

ALLOUCHE GALLERY

Gaetano Pesce

One of a Kind Iconic Works

1967 - 2015

“Art was always a product.” - Gaetano Pesce

Spaghetti. Resin. Foam. Bubbles. Leakage. Gaetano Pesce’s studio resembles a fantastical science lab that’s begun to melt in the sun like a band of forgotten birthday candles.

For fifty years Pesce has worked to convey that there is no separation between modes of artistic expression. Inspired by Renaissance artists and renowned polymaths like Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael, Pesce fashions himself a contemporary manifestation of the Italian tradition, dipping his toes into artistic fields ranging from architecture and design to drawing, performance and film. When asked how he’s describe his unusually heterogeneous practice -- *are you an artist? a designer?* He simply replied “I am myself.”

At 18 years old Pesce enrolled in architecture school at the University of Venice, where he became involved in Group N, any anonymous association of artists and designers interested in Op Art. The group’s work, characterized by intensely abstracted geometric patterns, garnered impressive and immediate attention, earning the collective a MoMA exhibition. Yet Pesce soon became disillusioned with the prospects of abstract production. “There was no way for me to witness reality,” Pesce said.

For Pesce, good art was a commentary on everyday life. Playful yet political, ambitious and often unfinished, he began to create work that ripped contemporary issues, such as the Vietnam War. He relished the complex and unutterable gunk that spewed out.

In 1967, for example, Pesce staged a performance at a temporary theater in Padua entitled “Piece for an Execution,” in which the audience watched for 27 minutes as a naked man lost 500 gallons of hot red paint, oozing across the theater and splashing up against the audience’s seats.

Now, Pesce, who has called New York home since 1980, is primarily known as a maker of objects, in the loosest sense of the word -- ranging from cracked open vases to bulbous chairs, so light they seem on the verge of floating, or at least rolling, away.

He is, however, renowned for his drawings and paintings as well. Some of his most well known are part of a five piece series titled “Church of Solitude,” three of which currently live at MoMa. The colored pencil, watercolor, ink, colored ink, gouache, and graphite works were catalyzed by Pesce’s early time in New York, categorized by buzzing crowds and inescapable hot noise. His images, then, provide an escape, a quiet albeit two dimensional space to contemplate, breathe

and find momentary peace. The whispering colors and faded shapes yield an architectural realm as calming as a cup of hot tea.

One of his most renowned works, entitled “Up,” is a chair first presented at the 1969 Milan Furniture Show. The globular form, made of polyurethane foam, resembles a thought bubble squished, an ancient fertility statue, or perhaps the curves of a voluptuous woman. A sphere of the same material rests adjacent to the chair, permanently linked by a rope. The chair comments on the prejudice women are forced to endure, depicting them as prisoners deprived of freedom.

And yet, despite the somber message of the piece, it presents its argument playfully, even giddily, like a piece of furniture permanently playing tag with itself. Its packaging was just as radically joyful. The entire piece could be flattened almost completely, allowing consumers to purchase the light’n’easy product conveniently and *wham!* a chair emerges like magic. Or art. Or consumption!

Yes, Pesce’s artworks are most often comprised of the most up-to-date substances, stemming from his introduction to resin and silicon at the age of 21. “I think each time should have its own material,” the artist said. He began reaching out to big chemical companies to examine the properties of the newest elements out there. Sometimes, they would invite him in. Pesce would watch, entranced, as a concoction formed from two disparate liquids would poof and rise -- “like bread,” he explained, wide-eyed, thus forming a foam cushion.

Pesce’s mastery of materials yield artworks that resemble the organic growths that peculiarly burgeoned in the dank corners of chemical labs. Think Flubber -- but way more avant garde. For example, his six foot polyurethane beast “Senza Fine Unice, 2011” resembles a mutant breed of spaghetti speckled in crystals of moisture. The pinkish color simultaneously draws comparisons to ground meat, cotton candy, artificially flavored femininity and human insides.

Despite the alien nature of many of Pesce’s sculptures, the artist takes great care to make sure his many creations are human-made, through and through. He values the unfinished and the imperfect -- savoring every blemish and open stitch as a manifestation of its messy organic origin. “We are not perfect,” Pesce says with a shrug and a smile. “I am not perfect myself.” A badly done work of art is synonymous with being a human being.

There’s no precise logic for when a work is completed, but somehow, Pesce seems to just know. “When what you wanted to say is already there, it’s finished.”

For example, his 2004 piece “XXXL Fabric Vase” is a hardened tornado of molten multicolored fabrics, solidified in resin.

The toppling tower of rainbow laundry is part practical object, part polychromatic tunnel, as if participating in a challenge to create a functional object in the least functional way possible.

Even Pesce's drawings incorporate unorthodox materials in seriously impish ways. His colorful 2014 drawing "Il Pied Panel" features a multicolored foot atop a slab of resin, a riff on a medical examination or scientific classification. The rainbow string of text at the bottom, concluding with a series of question marks, illuminates the radiant frivolity of the exercise.

Aside from his Renaissance mentors, Pesce takes inspiration from comparatively contemporary artists like Pop Art polyglot Andy Warhol and conceptual prankster Marcel Duchamp. To Pesce, Duchamp embodies the end of romantic art. He recognized creativity in the industrial object, the stuff of everyday life.

Practicality is always crucial to Pesce's practice. He doesn't shy away from the consumerist corners of the art world. From his perspective, they have been part of the picture since the beginning. Centuries ago, artists were hired to paint a portrait, to create a product, to serve a purpose.

In Pesce's eyes, the future will collapse the boundary between art and product, object and device, once and for all. A believer that the time of standardization is over, Pesce envisions a future when objects, even when manufactured in series, will be unique.

This premonition came to life with Pesce's Fontessa Customizable Shoes, a rubbery booty each consumer could customize to her liking. The buyer is meant to use scissors to cut up the shoes, made entirely of interconnected circles, transforming the footwear into ballet slippers, Mary Janes, or some unestablished, extraterrestrial shape. Also, according to some Amazon reviews of the shoe, they smell like candy.

Even Pesce's catalogues often follow his dictum of difference. He flipped through one, made from pigskin and hair, that looked more like a furry book of spells than standard art gallery reading material.

It's obvious that Pesce's obsession with distinction stems beyond a capitalist desire to make products more desirable. For Pesce, creativity can be expressed through both creation and consumption, and, though not in equal measure, both are generative. This differentiation doesn't just apply to art and objects either, it's one of Pesce's greatest dreams for the future. "Democracy is not the movement to make people equal," he said, "but the movement to respect difference. The freedom to be different." Less equality, more difference.

According to the artist, women embody this manner of difference, this liquid lifestyle, more than their male counterparts. The artist correlates his colorful, fluid aesthetic as a feminine way of being in the world. “The feminine brain is very elastic,” Pesce said in an interview with Disegno. “The female mind enjoys colours and changes. Only conservative people want things to be static. The feminine brain is very much like water: always changing and open to new information and possibilities.”

For Pesce, a masculine life trajectory moves roughly in a straight line. A woman however, plays many roles -- a mother, sister, wife, lover. It’s a multidisciplinary way of life, a polychromatic mode of living. “Start with something that is liquid, always. Liquidity is a characteristic of our own time.”

Pesce’s world is liquid, to be sure. He transforms everyday objects -- tables, chairs, mirrors and frames, into chameleon bodies, molten and melting. There is freedom in this infinitely mutable world, where sofas make political statements and chairs crack subtle jokes. Exploring a Pesce exhibition feels like entering an animated world that’s been anthropomorphized and overcooked. Everything is alive, everything is happy and everything is dripping.





Up in Wood, 1969

Wood

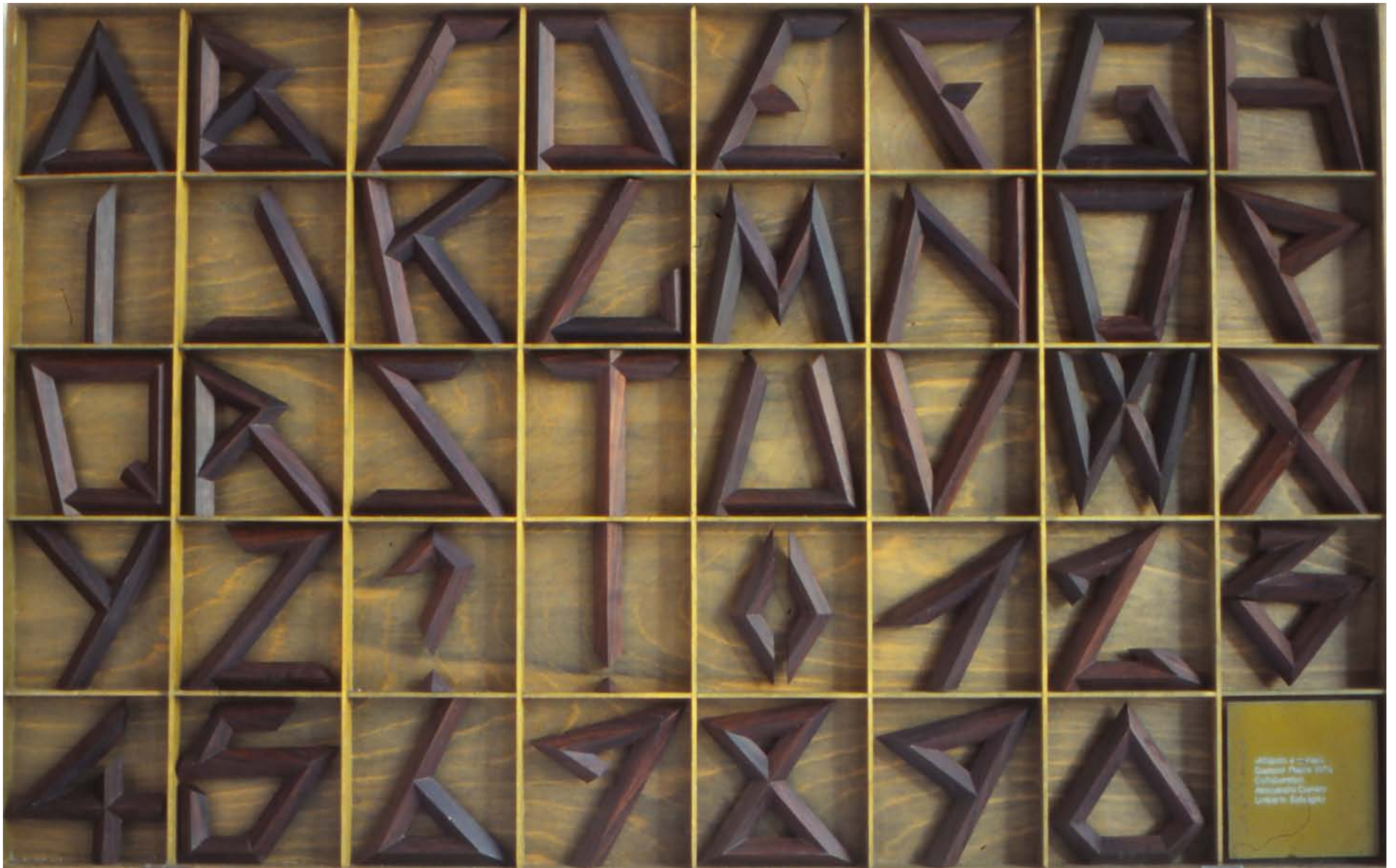
47.2 x 51.2 x 40.6 inches



Senza Fine Unica, 2011
Polyurethane
55.1 x 43.3 x 78.7 inches



Senza Fine Unica, 2011
Detail in Dark



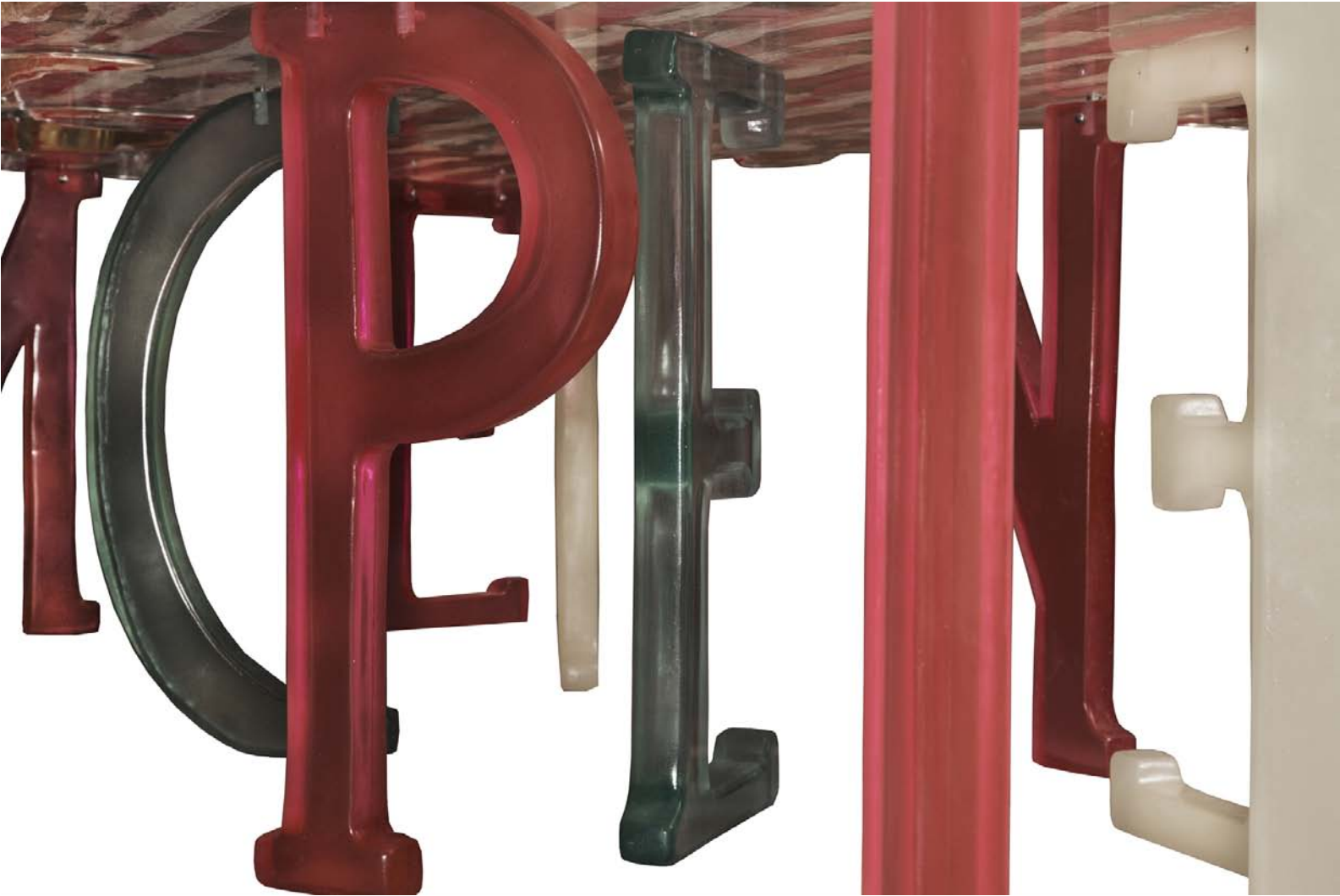
Alphabet, 1973
Brazilian rosewood
39.2 x 24.6 x 1.4 inches



America Table, 2012
Epoxy resin
106.3 x 47.2 x 31.5 inches



America Table, 2012
Detail 1



America Table, 2012
Detail 2



Do You Still Love Me? Cabinet, 1995-2007
Resin, wood, and metal
43.3 x 17.7 x 86.6 inches



Do You Still Love Me? Cabinet, 1995-2007
Open



Do You Still Love Me? Cabinet, 1995-2007
Closed



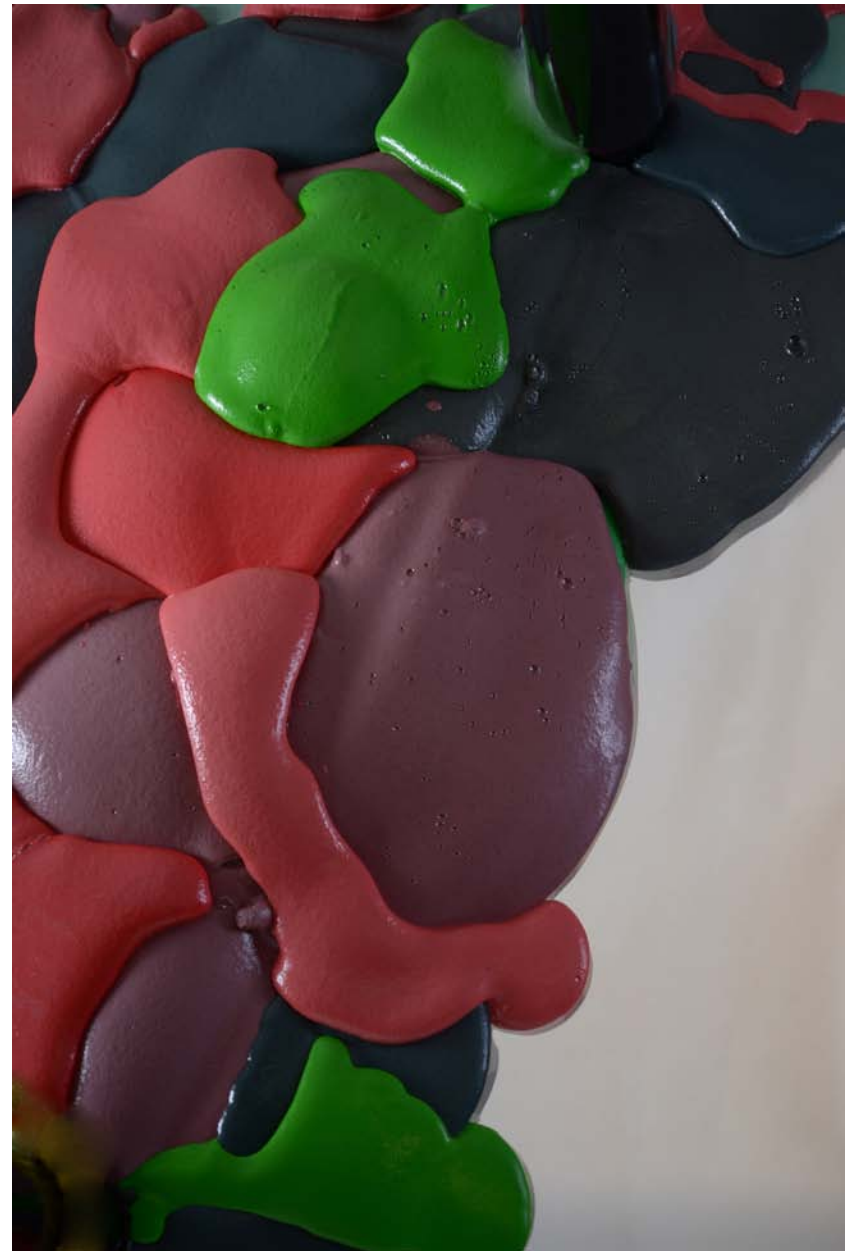
Do You Still Love Me? Cabinet, 1995-2007
Detail



Foam Table, 2014
Urethane foam, metal, and PVC
102.4 x 58.3 x 29.5 inches



Foam Table, 2014
Detail 1



Foam Table, 2014
Detail 2



Fish Table, 2006
Epoxy Resin
28.7 x 41.7 x 133.9 inches



Fish Table, 2006
Alternate angle 1



Fish Table, 2006
Alternate angle 2



King Chair (Nobody is Perfect Series), 2002
Resin and fabric
43.3 x 40.6 x 27.6 inches



King Chair (Nobody is Perfect Series), 2002
Alternate angle 1



King Chair (Nobody is Perfect Series), 2002
Alternate angle 2



Manila Chair, 2007
Twine and epoxy resin
34.6 x 16.5 x 16.1 inches



Dalila, 1980
Urethane foam
20.5 x 18.1 x 34.3 inches



Jefferson Chair, 2012
Fiberglass
34.6 x 17.3 x 19.7 inches



Nobody's Perfect, 2002
Resin
21.2 x 18.1 x 33.9 inches



Pink Chair, 2012
Epoxy Resin
23.6 x 19.7 x 10.2 inches



Bastone Lamp, 2014 (based on the original *Bastone Lamp* created in 1986)

Resin

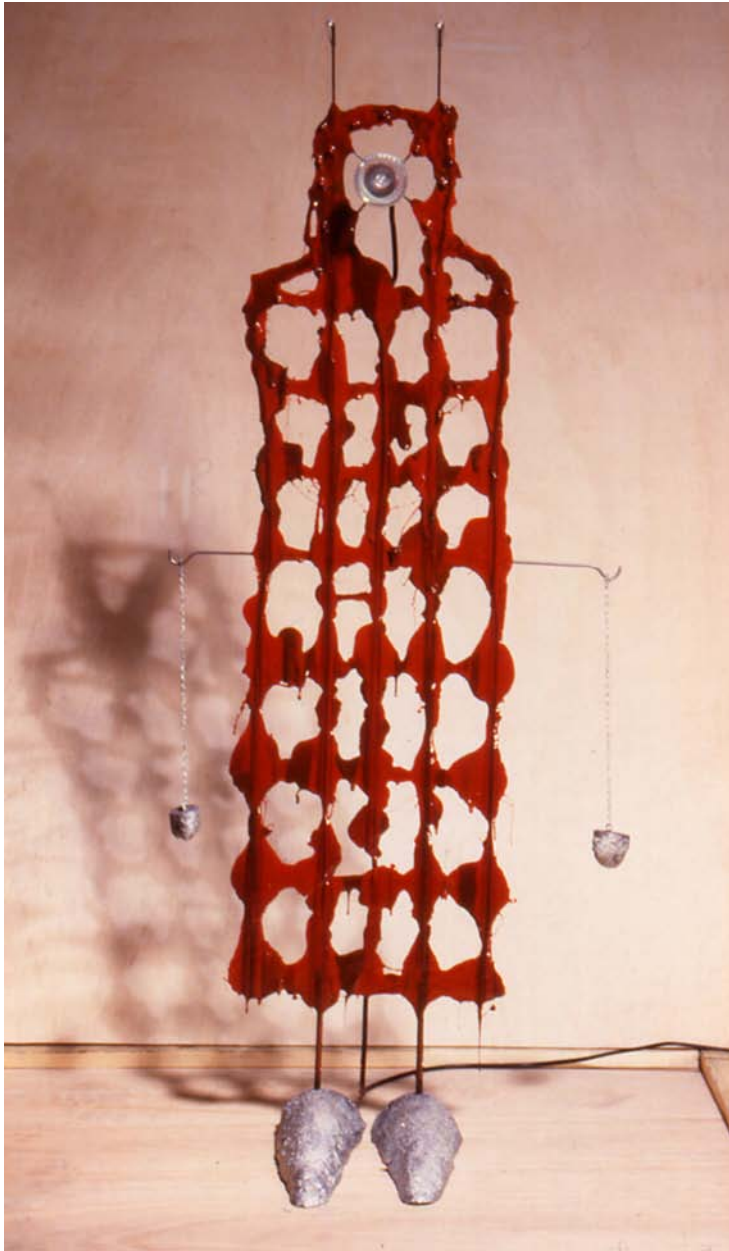
82.7 x 8.7 x 2 inches



Silicone Lamp XXL, 2012
Silicone and resin
74 x 28.7 inches



Silicone Lamp XXL, 2012
Lit View



Verbal Abuse, 1994
Urethane, steel, lead
94.5 x 33.9 x 13.8 inches



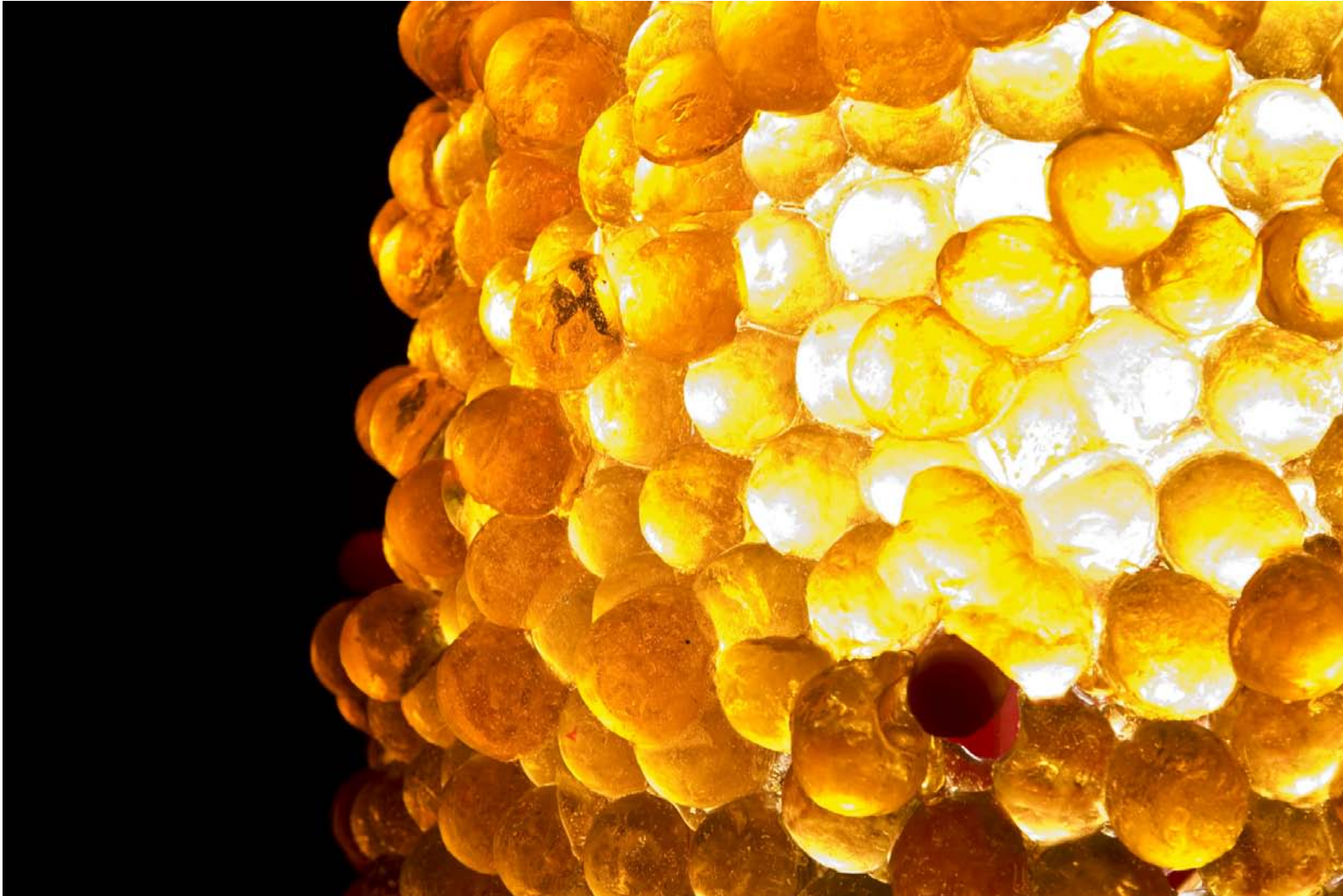
Kid Lamp, 2013
Resin, epoxy resin, and string
37.4 x 31.1 x 48 inches



Kid Lamp, 2013
Profile



Bee Lamp, 2005
Urethane resin
15.7 x 18.9 inches



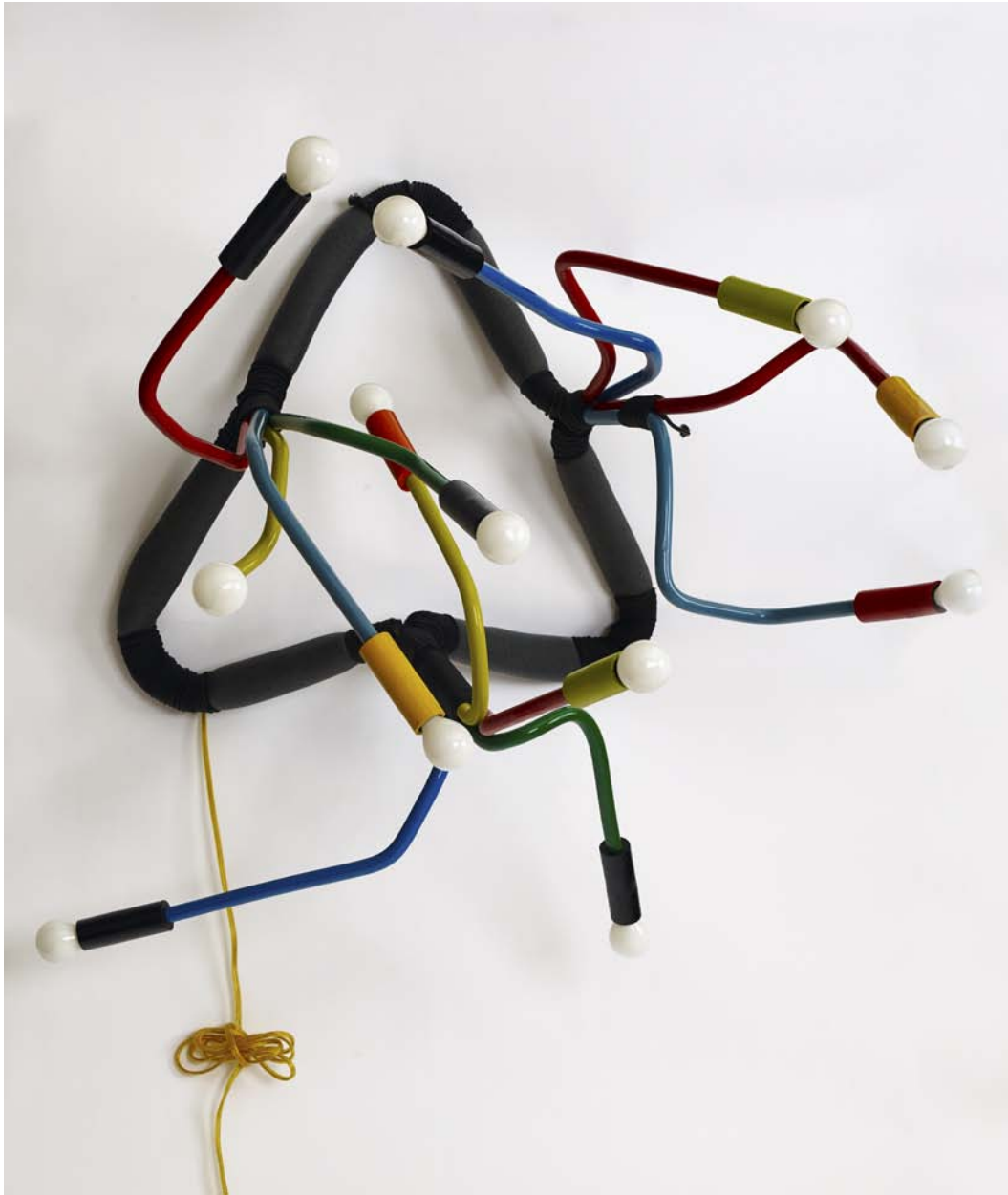
Bee Lamp, 2005
Detail



Pilone Lamp (Bricole in Laguna), 2013
Urethane resin, epoxy resin, and LED
27.6 x 25.6 x 22.4 inches



Pilone Lamp (Bricole in Laguna), 2013
Detail



12 Arms Lamp, 2008
Resin and copper
43.3 x 23.6 x 23.6 inches



Friend Lamp, 2014
Resin
96.8 x 64.2 inches



Cloud Lamp, 2013
Epoxy, resin, dacron, metal
59.1 x 63 x 51.2 inches



Foot Lamp, 2014
Urethane resin
43.3 x 27.6 x 4.7 inches



Ghost Lamp, 2010
Resin and metal
18.5 x 10.2 inches



Ghost Lamp, 2010
Lit View



XXXL Fabric Vase, 2005
Multicolor fabric, resin
50 x 27.6 inches



Fuoco Vase (Large), 2014
Resin
31.5 x 25.2 inches



Flame Vase (Big), 2012
Resin
38.2 x 8.7 inches



Flame Vase (Big), 2012
Resin
38.2 x 8.7 inches



Flame Vase (Big), 2012
Resin
38.2 x 8.7 inches



Flame Vase (Big), 2012
Detail



Flame Vase (Big), 2012
Detail



Flame Vase (Medium), 2012
Resin
21.7 x 5.9 inches



Fuoco Vase (Small), 2014
Resin
17.3 x 11.8 inches



Medusa Vase (medium), 2010
Resin
13 x 6.3 inches



Medusa Vase (medium), 2010
Resin
13 x 6.3 inches



Medusa Vase (medium), 2010
Resin
13 x 6.3 inches



Medusa Vase (small), 2010
Resin
8.3 x 8.3 inches



Vase with Red Legs, 2010
Resin
36 x 18 inches



Radici Vase, 2012
Resin
16.9 x 13.8 inches



Fabric Vase, 2008
Fabric and resin
11.4 x 10.6 inches



Nose Vase, 2010
Resin
11 x 9.8 inches



Portaghiaccio Ice Holder, 2010
Resin
13.8 x 9.4 inches



Face Vase, 2014
Sewing thread and urethane resin
11.8 x 11.8 inches



Root Vase Amber (Small)
Polyurethane resin
7.9 x 5.9 inches



Root Vase Brown (Small)
Polyurethane resin
7.9 x 5.9 inches



Root Vase Green (Small)
Polyurethane resin
7.9 x 5.9 inches



Root Vase Yellow (Small)
Polyurethane resin
7.9 x 5.9 inches



Root Vase
Group Shot



Root Vase Red (Small)
Polyurethane resin
7.9 x 5.9 inches



Root Vase Tan (Small)
Polyurethane resin
7.9 x 5.9 inches



UP 5&6, 1968
Polyester and epoxy putty
5.5 x 7.5 x 8.7 inches



Cirva Vase, 1988
Fiberglass
4.7 x 12.2 x 8.7 inches



Friend Lamp, 1995
Fabric, resin, and wood
18.1 x 13.8 x 4.7 inches



L'Abbraccio, 2009
Wood and paper mache
18.1 x 11.8 x 5.1 inches

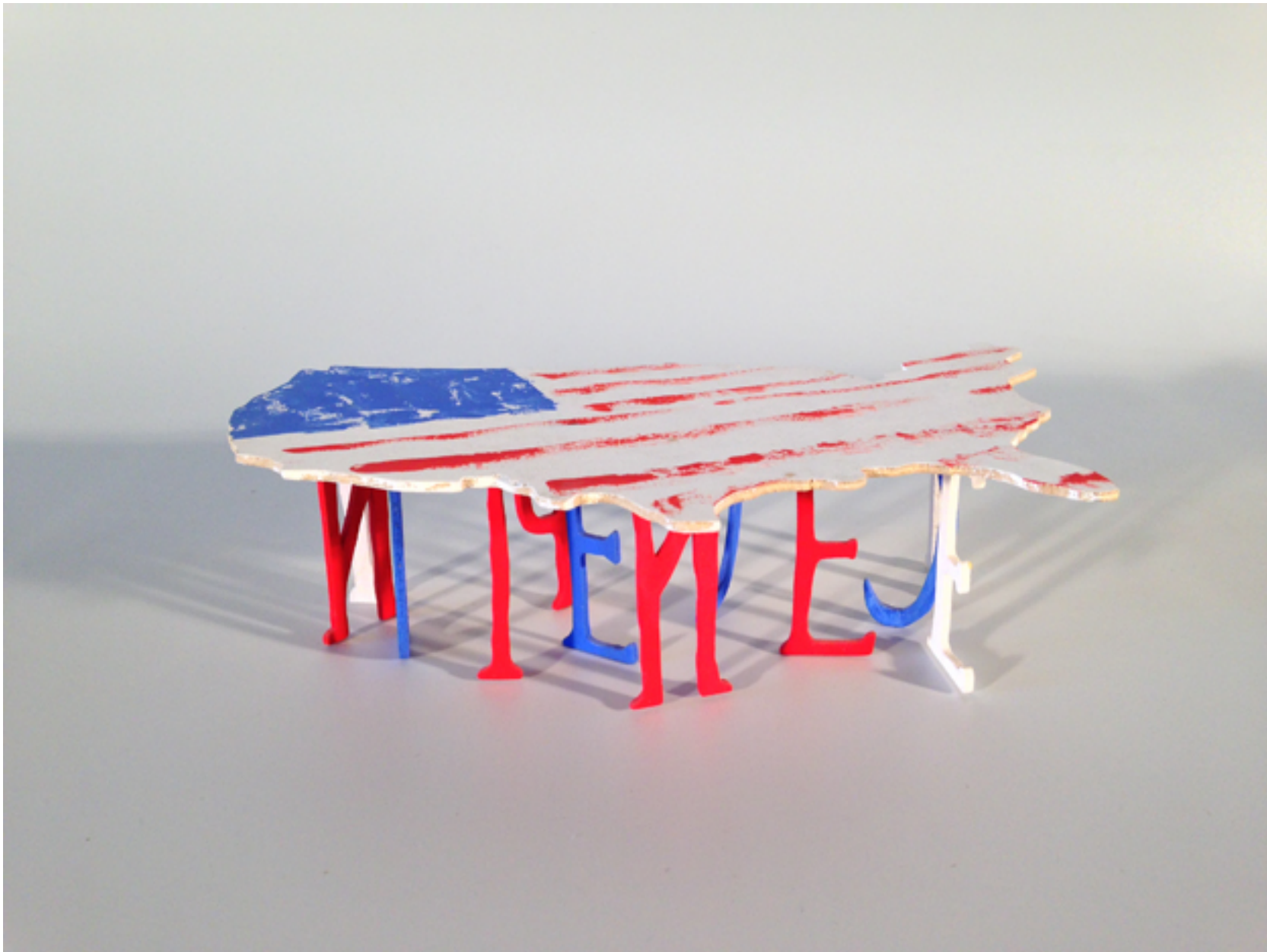
L'Abbraccio, 2009
Detail 1



L'Abbraccio, 2009
Detail 2



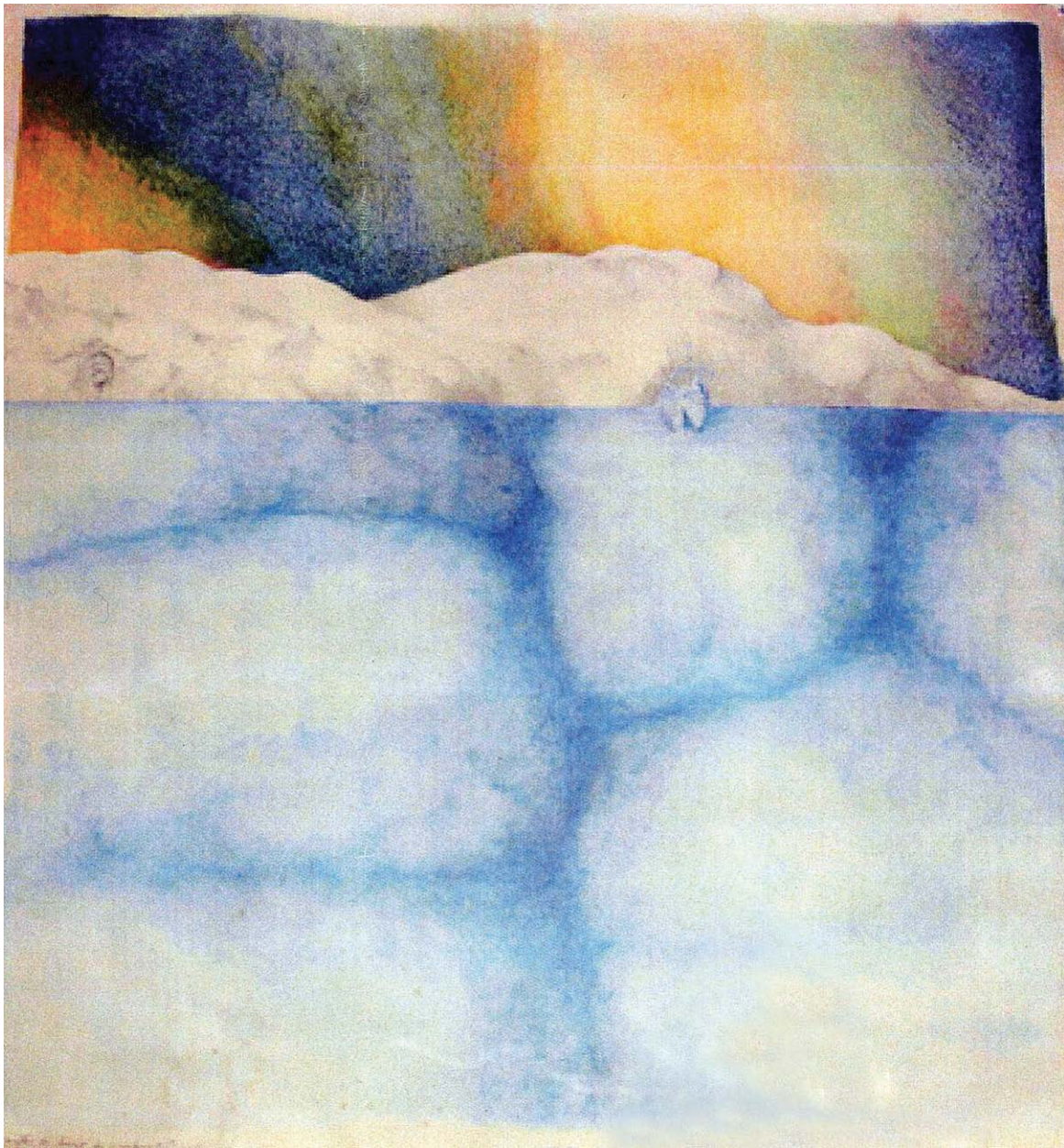
Rag Armchair, 1970
Rags and polyester resin
8.3 x 11 x 9.4 inches



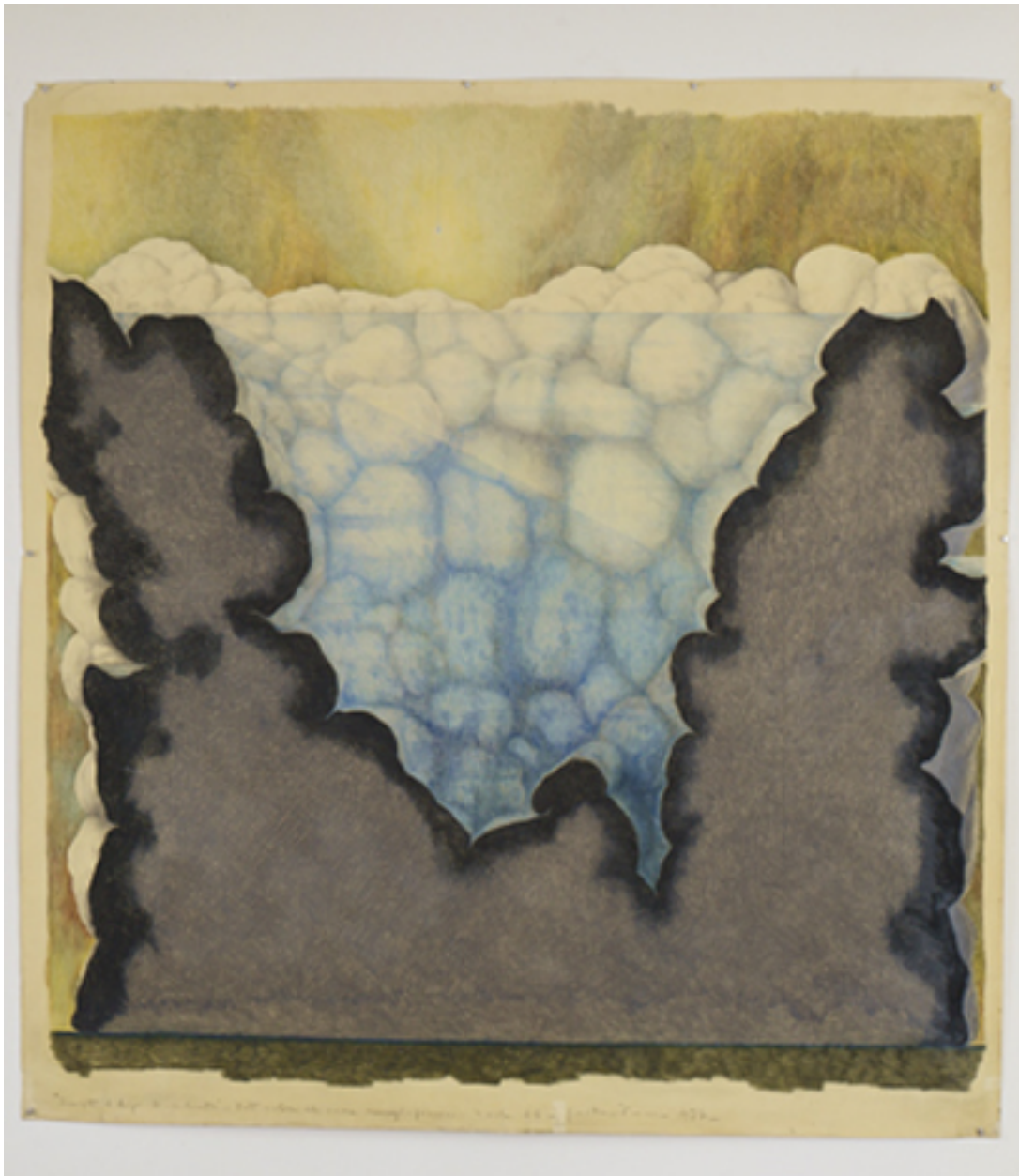
America Table, 2012
Colored plywood
10.6 x 4.7 x 3.1 inches



Senza Fine Model (Red), 2010
Experimental Resin
8.7 x 7.9 x 9.1 inches



Church of Solitude, 1977
Color pencil on paper
59.3 x 63 inches



Church of Solitude, 1977
Color pencil on paper
59.3 x 63 inches



Up 5&6, 1969
Color crayon and correction fluid on cartridge paper
14.6 x 11.4 inches



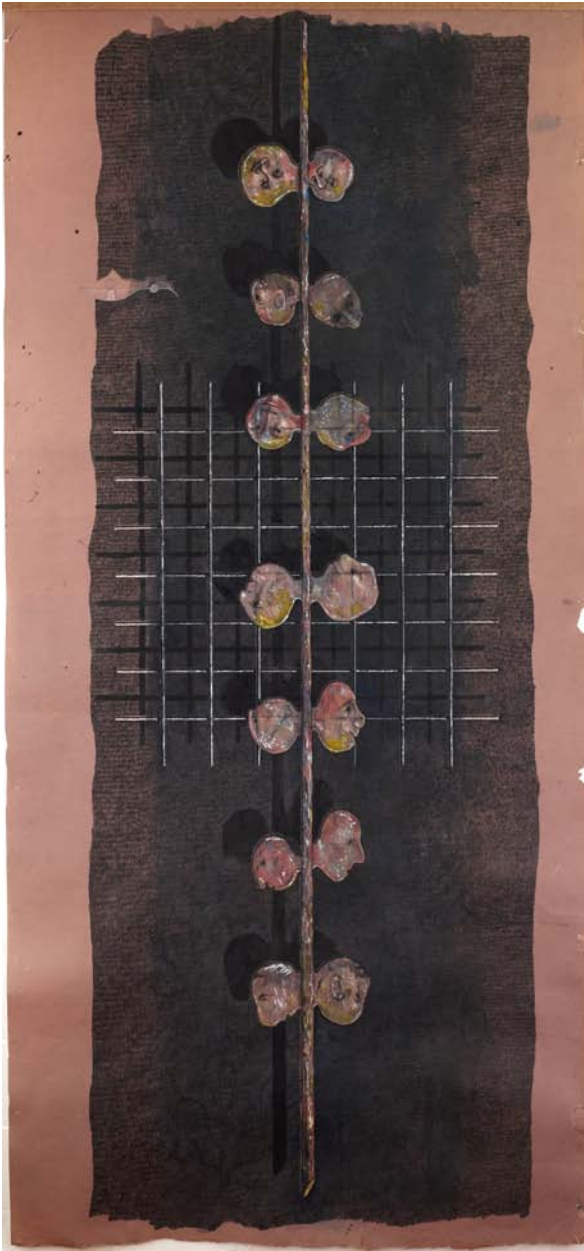
Up 5&6, 1969
Pencil and color crayon on cartridge paper
13.8 x 10.2 inches



Up Vestita, 1969
Ink and color crayon on paper
9.4 x 8.5 inches



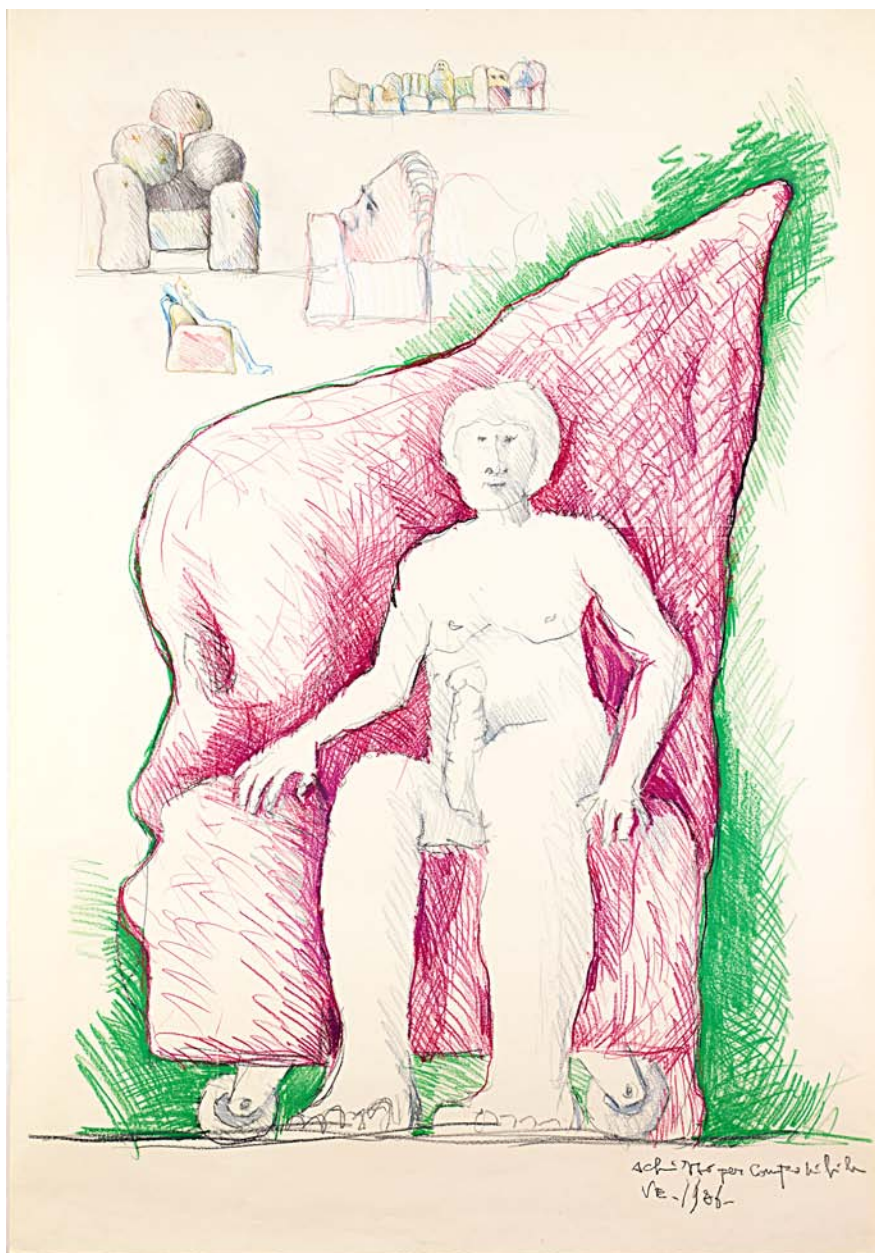
Greene Street Chair, 1984
Oil painting on cartridge paper
83.5 x 59.1 inches



Bastone Lamp, 1986
Oil painting on cartridge paper
94.5 x 43.3 inches



Big Black Portrait, 1983
Resin
94.5 x 48.4 inches



Sketch for a Modular Sofa, 1986
Pastel and color crayon on paper
59.1 x 39.8 inches



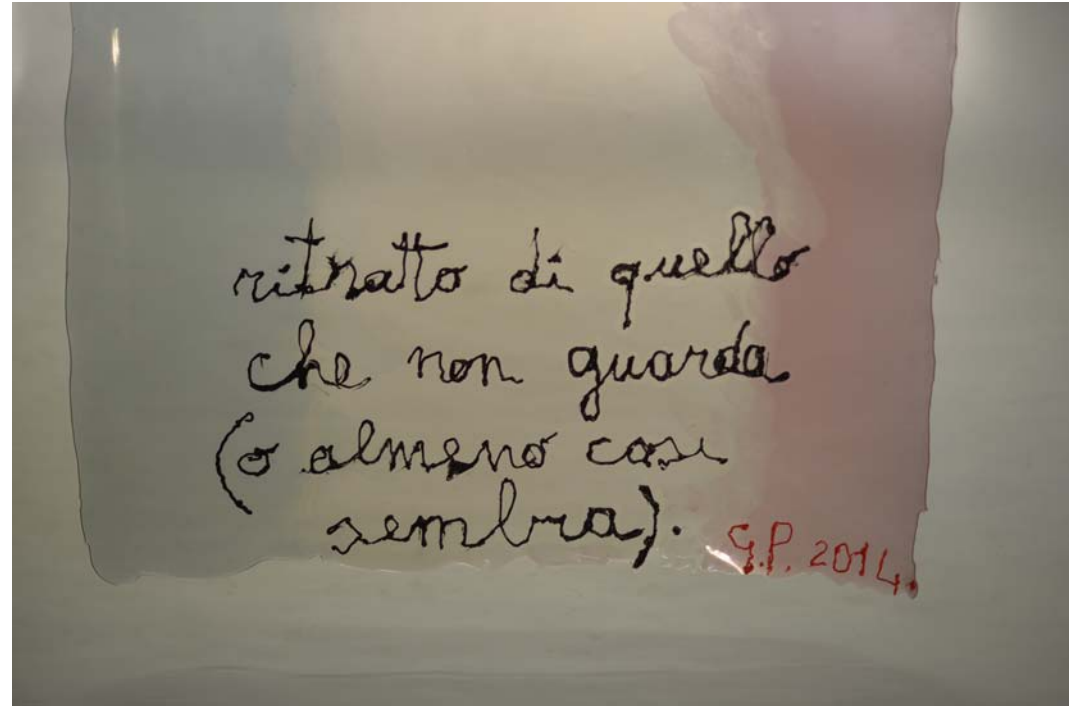
Wan Chai Chair, 1986
Oil painting on paper
103.4 x 59.8 inches



Ritratto di Quello Che Non Guarda, 2014
Resin
96.9 x 49.2 inches



Ritratto di Quello Che Non Guarda, 2014
Detail 1



Ritratto di Quello Che Non Guarda, 2014
Detail 2



Skin Nera, 1977
Resin
39.4 x 26.8 inches



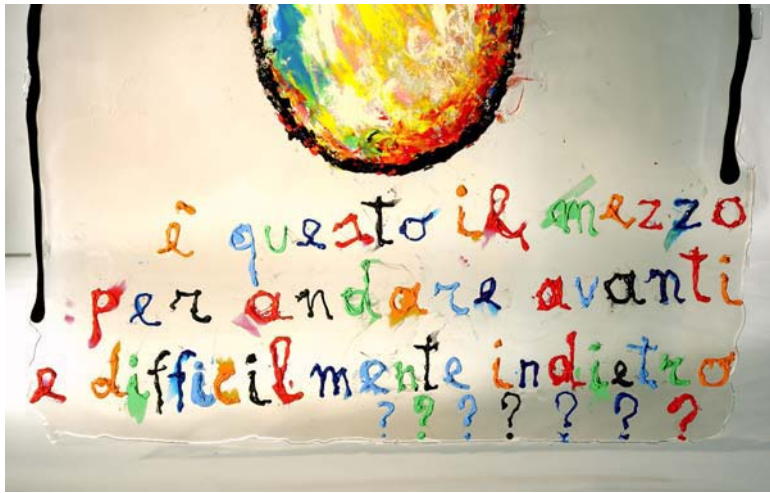
Pratt Chair, 1984
Gouache on paper
39.4 x 25.9 inches



Donna con Titolo, 2014
Resin
96.9 x 49.2 inches



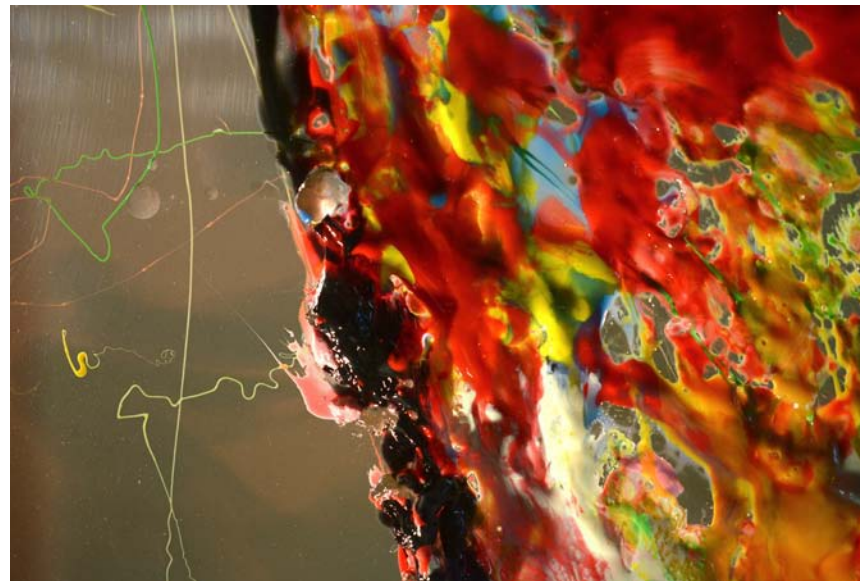
Il Piede Panel, 2014
Resin
96.9 x 49.2 inches



Il Piede Panel, 2014
Detail 1



Il Piede Panel, 2014
Detail 2



Il Piede Panel, 2014
Detail 3



Pieve per una Fucilazione, 1967
Pencil and watercolor on paper
27.6 x 19.7 inches



Feminino, 2004
Pencil, color crayon, and correction fluid on paper
19.3 x 13.2 inches



Senza Fine Unica bas-relief, 2011

Resin

29.5 x 19.7 inches



Heart Lamp, 1979
Pencil and oil painting on paper
39.8 x 25.9 inches



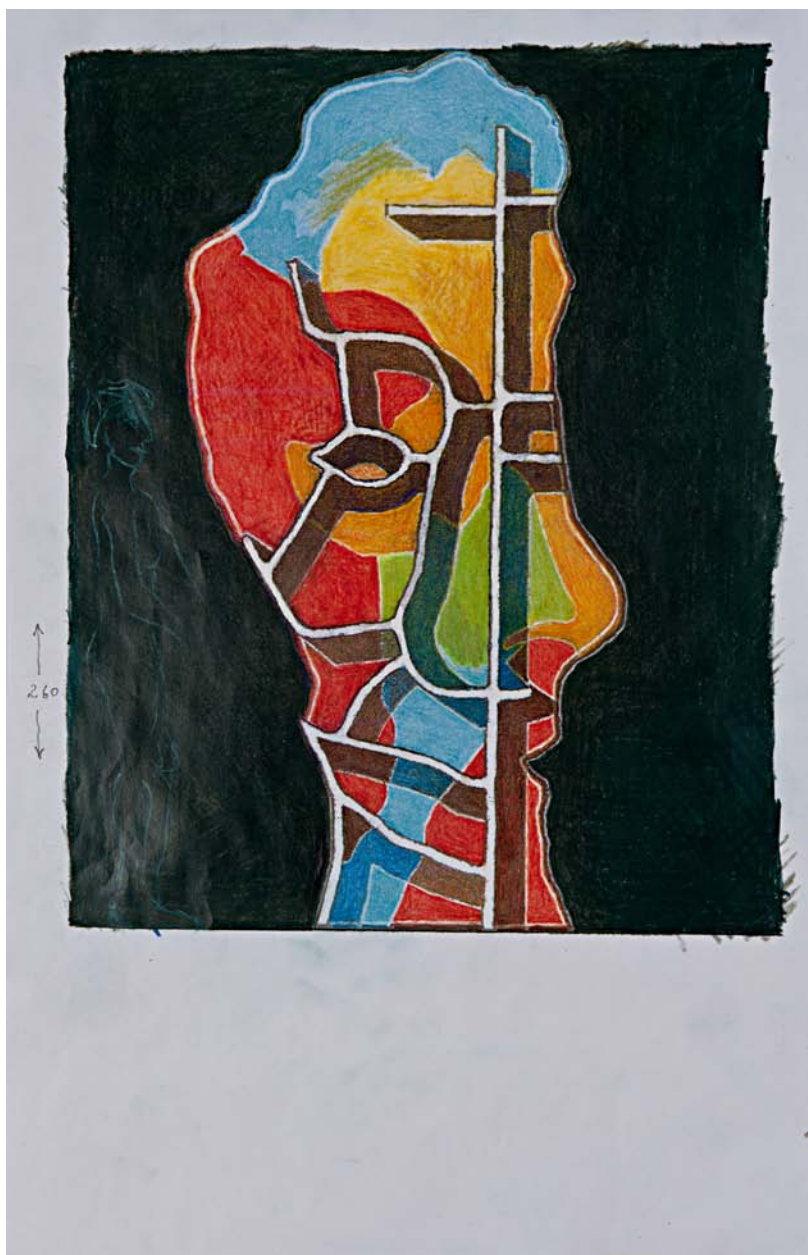
Sketch for a Bed, 2008
Pencil and color crayon on paper
11 x 8.5 inches



Schizzo Senza Titolo, 2002
Oil painting on fabric
34.3 x 21.3 inches



Disegno Sedia a Multipli Pedi, 2000
Oil painting on cartridge paper
39.4 x 27.6 inches



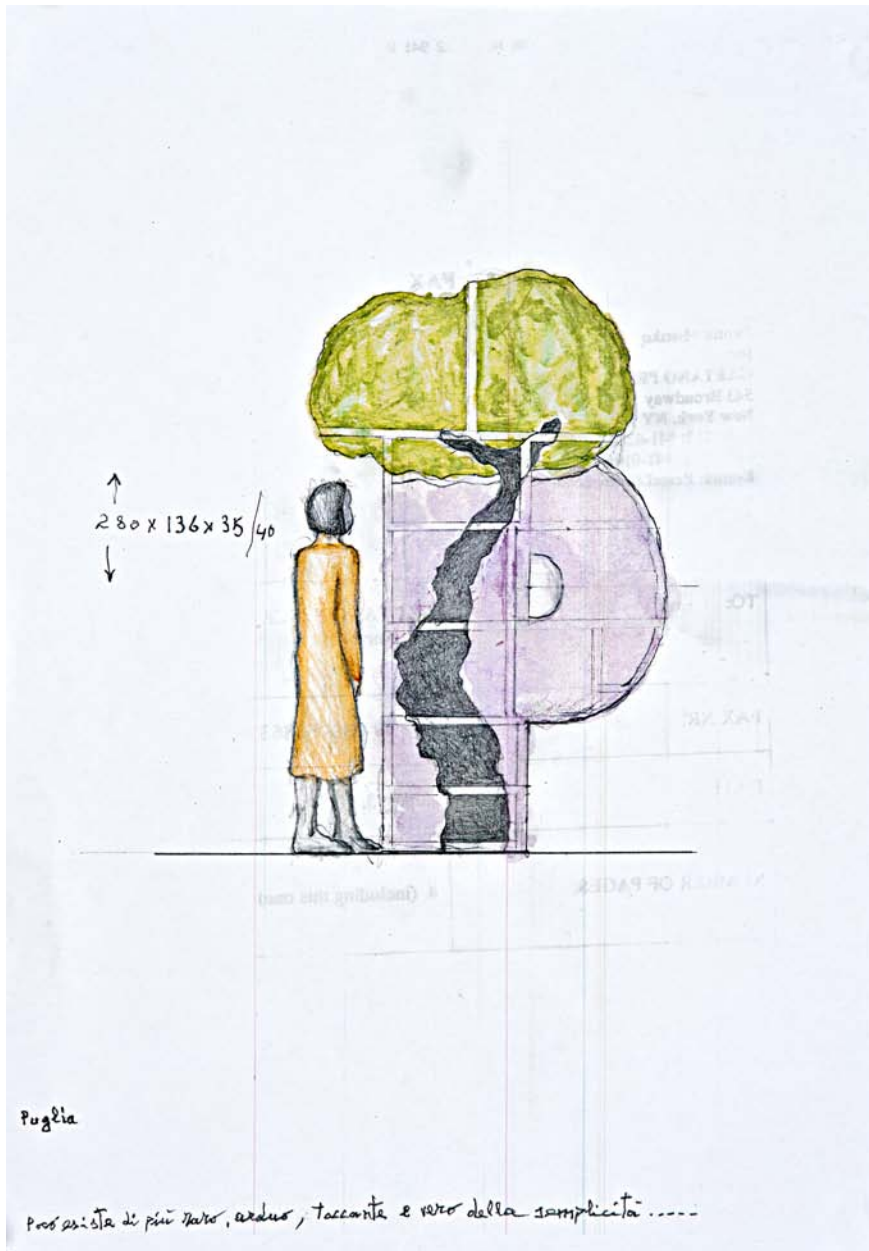
Palladio, 2011
Color crayon on paper
16.9 x 11 inches



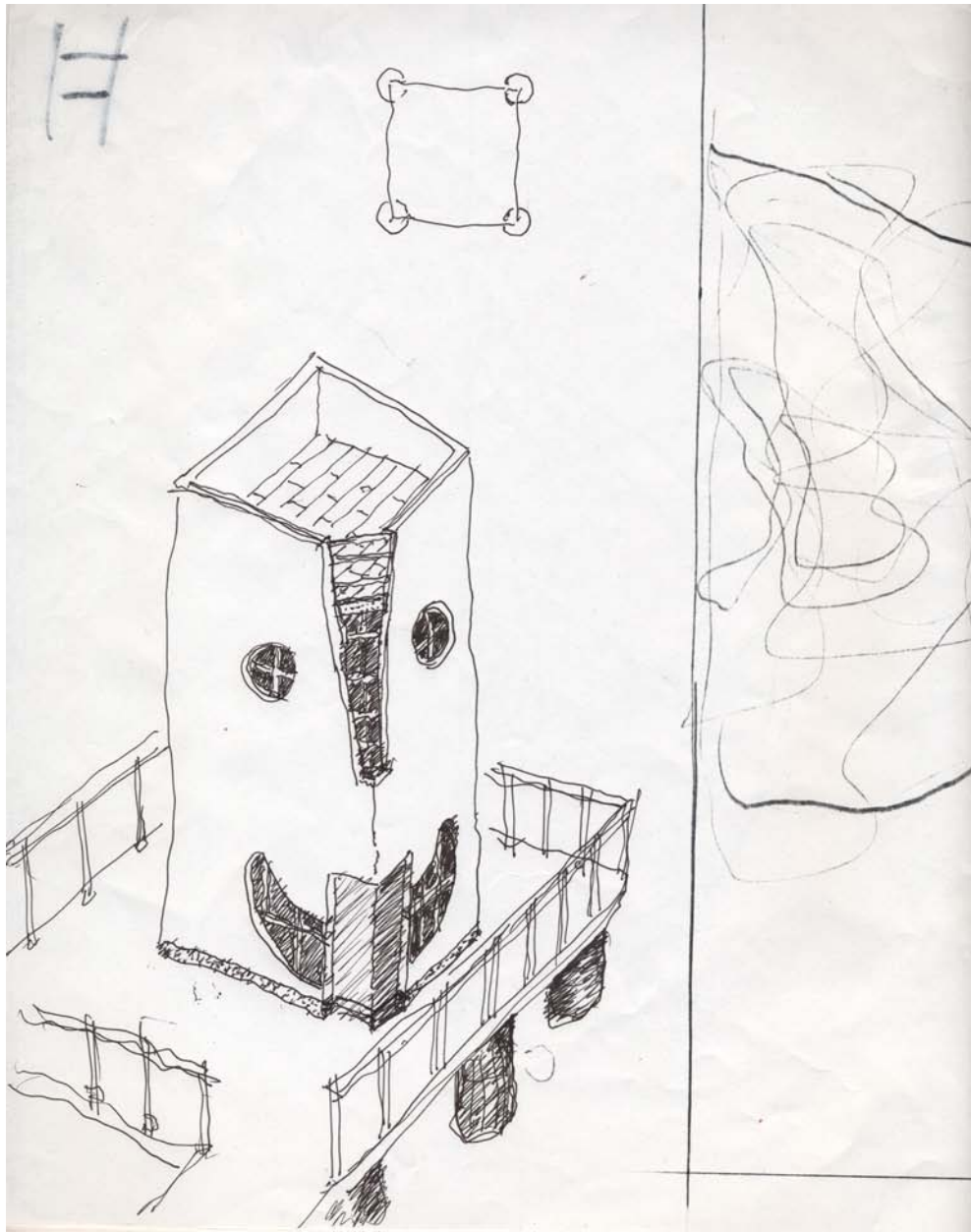
Uomo Vestito di Spaghetti, 2001
Pencil and colored crayon on paper
17.3 x 12.2 inches



Silicone Face on Fabric, 2011
Resin on Fabric
16.1 x 11.4 inches



Puglia Cabinet, 2007
Pencil and color crayon on paper
16.1 x 11.8 inches



Bahia House, 1998
Black ink on paper
13.4 x 8.7 inches