

LUCY+JORGE ORTA: POTENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

Cells are a part of the human body; they are at the origin of its being, its feelings, its emotions, and its sufferings. Thus, they speak the language of the body. There are also cells of habitation. The relationship between people and their habitat is formed in this metaphorical cell. Living and being become a single and unique life experience. CRISTINA MOROZZI

Potential Architecture explores artists Lucy+Jorge Orta's recent architectural endeavors that derive from their fascination with cell biology and the process of differentiation. Through drawings and sculpture, the artists conceptualize the communication process the human cell undertakes from its embryonic state, and the infinite transformations that lead to defined structural organisms.

This new body of work draws from Lucy+Jorge Orta's artistic practice, grounded in the universal concerns of community, shelter, migration, and sustainable development.

Potential Architecture is a powerful rejoinder to the arbitrary boundaries that define art, architecture, and design.

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Potential Architecture

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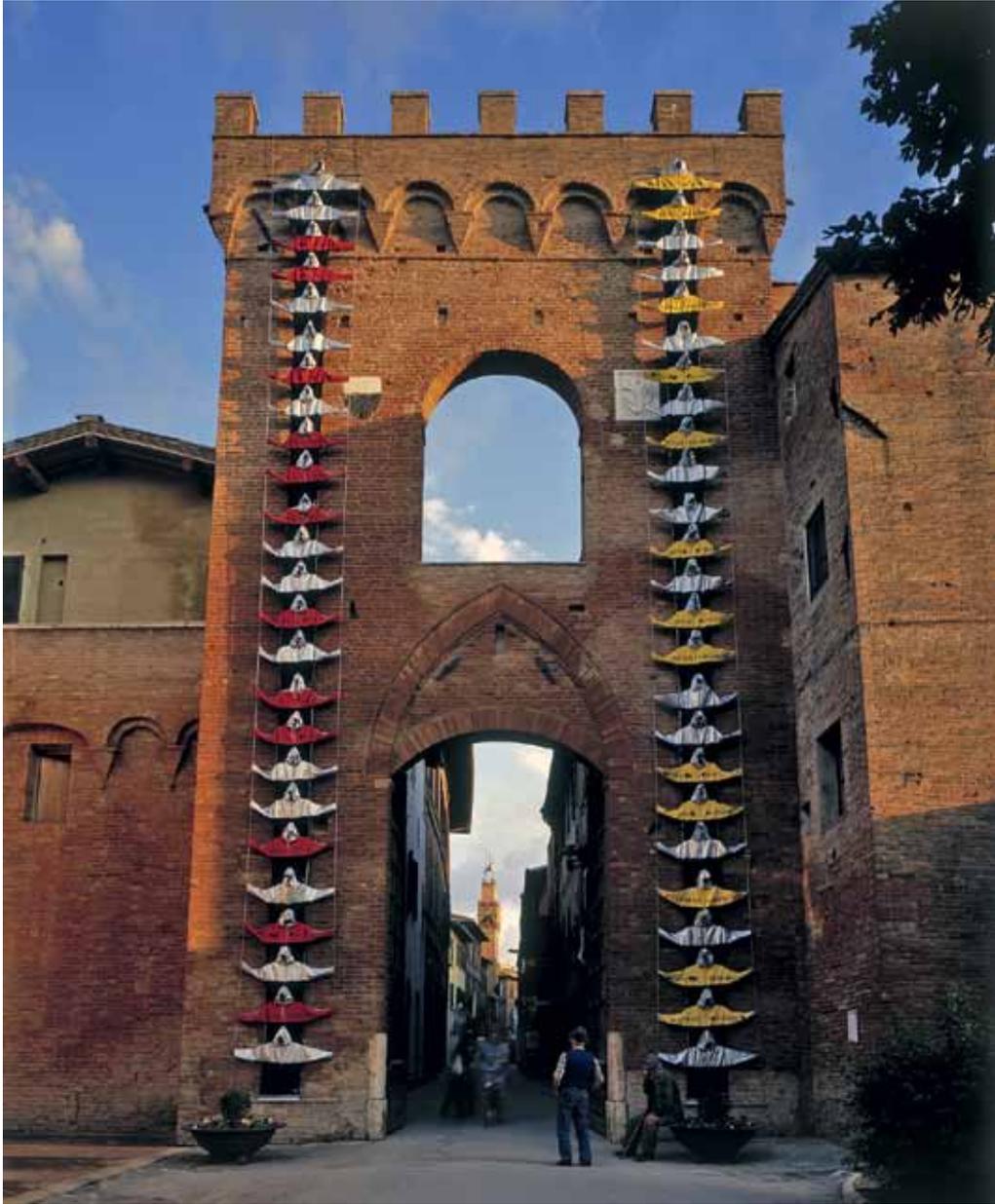
JAMES PUTNAM

Excerpt from The Shape of the Clouds and the Shape of Space and Time¹

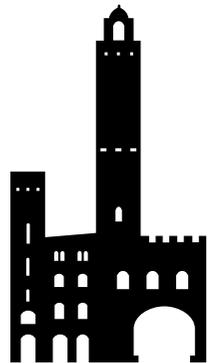
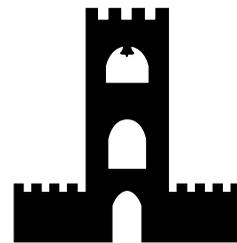
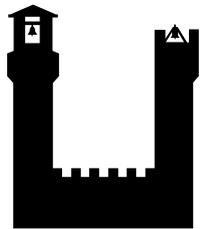
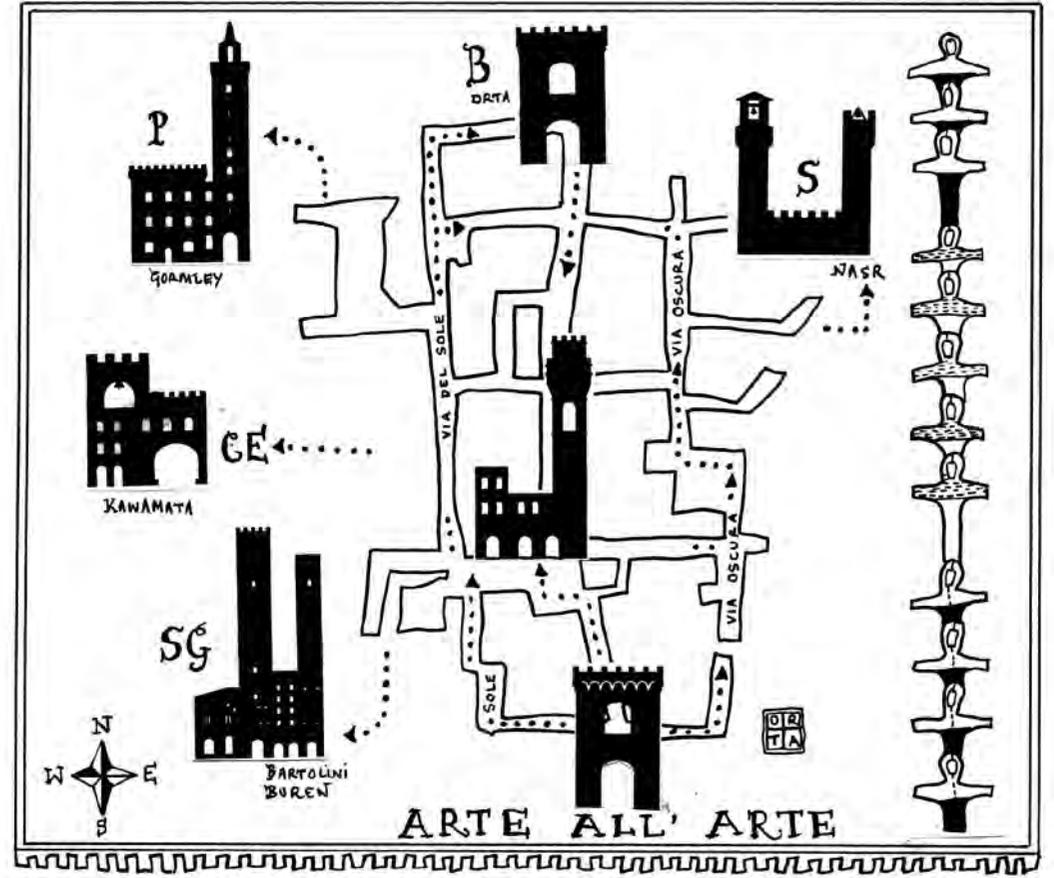
For *Arte all' Arte*, a project in the Tuscan town of Buonconvento, Lucy+Jorge Orta installed a series of specially made sculptures in crystal and steel in the Sacred Art Museum. The works were made in collaboration with local artisans and celebrate Colle di Val d'Elsa's crystal-blowing tradition. *In Vitro* is a modified antique cradle containing organic crystal-blown forms, whose placement juxtaposes a Renaissance painting of the Annunciation by Girolamo di Benvenuto. Orta have also created a series titled *Totipotent Architecture*, presented on metal and glass tables installed along the length of the gallery. These curious constructions consist of cut metal architectural silhouettes and armatures with organic blown-crystal extensions. They include an interactive work where local visitors can write down their secret wishes for the future and insert them in glass test tubes, which they deposit at the base of the sculpture. This is an extraordinary structure, with ladder-like elements and tiers upon which strange, imaginary textile "infants" in hand-crafted bivouacs rest on bunk beds. Like chrysalises hibernating in cells, they relate directly to Orta's *Connector Body Architecture* artwork, suspended from Buonconvento's gateway.

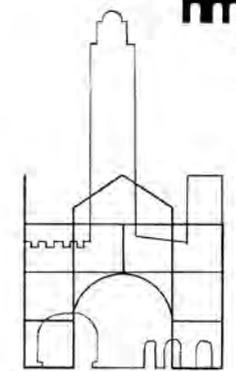
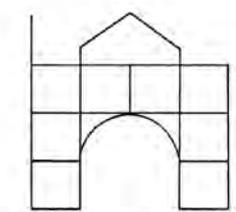
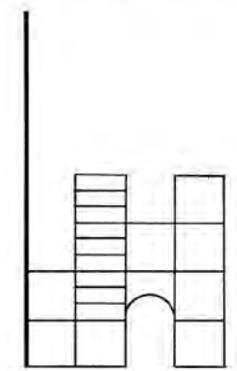
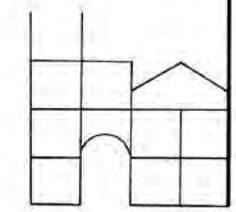
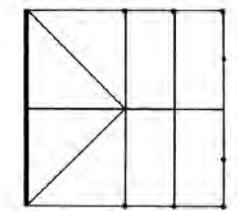
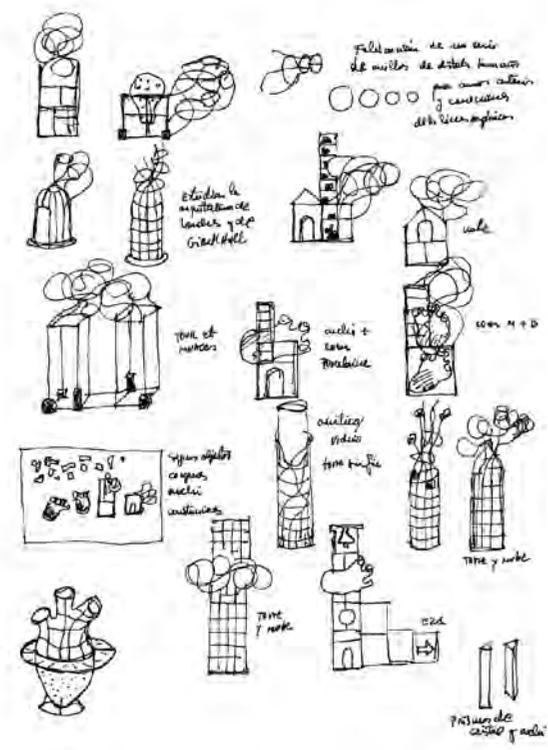
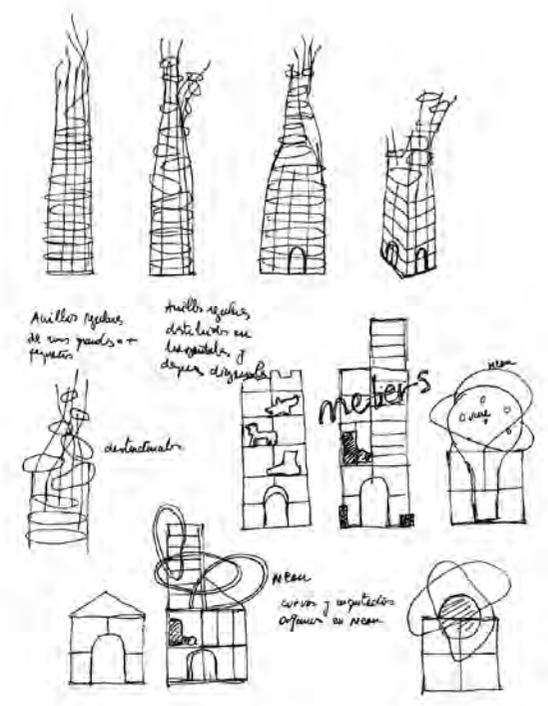
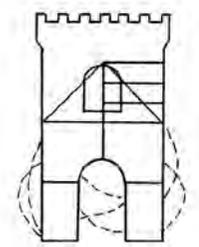
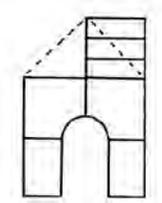
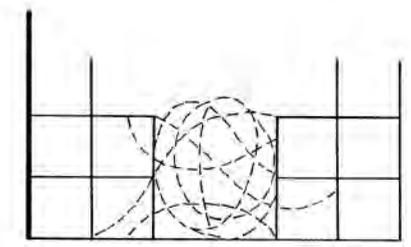
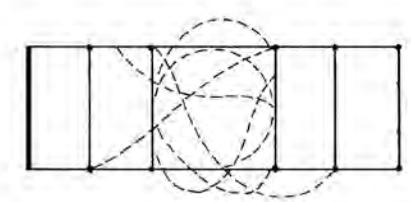
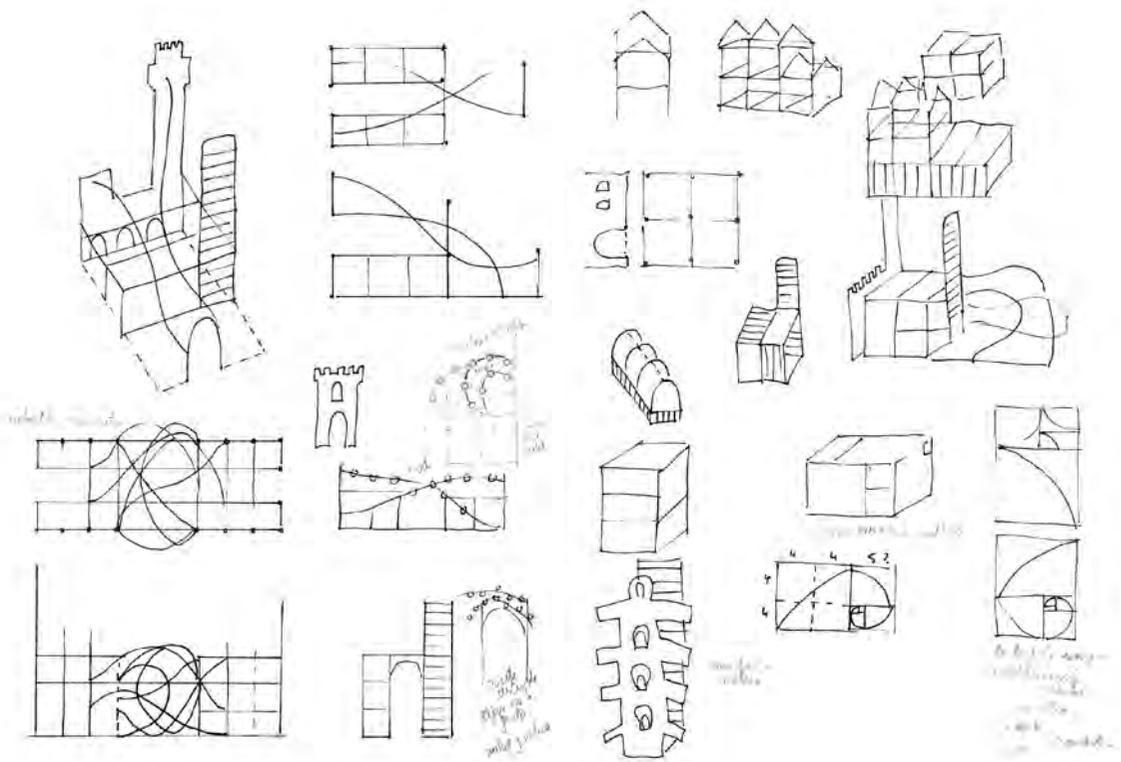
This new series was inspired by Orta's recent research into the microstructure of human cells in their earliest stages—the transformation of the embryonic cell into defined, "architectural" structures, which the artists refer to as "cells of habitation." In the context of Buonconvento, and in juxtaposition to Girolamo's Annunciation painting, these imaginary architectural models express a "vision" or a birth of new architectural forms as organic extensions of the historic Tuscan buildings. Like the *Connector Body Architecture* works climbing the city gates, they symbolize the human biological chain, ever evolving into infinite forms. Both elements of Lucy+Jorge Orta's project become one, reconnecting private thoughts and aspirations with public institutional space that relates to both the community structure and a futuristic vision for the architecture of Buonconvento.

1. James Putnam, "The Shape of the Clouds and the Shape of Space and Time," in *Arte all'arte. La forma delle nuvole. Arte, architettura, paesaggio*, eds. James Putnam, Achille Bonito Oliva, and Mario Cristiani (Pistoia: Gli Ori, 2004).



Connector Body Architecture - Buonconvento, 2004







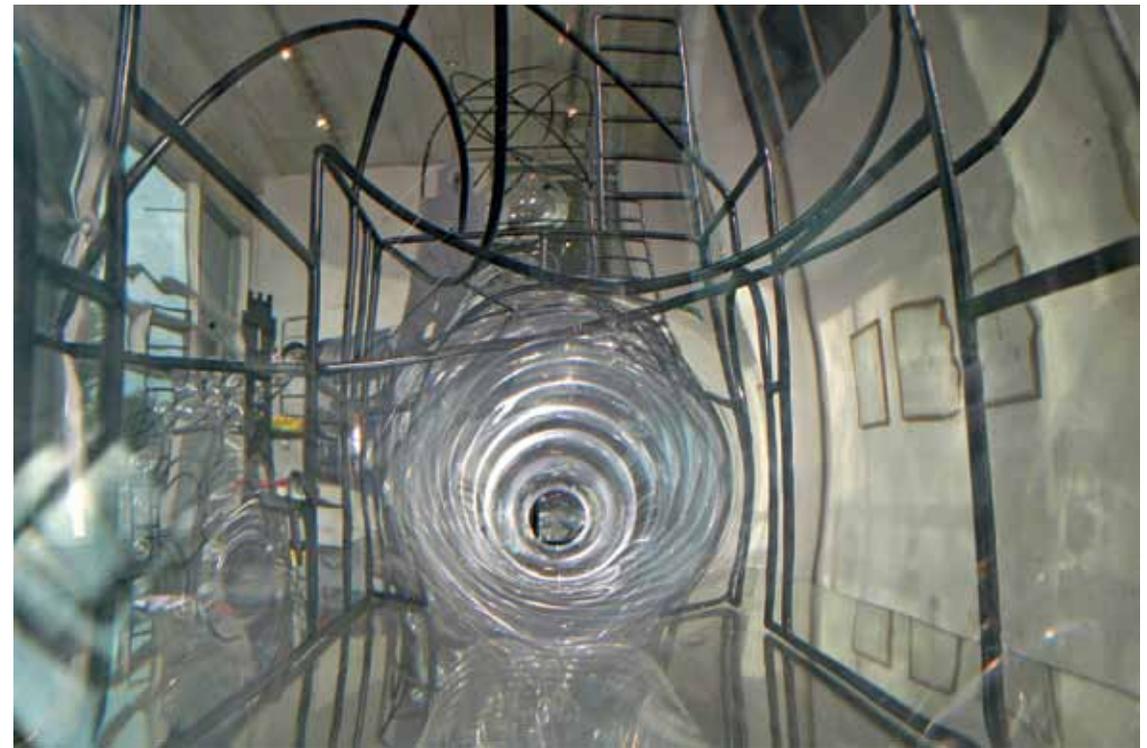




Totipotent Architecture - In Vitro, 2004



Totipotent Architecture - Tuscany, 2004
Installation in the Center for Contemporary Visual Arts, Brighton



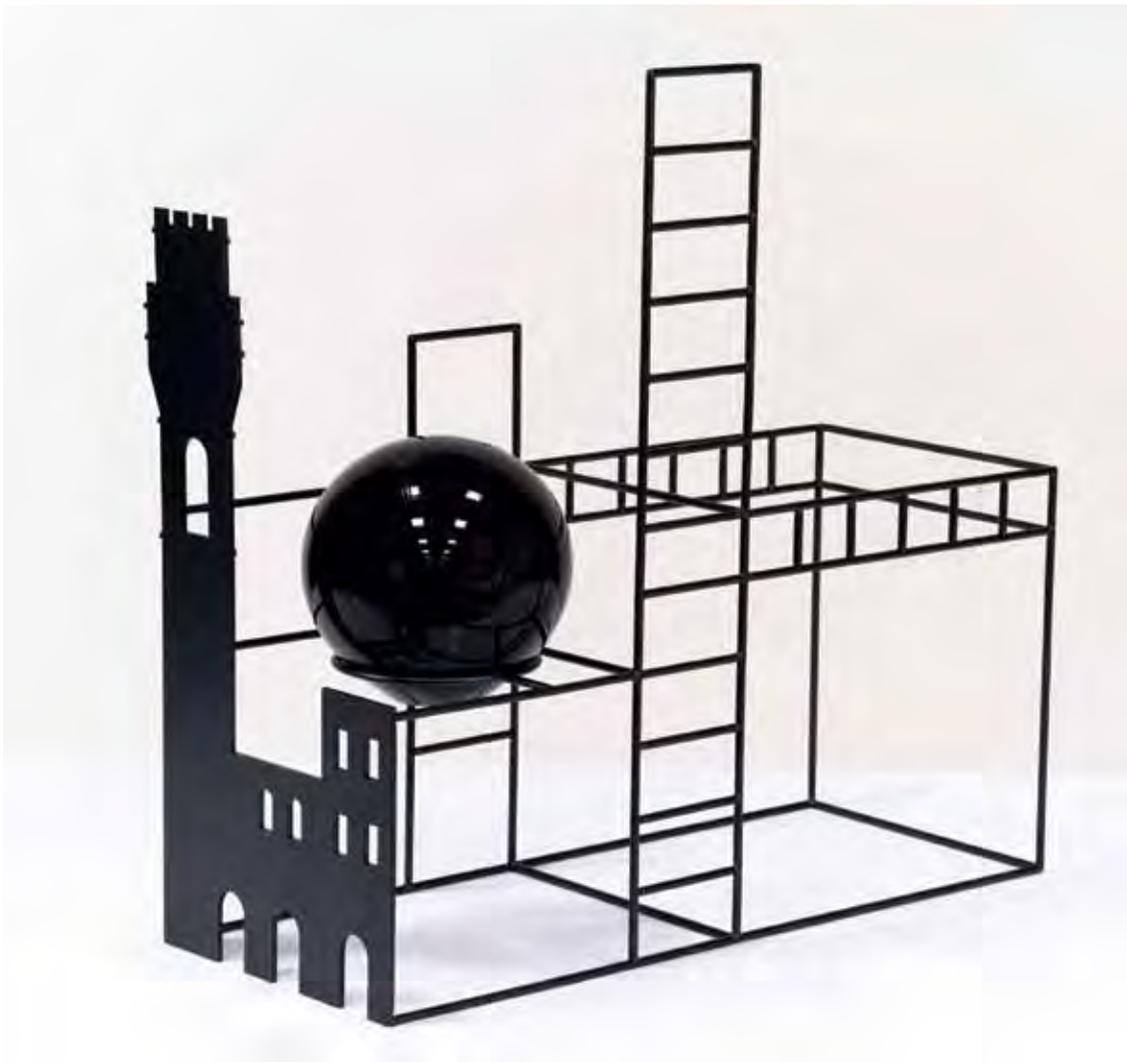
Totipotent Architecture - Tuscany (study), 2004



(left & right)
Totipotent Architecture - Tuscany (study), 2004

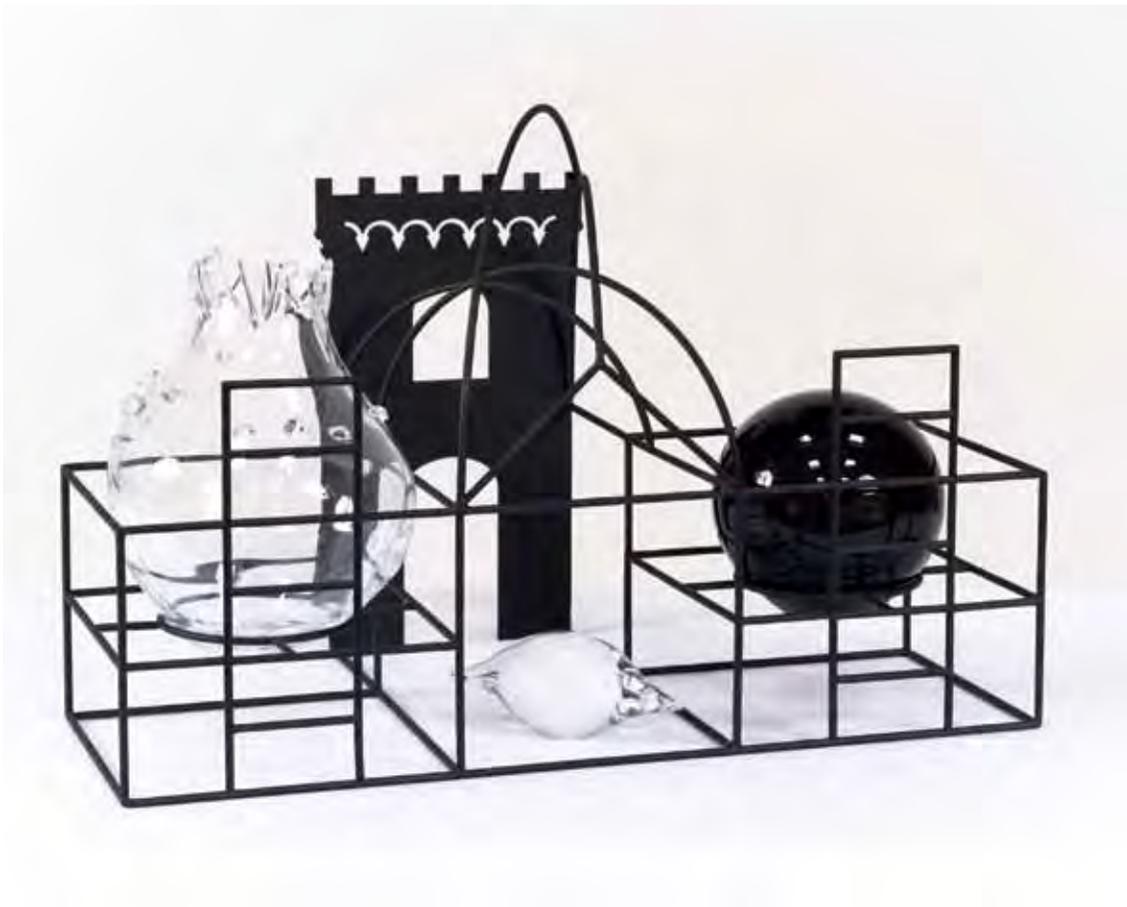


(left & right)
Totipotent Architecture - Tuscany (study), 2004



(left)
Totipotent Architecture - Tuscany (study), 2004-08

(right)
Totipotent Architecture - Tuscany (study), 2004



(left & right)
Totipotent Architecture - Tuscany (study), 2004-08



Totipotent Architecture - Tower of Dreams, 2004

