ETTORE SOTTSASS

FORMAL EXERCISE NR 2

CATALOGUE FOR DECORATIVE FURNITURE IN MODERN STYLE

1978 - 1980

Ho disegnato alcuni mobili che, nella mia storia personale, immaginata o no, rappresentano il momento finale (per ora) di pensieri e azioni, solitarie o consumate con amici, durante almeno dieci anni (forse quindici) e che chiamavamo, tanto per capirci, design radicale o qualche volta anche controdesign o cose del genere.
Certo, questi mobili che ho disegnato rappresentano (per quanto mi riguarda) un tentativo di uscita o meglio un tentativo di rientro verso il centro del problema; un tentativo per rientrare nel disegno portandomi dietro tutto quello che è successo e forse anche tutto quello che non è successo.
Ho riprovato a disegnare oggetti, cose, mobili, e a farli costruire.
Li ho fatti grandi e pesanti, con zoccoli e basamenti per sottrarli ai kitsch dell'arredamento borghese e piccolo borghese. Non stanno quasi da nessuna parte e comunque non « legano », non possono neanche produrre coordinati. Stanno soltanto da soli come i monumenti nelle piazze, e non riescono neanche a fare stile (infatti nessuno li compera, salvo collezionisti o sconnessi attori di Hollywood). Sono anche decorati perché così riesco a comunicare stati culturali (in senso antropologico) diversi, a seconda dei casi e secondo reali necessità funzionali.
Nel caso di questa mostra ho scelto per il disegno delle decorazioni (laminato Print disegnato e fatto produrre da Abet laminati in Italia), brani dell'iconografia figurativa trovata in spazi non corrotti dalla sofisticazione della cultura standard dell'arredamento privato. Ho scelto « textures » di quelle zone culturali che non rappresentano affatto la povertà ma che sono abbandonate dal kitsch, di qualunque origine sia, cioè sono abbandonate da qualunque intento o previsione intellettuale: specie di terre di nessuno, specie di zone culturali extraumane.

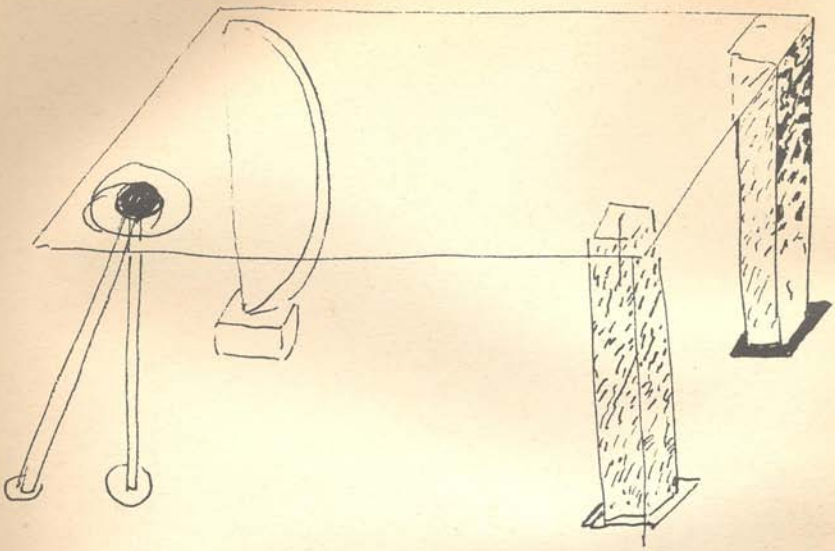
I have designed a number of pieces of furniture which, in my personal history, imagined or not, represent (for the moment) the final point of thoughts and actions experienced either alone or with friends, in a period at least ten and perhaps fifteen years and which, for want of a better name, we called radical design or sometimes counterdesign or things like that.
Certainly, this furniture that I have designed represents (as far as I am concerned) an attempt to get out of, or rather an attempt to re-enter the crux of the matter. It is an attempt to get back into design, bringing with me everything that has happened and maybe also everything that has not.
I have tried again to design objets, things, furniture, and to have them made.
I have made them big and heavy, with pedestals and bases to save them from the kitsch of bourgeois and petty bourgeois décor. There's almost nowhere you can put them and in any case they don't « match » and they can't even produce coordinates. They only go by themselves, like monuments in squares, and they don't even manage to create style (nobody in fact buys them, apart from the odd collector or desultory Hollywood film star).
They are also decorated, because in this way I can convey different cultural states (in an anthropological sense), according to cases and to real functional necessities. In the case of this exhibition I have chosen for the drawing of the decorations (plastic laminate designed and especially produced by Abet Laminati in Italy), extracts from a figurative iconography found in spaces uncorrupted by the sophistication of the standard culture of private interior design. I have chosen « textures » from those cultural area that do not by any means represent poverty but which are untouched by kitsch, whatever their origin happens to be.

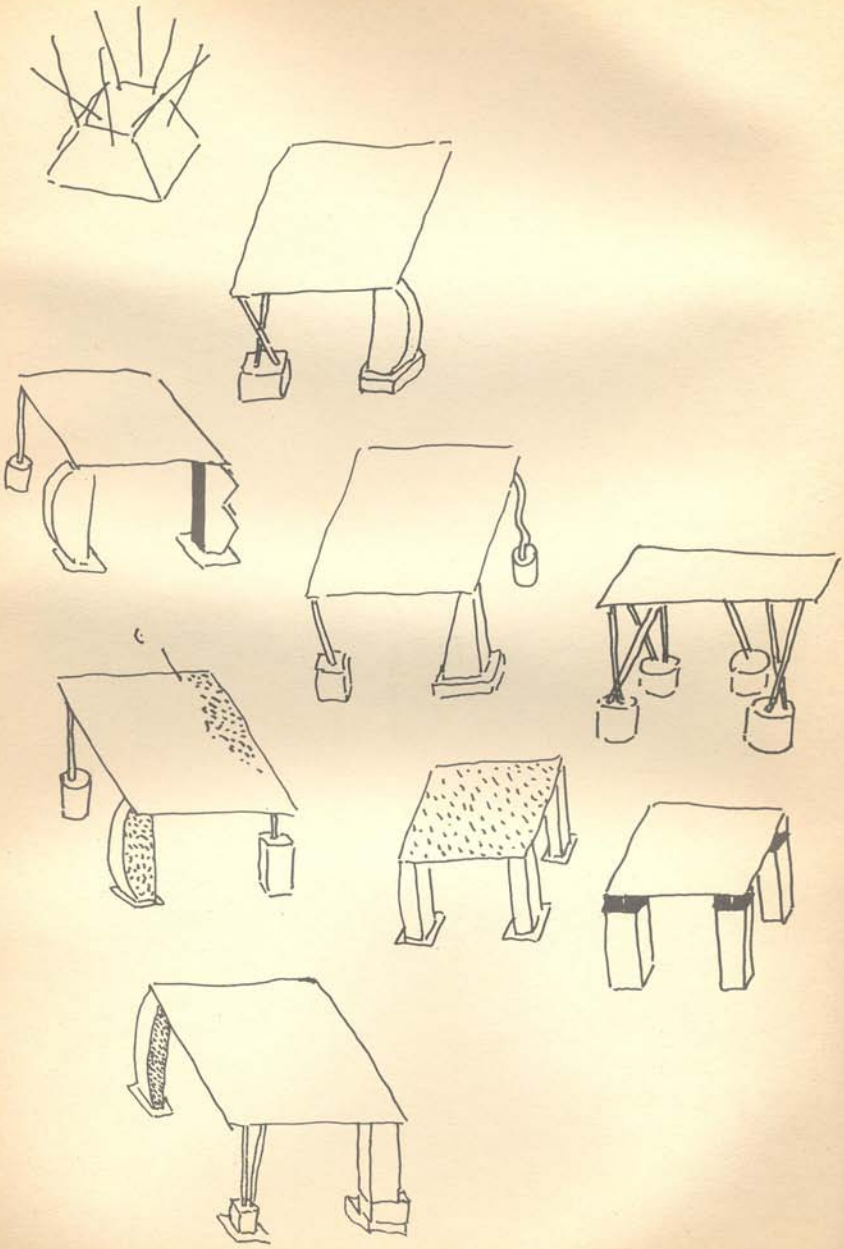
Ho scelto dunque textures come la graniglia e i mosaici dei gabinetti delle metropolitane delle grandi metropoli, o come le reti stirate dei recinti di periferia, o come la carta spugnata dei libri contabili ministeriali e polizieschi, e poi ho scelto colori come quelli delle sedie che ci sono nella latteria qui sotto casa dove si vendono uova, margarina, bottiglie di acqua minerale, detergenti vari, spaghetti e liquerizia e naturalmente formaggi molli e latte. Nella latteria uno si può anche sedere e bere un caffè. Poi ho scelto il laminato plastico che già è un materiale senza incertezze e ho scelto lamiere da tramvia municipale, da container e simili, ho scelto strati di gomma da pavimento di aeroporto e strati di prato artificiale per rifinire distributori di benzina texani e ho scelto anche zincature per apparecchi elettrici che normalmente si nascondono. Mi sarebbe piaciuto riuscire a proporre una specie di iconografia della non cultura, di una cultura di nessuno (non di una cultura dell'anonimo) ma l'iconografia di una cultura della cultura non usata e non usabile, non perché non c'è neanche perché non si usa, ma perché non si guarda, perché non si prende in considerazione, perché non c'entra, perché sembra non esistere nella cultura che si sa, e forse addirittura non produce cultura. Queste zone della non cultura, queste zone della « cultura di nessuno » ci sono. Ma su questo piano, molto più in là — per ora — non sono riuscito ad andare. Anzi, forse tutto è venuto fuori diverso da come era previsto.

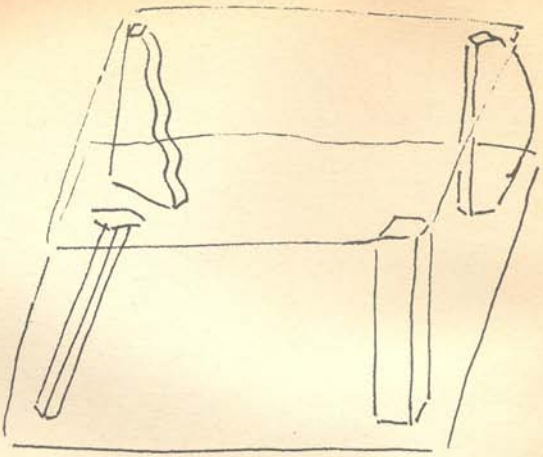
Giugno 1980
Ettore Sottsass jr.

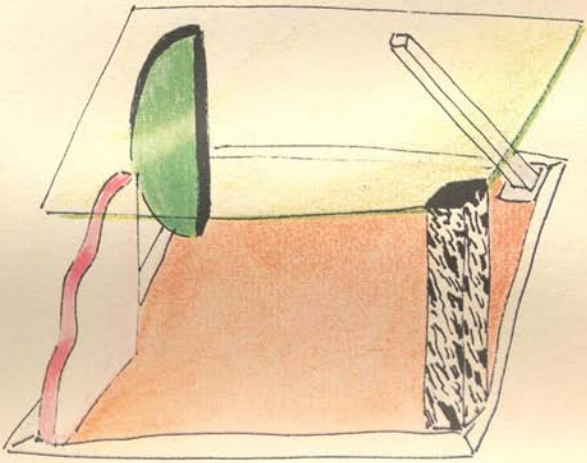
They are areas abandoned, that is, by any intellectual intent or expectation; a kind of no man's land, an extra-human cultural wasteland. So I have chosen textures like the grit and the mosaics of public conveniences in the underground station of big cities, like the tight wire netting of suburban fences, or like the spongy paper of government account books, and detective stories, and then I have chosen colours like those of the chair in the dairy under my house where they sell eggs, margarine, bottles of mineral water, miscellaneous detergents, spaghetti and liquorice and, naturally, soft cheeses and milk. In the dairy you can event sit down and have a coffee. And I have chosen the plastic laminate which is in itself a material with no uncertainties; and I have chosen metal plate used for trams, containers and the like; I have chosen layers of airport floor rubber and layers of artificial lawn used at texan filling stations; and I have also chosen the galvanized sheet used on electrical appliances which are normally hidden. I should like to have been able to propose some sort of iconography of non-culture, of no man's culture (and not to the culture of the anonymous) — the iconography of a culture of an unused and unusable culture, not because it does not exist or even because it is not used, but because it is not looked at, because it is not taken into consideration, because it's got nothing to do with the question, because it does not seem to exist in known culture and perhaps does not even produce culture. These zones of non-culture, of « no man's culture » do exist. But on this plane, I have not — for the moment — succeeded in getting much farther. In fact, everything has maybe turned out differently from what I had expected.

June 1980
Ettore Sottsass jr.



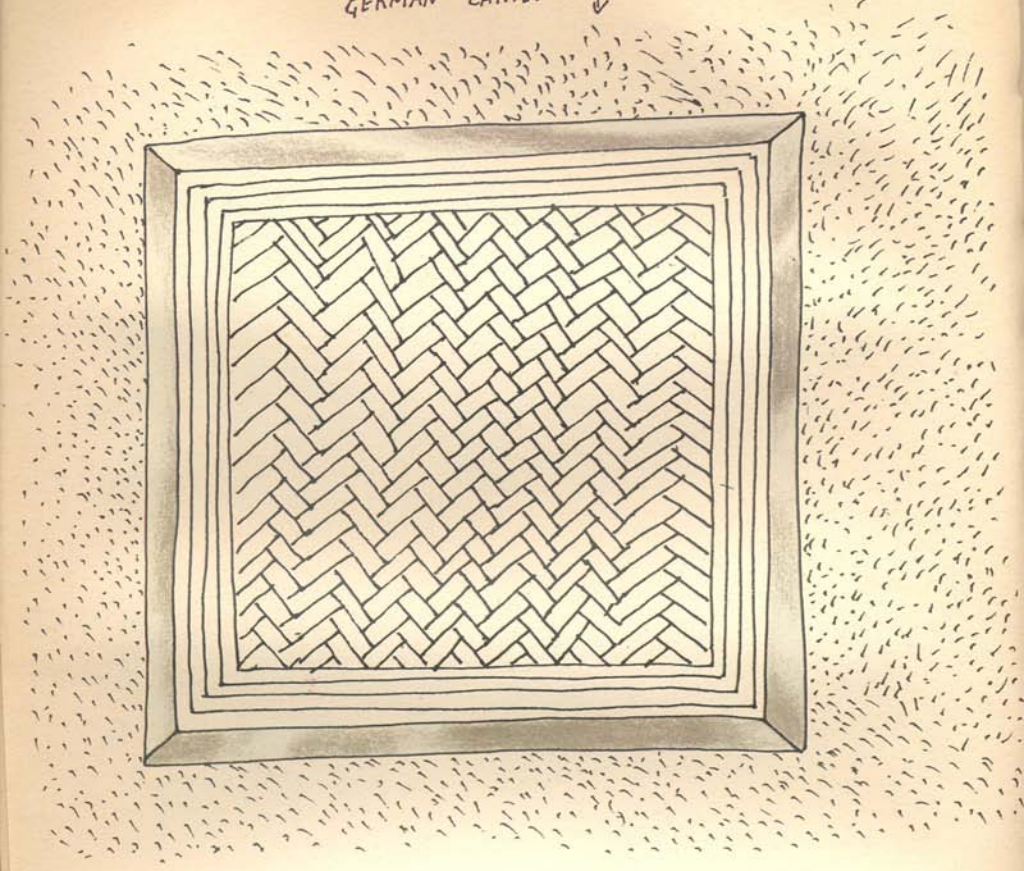


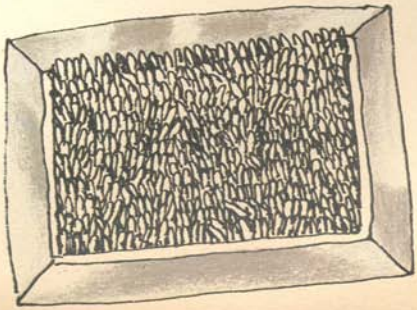


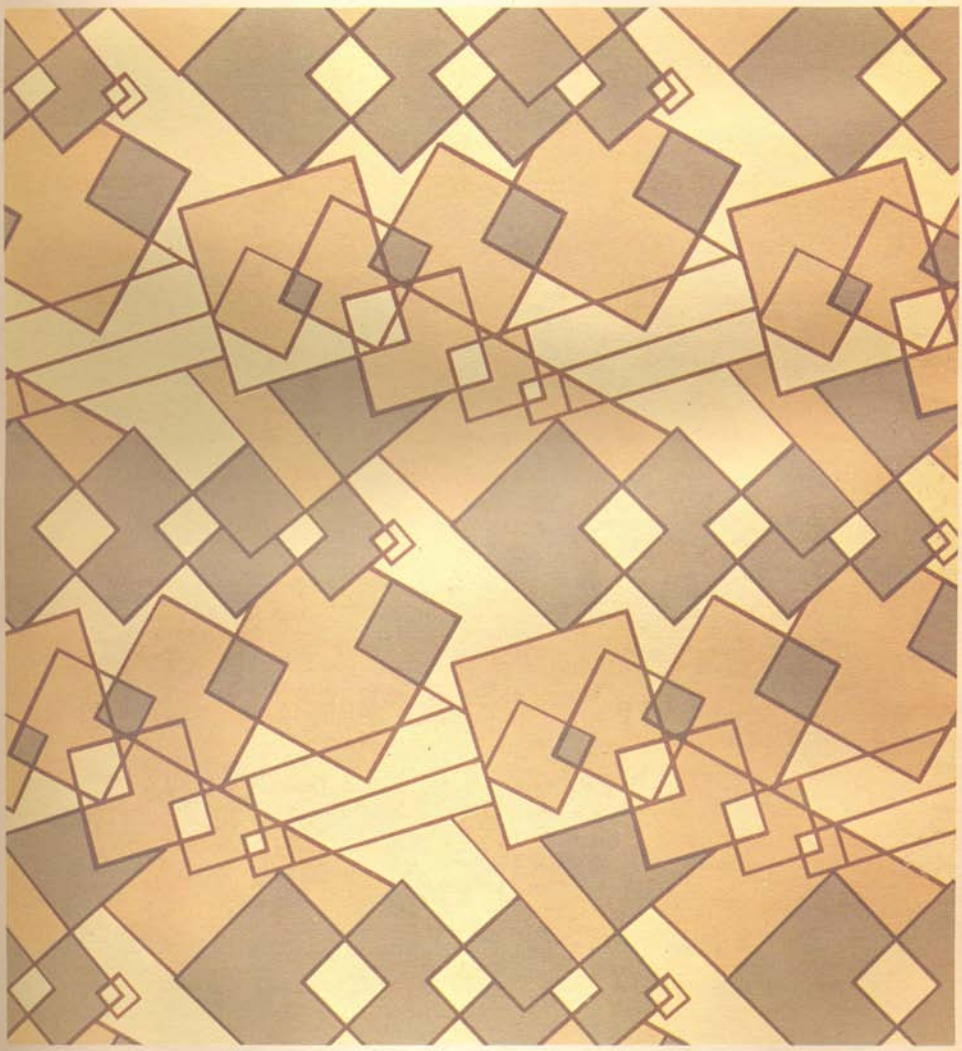


3 MAGGIO 1980
SCHIASS.

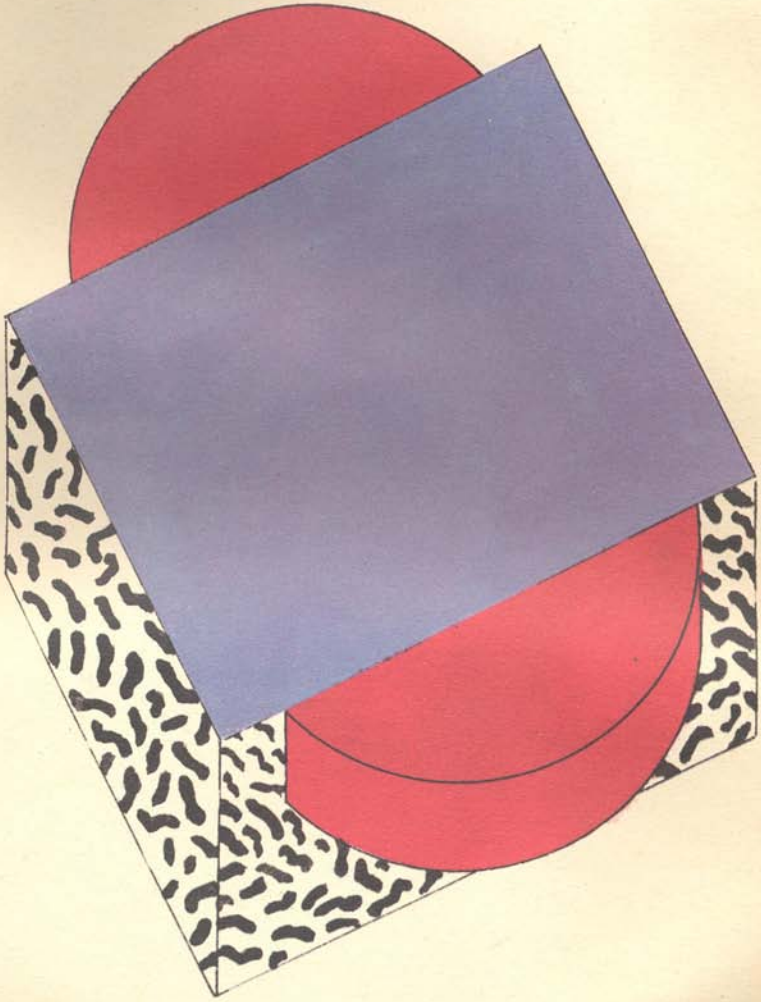
GERMAN CARPET ↓ WOOD AND CHROM.

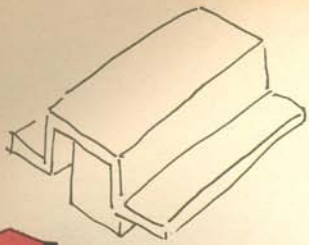


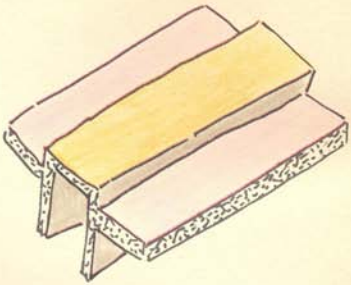


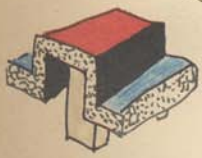


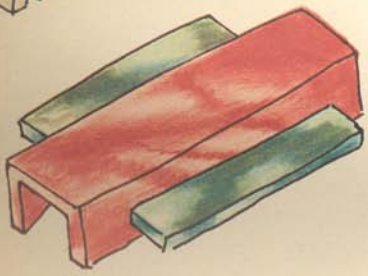
TEXTURE NR 2 : "ABSTRAC" DESIGNED BY MARIO RADICE 1979
PRODUCED BY ABET LAMINATI

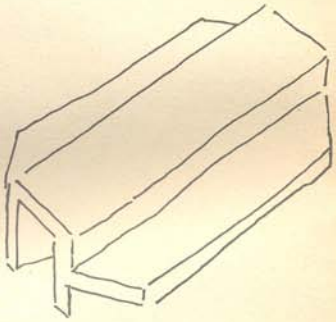


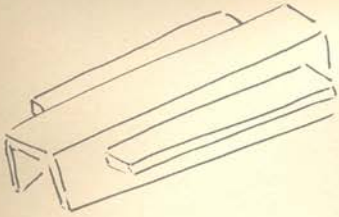


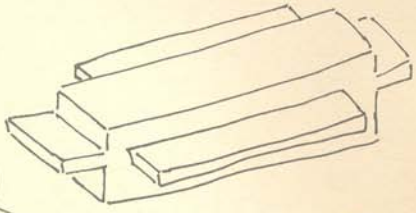


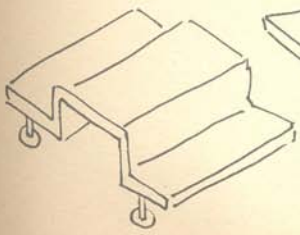


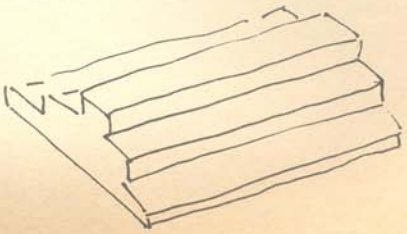












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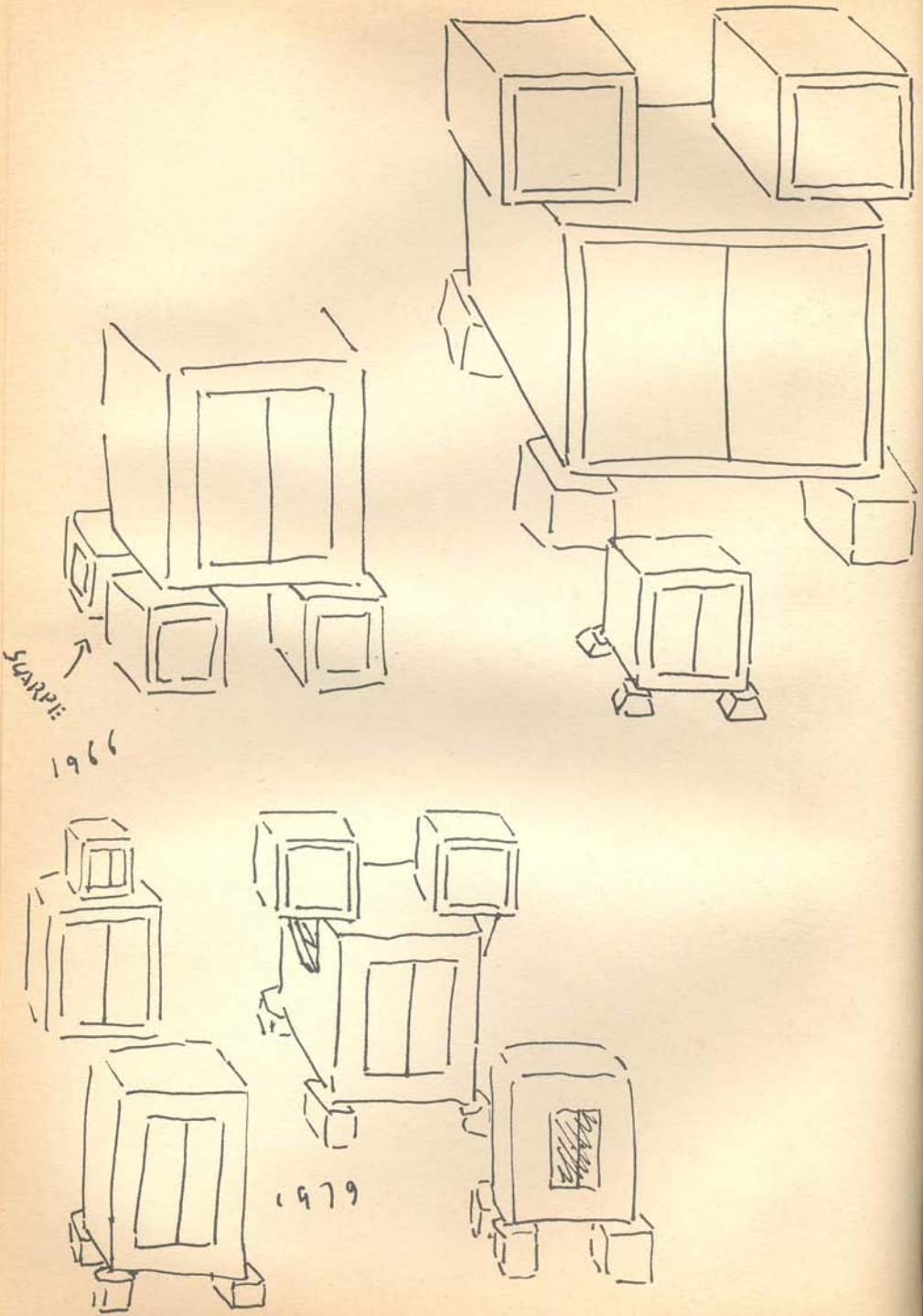
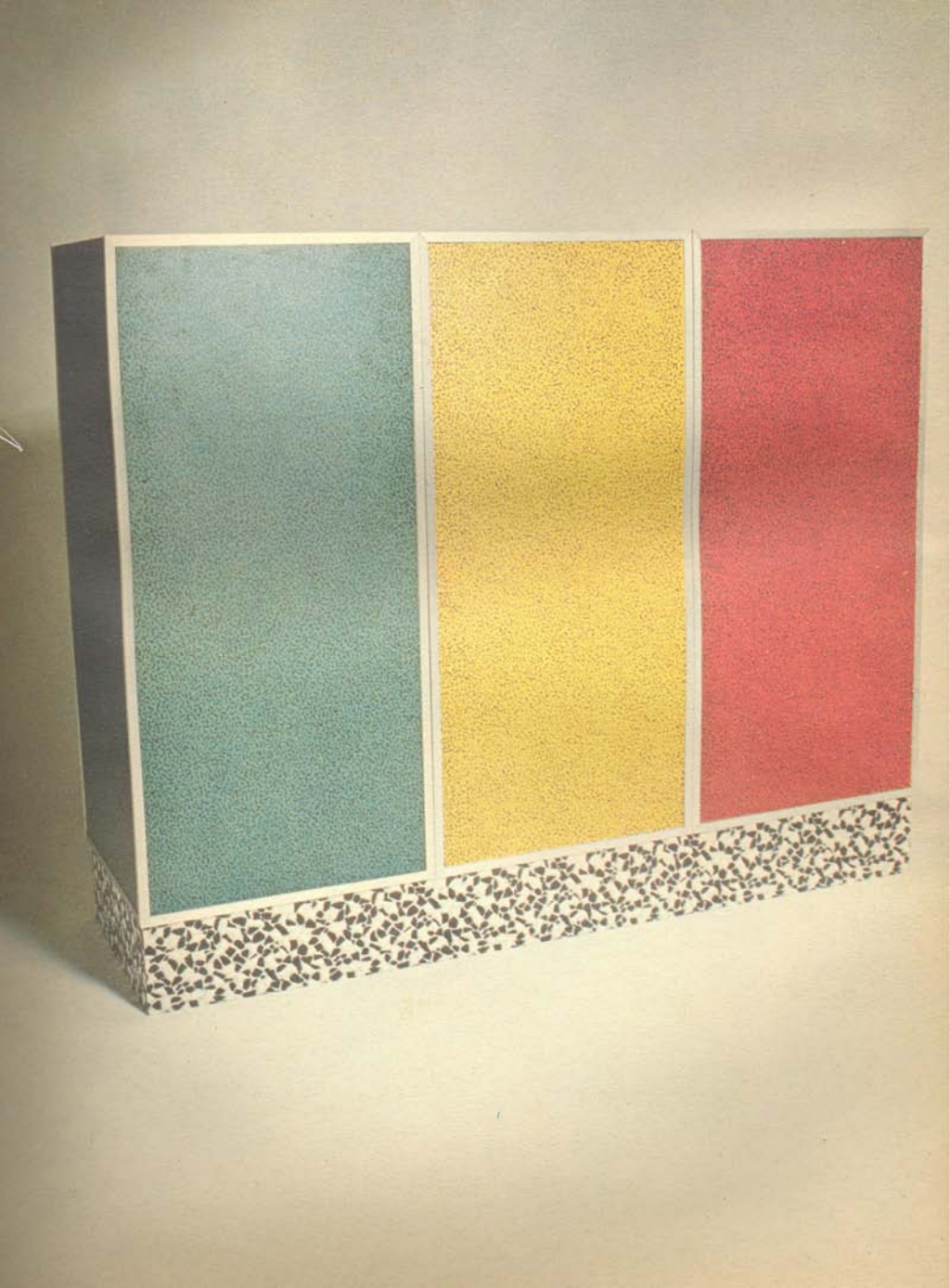
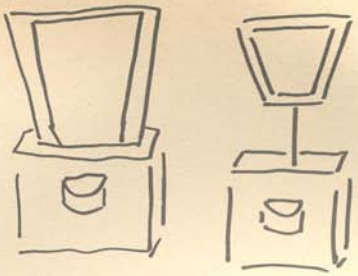
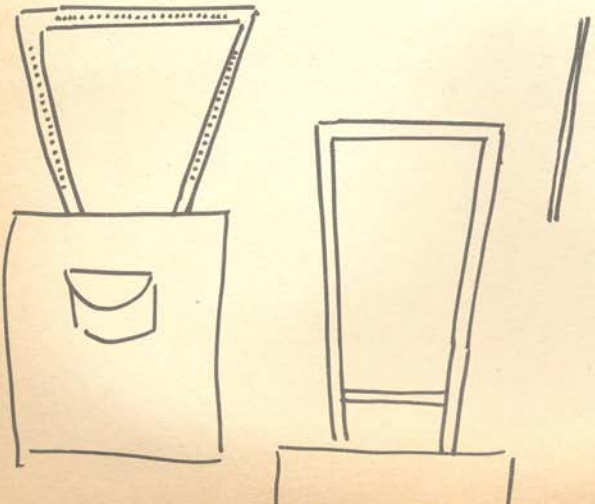
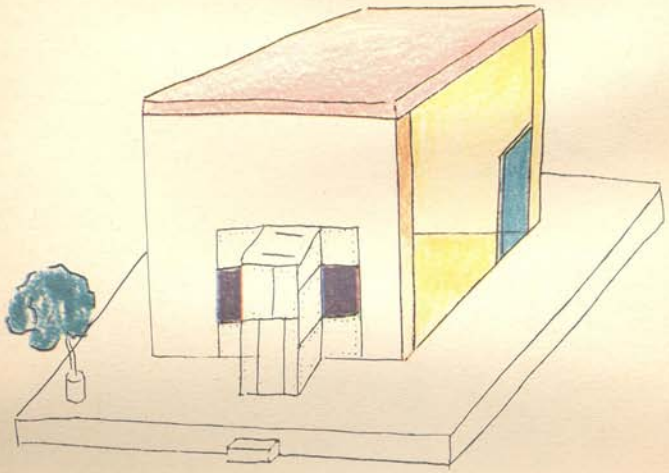
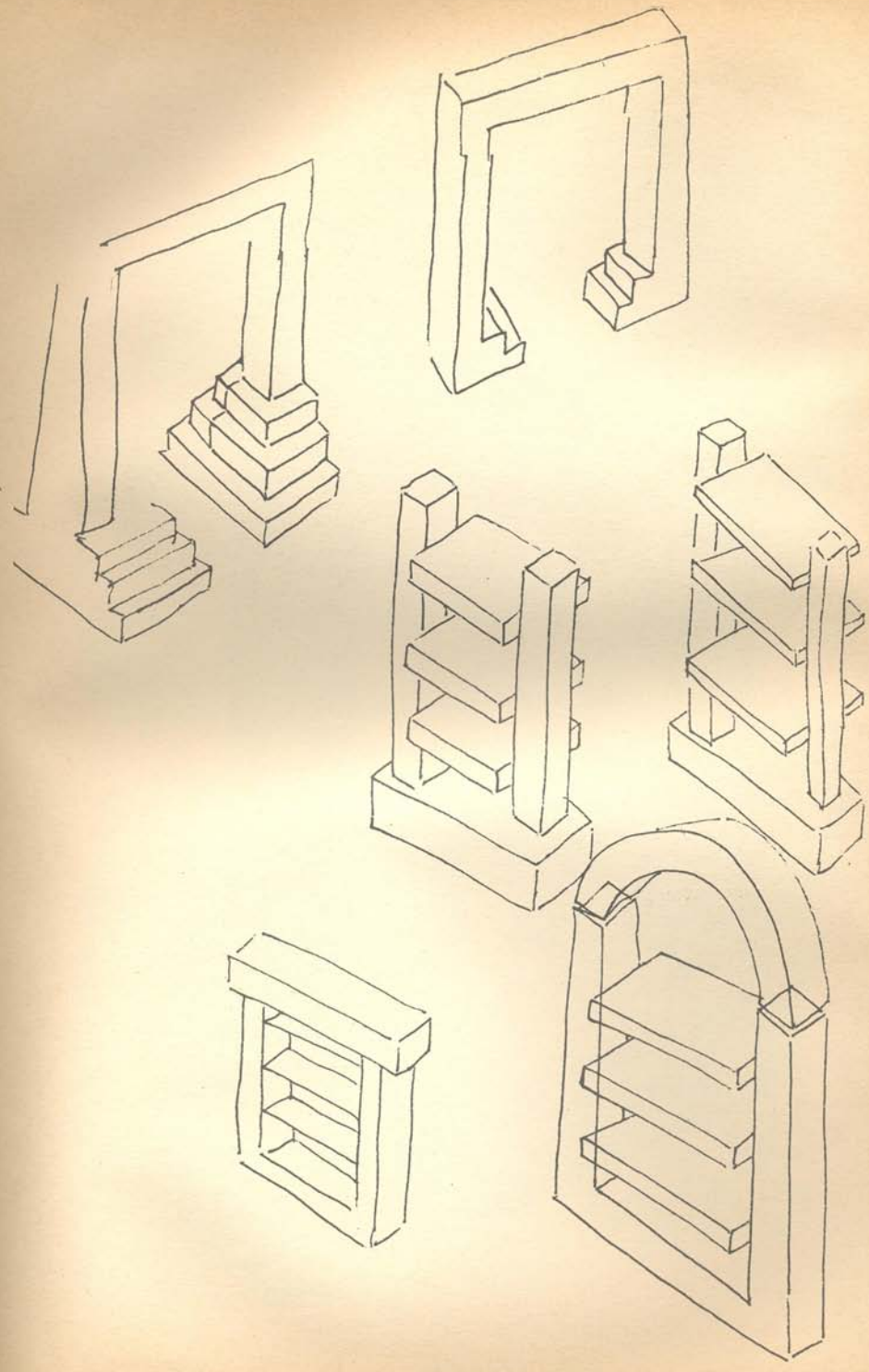

SHARPIE
1966
1979

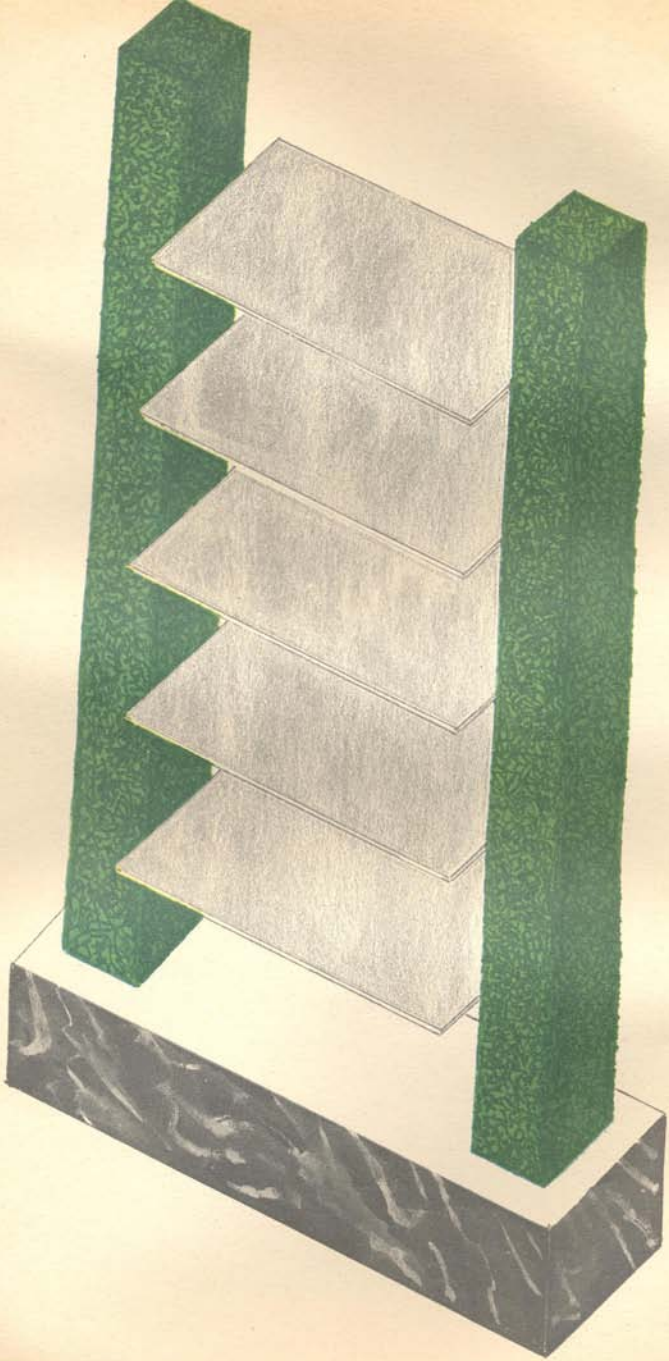




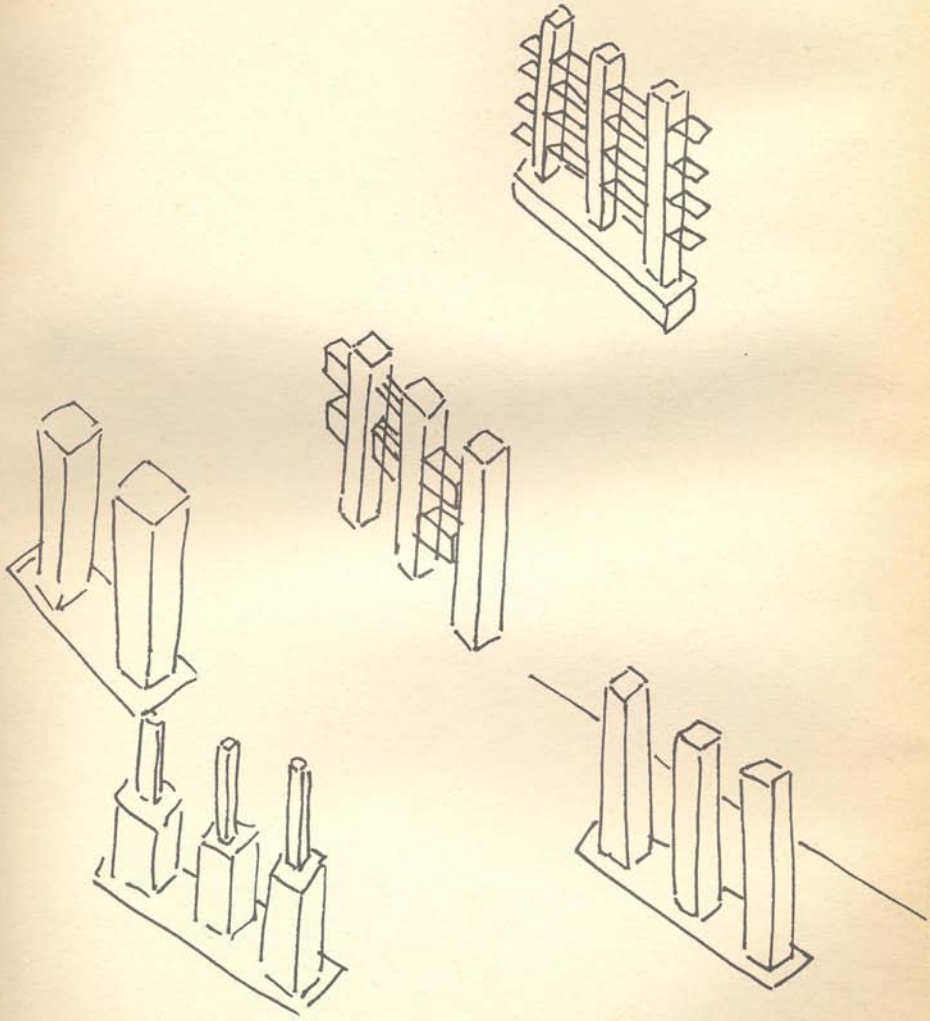


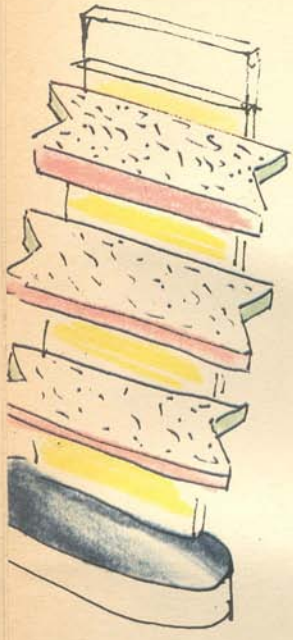


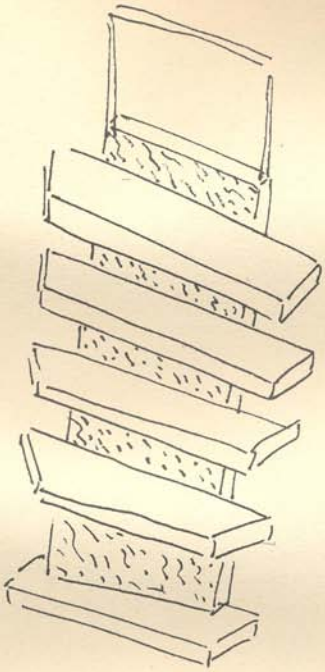


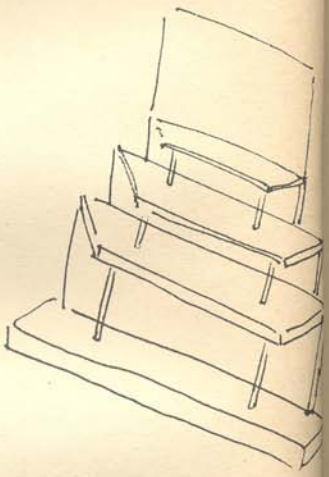


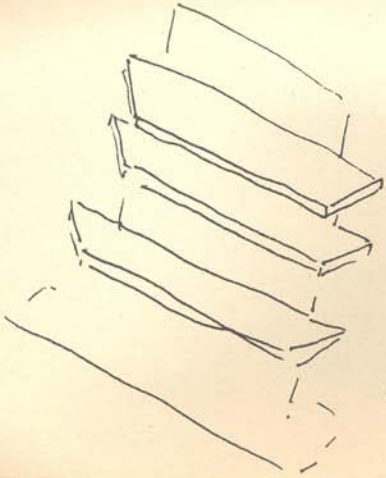
LIBRERIA - PRODUZIONE "ALCHYMIA"
(LAMINATO ABET-LAMINATI "BAKTERIO VERDE")











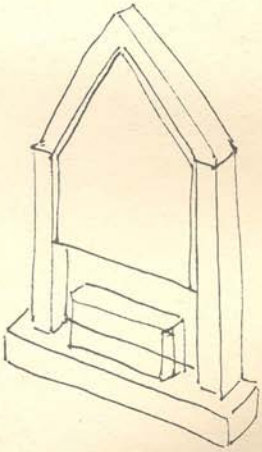
18.9.79

(?)

ALTAR TABLE WITH MIRROR AND HOUSE.

BALI

FORSE RIGHE O MEGLIO GRANITO.



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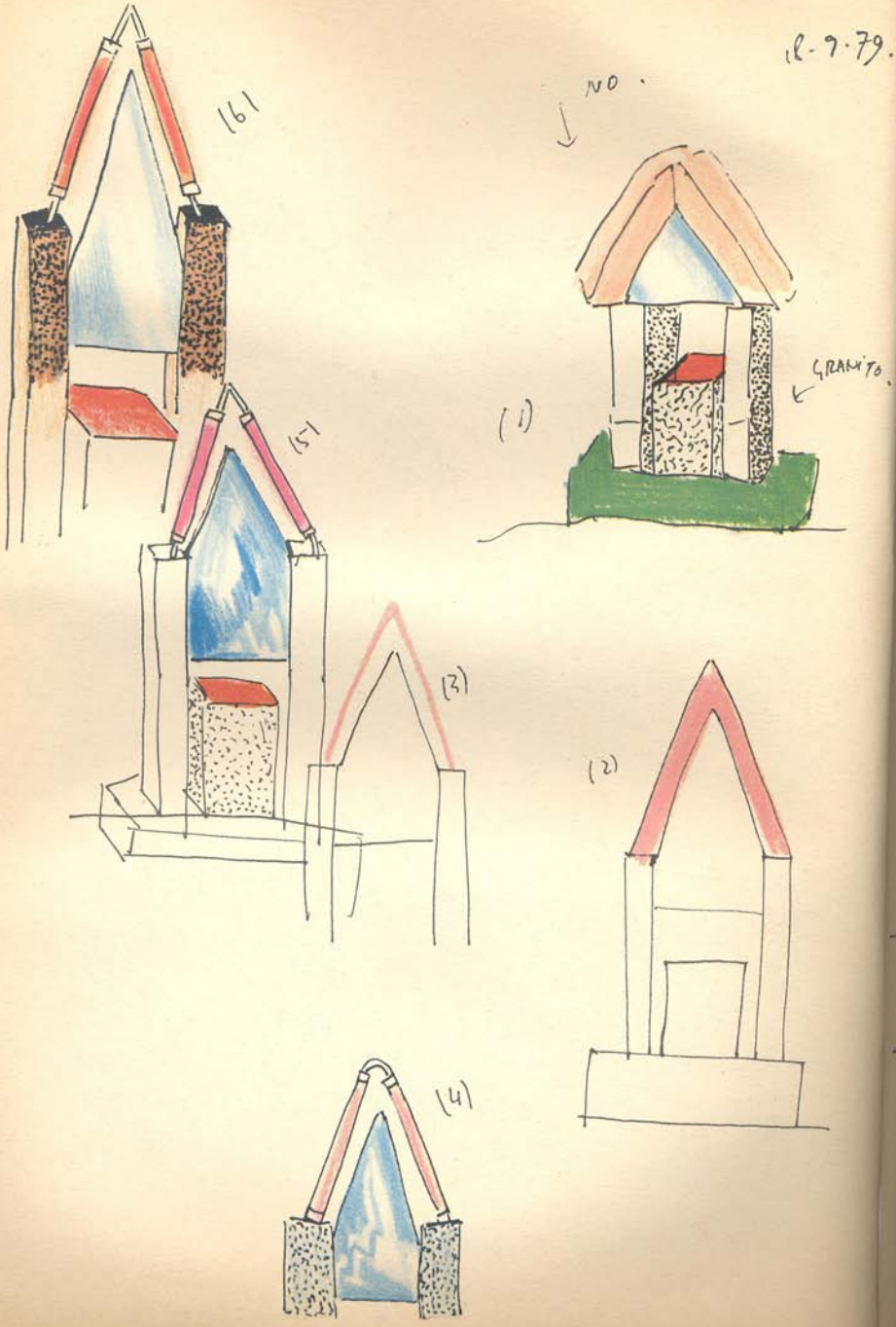
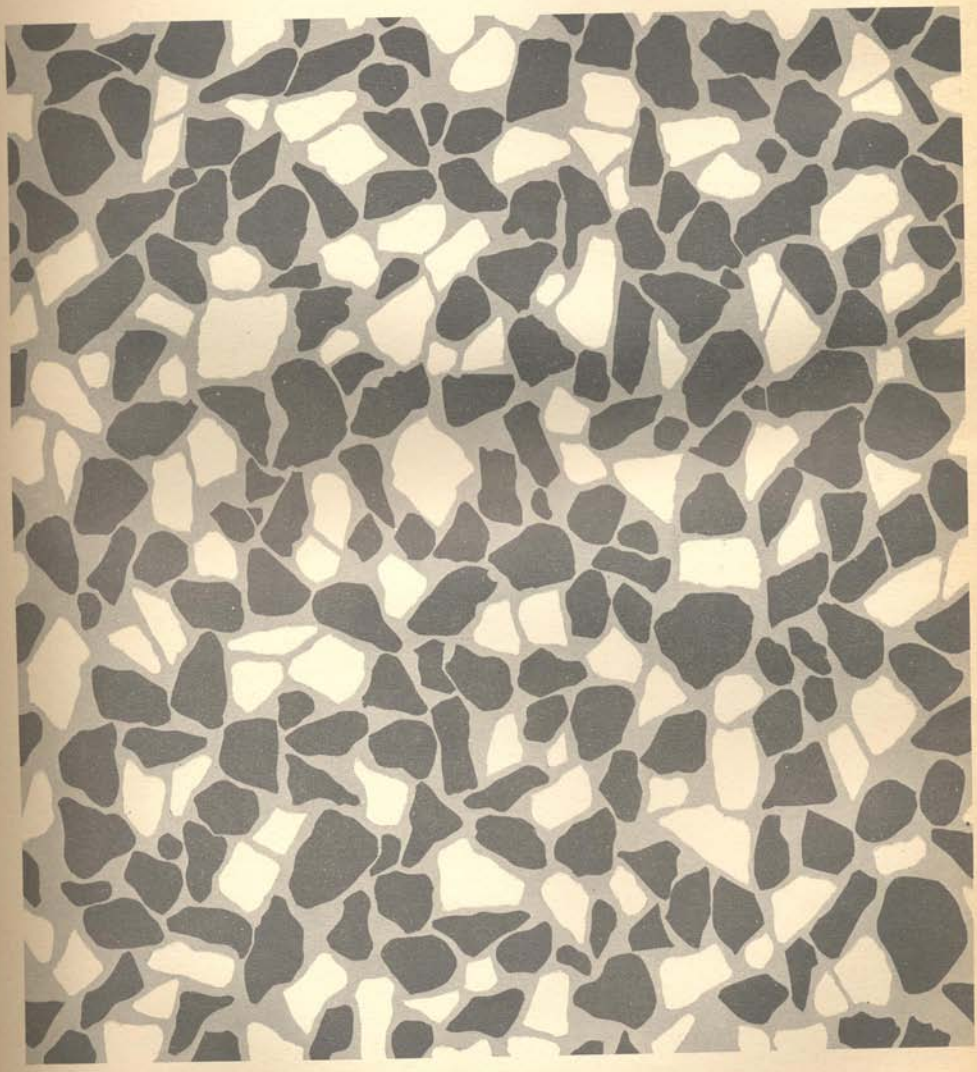
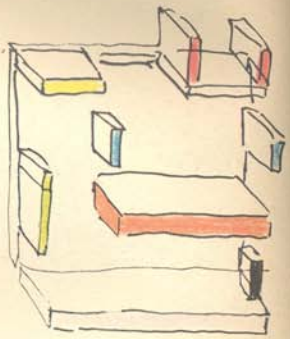
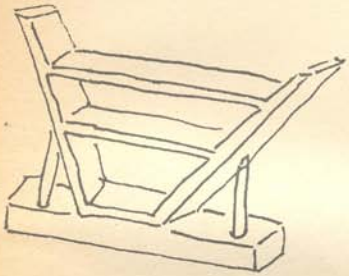
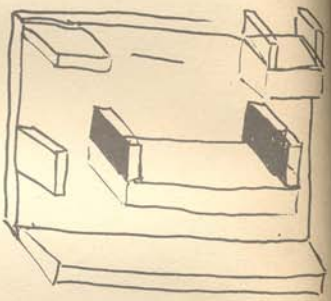


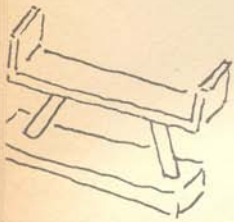


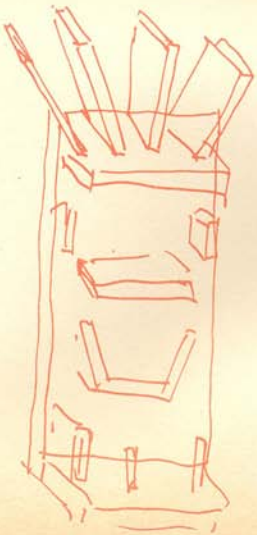
TEXTURE NR 3 : "VENEZIANA" (MOSAIC)
PRODUCED BY ABET LAMINATI'

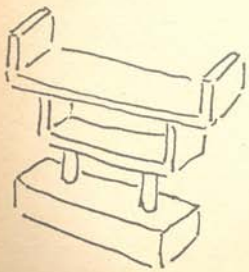




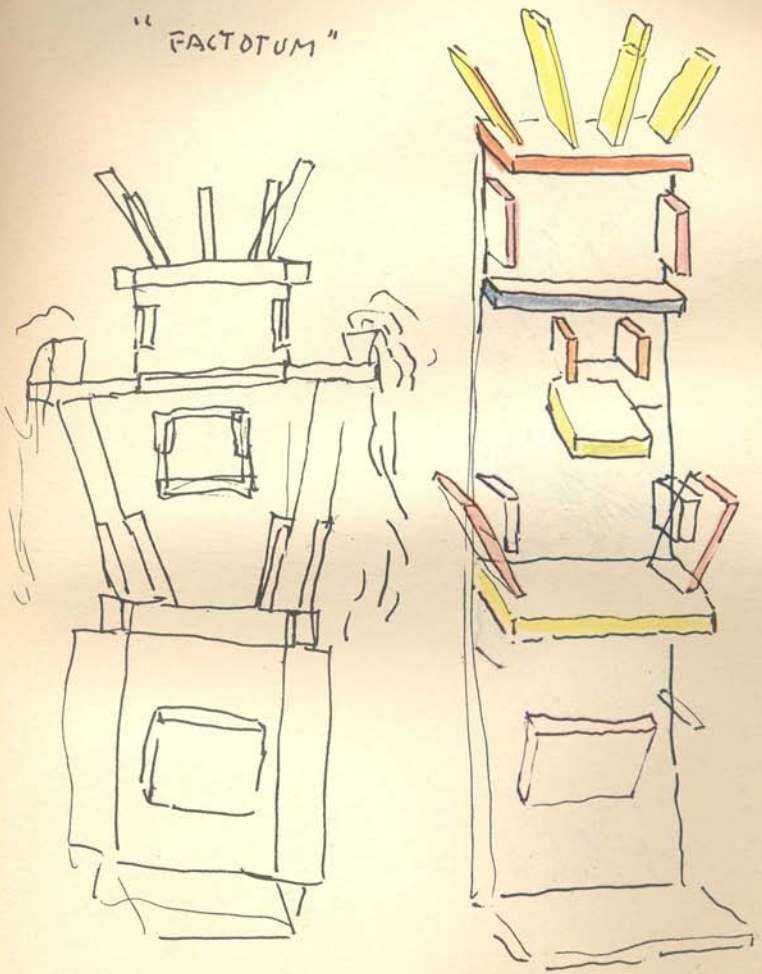


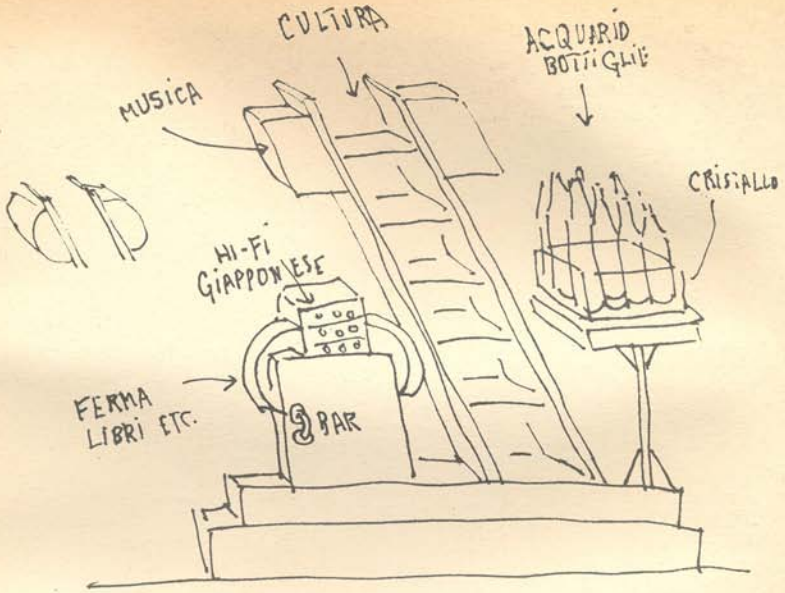




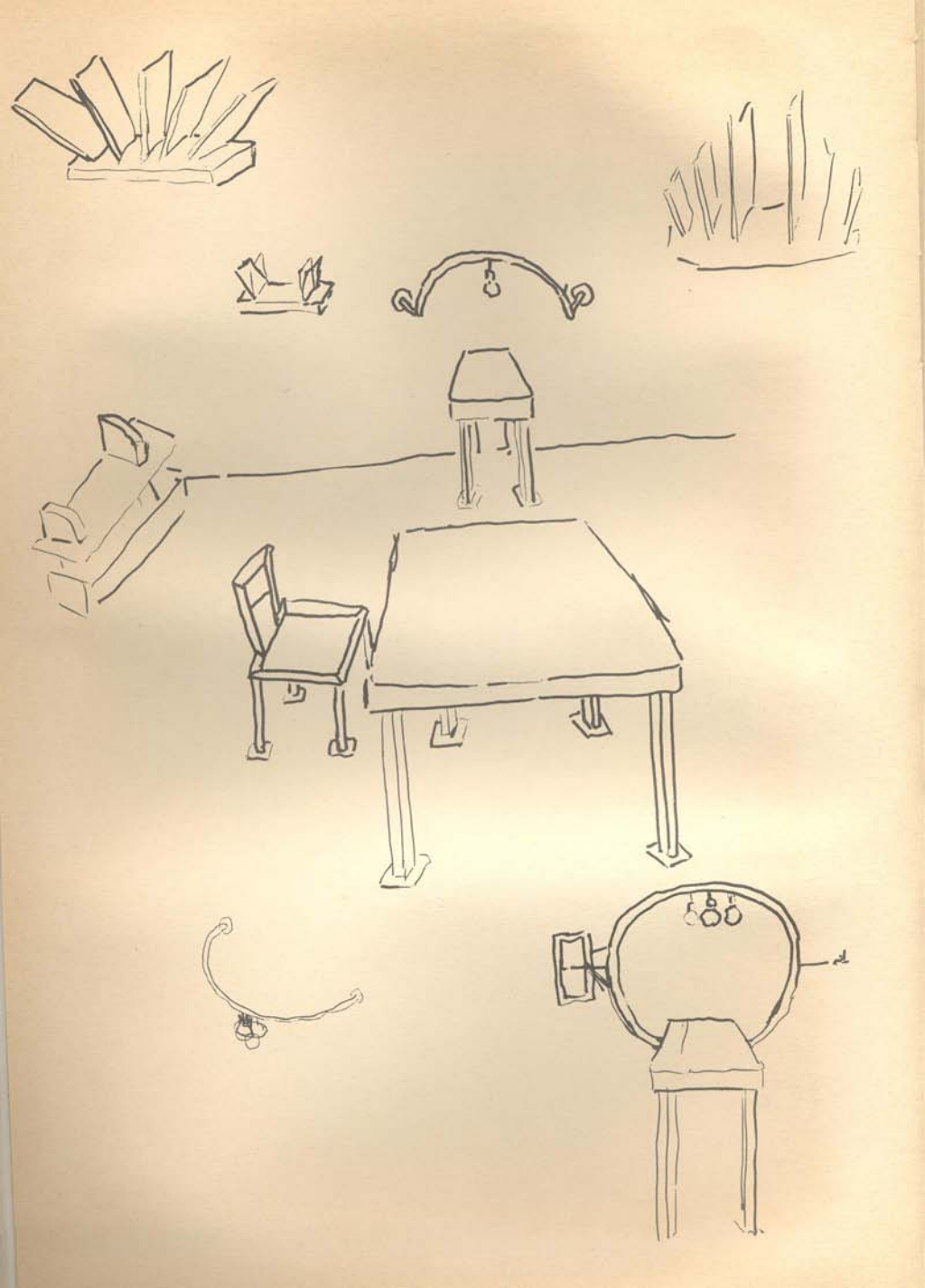


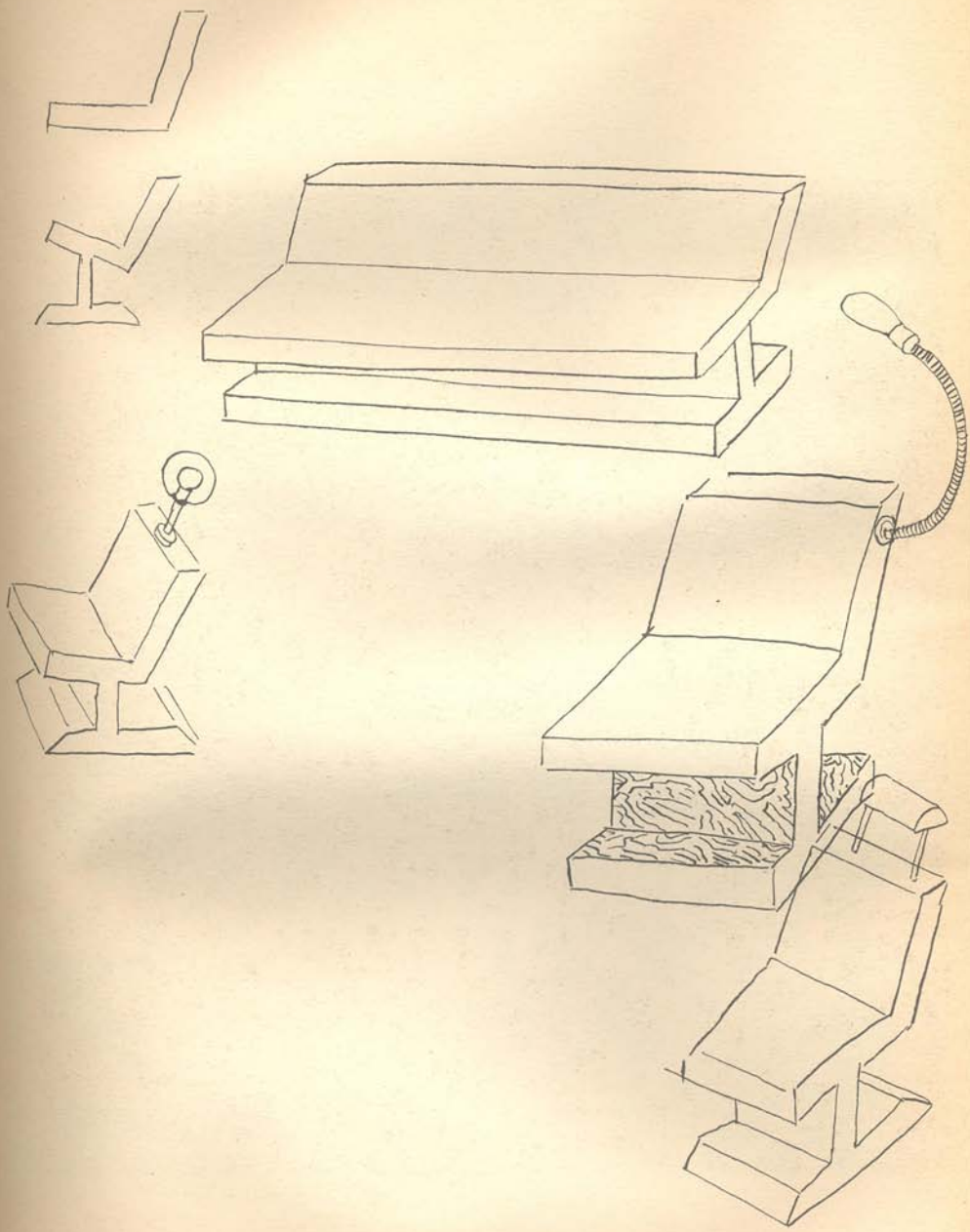
"FACTOTUM"



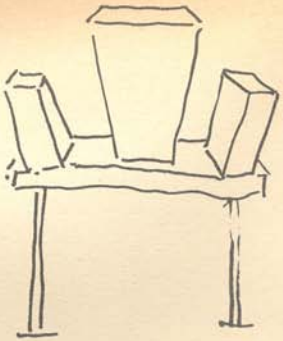

CULTURA
ACQUARIO
BOTTIGLIE
MUSICA
CRISTALLO
HI-FI
GIAPPONESE
FERMA
LIBRI ETC.
BAR

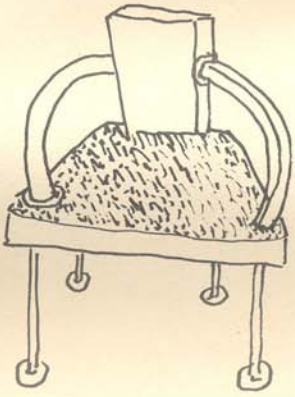
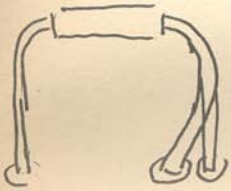
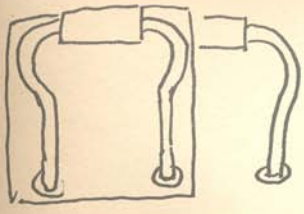
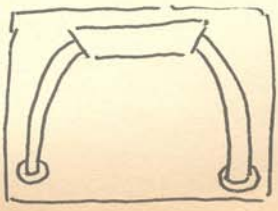
25.9.80





TEXTURE NR 4 : "SPONGE"
PRODUCED BY ABET LAMINATI



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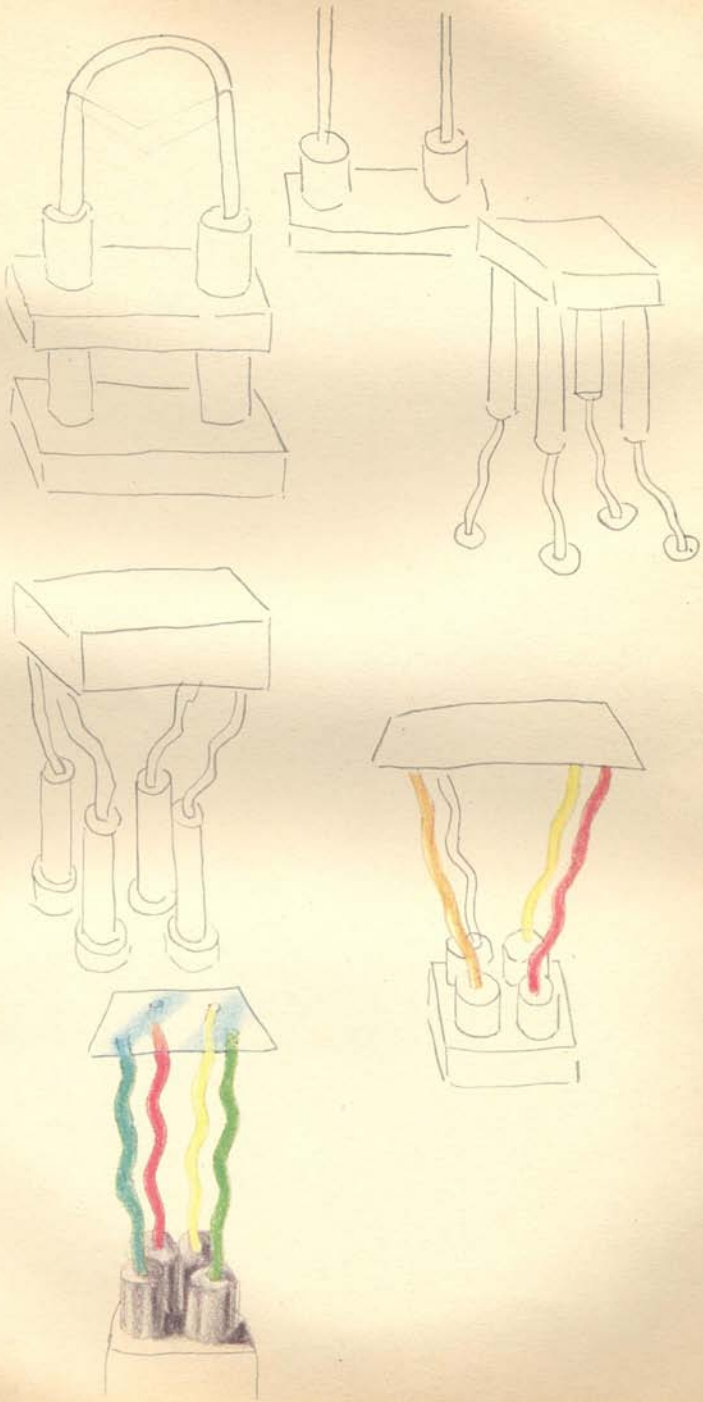
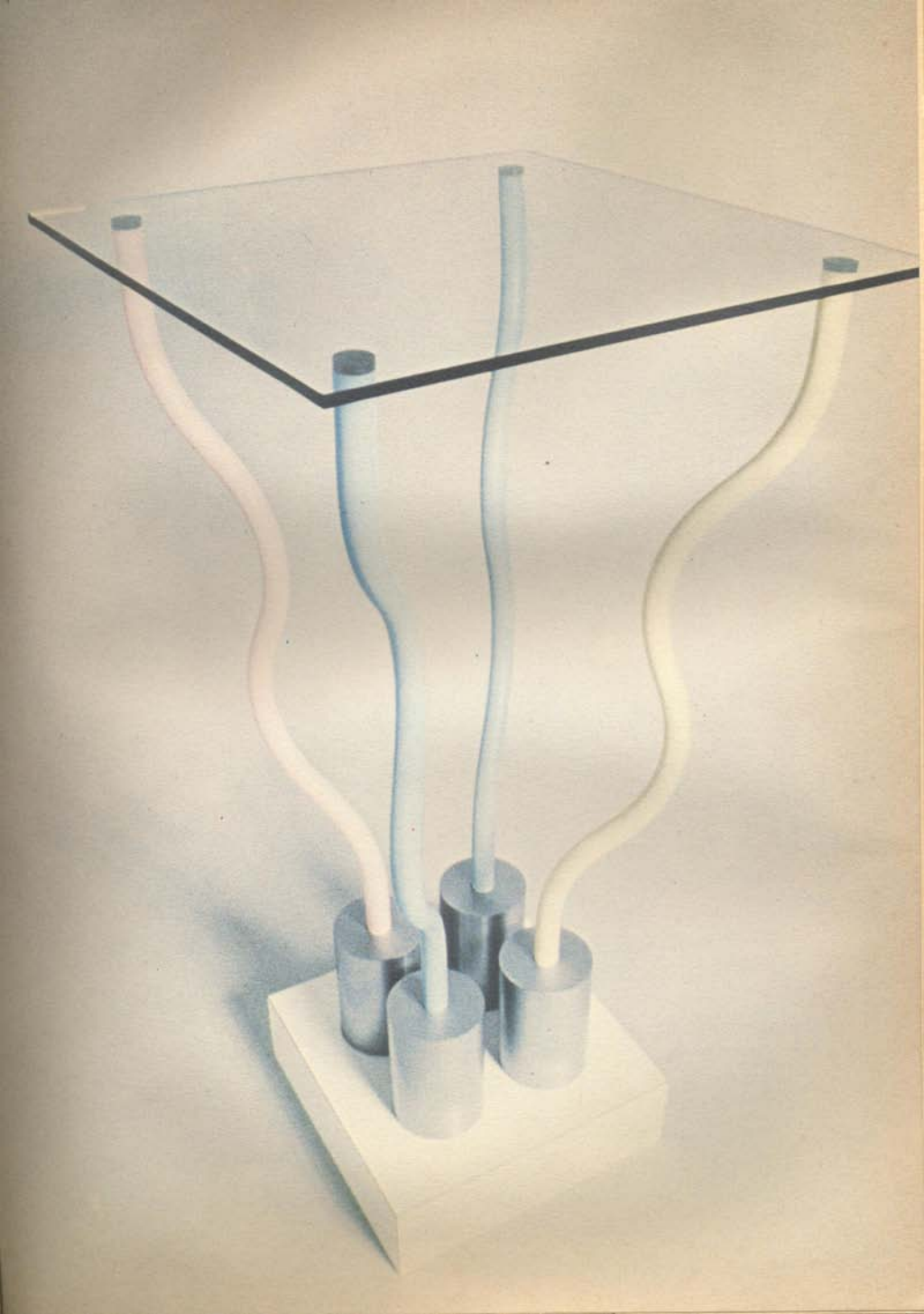
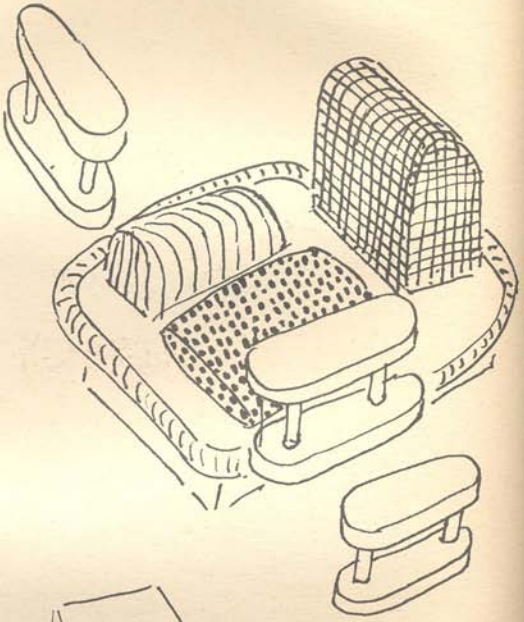
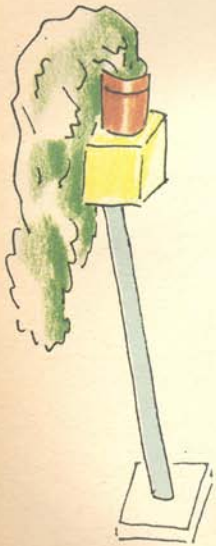
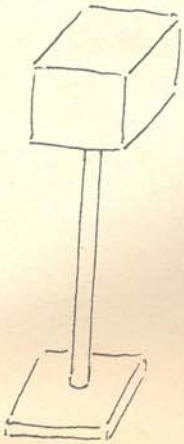


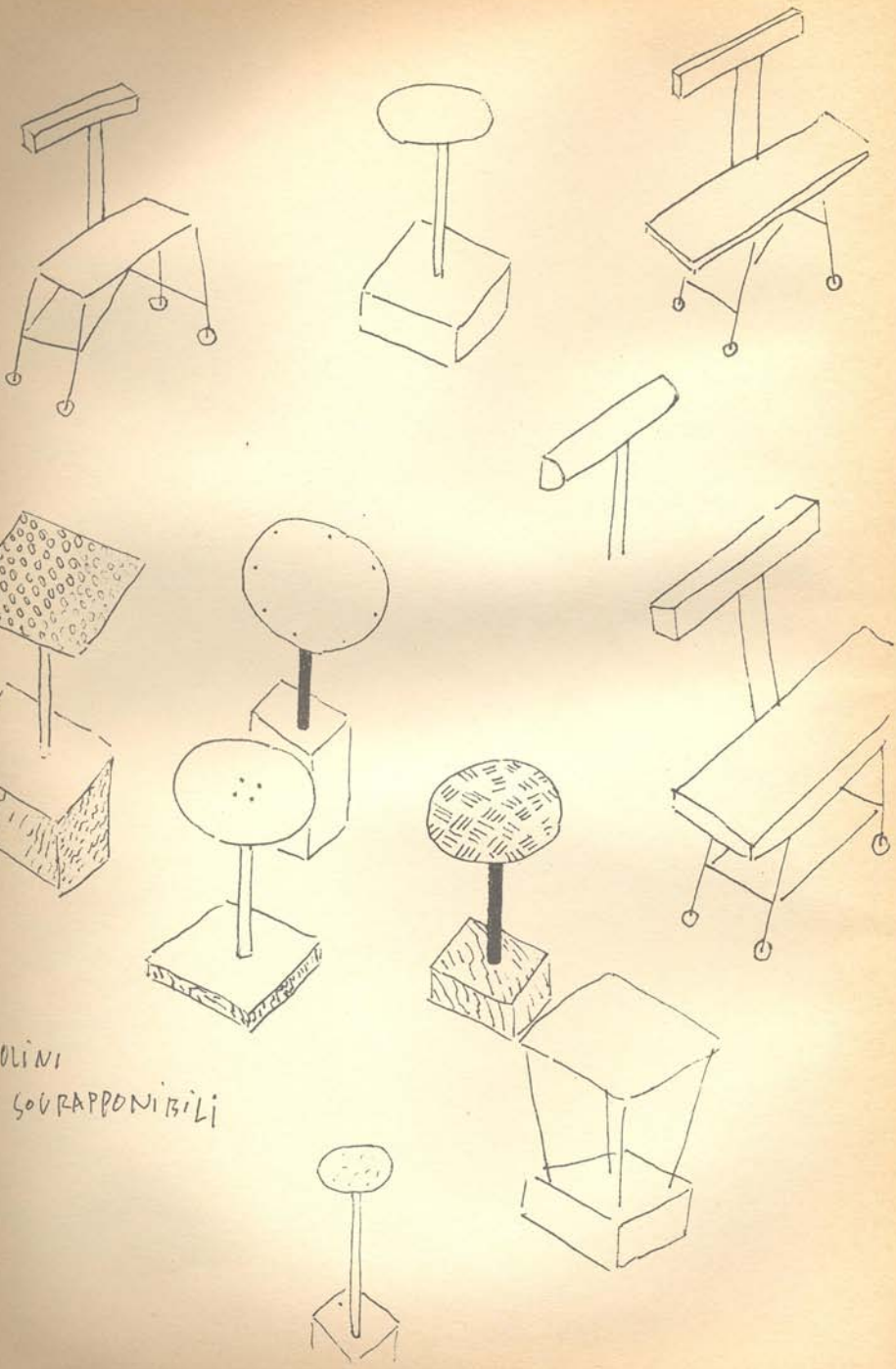


OLD PROJECT · 1977

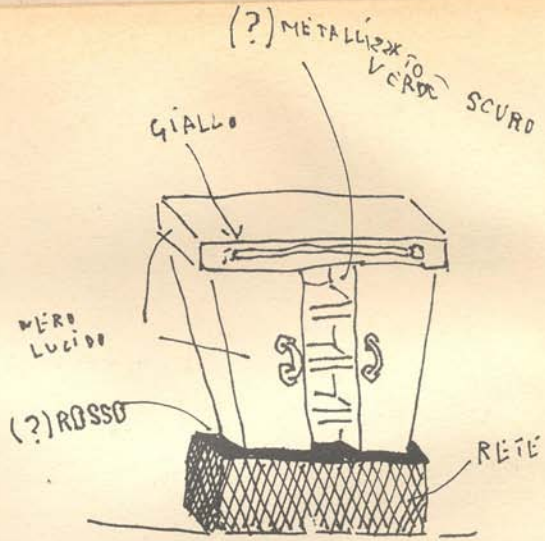








TAVOLINI
NON SOVRAPPONIBILI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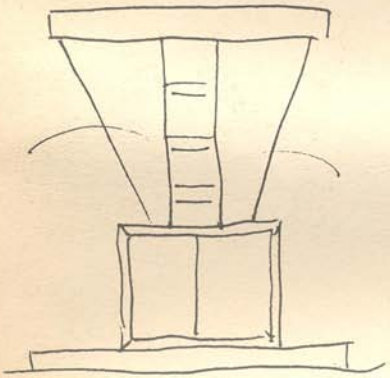
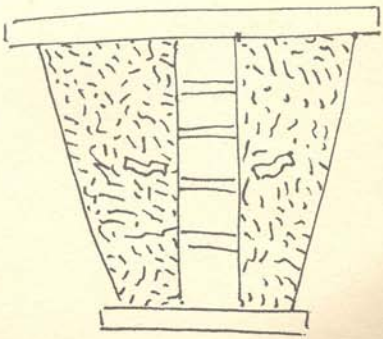
GIALLO
NERO LUCIDO
(?) ROSSO
RETE





ESERCIZIO FORMALE NR 2

FORMAL EXERCISE NR 2

CATALOGO DI MOBILI DECORATIVI DI STILE MODERNO

CATALOGUE FOR DECORATIVE FURNITURE IN MODERN STYLE

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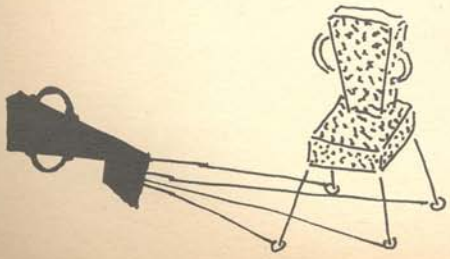
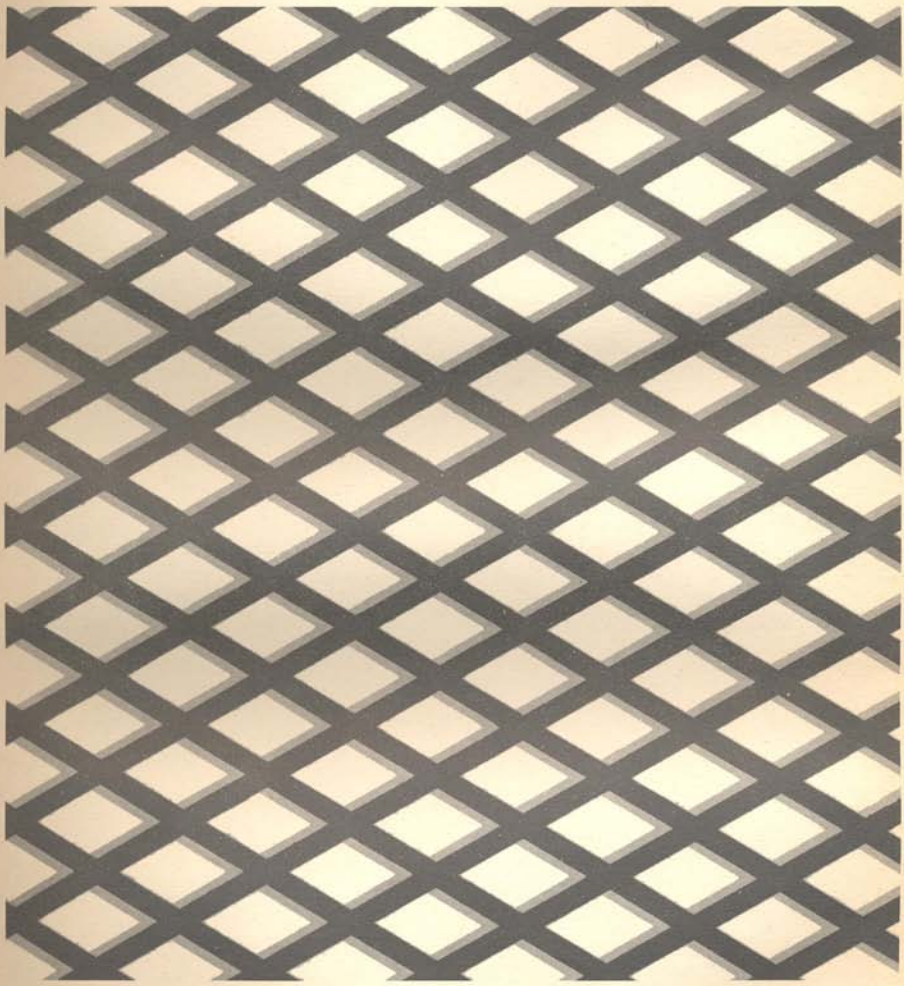
a) TEXTURES

e) DETAILS

c) CREATIONS





TEXTURE NR 5 : NET

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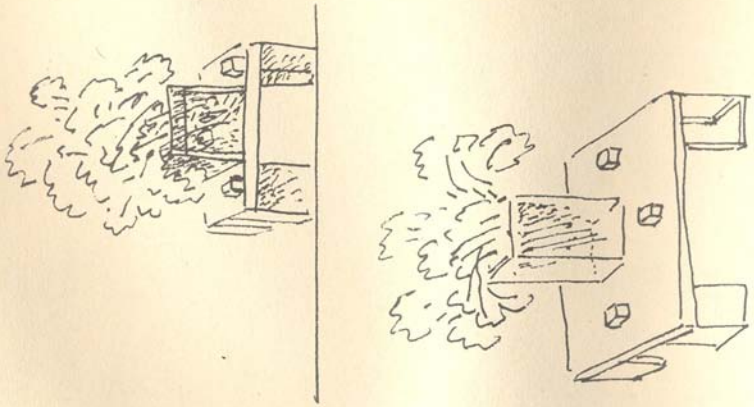
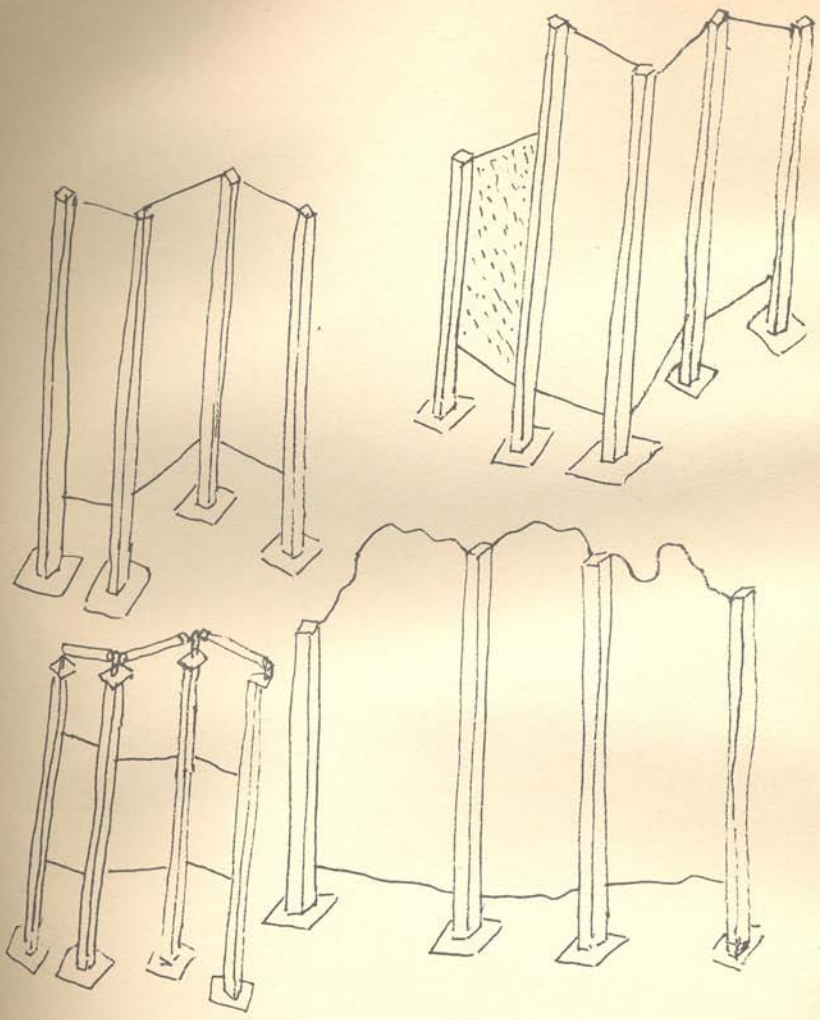
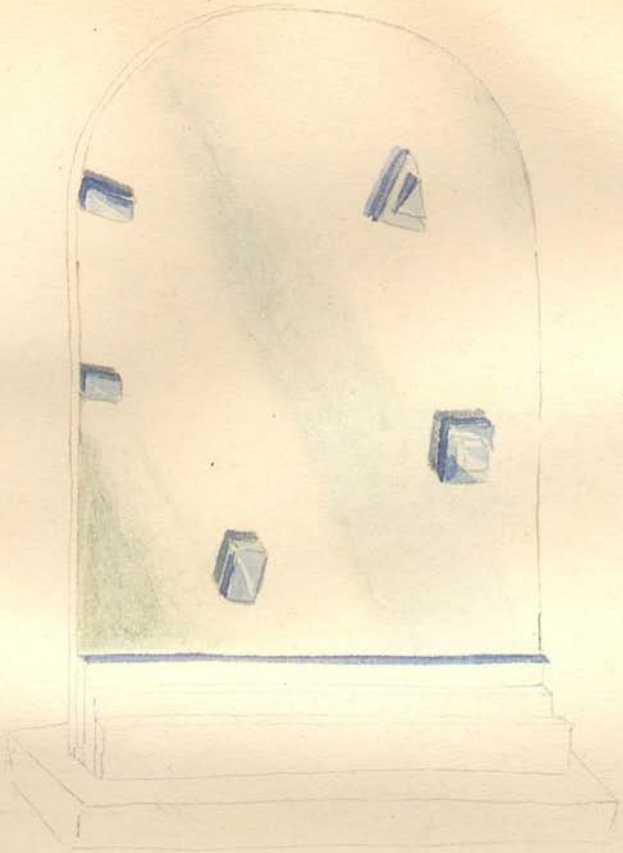
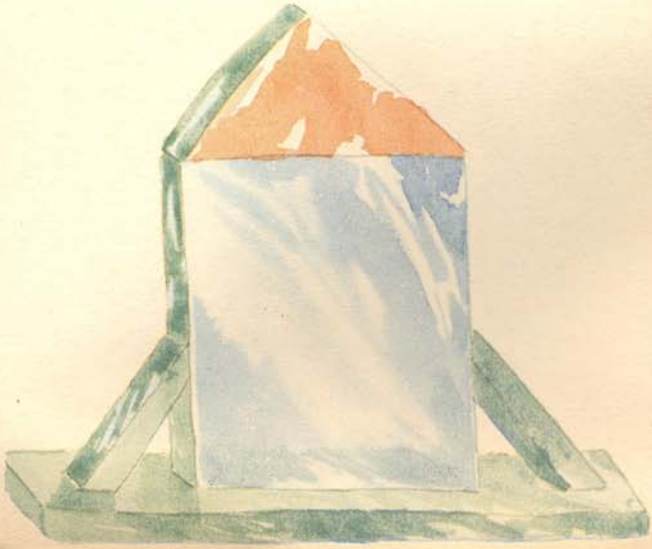


Milano
7.11.79

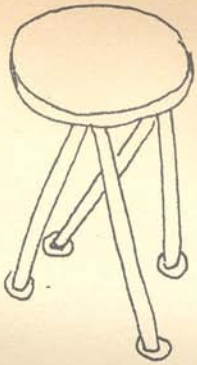


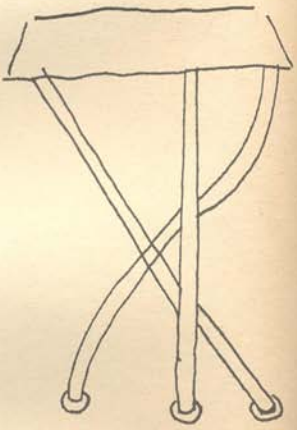
24·9·79
NON CI SIAMO

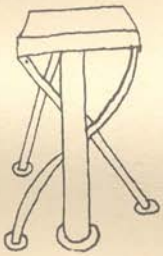


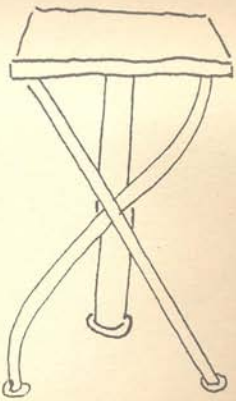


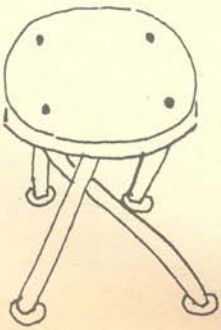
TEXTURE NR 6: "BAKTERIO"
PRODUCED BY ABET LAMINATI

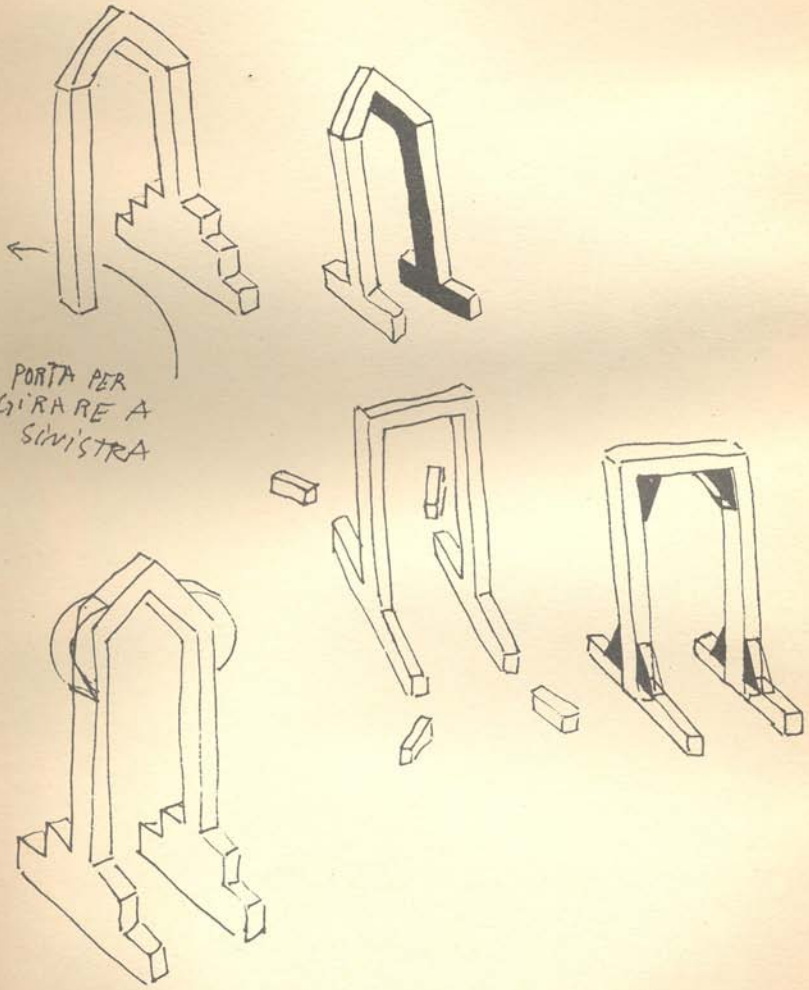




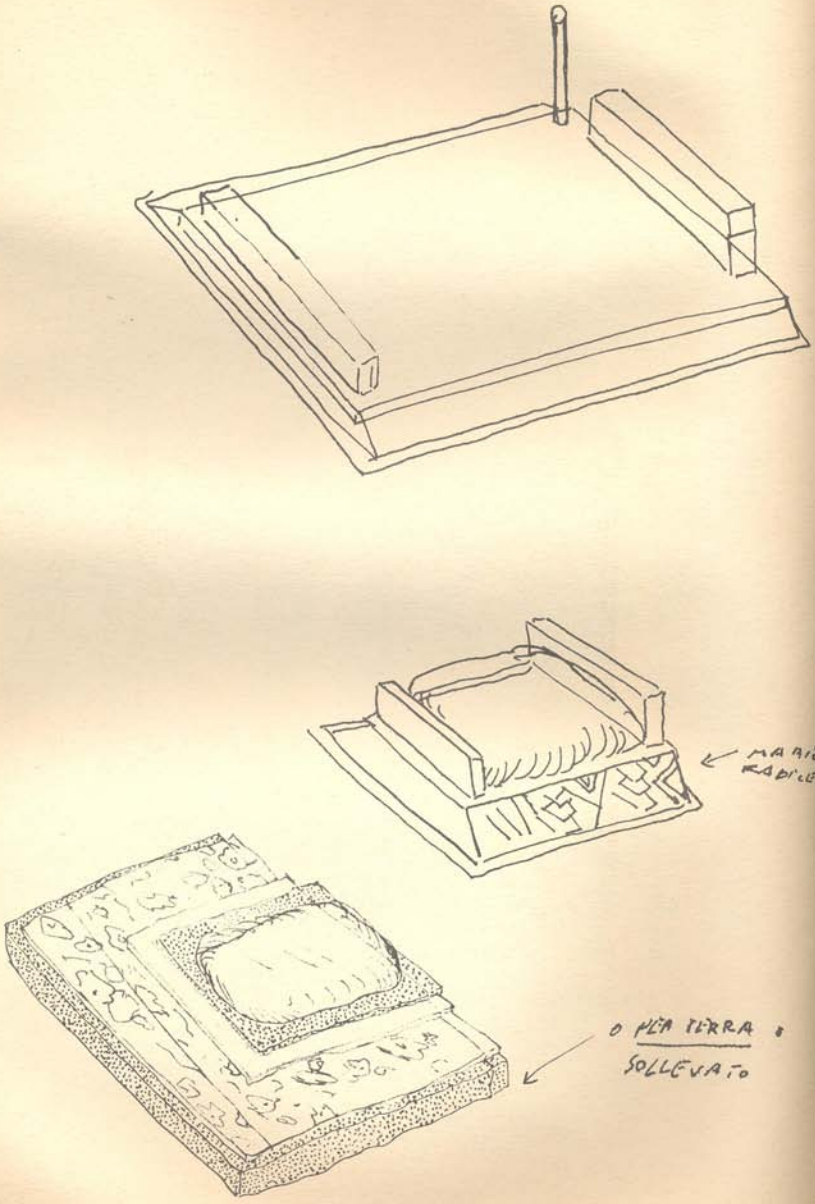


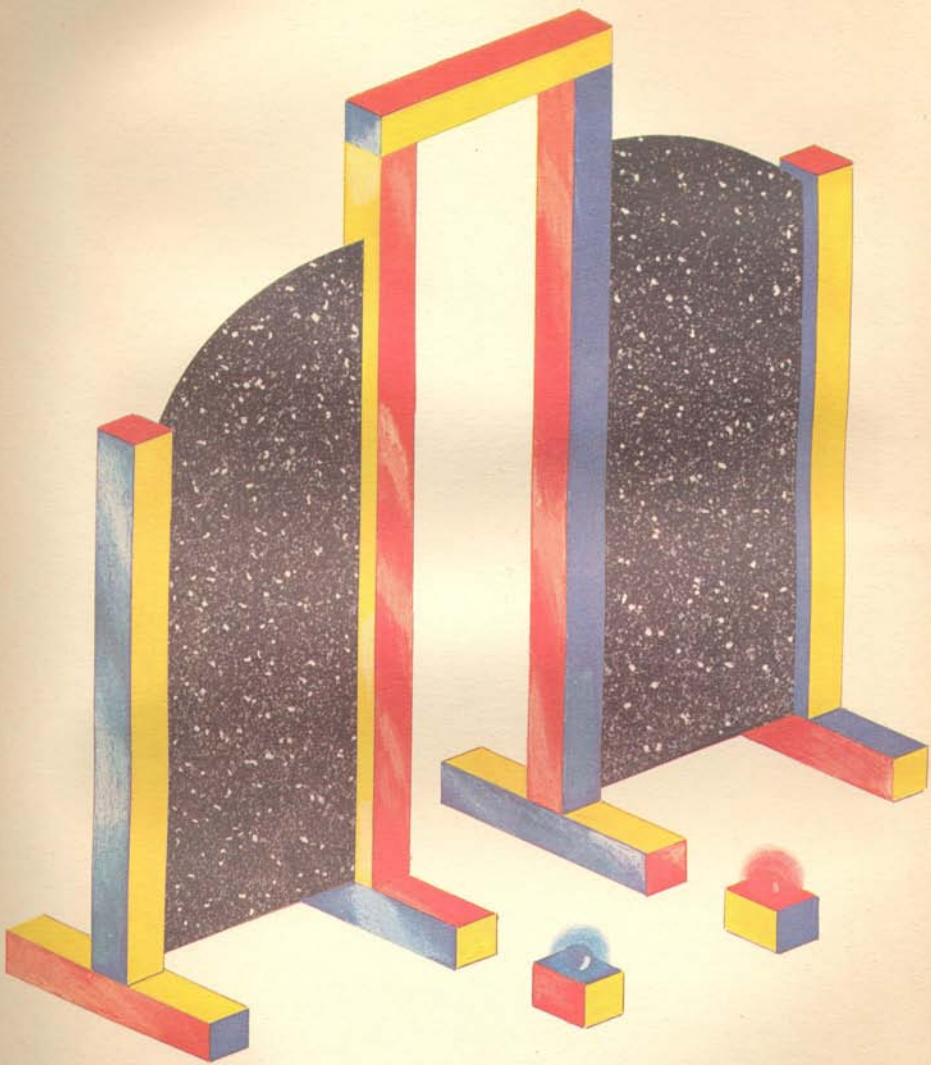




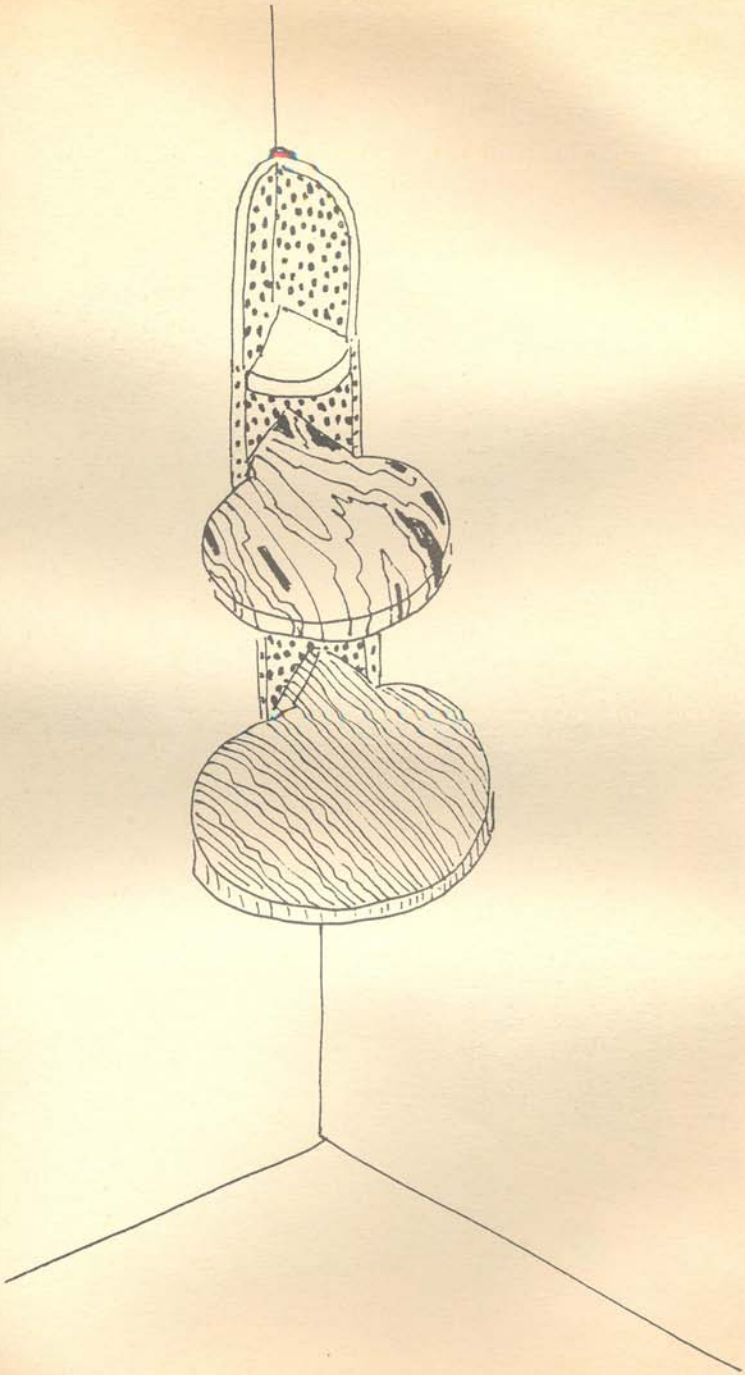

PORTA PER
GIRARE A
SINISTRA

SALIZZI
DOMENICA
13.5.79.





PSEUDO PORTA (OMAGGIO A VAN DOESBURG)



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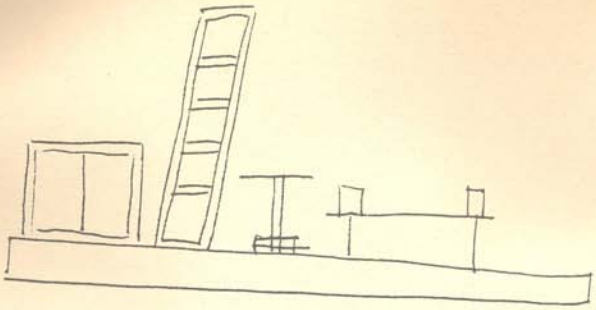

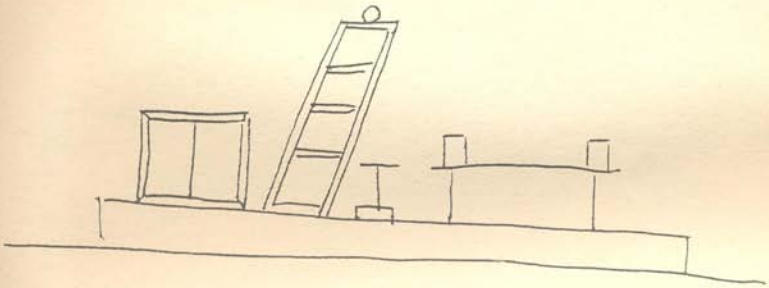

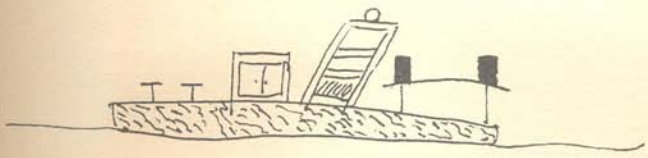

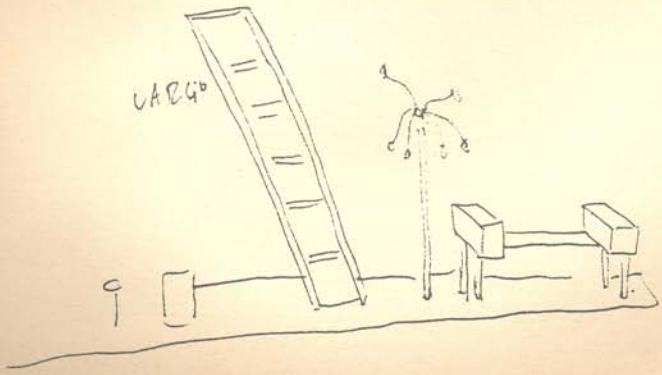
LARGO

QUESTO LIBRO DI ETTORE SOTTSASS
CURATO DALLO STUDIO ALCHIMIA
E PUBBLICATO DALLO STUDIO FORMA/ALCHIMIA

È STATO STAMPATO
DALLA TIPOGRAFIA GEL DI LODI
NEL MESE DI OTTOBRE 1980

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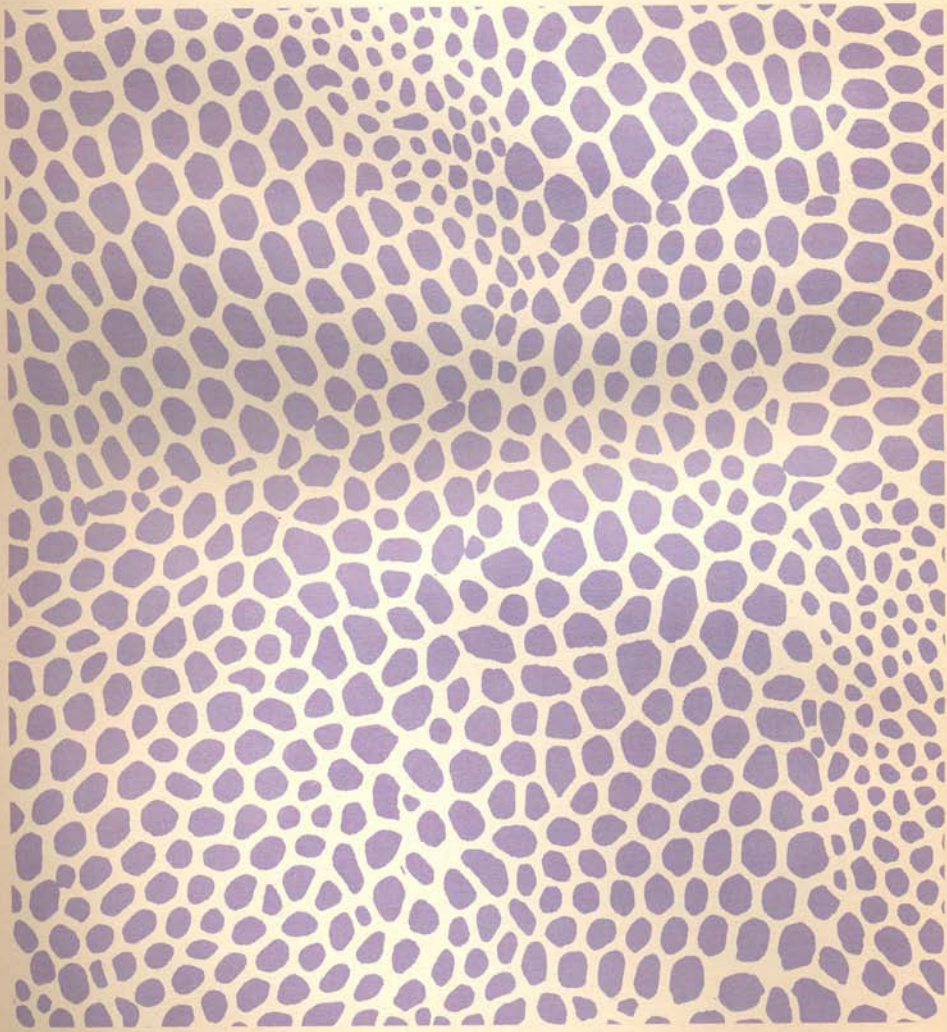
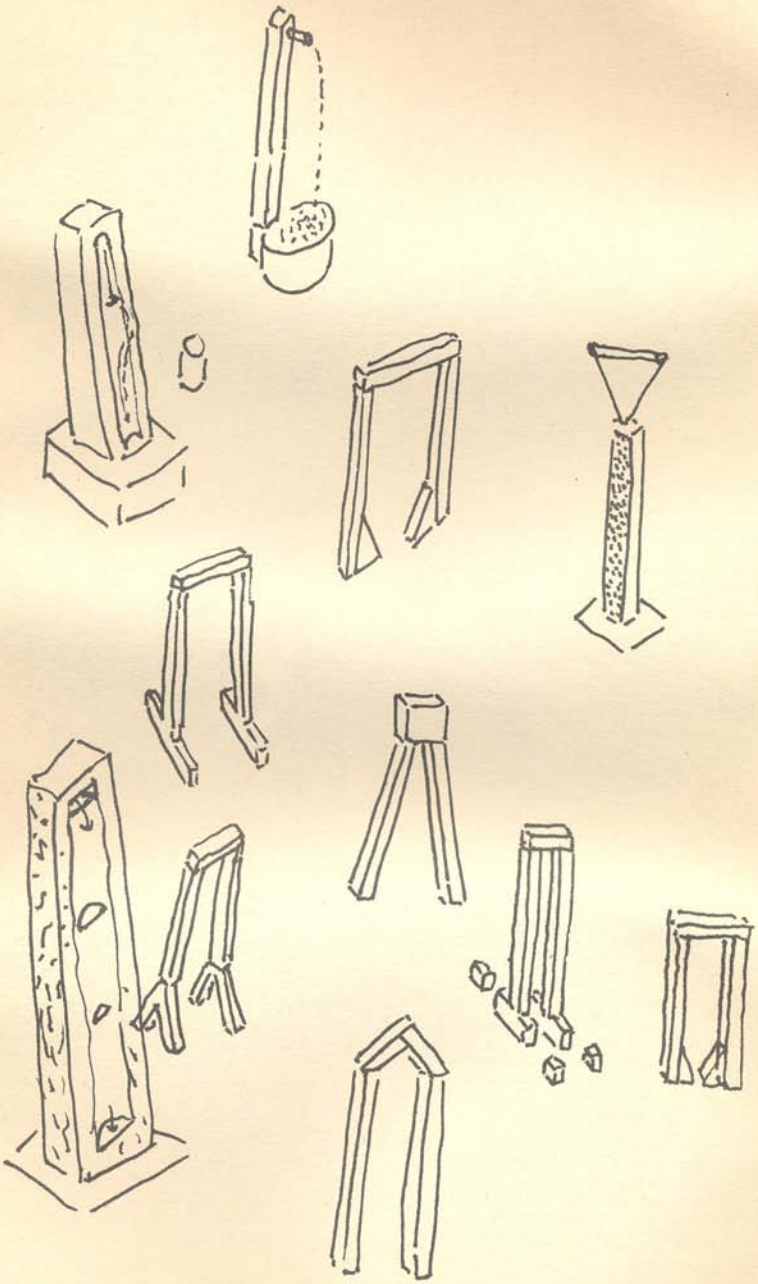
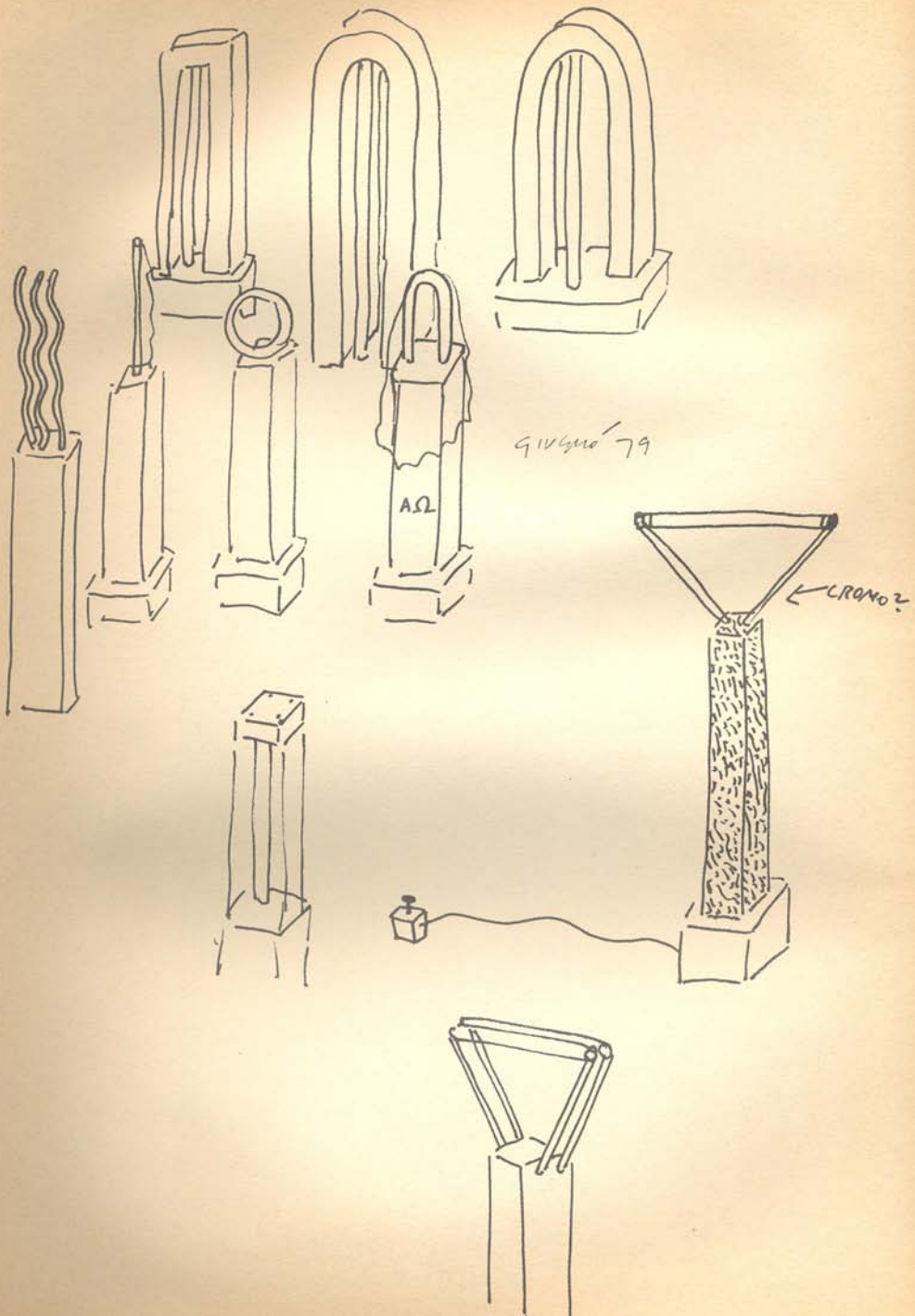
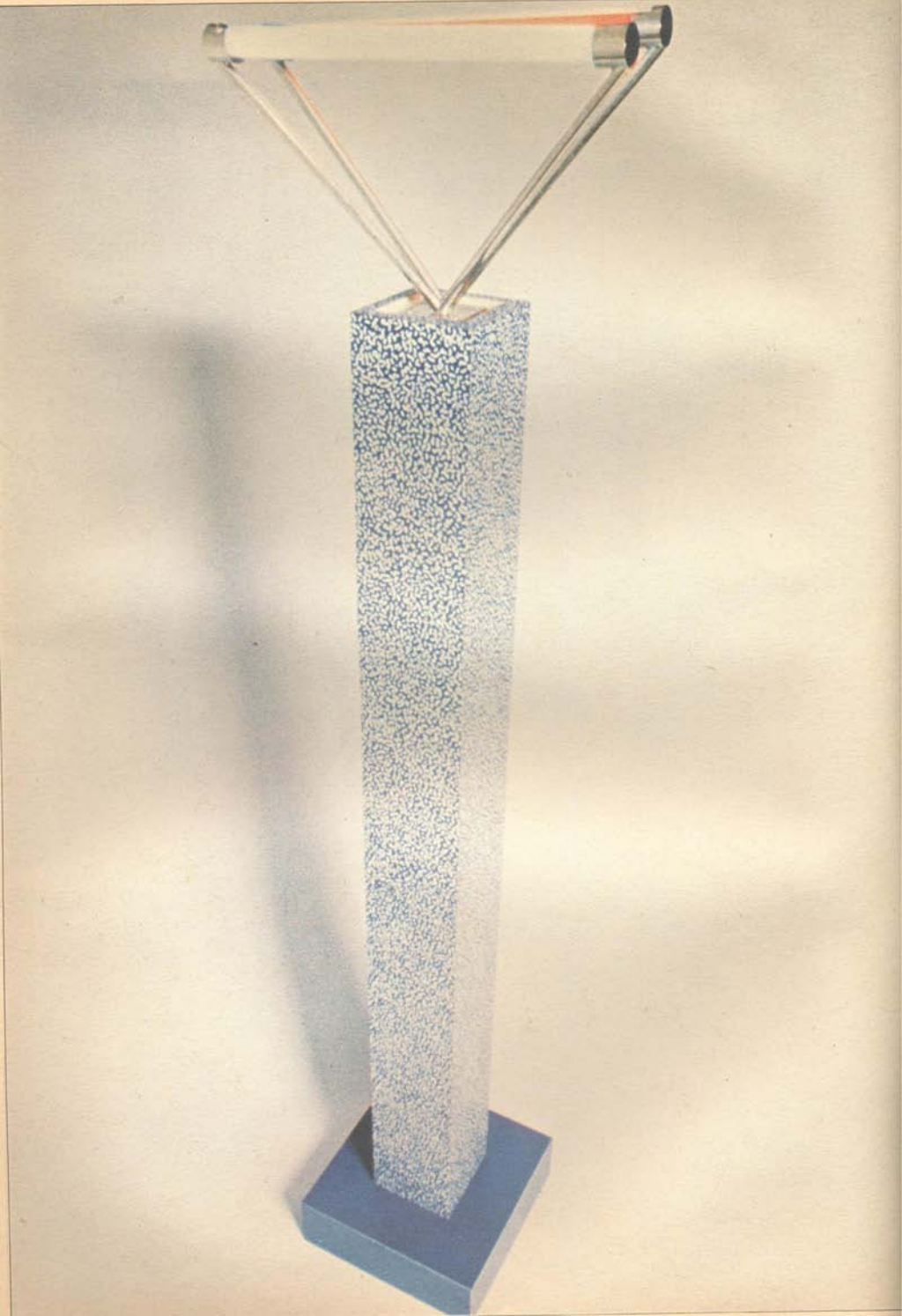


TEXTURES (1) : SERPENT SKIN
PRODUCED BY ABET LAMINATI'




AΩ
CROMO 2