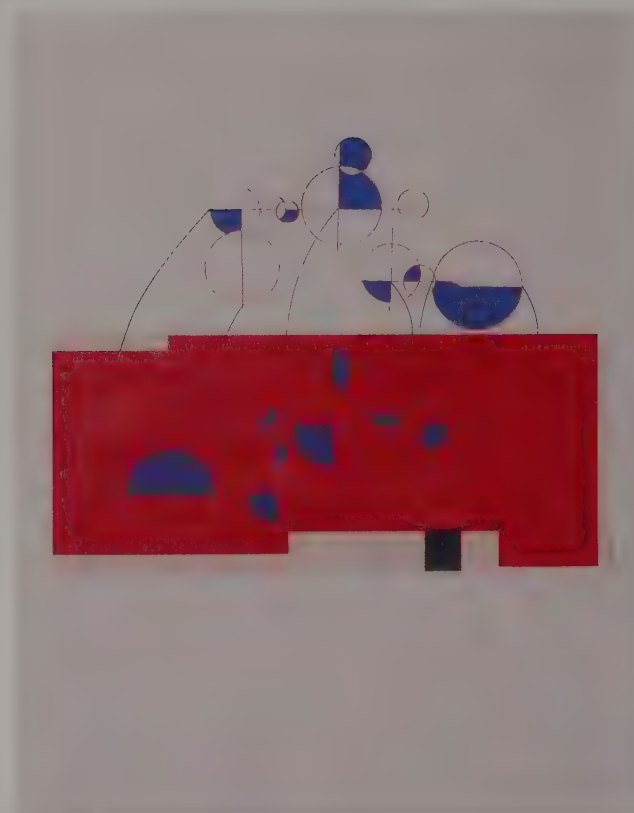
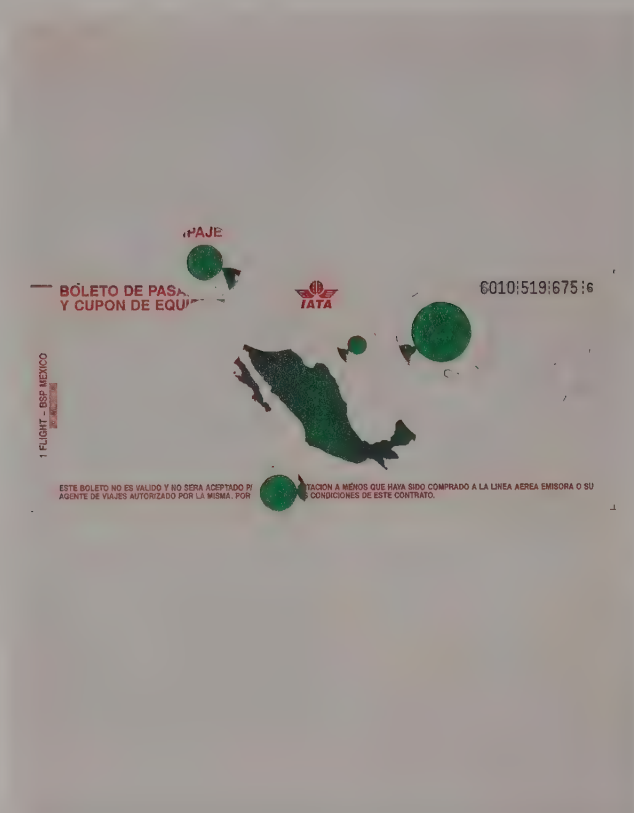
BF: What surprised me about your paintings was not the circular motifs or even the paint, but the canvas. It felt like a risk rather than a return to something. It did not feel like a return to painting. An established vocabulary for painting in some ways fails to fit your paintings.

GO: People forget that I want to disappoint. I use that word deliberately. I want to disappoint the expectations of the one who waits to be amazed. When you make a decision, someone is going to be disappointed because they think they know you. It is only then that the poetic can happen. It is not about entertaining the



Installing *Light Sign* at the Gwangju Biennale, Korea, 1994

Light Sign, 1994
Plastic and aluminium light box, 100 x 100 x 20 cm



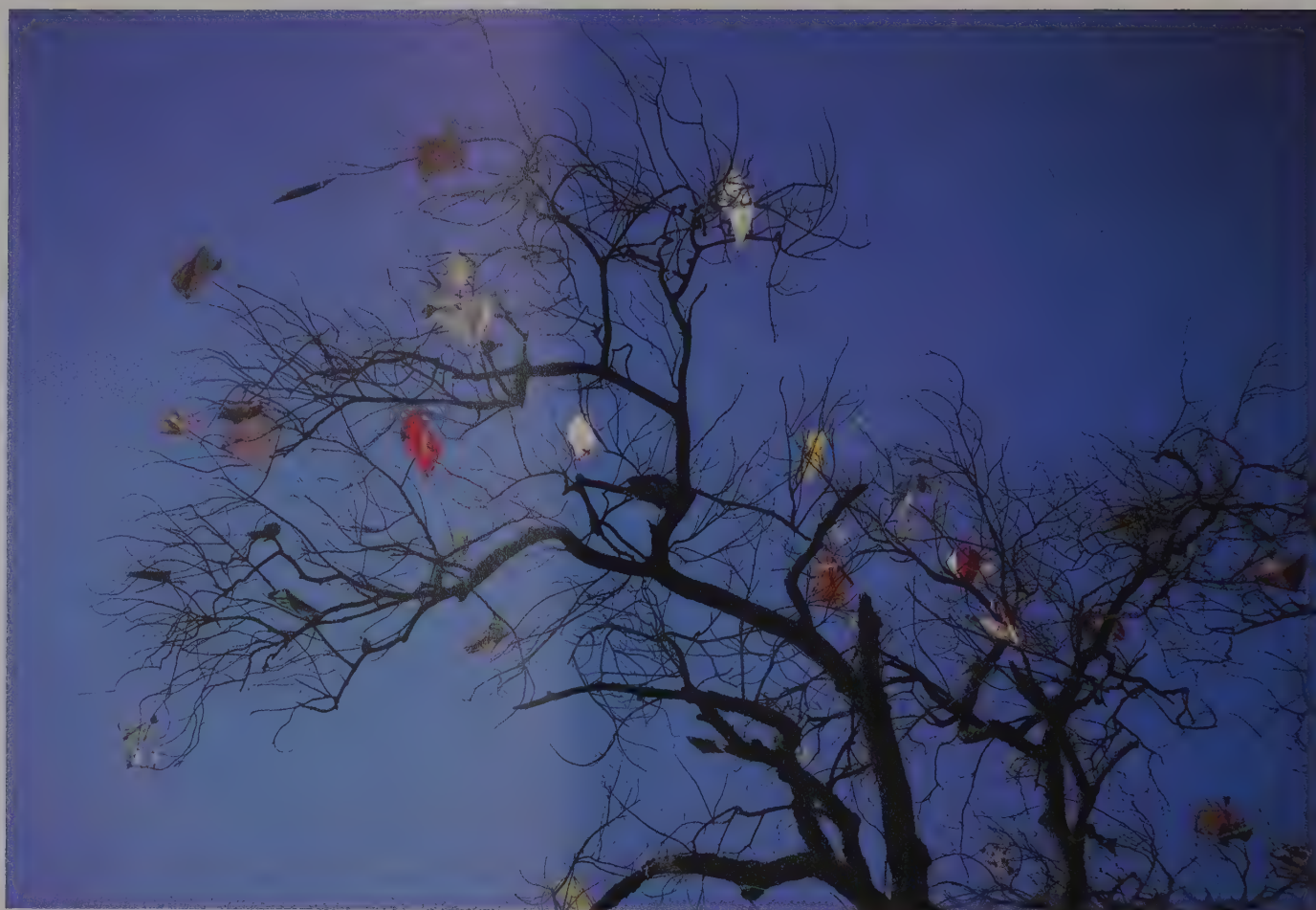
Baggage Tag, 1997
Drawing, collage, acrylic on airplane ticket, 27.9 x 21.6 cm

Rubbed, 1997
Collage and frottage on the back of an airplane ticket,
27.9 x 21.6 cm

Untitled, 2000
Airplane ticket, gouache, 27.9 x 21.6 cm

Red Air, 1997
Collage and frottage on an airplane ticket, 27.9 x 21.6 cm





spectator, or working for the spectator. I knew they were going to be read as paintings, and I think they are not about painting. They are diagrams. The idea of a diagram has the pretension to explain how things work, how objects behave and how plants grow. There is a kind of meeting point between the idea of the diagram and the fascination I have with icons. There is something very material about Russian icons. They are very flat, very geometric. Obviously icons played a role in abstraction, in Malevich for example. But I am not religious. I am interested in their materialism. They are made of wood. In a conceptual way they behave as a geometric organism. It is also a game with certain rules that I apply to these phenomena and see what happens, generated by chance phenomena.

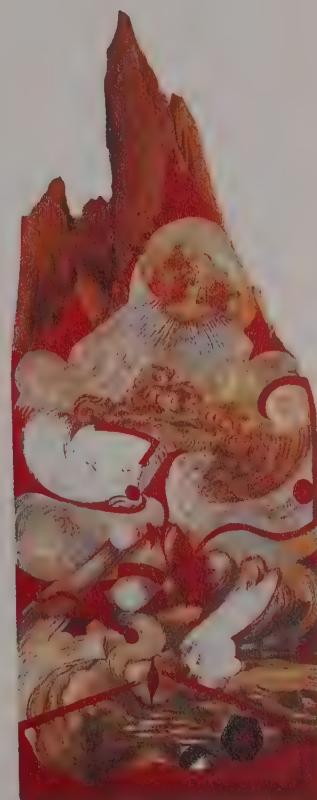
BF: They invoke the first generation of abstract painting—the abstraction of the 1910s and 20s rather than the later, more expressive model of abstraction that gained ground with abstract expressionism in the middle of the century. Your references are often to the historical avant garde.

GO: I feel much more connected to the infantile, geometric approach to life you find in European art before World War II. I am interested in the way the art of the early avant garde was based on childhood experience and had more connection with reality. Then art in the second part of the twentieth century, especially American art, got more into teenage experience. American culture is based on the teenager. It is decadent, self-indulgent. So much self-exploration with no connection to reality. Dada is for perverted kids, who shit and pee on the table. I feel much closer to that. In Mexico, the muralist movement was also infantile. I don't mean this pejoratively. It was infantile in that it was utopian, in its ideological energy, its approach to reality. Afterwards, with Frida Kahlo, came teenagerhood. Surrealism was the perfect movement for teenagers.

BF: Maybe Surrealism had to disavow the infantile in Dada. Another important strand for your work goes back to Constructivism, especially Rodchenko's line and circle paintings, which were, of course, already, in a way, antipaintings, a way of painting that was not about the expressive idioms conventional to painting. Painting for him seemed to be a way of making an object.

GO: Rodchenko is very important. The idea of construction is very important. It is not enough to cut a car in half. You have to build it up again. There is always a constructivism in my photography. It is not just to discard but to reconstruct, reconfigure, regeometricize. I like Rodchenko paintings close up. When you look at them in reality, you feel he doesn't really like to paint.

BF: Color has been seen as the prime ground for expressive decisions. Whereas you treat color not as a choice, but as a template, as what is pre-determined.



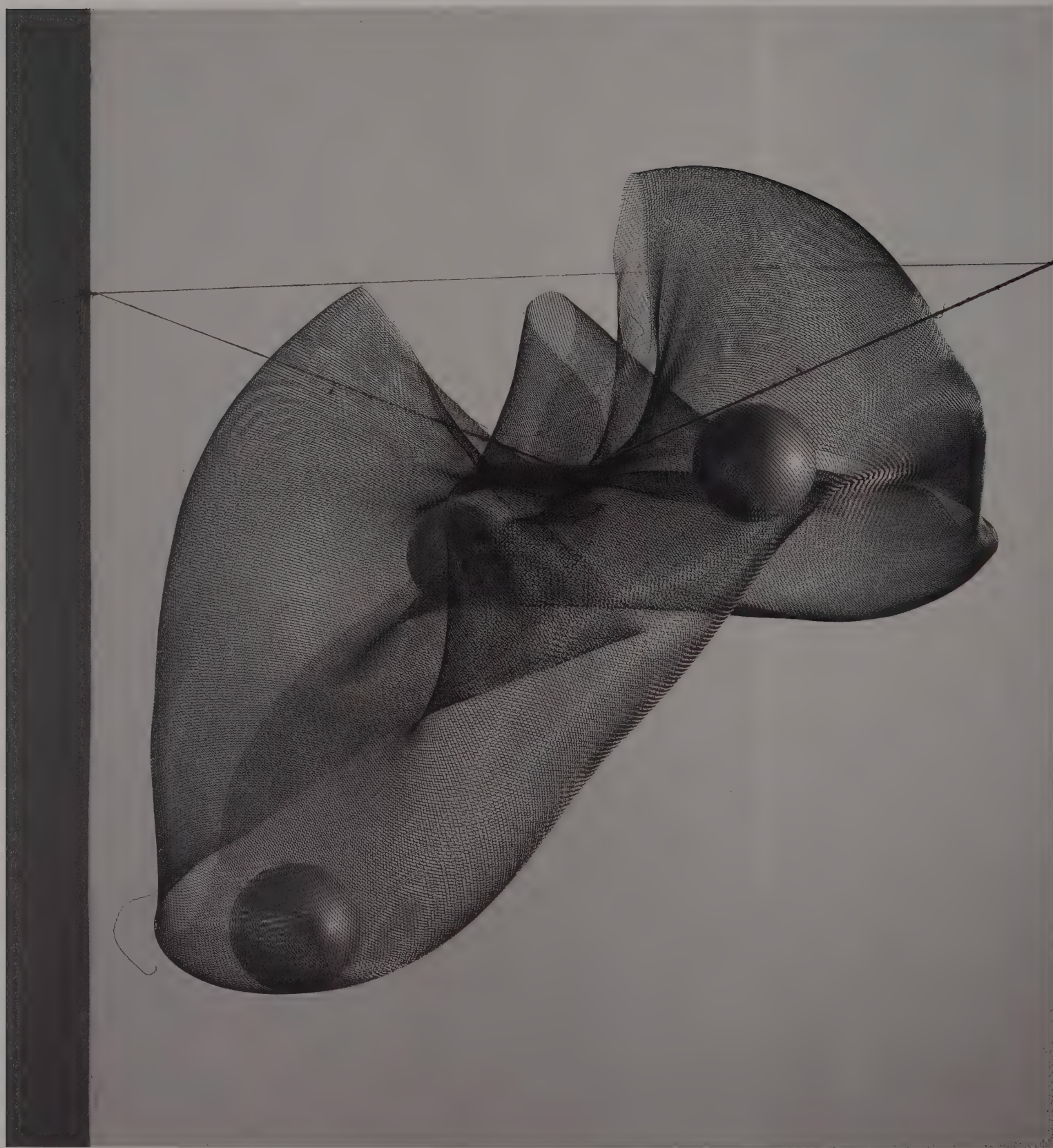
Salome's Dress, 1989
Acrylic on wood, 31 x 45.5 x 4 cm

Storm, 1989
Acrylic on wood, 40 x 30 x 15 cm



Seed, 2003
Galvanized steel mesh and styrofoam, 45 x 46 x 20 cm





Mesh II, 2005
Steel mesh, cord and styrofoam balls, 34 x 88 x 55 cm



GO: What I hate about painting are all the small decisions, what goes with what. I like other kinds of decisions. My research is more about space and bodies and action and movement, not about perception of color or about paintings. I made the decision to use four colors. So I decided blue and red have the same weight, then white. Then gold, even more than yellow, because gold works as a noncolor and as a totality of light.

BF: Does that relate back to the icons?

GO: Yes, in that it is physical. Like white in Manzonis is very physical. So it isn't decided by feeling, but it is technical, like dividing a chart and you need to see clearly the four fields. I vary the color according to the knight's move in chess: 2 and 1, 2 and 1. I don't make many decisions, so once I have put the colors at the center, then all the others follow.

BF: When you showed the series called *Invariant Diagram (Samurai Tree)* at Marian Goodman in the fall of 2005, you also included an animation of the color switches, which added another dimension to thinking about the paintings. All the color ways were animated, mobile, fast—as against the paintings that are slow to make, laborious to make even if they look quite mechanical. There seemed to be a point of friction there.

GO: It happened like this. I was doing the paintings. When I made the first drawing for the *Samurai Tree* series I was very happy with it. I decided to work with the one drawing, using the same rules of coloring. I called it *Invariant* because it is always the same. The location of color is different, but the drawing is the same. So I wanted to see the variations one by one. So I realized all the possible variations on the computer and made a kind of catalogue. So I could go to the catalogue and choose the painting that I wanted to make. Helped by an assistant, we came up with 672 variations. Then we decided to see them one second per image, one after the other, and see how it looks. Then I made a sequence and we ended up with this animation. Somehow the animation came about from cataloguing the variations of the drawings. You see the painting with all the possible variations, so it becomes a kind of mobile painting. For the objects themselves I never wanted to use other techniques like screen-printing or computer-generated images. I like the technique of painting with acrylic. There is a connection with my own body. I work with one assistant, with great focus and concentration. At the beginning I didn't want anyone else to produce the work. I wanted to do it myself. I am even going backwards now, using egg tempera, a Russian icon technique.

BF: We come back to your own physical involvement with the work, to the resistance embodied in the hand-made or the artisanal product. It is striking

that you have drawn on craft techniques as well as computers—it is as if these technologies, whether archaic or digital, cease to be opposites but come to obey the same logic. I am thinking about the *Cazuelas (Beginnings)*, the project you made for Documenta in 2002.

GO: Well, again, the idea of the recipient is important, as it is in all my work. I don't like making clay pots myself, but I worked with a potter in a workshop in France. When you make a bowl or a pot on a potter's wheel, you have the movement, you also have the idea of the wheel as a kind of vehicle. It is a brick clay not a pottery clay. As the potter was throwing, and I was indicating the shape I wanted, I was also making an arsenal of clay balls. And when the bowl was of the proper size then I was throwing the little balls at it, smashing them into it. It was like a game between baseball and basketball, trying to get the ball inside the bowl. The bowl was spinning, and the ball was a kind of meteorite. It was a whole exercise, a week of work. All the time, pitching and throwing, smashing the balls against the molds, and altogether they form a bowl. It was a reflection on pottery, erosion, movement, planetary space, etcetera—it was all there.

BF: You often seem to snatch back materials that circulate in a world of commodities—like various forms of packaging—and retrieve them for your own particular materialist project. I am thinking about the *Four Containers*.

GO: I like styrofoam containers—they are recipient molds—and I store things in them. Stuff becomes an informal archive of materials. I like that: it is almost like trash, my own trash in a high-tech recipient. Over time this just happened. I did not intend to make a work but I was testing materials over a period of about three years and suddenly it became a work. I like to use materials that are common and also not high-tech. I can use clay and egg tempera and styrofoam and wood and mesh. I use everything, not as a technology but because we use materials in everyday life. I use a computer but it is not about the computer. It is the materiality of the material. It is materialist and it is a reflection on the material. There is never so much manipulation that you do not see what it is made of.

BF: This idea of bringing together a diverse collection of things over a period of time—not just in space but in time—seems also to be at the heart of your working tables. Perhaps you can speak about the temporality of the tables.

GO: Well, the working table presentation came from having collections of objects stored in shoe boxes in my apartment, accumulating. Some of these objects I found interesting but didn't know what to do with them. Some of



Fleuve, 2003
Polyurethane foam, polystyrene, cotton,
plaster and wire, 226 x 43 x 81 cm

them were like tests that did not work. So after five or six years I thought why not show them all, on a table, successes and failures. I showed objects with drawings and diagrams that I did not consider finalized work either. I did not like the idea of a vitrine very much. I wanted them to look more like my table, covered with this and that, with trash, with instruments. I have always liked the idea of a mechanic's table in a garage, a rough, dirty accumulation of pieces. Every five years or so I pull out all the stuff I have accumulated. In the working tables, time is made actual. In many artworks today, you feel there is just one second there, one point, not time accumulated. Some of my best work has the pretension to have such an accumulation of time, so that you can spend quite a lot of time looking at the object. *Black Kites*, the skull with graphite, took six months to make, but I think you can maybe spend six months looking at it too. Then in the working tables—which are five years of work, process, tries and tests—you can spend fifteen minutes looking at them. Now is a moment of a high pressure of production on artists. There is a certain demand to work with this pressure, but the tables can only be made over time. They cannot be made in a week. You need all that accumulation of things left over. Production processes are coopted, but these tables cannot be. BF: Slow time.

GO: Like Duchamp's *Large Glass* left to accumulate dust. Stopping time. It spoke about that quite consciously, a retarded work. In my case, I like the combination between this and the pressure of time. I like the pressure of time as well. I think you can also make a work in one second. The combination of scales is important in terms of size but also time. There's the work



Containers, 2001
4 polystyrene containers, lint, plasticine, wood,
butterfly wing, jars, 15.2 x 19 x 34.2 cm

Cazuelas (Beginnings), 2002
71 clay pots, variable dimensions
Installation view at Documenta 11, Kassel, Germany





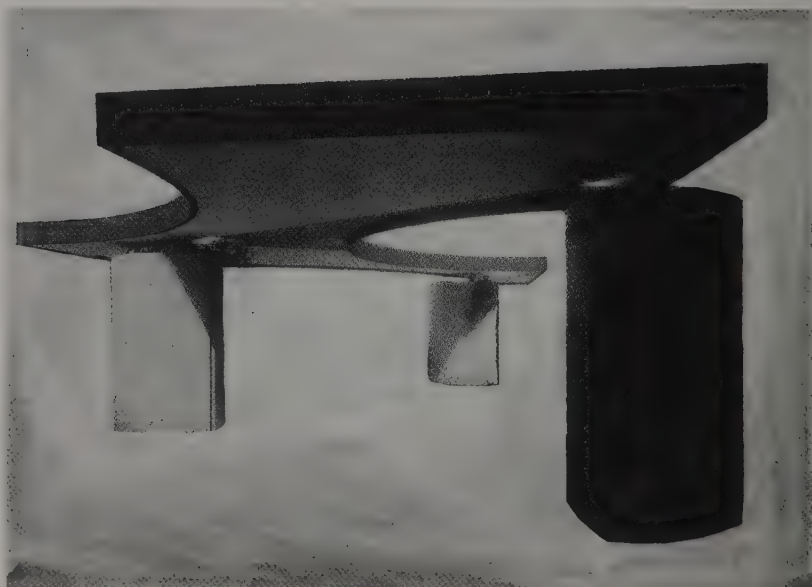


Pensilina

By Carlo Scarpa, Italian Pavilion,
26th Venice Biennale, 1952, which inspired Gabriel
Orozco's *Shade between Rings of Air* (inside), 2003
Photo: Florian Kleinfenn, Paris



Shade between Rings of Air
Wood and metal, 280 x 800 x 1400 cm
Installation view at the Italian Pavilion,
51st Venice Biennale, 2003



Four sketches for *Shade between Rings of Air*, 2003
Gouache on photographic paper, 21 x 14 cm each

that only takes a moment and then the long-term project. There is the micro and the macro.

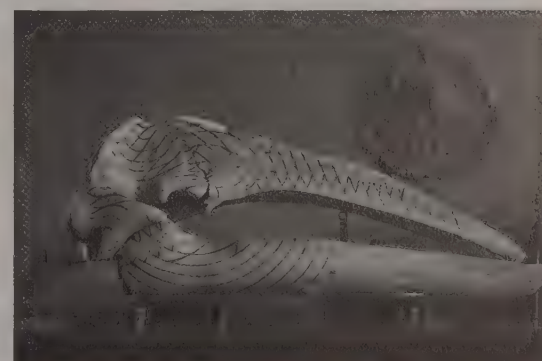
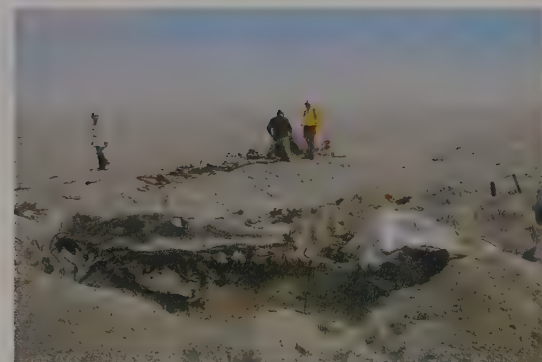
BF: I want to end by asking you about your attitude to architecture, and the relation of your work to architecture. For the 2003 Venice Biennale, you replicated a ruined sculpture court designed by Carlo Scarpa for the Italian Pavilion in 1952. The replica you made was like a ruin in reverse.

GO: Scarpa made a small modernist pavilion to show modern sculpture in 1952 and then after it was abandoned. It was a difficult space to show sculpture because Scarpa's pavilion is itself very sculptural. The room next to it is of very similar proportions. So I thought of making a replica next door and in wood. What interested me was the experience of walking between the two, between the ruin of the dusty, open-air pavilion and the wooden replica inside—one to one, almost like a model, which stood in a white room that was very pristine and clean. It was about the time between the platonic pavilion and the pavilion eroded by weather. It was a shiny new idea that was immediately eroded and "accidented" by reality. In the process of making the replica, there were also many accidents that occurred along the way. Then afterward, it travelled. It was shown in the Palacio de Cristal in Madrid, to see how it behaved differently, like sculpture. It was still a roof, but a roof behaving like a sculpture, making sculpture out of architecture.

BF: I want to come back to the point where we started out. You spoke about wanting to occupy a position that was resistant to a spectacular culture, that you wanted the work you did to interrupt in some way the circuits of production and consumption. In light of that I want to ask you about two large-scale works that you are working on now. The first is the project for the Mexican National Library, for which you plan to use the whole skeleton of a whale. Is this not a spectacular move? How does it relate to what you said at the beginning about a resistance to spectacle?

GO: Yes, this is a big operation for me. Yes, it is spectacular, but it is so by accident. I still work pretty much the same way. I don't have assistants generally. I don't have a big studio, although I'll need lots of help for this project. However, the point is not about the absolute scale of something in literal or physical terms.

BF: Then there is the beach house you are working on, which picks up on the interest in architectural projects. You converted and reconfigured this house in which we are sitting here in Tlalpan. The beach house draws on a group of giant astronomical instruments near Delhi that you first encountered over eight years ago—and which has been in your mind ever since. A photograph

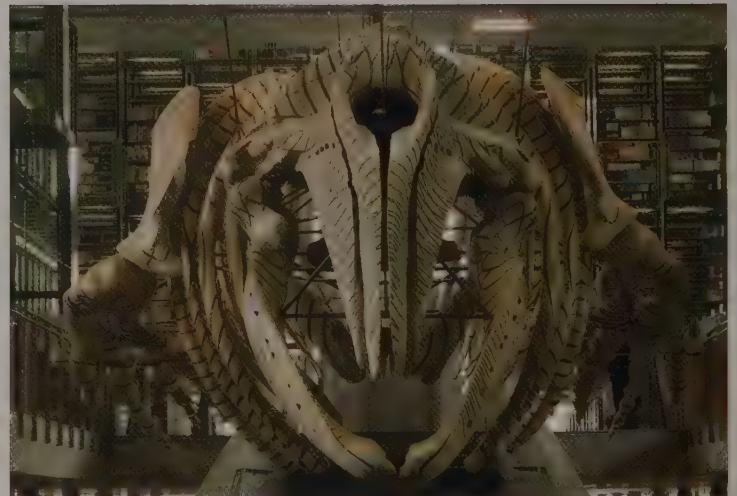


Excavation of the gray whale, Guerrero Negro, Baja California Sur, 2006

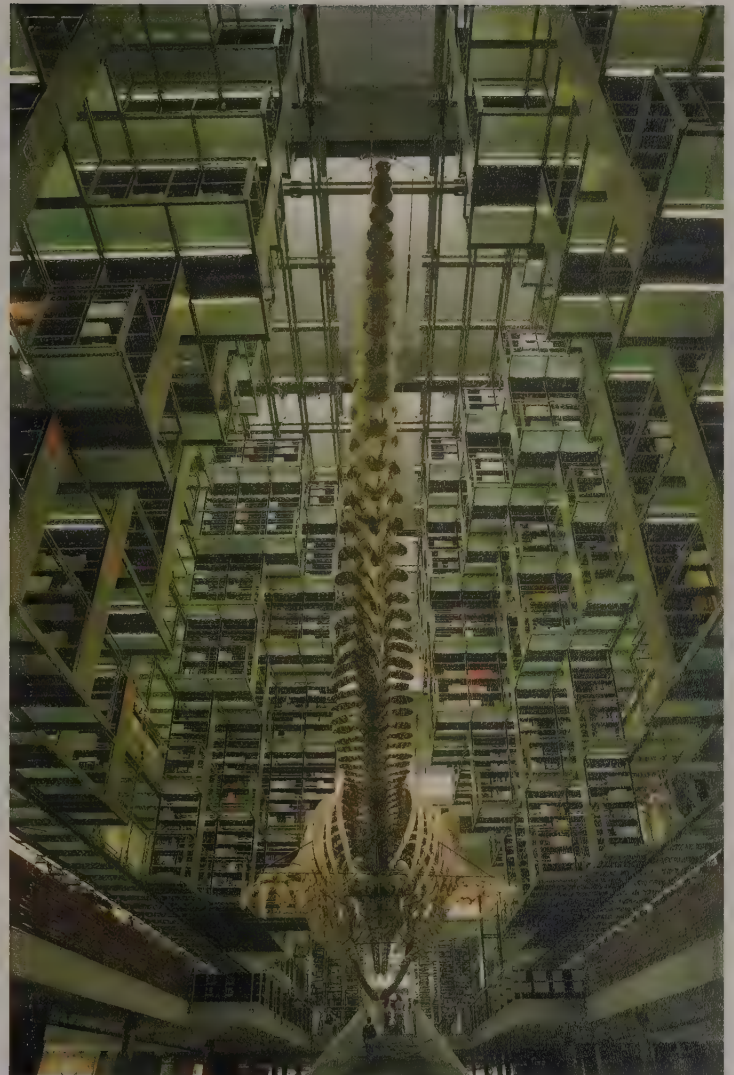
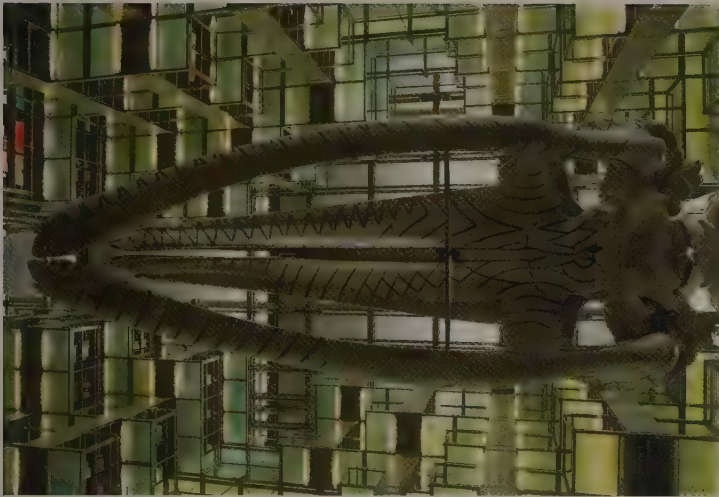
Two views during the process of drawing the whale at the old train station, Buenavista, Mexico City, 2006
Photos: Marco Barrera





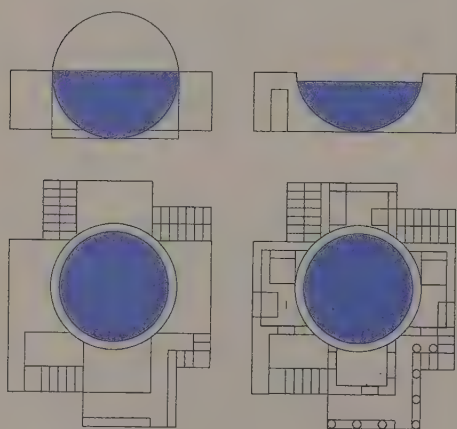


pp. 128–129: *Mobile Matrix*, 2006
 Graphite on gray whale skeleton, 254 x 1169 x 205 cm
 Installation view at the José Vasconcelos Library,
 Mexico City





AGUAPRACHASA.



of another part of the site called *Sundial Banana* (1995) was included in your Smithsonian show of photographs in 2004. Rather like the Venice work, you are again transporting the shape of an entire building from one site to another. But on this occasion, you are moving one from one continent to another—an astronomical observatory in Delhi to the Mexican coast.

GO: I think of making this house as a semiprivate thing. I am transporting the building somehow into a new context. I think other works might come out of this house. It is an experiment. It is an observatory, an instrument, a place of work. It will be my house, outside of the art world, inserted into everyday living, and outside the coopted world of the museum. This house is an experiment in everyday life for myself. It is important to keep it independent. I am not really interested in pavilions as such—that was the concern of a previous generation. It is not a way of speculating about architecture. I am not trying to be an architect. It is more like making sculpture with an architecture complexity.

BF: These connections—not only the relationships between event, object, photograph that we started out talking about in relation to your work from the early 1990s, but also now architecture—are very mobile in your work. They trigger each other.

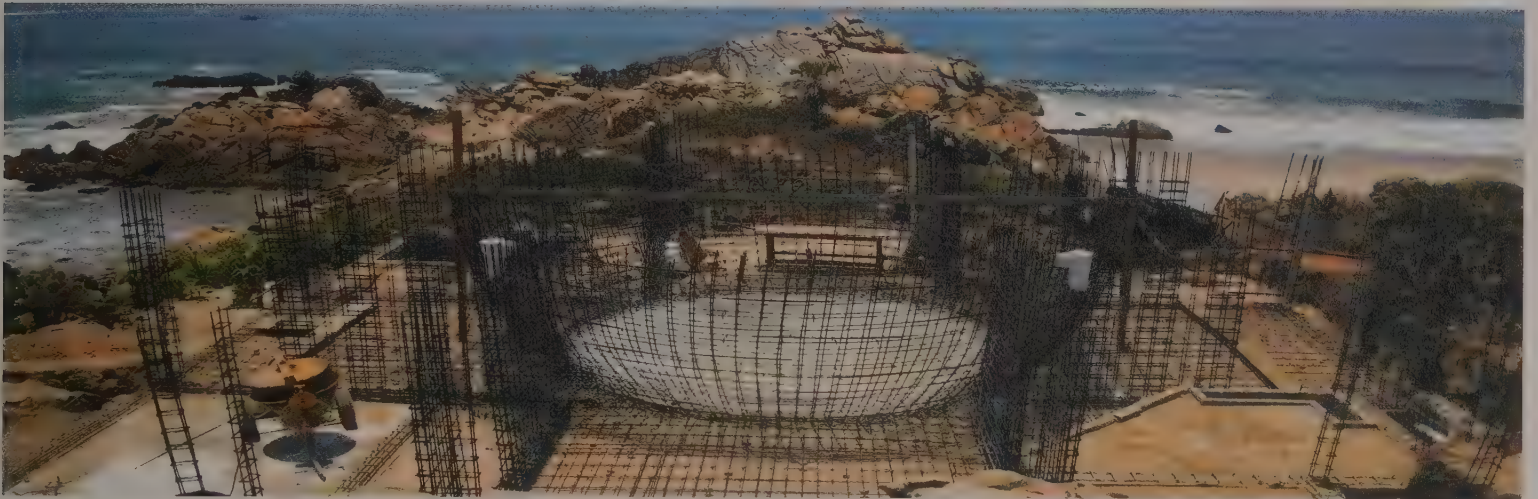
Views of Observatory House on the Pacific Coast,
Oaxaca, 2006
Photos: Tatiana Bilbao

Drawing for Observatory House, 1996
Gouache, digital impression on paper, 21 x 14 cm





Various views of Observatory House under construction
on the Pacific Coast, Oaxaca, 2006
Photos: Tatiana Bilbao





Sundial Banana, 1995
Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm

GO: I call this a “deterritorialization” of style. I mean I do think in terms of a galaxy. A world of an artist generates planets and different constellations. I also think that that the style or world of an artist can get into establishing a single, fixed territory, making a certain type of work, a certain style or brand. One idea, one artist. This style of working becomes a kind of fortress and I don’t believe in that. I don’t want to establish that kind of territory. The constellation of the world that the artist generates, that I want to generate, is in constant movement. The weight of each work is constantly questioned by the others.

BF: If the artist generates a world or a constellation, then how do you think of your own role in that. I mean in the sense of where you situate yourself. It seems to me that you actually avoid staging yourself, in a performative sense, in your work. Can you say something about that effacement?

GO: I think it is better to empty that space of the actual body. Then that space can be reactivated, so everyone might occupy it for themselves. I want to open up that space as a recipient for the spectator to occupy. I want to erase my presence. It is very basic. When you impose yourself as the performative aspect of the work, that is not only expressing the narcissistic but also something tyrannical. It is a power mechanism, the artist imposing a legend on the anonymous public. That is what spectacle does, generate a persona, celebrity. In my photos I want to disappear. I don’t want to impose my persona. Also I am so handsome that I don’t want to make any enemies. [Laughter.]

Tlalpan, February 2006



Camping in the Thar desert, 1996
Photo: María Gutiérrez

Postcard of Jantar Mantar observatory,
New Delhi, India, architectural site which
inspired Observatory House



Mariguano Villegas, 2000
Gouache, ink on Iris print, 80 x 61 cm

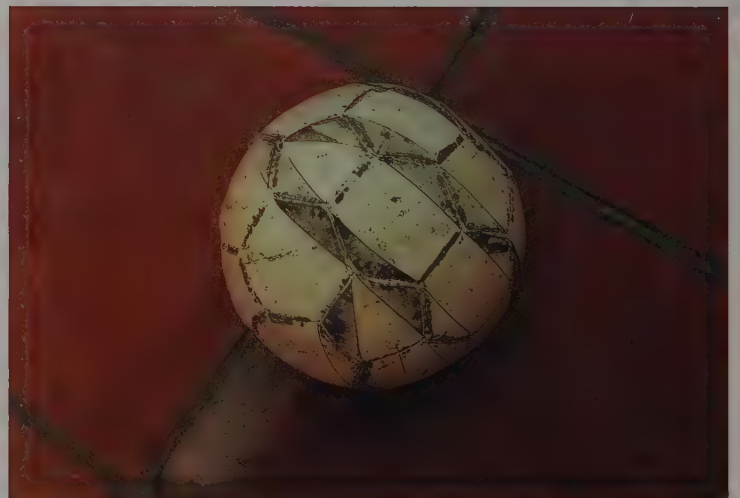
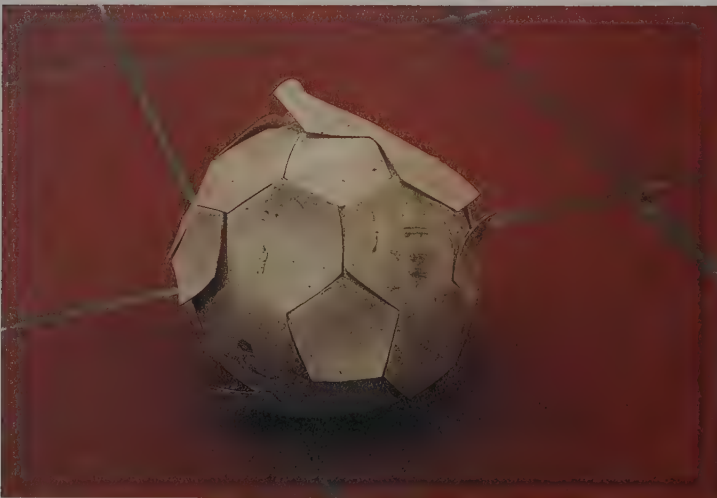
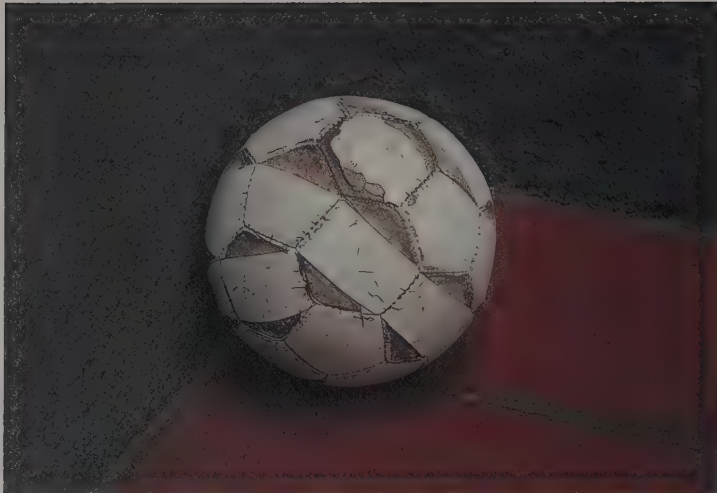
pp. 140–141: *Light through Leaves*, 1996
Iris print, ink on paper, 50.8 x 76.5 cm













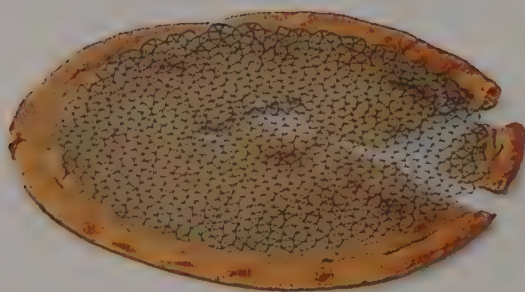
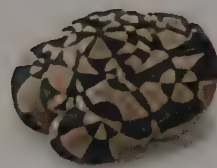


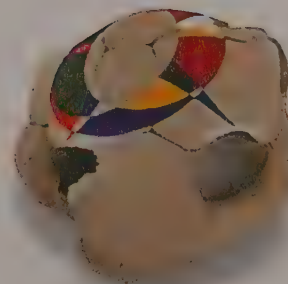
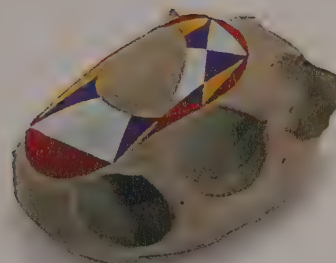
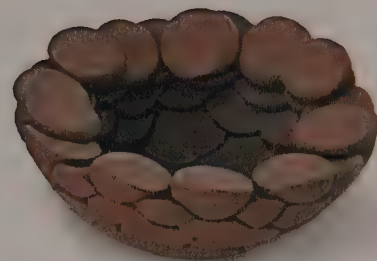
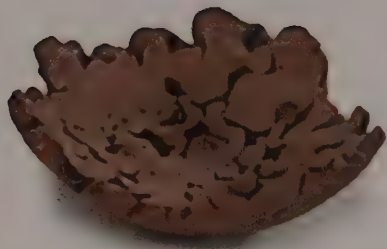




pp. 146–147: *Working Tables*, 2000–2005, New York, 2005
Collection of objects, variable dimensions









Benjamin H. D. Buchloh

Gabriel Orozco:
Sculpture as Recollection

There comes a moment, in the life of every great artist, of every poet, in which his idea of beauty, a conceptualization that up to that point in time needed by necessity to be followed continually in an upward and always elevated spiral, is then suddenly, without warning, inverted in the opposite direction, is shown to be, one could say, falling vertically... This is the point of de-creation, when an artist in the supreme interpretation of his art no longer creates, but rather, de-creates, the messianic moment, one impossible to give a name to, one in which art itself is miraculously held in stasis, almost in astonishment; in every instant, it is fallen and resurrected.

Giorgio Agamben, "Belezza che cade," in
Cy Twombly: Eight Sculptures (Rome: American Academy, 1998)

The citation of Giorgio Agamben's astonishing remark on an aesthetics of a sudden reversal, or negation, serves to signal three speculative proposals and historical arguments that this essay will attempt to sketch out. First of all, in line with Agamben's brilliant insight, we would like to envisage an alternate history for the writing of twentieth-century sculpture, one that would not define itself along the paradigmatic order of evolutionary progress and active production, paralleling industry, but one that would situate itself in an opposition to production, to subvert the universal regime of labor to produce commodities and the fetishes of consumption.

Second, in order to give Agamben's argument historical ground, we will attempt to trace the morphologies and formal strategies that such a counter-sculptural aesthetic would have to have generated throughout the twentieth century in order to define a viable opposition to modernist sculpture. And thirdly, and most specifically, we would like to follow this dialectic of production and de-creation in the sculptural oeuvre of Gabriel Orozco, where this dialectic has been played out in manifold propositions concerning the status of the sculptural object.

Focusing on a selected number of works where these contradictions seem to have acquired an almost programmatic profile, our argument will consider first of all the opposition between a seemingly inevitable return of sculpture to a polymorphous objecthood, to act in opposition to the universal reign of the object, and its continuous efforts to claim for itself the singular status and practice of defetishization. Second, and integral to the aesthetics of a sudden inversion suggested by Agamben, we will consider the dialectic between ever more radical forms of deskilling and their counterpart, the subtle reinscriptions of the artisanal, the return of a repressed aesthetics of skill within Orozco's sculpture. After all, it should be emphasized, that the very definition

of sculpture as “object production” (as opposed to photographic records, or linguistic propositions) in Orozco’s work constitutes in and of itself a “return,” being an assertion of specific skills, artisanal processes, and materials in sculpture. This is all the more so since Orozco consciously confronts at least three major instances in the history of sculpture that had contested sculpture as an ontological object, as much as they had disqualified sculpture as an epistemological object paralleling industrial production.

The first instance of such a decisive contestation would of course be the Duchampian readymade (even though Orozco denies its putatively universal impact). Second, two figures in the 1950s who redefined the (mis)conception of sculpture as industrial object played a crucial role in the formation of Orozco’s conception of sculpture: on the one hand was the impact of John Cage; and on the other, that of Piero Manzoni. The Conceptualist annihilation of traditional sculpture constitutes the third aesthetic challenge of which Orozco is, of course, fully conscious, work by artists such as Michael Asher and Lawrence Weiner, who insisted on having their linguistic and critical practices inserted into the discourses of sculpture, rather than seeing it merely placed within the Conceptual, the critical, let alone the poetical, as their opponents among sculptors, in particular, have argued again and again.

Were one to begin to write an alternate history of the sculpture of the post-war period, one might start with the insight that the traditional modernist registers and criteria of sculpture as “production”—the formal and morphological orders of machine-age geometricity and the procedures of industrial construction and materials—while still central to the sculptural work of minimalism of the 1960s, had already lost their exclusive paradigmatic status by the mid- to late 1950s. In spite of Duchamp, and with the exception of deviant moments in Surrealism and the work of Joseph Cornell, the commodity form and its psychic correlative, the fetish, are absent in modernist sculpture, from Picasso to Giacometti, from Matisse to David Smith, from Calder to minimalism.

Nevertheless, the recognition of the heretofore unrecovered legacies of Marcel Duchamp, or the impact of the musical theories of John Cage on the conception of all aesthetic objects, or that of emerging opposing paradigms (for example, collection versus production), would be consistently delayed, at least until the late 1960s. The absence of an adequate theorization of the early sculptural work of Robert Rauschenberg, or that of Jasper Johns, or the magnitude of Claes Oldenburg’s oeuvre, or of an intelligent account of the historical determinations and utterly different parameters of the sculpture of Cy Twombly, would clearly corroborate this.



Hand Pressure on Clay Marbles Submerged in Plaster, 2003
Plaster, clay, 5.08 x 25.4 x 25.4 cm

Submerged Oyster Relief, 2005
Plaster, oyster shell, graphite, 6.35 x 30.48 x 30.48 cm

Submerged Orbital Turbulence, 2005
Plaster, paper, graphite, 15.24 x 33.02 x 33.02 cm

Floating Sinking Shell II, 2004
Plaster and seashell, 15.24 x 30.48 x 30.48 cm

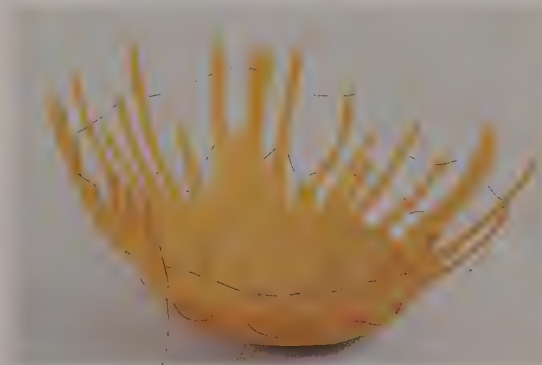
Even after the readymade's implications for sculptural propositions had been finally recognized, and new modes of thinking about sculpture had been defined—for example, the conception of sculpture as psychosomatic inscription and bodily record as in the work of Piero Manzoni, Robert Morris and Bruce Nauman, or as a rhetorical “figure” (as in Marcel Broodthaers)—the ensuing strategies would remain themselves illegible for the longest time.

Yet the new sculptural paradigms emerged from more than just the reception of historically disavowed precedents; and the seemingly sudden changes transformed more than just the materials and production procedures of traditional modernist sculpture (e.g. from welded steel to chicken wire, from bronze to sculpmetal). More decisively, they also affected sculptural object choices and their organization, display devices, and distribution forms.

These changes manifested the belated insight that even sculpture would have to succumb to the reigning forms of collective object experience, the industrially produced commodity and the inevitably ensuing conditions of fetishization. Furthermore, it became evident that these changes originated in an ever intensifying crisis of the collective experience of objects, resulting either from the object's massive proliferation, its incessant multiplication and serial repetition, or from its accelerated decay and eventual disappearance. What the object had lost first of all was its once seemingly immutable status, its solid promise to produce use value. Instead, objects were now defined as utterly ephemeral, merely performing their temporary assignment to generate exchange value. As their lifespan became increasingly controlled by the newly invented temporality of planned obsolescence, all objects and materials were rapidly transformed into a deluge of detritus.

This schism inside the object structure would, however, not only affect the morphology of sculpture in the most profound way; it would also necessitate a complete reconfiguration of its presentational conventions and devices. Inevitably these would now mimetically inscribe themselves within the larger institutional and economic frameworks containing and displaying commodities (such as the box, the package, the shop window, the vitrine, and the display table).

To illustrate how decisive this historical transition would become, one could point to two simultaneous, yet opposite, sculptural paradigms of the earlier twentieth century, both of which have been invoked by Gabriel Orozco as figures of tremendous importance in the development of his own work. The first would be Constantin Brancusi, and the degree to which one dimension of his work had simulated industrial manufacture, bordering at times

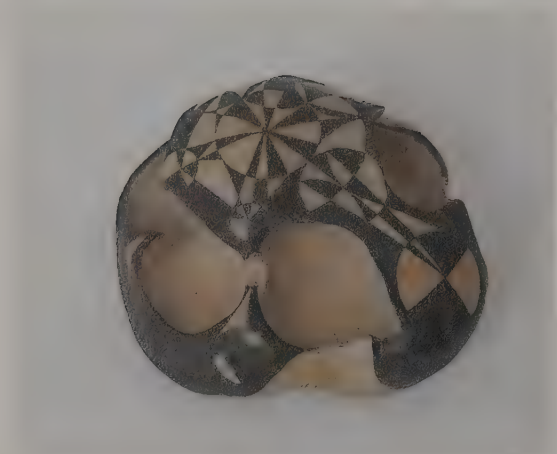


Big Drip on a Spherical Base with Surrounding Cord, 2003
Polyurethane foam, cord, styrofoam ball,
30.4 x 50.8 x 53.3 cm

Multiple Dropping on Copper Field, 2003
Polyurethane foam, copper screen,
30.48 x 53.34 x 52.07 cm

Galaxy Pot, 2002
Plaster, gouache, 13.9 x 26.6 x 26.6 cm

Galaxy Pot II, 2002
Plaster, gouache, 13.9 x 26.6 x 26.6 cm



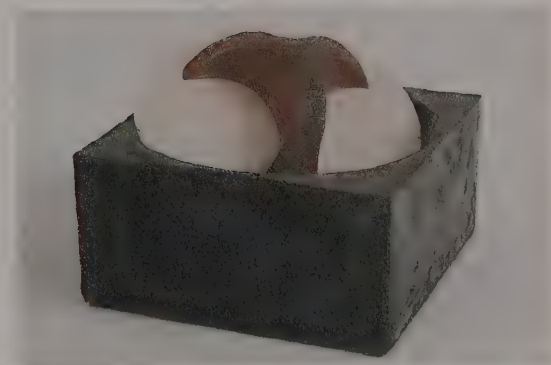
on a mimicry of the readymade, when the artist was in fact devoted to the redemption of artisanal skills. And while Brancusi made every effort to contextualize his sculptural objects—by positioning the sculptural epiphany in infinite variations on its supporting base, from citation of the primitive to stereometric abstraction, from an invocation of the use value of the caryatid to the melancholic reminiscences of Romanian peasant architecture—the incorporation of the presentational frames and the display devices of the commodity would be typically absent from all of these contextualizations. Paradoxically then, Brancusi's efforts to bond the object with its base, by situating it within a system of structural, textual and morphological correspondences, ultimately only fortified the boundaries that protected the presumably autonomous domain of the sculptural from any contamination with the regime of the industrially produced commodity.

The other figure important to Orozco is Kurt Schwitters. While being Brancusi's contemporary—and in many ways counterfigure—Schwitters was equally engaged with the proliferation of objects and with their seemingly unstoppable spatial expansion. And while there is no doubt that the splitting of object experience between mournful devalorization and ritualistic resuscitation is one of the defining forces of his collage aesthetics, Schwitters refused to compensate for the object's incessant decline and disappearance with the hyperbolic redemption of artisanal skills. Inevitably, Schwitters would also become the first sculptor to trace the totalizing expansion of those conditions into collective social space by transposing his collage/reliefs into proto-architectural dimensions. Yet, even his most radical contextualization, the *Merzbau*, as it enacts the transition from devalorized private object to the deluge of objects in public space, ultimately does not demonstrate a shift from the presumably autonomous space of sculpture to the actual spaces of commodity production; nor does his architecture mimic the display conventions of the industrial object. Instead, Schwitters's *Merzbau*, in a chiasmic fusion, simultaneously recites the ritual and the rhetoric of an architecture of cult, while merging it with a melancholic display of the object's disappearance in fetishistic proliferation.

Chunk, 2005
Plaster, asphalt, concrete, rocks, 21.59 x 20.32 x 10.16 cm

Clam Shell, 2003
Molded paper, foam, 25.4 x 41.91 x 30.4 cm

Hands Pressing Five Balls into a Mass after Drawing, 2005
Ceramic with graphite, 7.6 x 16.5 x 13.3 cm



Golden Drop on Melted Wax, 2003
Wax, gold pigment, MDF (masonite), 30.4 x 27.9 x 2.5 cm

Two Orbits with Nucleus, 2005
Mold, concrete, steel bearing, 29.2 x 20.3 x 20.3 cm

Three Sphere Connected Orbit, 2005
Mold, concrete, plaster, clay, 15.24 x 20.32 x 20.32 cm

Collection versus Production

The transformations of the support structure, and the actual integration of commercial means of display—such as the box, the display table, the vitrine, the accumulation—into the conception of the sculptural body itself do not occur until the early 1950s. They appear for the first time in the display tables of the *Scatole personali* and the *Feticci personali* that Robert Rauschenberg exhibited in Rome and Florence in 1952 and 1953. This exemplary shift would soon thereafter find its expansion in Arman's epochal installation *Le Plein* at the Iris Clair Gallery in Paris in 1960, and later in Claes Oldenburg's *Ray Gun Museum* and *Mouse Museum*, collections that compiled their objects in the manner of a mad thesaurus.¹

While motivated by rather different attitudes, these works, in their sheer infinite variation and repetition of objects, insert the regime of commodity production and distribution for the first time into the conception of sculpture. Moreover, they are also the first to literally incorporate the economic container or the commercial support devices within the sculpture itself, establishing explicit correspondences between the studio as the site of production and the shop as the site of distribution or between a private subject's compulsive collection of fetish objects and the institutional sites where public collections are invested with authoritative meaning.

It is of course important to recognize that the rhetorical and discursive formation of a "collection" becomes at that moment a decisive epistemic feature for the production of sculpture, suspended however, from the start, within an astonishing dialectic. At one extreme, it is governed by the artist's almost compulsive focus on the singularity of one particular type of object (from the "mouse" and the "ray gun" in Oldenburg, to the "eagle" in Marcel Broodthaers's *Musée des aigles* in 1972). In the manner of a fetishistic collector, the authors of these fictitious "collections" seem to invest all of their interest and desire within the prospects of mastering an uncontrollable proliferation by the seemingly exhaustive, yet never complete, accumulation of one particular object. At the other, as in Arman's *Le Plein*, we encounter an extreme desire to cancel any hierarchic singularity, and the "work" declares a universal nonhierarchical equivalence of all objects. Here, a random accumulation of all and everything that is governed by chance and aleatory principles alone acquires the status of an anti-collection.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that the profile of artistic and authorial identity itself comes undone in this shift. The sculptor had been traditionally associated with an ethos of active production—more ostentatiously and programmatically than it had ever applied to the painter. Production—that is, the mastery of means and materials—had been for centuries the epistemic center of the very performance of the sculptural, no matter whether it had been manually, artisanally, or industrially produced. A principle of “collection,” by contrast, now yielded passively to the onslaught of an already preproduced miasma of materials and objects, and it could merely register and record, at best just administer the overbearing masses of readymade objects.



Orozco's *Working Table*

Orozco's first *Working Table*, exhibited in Zurich in 1996, clearly positions itself within the lineage of these paradigmatic changes. At first sight the *Working Table* seems to be adopting the model of a universal equivalence of all objects and materials, positioning Orozco in a lineage with Duchamp and Cage. On Orozco's table, a found object is equivalent to a sketch in plasticine, a readymade is as important as a finely crafted model in clay. Yet the actual processes of accumulation and the criteria of exclusion and inclusion are much more complex in Orozco's *Table* than in the instances we have described, however briefly, as the predecessors of the paradigm of sculpture as collection. First of all, this is because the extreme diversity of object types on Orozco's tables abolishes any remaining hierarchy of sculptural genres, of objects and production procedures. Such a latent hierarchy, even if it had been performed merely as a travesty of fetishistic compulsion, had still demarcated the iconic, if not even iconographic, focus on a singular object type in Oldenburg's work, for example. At the same time, in manifest opposition to Arman's totalizing indifference to all objects as ultimately inevitably aspiring to the condition of garbage, the variation of object types on Orozco's *Working Table* fractures and differentiates traditional typologies further and further. This refinement of differences causes a continuous slippage between handmade objects and ready-made objects, between the partially made and the merely found, between the



Working Tables, 1993–1996, Zurich, 1996
Collection of objects, variable dimensions
Installation view at Kunsthalle, Zurich

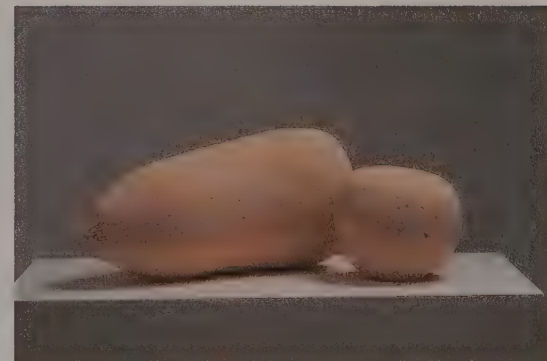
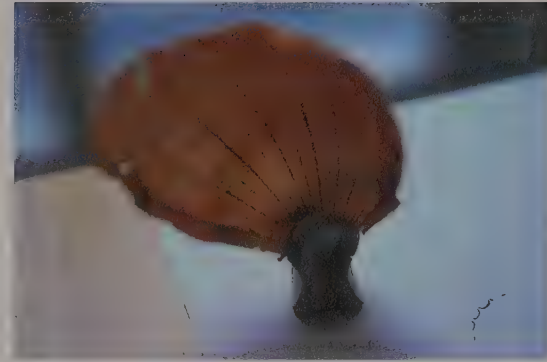
artisanal and the industrial, between the original and the reproduction. Lastly, one could argue that the discursive hybridity of these objects in fact records the actually prevailing conditions of object relations in society at large, and, as a result, the deep intertwining of sculptural production with both the artisanal and the industrial, with the subject's private relation to objects as one of possessing, as well as with the subject's public relation to objects as one of being possessed.

If the spectators' first encounter with the multitude of object types on Orozco's *Working Table* most likely generates bewilderment, it is all the more surprising to hear the artist's own comments on the project, describing the *Table's* display as though it resulted from a latent, yet almost programmatic order:

Some pieces are more like finished sculptures, like the *Socks* or the *Heart*, and some of them are like models, like the car, the small DS or the little *Yielding Stone*, which is the first one I ever made. Then some of them are totally readymade, like the box of soap or the shoebox. Some of them are failed sculptures, models that didn't work out but have some interesting possibilities for the future.²

Thus the "collection" of Orozco's work tables records first of all the diversity and heterogeneity of his conception of sculptural procedures and materials, and the inevitable hybridity of sculpture's object status in the present: in fact, the "work" on the *Working Table* in many cases is neither an object nor a work. It might be a sketch, a model, and more often than not it is a model for a sculpture that will never be made. It might be called material in transition toward becoming an object; it might be an object evolving in its becoming a work, stages of an object's sculptural abilities; it is a project of sculpture in production and in simultaneous negation. Briony Fer has given us a lucid description of the instability of these objects in her account of Orozco's *Working Table*:

Leftovers come to stand not for what once has been but what will be. They suggest forever fluctuating possibilities. What is kept as important and what is cast out as unimportant have always been mutually dependent and, needless to say, have been subject to radical historical changes over time. Focusing attention on the leftover puts into question the value of what we choose to keep. The things that seem important at first end



Working Tables, 1993–1996, Zurich (details), 1996

Two Socks, 1995
Papier mâché, 15 x 28 x 10 cm / 15 x 17 x 10 cm

pp. 164–165: *Working Tables, 1993–2000, Los Angeles, 2000*
Collection of objects, variable dimensions
Installation view at the Museum of Contemporary Art,
Los Angeles









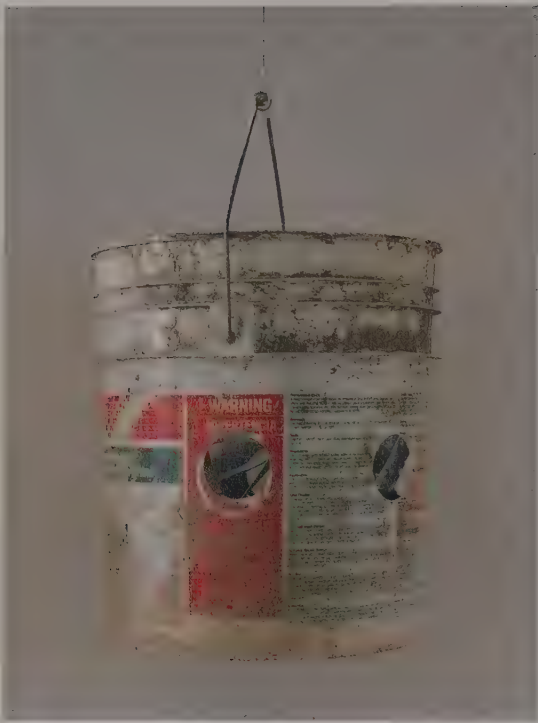
up being abandoned, and what is at first abandoned ends up being the most productive. Chance often works this way, when something that has been cast aside breaks through to something new.⁸

The *Penske Project* and Obsolescence

As Fer's observation illuminates, there is another fissure inside our object experience, and it is of a more temporal nature, originating in the object's duration in usage and time. An object in proper use (like Duchamp's urinal before its definition as a readymade, or Johns's lightbulb before its casting as sculpture) seems to have no temporality whatsoever. Neither does it incite a mnemonic desire to understand its functions within an alternate context or to fathom a dramatically different structure of experience (like a cult object or mask, for example); nor does an object in use make any announcements for a future function and time to come, a time when subject/object relationships and social spaces would have dramatically changed (like a Tatlin counter-relief, for example). An object in proper use seems to exhaust itself within its affirmation of present time, undoubtedly one of the sources of radicality in the experience of Duchamp's or Johns's propositions to insert these seemingly timeless objects into a sculptural proposition.

This affirmation of an object's presentness and use value was countered by Duchamp's fellow Dadaists Arp and Schwitters with an emphasis on obsolescence, the object's slow deterioration, or its inherent, increasingly rapid disappearance. One of the precarious tasks that Schwitters and Arp confronted was of course to distinguish the obsolete object from mere detritus. That is, to transfigure an object, merely freed by time from its deployment in the production of use and exchange value, so that it would become a mnemonic object engendering a reflection on the imaginary status not only of a future object, but also of future subject/object relations freed from all demands for production. What we perceive as aesthetic mastery in Schwitters and Arp originates first of all in their ability to rescue the fragment from appearing as mere junk, and to imbue the obsolete with an air of redemption.

Gabriel Orozco's *Penske Project* (1998) expands these concepts into the present, defining once again totally different parameters for sculptural production. First of all, by collecting building materials, or their ruinous leftovers, and the detritus of architecture, the work transfers sculptural reflection explicitly from the sphere of the commodity object to the sphere of the architectural fragment and to sculpture's problematic, if not impossible, relation to



Penske Project: French Fries View, 1998
Mixed media, plastic and metal, 50.8 x 10.2 x 35.6 cm

Penske Project: Fractal Bucket, 1998
Mixed media, plastic, 52 x 58.4 x 58.4 cm

pp. 170–173: *Penske Project*, 1998
Installation view with *Pinched Stars* and *Dandelions*
Photos: Cathy Carver, New York

public space. The *Penske Project* performs the public and inevitable negation of sculpture's aspiration to architecture.

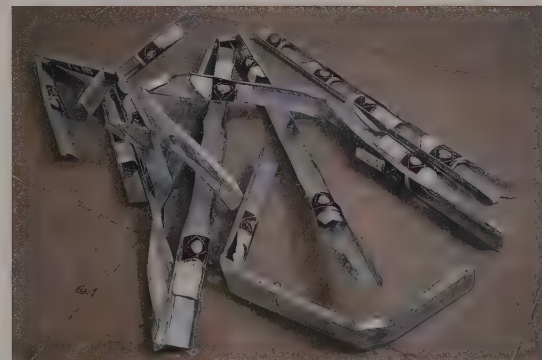
Second, as we had already discovered in the discussion of *Working Table*, the *Penske Project* presents us once again with an inextricable simultaneity of object types and materials, social practices, and spheres of production that had been kept separate—with the exception of Schwitters—in almost all sculptural operations up to that moment. Sculpture had either defined itself within the sphere of the object, of the model, or of the construct. If it had indeed claimed to be situated within public space, it would have been inevitably positioned within the sphere of industrial construction, if not the monument. In its opposition to these material, typological, and categorical hierarchies of sculpture, and in its all-encompassing approach to a universal equivalence of found materials and objects that the artist collected in a performative daily operation for a period of time, the *Penske Project* seems to introduce John Cage's conception of universally available ambient noise as one of the elementary materials of musical composition (as for example most evident in his famous work *4' 33"*) for the purposes of sculpture in the present.

Nevertheless, each of the seemingly randomly collected elements of the *Penske Project*, explicitly or implicitly, refers to the architectural dimension of sculpture. Even the numerous packing devices and boxes that seem to have drifted more or less accidentally into the construction debris of the *Penske*



Penske Project in process, New York, 1998

Penske Project in process, with *Centipede* and *Blinds on Rubber Mat*, 1998



Penske Project: Centipede, 1998
Wood, 38.1 x 304.8 x 121.9 cm

Penske Project: Blinds on Rubber Mat, 1998
Iron, wood, 40.6 x 175.3 x 175.3 cm

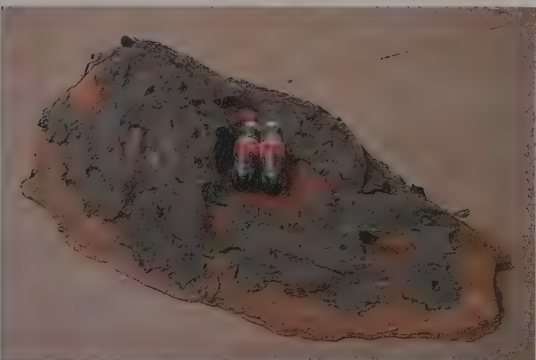
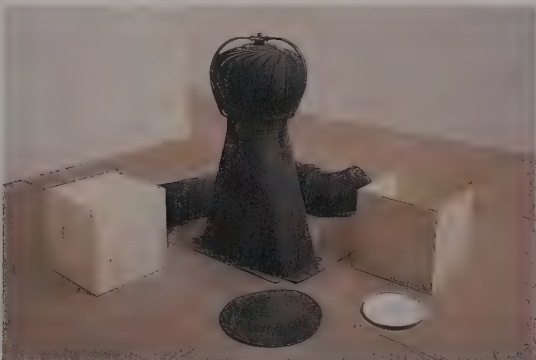
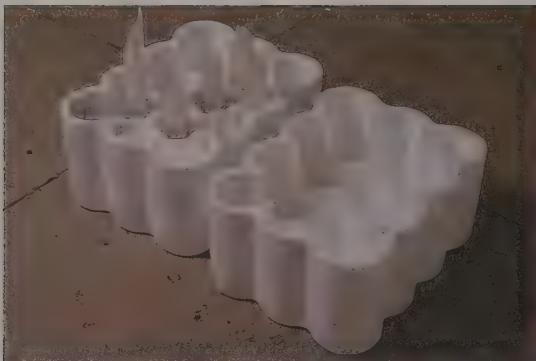
Penske Project: Final Octopus, 1998
Mixed media, cardboard, 38.1 x 248.9 x 116.8 cm











Penske Project: Box Full of Broken Lights, 1998
Polystyrene, glass, 34.9 x 66 x 43.2 cm

Penske Project: Why a Chimney?, 1998
Metal, wood, 96.5 x 172.7 x 142.2 cm

Penske Project: Eye in the Brick, 1998
Brick, matchbox, 6.4 x 10.2 x 5.1 cm

Penske Project: Coca Cola Lovers, 1998
Papier mâché, 25.4 x 144.8 x 76.2 cm

Project, still foreground their former function as “shells” that once housed objects. Or rather, they refer to sculpture’s lost aspirations to become architectural, since these aspirations could only have a historical reality if each sculptural object, like each of its perceiving and participating subjects, could maintain an unalienated subject/object relationship and simultaneous communication in public space.

Since nothing could be further from those aspirations in the present, it is not surprising that sculpture, as in the *Penske Project*, can only manifest itself in the most radical negation of architecture, in its ruins. Once again, the comparison with Schwitters’s *Merzbau* is illuminating. It tells us to what extent such an aspiration towards a sculptural/architectural articulation of the breakdown and eventual disappearance of public social space could at least still be conceived in Schwitters’s work in an actual architecture of negation. By contrast, in Orozco’s *Penske Project*, it can only take the form of the ruinous object; it can define its relation to architecture only in terms of a total negation.

What distinguishes Orozco’s work even more from the legacy of the *Merzbau*, to which it is clearly indebted, and to which it pays tribute in many ways, is of course the radicality with which Orozco suspends his urban construction at the very threshold between affirming the presentness of the objects of use value and an immediacy of induced obsolescence. Often these



Penske Project: Bent Mesh, 1998
Metal, plaster, three parts paint, 144.8 x 241.3 x 96.5 cm



objects appear as though they had just performed the function of use value minutes or hours before they—almost involuntarily—entered the register of of obsolescence, and an aesthetic of (re)collection. The sculptural object's insistence on the instantaneous transformation of use value into obsolescence mimetically reiterates the actual prescription of accelerated obsolescence within the object itself, thus it signals the disappearance of use value as a loss of experience at large.

The semblance of being attached to that which has passed, to that which has become dysfunctional, to the exhausted object, bespeaks—at least within sculptural propositions—a sudden turn. It signals resistance against the destruction of the object, solidarity with matter and memory itself. It is that devotion to redeeming materials and objects on their own terms that necessitates Orozco's decision to shortcut the shift from use value to exhibition value in the *Penske Piece* by fusing the presentness of Duchamp, Cage and Johns with the mnemonic dimensions of the work of Schwitters and Rauschenberg. Had the *Penske Project*, however, forfeited that precarious balance, it would have betrayed its commitment to an aesthetic redemption of the use value of materials and objects altogether.



Penske Project in process, New York, 1998

In a New York container, image from the film *Gabriel Orozco* by Juan Carlos Martín, 2002

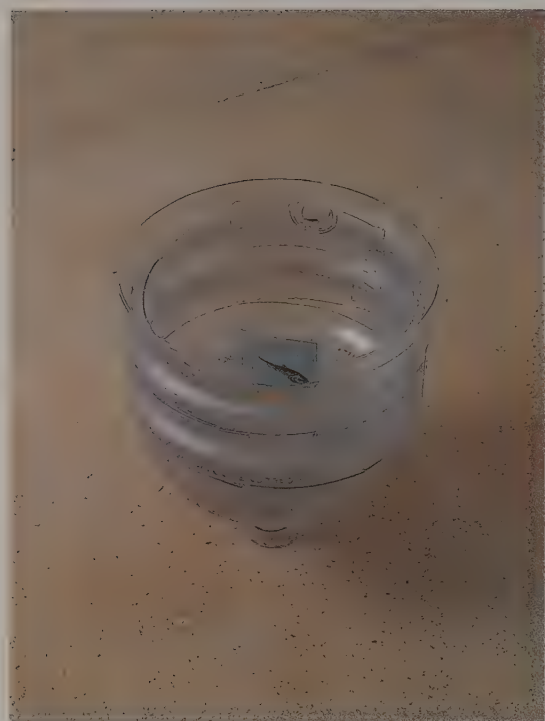
Penske Project: Found Holes in a Triangle, 1998
Wood and paint, 61.6 x 104.1 x 119.4 cm

Penske Project: Open Door, 1998
Plastic, metal, 77.5 x 26.7 x 14 cm

The Dialectics of Deskilling

Analogous to the loss of use value innate to the objects accumulated in the *Penske Project*, their seemingly arbitrary selection defies even the slightest reminiscence of criteria, competence, and artistic or artisanal skills in the decision-making processes leading to the production of the sculptural object. In fact, Orozco's performative collection of construction detritus constitutes a further apogee of the historical project of deskilling sculpture (and in this regard, it could well be seen as the dialectical counterpart to Thomas Hirschhorn's performative insertion of his own work within the spaces and practices of the Paris garbage collection. To give it its proper institutional and social space, the actual reality within which the work of art has to be situated to retain its authenticity, Hirschhorn's own painterly and sculptural reliefs had to be inserted as unaltered objects into the professional collection of a city's garbage. In a dialectical countermove, Orozco's artistic collection of the refuse of a large city—in this case, New York—inserts its findings in a totally unaltered manner into the gallery space itself.

There is, as always in Orozco's work, an enigmatic contradiction at the very center of the enterprise, since the universal prevalence of construction detritus in the *Penske Piece* is regularly ruptured by another type of object that at first sight does not seem to belong to the objects otherwise presented,



Penske Project: Fish Aquarium, 1998
Plastic, card, 34.9 x 29.2 x 29.2 cm

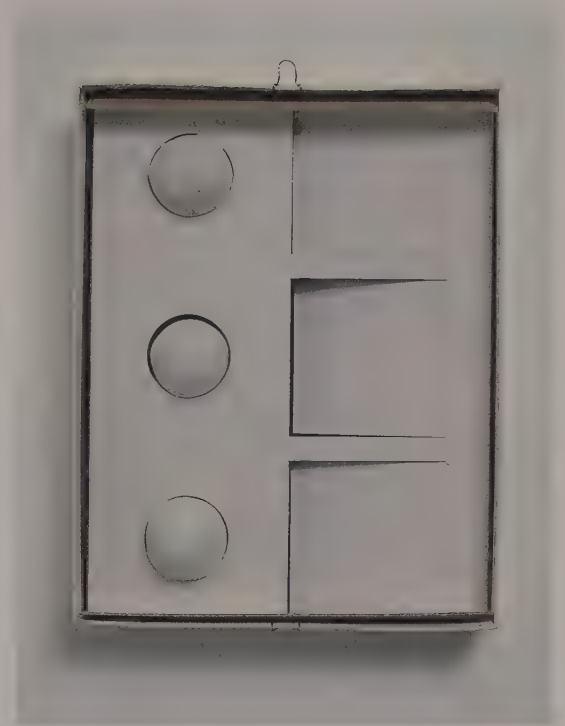
Penske Project: Jingle Bed, 1998
Polystyrene, fabric, 68.6 x 170.2 x 58.4 cm

such as paint buckets, fragments of window shades, doorjams and frames, remnants of mortar and plaster. And that object type is of course the box, the container, the packaging material whose own obsolescence is immediately signalled by the absence of the object that it once used to shelter. The empty box, a container of objects that have disappeared, had been of course one of Orozco's paradigmatic objects since the very beginning. Most programmatically and stunningly, he had presented it in *Empty Shoe Box* (1993), an object that has gained—with hindsight all the more so—an epistemological authority approaching the status of Duchamp's first, pure unadulterated readymade. The reasons for the quietly compelling attraction of an utterly banal object are of course manifold, yet one primary explanation could be found in the fact that the presentation of an empty container, rather than the object itself, traces the very shift from use value to exhibition value that has occurred in the culture at large.

The box is, of course, the quintessential transitional object, mediating between use value, exchange value, and exhibition value. Performing all tasks simultaneously, it has by now acquired a greater epistemological importance than the object itself.* In the same way that the container signals the simultaneity of all object values, it also pronounces the simultaneity of the object's temporalities. While closed, the container promises the object's future epiphanous appearance, the literal unfolding of its mythical use value, yet after the object's departure, having delivered its services to produce exchange value, the container contains nothing but obsolescence and signifies object loss in its purest form.

It is precisely at this juncture that we can understand why the seemingly inappropriate inclusion of packages and containers within the material collection of the *Penske Project* is actually perfectly logical and continuous with the project's overall delivery: in the same manner that the construction detritus delivers an allegorical negation of the desire for sculpture's activation of collective simultaneous spatial experiences, the box, in itself a hull, a shell, and a housing of the value system of objects, performs an allegorical negation of any object's promise to provide the experience of use value.

But Orozco's sculptural intervention would not contend itself with the container alone. Rather, he stages an active dialectical countermovement within the allegorical shells that he had collected. Inserting what one could call the minuscule units of a fundamental impulse of sculpting (in the same manner as, and even somewhat reminiscent of, the smallest units of paint deployed by Niele Toroni in his paintings), the artist randomly places these



Penske Project: Bent Mesh (detail), 1998
Metal, plaster, three parts paint, 144.8 x 241.3 x 96.5 cm



“molecules” of modelling, the quantity of a few fingertips worth of material that a child might comfortably roll and form to make its modelling mark, within the slots and openings of the boxes that had once contained their objects. The little black balls and disks, slipped into the perforations of the containers, filling some of those negative spaces whose objects and display functions have suddenly disappeared, are the quintessential anti-fetishes, giving a glimpse of the collectively dormant symbolic resistance against the total reification, if not the extinction, of subject/object relationships.

These banal balls of plasticine or plaster, as infantile a material as Oldenburg’s *papier mâché*, appear as primary in their compulsive formal definition as the involuntary sculptures photographed by Brassäi on behalf of the Surrealist idea that the desire to demarcate one’s somatic existence in space is an index of the fundamentally collective nature of artistic productivity. In spite of their appearance as black balls, at first suggestive of the quintessential fetish object, they distance themselves from the impulse of fetishization in a dexterous manual operation, primitive and quick, lapidary and ludic, skillful and infantile, pointless and performative, setting the imaginary rules of a game yet to be invented or yet to be understood: namely, how to regain access to the object, how to recover use value, how to experience the constitution of subjecthood in the relation to a materialist object of utilitarian function and within a social space of public communicative action.

These fictions of an elementary experience of the ludic, accessible to all, become at the same time the most credible act of resistance against the inevitably fetishizing impact of the sculptural operation itself. In fact, these imbecile gestures and objects perform the countersculptural gesture as a countercultural one, by introducing imaginary games whose rules have not been yet written, or whose rules remain, at least for the time being, unknown. Yet in the same manner that Schwitters could only construct a cultic space at the condition of proclaiming it to be a totally countercultic architecture, a travesty of cult rather than its belated and desperate resuscitation of ritual and rite, Orozco’s invocation of the ludic sustains its credibility only at the condition of an impossible enactment of the rules of the game. Its potential for resistance is paradoxically retained in the negation of the game that it seems to propose, since an acceptance of the ludic as the sole solution of the totally alienated conditions of object experience, would, by its reduction of the subject to an infantile participant, betray the very promise of a radical resuscitation of object experience whose tasks sculpture has to perform.

Penske Project: The Industrial Revolution, 1998
Cardboard box, plasticine, 5.7 x 37.1 x 31.8 cm

Penske Project: Black and White Game, 1998
Cardboard box, plasticine, five white balls, five black balls,
6.4 x 41.3 x 33 cm

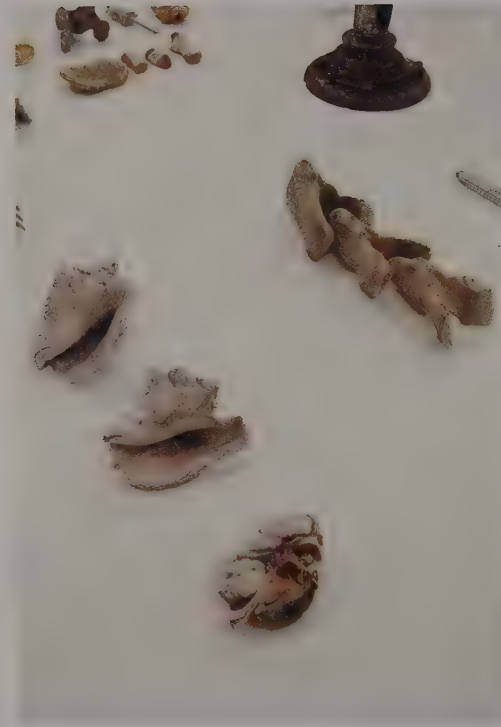
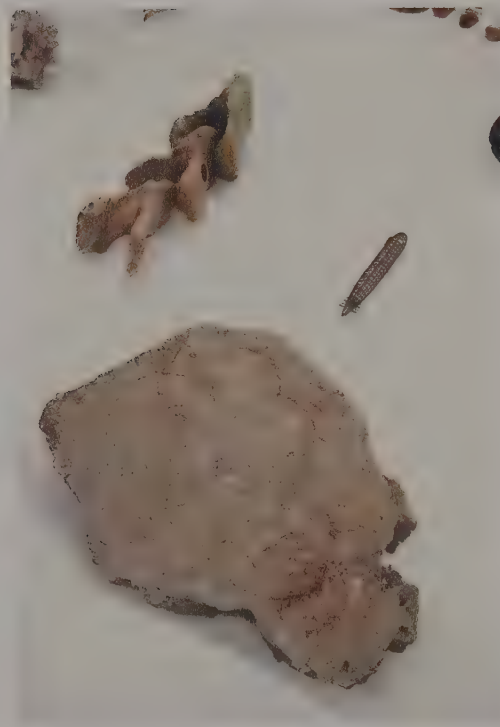
Penske Project: Drawing Platform, 1998
Cardboard box, plasticine, 10.2 x 59.7 x 33 cm

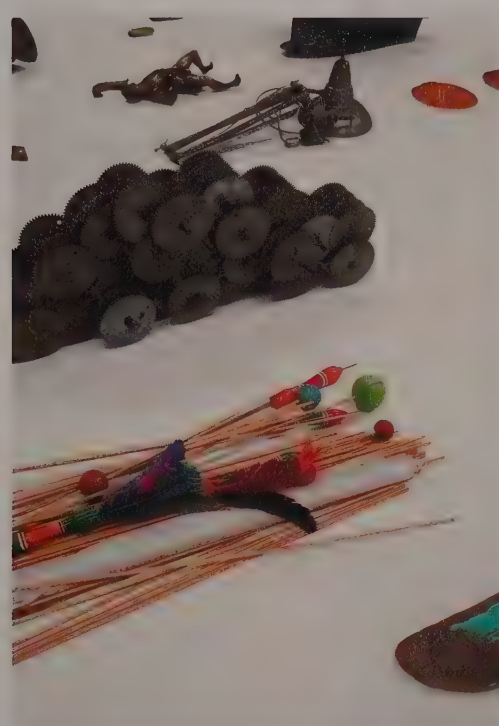


Empty Shoe Box, 1993
Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm

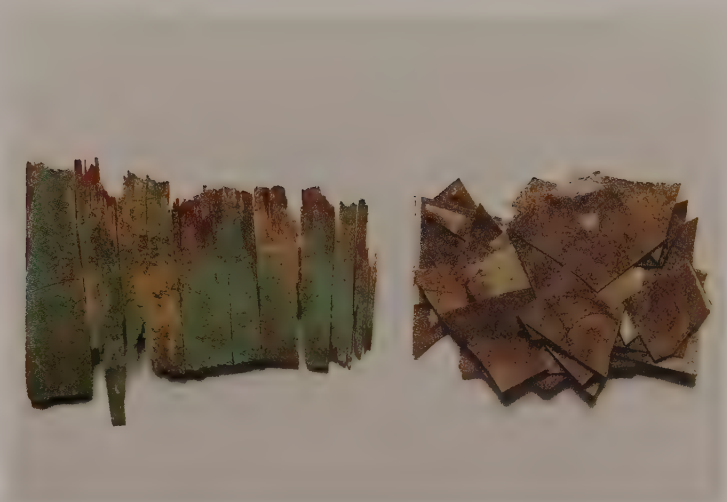


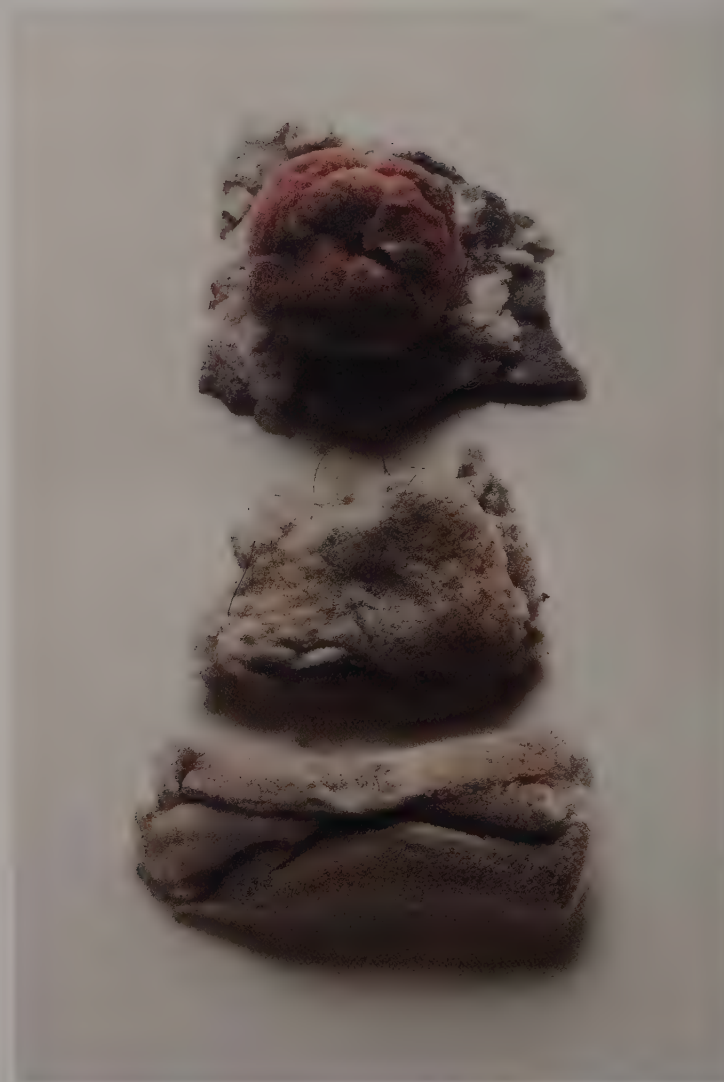


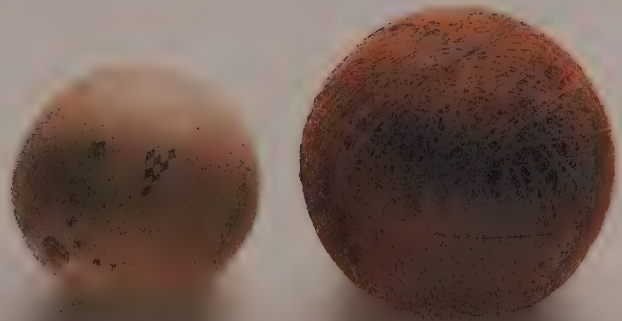
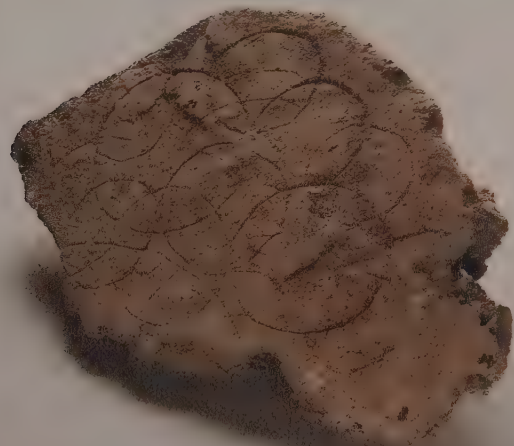














Terracotta: Residual Skills and Emerging Reskilling

Analogous to the dialectical inversions of object types and sculptural procedures in individual works like Orozco's *Working Tables* or the *Penske Project*, we encounter these oppositions in the developmental sequence, or rather, the alternating phases in his oeuvre at large. The sudden shifts from one project to the next make one wonder whether the artist merely refuses to define his oeuvre along the traditionally respectable lines of stylistic homogeneity and morphological consistency—a monolithic virtue, if ever there was one, that has determined the aesthetics of American minimalism for the past forty years. Or, whether the multiplicity of equally valid sculptural subject positions (e.g., the collector, the constructor, the photographer, the builder, the artisan, the painterly producer of objects) simply necessitates these constant shifts in the unfolding of the artist's oeuvre.

Orozco's recent series of terracotta objects implicitly addresses the problem of sculpture's possible return to artisanal production. It confronts us once more with one of the work's inherent and fundamental dialectics, continuously shifting between programmatic deskilling and the potential resurrection of artistic skills. The artist's earliest terracotta *My Hands Are My Heart* (1991) had pronounced this dialectic in a primordial formulation, since the body was here identified as both the site of skill and artisanal competence and memory, as it was at the same time displayed as the promise of a universally available access to the sculptural impulse of modelling and almost mechanical mark-making.

The more recent terracotta works at first glance appear to relapse into a set of potentially reactionary *dispositifs* of seemingly guaranteed, and therefore mythical, identities.

The first myth would be that of an originary artisanal foundation of the production of all sculpture. The second one would be that of the locally, regionally, and historically specific sites, materials, and production procedures of the crafts of plasticity. It would be rather tempting to position Orozco's terracottas within a lineage of ceramic objects deriving from the archaic cultures of his native Mexico, since ceramic sculpture did not exactly originate at the cosmopolitan sites of the twentieth-century avant garde. Thus they would seem to affirm a latency (for some, long desired; for others, long suspected) of regionally specific features in Orozco's work, a certain type of *mexicanismo*. And thirdly, the densest concoction, particularly difficult to unravel when it comes to the construction of cultural objects, would be that



My Hands Are My Heart, 1991
Clay, 15.25 x 10 x 15.25 cm approximately

of an almost natural, geopolitically—if not even ethnically—grounded identity of cultural producers, spectators and readers.

While we would not want to succumb to any of these rather tempting, yet ultimately dubious, explanatory propositions (and we might as well mention immediately that their validity is of course vehemently contested by the artist himself), we might also, for heuristic purposes at least, entertain them for a few moments. They might help us to understand what would actually be at stake in a resuscitation of obsolete forms of the skills of artisanal production. And more importantly, they might explain the lures (both promising and problematic) of a resurgence of models of artistic identity formation that accept the groundedness of the artist, if not explicitly in the narrow confines of a culture of the nation state, then at least in those of larger, yet specific, geopolitical formations.

At least one other historical precedent comes to mind, again vigorously denied as a figure of reference by Orozco himself, namely the ceramic objects produced by Lucio Fontana in the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, uncertain as it is whether they should be categorized as sculpture. In spite of Orozco's prohibition, it could be argued that certain historical, geopolitical and epistemological parallels might apply to at least justify an exploratory comparison.

First of all, Fontana's Argentine-Italian background, and his return to postwar Italy after temporary emigration, set up a perfect staging ground for the conflicted conditions of a totally asynchronous culture of object production: an agrarian versus an industrial culture, a rural versus an urban society, or a residual artisanal culture versus one of an advancing commodity production, resulting in hysterical claims for the salvation of obsolete forms provoked by the onrush of the postwar regime of Americanized consumer culture. Fontana's simultaneous work in startlingly innovative neon technology and archaic terracotta modelling bears witness to those extreme contradictions. And this inextricable simultaneity of obsolescence and innovation would be exacerbated twenty years later by the sculptors of Italian *arte povera*. (Orozco's encounter with their work was possibly even more important since it intensified those contradictions innate to his own subjectivity and historical formation.)

In Fontana's terracotta work, the license to insert artisanal practices into the context of neo-avant-garde sculpture had been obtained first of all by disguising the sculptural object within the traditional formats of ceramic objects, the vase, the vessel, the plate, the pot. Nevertheless, these objects made it evident, both in their size and scale as much as in their artistic ruptures—the





dysfunctional perforations of the surface, the cutting or slitting of the supposedly utilitarian container—that the purely artisanal execution and the seemingly functional form of the vessel served a primarily artistic desire: namely, to reposition the sculptural object between the traditions and skills of craft and the permutations of a rapidly deskilling technological production. Or, viewed in a different, yet complementary perspective, to position the work at the historical threshold between the local and historical boundaries of an Italian avant garde culture and an invasive internationalism of consumer culture.

While we have to shift and modify our contextualization from the fifties to the nineties, and from Italy to Mexico, I would argue that this general historical and geopolitical framework of an asynchronicity and uneven development in the conflict of artisanal/artistic cultures and technological object production still retains some of its explanatory validity. More importantly perhaps, this model might contribute to comprehend Orozco's seemingly contradictory artistic desire to simultaneously preserve artisanal skills and contest them in manifest acts of the deskilling of all sculptural operations.

Thus, a crucial work such as *Cazuelas (Beginnings)* (2002) pronounces almost programmatically that Orozco knows all too well that any mobilization of artisanal materials and procedures in sculpture would be not only reactionary, but also grotesque. It would lack any credibility, as would any claim to return to a supposedly guaranteed artistic and social identity grounded in the fiction of the nation state. After all, this is work being done at the very moment when these fictions are rapidly withering, if not already extinct, under the pressures of a global elimination of locally and regionally constructed practices of identity formation. Any suspicion or desire for a lingering *mexicanismo*, wishing to associate Orozco's work all too easily with the locally specific traditions of terracotta production, would find itself instantly cancelled by a first look at the actual production procedures of the work itself.

Cazuelas (Beginnings) challenges in almost destructive chance operations any credibility of the artisanally produced vessel: these objects are, first of all, not made by the artist; rather, they are manufactured by an artisan potter in a ceramic workshop in the Loire region of France. Secondly, they serve only as the ground or support structure of the artistic intervention, as an artisanal grid for the figure inscribed by the dual impact of chance and choice. It is only in Orozco's almost juvenile defiance of skills by chance, and the negation of the order of the artisanal tradition, that the actually sculptural definition of the work occurs.

In gestures of seemingly spiteful indifference, the artist catapults aleatory pebble-shaped disks of wet clay onto a vessel while it rotates on the potter's wheel during production. Once again, these clay pebbles perform as elementary units of sculptural desire and despair, a couplet we had encountered before in the plasticine balls inserted into the empty packaging shells. These material inflictions leave a large variety of imprints and impacts on the invulnerable surface and perfect shape of the archaic vessel. At certain times, they merely dent it; at others, they perforate its surface; and in some instances, they seem to smash the age-old and timeless form altogether. The title of the work, *Cazuelas (Beginnings)*, invoking the primitive practices of producing utilitarian objects as the beginning of all sculptural desire, is at least ambiguous, if not outright ironical. After all, it is the artist's actual destruction of the primordial vessel that is as integral to this work as is its formation by a master craftsman.

Two orders confront each other in *Cazuelas*: the immutable, age-old foundation of sculpture in its mythical timelessness of utilitarian value, and the aleatory principles of a willful subjection to chance operations, dislodged from any function as much as from any meaningfully grounded referent. The apogee of modernism, Mallarmé's analysis of chance in the "Coup de dés", is introduced here into the atavisms of sculptural production. His strategy had initiated the modern subject into the discovery that identity is a tragicomical dialectic: suspended between a total overdetermination in systems of language and of social and economical control that preexist the subject's formation, these systems of involuntary self-subjection are counteracted by random gestures and ostentatious acts in which the subject simulates self-determination and liberation from its fetters by symbolic and artistic means.

Recollecting the Body

Cazuelas (Beginnings) not only contests the fiction of a sustainable and substantial artistic identity that originates in the economically and culturally productive conventions of the nation state. It also dismantles the intricate alliances that sculptural technology (or the resistance to it), as much as materials themselves in their innate technological progressivism or crafty retardation, have traditionally formed with fictions of foundational identities in nation-state culture (an example to be recalled once more would be the quintessentially technological identity of American minimalism, and the complicated ambiguity with regard to that identity in Italian *arte povera*).





Untitled, 2002
Ink on paper, 30 x 22.75 cm



In Orozco's terracotta work this alliance is articulated as one of perpetual tension, if not of outright failure. Neither the fiction of an identity grounded in the culture of the nation state, nor the fiction of naturally or culturally meaningful materials and techniques, appear any longer redeemable, or even desirable. Yet the work denies with equal vigor the by now almost universal myth that all sculpture after American minimalism has to maintain an unconscious bond with the registers of technological and industrial production to be as deeply anchored in the mythology of technology as it had previously been grounded in the fiction of the artisanal origins of sculpture.

Both discursive frameworks—that of the local artisanal tradition and the ethnic and national specificity of the artist, as well as the myth of the artist as internationally, if not globally, legible industrial producer and technological constructor—are suspended in Orozco's work in a mutual negation and a precariously held contestation that defies any sense of a guaranteed identity that could be regained with fraudulent, that is, historically obsolete or invalid, means. And it is once again Orozco's irreverence towards both the ideological apparatus of tradition as well as that of technology, both of which inevitably frame his production and social identity as an artist, that makes his work all the more legible for a contemporary audience suspended in the same dilemma.

This speculation is substantiated if we consider the two series of terracotta sculptures following *Cazuelas* (*Beginnings*) that Orozco produced subsequently at the same workshop in France. Both series, the first comprising works such as *Double Tail* (2002), *Tri* (2002), and *Four and Two Fingers* (2002), as much as the second series of the so-called *Carbon* sculpture, expand and eventually surpass the dialectics of regionalism versus internationalism, or



Double Tail, 2002
Clay, 13 x 70.5 x 21 cm

those of craft conventions versus the techno-industrial model of sculptural production.

Instead they now set up a dialectic between the seemingly guaranteed corporeal foundations of sculptural production and perception, on the one hand, and an aesthetic of pure process and chance operations on the other. First of all these works challenge the assumption that all sculpture could naturally take recourse to the producer's and spectators' situatedness as psycho-physical, or somatic, beings in the world. Traditionally, the carnality and corporeality of sculpture had served to legitimize the ontological status of the category of sculpture itself. And while Brancusi had already contested this ontological definition of sculpture as being purely "of the body" in his perpetual transfigurations of bodily part objects into the mechanomorphic machine part, this dialectic is rephrased in Orozco's work with entirely different intonations.

The fusion of mechanical and anthropomorphic fragmentation in Brancusi's work, however, had also been legible as an affirmation of technological modernity and the immense liberatory promises of technoscientific progress; or at least it had performed an apotropaic function of assimilating the subject to the increasingly violent demands of subjection to the order of the technological. In total opposition to this modernist synthesis of biomorphism and mechanomorphism that defines the work of Brancusi, Orozco's fusion of the somatic with the mechanic in the terracotta sculptures, culminating in the *Carbon* series, appears more as a record of a tragic sense of loss, than as one of a progressive promise. It is a sense of loss that recognizes not only that Brancusi's initial utopian aspiration for a synthesis of the opposing forces had run its course, but moreover, that it might perhaps have been based—

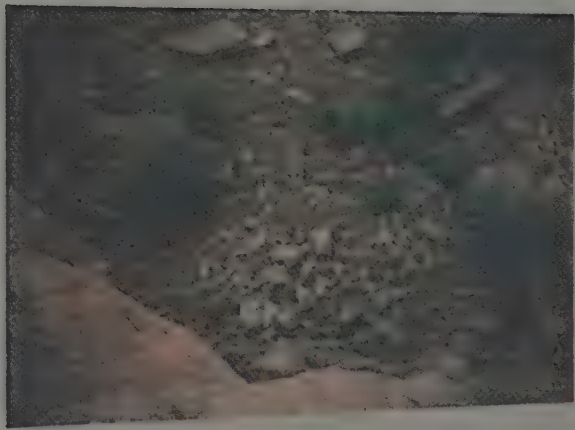


Four and Two Fingers, 2002
Clay, 13 x 39 x 19 cm



Tri, 2002
Clay, 14 x 18 x 19 cm

pp. 200–201: Installation view at the Chantal Crousel
Gallery, Paris, 2002







even in its initial stages—on a terribly optimistic misreading of the actual historical potential of an assimilation of the body—and by implication of sculptural morphology—to the regime of technology.

Very seldomly, with the manifest exception of the work of Eva Hesse, has the bodily fragment, the part object, or the somatic record been represented as totally contained and submerged within the matrix of purely machinic/technological registers. Yet Orozco's work adds at least one other dimension to this most complex of all sculptural attempts to redeem the subject's somatic presence against the totality of repressive reification. In his *Carbon* series, the biomorphic is fully sublated within the mechanomorphic, since these objects appear simultaneously as bodily fragments and as machine parts. And if sudden vitalistic flashes of the purely somatic, of an unalienated body, appear in these sculptures at all, they appear as always already charred remnants. The sinuous contours of these objects fuse an extinct biomorphism with an entropic condition, negating any residual concept of progress that might have at one point still emanated from the technological object as a lure for the body's mimetic assimilation.

Nothing would appear more improbable, if not outright impossible, than a perfect fusion of sculptural chance operations and a perfectly rendered bodily morphology. Yet we would argue that this is precisely what Orozco's sculptures such as *Four and Two Fingers* (2002) and *Double Tail* (2002) achieve in an utterly stunning bravura act, walking the tightrope between a totally amorphous regression of form, the mere result of process and chance, and a bodily representation bordering on a surrealist, if not neoclassical or even



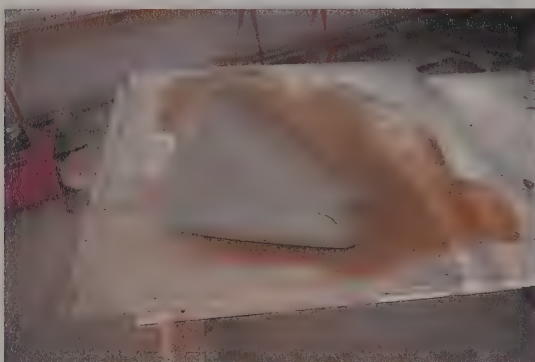
Three Arms, 2005
Clay with three parts black charcoal,
5.7 x 64.7 x 6.3 cm/ 5.7 x 55.8 x 10.1 cm/ 7.6 x 54.6 x 8.8 cm

Clenched Fist, 2005
Clay with black charcoal, 6.9 x 38.1 x 8.8 cm









authoritarian, resuscitation of the traditionally modelled body part (the languid and extremely elegant form of *Double Tail* inevitably reads at first like a tragically severed and fragmented arm, and almost simultaneously as an object or instrument of some unknown myth of pantheistic procreation).

Both *Double Tail* and *Four and Two Fingers* offer the semblance of a singular moment of somatic groundedness, the sublime instant of an utter assurance of being in the world, as much as being in one's body. Paradoxically, it is an intensity that results from a total suspension of sculptural intention, and from the total absence of mimetic modelling in Orozco's terracottas. This paradoxical synthesis of supreme chance and sublime bodily representation is almost inadvertently attained. Not surprisingly, it can occur only in the fragment, spatially defined as the part object of the body, temporally defined as merely one arrested moment from a continuous flow of processes of production, all equally valid.

The seemingly infinite number of charred fragments in the *Carbon* series attests to this all the more. If any somatic identity could be articulated by sculptural means at all, or so it seems in Orozco's terracotta sculptures like the black *Torso* (2006), it would be the one that found its anthropomorphic design by accident, the result of a random confluence of mass and gesture. Only as a lapsus of intention does sculpture become a credible bodily inscription and, paradoxically, a representation of somatic identity.

Just as the multitude of practices and models in Orozco's table sculptures had asserted a nonhierarchical order of the most diverse sculptural paradigms, Orozco's work asserts the viability of the artisanal and skillful execution of an object as one of the available, if highly problematical, facets within the apparatus of his sculptural production (unlike, for example, the emphatic and general prohibition of manual and artisanal skills in the work of a sculptor like Robert Smithson). In Orozco's terracottas, the manual modelling process inhabits a place of relative importance alongside all other practices defining his work, that of photography, drawing, the readymade and the found object, defined in a set of egalitarian relations without being privileged in any way over any other.

Which leads us to the last question, namely the task to reconsider what the current status of the historically central strategy of deskilling in all artistic practices (painting, drawing, sculpture, photography) might actually entail in the present situation. If deskilling initially had argued for a radical refusal of the privileged forms of experience embedded in acquired technologies of refinement and virtuosity (whether musical or sculptural, pictorial or

photographic), the massive campaign of deskilling had of course also inevitably advocated an implicit acceptance of a dismantled, if not anomic, subject whose primary forms of experience were to be as closely intertwined with the commodity structure as with the ruling principles of purely legal-administrative orders.

It should be emphasized that skills as linguistic competence, or as artistic and artisanal *techné*, or as cognitive perceptual forms of comprehension and commemoration, had of course never been the target of the radical project of deskilling that the avant garde had initiated with Duchamp's readymade paradigm. One paradox of aesthetic deskilling has of course been the fact that while the historical desire for artistic skills has disappeared, the desire to implement skills as an opposition to the anomic destruction of the self has increased its urgency.

1. The *Ray Gun Museum* would easily qualify as the first systematic museological accounting of a primarily phallic culture, whose every object promises the eternally unattainable phallus in substitutional forms.
2. Benjamin Buchloh, "Interview with Gabriel Orozco," in *Gabriel Orozco: Clinton is Innocent*, exh. cat. (Paris: Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1998), p. 127.
3. Briony Fer, "The Scatter: Sculpture as Leftover," in Helen Molesworth (ed.), *Part Object Part Sculpture* (Columbus, OH: Wexner Center for the Arts, 2005), pp. 222–233.
4. The object stood still at the center of Duchamp's attention in the conception of the readymade and its impact on sculpture. Even though, it should be noted, that by 1921 Duchamp might have been the first to recognize that the object itself was in crisis and was about to be replaced by an object *containing* the object, that is, its sign exchange value, when he decided to produce *Belle Haleine*, the first work of the twentieth century to actually pronounce these transitions.



Torso III, 2006
Clay, 63 x 32 x 28 cm





Torso IV, 2006
Clay, 35 x 21 x 16 cm



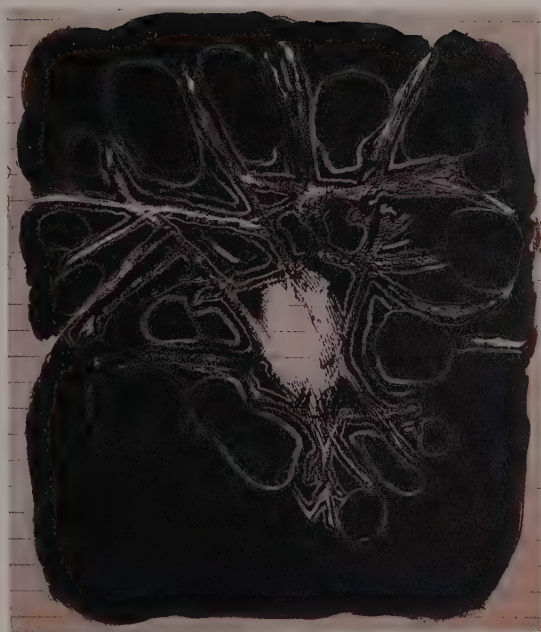
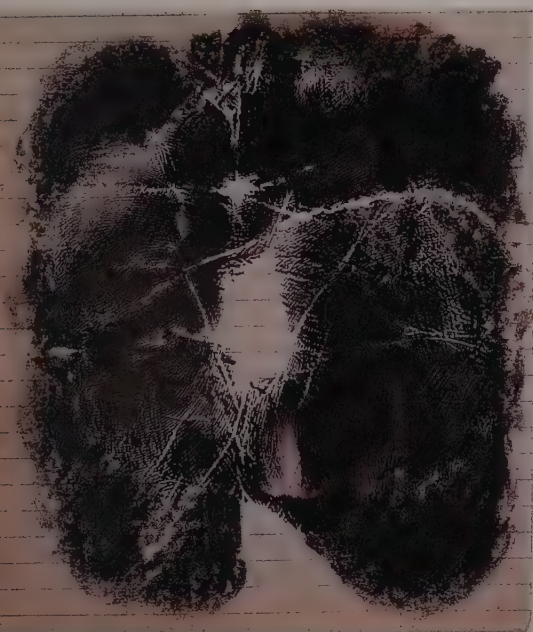


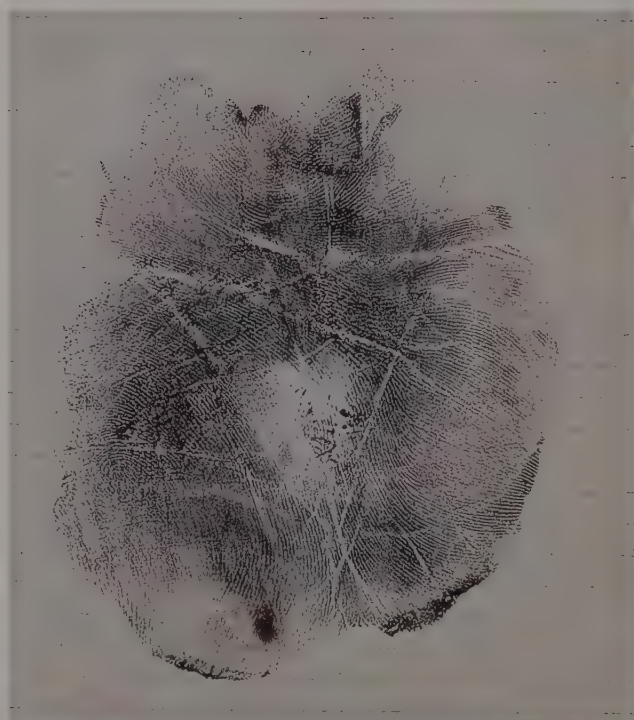
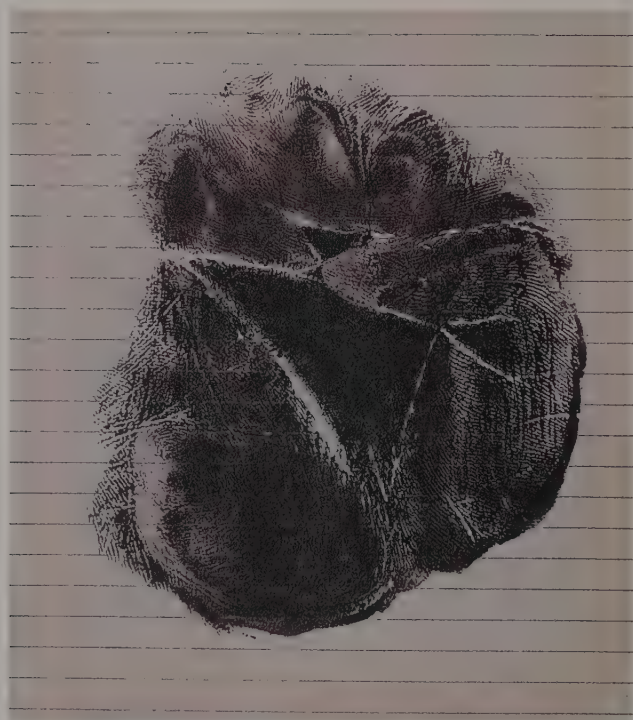
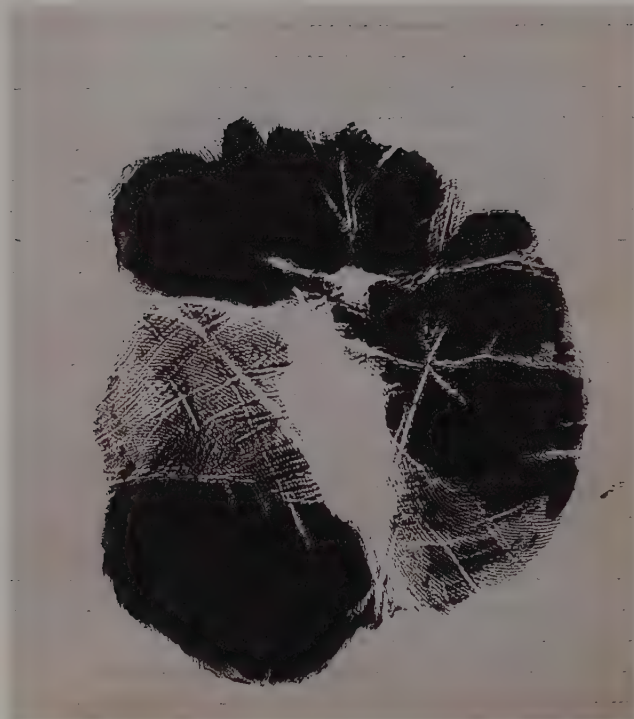
Black Body I, 2006
Clay, 44 x 45 x 45 cm





Black Pot, 2006
Clay, 28 x 36 x 30 cm



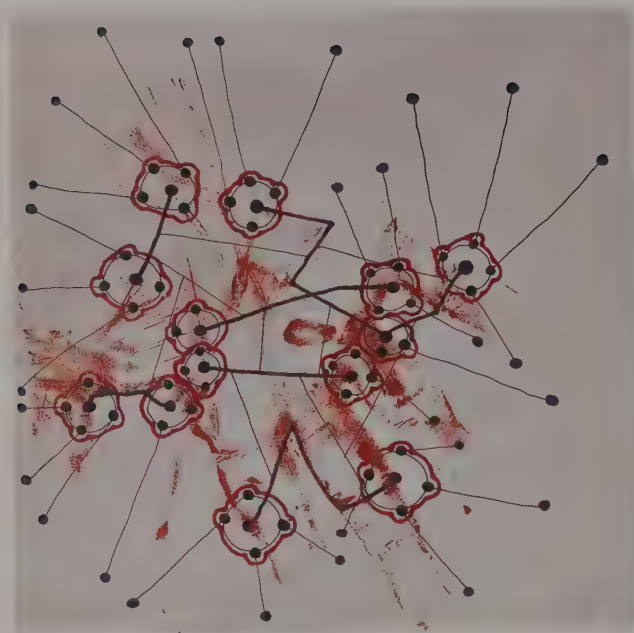


Untitled, 2001
 Graphite, pigments and acrylic, 4 drawings,
 13 x 11 cm each





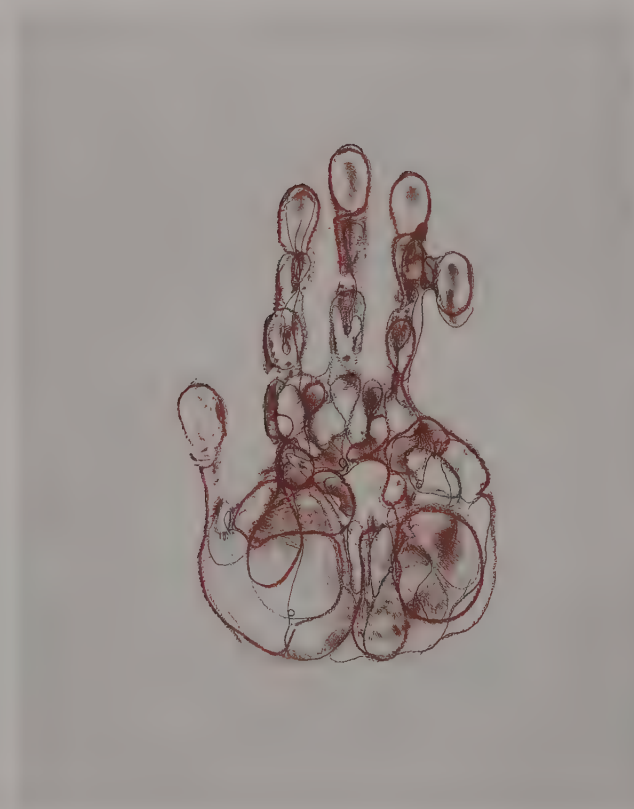




Untitled, 1999
Acrylic, ink on paper, 17.8 x 17.8 cm



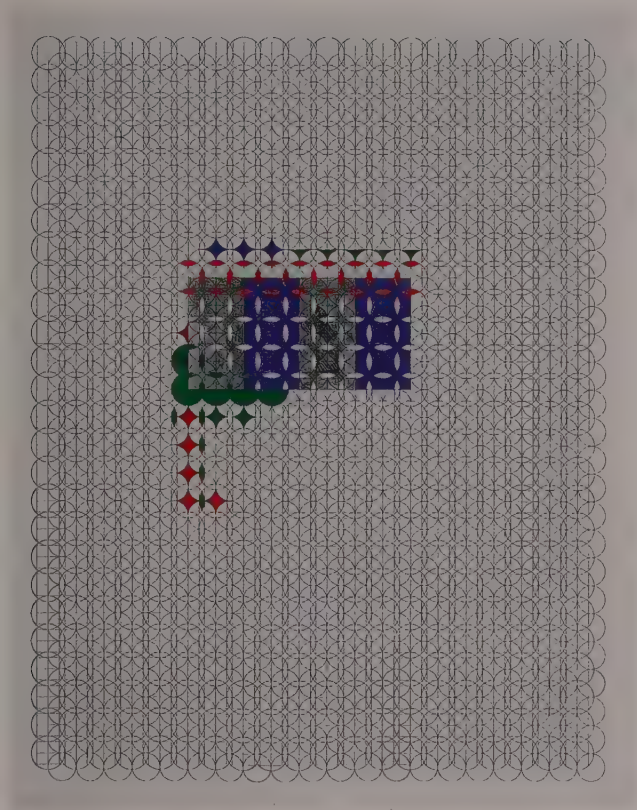
Fear Not, 2001
Drawing, acrylic, wood on paper, 31.8 x 24.6 cm



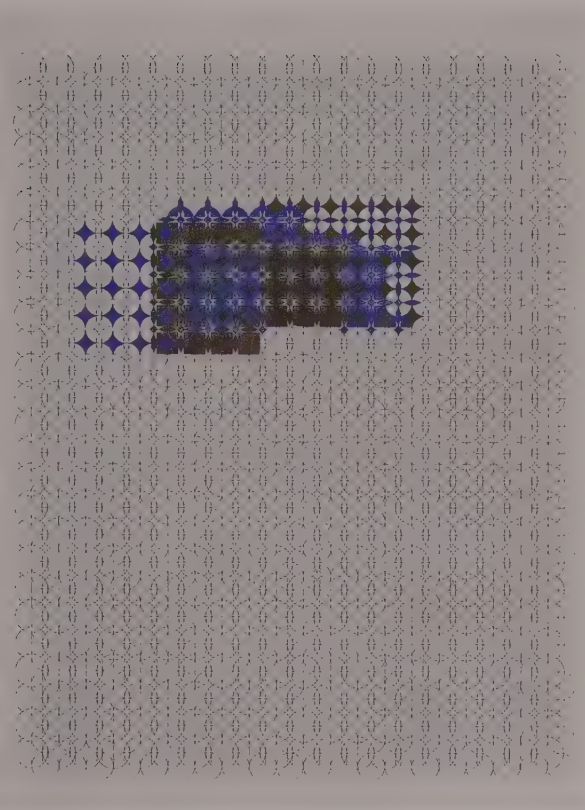
Untitled, 2002
Ink on paper, 28 x 21 cm



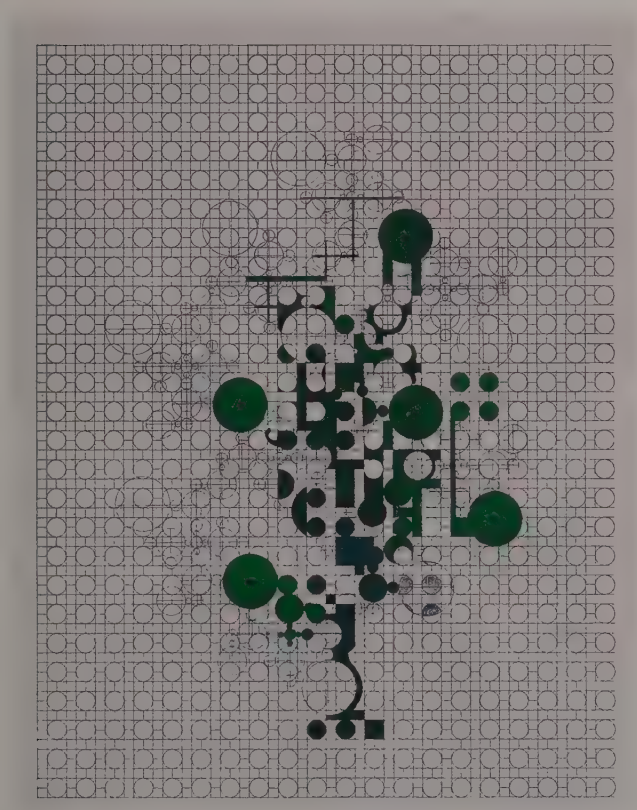
Untitled, 1999
Acrylic, graphite, ink on paper, 17.8 x 17.8 cm



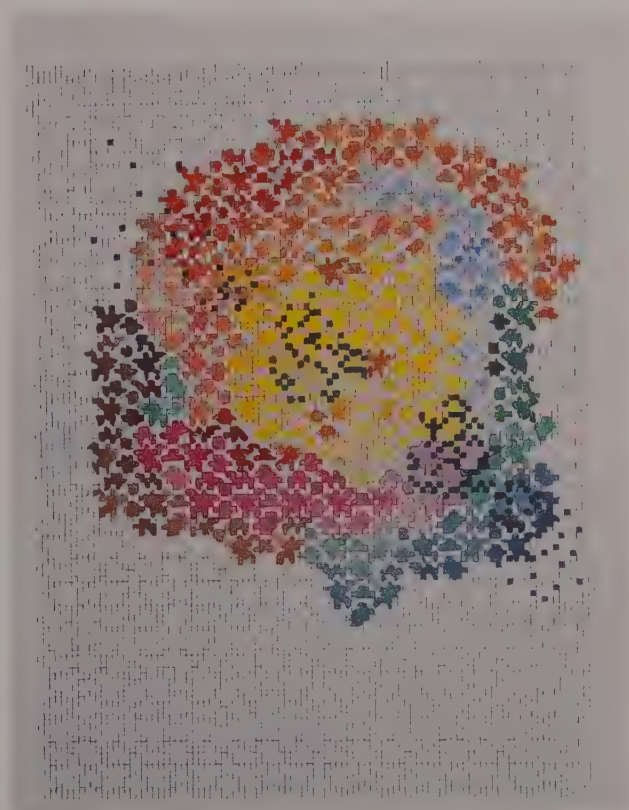
Puddle 68, 1996
Drawing, digital print, acrylic, graphite, 27.9 x 21.6 cm



Puddle 43, 1997
Gouache on laser print, 27.9 x 21.6 cm



Puddle 33, 1997
Gouache on laser print, 27.9 x 21.6 cm



Untitled, 2000
Watercolor on digital print, 29.8 x 21 cm

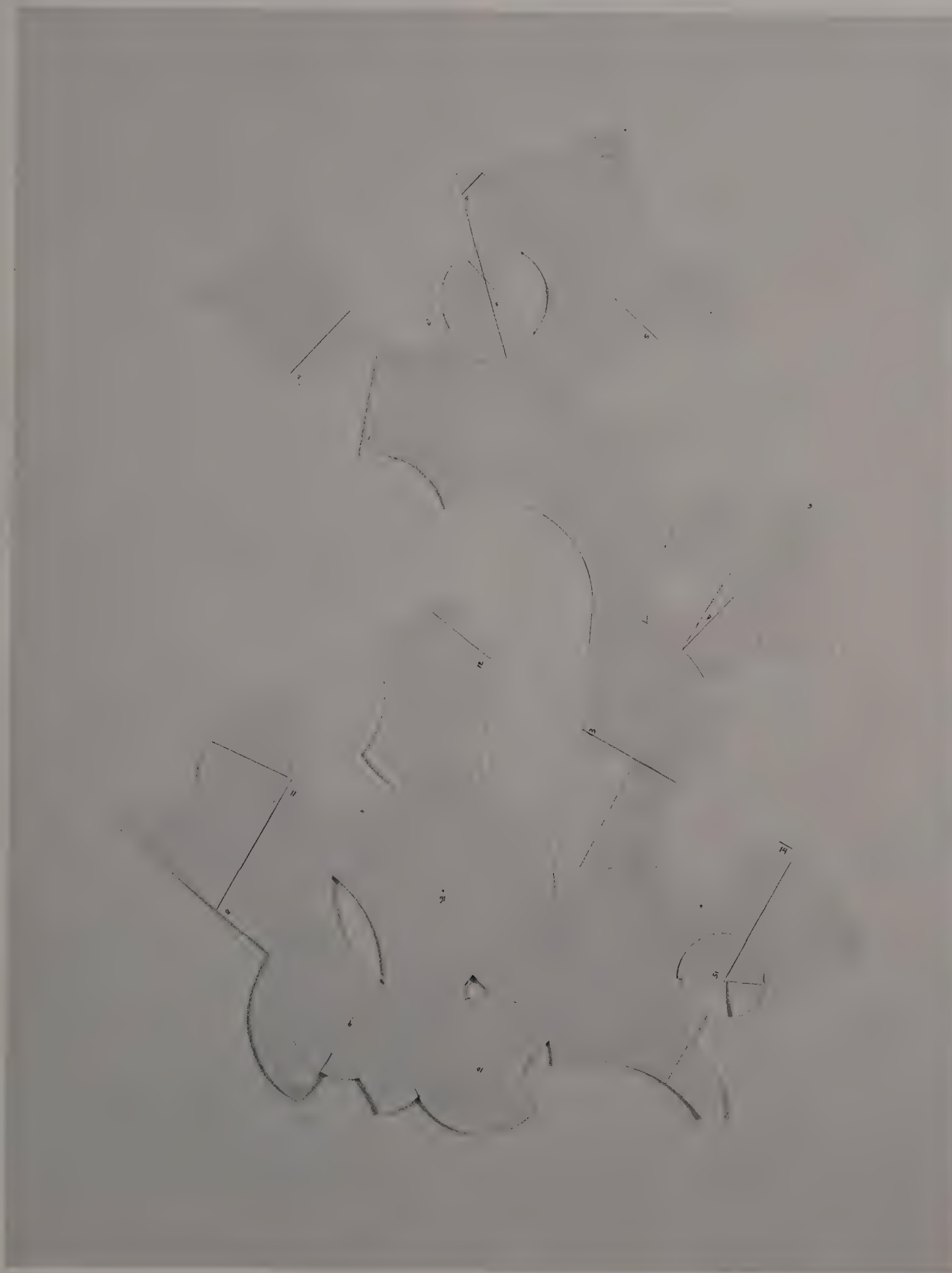


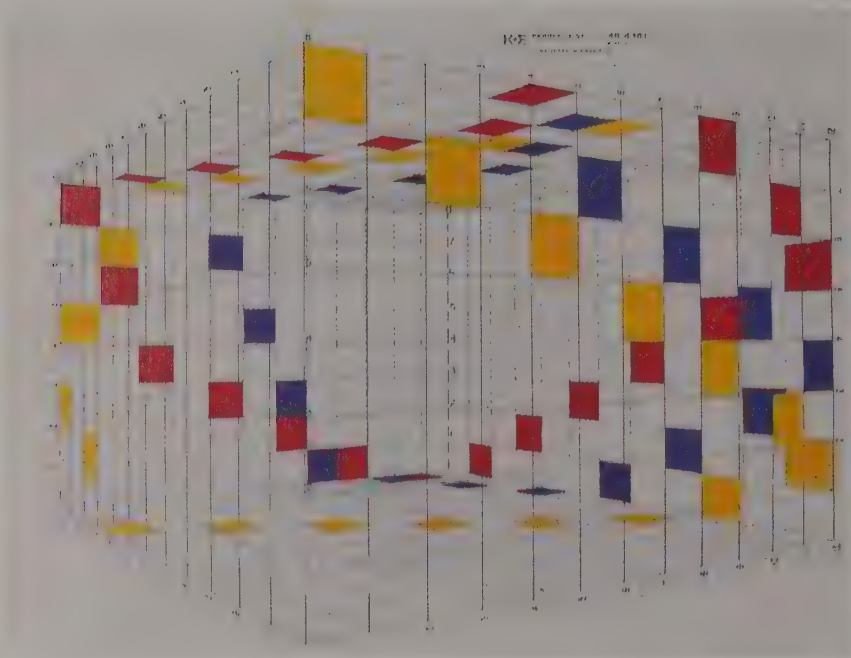
Eroded Suizeki, 2002
Collage # 25, 28.6 x 20.6 cm

Eroded Suizeki, 1998
Collage # 3, 28.6 x 20.6 cm

Butterfly Effect, 1998
Collage # 9, 29.8 x 23.5 cm

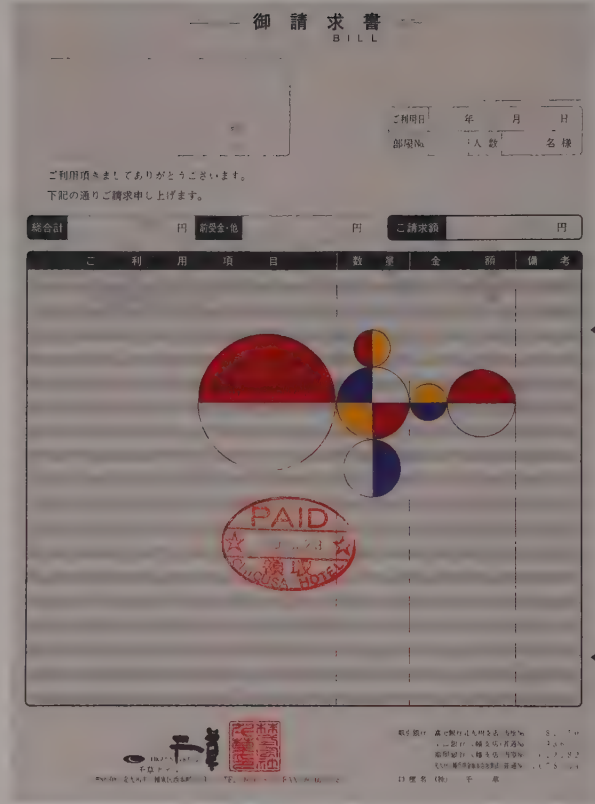
Butterfly Effect, 1998
Collage # 11, 29.8 x 23.5 cm



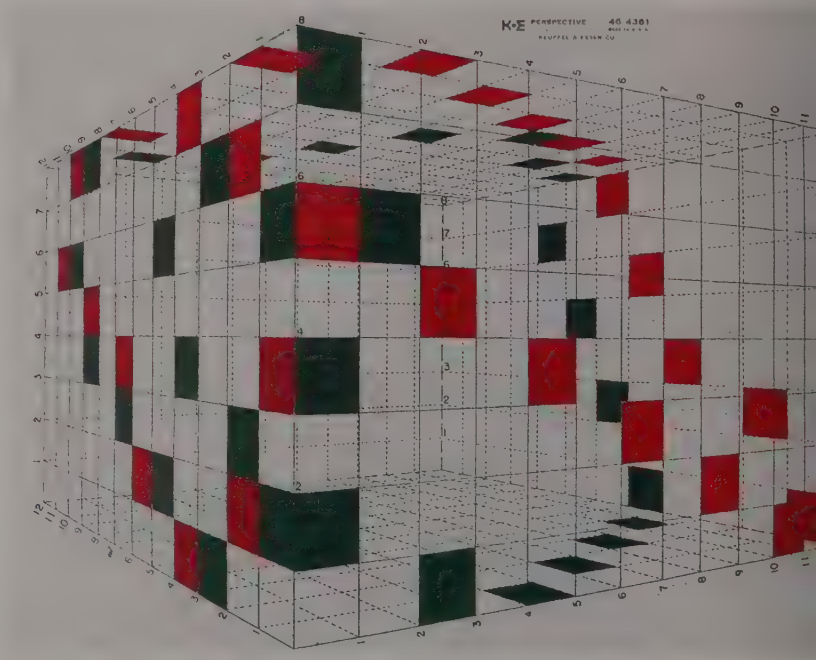


Untitled, 2001
Gouache on paper, 27.9 x 35.6 cm

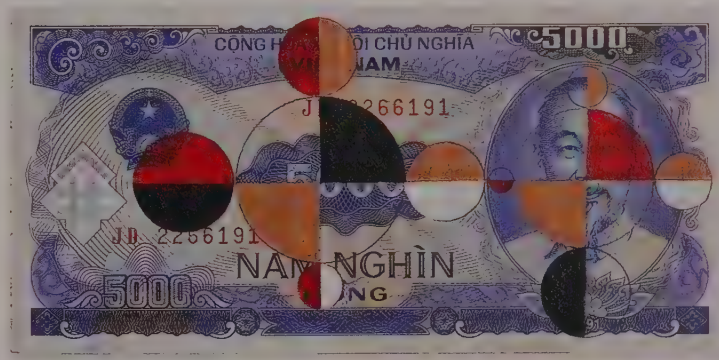
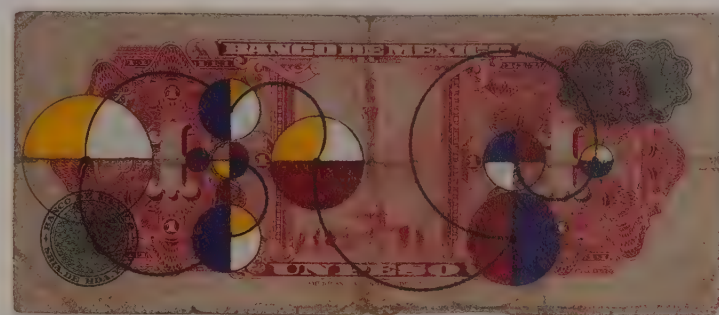
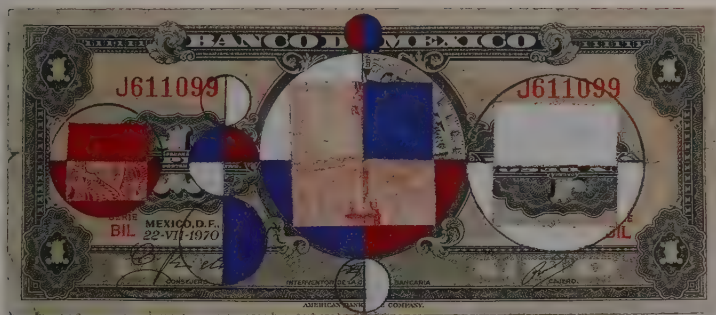
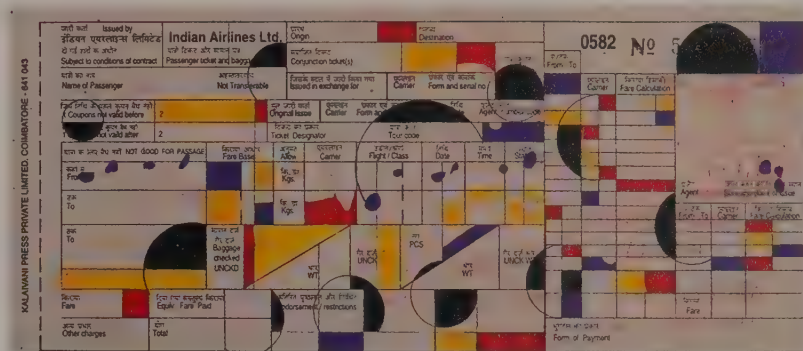
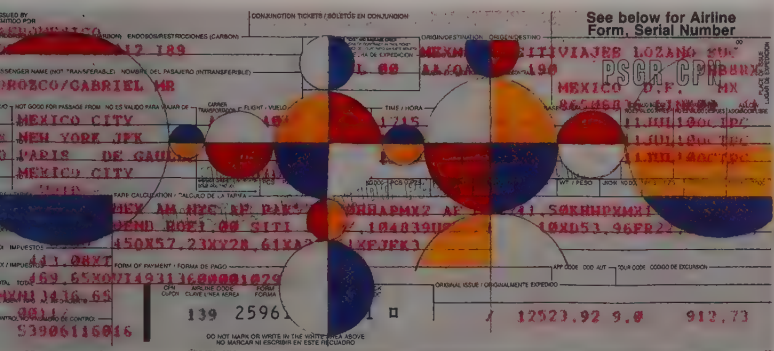
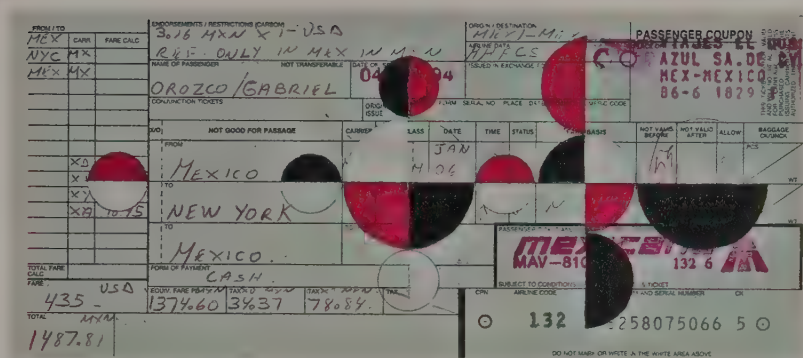
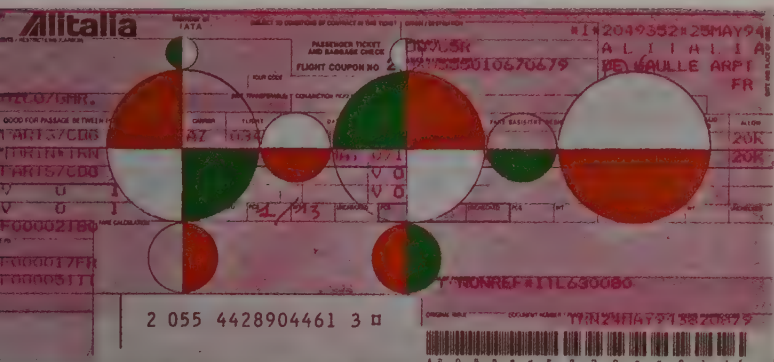
Untitled, 2001
Gouache on paper, 27.9 x 35.6 cm



Untitled, 2000
Gouache on dry-cleaning bill, 28 x 20.3 cm

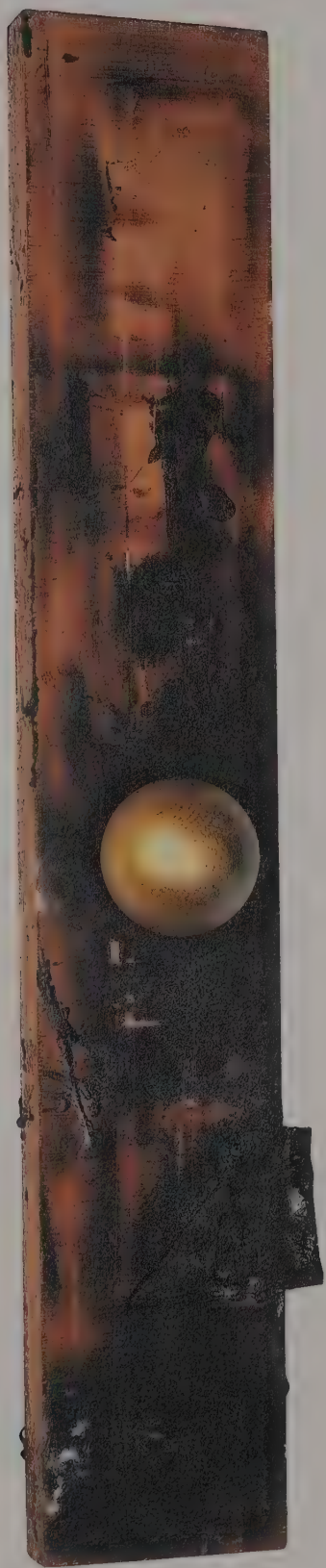


Untitled, 2001
Gouache on paper, 27.9 x 35.6 cm



Alitalia, 2001
Gouache on airplane ticket, 18 x 25 cm
Mex-NY-Paris-Mex, 2001
Gouache on airplane ticket, 8.5 x 19 cm
Untitled, 2001
Graphite and gouache on one-peso bill, 18 x 25 cm
Growing Grapes, 1997
Gouache on bill, 21.6 x 27.9 cm

Mex-NY, 2001
Gouache on airplane ticket, 18 x 25 cm
Untitled, 2002
Boarding pass, acrylic, ink, 8.57 x 20.37 cm
Untitled, 2000
Gouache and pencil on one-peso bill, 7 x 15.5 cm
5000 Dong, 1999
Gouache, graphite on bill, 20.9 x 29.8 cm



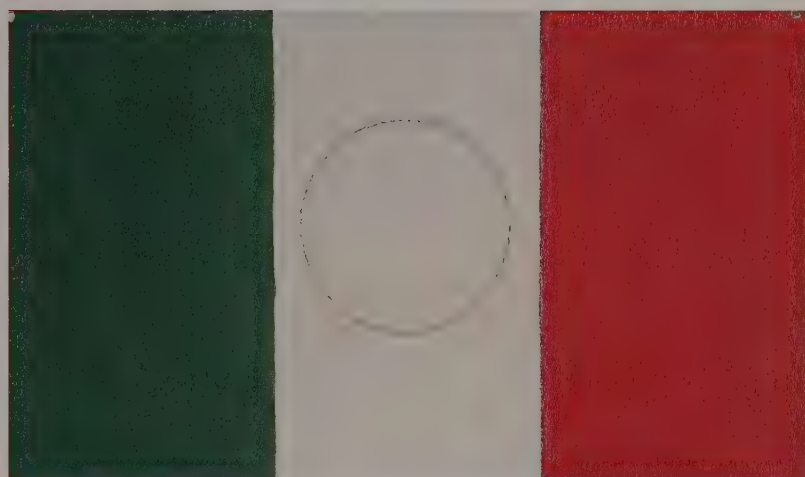
Untitled, 2004
Mixed media, 52 x 13 x 3 cm



Lattice, 1990
Mixed media, 40 x 30 x 10 cm

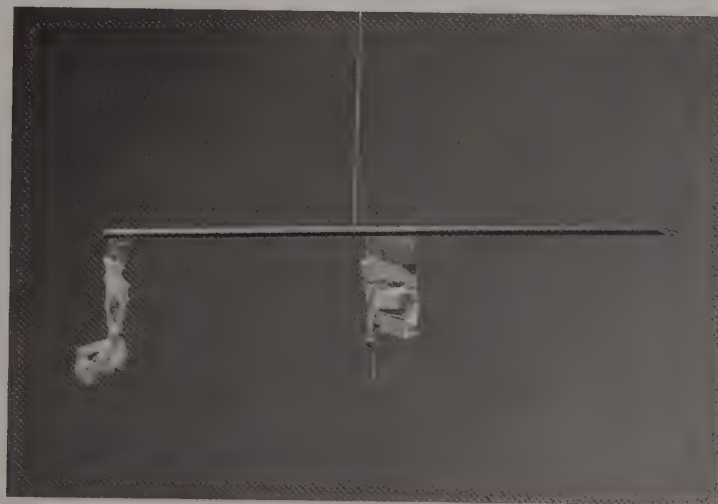
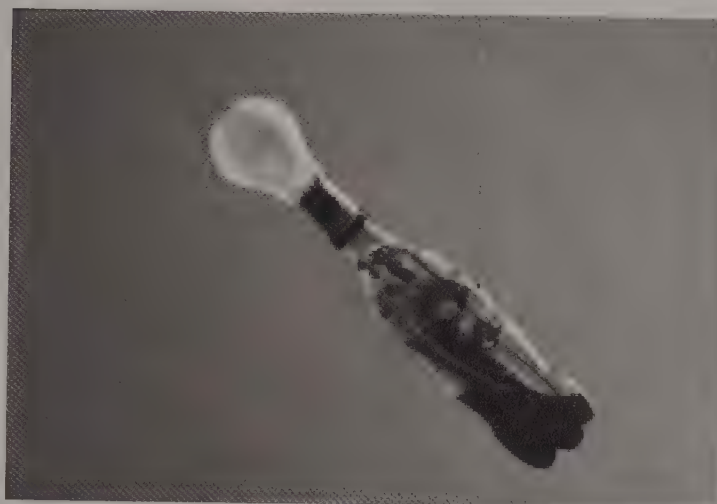
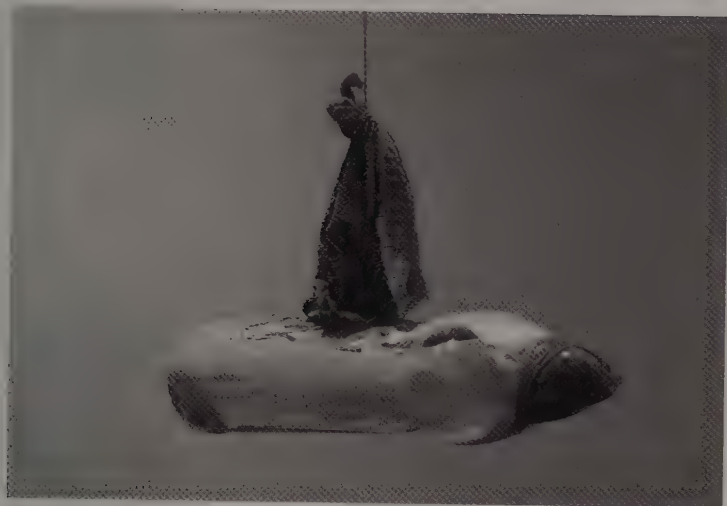


Flag, 2003
Acrylic, mixed media on cardboard, 60 x 34.5 cm
Flag, 2003
Acrylic, mixed media on cardboard, 46 x 67.5 cm



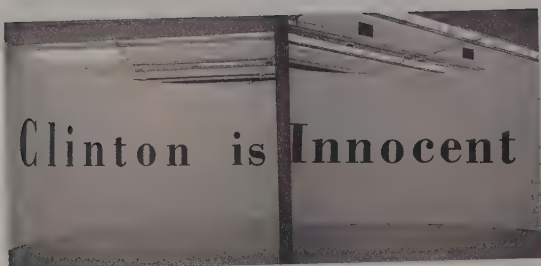
Flag, 2003
Acrylic, mixed media on cardboard, 30.5 x 64.3 cm
Flag, 2003
Acrylic, mixed media on cardboard, 35 x 85.5 cm





p. 228: *The Weight of the Sun*, 2003
14 sculptures, mixed media, variable dimensions

The Weight of the Sun (details), 2003



Clinton Is Innocent, 1998
Installation

Mamá, 1998
Pianos, slate roof, wood, metal and chair,
305 x 264 x 140 cm

With María in the *Kiss of the Egg*
Photo: Angéline Scherf

Kiss of the Egg, 1997
Steel, wire, egg, 72.4 x 120 x 55.9 cm

Installation view of the Musée d'Art Moderne
de la Ville de Paris (ARC), 1998



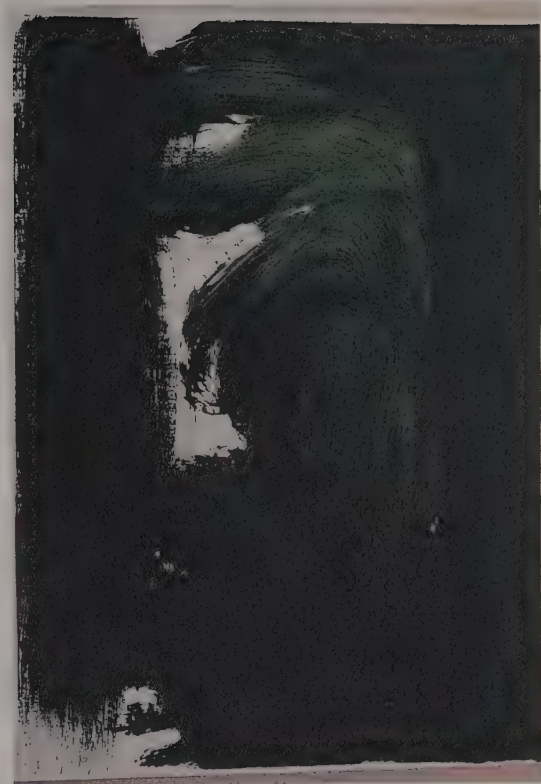


Installation view of the Musée d'Art Moderne
de la Ville de Paris (ARC), Paris, 1998

Blackboard 10, 1998
Screen-printing on blackboard, aluminium, 158 x 121.9 cm



Pinched Stars, 1998
Aluminium
Installation view of the seven pieces at the Rooseum
Centre for Contemporary Art, Malmö, Sweden, 1999



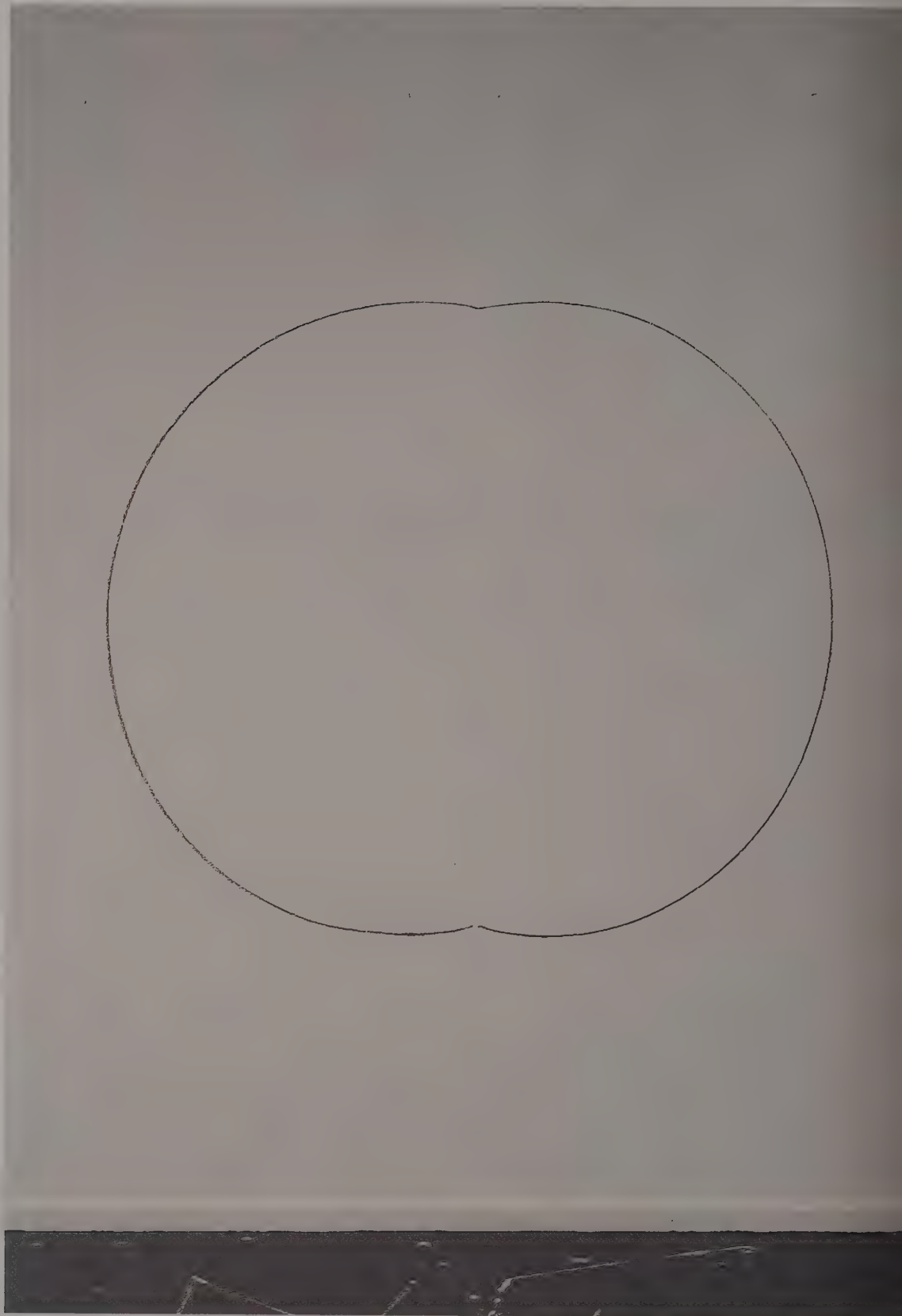
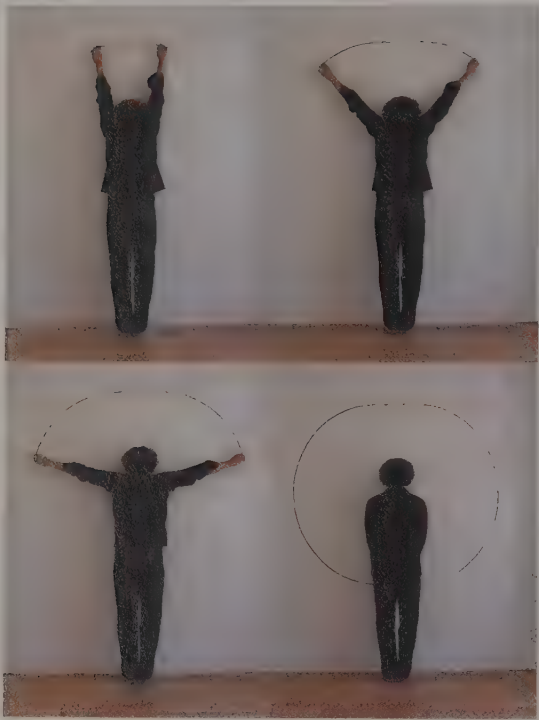
Snake, 1991
Iron, variable dimensions

Sketch for *Tree*, 1987
Acrylic on paper, 35 x 24.8 cm



Parking Lot, 1995
Installation views of the Micheline Swajcer Gallery,
Antwerp, Belgium

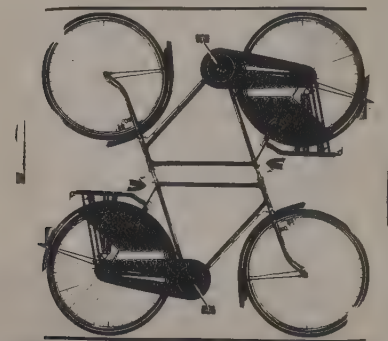
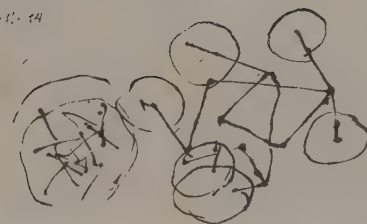




Drawing *Estela*
Estela, 2005
 Charcoal on wall, 150 x 240 cm



11-11-94



Four Bicycles—There is Always a Direction, 1994
Altered bicycles, 198 x 223.5 x 223.5 cm

Drawing in workbook for *Four Bicycles—There Is Always a Direction*, 1994

pp. 238–239: Installation view of solo show at the Museo Internacional Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City, 2000

pp. 240–241
Half Submerged Ferris Wheel, 1997
Ferris wheel half submerged, variable dimensions
Universal Hannover Fair, 2000

pp. 242–243
Long Yellow Hose, 1996
Installation view of the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego

p. 244–245
Ping-Pong Table, 1998
Modified ping-pong tables, water lilies and water,
76 x 426 x 426 cm

CERVEZA

Sol





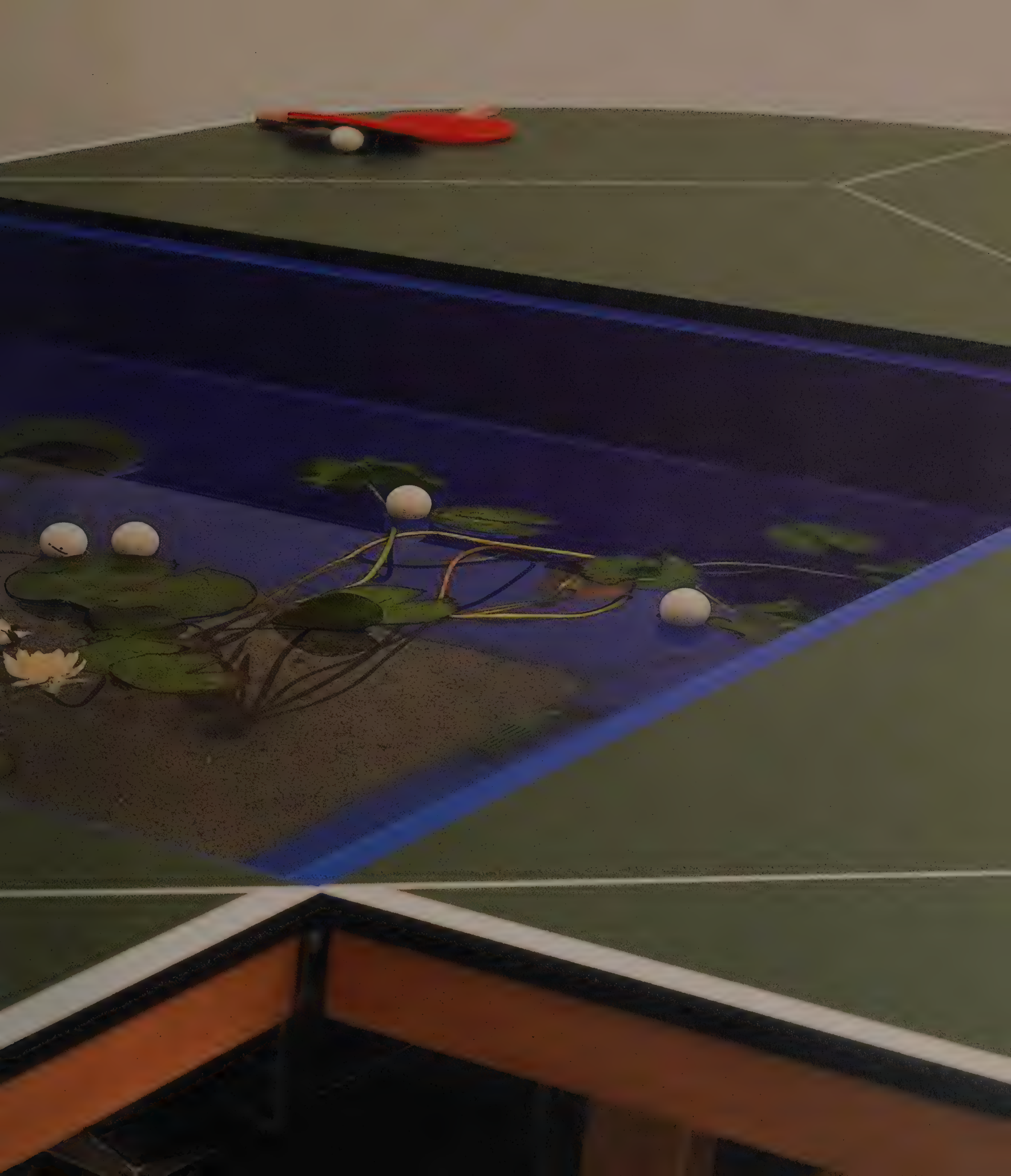






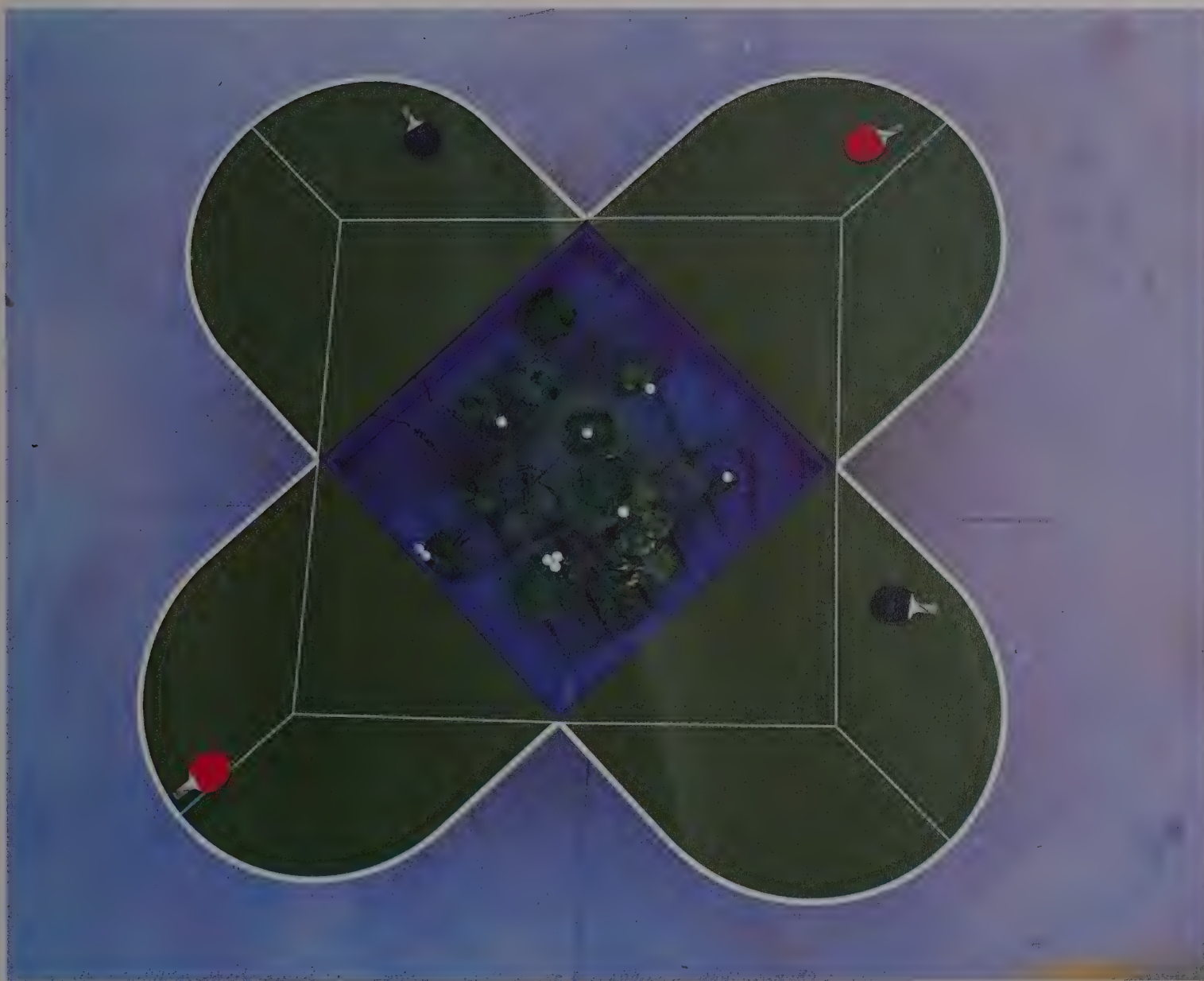








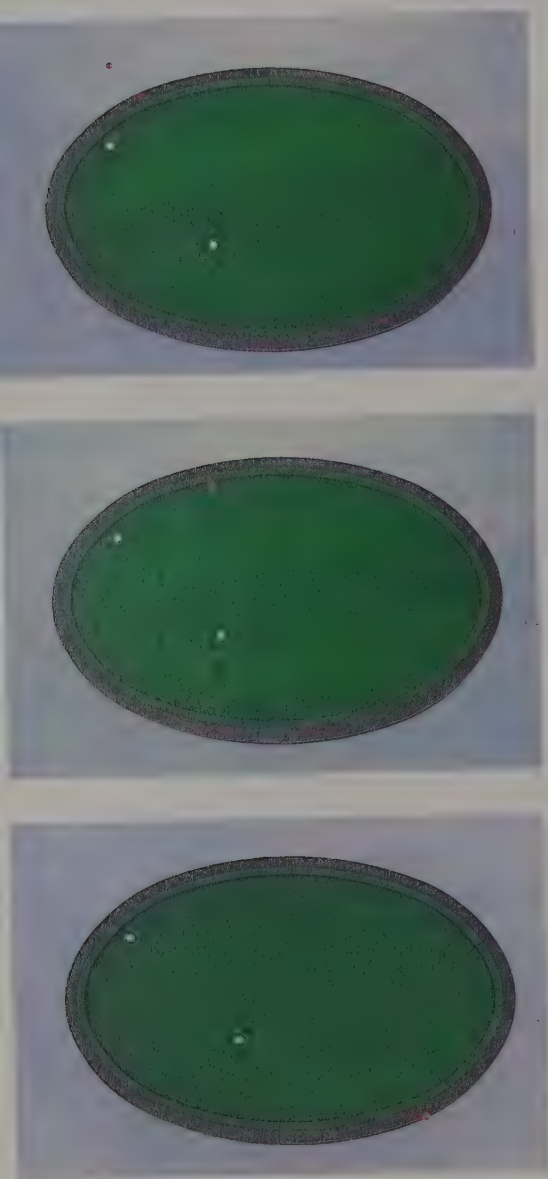
Elevator, 1994
Modified elevator, 244 x 244 x 152 cm





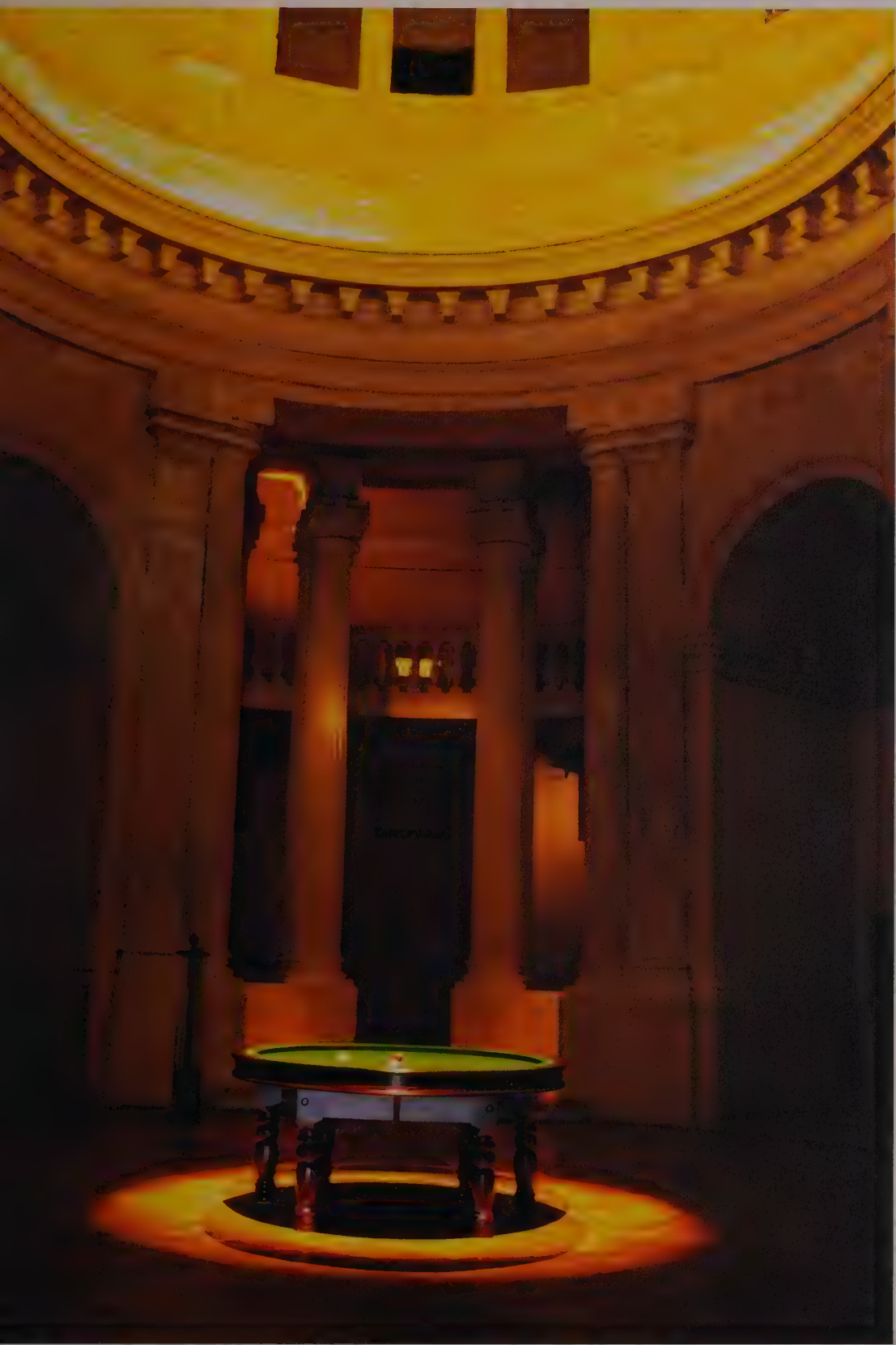
Installation view showing *Ping-Pong Table* and *Atomists*
at the Museum of Contemporary Art,
Los Angeles, 2000





Views of *Oval with Pendulum*, 1996

Oval with Pendulum, 1996
Oval pool table, mixed media, 88.9 x 309.9 x 228.6 cm



Installation view
Chapelle du Centre de la Vieille Charité,
Musée de Marseille, 1998

Playing with *Oval with Pendulum*





Yve-Alain Bois

The Tree and the Knight

Edward Said was particularly fond of a quotation from a text by a twelfth-century monk, Hugo of Saint Victor. Said borrowed the quote from Eric Auerbach, himself a famous exile, just as I borrow it from Said: "The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land."¹

I shall begin with a paradox: it is perhaps because he has reached the state of "perfection" to which the ancient author alluded that Gabriel Orozco, the quintessential globetrotter, the artist-immigrant, has been able to enter comfortably the land of painting—a domain resolutely foreign to him until very recently. And perhaps it is also why he can now come back to his native country without feeling the need to justify his departure, without fearing to be cast in the role of the returning Ulysses or that of the prodigal son. He had been apprehensive in the past—even before the hostile reaction of the Mexican art world, and particularly the art critics, to his first major exhibition in Mexico City in 2000. In 1998, for example, in a long and remarkable interview with Benjamin Buchloh, he refused to endorse either the position of "Mexican artist" or that of "international artist"—while he felt that the term "nomad" was too glamorous to describe his status.² "Returns" of any kind were then touchy topics for Orozco.

Yet, in the same interview, one reads his dismissal of the painter's practice (which he had abandoned while studying in Madrid in the mid-1980s—a sojourn that was crucial for the formation of his artistic identity, as he has stressed in numerous interviews): it was not so much with the medium of painting that Orozco had issues, but with the setting. To be a painter you have to have a studio, if not entirely distinct from your living space, at least from your kitchen and bedroom (fumes are toxic): you need to dedicate a space to your artistic practice, a place where your canvases can dry, where you can wash your brushes, where you can store your paint; you need to take root. Orozco long rebelled against both this sedentary obligation and the notion of an assigned allotment of space. For him, the working space had to be that of his daily life: "my apartment, just my apartment...the idea of the apartment is important; the idea of not having a studio or a factory, and just doing anything we can from here, from a common place; then going outside, having situations that produce this or that."³ This explains, as well, Orozco's perpetual wandering from one medium to the next or rather between media, his ebullient versatility, which has dazzled all commentators.

Painting is a slo-mo activity that requires all kinds of paraphernalia, not something you do on the go. But if you are always “elsewhere,” wherever you are, if “the entire world is as foreign land,” there is no longer any need to roam around, or much less so, no need to surf the whole panoply of nomadic media such as photography or readymades “*de voyage*” (to use Duchamp’s apt phrase). There is no longer any prohibition, in any case, against establishing a studio. And who knows, perhaps this travel back in time, away from what I just called nomadic media to the sedentary activity of painting, is just the beginning? After all, except for frescoes, paintings have long been transportable objects; they too are nomadic in some ways (albeit only once they have been made). Their commerce began in Classical Greece, where pictures called *xenia* (mainly still lifes) were brought as gifts to their host by visiting strangers (*xenion* comes from *xenos*, stranger or host). Will Orozco eventually engage in the old craft of fresco? And what about carving marble, casting bronze? He has expressly stated his disgust for such sculptural practices—as no longer credible, as pure kitsch—but even the land of kitsch can be inhabited by one who has attained the wisdom praised by our medieval monk. For his current series of paintings, Orozco is relearning the forgotten skills of icon painters: egg tempera on wood panel, gold-leaf gilding. Who would have ever thought such a revival possible, especially after the bad name given to “Byzantine parallels,” not so long ago, by a Clement Greenberg?⁴

I am not trying to be facetious here. In fact, for an artist such as Orozco, steeped in Conceptual art and at ease with the most sophisticated new technologies, returning to the tradition of the so-called geometric abstraction in painting, which is what he has been toying with during the past three years or so, represents just as much an archaism as working with a clay potter at the wheel (which he has also been doing) or reading Cennino Cennini’s manual *Il Libro dell’Arte*, in order to learn how many egg yolks (and what kind!) to use in a tempera concoction so that it does not ruin your colors nor dry too fast. There is an obvious telescoping of time in that counterintuitive graft of a Quattrocento practice onto that of a Mondrian, but this telescoping, in itself, signals that it is from the point of view of a stranger that Orozco looks at the whole development of Western painting, and that this exogenous, oblique point of view is perhaps the only one able to rekindle its flame.⁵





String Tree, 2005
Acrylic on linen, 200 x 200 cm

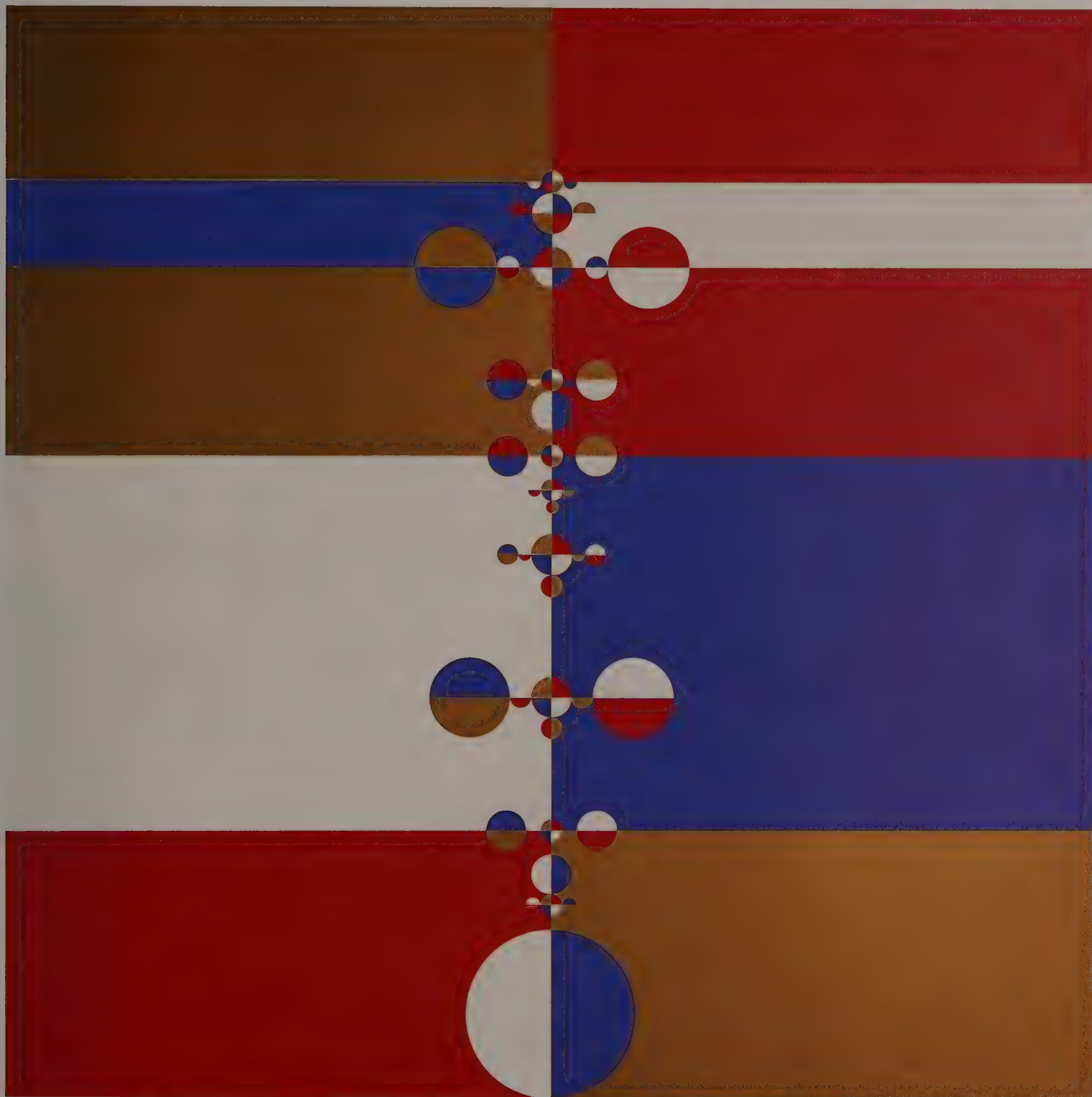


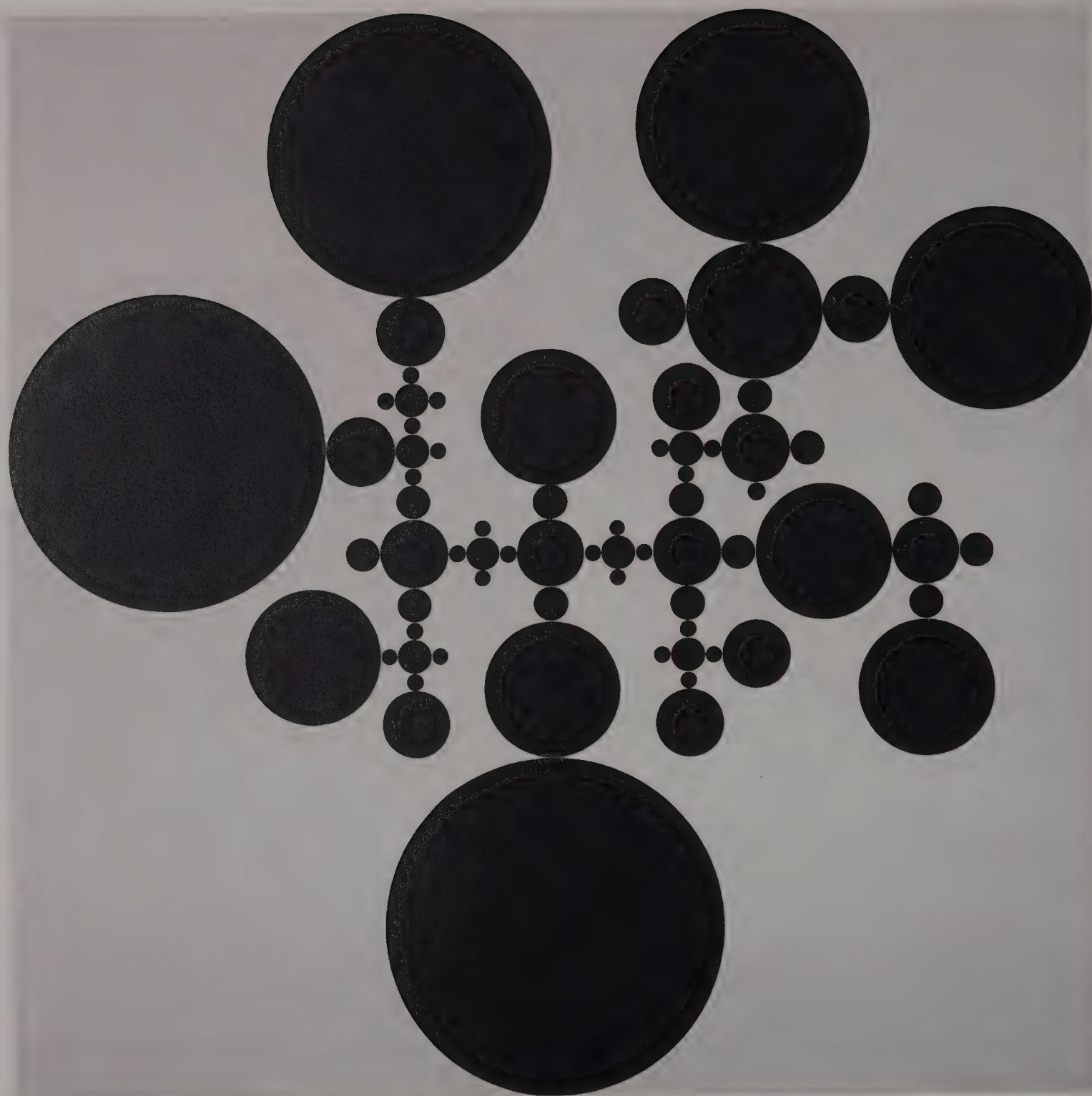
That Orozco's pictorial enterprise has little directly to do with the tradition I just mentioned comes out with particular clarity in a statement where he opposes it to the "worst failures" of Op Art: "It's not visual, it has to be intellectual, it has to be an idea."⁶ The conceptual nature of his involvement with painting is also at the core of his interest in Tantra, as well as that of his very first brush with Russian icons. As he declared that he had quit painting while in Madrid, Briony Fer reminded him of his first return to painting (and to Mexico) after his Spanish years. At this he retorted: "I was taking fragments from Russian icons. I loved those paintings. I also like the objects, the thick wood, the abstract shapes, the gold. It is painting but with a readymade, conceptual approach. I didn't feel I was a painter. I was analyzing a painting, like a fragmented readymade and then presenting it. I did a show in Mexico of that work in 1989. Then I started to move and travel, and use photography more and more."⁷ He no longer has to be so defensive; he can allow himself to feel as a painter—but his approach is no less conceptual than before.

Let us go back to his criticism of Op Art—for which he has often admitted a soft spot. It failed, he notes, because it was illusionistic—it wanted to generate, by visual means alone, the illusion of movement or tridimensionality:

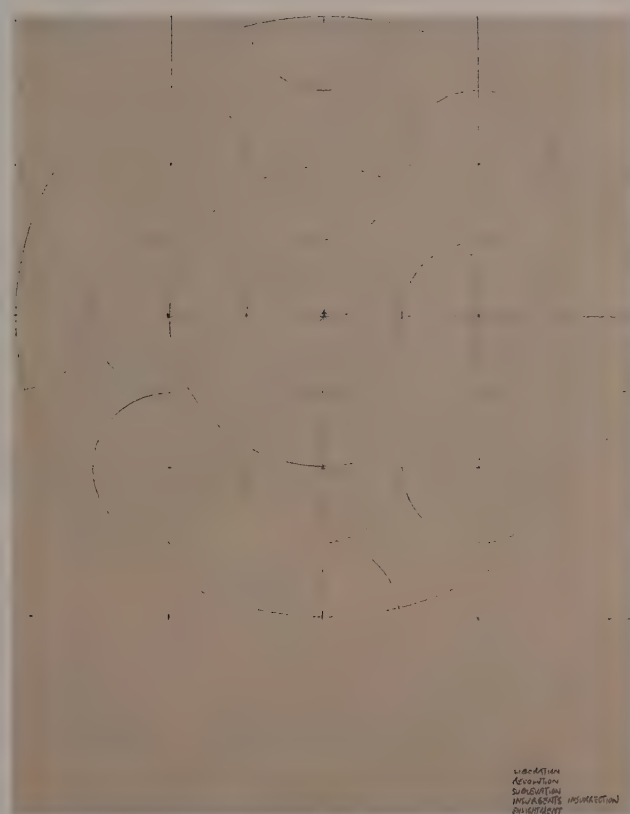
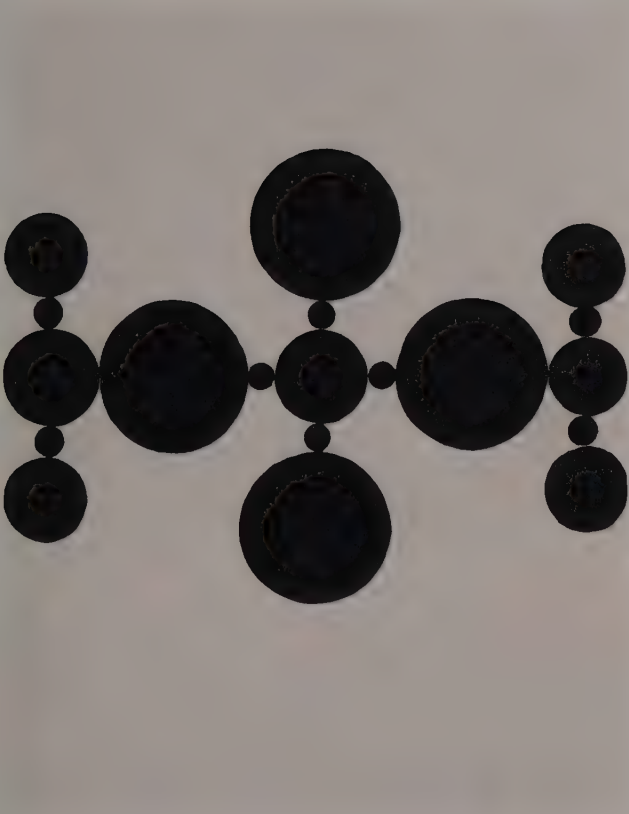
They are very nice tries, they were fantastic and I like them very much, believe me. But obviously I don't think it's a visual problem to generate a three-dimensional proposition or to express the formula of how things work to become an organism or three-dimensional objects. [We have now switched to his own paintings] It's not visual, it has to be intellectual, it has to be an idea. Again it's like a formula, you can look at them and think of molecules, or atoms, or a DNA chain, but at the same time they're not claiming to be scientific. They're also ludic, they look childish and I think that is good also.⁸

There is much to unpack in such a statement, all the more so since it is excerpted from a long conversation and refers in shorthand to things developed previously during a two-hour dialogue. The two main themes it summons us to explore, and which indeed pervade all the declarations of Orozco about his work (in whatever medium), are: *game* and *organism*. In the field of painting, the theme "game" translates into gameboard (or board game), but more importantly, via the metaphor of chess, and in





The Eye of Go, 2005
Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120 cm



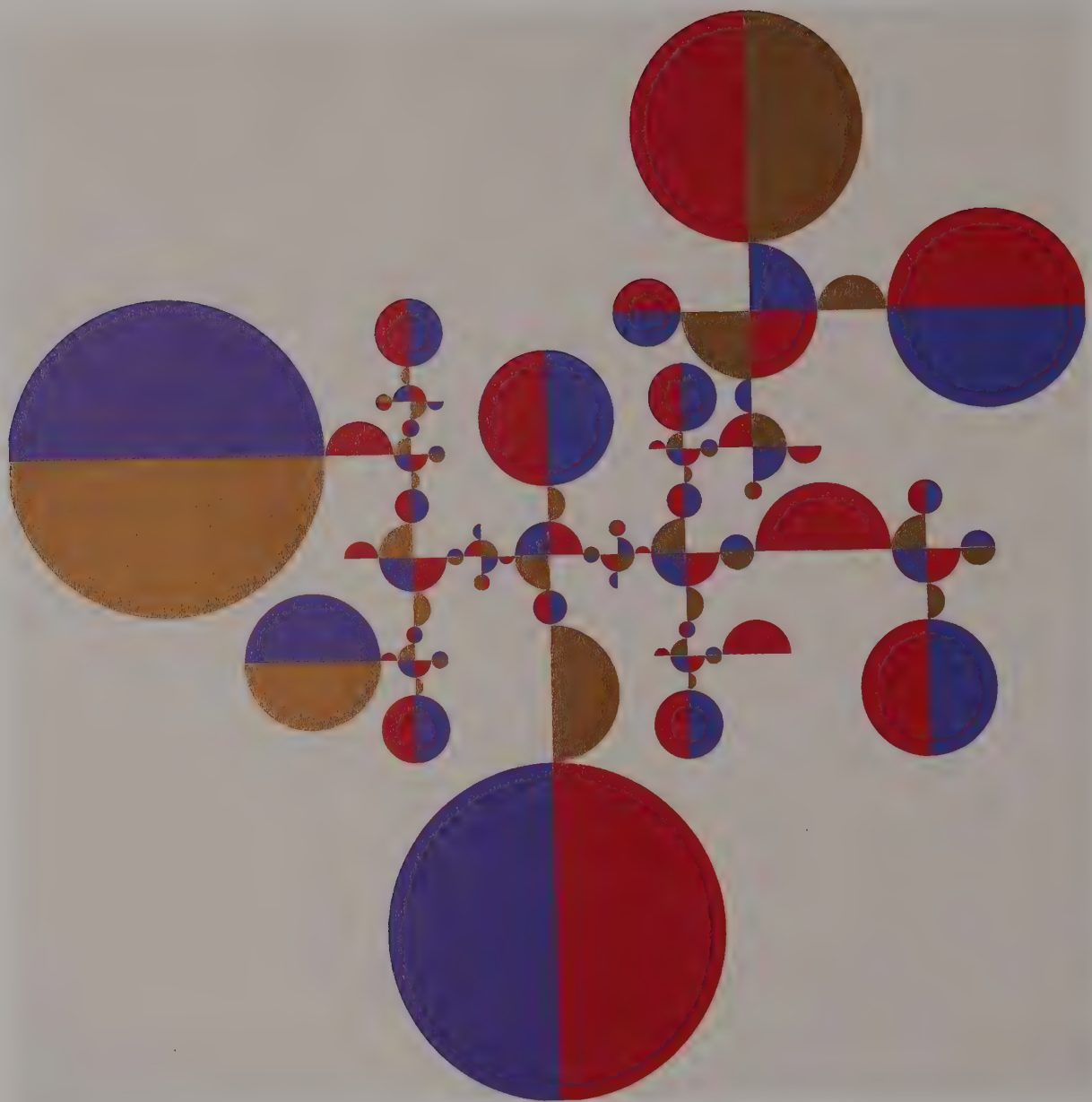
Untitled, 1995
Digital drawing, 27.9 x 21.5 cm
Untitled, 1995
Digital drawing, 29.8 x 20.9 cm

Untitled, 1995
Gouache on paper, 26.6 x 20.9 cm
*Liberación, revolución, sublevación, insurgentes,
insurrección, ilustración*, 2004
Collage, graphite on paper, 27.94 x 20.96 cm

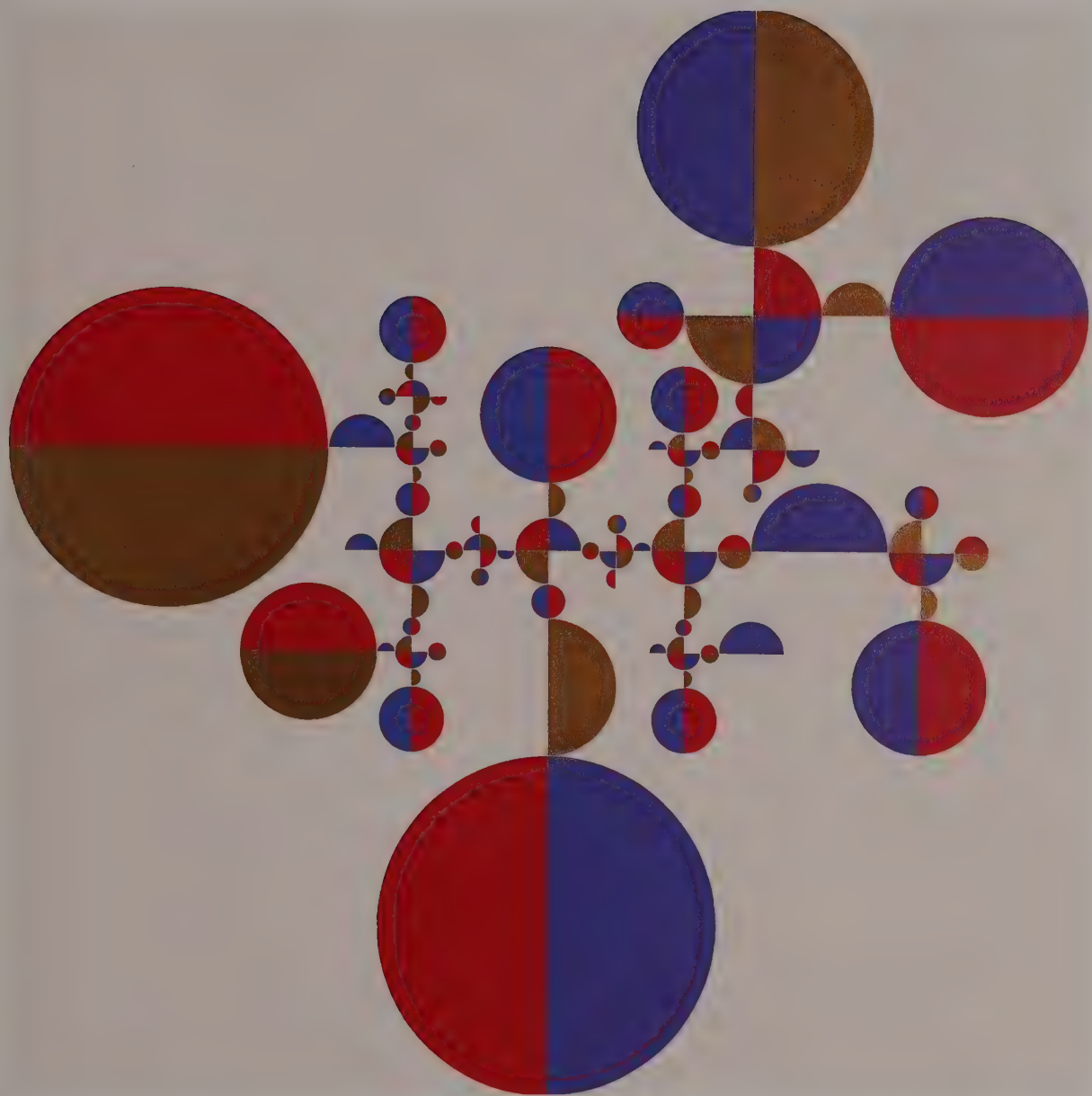


Samurai Tree (Invariant Red 3), 2005
Acrylic on linen, 120 x 120 cm

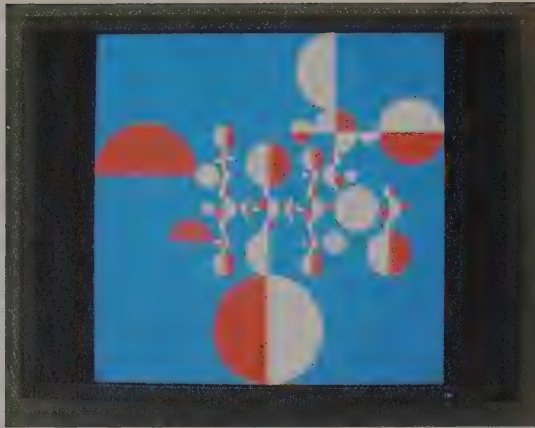




Samurai Tree (Invariant White 2), 2005
Acrylic on linen, 120 x 120 cm



Samurai Tree (Invariant Diagram White), 2005
Acrylic on linen, 120 x 120 cm



particular the move of the knight—which is, as Orozco reminds us, “the only piece of the game whose movement is conceived to represent tridimensionality”⁹—it brings us to the artist’s conception of his canvases as “platforms for action,” as diagrammatic, conceptual representations of a movement, that of the “rotation of a body *inside* a flat plane.”¹⁰

But let us start with the notion of organic growth, literally an obsession for Orozco. His model par excellence is the tree: “In a way, my dream is to one day make a world that is as fantastic and perfect as a tree. Trees are perfect things, the perfect machine, the perfect body, the perfect exotic things, trees are so strange and always surprising, very mysterious.”¹¹ Differentiating his recent paintings from Jasper Johns’s *Target* canvases, he states that the American artist “was not starting from nothing, growing into an unknown kind of form, which I think is how organic creatures grow: they start from a center and there is no certainty what kind of shape this will have at the end, or what possibility there is that it will keep growing...I love the idea of how trees grow from a center. How they also grow underground and on the ground from a center and a horizon and they start to develop all the branches. A tree is a metaphor for me.”¹²

The tree was, as well, a metaphor for many pioneers of abstract art—but only for very few of them was it a positive one for organic growth (Jean Arp being the most eloquent in this minority, to which belongs also Schwitters, an artist ranking high in Orozco’s pantheon). Quite the contrary, and this is easily understandable in the context of these artists’ necessary struggle against, or flight from, “the natural,” the tree was for many of them the very emblem of mimetic representation (they had all been impressionists frolicking *en plein air* during their youth). A excellent testimony of this modernist chlorophobia is to be found in the answers to the questionnaire sent in 1933 by the journal of the association *abstraction création art non-figuratif* to the roster of its participants. Question number two read: “What do you think of the influence of trees on your work?” Wladyslaw Strzeminski’s answer was the most precise (this was to be expected—I have always held him as the most articulate theoretician among the abstract painters of his generation):

Trees revealed to me what a work of art is not. The shape of a tree results from:

a) symmetry (in the shape and in the distribution of leaves). This symmetry is the result of the cell division of a plant. A picture does not grow, its cells don’t divide and thus there is no place in it for symmetry.

b) the curving fluidity of the shape of the branches and trunk, resulting from the pressure of the wind, the direction of the sun (of light), the vaporization of sap in the plant. Such forces are nowhere to be found in a painting, therefore its form is different.¹³ [To the forces mentioned by Strzeminiski, as we shall see, Orozco would add gravity.]

But if during the first age of abstraction (from roughly 1915 to World War II), the tree was the symbol of mimesis, of “nature,” the opposite insignia was the square as the emblem of the arbitrary, of “culture.” Even after the tree no longer remained the mandatory opponent of the square in a paradigmatic pair, the latter retained its aura of pure artificiality, of belonging to the sphere of codification, of the semiological, of language—witness the answers to another questionnaire, this one sent to many artists and published by Lucy Lippard in *Art in America* in 1967 (there, the most articulate answer was given by a veteran of the first abstract wave, another of Orozco’s heroes, Josef Albers, who justified his choice of the figure of the square by the fact that one does not see it in nature, except in some rare crystals).¹⁴

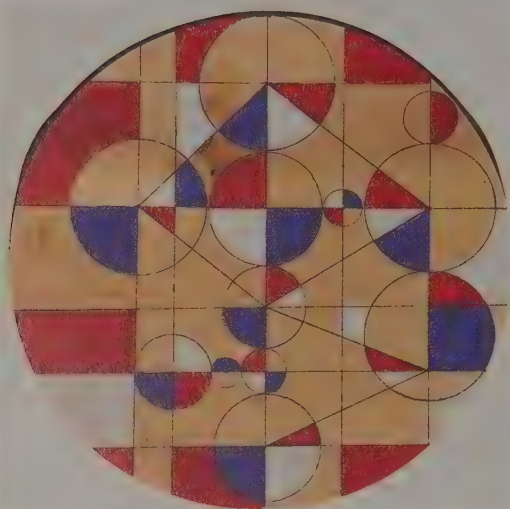
Of course, the artist who epitomizes best this struggle between the tree and the square during this first round of abstract art (or rather the victory of the square over the tree, even if squares are actually not that frequent in his oeuvre) is Piet Mondrian—and it is this painter above all, I think, whom Orozco addresses in his recent canvases. He himself alluded very explicitly to Mondrian’s famous series of trees in the process of becoming grids. Here is how a statement partially quoted above unfolds: “A tree is a metaphor for me. But it doesn’t mean you see the representation of a tree. That would be very Mondrianesque. Mondrian’s vision of a tree is from the point of view of someone standing on the ground looking at a landscape. Vertical and horizontal lines make the structure and representation of the branches. But if you look at a tree from above, you see the center from which it starts to spread the branches in multiple directions.”¹⁵ Yet things are not as simple as that and Orozco might be in the end closer to Mondrian than he thinks—not to the Mondrian of the beginnings, of the trees series, nor to the painter of rarefied neo-plastic compositions, but to the author of *Victory Boogie Woogie*.



The path of Mondrian to abstraction via cubism is too well known, I certainly hope, to merit any development here. But I would like to insist on one point, which is that at first he envisioned the modular grid as a measure of suspending time, as a mapping of the autonomous space of the painting in which everything would be at rest, and that if he very swiftly abandoned this trope of the modular grid, which seemed so perfectly to answer his needs, it is because of a side effect that he had not foreseen, and which utterly undermined his quest for compositional stability: the optical flicker. This refusal of dynamism, of time (and thus of repetition and rhythm) was perfectly consistent with the war Mondrian waged against nature. The cycle of the seasons and the beat of our pulse were ciphers of the natural for Mondrian—and we should note how much Orozco proves him right: in the pulsatile flicker of the Mexican artist's animated film of the 677 color variations based on the "invariant diagram" of his *Samurai Tree* series (2005), it is impossible not to sense an organic throb, be it blood or sex.¹⁶ By the early 1930s, however, having reached a point of perfect classical stasis in his art, Mondrian began to change his view. The change was not abrupt, as it had been long prepared by his interest in jazz, but the click only happened in 1932, when he was able to translate his theoretical *aggiornamento* into his painting (with his use of what he called the "double line"). From then on we witness an amazing acceleration in what I have always thought to be a systematic enterprise of sabotage against his previous conception of painting as a necessarily static art.¹⁷ Rhythm was admitted with a vengeance in Mondrian's canvases, now considered a key arsenal in his quest for a "dynamic equilibrium," the staccato accelerating throughout the 1930s. And at the end of his life, on the white walls of his New York studio, rectangles of primary colors floated unmoored, among them small mirrors disturbing the quiet austerity of this pristine space by their ever-changing reflections.

But let us go back to the grid and its interpretation as a means of freezing time, which was common to all early pioneers of abstract art. (Strzelecki was particularly eloquent about that, though he saw this function as characterizing all tropes belonging to the generic category of deductive structures, the grid being only one of them.¹⁸) It might be this conception of the grid that prevented Mondrian and his peers from even thinking about chess as a model (even if his first three square modular compositions, all in a lozenge format, are based, like a chessboard, on a division of 8 x 8 squares).¹⁹ Or, conversely, it might be that the conception of chess





that was available at the time was inherently static. Witness, for example, Ferdinand de Saussure's celebrated use of the chess metaphor, in his *Course of General Linguistics*, in order to explain his concept of language as a synchronic system of signs, each of which is endowed with a specific oppositional identity that he called its "value." (Needless to say, the Swiss author's *Course*, posthumously published in 1916, just before Mondrian would be coping with the problem of the modular grid, remained a confidential opus known only to linguists until the late 1950s or early 1960s, with the advent of structuralism.)

Saussure's three points (synchrony, systematicity, value) are worth rehearsing, in part because a comparison of their applicability to Orozco's and to Mondrian's art will help in pinpointing the difference between the two. It seems to me that both Orozco and Mondrian would agree to the applicability of two of Saussure's concepts to their pictorial enterprise (language as a system; differential value of the sign). Here are Saussure's invocations of chess with regards to these concepts:

System

Language is a system that has its own rules. A comparison with chess will bring out the point. In chess, it is relatively easy to distinguish between what is external and what is internal [to the system]: the fact that the game passed from Persia to Europe is external; what is internal is everything concerning the rules. If I replace wooden pieces by pieces in ivory, this change has no effect on the system; but if I decrease or increase the number of pieces, this change has a profound effect on the "grammar" of the game.²⁰

Value

Take a knight, for example. Is it by itself an element of the game? Certainly not, for in its pure materiality make-up—outside its square and the other conditions of the game, it means nothing to the player; it becomes a real, concrete element only when endowed with value and wedded to it. Suppose that the piece happens to be destroyed or lost during the game. Can it be replaced by an equivalent piece? Certainly. Not only another knight but even a figure shorn of any resemblance to a knight can be declared identical provided the same value is attributed to it.²¹



Untitled, 1999
Acrylic and graphite on wood disk, 13.3 cm diameter

Ball with Moss, 2005
Digital print on wood, 15 x 15 x 2.4 cm

The entire neo-plastic oeuvre of Mondrian functions as “Exhibit A” for Saussure’s first point (about language—but also any semiological system—having its own internal rules), but this was verified with particular clarity in 1932 when the increase of Mondrian’s pictorial vocabulary by just one element (the double line) completely transformed the “grammar” of his language (that is, utterly changed the rules of his game). As for Orozco, especially because the configuration of his canvases is based upon something as specific, as exceptional, one could say, as the knight’s move, it goes without saying that any alteration of that rule (were he to choose the rook’s move or the bishop’s as a guiding principle) would result in entirely different “compositions”—he simply would not be speaking the same pictorial tongue. Note that long before his return to painting, Orozco provided a perfect illustration for Saussure’s metaphor in his *Horse Running Endlessly* of 1995, consisting in a modified chess board (there were four times more squares than usual, and these were of four different colors, as opposed to the standard binary opposition). As for the pieces, not only were they also of four colors but each of the four pool of sixteen pieces (the standard number per team) comprised only knights.²² Instead of a regulated tit-for-tat exchange necessarily coming to a close, only endless chaos (so says Orozco’s title) could proceed from his “prepared” board (to use John Cage’s word).

Saussure’s notion of value, which is different from that of signification, is far too complex to be seriously examined here. To explain it in a nutshell, I shall quote his most famous example: the value of the French word *mouton* is not the same as that of the English word *sheep*, even though the two *can* have the same signification, “because in speaking of a piece of meat ready to be served on the table, English uses *mutton* and not *sheep*. The difference in value between *sheep* and *mouton* is due to the fact that *sheep* has beside it a second term while the French word does not.”²³ Perhaps more telling—in that it seems almost a description of Mondrian asceticism, particularly in his barest canvases, for example his *Lozenge Composition with Two Black Lines* of 1931 (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam)—is the following remark: “If you augment language by one sign, you diminish in the same proportion the [value] of the others. Reciprocally, if only two signs had been chosen [...] all the [concrete] significations would have had to be divided between these two signs.”²⁴

On this point Mondrian and Orozco differ somewhat—the younger artist being more interested in the commutability, the exchangeability, of the sign (an abstract property deriving from its having a value, as is the



Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on newspaper, 16.3 x 17.2 cm

Horses Running Endlessly (detail), 1995









case for currency) than in its identity. There is no better illustration of Saussure's hypothetical replacement of a lost knight during a game than Orozco's 2005 animated film of the 677 color variations based on the "invariant diagram" of *Samurai Tree*: given that it is not the visual effect that matters to Orozco in his paintings, but rather the conceptual nature of the process of formation of the image, and given that in all the variations recorded in the film (of which only a few were actually realized in painting), the diagrammatic structure of the image itself remains unchanged, the value of a color plane is not altered, at least in theory, by its shifting from gold to blue or red or white.²⁵

During most of his life Mondrian would probably have resisted the idea that such permutations were possible: even when he based several paintings on the same compositional scheme—and this is particularly striking for the classical 1929–1932 series that immediately preceded his discovery of the double line—he could never change the color of a plane without modifying other elements of the composition (size of this and other planes, thickness of the lines, etc.). However at the very end of his career, while working on *Victory Boogie Woogie*, Mondrian came close to the nonvisual, conceptual stance of the Mexican artist.

Here are two anecdotes. The first is well known: when Carl Holty asked him why he kept altering *Victory Boogie Woogie* (which he did to the very end) instead of making several paintings of the different solution that had been superimposed on this canvas, Mondrian answered, "I don't want pictures. I just want to find things out."²⁶ The other story is more obscure but perhaps more revealing: as he was showing to James Johnson Sweeney a painting in progress in his studio (most probably *Victory Boogie Woogie*), Mondrian asked his interlocutor what he thought of a particular area of the canvas (covered with small rectangular planes of colored paper, according to the method used by the painter in New York). Sweeney answered that, honestly, he preferred the way it looked at his last visit, when there was an element of a different color in place of the red one he could now see. Mondrian was at first puzzled, until he realized that Sweeney was commenting upon what he effectively had in front of his eyes as opposed to what he, Mondrian, had so clearly thought out in his head: he had only used red because he no longer had a paper of the other color to hand, he said, but "it was not red in [his] mind."²⁷

Let us come at last to the third occurrence of Saussure's chess metaphor, concerning synchronicity. The passage is long, and even though it is stunning

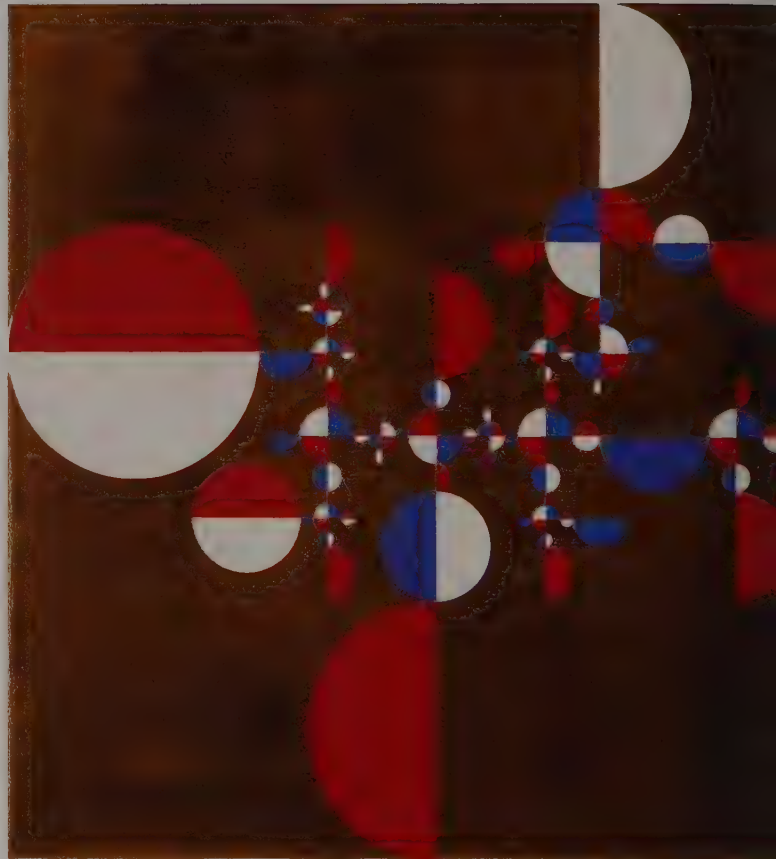
for its sheer theoretical brilliance, I have to resist quoting it in full. In it, Saussure wants to show that in order to approach a language from a structural point of view—as opposed, say, to a sociological one—it is only necessary to consider one of its “states.” If considering its current state, a knowledge of its historical past is irrelevant. After an elaborate comparison about the nature of changes occurring in language and in a game of chess, Saussure concludes:

In a game of chess any particular position has the unique characteristic of being freed from all antecedent positions; the route used in arriving there makes absolutely no difference; one who has followed the entire match has no advantage over the curious party who comes up at this critical moment to inspect the state of the game; to describe this arrangement, it is perfectly useless to recall what had just happened ten seconds previously.²⁸

In other words, even though it has a narrative development (pieces are taken, the board gets less and less crowded, in most cases one of the players wins), a game of chess is for Saussure a succession of static moments—it is like a slide show, as opposed to a movie. Or rather, each move, even though it “has a repercussion on the whole system,” is indifferent to the structure of the game itself: “In chess, each move is absolutely distinct from the preceding and the subsequent equilibrium. The change effected belongs to neither state: only states matter.”²⁹ With this Mondrian would have concurred. But I gather that Orozco would not. In that respect, he is much more the heir of the only artist of Mondrian’s generation to have seriously thought about the conceptual implication of the chess model, and this in direct opposition both to the whole dream of arresting time, and to the fiction of pictorial opticality: Marcel Duchamp, whose interest in chess, as Hubert Damisch noted, arose at the very moment when the static conception of the game was about to be upturned by the revolutionary tactics of the camp known as “the hypermoderns.”³⁰ I would say that it is under the aegis of Duchamp (one of his prime ancestors) that today Orozco is revisiting Mondrian.



Untitled, 1995
Collage, graphite and ink on plane tickets, 8.3 x 113 cm



We should note, however, that Orozco's paintings perturb the model of chess so dramatically that they radically transform the "grammar" of the game, and in doing so they also annul in the grid what had seduced Mondrian and many others—the fact that it is decentered, all over. This is a direct consequence of Orozco's organic model—and he has been very insistent in his fascination for growth, a growth he always envisions as originating from a center (the rhizomatic growth of mushrooms is not for him—a major difference with John Cage here). But centeredness in Orozco's paintings—and thus symmetry (which, surprisingly, had the connotation of death, not organic life, at the time of Mondrian)—is also a function of the noncompositional impulse to which they partake. In that respect they belong to a long tradition—with several very distinct tropes (grid, all over, monochrome, index, fusion of field and image, etc.) that were all already explored during the first wave of abstract art. The prewar occurrence that is closest to Orozco's works—and specifically targeting Mondrian's neo-plasticism—would be Theo van Doesburg's notion of a programmed art, one in which all compositional decisions would be mathematically computed beforehand, generated by a set of simple rules that would be readily deciphered by the beholder in the final work. True, van Doesburg shunned symmetry no less than Mondrian—it is only after World War II that symmetry was revisited and, in a swing of the pendulum, became a positive factor as an emblem of non—or even antisubjectivity. The "What I hate about painting are all the small decisions, what goes with that" of Orozco³¹ directly echoes, like it or not, Frank Stella's attack on what he called the "relational aesthetic" of European post-cubist abstraction (there too Mondrian's neo-plasticism, albeit not named, was the prime target).³²

There is, however, a difference between Orozco's approach to the very idea of systematicity and that of his predecessors. As in their works, the rules he adopted for the distribution of color planes in his paintings are extremely simple (centrifugal expansion according to the knight's move), as are no doubt the rules controlling the size of the contiguous circles and their division into half or quarter, but mesmerized by the vibrating simultaneous contrasts produced by the juxtapositions of colors, we instantly lose track of these rules (I, for one, can never remember them and even less verify them, but that is undoubtedly due to my utter incompetence in math). We might wonder why the periphery of Orozco's canvases is less agitated than their central zone, but we do not connect this fact, while in

Samurai Tree 2E, 2006

Tempera and gold leaf on wood, 55 x 55 cm

Samurai Tree 2C, 2006

Tempera and gold leaf on wood, 55 x 55 cm

Samurai Tree 2X, 2006

Tempera and gold leaf on wood, 54 x 54 cm

Tree 2J, 2006

Tempera and gold leaf on wood, 54 x 54 cm

front of these works, to the one structural limitation imposed on the otherwise very free knight—that the closer it comes to the limits of the chessboard, and especially its corners, the more restricted are its moves. Add to this the nonchalant license taken by Orozco, at any point of the process, to disobey the a priori rules he has set himself, and we find ourselves still at a further remove from the strict realm of programmed art as defined by van Doesburg (or, closer to us, Sol LeWitt, in his patient and exhaustive declension of geometric and arithmetic systems during the 1960s). Curiously, with what Orozco has aptly called his wish to “disappoint” in his paintings,³³ he rejoins Mondrian’s deliberate attempt, culminating in *Victory Boogie Woogie*, to trump all our expectations and to destabilize our perception, and this despite the fulcrum provided by their originating center.

But let us go back to this center once more. First, let’s note that for Orozco growth is also a form of destruction—he speaks about some of his artistic procedures as the “introduction of a virus,” admires the trees that are eating architecture away, as the jungle does in Mexican ruins.³⁴ Even before his recent series of paintings he thought about the entropic potential of growth, for example when doing his “spitting drawings” while in Kortrijk in 1993: “I was working out from the center. I found that adding elements took something away, obliterated something. [Note how closely this matches Saussure’s remarks about the value of a sign]. This was a way of approaching a piece of paper that is also to destroy the center. It is the opposite of a vanishing point that holds the center.”³⁵

The most important issue, however, is perhaps not the battle between organic growth and inorganic geometry, but Orozco’s stance against the vanishing point, which he sees as the anchor of a painterly way of thinking, a pictorial code, remnant of the past, from which he is intent, if not to wholly cut loose his painting, at least to give it some slack. He hopes to do so, he says, by conceiving of his painting in sculptural terms:

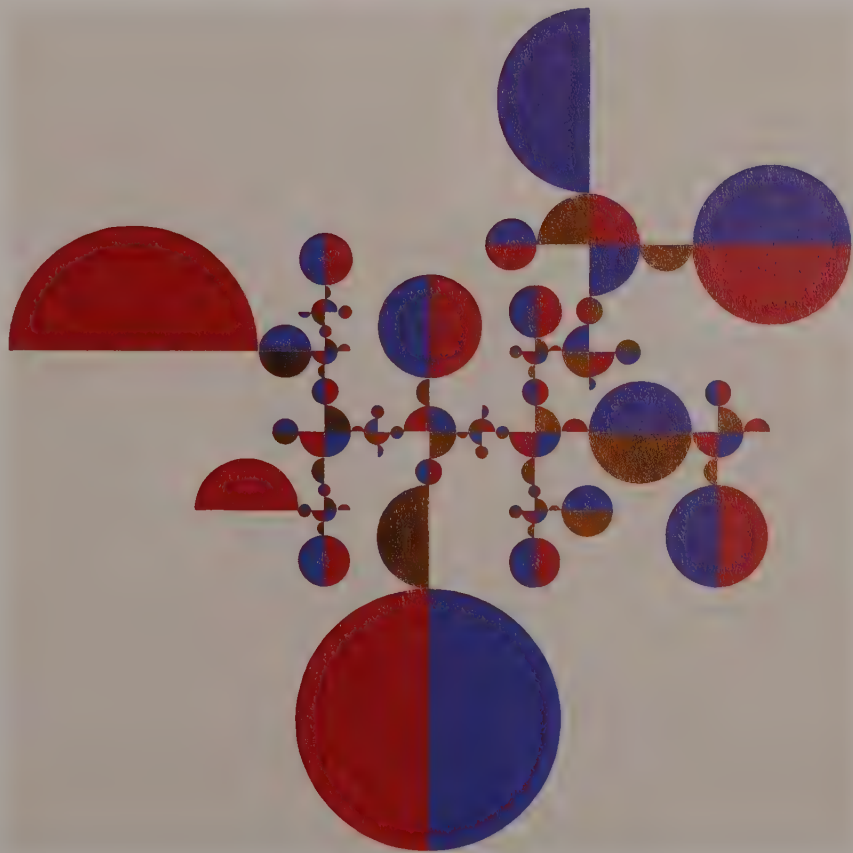
I think I have a notion of sculpture in all my work—starting from the center, growing from the center. That center is as a spine to the body, a center point of gravity, which connects the body with earth. A painter works with the idea of a vanishing point, with something flat and abstract, something in front of you. A sculptural mentality, on the other hand, is associated with the ground, from the floor upwards. If you think in spherical terms, you have to mix the two, both a vanishing point and a gravity point. That creates movement too, orbital

Samurai Tree 5J, 2006
Tempera and gold leaf on wood, 55.5 x 55.5 cm

Samurai Tree 4A, 2006
Tempera and gold leaf on canvas, 67 x 67 cm

Samurai Tree 28W, 2006
Tempera and gold leaf on wood, 48.5 x 48.5 cm

Samurai Tree 1C, 2006
Tempera and plaster on wood, 55.5 x 55.5 cm





movement or centrifugal movement, a certain kind of turbulence, which is perhaps also why the sphere or the circle is for me the best way of showing both vanishing and gravity points. In my paintings I am also thinking of the gravity point, the weight of a vertical axis, not only a vanishing point in the center.³⁶

This statement is a bit confusing at first because two themes are intertwined, that of rotation and that of the switch from the planar verticality of painting to the spatial, tabular horizontality of sculpture—but this conjunction is crucial, and it is precisely why Orozco has been so attracted by the knight's move as a conceptual model (its jump addresses gravity and space, its spin addresses rotation). This is also one more instance of a certain affinity between his canvases and the last works of Mondrian. It might be true that, as Orozco noted (in a quote made above), when Mondrian painted his series of trees gradually digitized into a grid, he was still operating, at a certain level, as a landscape painter contemplating a scene *in front of* him; it might also be true that while working on his neo-plastic compositions, from 1920 on, he was still occupying the frontal (in-front-of) position of the painter with regard to his pictorial field, despite his very strong anti-gestaltist drive, and the fact that those works were painted horizontally, on a table. But gradually throughout the 1930s, and certainly in New York, he came to think of his canvases as objects inhabiting space—both as maps (that is, diagrammatical “platform for actions”) and as endowed with a tridimensional materiality. As such, they were escaping the purely visual realm and thus illusion—which is why an Alberto Giacometti, the great maker of gameboards in twentieth-century art, could praise Mondrian's art as “coming from the domain of painting and entering another domain.”³⁷ It is to this last point that Orozco alludes when he mentions Mondrian (immediately after having invoked Duchamp) as “getting to a kind of inner space in the space of the painting. Inner space means the inner line, the space in the line.”³⁸ There is a certain thickness in Mondrian's last works, a material (and no longer illusionistic) weave of planes, with an over and an under, that is very close in kind, at least conceptually, to the rotary collage effect achieved by Orozco in his centrifugal structures.

Symmetrical Tree, 2006
Tempera and gold leaf on wood, 49.5 x 49.5 cm

New Tree, 2006
Tempera and gold leaf on canvas, 50.5 x 50.5 cm

Samurai Tree 4AM, 2006
Tempera and gold leaf on wood, 55.5 x 55.5 cm

Psycho Tree, 2006
Tempera and gold leaf on wood, 66.6 x 66.6 cm

In his *Knight's Move*, published in 1923 (devoted to Malevich, Tatlin, Maia-kovsky, and other totems of modernity), the Russian formalist critic Viktor Shklovsky characterizes the odd course of his eponymous figure as oblique. The knight can't go straight, he explains, because the direct route is blocked in front of it.³⁹ Perhaps is this why Orozco had recourse to this figure: offering him a detour by which he could bypass the formidable obstacles any artist finds in the road toward painting today, the sideway hop of the knight gave him the tool with which, without much concern with the burden of the recent past, he could rejoice at relearning very old skills.

1. Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 185.

2. Benjamin Buchloh, "Interview with Gabriel Orozco," in *Gabriel Orozco: Clinton is Innocent*, exh. cat. (Paris: Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1998), pp. 85–7.

3. Ibid, pp. 55–59. The "factory" in the quotation is a direct allusion to Warhol, discussed just before in the interview.

4. Greenberg's "Byzantine parallels," dated 1958, is the essay where the critic articulates the most forcefully his conception of opticality (in *Art and Culture* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1961], pp. 167–170). It is this conception that led him, somewhat later, to interpret Pollock's use of metallic paint as an illusionistic, "optical" device, an interpretation emphatically denied, as Rosalind Krauss noted, by another lover of metallic paint (in the early 1960s), Frank Stella (see *The Optical Unconscious* [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993], p. 246). It should be noted in passing that the gradual disappearance of gold from Western painting corresponds to the shift from the medieval conception of the image-maker as artisan to the Renaissance idea of the fine artist (see Christian Hecht, *Die Glorie: Begriff, Bildelement in der europäischen Sakralkunst vom Mittelalter bis zum des Barock* [Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2003]. My thanks to Jeffrey Hamburger for this reference). This shift, and Orozco is well aware of this, is the direct result of a class struggle that, if "outdated," is still going on: "Many craftsmen are artists, but their social position means that they are considered craftsmen, and unfortunately what they earn corresponds to that status, so they earn less than an artist. Then there are many artists who call themselves artists but are actually craftsmen...I see the division between art and craft as a political problem. We know that in earlier times, the arts were divided between arts and crafts, and when art was functional, like craft, it was seen as a trade, then when it ceased to be functional it became Fine Art in capital letters. This is a French model [actually, Italian] which continues to be applied and which is now rather outdated." "Gabriel Orozco in conversation with Guillermo Santamarina, Mexico City, August 2004," in *Gabriel Orozco*, exh. cat. (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2005), p. 140.

5. For an illuminating analysis of Orozco's "reskilling," see the conclusion of Benjamin Buchloh's essay in this volume.

6. Gabriel Orozco, transcript of a conversation with Benjamin Buchloh, Goethe Institute London (organized by the Serpentine Gallery), July 1, 2004. See also in this volume his declaration to Briony Fer: "It is not about visuality."

7. See interview in this volume.

8. See note 6.

9. Ibid.

10. To Briony Fer, in this volume.



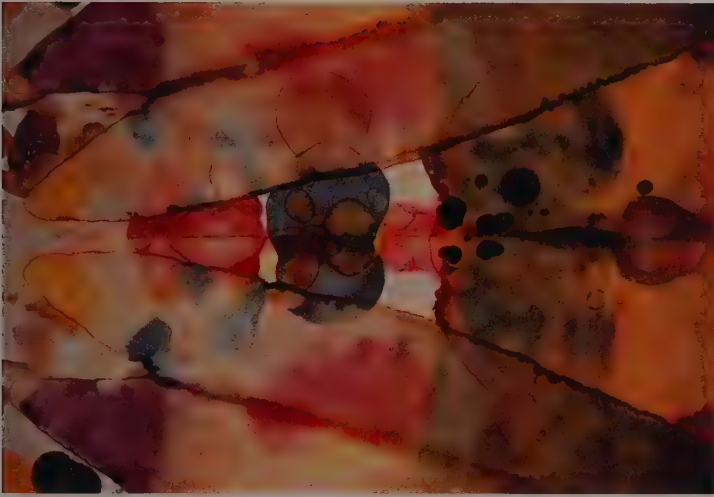
11. To Buchloh, *Gabriel Orozco: Clinton is Innocent*, p. 69.
12. To Buchloh, as in note 6. This portion of the interview was published in *The Experience of Art: 51st International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale, 2005*, p. 179.
13. Wladyslaw Strzeminski, untitled statement in *abstraction création art non-figuratif* no. 2, 1933, p. 40.
14. See Josef Albers's untitled statement in Lucy Lippard, "Homage to the Square," *Art in America*, July–August 1967, pp. 50–57.
15. To Buchloh, portion of the London Goethe Institute interview published in the Venice Biennale catalogue (as in note 12), p. 179.
16. The fact that a rhythmic pulse is almost inevitably perceived as organic might be an intrinsic property of abstract film: this phenomenon is already very clear in Hans Richter's *Rhythmus 21* of 1921 and Viking Eggeling's *Diagonal Symphony* of 1923.
17. This analysis is developed in much greater length in my essay "The Iconoclast," published in the catalogue of the touring 1994 Mondrian retrospective (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art), pp. 313–372.
18. On Strzeminski and the deductive structure, I refer to my essay "Strzeminski and Kobro: In Search of Motivation," in *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 123–155.
19. Those are numbers B 97, B 98, B 99 and B 100 in Joop Joosten's *Catalogue Raisonné* of Mondrian's work of 1911–44 (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), pp. 268–272. The two so-called "checkerboard compositions" (the nickname is not due to Mondrian), although rectangular, are based in a modular division of 16 x 16 units.
20. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York, Toronto, London: McGraw-Hill, 1959), pp. 22–23. I slightly modified the translation, due to Wade Baskin.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
22. On the least cropped photograph Orozco published of this piece one can see sixty-three wooden knights, sixteen of each of three colors—white, yellow, brown—and fifteen of black (but two corners are cropped, and the sixteenth black knight might have been on one of them). See *Gabriel Orozco*, Reina Sofia, without pagination.
23. Saussure, *Course*, p. 116.
24. This does not figure in the 1916 (and highly deficient) edition of the *Course*, but in the notes of a student who actually took the class. Quoted in René Amacker, "Sur la notion de valeur," in *Studi saussuriani per Robert Godel* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1972), p. 14. For more on this point, see my "Kahnweiler's Lesson," in *Painting as Model*, particularly pp. 86–89.
25. Orozco calls each canvas in his *Samurai Tree* series an "invariant," in an obvious homage to Albers. He has expressed his admiration for Albers's work in *TATEetc*, an online journal published by Tate: "What I admire about it is that he has one idea; he looks at one decision, and from that decision he can do a lot of things. You can follow that decision into all the possible variants. That makes the work a little bit mechanical in one way, but very experimental in another" (no. 6, published at the occasion of the exhibition "Albers and Moholy-Nagy: From the Bauhaus to the New World," in the spring of 2006).
26. Quoted in Carl Holty, "Mondrian in New York: A Memoir," *Arts*, no. 31 (September 1957), p. 31.
27. Interview with James Johnson Sweeney by Piet Hoenderdos in his film *Mondrian in New York*, 1980.
28. Saussure, *Course*, p. 89.
29. *Ibid.*
30. See Hubert Damisch, "The Duchamp Defense," in *October*, no. 10, Fall 1979, pp. 5–28. Concluding his discussion of this sea-change in chess strategy, Damisch quotes a Znosko-Borovski, "whom Duchamp translated": "The statics of the positional game were succeeded by the dynamism of hyper-modern play" (p. 16).

31. To Briony Fer in this volume.
32. I am referring here to the famous interview of Frank Stella and Donald Judd by Bruce Glaser, reprinted in *Minimal Art* by Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton, 1968), pp. 148–164.
33. To Briony Fer in this volume.
34. For the virus, see the interview with Buchloh, *Gabriel Orozco: Clinton is Innocent*, p. 95; for the trees “eating” architecture, see the interview with Briony Fer in this volume.
35. To Briony Fer in this volume.
36. To Briony Fer in this volume.
37. Quoted in Georges Charbonnier, “Entretien avec Giacometti,” *Le monologue du peintre* (Paris: Julliard, 1959), p. 170. For more on the “sculptural” aspect of Mondrian’s paintings, see my “Piet Mondrian, *New York City*,” in *Painting as Model*, passim.
38. To Buchloh, in *Gabriel Orozco: Clinton is Innocent*, p. 119.
39. Viktor Shklovsky, *Knight’s Move*, trans. Richard Sheldon (Normal, Ill.: Dalkey Archive Press, 2005).













Lemons Game, 2001
Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm

pp. 296–297: *Carta Blanca*, 1999
Rusted cans, beer labels and sand, variable dimensions
Installation view at Portikus am Main, Frankfurt

pp. 298–299: *Dark Wave*, 2006
Calcium carbonate and resin with graphite
304 x 392 x 1375 cm
Installation view at the White Cube Gallery, London

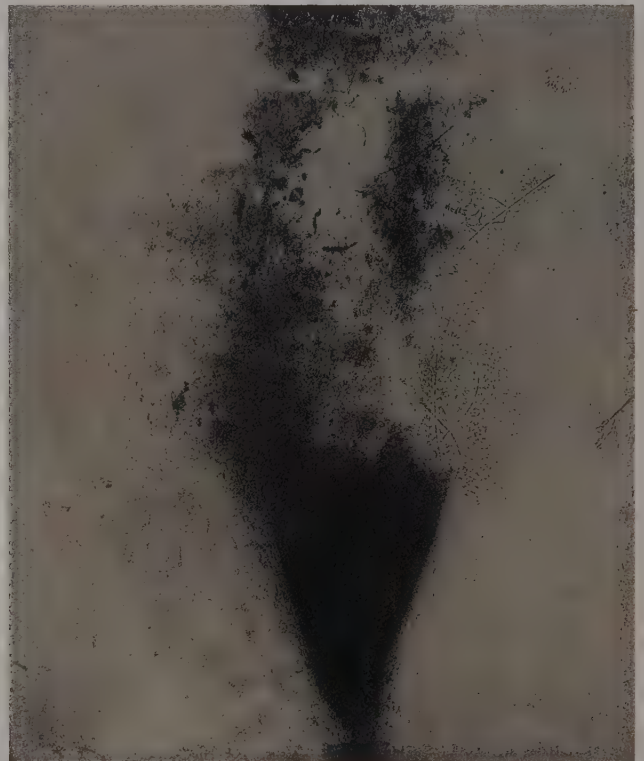
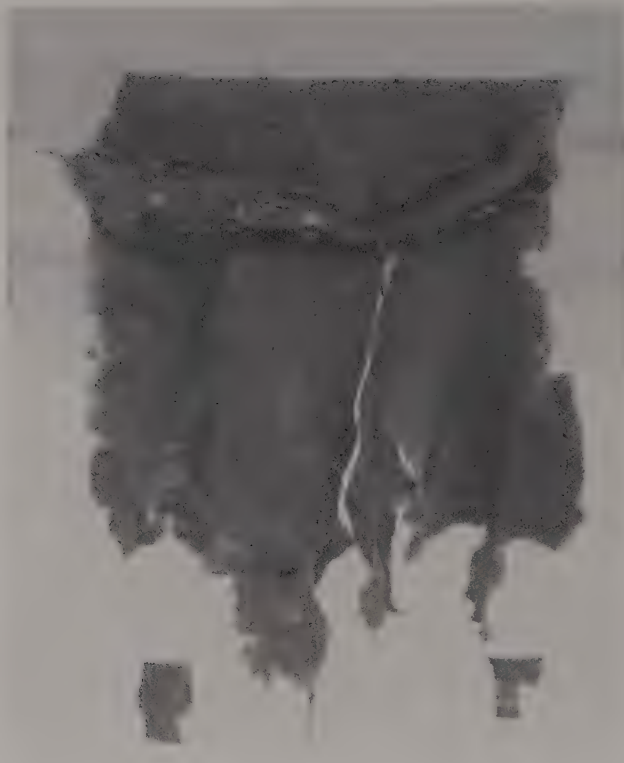








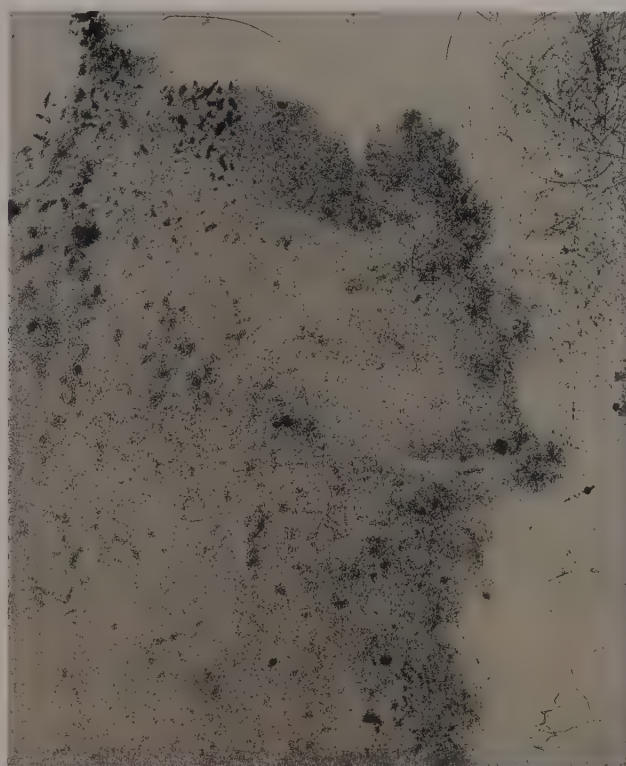




Lintels (detail of a lint piece), 2001

Lint Book, 2002

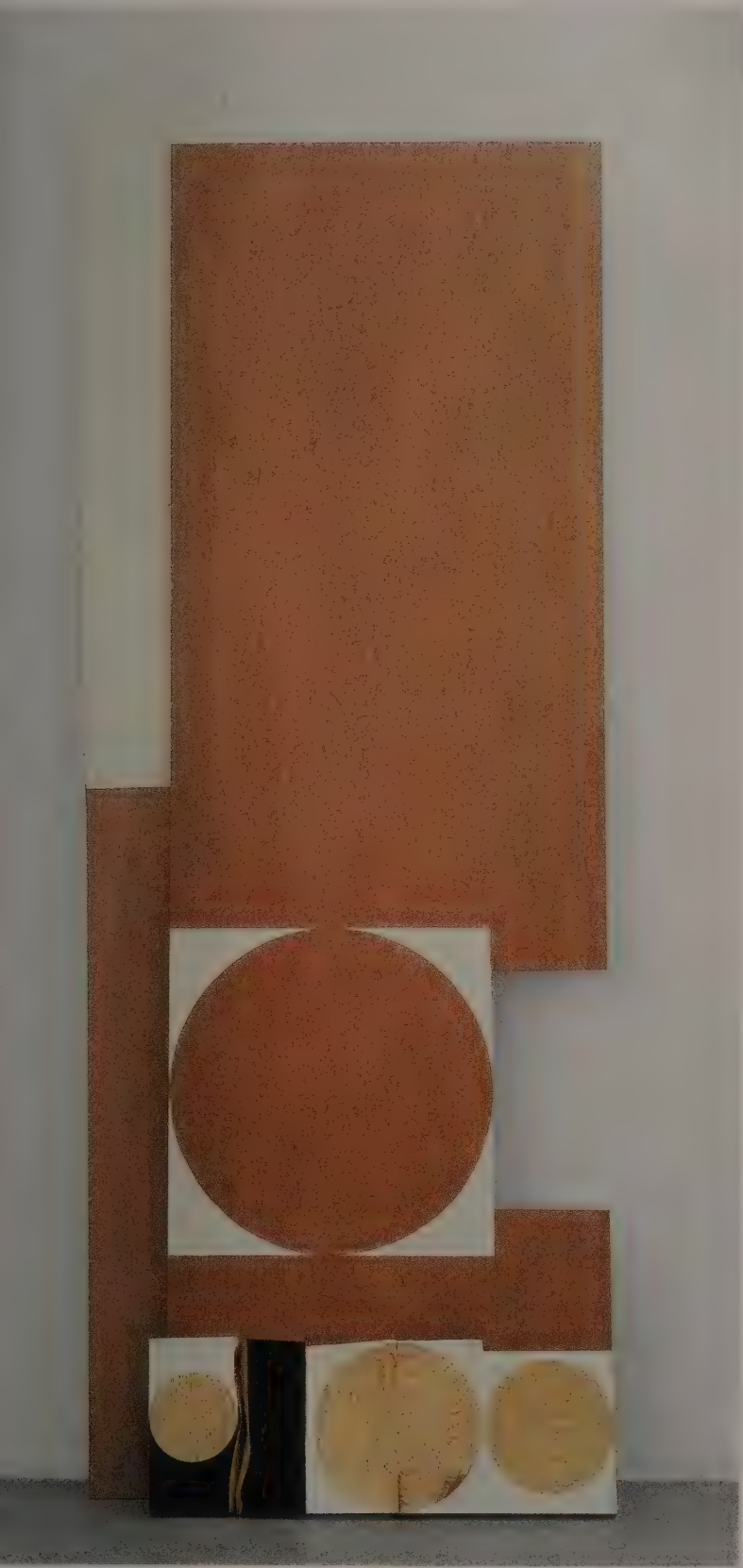
Selection of seven prints from book of twelve etchings,
20 x 16.5 cm each





The Rings of Formwork, 1998
Graphite on wood, 53 x 40 x 4.5 cm

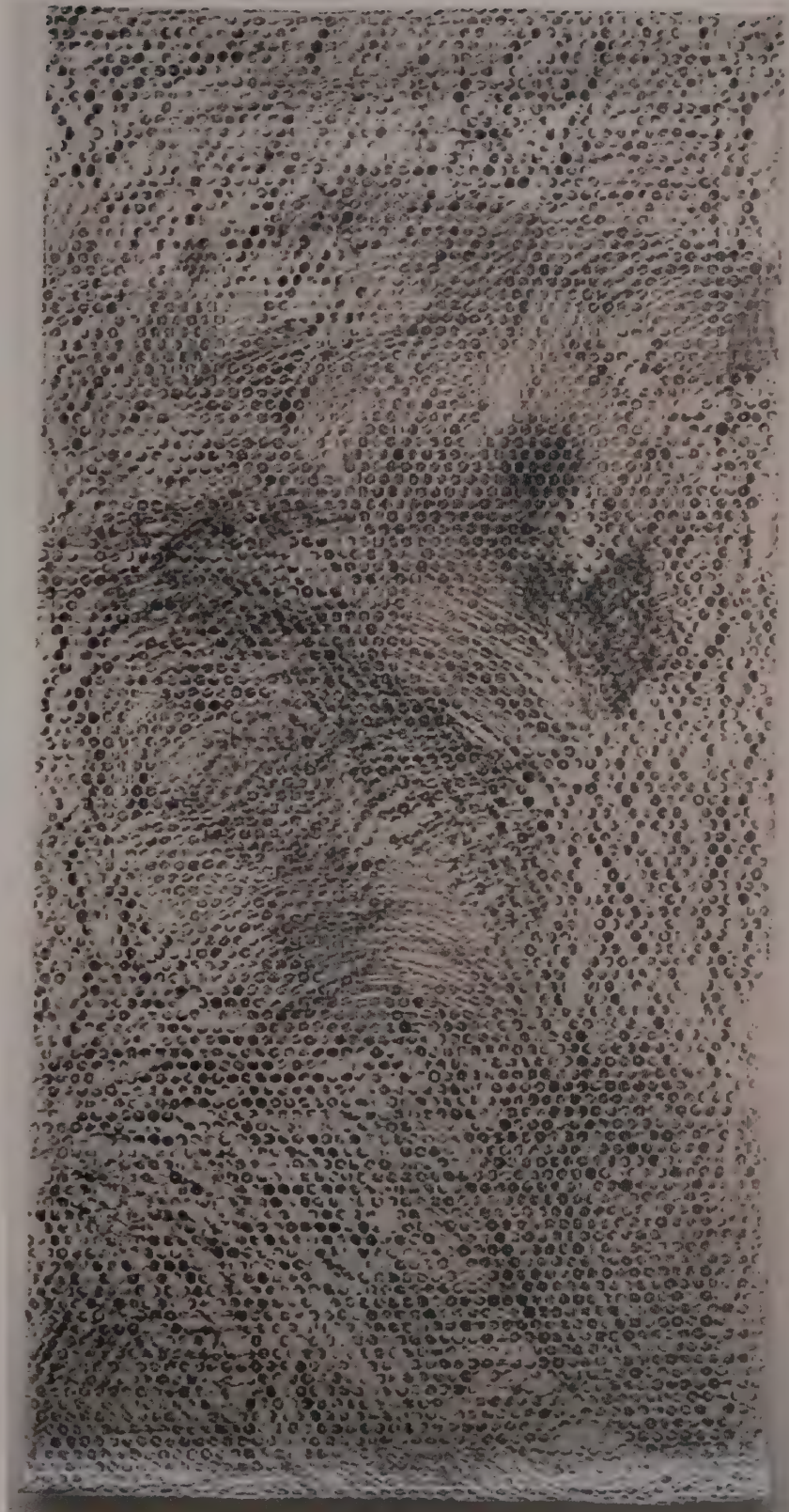
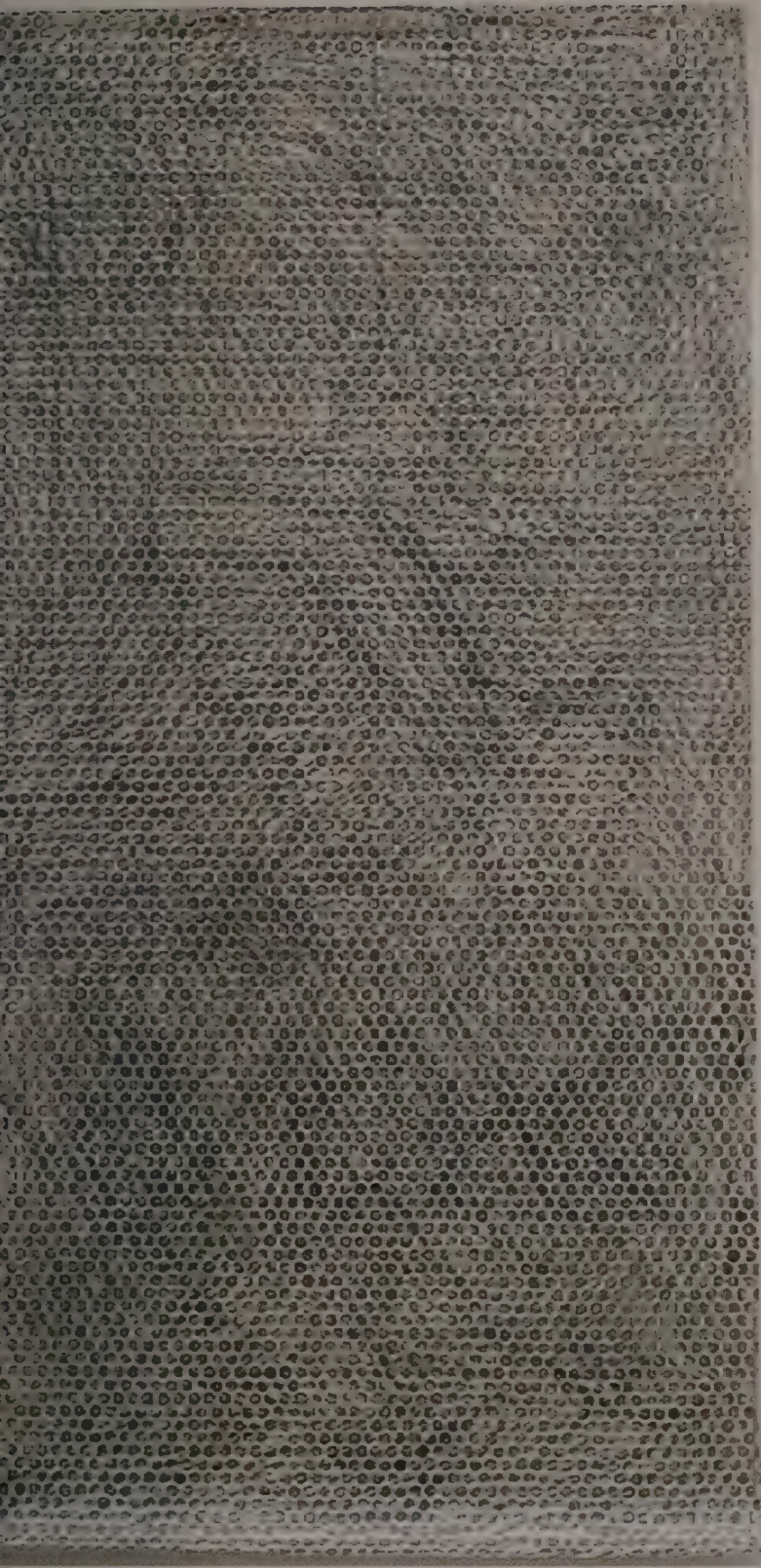
The Papers of Formwork, 1998
Cement on paper and wood, 163 x 40 x 2.9 cm

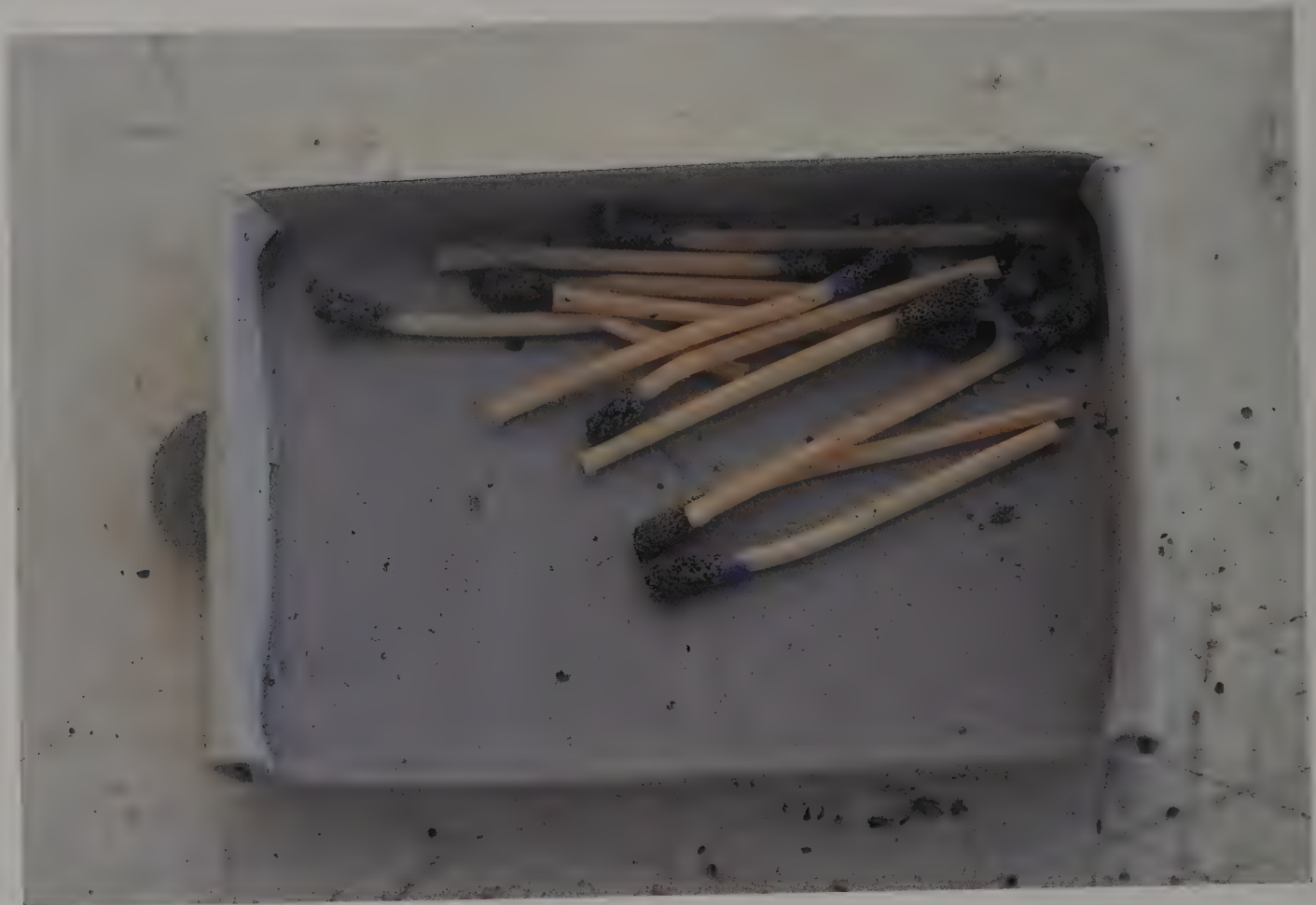


After the Table, 1999
Acrylic on wood, 250 x 107 x 10 cm

After the Table, 1999
Acrylic on wood, 240 x 86 x 5.5 cm









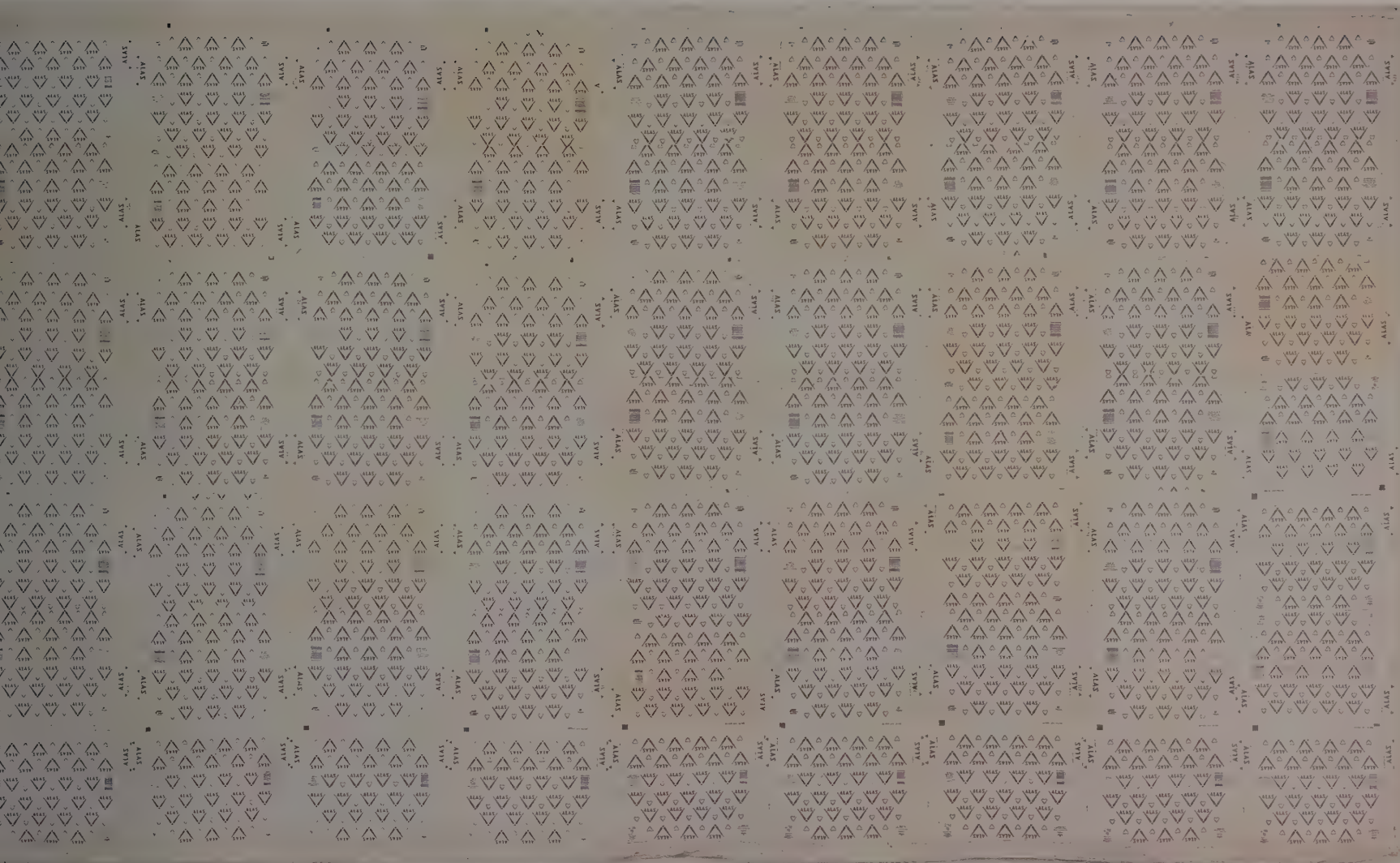


Stuck Stones, 2005
Fuji crystal print, 40.6 x 50.8 cm





Dial Tone, 1992
Collage, 28 x 1036 cm



20.X.05

- BALONES Y DIBUJOS Y FOTOS
- EL PESO DEL SOL
- ARQUITECTURA: FOTOS Y MAPAS CASA PLOJA Y FOTOS Y DIBUJOS ARQUITECTURA.
- CAMERA SATURNO
- CUADERNOS DE APUNTES Y MAPAS
- CUCHARAS Y FOTOS Y DIBUJOS
- CUCHARAS Y DIBUJOS MANOS
- ESPUMAS Y DIBUJOS CITOS Y OTROS ACCIDENTES
- MESAS MUJERES MUJERES
- CAMERA O FOTOS PROCESO
- CORAZON Y OTRAS TERRACOTAS
- PENSKE PROJECT
- OJA ZAPATOS. TAPAS YOGURT
- BANDERAS

- MESAS TRABAJO + MESA O ARENA, BAJO LA MESA, MI OTICINA,
- SALA INSTALACIONES: FOTOS DOCUMENTALES INSTALACIONES DE EXPOSICIONES. MUSEOGRAFÍAS
- ARQUITECTURA: AGUAFRACAS. MUNICH PROJECT. PENSILINA. CASA TULPAN. FOTOS.
- OBRA CONSTRUCCION - TABLONES. ALBAÑILERIA GRAL.
- 23 XI 05 • EL CUARPO DE LAS TAPAS DE YOGURT. (?)
- RETICULAS: PIZARRONES. FOTOS CALAVERA. DIBUJOS. (?)
- CUCHARAS COMO RETICULA EXPANSIVA A PARTIR DE LA MANO.
- A LA SALA DE CUADERNOS Y MAPAS AÑADIR DOCUMENTOS "ESTUDIOS". ASÍ, CUADERNOS, ESTUDIOS Y MAPAS SE AMPLIA A LAS E INCLUYE LOS ESPACIOS DE TRABAJO TEMPORALES. FOTOS DE: TULPAN, PARIS, COSTA RICA, BOULOGNE, N.Y. CAMPAMENTOS CHACHUA Y THAR INDIA,

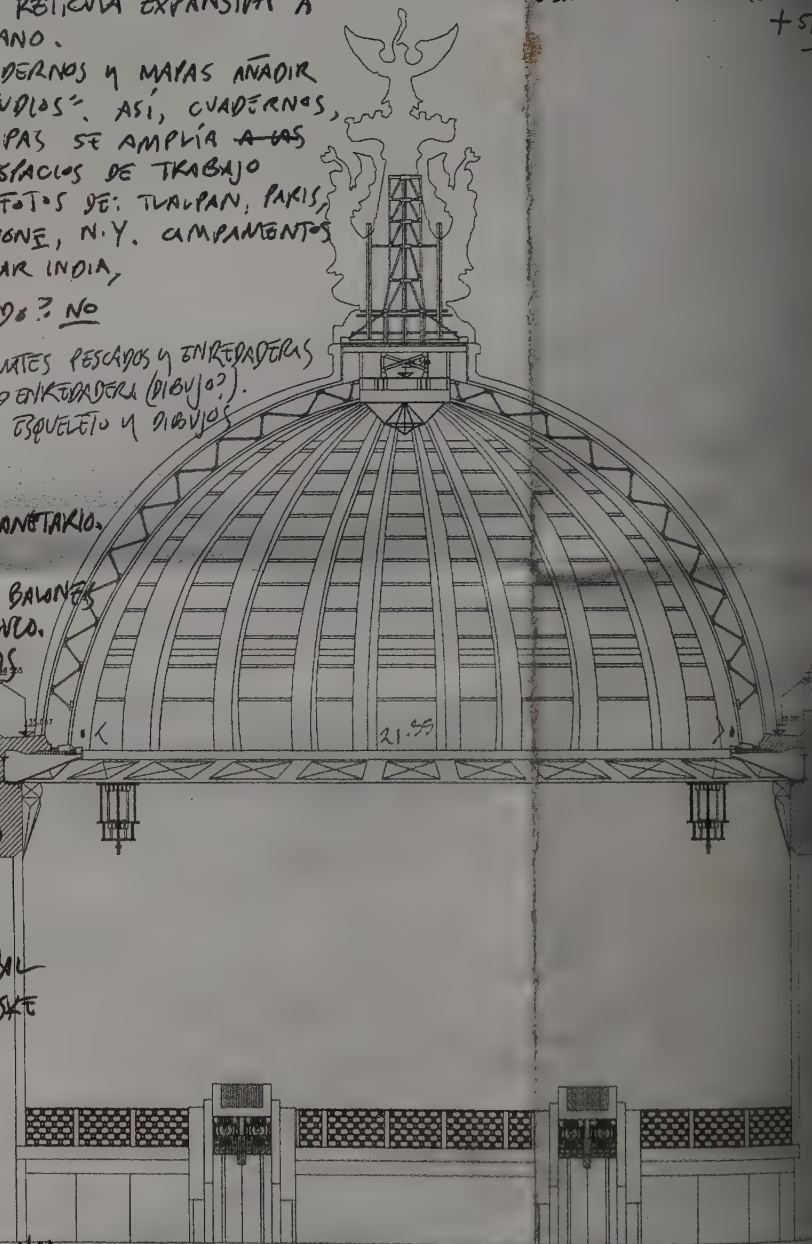
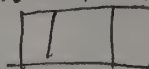
- PINTURA AREAL. ARBOLES
- SALA CALAVERA: 15 FOTOS DIBUJOS RETICULA ESCUPELOTA PUNCHADA. CIZA
- SALA CORAZON. CELOSIA DIBUJOS IMPRESIONES MA
- SALA ARQUITECTURA: PENSILINA + STR

- FOTOS TRABAJANDO? NO
- 11.1.06
- SALA DIBUJOS Y ANIMATES PESCADOS Y ENREDADERAS (PROYECTO GOMA COMO ENREDADERA (DIBUJO?). CONEXION Y BILUENA ESQUELETO Y DIBUJOS EN CARACOL.

- 4.11.06
- SALA NACIONAL Y PLANETARIO. SCARPA Y ESPUMAS EL PESO DEL SOL Y BALONES EXT. REF. Y T. MUNDO. PINTURAS. BANDERAS. CENTRO FLEUVE SPINAL BLANCO Y NEGRO

- 120. HERACITO DEL CARMENITE CARACOL O HUESOS BILUENA
- SALA PLANETARIO NACIONAL
- PARTES DEL PENSKE PROJECT
- MAPAS CON BOLAS SANTANDER
- PINTURAS BALAS
- TENIS LINT. ESPUMAS.

SALA NACIONAL PLANETARIO
ESPUMA BYN. COLOR
POLVO



25.XI.05 EXPO DIEZ SALAS

1. PROYECCIONES: FILMS. VIDEOS. VIDEO Y TOSCA?
 2. DOCUMENTOS: CUADERNOS Y MAPAS. AMPLIACIONES. FOTOGRAFÍAS. INVITACIONES. INSTALACIONES EN OTROS... RECORTES PERIODICOS Y REVISTAS?
 3. MESAS TRABAJO: OBJETOS. ALGUNAS FOTOS Y DIBUJOS.
 4. ARQUITECTURA: PROYECTOS: TULPAN. MUNICH. PRB. + FOTOS
 5. ESPUMAS
 6. CUCHARAS
 7. EL PESO DEL SOL
 8. PENSKE
 9. BALONES
 10. CAMERA (FOTOS PROCESO)
- + CUPULA:
EXPUNADA: OMBELA (PIEZ TRAILER)

28.XI.05

- PINTURAS
- LINTES
- VIDEO PATALOTES + VIDEO ANIMACIONES. TREE
- OBSERCIÓN OBRA VILIA IRIS. TRES ACCIONES TELA. TRES MAPAS. DIBUJOS.

2 XI 05

ESQUELETON MUSEO = EXPO.
AMPLIACION, TRADUCCION, INSTALACION GRAFICA DE CUADERNOS Y TRABAJO. EXPO ESQUELETO FOTOMONTAJES, TEXTOS Y DIAGRAMAS CUADERNOS AMPLIADOS. ALGUNOS OBJETOS. LIBRO = EXPO. ALGUNAS SALAS CON OBJETOS (REALIA) PERO LA MUJERIA UNA SUCESION DE ESPACIOS PAGINA PANELES INFORMATIVOS AMPLIADOS. ¿DOCUMENTACIÓN?

S y DEMÁS.

Foto "SENTERO P."

ELER DIBUJADOS

UJOS LAPIZ - CHARLOS 1º JUNIO 2006

UJO BRAZOS EXTENDIDOS → CORAZON + DIBUJO MANO - NOJA
IMPRESIONES NEGROS
DIAGRAMATICOS PEDOS

0. EJE + FOTOS

→ PENSILINA + MAQUETA OBSERVATORIO
+ OJA ZAPATOS + FOTOS: HOUSE AND RAIN, USA ON A ISLA + ETC
+ SEMILLA? + FOTOS CASA PLANA y DOCUMENTOS...

→ PLANETARIO:
EL PESO DEL SOL +
LINTELS + ESPUMAS
+ BOLA PLASTICA
+ NAT. REC.
+ TAPAS YOGURT
+ ¿PENSKE?
+ (FOTOS)
+

→ BALONA?
FOTOS DIBUJOS y NUEVOS
DIBUJOS LAPIZ
TEMPORARIOS.

2 → OLIVERA... + FOTOS
CAJAS YOGURT...?
PIZARRON NEGRO...

→ ICONOS S. TREE

→ CAJAS y CONTAINERS

→ MESA MEXICANA

→ CUARTO VIDEOS

→ BLACK KITES y
VIDEO JAIPIK KITES.

→ CUCHARAS (MIMAS...)

→ LINTELS

→ CUADERNOS, DIBUJOS FOTOS

→ PROYECTO PENSKE.

→ EL CUARTO (EL CUARTO)
DE LOS ICONOS.

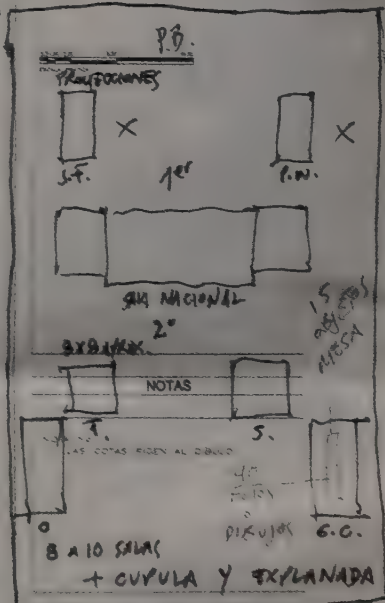
→ EL CUARTO DE LAS IMPRESIONES
S.T. y ANIMACIÓN.

1.14 LEVANTAMIENTO ARQUITECTÓNICO
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SECCIÓN
ESCALA APROXIMADA 1:82.8

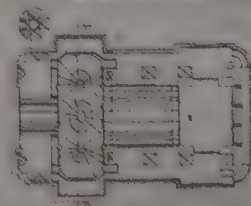


EXPO DEL 29 NOV. AFINETOS.

SIMBOLOGIA:
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SECCION DE LOSAS y MUROS
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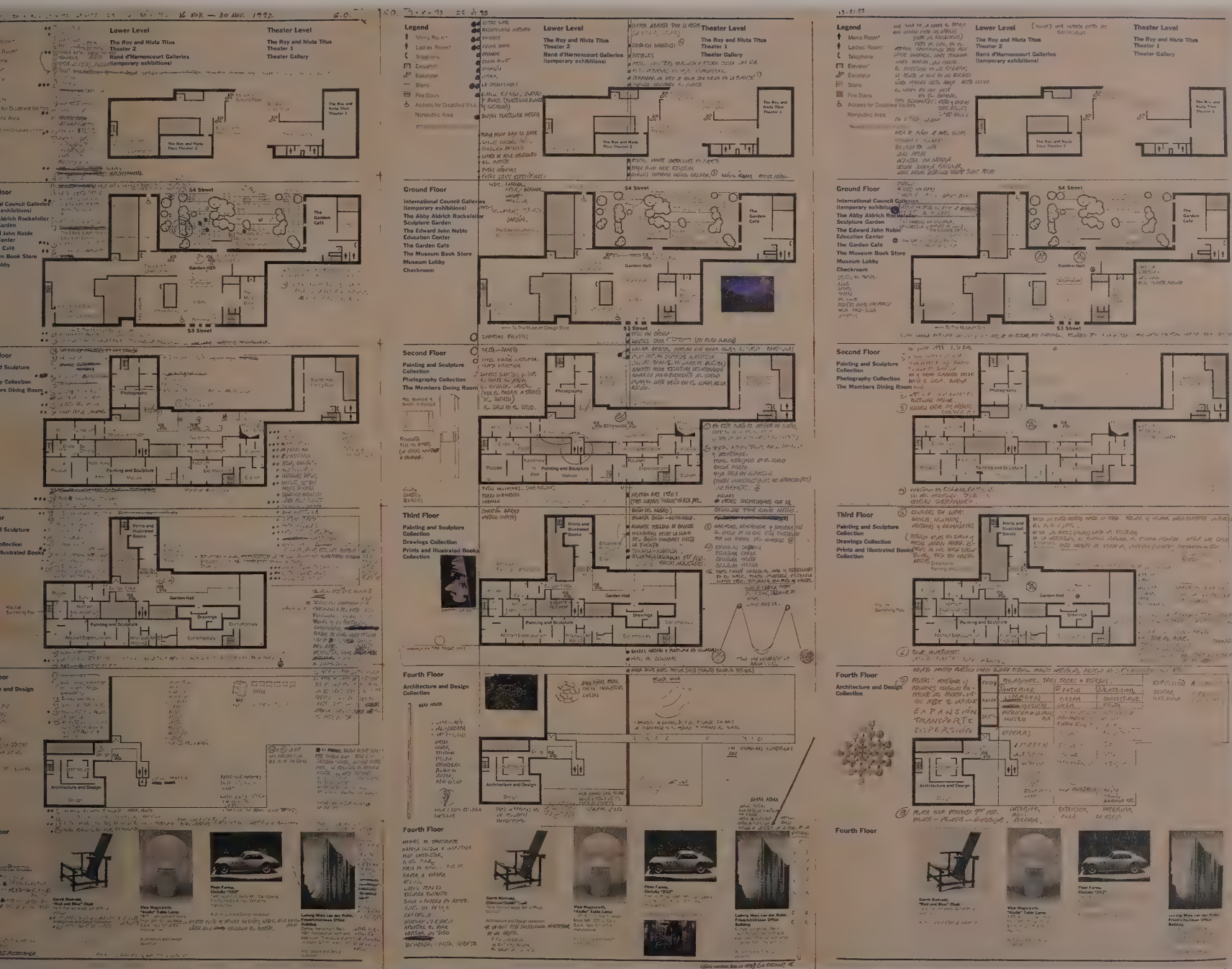
CROQUIS DE REFERENCIA



INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES
LEVANTAMIENTO
ARQUITECTÓNICO Y DE INGENIERÍAS
CORTE TRANSVERSAL 2-2
CT-02

★ Constructora APROCO SA de CV





Map of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1993
Notes for an exhibition project on the museum's plan,
70.4 x 92 cm

52

MAYO 1999

FOTOS Y DIBUJOS

CONCHA CON CONCHAS

ESTRELLA

MESA BILLAR

ELEVADOR

BOLA

ESTRELLA

ESTRELLA

MESA MESA

MESA PING PONG

MESA MESA

BOLA

BOLA

BOLA

D.S.

ESTRELLA

BICICLETAS

CAJA ZAPATOS

ESTRELLA

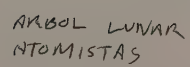
ESTRELLA

FOTOS Y DIBUJOS

FOTOS Y DIBUJOS

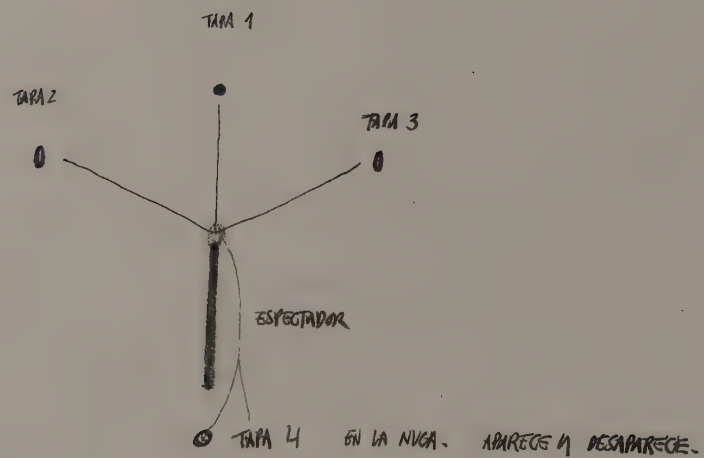
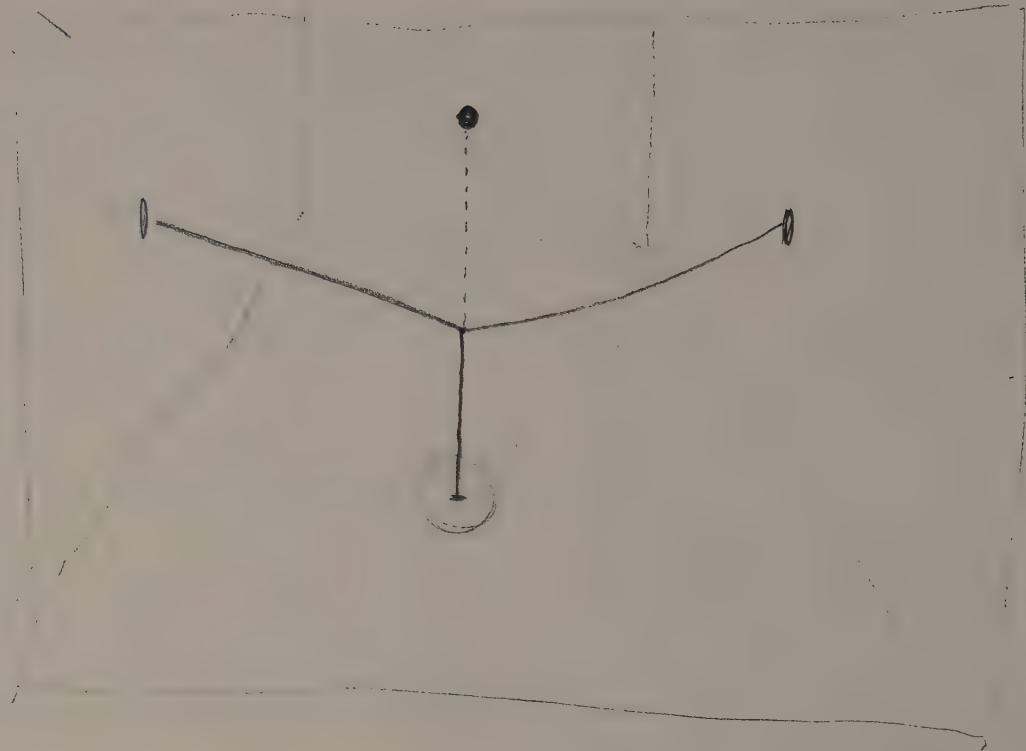
FOTOS Y DIBUJOS

53



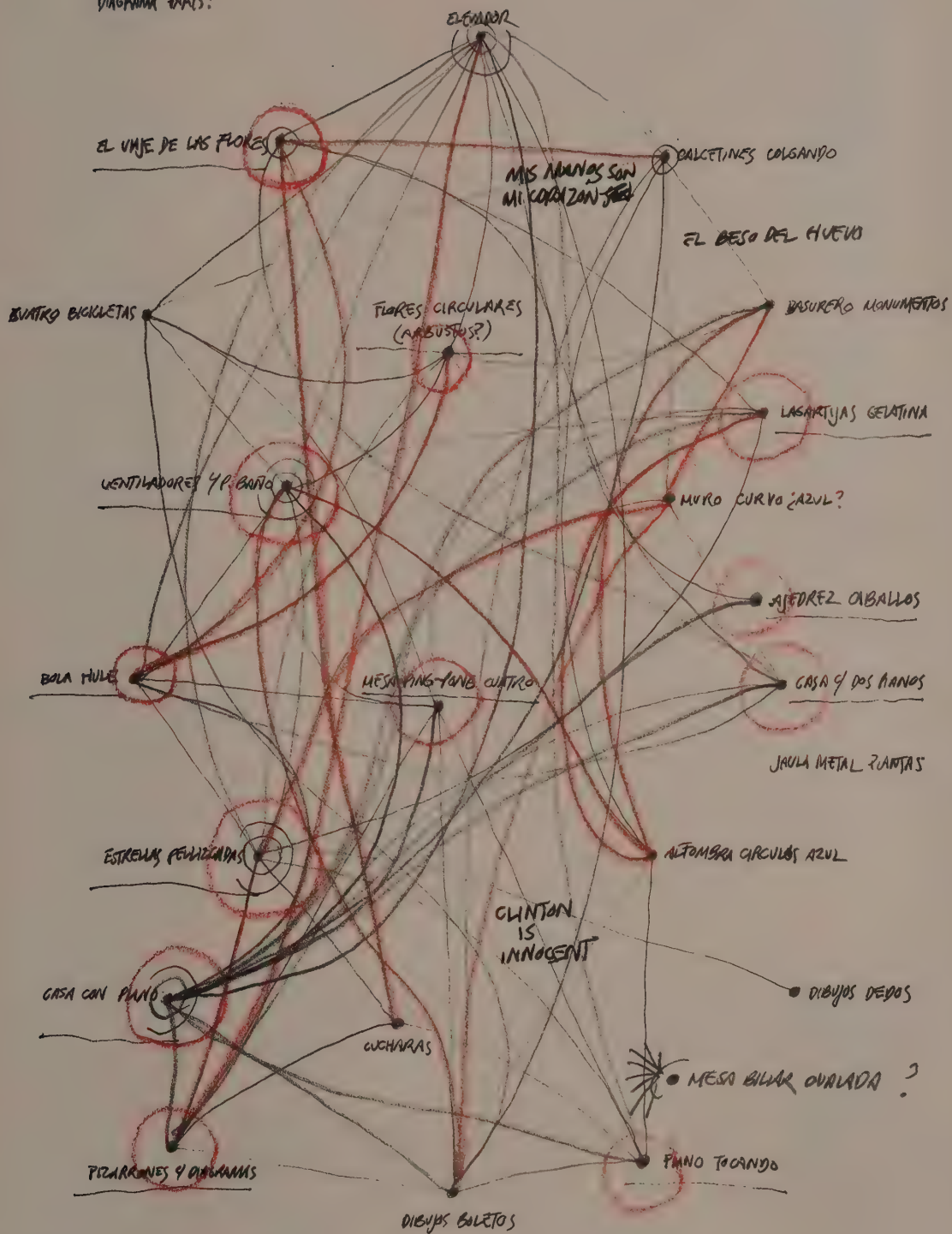
NADA QUE ESCONDER
EL MUNDO NO TIENE NADA QUE ESCONDER
SOMOS NOSOTROS LOS QUE NO ~~LA~~ VEMOS

104



LOS IMPRESIONISTAS

DIAGRAMA TARIS:



NHC 18 VII 92

3

PLASTILINA:

MATERIAL VULNERABLE. TRANSFORMACIÓN CONSTANTE. VIVA Y ESTÉRIL. INDUSTRIAL Y ORGÁNICA. MATERIAL TRANSITORIO. SÓLIDO Y LÍQUIDO. REPENTE Y ADHERENTE. COSA.

INTERMEDIARIO PARA HACER ALGO DEFINITIVO (BRONCE, HIERRO, ETC.) PERO NADA ES DEFINITIVO Y LA PLASTILINA CONTIENE TIEMPO Y VULNERABILIDAD. INDEFINICIÓN.

TODO SE LE PEGA (EL AGUA NO). PIEL RECIPIENTE (DESAGRADABLE). ¿QUÉ ES ESO?

REVOLVERLA EN ARENA, GRAVA, PASTO, HOJAS Y FOLVO. CAMUFLAJE. SE DISFRAZA CON MATERIA ORGÁNICA Y CON BASURA. SE CONVIERTE EN ROCA, PIEDRA.

HACER UNA PIEDRA. ESCULPIR UNA PIEDRA.

OBJETO DE SUCIEDAD, NO BIODEGRADABLE (COMO LAS PIEDRAS). MOTIVO DE CAOS.

LA PLASTILINA NO HA TENIDO VALOR POR SI MISMA, ES UN MEDIO POR EXCELENCIA.

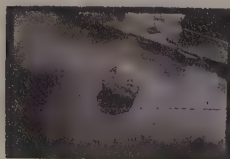
JUGUETE. MATERIAL DESECHABLE. INTERMEDIARIO ENTRE LA IDEA Y EL RESULTADO. ENTRE EL GESTO Y SU DURABILIDAD COMO ARTE. SÓLO ES PROCESO.

GRAN RESIDUO. RECIPIENTE. HOYO NEGRO. MATERIAL NEUTRO. NADA.

PLANETA. WANDERING STAR. NO TIENE FIN. NO CONOCE OBJETIVO ÚLTIMO. DESAPARECE.

ORGANISMO. NUNCA ES ESCULTURA. TIENDE A DESAPARECER. (COMO LA TIERRA).

CADA MANO QUE LA TOQUE DEJA SU HUELLA. ACCIDENTES QUE SE AÑADEN. PIEL ACCIDENTADA. RECOLECTORA. ATRACTORA. GRAVEDAD. PLANETA.



ESCRITO EL 31. V. 92:

LA PLASTILINA ATAPA LA BASURA, LAS PARTICULAS, EL FOLVO, LA MATERIA DEL SUELO Y SE VISTE CON ELO, SE DISFRAZA. CAMUFLAJE DE UNA SUSTANCIA HECHA PARA SER INTERMEDIARIO ENTRE NUESTRAS MANOS Y LOS MATERIALES INMOLDEABLES COMO EL HIERRO Y EL BRONCE. SUSTANCIA VIVA, ALTAMENTE FASIONABLE, INDETERMINADA. DE EXTRAÑA PRESENCIA. NO ES NATURALEZA. LUEE ARTIFICIAL Y ORGÁNICA AL MISMO TIEMPO. SÓLIDO - LÍQUIDO.

FEA. HORRIBLE. CACA. BULO ALIMENTICIO. SUSTANCIA. GRASA Y BRILLO. (¿CON PELO?) (¿CON RAMAS?) (¿HIERBA?) ¿DE QUE TAMAÑO? NO MUY GRANDE. DEL TAMAÑO Y PESO EN QUE YO PUEDA CARGARLA. NO ES UN MONSTRUO. NO ES UN MONUMENTO. NO ES UN MONUMENTO A LA PLASTILINA. NO ES UN ENUNCIADO. NO ES UNA ESCULTURA. NO ES ARTE. ES UNA BOLA DE PLASTILINA. SUCIA.

PUEDO SER BLANCA PARA QUE SE VUELVA GUIS. O GUIS. O CAFÉ. O VERDE. O ROJA O AMARILLA. PUEDO HACERLA RECORRER CALLES, PARQUES, TIERRA, VÍATOS (NO VÍ-EDIFICIO Y SE APLASTARA CONTRA EL SUELO. PORQUE LA GRAVEDAD ES LO MÁS IMPORTANTE EN LA ESCULTURA. PORQUE EL CHOQUE ENTRE LA BOLA DE PLASTILINA (QUE ES UN PLANETA O UN METEORITO) Y LA TIERRA (QUE ES PLANA POR CIENTO) SERÁ EL CHOQUE DE DOS PUNTOS GENERANDO UN PLANO Y ESO ES FUERZA O DOS FUERZAS.

PRE-ESCULTURA. ANTES DE CONVERTIRSE EN ARTE ES COSA.

20 VII 92

ESCRIBIR TODAS LAS PALABRAS DEL DICCIONARIO EN EL MISMO LUGAR, UNA SOBRE OTRA, HASTA FORMAR UNA MANCHA DENSÁ Y ROMPER EL PAPEL. PAPEL GASTADO. ACUMULACIÓN HACIA EL FENÓMENO. TARENTESIS: CHISME ARAA MORTAL. (EL RUMOR ES LENGUAJE FÍSICO).

SUBSTITUCIÓN IMPLICA UNA AUSENCIA. EL LENGUAJE ES SUBSTITUCIÓN. UNA PALABRA NOS INDICA ALGO QUE ESTÁ ALLÁ AFUERA. LO DENOMINA, PERO ESO QUE ESTÁ ALLÁ AFUERA YA NO EXISTE, HASTA QUE LO VOLVAMOS A VER. PERO NUESTRA MEMORIA LO RETIENE Y LO SUEÑA Y CASI TODO ES UN SUEÑO ENTONCES (LORE DE VEGA) Y EL LENGUAJE ES UN SUEÑO SI NO SE PRONUNCIA Y ES REAL (COSA) CUANDO SE DICE Y NO HAY PROBLEMA PORQUE TODO LO QUE SUCEDE ES UN LIBRO. O ES UN SUEÑO.

COSA

INDEFINICIÓN
TIEMPO

ROCA

CAOS

MEDIO

PROCESO
NEUTRO

ACUMULACIÓN
PALABRAS

28 X 92

LO QUE HAY DEBAJO DE UNA PIEDRA. LO QUE HAY DEBAJO DE UNA ESCULTURA, DEBAJO DE LA BASE BLANCA. ENTRE LA BASE BLANCA Y EL SUELO PONER POLVO O TIERRA O MUSGO O GUSANOS O UN HORMIGUERO. ¿QUE HAY DEBAJO DE LAS LAPIDAS? ORDENAR EL POLVO. BARRER LA CASA. LIMPIAR EL ESPEJO. ESCONDERSE DEBAJO DE UNA ESCULTURA (COMO LOS GUSANOS EN LAS PIEDRAS). ALZAR LA BASE Y VER EL ESPACIO ENTREGADO. EL FÓSIL.

EL POLVO PROTEGE A LA BOLA DE PLASTILINA DEL MUSEO. LA BOLA DE PLASTILINA SE AMARRILLA CON POLVO Y ES UNA COSA DISTANTE DEL MUSEO. NADIE LA PODRÁ LIMPIAR. SERÁ SIEMPRE PIEDRA. UNA COSA ENTRE LAS COSAS. ESPEJO NO PUEDO. VENTANA OSCURA. TAPÉ CONSIGO MISMA SU BASE: TODO EL SUELO. LO CONTRARIO DE LA TORTUGA: SE PROTEGE CON TODO LO OTRO, CON EL POLVO. DESDOBLA LO EXTERNO Y SE CUBRE CON ELLO. SE ANESTESIA. SUELO. CAPA PROTECTORA. POLVO. SE CUORE DE SUELO Y SE ENCIERRA EN LO OTRO. INVULNERABLE.

LA ESCULTURA ES LENGUAJE. LA BASE ES LENGUAJE. PERO NO EL ESPACIO INTERMEDIO, INVISIBLE, PERO QUE AHÍ ESTÁ. EN ESE ESPACIO HAY POLVO (Y MUCHAS OTRAS COSAS QUE NO SABEMOS) Y ESE ESPACIO ES ~~LA PIEDRA~~. REALMENTE Y NO SIGNIFICA NADA. ES SOLO POLVO Y ESTÁ OSCURO. (LA BOLA DE PLASTILINA SE APROPIA DE ESE POLVO Y ESPACIO) (Y SE PROTEJE CON ELLO).

BRANCUSI HIZO SUS ESCULTURAS CON TODO Y BASE PERO INSISTEN EN PONERLES MÁS BASES. BASE SOBRE BASE SOBRE BASE. BRANCUSI TAN SÓLO QUERÍA HACER PERSONAS O COSAS. NO ESCULTURAS PARA BASES.

LEVITAR UNA ESCULTURA DE RODIN PARA VER QUE HAY DEBAJO, ENTRE LA ESCULTURA Y LA BASE. LLENAR DE POLVO EL ESPACIO + LA ESCULTURA Y LA BASE. QUE SE NOTE APENAS UNA FRANJA. HORMIGUERO.



ENTRE LAS RUEDAS DE LA BICICLETA Y EL SUELO ENCONTRE AGUA Y ~~DESCUBRIR~~ LA ESPACIO EN EL ESPACIO. COMO LA ~~PIEDRA~~ PIEDRA DE PLASTILINA. ESPARCIR O DIBUJAR O EXTENDER O REVELAR EL ESPACIO INTERMEDIO ENTRE UNA COSA Y OTRA COSA. ENTRE NOSOTROS Y ESA COSA. ENTRE UN CUERPO Y OTRO CUERPO. ENTRE LO QUE SUCEDE Y LO QUE PERCIBIMOS. ENTRE NUESTROS PIES Y EL SUELO.

SI DOS ESTÁN REUNIDOS, YO SERÉ EL TERCERO. EN EL NOMBRE.

29 X 92

~~ANTE~~ LA PALABRA ANTE ES UN VERBO. COMO CORRER, NAVEGAR, MIRAR, RESPIRAR, COMER, LA PALABRA HACER SE DEFINE POR LA ACCIÓN. EN ESA ACCIÓN SE DESCUBREN LAS POSIBILIDADES DEL ARTE. NO EN EL OBJETO FIJO, ACABADO, RESULTADO. SINO EN LO QUE SUCEDE INFINITAMENTE ANTES. ESE OBJETO FINAL DEBE SER LA CALMA DEL GESTO CONTENIDO. DE LOS GESTOS ANTERIORES QUE LLEVARON A SU REALIZACIÓN.

ESCRIBÍ EL 21 IV 92:

ENCONTRAR LA FORMA. EL SISTEMA DE EXISTENCIA DE LO QUE SENTIMOS Y QUEREMOS DECIR. NUESTRO SISTEMA DE RELACIÓN CON LAS COSAS. NUESTRO CAOS CONVERTIDO EN SISTEMA. EL SECRETO DE NUESTRO ORDEN INTERNO. LOS MECANISMOS DE NUESTRA CONDUCTA. SOMOS NAVES ESPACIALES Y NUESTRO ORGANISMO NOS CONDUCE A DONDE SEA. LO QUE SEA ES LO QUE SEA. NUESTRA TOLERANCIA Y ENTENDIMIENTO DE LO QUE NOS RODEA Y COMO QUEREMOS PODERARLO. NOSOTROS. LABERINTO DE CASUALIDADES. FUTURO ES CAOS, PASADO ES SISTEMA, PRESENTE ES ENCONTRAR UN SISTEMA PARA EL CAOS INMEDIATO. EL RECUERDO SISTEMATIZA EL CAOS ANTERIOR. FUTURO ES CAOS INCONCEBIBLE, PERO PODEMOS PREDECIR UN SISTEMA POSIBLE. ORGANISMO CAOS SISTEMATIZADO. PUNTUACIONES. RECORRIDO. SISTEMA DE CONOCIMIENTO — LUVIA; TRANSPORTACIÓN IRRACIONAL. CULTURA — SOLTURA. CAMINAR — NADAR. DEJAR ESCURRIR Y PROYECTAR NUESTRO INTERIOR Y NUESTRO EXTERIOR. FLO — CONDUCTA. NO PIENSO Y NO TERMINO DE SENTIR. RECORRER. VER EN TODAS DIRECCIONES. AVANTAR. DISPERSIÓN. GIROS. SER GIRANDO. SIN PENSAR ENVOLVIENDO EL AIRE SIN RESPIRAR ASZSPAZSZASZSPZSZ REMOLINO Y ESPIRAL. PELETREO. PUNTUACIÓN. PITMO. GAMINAR. VER GIRAR VER. MÁQUINA. TERMINATOR. ACUPUNTURA. PUNTOS EN EL CUERPO. Y EN TODOS LOS CUERPOS. PLANETAS. MOLECULAS. ÁTOMOS. CANICAS. GOTAS. MERCURIO. PESO. DISPERSIÓN. PENSAMIENTO.

POLVO

POLVO



BOLA PLASTILINA

SE PIENSA
SE HACE
SE ANTE



CORCHOLITAS EN TINA
PAVIMENTO



13. 3. 97

TUNNELED INTO THE FUGITIVE NIGHT. A.L. JONES.

14. 3. 97

LA PARTIDA DE AJEDREZ MÁS LARGA QUE HE JUGADO.

THE MASTER OF GO.

THE KING OF NOTHING.

DIBUJO — PIEL.

DIBUJO — ESQUELETO.

ESTRUCTURA

EXTERIOR.

• LA MUERTE. LA NADA. TOPOGRAFÍA DE LA NADA.

CAMPO DE NADA.

FOTOGRAFÍA.

ESQUELETO — DIBUJO.

OTRA VES. ¿QUÉ ES ESTRUCTURA?

20. 3. 97

RETÍCULA PARA MEDIR EL PAISAJE.

DIBUJO TÉCNICO

5. 4. 97

NOTHING AFTER NOTHING

THE KING OF NOTHING

NOBODY'S KING

NOBODY'S HEAD.

→ NOBODY'S DRAWING

FUGITIVE DRAWING

DRAWING ON NOTHING

NOTHING'S DRAWING

NOBODY'S MAP.

DIBUJO EN NADIE

DIBUJO DE NADIE

PORTRAIT OF NO ONE

NO ONE'S MAP

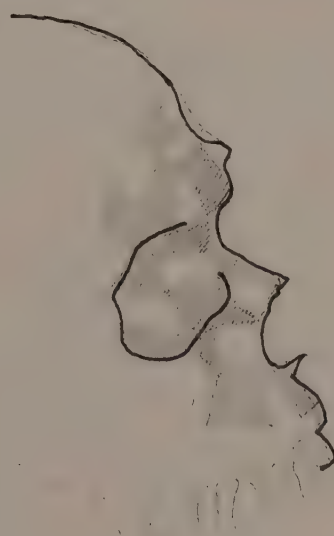
MAPA DE NADIEMAPA DE NADA

DRAWING ON SKULPTURE

BLACK KITES

PAPALOTES NEGROS

POMO SOBRE HUESO

THINKING ON NOTHINGDRAWING ON NOTHING

EMPTYING THE MIND ON ITS WAY TO THE VOID FULLNESS, WHICH IS EMPTY OF ANY CRISTAL-
THOUGHT.

EMPTYING THE MIND
ON ITS WAY TO
THE VOID FULLNESS

[illegible]

Cuatro trayectorias circulares en campo uniforme. El punto de fuga en este campo tridimensional solo es la marca del ojo lo contempla. El punto de fuga es el espectador, parado en punto de fuga. La gravedad del centro moral mueve

Cuatro horizontes circulares en campo abierto. El punto
cuatro líneas azules. Equilibrio en codo de blanco silencio.

Nada está sucediendo. *Nada* hay que ver. Espectador que desastroce. Decodicon, tranquilo yelo. Conciencia en blanco.

[illegible]

Cuatro tapas de yogurth en una habitación blanca. En el centro de cada uno de los cuatro muros. Lleno de luz, de blancura y de suelo gris. Techo con lamparas. Las tapas son anillos de plastico azul, con caratula transparente en la cual algo esta escrito : venderse antes de septiembre once, y grocery, y noventa y nueve centavos. Una fecha limite, un lugar determinado y una cantidad que representa lo que la tapa contiene (una traduccion numerica). Una suma de hechos contenidos en cada uno de los anillos transparentes, un espacio, un tiempo y una medida (podemos ver, a traves, el muro blanco, con sus poros, con sus detalles rodeados por el azul anillo del plastico). Alrededor blanco iluminado. Un paisaje. Muros de pintura seca como la cal, en cada anillo podemos distinguir los reflejos del plastico cristalino en la pared, como gotas humedas de luz plastica. Estamos viendo solo un disco, pero hay otros tres, y uno esta a nuestra espalda. Nos alejamos de ese momentaneo centro de atraccion para capturar con la mirada los otros tres, tal ves los cuatro. Caminamos entre las cuatro paredes blancas y podemos abarcar tres y no siempre los cuatro. Nuestro angulo de vision, tiene un limite y no siempre puede abarcar los cuatro muros. Punto ciego a nuestra espalda. Punto de fuga en la nuca, espacio de conciencia y memoria del objeto que no vemos pero sabemos que esta ahi. La cuarta tapa escapa a nuestra mirada, pero no a nuestra conciencia. Volteamos y la vemos, ahi esta, pero ya no esta la otra cuarta tapa, que recordamos. Espiral recorriendo cubo, caminando en triangulos, desarrollandose en angulos rectos, desde punto central movi que se fuga hacia si mismo.

Cuatro horizontes circulares en campo abierto. El punto de fuga en todo campo tridimensional esta en la nuca del que lo contempla. El punto de fuga es el espectador, parado en punto de fuga. La gravedad del centro movil mas cuatro imanes azules. Equilibrio en cubo de blanco silencio.

"Nada" esta sucediendo. "Nada" hay que ver. Espectador que desaparece. Decencion. Tranquillo vacio. Conciencia en blanco.

Escultura abierta hacia cuatro lados. Espectador adentro del espacio. Recorrido hacia cada uno de los cuatro puntos, dejando siempre uno a nuestra espalda. La estela de la acción. Campo de vacío inmediato. Espacio-punto recién dejado. Espacio después de la acción. Inmediato abandono inmediato encuentro, con la misma cosa. Topo. Nosotros. Límite. Uno, dos, tres, cuatro límites y después nos vamos. La pieza queda vacía, permanece, tal vez, en la memoria del que la habita, ahora la pieza está adentro del espectador, para siempre. Adentro, afuera y finalmente, adentro. Espectador-objeto-espectador. Exterior-interior. Transporte de la memoria hacia la nada, No hubo nada que recordar, por eso lo recordamos.

TARAS YOGURT.

EL ALEPH ES EL ESPECTADOR. UN CENTRO DONDE CONTIENEN TODAS LAS COSAS. CENTRO QUE SE DESPLAZA. CENTRO MÓVIL.
LO QUE NOS SUCEDE EN CADA INSTANTE ES UNA MUESTRA QUE CONTIENE TODA LA HISTORIA DEL UNIVERSO. TODO Y NADA.
EL INFINITO. TODO ESTÁ SUCEDIENDO NADA ESTÁ SUCEDIENDO. LA SUCESIÓN DE LO INSIGNIFICANTE.
ESTO ES LO QUE ESTÁ SUCEDIENDO!

EL CENTRO EN TODAS PARTES, LA CIRCUNFERENCIA EN NINGUNA

"Y LOS NOMBRES SE SINTIERON PEARIDOS EN EL TIEMPO, Y EN EL ESPACIO. EN EL TIEMPO, PORQUE SI EL FUTURO Y EL PASADO SON INFINITOS, NO HABRÁ REALMENTE UN CUÁNDO; EN EL ESPACIO, PORQUE SI TODO SER EQUIDISTA DE LO INFINITO Y DE LO INFINITESIMAL, TAMPOCO HABRÁ UN DÓNDE. NADIE ESTÁ EN ALGÚN DÍA, EN ALGÚN LUGAR, NADIE SABE EL TAMAÑO DE SU CASA." (I.L.B. O.C. TOMO II P. 15 'LA ESFERA DE PASCAL').

— LA TARAS EN EL CENTRO DE CADA MURO:

EL CENTRO ES EL ESPECTADOR, AL CUAL SE LE MUESTRA EL ESPECTADO, DESAPARECIÉNDOLO COMO ESPECTADOR, RECONSIDERÁNDOLO COMO RECIPIENTE VACÍO-LLENO DE TODO Y NADA. PUNTO CERO. ESPARO CERO. CONCIENCIA ABIERTA.

EL ESPACIO ESPERA, ESTATICO. EL ESPECTADOR ESPERA, ESTATICO. SI EL ESPECTADOR SE MUEVE, EL ESPACIO SE MUEVE CON ÉL. Y NADA SUCEDE. PORQUE TODO ESTÁ SUCEDIENDO.

THE REALITY (WHITE BACKGROUND SURFACE, THE LIBERATED NOTHINGNESS, THE OPEN SPACE IN WHICH OBJECTS CAN APPEAR) OBTAINS ITS CONSISTENCY ONLY BY MEANS OF THE "BLACK HOLE" IN ITS CENTER (THE LACANIAN "PASS-DUNS; THE THING THAT GIVES BODY TO THE SUBSTANCE OF ENJOYMENT) I.E. BY THE EXCLUSION OF THE REAL, BY THE CHANGE OF THE STATUS OF THE REAL INTO THAT OF A CENTRAL LACK. SLOVOJ ZIZEK LOOKING AWAY, P. 19.

NEGACIÓN DE LO POÉTICO. DETENER LA POSICIÓN POÉTICA. SILENCIARIO. PAROJANDO LA DECEPCIÓN. LA DECEPCIÓN ES EL ESPACIO DE LO QUE SUCEDE ANTES Y DESPUÉS DE LO POÉTICO. LO POÉTICO ES UN ESTADO MÍNIMO DE AQUÍ Y AHORA ENMARCADO POR EL INFINITO ESTADO DE LA DECEPCIÓN. RELACIÓN DIALECTICA. SIN LA DECEPCIÓN (ESTADO EN QUE "NADA" SUCEDE) NO PODRÍAMOS RECONOCER UN ESTADO POÉTICO. Y EL ESTADO POÉTICO NO ES INFINITO. DESAPARECE PARA QUE LA DECEPCIÓN CONTINUE.

ESPECTANT ESPECTATOR - ESPECTANT OBJECT.

SPECTATOR WITH EXPECTATION.

WAITING SUBJECT + WAITING OBJECT = NOTHING HAPPENS. THE ESPECTATOR START TRYING TO ACTIVATE A PIECE. THE PIECE RESPOND WITH INDIFFERENCE. BUT SOMETHING IS HAPPENING: THE EVENT IS MOVING. THERE IS MOVEMENT, IN WHICH NOTHING ("APPARENTLY") IS HAPPENING.

EL ESPECTADOR ES EL PUNTO DE FUSA.

EN ESCULTURA EL PUNTO DE FUSA ESTÁ EN LA BASE. EN EL PUNTO DE CONTACTO GRAVITACIONAL DONDE DESCANSA Y SE SOSTIENE LA ESTRUCTURA DE LA PIEZA. CUANDO EL ESPECTADOR CAMINA ALREDEDOR DE UN OBJETO TRIDIMENSIONAL LA VISIÓN DE ÉSTE VA CAMBIANDO, PERO EL PUNTO GRAVITACIONAL SIGUE INMÓVIL. EL ESPECTADOR, AL MOVERSE, HACE MOVERSE A LA ESCULTURA. LA BASE (COMO EN EL PÉNDULO) QUEDA INMÓVIL. ¿QUE PASA SI EXCLUIAMOS LA BASE? ¿QUE PASA SI MOVIMOS LA ESCULTURA Y LA UBICAMOS A NUESTRO ALREDEDOR? ¿QUE PASA SI NOS MOVEMOS ADENTRO DE UNA ESCULTURA SIN BASE? (EL CENTRO EN TODAS PARTES, LA CIRCUNFERENCIA EN NINGUNA. EL LABERINTO PERFECTO ES EL DESIERTO). EL CENTRO GRAVITACIONAL DE UNA ESCULTURA QUOTIDIANAMENTE LA SIN BASE CAMBIANTEMENTE ABIERTA Y SIN BASE SON NOSOTRAS. QUE LA RECONOCEREMOS POR TODAS PARTES. ESTAMOS EN EL INTERIOR Y EN EL EXTERIOR AL MISMO TIEMPO. Y LOS LÍMITES DEL ESPACIO ESTÁN SOSTENIDOS POR NUESTRA MIRADA Y NUESTRA CONCIENCIA (SIEMPRE HABRÁ UNA TARA DE YOGURT QUE NO VEMOS) (COMO LA ESTELA DESPUÉS DE LA ACCIÓN).

INTERACCIÓN ENTRE EL

HORIZONTE, FIJAMIENTO VISUAL Y

LA COLUMNA VERTEBRAL COMO PUNTO GRAVITACIONAL.

KUJANGJU.
 ARREGLAR TACONES ZAPATOS. CORTE DE PELO. COMPRAR CAMISETAS BLANCAS.
 CARRO AMBULANTE.
 BICICLETA DESARMABLE.

11 - 21 DE SEPTIEMBRE EN KUJANGJU.



LOS PÁVULOS SALIERON LUMINOSOS. SIGNOS DE LUZ. UN METRO POR UN METRO. EN TRES COLORES Y
 BLANCO. MR. LEE ME AYUDÓ A HACERLOS. CREO QUE SON MUY HERMOSOS. CREO QUE
 UNA NUEVA ETAPA HA COMENZADO. ESPERO QUE LA LUZ REFLEJE EN LOS LAGOS.
 ESPERO QUE LOS ROCES DE LOS ÁTOMOS DESPRENDAN NUEVOS SIGNOS LUMINOSOS.
 ESPERO QUE LOS LOSOTIPOS FLOTEN EN EL AIRE. ESPERO QUE LOS CUERPOS
 LUMINICOS ~~CHASQUEEN~~ CIRCULEN ENTRE LAS NUBES. ESPERO QUE AL
 ABAJAR LOS BRAZOS ONDAS DE TONALIDADES DIVERSAS BAIEN OTROS UERPOS.
 ESPERO QUE LA CIRCULACIÓN SANGUÍNEA DE LA GEOMETRÍA CORPORAL NO
 SE DETENGA Y QUE LAS HOJAS VIBREN CON EL VIENTO. ESPERO QUE
 TÚ SIGAS A MI LADO Y QUE LOS RAYOS INFRAROJOS DESAPAREZCAN.
 ESPERO ONDAS SONORAS.
 ESPERO ANDADAS.
 ESPERO PARVADAS.
 ESPERO RABOLES.





1952
 ENTRE CÍRCULOS, ENTRE ESPACIOS. INFRA MINCE. VACÍO ENTRE ÁTOMOS. LUBRICIDAD.
 LUBRICIDAD. (ACEITE, TECTO DE ACEITE)
 LO IMPORTANTE ES EL TECTO, ESPACIO ENTRE CÍRCULOS VACÍOS. AHORA, TECTO DE ACEITE.
 TECTO DE AGUA. TECTO ESTANQUE. ESTANQUE VISTO DESDE ABAJO, TECTO ESTANQUE
 DE CRISTAL, PARA SER VISTO DESDE ABAJO. CON HOJAS Y LIAJOS. TALVER BALONES.
 ENTRE LA BASE Y LA ESTRUCTURA. ENTRE CÍRCULOS. ENTRE ESPACIOS. PERGOLA.
 ESTRUCTURA TECTO CON ALAMBRE O HILO, SIMULANDO PERGOLA Y ENREDADERA,
 COMO MALLA O TEJIDO. CONSTRUIR COLUMNAS SÓLIDAS (AVERIGUAR^{ON} POR QUÉ DE ESAS
 COLUMNAS). ADAPTAR TECTO TEJIDO HECHO A MANO PARA SER VISTO DESDE ABAJO.
TOLDO TOLDO CON AGUA. HOJAS. CHARCO FLOTANTE. EL ESPACIO ENTRE
 DOS O MÁS MOVIMIENTOS ES EL CHARCO. COSTURA BALONES.



1 CONTEXTO: TRANSPORTABLE. TRANSPORTAR EL CONTEXTO. CONTEXTO MÓVIL. FLEXIBLE.

2 EL ESCULTOR PERDIDO: ACTIVIDAD TRIDIMENSIONAL ESCULTORAL POTENCIALMENTE CAÓTICA SIN SENTIDO. RECIPIENTES DE DESECHOS. Basureros. BALONES-OLAS-LÓTUS-PIEDRAS. PIEDRA CAGADERO. CUBETA CON AGUA ESTANCADA.

CAOTIZAR EL ESPACIO. EXAGERAR LA RELACION NATURALEZA-GEOMETRÍA. PROCESO DE DISPERSIÓN, DESESTRUCTURACIÓN, EROSIÓN. (PALEAQUE).

DESARRES DEL ORDEN:

CHARCO

VARILLA INÚTIL

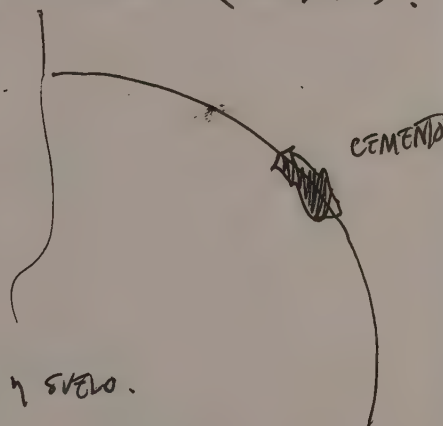
MASA CEMENTO Y BASURA.

RESIDUOS CONSTRUCCIÓN.

ADOBES TIRADOS ROTOS

MONTICULO GRAVA

PIEDRAS Y VIGAS RESTANTES



ENTRE MURO Y SUELO.

- "BASURA" CONSTRUCCIÓN PATIO MODELO, "DISPERSA" EN PATIO REAL

~~INVESTIGACIÓN MATEMÁTICA~~

15 JUNIO

PROTOTIPO:

PINTURA CERO ZERO PAINTING (MAYO 2004)

PROTOTIPO

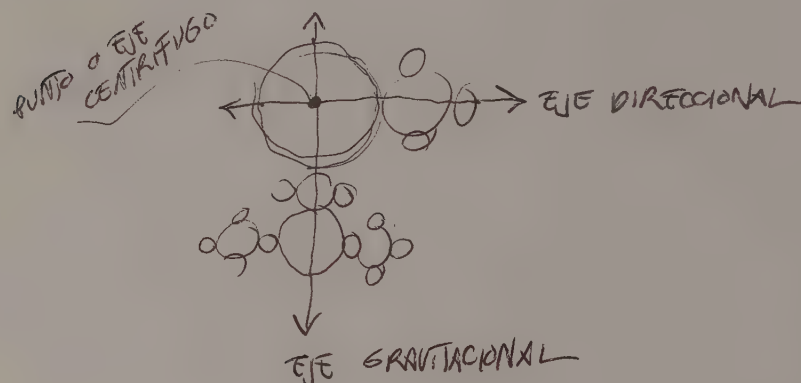
PRIMERA PINTURA CON RESA FONDO Y PUNTO CENTRIFUGO

DOS PUNTOS O EJES ESTRUCTURALES:

1- EJE GRAVITACIONAL VERTICAL

(TAL VEZ 2- EJE DIRECCIONAL HORIZONTAL)

2- EJE CENTRIFUGO DE ROTACIÓN



+ CRECIMIENTO O DECRECIMIENTO (MULTIPLICACIÓN)
(TIEMPO?)

EICLOS
CRECIMIENTO
EXPANSIÓN

INACABADOS...
→ SECUENCIA INCOMPLETA
DESDE UN INICIO (PUNTO
CENTRIFUGO) HASTA
UN FINAL INDICADO (EJE
DIRECCIONAL) A
TRAVÉS DEL EJE
GRAVITACIONAL

HAGO ABSTRACCIÓN CUANDO TENGO MUCHO QUE HACER POR UNA QUERER
JUNCO ES ACCIÓN

Hoy 25 de mayo 2004

PINTURA CON EJE GRAVITACIONAL.

DOBLE EJE:

1. EJE CENTRIFUGO (ROTATIVO)

ES DECIR, SUPERFICIE QUE GIRA
EN SI MISMA (ESPIRAL,
RELO),

CIRCULAR)

2. EJE GRAVITACIONAL:

EJE SIMETRÍA

"ESPINA DORSAL"

"COLUMNA VERTEBRAL"

QUE IMPULSA EL EJE QUE

SOSTIENE EL OBJETO SIMETRICO

PERO ASIMETRICO

GRACIAS A LA DISTRIBUCIÓN
ALTERNATIVA (ROTATIVA) DE
LA SECUENCIA DE COLORES

ASÍ, ... PUNTO DE FUGA (CENTRIFUGO)

+

PUNTO (O EJE) GRAVITACIONAL

PINTURA ESCULTURA

OBJETO

TRIDIMENSIONAL PLANO

PLANO TRIDIMENSIONAL















GABRIEL OROZCO

Jalapa, Veracruz, Mexico, 1962

Education

- 1981–1984 Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Mexico City, Mexico
1986–1987 Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain
1995–1996 DAAD, Artist in residence, Berlin, Germany

Academic Activities

- 1987–1992 Friday Workshops, Tlalpan, Mexico City, Mexico
1991–2005 Courses and lectures given in the following institutions:
Columbia University, Vassar College, Cooper Union, New York;
Yale University, Connecticut, USA
Goldsmith College, Institute of Contemporary Art, Goethe Institute, London, UK
École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France
Jan van Eyck Akademie en Maastricht, Holland
Kunstwerke, Berlin, Germany
Taller Villa Iris, Fundación Marcelino Botín, Santander, Spain
Cátedra Latinoamericana Julio Cortázar, Universidad de Guadalajara; Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Museo Nacional de Arte, Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Centro de la Imagen, Museo Internacional Rufino Tamayo, México City; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico

Curatorial Projects (Selection)

- 2005 Inaugural Project, Museo Experimental ECO, UNAM, Mexico City, Mexico
2003 *The Altered Everyday*, 50th Venice Biennale, Italy
1999 *Market Economy*, Launching of galería kurimanzutto in a stall in the Medellín Market, Mexico City, Mexico
1997 *Lines of Loss*, Artist Space, New York, USA
1989 *Speaking Of*, Museo del Ex-Convento del Desierto de los Leones, Mexico City, Mexico

Public Projects

- 2006 *Mobile Matrix*, José Vasconcelos Library, Mexico City, Mexico
2005 *GO 4 No Borders*, Centro d'Arte Contemporanea Villa Manin, Italy
2000 *Wheel of Submerged Fortune*, Universal Hannover Fair, Germany

Solo Shows (Selection)

- 2006 Blue Orange Prize, Ludwig Museum, Cologne, Germany
Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, Mexico
White Cube Gallery, London, UK

pp. 336–342: Houses
Tlalpan, Mexico
Charles V, Paris
Washington Place, New York
San José, Costa Rica
Notting Hill, London
Boulogne-Billancourt, France

At the age of eight, Parque de los Tres Arcángeles,
San Ángel, Mexico City, 1970
Photo: Manolo García



- 2005 Fundación Marcelino Botín, Santander, Spain
Palacio de Cristal, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, USA
- 2004 *Photographs*, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C., USA
Serpentine Gallery, London, UK
- 2003 *The Weight of the Sun*, Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland
Centro de Artes Visuais, Coimbra, Portugal
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, USA
- 2002 Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, USA
Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, France
- 2001 Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, USA
- 2000 *Gabriel Orozco*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA
Museo Internacional Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico
Blue Memory, Mirei Shigemori Residence, Kyoto, Japan
- 1999 *Chacahua*, Portikus, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Centre pour l'Image Contemporaine, Geneva, Switzerland
Photogravity, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, France
- 1998 Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri, USA
Clinton is Innocent, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (ARC), Paris, France
Let the Foreigner Win, Centro Fotográfico Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Oaxaca, Mexico
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, USA
- 1997 *Recordings and Drawings*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Holland
Staatlichen Museum am Kulturforum, Berlin, Germany
Chapelle du Centre de la Vieille Charité, Museum of Marseille, France
- 1996 Zurich Kunsthalle, Zurich, Switzerland
Institute of Contemporary Art, London, UK
The Empty Club, The Artangel Project, London, UK
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, USA
- 1995 *Projekt: Gelbe Schwalbe*, DAAD Gallery, Berlin, Germany
Migrants, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (ARC), Paris, France
- 1994 *Gabriel Orozco*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, USA
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, USA
- 1993 Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
Kanaal Art Foundation, Kortrijk, Belgium
Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, France
- 1991 *Found Bodies*, Museo de la Alhóndiga de Granaditas, Guanajuato, México



Group Shows (Selection)

- 2006 *Part Object, Part Sculpture*, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio, USA
- 2005 *The Myth of the Volcanos: Popocatépetl and Iztaccíhuatl*, Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, Mexico
Covering the Real: Arts and the Press Picture, from Warhol to Tillmans, Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland
The Experience of Art, Italian Pavilion, 51st Venice Biennale, Italy
- 2004 *Uses of the Image: Photography, Cinema and Video in the Jumex Collection*, Malba / Colección Constantini and Fundación Telefónica, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2003 *Ritardi e Rivoluzioni*, Italian Pavillion, 50th Venice Biennale, Italy
Fast Forward: Media Art from the Goetz Collection, ZKM Centre for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany
Drawing Modern: Works from the Agnes Gund Collection, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, USA
- 2002 *Tempo*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
 Documenta 11, Kassel, Germany
ARS 01, Museum of Contemporary Art, KIASMA, Helsinki, Finland
Sonic Process. A New Geography of the Senses, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
- 2001 Yokohama 2001: International Triennial of Contemporary Art, Yokohama, Japan
Places In the Mind: Modern Photographs from the Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
Working Tables, Permanent Collection, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
- 2000 Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain
Let's Entertain, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

- 1999 *Carnegie International*, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA
Market Economy, kurimanzutto, Mexico City, Mexico
- 1998 Berlin Biennale, Berlin, Germany
São Paulo Biennial, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1997 Sculpture. Project in Munster '97, Munster, Germany
Documenta X, Kassel, Germany
Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA
- 1996 *Gabriel Orozco, Rirkrit Tiravanija* og, The Living Art Museum, Reykjavik, Iceland
Inside-Out, Inaugural Exhibition, Museum of Contemporary Art, La Jolla, California, USA
Drawing on Chance: Selections from the Permanent Collection, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
Gwanju Biennial, Seoul, South Korea
New Acquisition Display, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
Das Americas, São Paulo Museum of Art, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1994 *Watt*, Witte de With & Kunsthalle, Rotterdam, Holland
The Cooked and the Raw, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain
- 1993 *Real Time*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, UK
Aperto '93: Emergenza / Emergency, 45th Venice Biennale, Italy
In Transit, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, USA



- 1992 *If Columbus Only Knew!...*, Museo de Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico
America. Bride of the Sun, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten,
Antwerp, Belgium
- 1991 *Another Mexican Art*, Pasadena Art Center, Pasadena, California, USA
D.F., Blue Star Art Space, San Antonio, Texas, USA
- 1990 *Sculpture of the Americas into the Nineties*, Museum of Modern Art
of Latin America, Washington, D.C., USA
Installations: Current Directions, Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art,
New York, USA
Video D.F., Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, USA
- 1989 *Contemporary Mexican Artists*, Second Latin American Festival of Art
and Culture, Brasilia, Brazil
- 1987 *Six nouveaux regards Mexicains*, Centro Cultural de México,
Paris, France
First Prize, Salón Nacional de Artes Plásticas, "Espacios Alternativos"
Section, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, Mexico
- 1985 *No Apparent Motive I*, Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City, Mexico
- 1984 *Neographic*, Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico City, Mexico
- 1983 Honorable Mention, Salón Nacional de Artes Plásticas, "Dibujo" Section,
Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, Mexico
Honorable Mention, 3^{er} Encuentro Nacional de Arte Joven,
Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Aguascalientes, Mexico

Selected Bibliography*

Gabriel Orozco (exh. cat.). Texts by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh and Jean Fisher. Kortrijk, Belgium: Kanaal Art Foundation in association with La Vaca Independiente Promoción de Arte y Cultura, Mexico City, and Les Éditions la Chambre, Ghent, Belgium, 1993.

18 Triunfo de la libertad, Tlalpan, C.P. 14000 (exh. cat.). Edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist. Stuttgart: Oktagon Verlag, 1995.

Gabriel Orozco (exh. cat.). Essays by Bernhard Bürgi and Benjamin H. D. Buchloh. Zurich: Kunsthalle Zurich, 1996; London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1996; Berlin: Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst Berliner Künstlerprogramm (DAAD), 1997.

Empty Club (exh. cat.). Essays by James Lingwood, Jean Fisher, Mark Haworth-Booth and Guy Brett. London: Artangel, 1996.

Clinton is Innocent (exh. cat.). Essays by Francesco Bonami. Interview by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh. Paris: Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1998.

Chacahua (exh. cat.). Essay by Daniel Birnbaum. Frankfurt am Main: Portikus, 1999.

Photogravity (exh. cat.). Epilogue by Ann Temkin. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1999.

Gabriel Orozco (exh. cat.). Preface by Jeremy Strick. Introduction by Alma Ruiz. Essays by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, Molly Nesbit, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Damián Ortega, Gabriel Kuri. Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000; Mexico City: Museo Internacional Rufino Tamayo, 2000; Monterrey: Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, 2000.

Gabriel Orozco: From Green Glass to Airplane Recordings (exh. cat.). Essay by Martijn van Nieuwenhuyzen. Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 2001.

Gabriel Orozco (exh. cat.). Essay by João Miguel Fernandes Jorge. Coimbra, Portugal: Centro de Artes Visuais, 2003.

Work. Essays by Angéline Scherf, Molly Nesbit and Jean-Pierre Criquei. Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König; Paris: Galerie Chantal Crousel, 2003.

Of Games, The Infinite and Worlds: The Work of Gabriel Orozco (exh. cat.). Essays by Miguel González Virgen and John Hutchinson. Diagrams by Miguel González Virgen. Dublin and Merz: Douglas Hyde Gallery, 2003.

Gabriel Orozco (exh. cat.). Essays by Briony Fer, Rochelle Steiner and Benjamin H. D. Buchloh. London: Serpentine Gallery, 2004; Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2004.

Gabriel Orozco-Photographs. Essays by Phyllis Rosenzweig and Mia Fineman. Washington: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution; Göttinger: Steidl, 2004.

Gabriel Orozco (exh. cat.). Interview by Guillermo Santamarina. Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Palacio de Cristal, 2005.

Writings on Gabriel Orozco’s Work. Collection of essays between 1993 and 2000 by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, Ann Temkin, Jean Fisher, James Lingwood, Mark Haworth Booth, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Francesco Bonami, Molly Nesbit, Daniel Birnbaum. Prologue by Pablo Soler Frost. Madrid: CONACULTA / Turner, 2005.

Gabriel Orozco in Villa Iris. (studio and exh. cat.). Conversations with Gloria Moure, Ángel Ramos and Sergio Rubira. Santander: Fundación Marcelino Botín, 2005.

Gabriel Orozco (exh. cat.). Essays by Paola Malavassi, Hubert Beck and Luminita Sabau. Cologne: Blue Orange 2006, Museum Ludwig, 2006.

Gabriel Orozco: Samurai Tree Variant. Artist book. Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2006.

Gabriel Orozco (exh. cat.). Texts by Mark Godfrey and Philip Hoare. London: White Cube Gallery, 2006.

* Monographic books and catalogues in chronological order.

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p. 10 <i>Green Paper</i>, 1991 (printed in 2006) Fuji crystal print, 40.6 x 50.8 cm Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York	p. 26 <i>Whale's Skull</i>, 2006 Fuji crystal print, 50.8 x 40.6 cm Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York	p. 37 <i>From Roof to Roof</i>, 1993 Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York
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* Works not included in exhibition.

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Fuji crystal print, 40.6 x 50.8 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

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Yielding Stone, 1992
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Breath on Piano, 1993
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Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

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Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

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Cats and Watermelons, 1992
Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

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Until You Find Another Yellow Schwalbe, 1995*
Series of 40 cibachromes, 20.7 x 28.6 cm each
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

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Cardboard box, 15 x 33 x 20 cm
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Yogurt Caps, 1994*
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Altered Citroën DS, 140.1 x 482.5 x 115.1 cm
Collection Fonds national d'art contemporain, France

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Pastel on paper, 24 x 33 cm
Collection of the artist

Atomists: Asprilla, 1996*
Impression in 3 parts on digital archive paper, laminated,
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Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York
Photo: Cathy Carver, New York

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Saturn, 1975
Pastel on paper, 33.5 x 47.5 cm
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First Was the Spitting I, II, III and IV, 1993
Ink, graphite and toothpaste spit on graph paper,
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Collection Catherine Orentreich, New York
Photos: John Berens, New York

p. 75
Untitled, 1993
Triptych, acrylic, graphite, drawings of circles,
marker on paper, 26.7 x 20.3 cm
Collection Agnes Gund, New York

Untitled, 1993*
Ink, graphite and toothpaste spit on paper,
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Collection Rebeca and Martin Eisenberg

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Untitled, 2001
Acrylic on paper, 20 x 20 cm each
Collection Mercedes Vilardell, Spain
Photos: Joan Sastre

p. 77
Black Kites, 1997
Graphite on cranium, 21.6 x 12.7 x 15.9 cm
Collection Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
Donation of Mrs. and Mr. James P. Magill

p. 80
Atomist, 1996*
Gouache and graphite on newspaper, 17.8 x 13.2 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York
Photo: John Berens, New York

p. 81
Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on Xerox photocopy, 16.9 x 22.2 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York
Photo: Cathy Carver, New York

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Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on newspaper, 21 x 21 cm
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Photo: Cathy Carver, New York

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Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on newspaper, 20.4 x 16.3 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York
Photo: Cathy Carver, New York

Atomist, 1996*
Ink on Xerox color photocopy, 19.1 x 18.5 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York
Photo: John Berens, New York

Atomist, 1996*
Gouache and ink on Xerox color photocopy, 19.1 x 18.5 cm
Collection Ellipse Foundation
Photo: John Berens, New York

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Gouache and ink on Xerox color photocopy, 25.1 x 18.5 cm
Collection Ellipse Foundation

Atomist, 1996*
Gouache and ink on newspaper, 30.2 x 18.5 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York
Photo: John Berens, New York

p. 85
Atomist, 1996*
Ink on newspaper, 22 x 18.5 cm
Collection Lisa and Stuart Ginsberg, New York

Atomist, 1996*
Gouache and ink on newspaper, 20.4 x 17.2 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

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Gouache and ink on Xerox photocopy, 20.4 x 26.4 cm
Collection Ellipse Foundation

Atomist, 1996*
Gouache and ink on newspaper, 20 x 26.1 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York
Photo: John Berens, New York

Atomist, 1996*
Gouache and ink on Xerox photocopy, 19.4 x 21.6 cm
Ellipse Foundation

Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on Xerox color photocopy, 19.4 x 21.6 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York
Photo: Cathy Carver, New York

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Atomist, 1996
Gouache and ink on Xerox photocopy, 20.4 x 17.2 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

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Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

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Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

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Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm
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p. 94
Mixiotes, 1999*
Cactus leaves, balls and plastic bags, variable dimensions
Collection Helen and Brice Marden, New York

p. 98
Spume I, 2003
Polyurethane foam, 40.64 x 162.56 x 101.6 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

p. 99
Spume III, 2003*
Polyurethane foam, 40.6 x 121.9 x 55.88 cm
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p. 100
Spume II, 2003
Polyurethane foam, 27.9 x 185.4 x 96.5 cm
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Spume V, 2003
Polyurethane foam, 73.6 x 154.9 x 109.2 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

p. 102
Delta Tail, 2003*
Polyurethane foam, 86.3 x 162.5 x 119.3 cm
Collection Isabel and Agustín Coppel, Mexico
Photo: John Berens, New York

p. 103
Arch Stream, 2003*
Polyurethane foam, 76.2 x 180.34 x 104.14 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

p. 105
Spume IV, 2003*
Polyurethane foam, 114.3 x 177.8 x 71.2 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

p. 106
Recaptured Nature, 1992
Vulcanized rubber, 94 cm diameter approximately
Collection Pepis and Aurelio López Rocha, Guadalajara

p. 107
Orange without Space, 1993*
Plasticine and orange, 40 cm diameter approximately
Collection of the artist

p. 108
Twelve Korean Notebook Pages, 1995
Gouache and graphite on notebook pages, 17.8 x 12.7 cm
Collection Marie Jose and Henry Kravis, New York
Photo: John Berens, New York

p. 109
Light Sign, 1994*
Plastic and aluminium light box, 100 x 100 x 20 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

p. 110
Baggage Tag, 1997
Drawing, collage, acrylic on airplane ticket, 27.9 x 21.6 cm
Collection Bruno van Lierde, Belgium

Rubbed, 1997
Collage and frottage on the back of an airplane ticket,
27.9 x 21.6 cm
Collection Jérôme Bel, France

Untitled, 2000
Airplane ticket, gouache, 27.9 x 21.6 cm
Collection Luisa and Juan Carlos Martín, Mexico

Red Air, 1997
Collage and frottage on an airplane ticket, 27.9 x 21.6 cm
Collection Victor Gissler, Suiza

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Collage # 9, 30 x 24.2 cm
Collection Jumex, Mexico

Kelly Kites, 2001
Collage # 8, 30 x 24.2 cm
Collection of the artist

Kelly Kites, 2001
Collage # 12, 30 x 24.2 cm
Collection Isabel and Agustín Coppel, Mexico

Kelly Kites, 2001*
Collage # 6, 30 x 24.2 cm
Collection Lady and Sir Evelyn de Rothschild

p. 112
Vital, 1998*
Cibachrome, 40.6 x 50.8 cm
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

p. 113
Salome's Dress, 1989
Acrylic on wood, 31 x 45.5 x 4 cm
Collection of the artist

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