

PROJECT  
**Play-Ground**  
2021

**Gianluca Malgeri**

in collaboration with  
Arina Endo



Copenhagen, 2006



New Delhi, 2013



New Delhi, 2013



New Delhi, 2013



Tokyo, 2016



Tokyo, 2016



Tokyo, 2018



**Untitled - India, 2013**  
photographic print  
50 x 70 cm



**Paese dei balocchi No. 2, 2014**  
copper, soldering  
33 x 28 x 52 cm



**Paese dei balocchi No. 3, 2014**  
copper, soldering  
38 x 38 x 58 cm



**Untitled, 2020**  
copper, solder  
35 x 35 x 75cm



**Untitled, 2020**  
copper, solder  
30 x 30 x 67cm

## Edge of Chaos (Expelled from Paradise)

Curated by  
Vita Zaman and Nicola Vassel

May 5 – June 29, 2015  
Casa Donati, Venice

On the occasion of the 56th Biennale di Venezia, Vita Zaman and Nicola Vassel are pleased to present, Edge of Chaos (Expelled from Paradise), an exhibition featuring works by LaToya Ruby Frazier, Gianluca Malgeri and Audra Vau.

“Edge of Chaos” explores these artists’ creative responses to global tumult using the framework of feminism and ecology. As chaos reigns from climate change to political and economic volatility, there is an increasing parallel between patriarchy, social injustice and the degradation of nature. Seeing all life as valuable, the three artists share an outlook that celebrates the earth as sacred and acknowledge our interdependence upon the natural world.

Ecofeminism and sustainability form the exhibition’s foundation. It links theory and activism, viewing the oppression of women and pillage of the earth as intrinsically related. Saluting women’s interconnectivity with the earth, ecofeminism challenges capitalistic domination of one subject over another as a means of optimizing wealthbased power and extracting finite resources without reciprocity (e.g. man over woman, culture over nature, racism that extends to specieism).

The cosmic thread for the exhibit is found in Edge of Chaos theory, which explores the dynamics of criticality. It locates the point between order and chaos that sits a fraction away

from bedlam but does not actually cross the annihilative threshold. When an ecosystem is poised at criticality, the trick is to harness the power of small agitations that occur immediately before ruin to alter the composition of the system without completely decimating it. In a sense, criticality could be a superlative evolutionary fix for dominions that need to balance resilience with adaptability.

Recognizing and repurposing the ripples of criticality, while utilizing traditionally female values like parity, nurturing and cooperation can bring new wisdom.

In the exhibition, LaToya Ruby Frazier presents an autobiographical and highly personal video, which documents illnesses that she and her mother suffer caused by the systematic industrial pollution of their Pennsylvania town. The sculpture of Gianluca Malgeri resemble utopian architectural models, and are based on his investigation of the Lithuanian symbolist painter/composer, Mykalojus Konstantinas Ciurlionis whose work bears the elegy of nature and principle of synesthesia. Audra Vau’s video and photographic series examine her intimate relationship with a local, post-agricultural Lithuanian landscape in which the strain between a community’s natural resources and its reliant inhabitants is palpable.





**Ciurlionis**, 2015  
copper, soldering  
125 x 80 x 80 cm



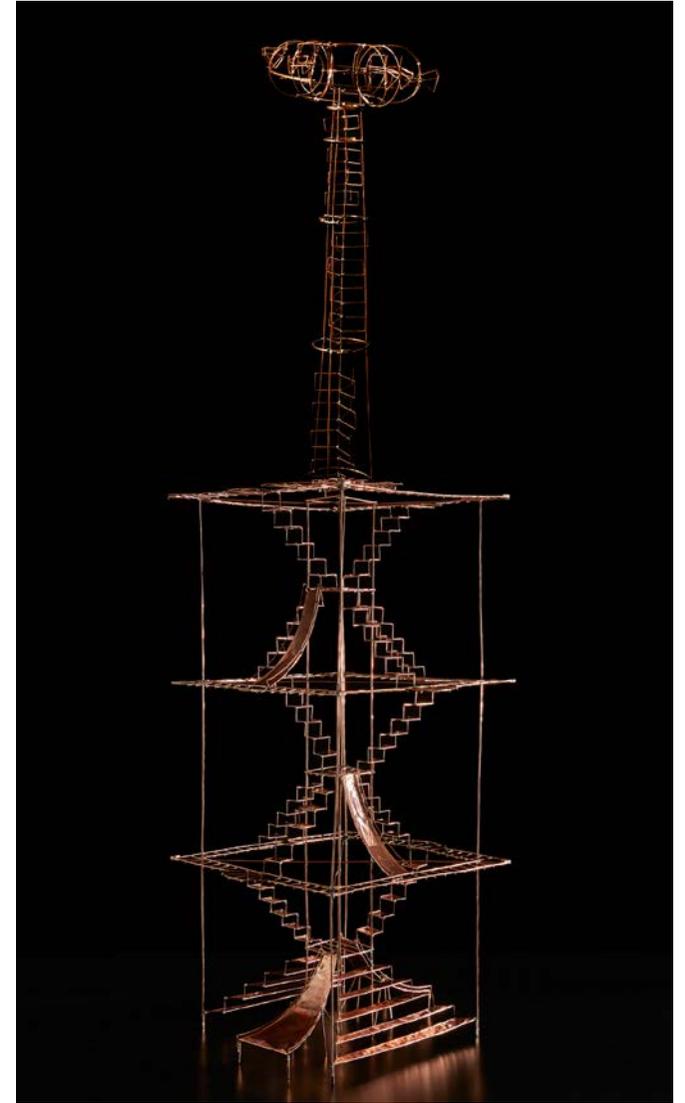
**Expelled from Paradise #11**, 2015  
copper, soldering  
70 x 20 x 20 cm



**Expelled from Paradise #4**, 2015  
copper, soldering  
122 x 32 x 32 cm



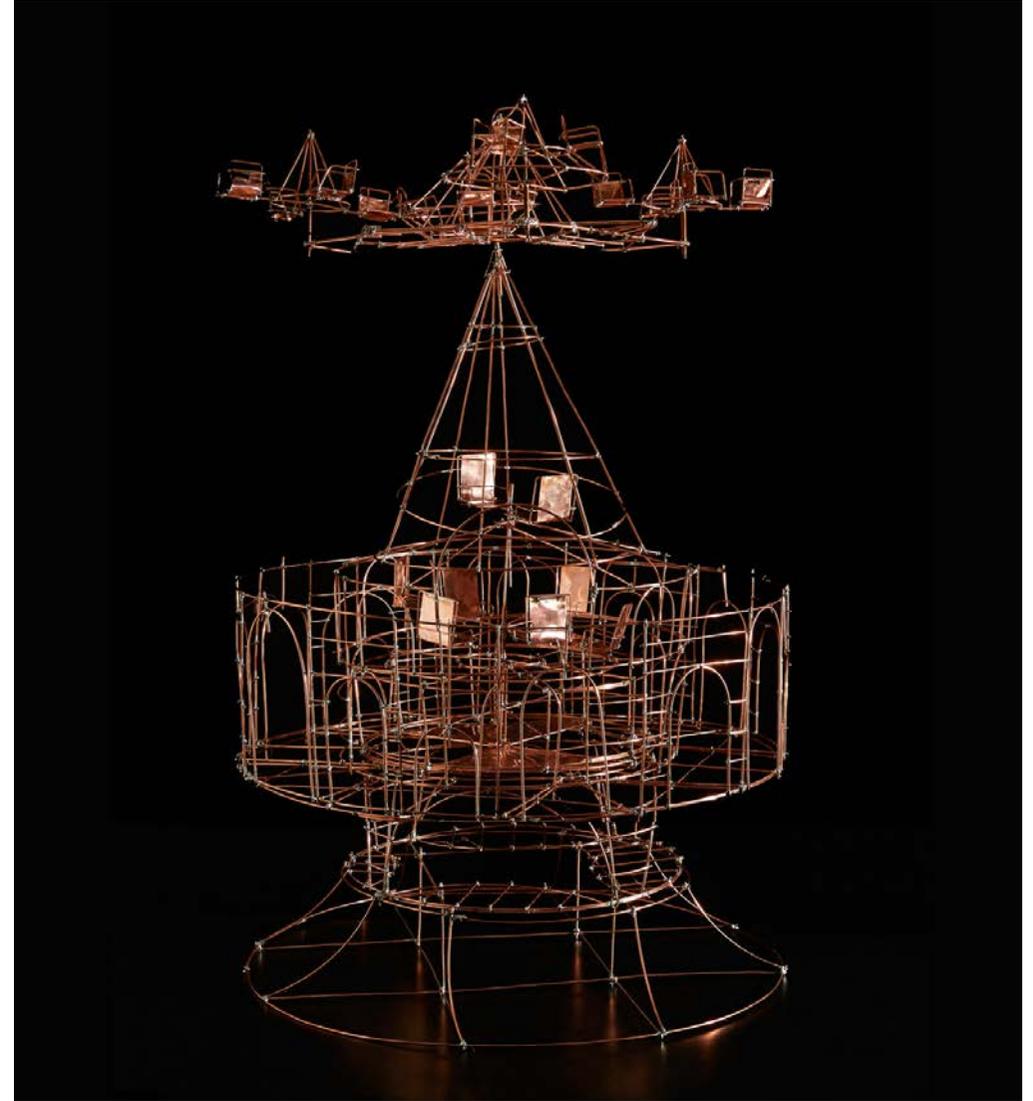
**Expelled from Paradise #8**, 2015  
copper, soldering  
258 x 70 x 70 cm



**Expelled from Paradise #3**, 2015  
copper, soldering  
230 x 60 x 60 cm



**Expelled from Paradise #5**, 2015  
copper, soldering  
160 x 25 x 100 cm



**Expelled from Paradise #10**, 2015  
copper, soldering  
125 x 80 x 80 cm

# DER TAGESSPIEGEL MEHR BERLIN

VIER SEITEN KUNST, POLITIK UND STADTGEFÜHL

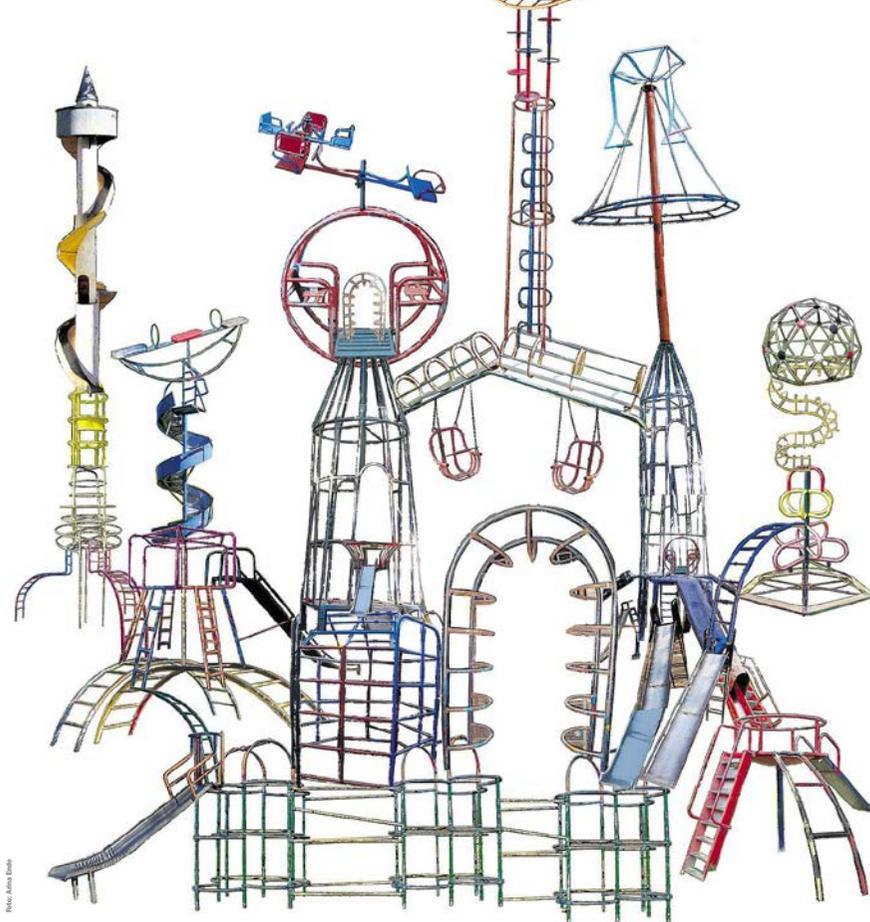


Foto: Arina Endo

## DIE KUNST

**Im Spiele-Land.** Vor zwei Jahren stieß Gianluca Malgeri bei einer Indienreise auf Spielplätze, deren Gerätschaften in Deutschland kein TÜV durchgehen lassen würde. Der Bildhauer war begeistert, fotografierte sie und nahm sie auf in sein künstlerisches Repertoire. Wieder in Berlin, wo er seit 2004 lebt, begann er die Klettergerüste, Rutschen und Schaukeln in miniature aus Kupfer nachzubauen und zu kombinieren – bis überwältigende Architekturen entstanden. Die Technik hat er im Atelier von Olafur Eliasson gelernt, für den er bis 2008 als Assistent tätig war. Der Frei-Otto-Schüler und Architekt Einar Thorstein brachte sie ihm dort bei. Das Ergebnis ist eine Spielplatz-Stadt, eine Città dei Babocchi, wie sie in Carmelo Bene's Darstellung des „Pinocchio“ vorkommt. Für Malgeri hat Berlin den Charakter einer solchen Stadt der Träume für Künstler – mit der Gefahr, nicht zu erwachen. Wir zeigen eine Collage der in Indien fotografierten Elemente.

## DER KÜNSTLER



**Gianluca Malgeri, 41.** Führte der Zufall nach Berlin, die Einladung zu einer Ausstellungsteilnahme – und er blieb. Hier findet der aus Kalifornien stammende Bildhauer, der in Florenz und Venedig Kunst studiert hat, das Material für seine Installationen und Skulpturen. Für eine Ausstellung in der italienischen Botschaft baute er aus Zweigen des Tiergartens Gavelle nach, die an Dalí'ses Verwandelung aus Ovids „Metamorphosen“ erinnern sollten. Aus abgerissenen Kiehläden konstruiert der Künstler zauberische, von innen leuchtende Skulpturen. Oder er setzt als fortlaufendes Projekt Glasummeln in Eierschalenlöcher ein, die sich noch aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg an Häuserfassaden befinden. Malgeri bezeichnet sich selbst scherzhaft als „Pseudo-Archäologe“, entsprechend gehört das Pergamonmuseum zu seinen Lieblingsmuseen in der Stadt.

NK

**Land of toys, 2015**  
– Cultural supplement  
of the Der Tagesspiegel  
(15 August 2015)

# Homo Ludens

November 20, 2015 – January 30, 2016  
Magazzino d'Arte Moderna, Rome

Magazzino is pleased to present an exhibition project resulting from the collaboration between Japanese artist Arina Endo (1983, lives and works between Florence and Berlin) and Gianluca Malgeri (1974, lives and works between Florence and Berlin). For his third solo show at the gallery, Malgeri invited Endo to think of a project together. The collaboration between the two artists started in 2015 in the occasion of the exhibition *Edge of Chaos*, where Endo and Malgeri presented for the first time the series of sculptures *Expelled from Paradise*, inspired by the 'Land of Toys' in the tale of Pinocchio. This collaboration continues with *Homo Ludens*, an exhibition inspired by Carmelo Bene's reinterpretation of Pinocchio, and his metaphor of the "heroic refusal of growing up".

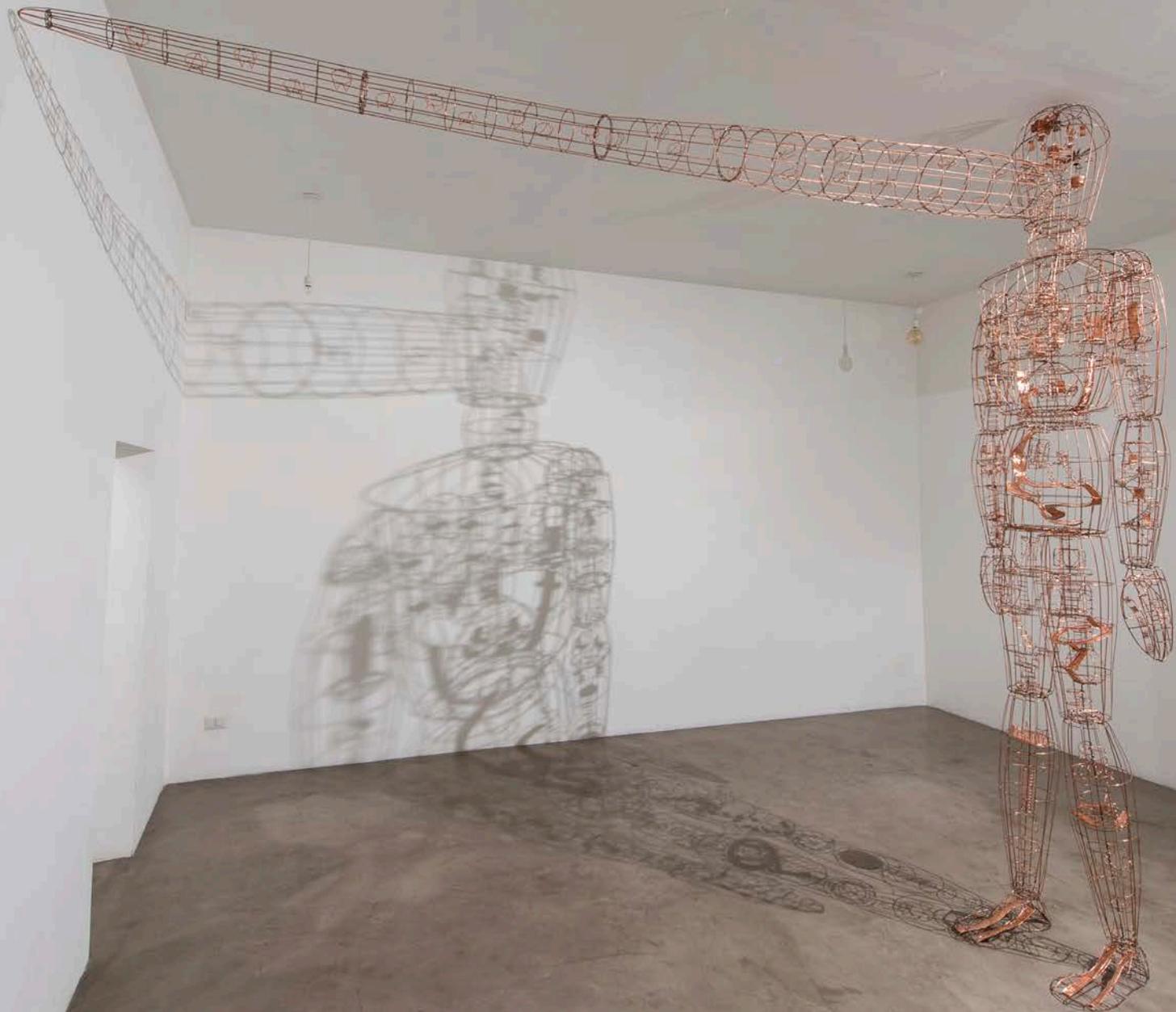
The artists' fascination for the concept of 'Land of Toys' begins from the observation of the city of Berlin, where they both live, and from the consideration and perception of the city as a place where one can lose a sense of adulthood, renounce all conscience and given rule. This vision is obviously misleading and utopic, as the 'Land of Toys' can only be an imaginary place. The series *Expelled from Paradise* is the development of this very concept and investigates play in both material and metaphoric terms.

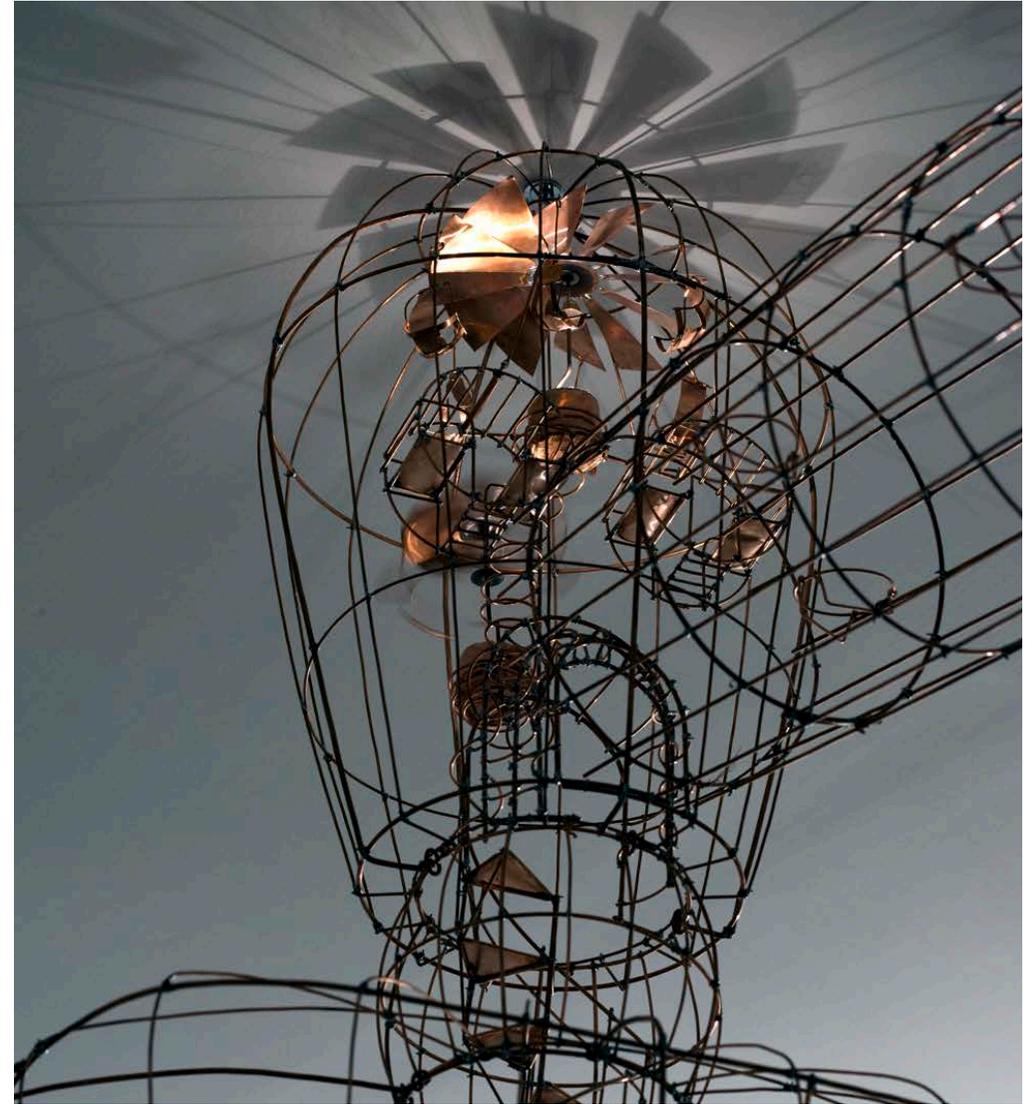
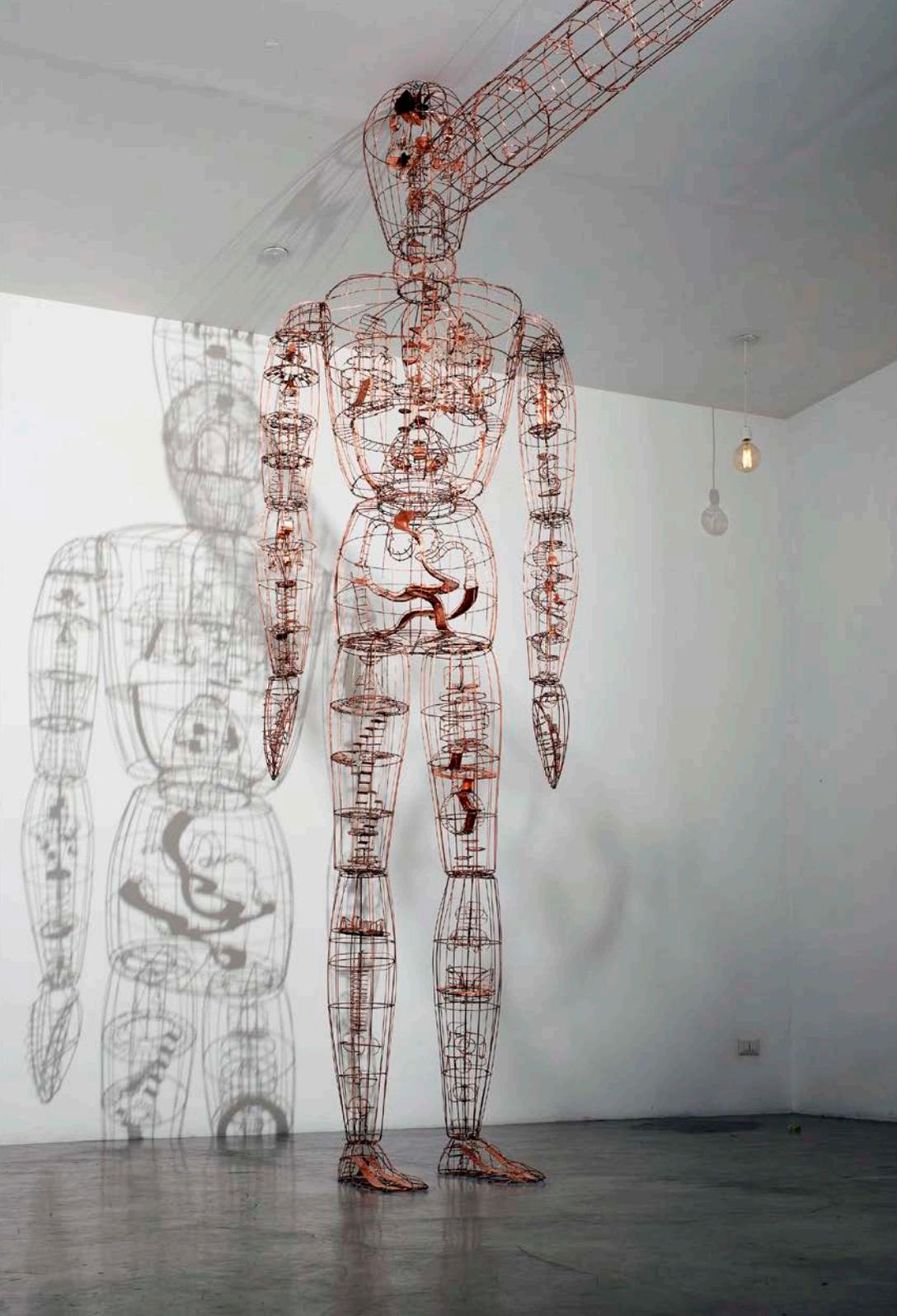
The title of the exhibition, *Homo Ludens*, quotes a pivotal essay by Huizinga, where the author defines play as the fundamental and necessary base of social organisation and

civilisation. Through play, also common to animals, mankind shifts from his natural and instinctive phase to a cultural one.

The tale of Pinocchio demonstrates this shift and the contrast between the acknowledgment and acceptance of the given rule (that belongs to growing up into an adult conscience), and "the great childhood dream, of rebellion and escape" (Manganelli). Abiding social rules is the key to Pinocchio's transformation into a good boy; "the disappearance of the nose is the moment of his surrender to obedience" (Bene).

The two artists' vision is at the same time grand and intimate: a metaphor for innocence set aside in the imposed pursuit of adaptation to social convention, and at the same time, the refusal of the adult condition, the "senseless, civilised and brutal growing up" (Bene). In what he defines as the "Pinocchio situation", Carmelo Bene warns us not to 'give in' to adulthood. This notion translates in Malgeri and Endo's work, into a meticulous and articulate construction. Pinocchio appears like an enormous container of a fantastic city, a toy puppet, almost a monument to innocence, to irreverence and to the intrinsic anarchy of the creative act.

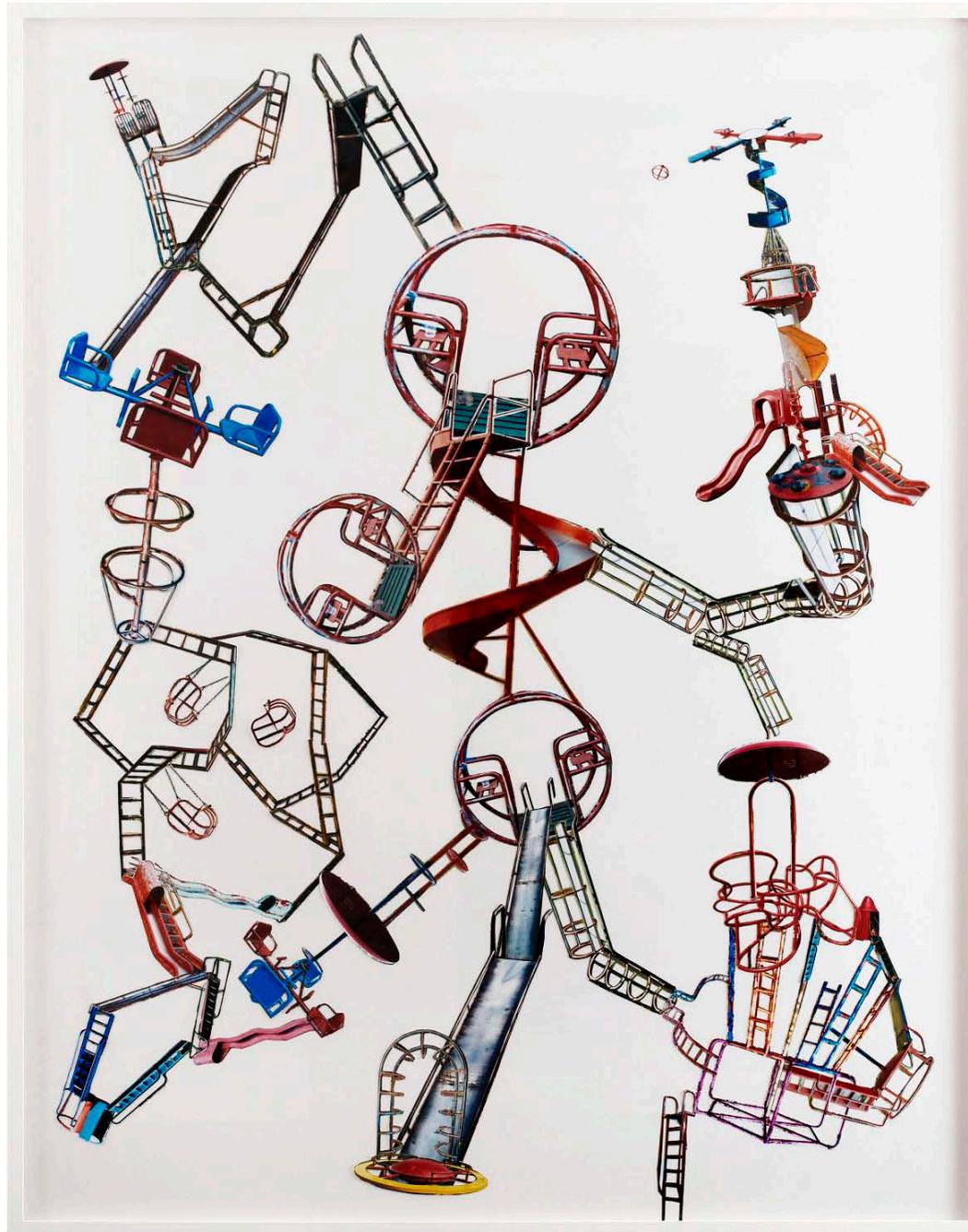




**Senza Nome**, 2015  
copper, soldering  
347 x 100 x 300 cm



Arina Endo  
**Municipio sul Miraggio**, 2015  
wood, sand, terracotta  
28 x 28 x 10 cm



**Sogno del Sonnambulo**, 2015  
collage on paper  
158 x 128 cm

## Mery-Go-Round

Text by  
Lindsay Webb

March 23 – April 21, 2019  
AYUMI GALLERY CAVE, Tokyo

Mery-Go-Round is a playful collection of collages and delicate copper sculptures by Gianluca Malgeri and Arina Endo. It imagines a multiplicative landscape of outmoded playground equipment, reconfigured into a series of prototypical, self-questioning artworks. The artists are Italian and Japanese respectively, and the approach they have chosen exposes both the ethical and idealistic dimensions of cross-cultural collaboration. That they converge on the subject of playgrounds offers the chance to overlay notions of social conditioning with those of a shared, non-cultural a priori.

The works on exhibition follow, quite directly, a line of enquiry from these artists' previous joint exhibition *Homo Ludens* (Rome, 2016), whose title explicitly conjured the primary thematic of humans as creatures of play. The well-regarded treatise of the same name by Dutch theorist Johan Huizinga, first published in 1944, explores the idea of play as a primordial condition, one that precedes culture. Huizinga claims that, because play occurs in the animal world too, it pre-exists our 'humanity', and, moreover, that "human civilisation has added no essential feature to the general idea of play". Being free, temporary but borderless, self-regulating, possessed of its own flexible interior logics, and without material interest or ultimate goals, Huizinga argues that play can provide insight into the great question of purpose that plagues the secular world.

Huizinga's ideas have inspired thinkers and strategists working in fields as disparate as pedagogy, corporate strategy, and computer game design, just as they have consistently captivated artists. Significantly for Mery-Go-Round, the situationist Constant Nieuwenhuys takes up the *Homo Ludens* thesis in his opus *New Babylon*, an encyclopaedic body of work spanning paintings, drawings and quasi-architectural models created between 1959 and 1974. *New Babylon* posits a utopian totalising urbanism (covering the whole Earth) that rejects capitalist oppression of the working classes and embraces play, adventure and mobility. This new metropolitan condition is largely characterised by reconfigurable, multi-density structures wherein post-evolutionary citizens can roam, free to curate their own artistic life whilst at the same time affecting and creating the environment they occupy. It can be conceived as a perpetual play space, and on examining the models and drawings, it is hard to imagine that playground designers of the 1960s and 1970s did not derive inspiration from them.

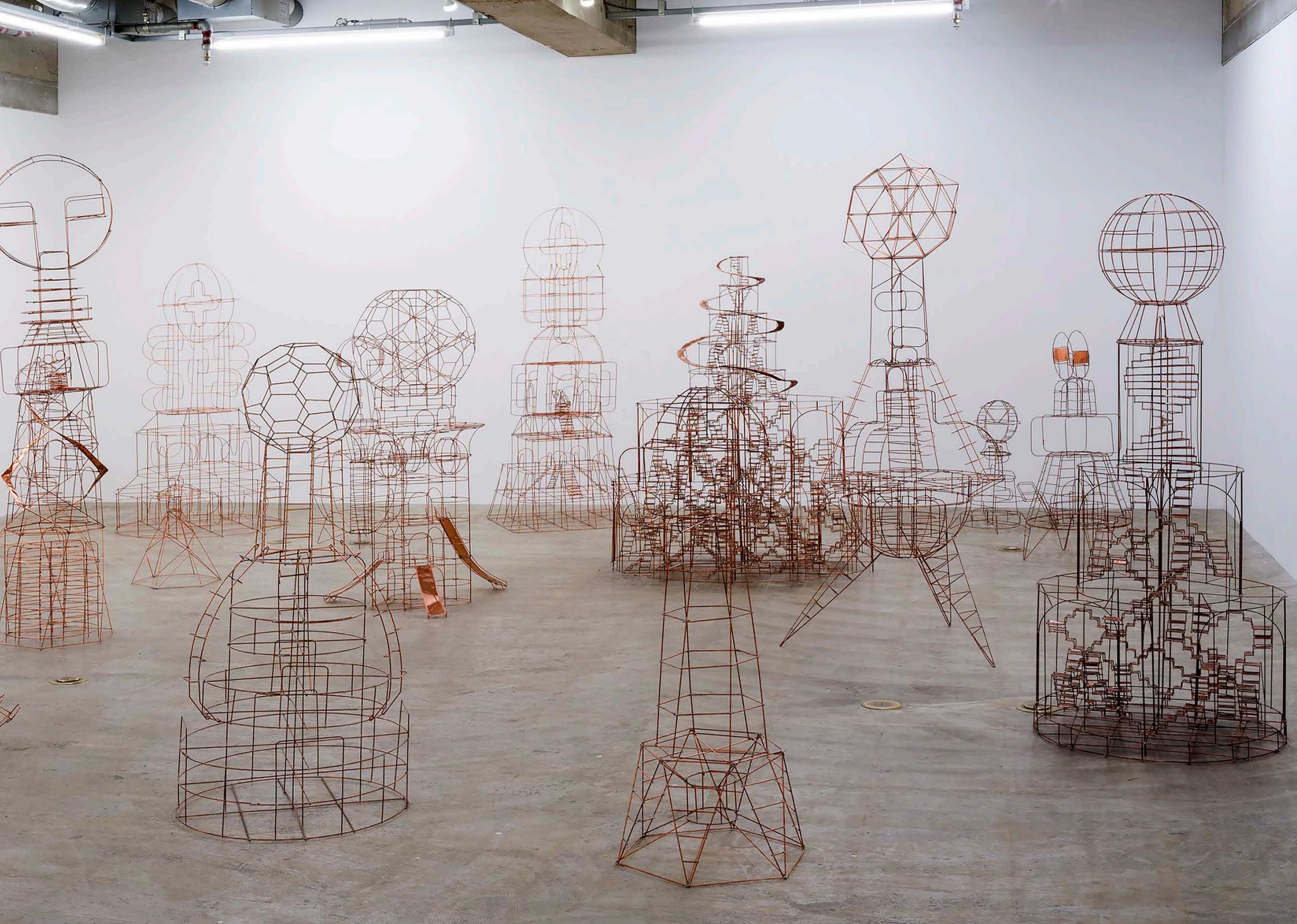
From today's perspective, *New Babylon* was remarkably prophetic. Its promise of a post-industrial, interconnected society has on many levels been enacted. Arguably now everyone is a creator, an influencer, an artist of the self. A life is curated, photographed, filtered, edited, and then re-represented in one's own gallery. Within industrialised nations, there emerges a philosophy that work, the 'old' kind, exists only to support rather than to fundamentally dignify a life. But reality is less egalitarian than Constant imagined – the citizenry of con-

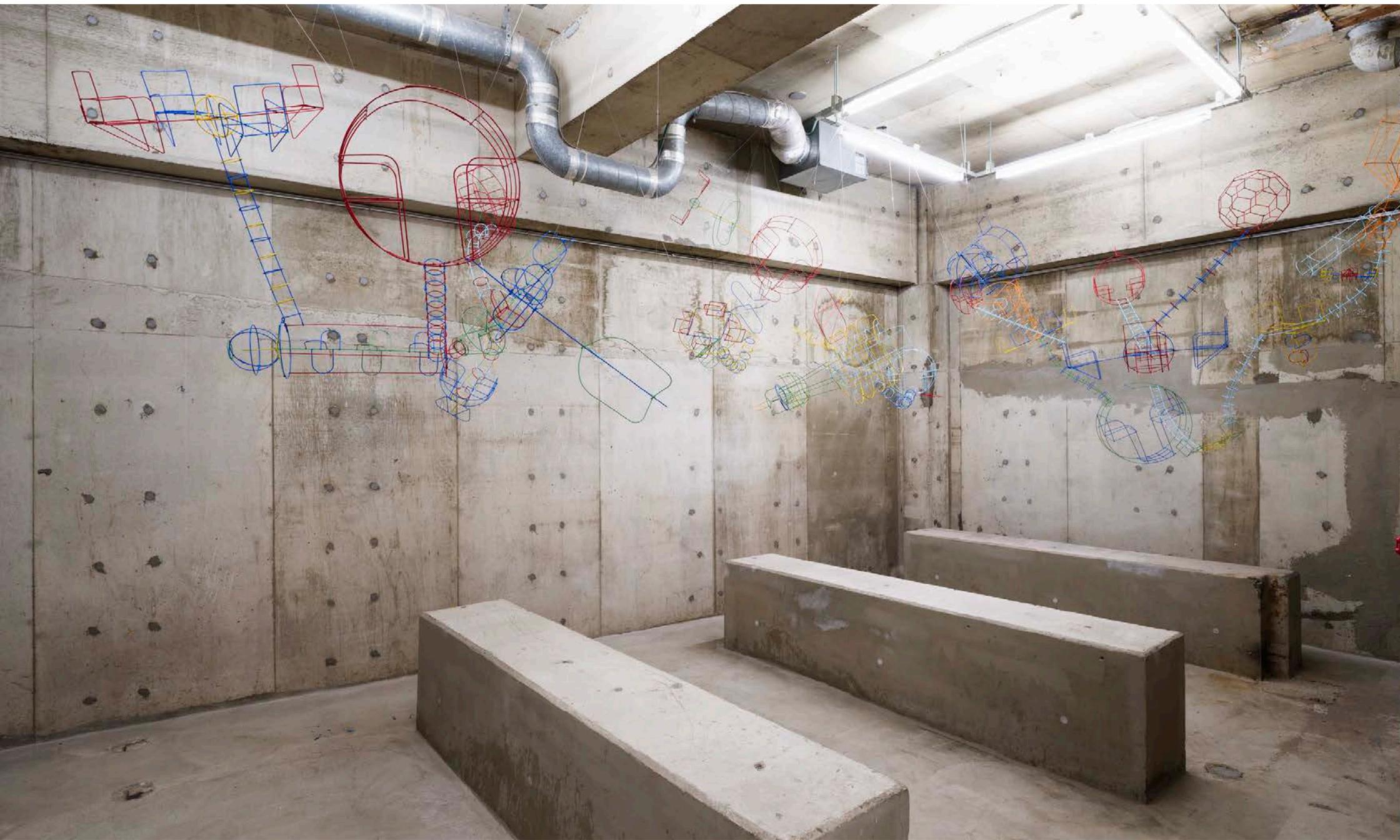
temporary society lack other kinds of autonomy and agency that he portrayed as integral to the self-actualised life. Hyper-surveillance, increasing disparity in resources and wealth, diminishing global tolerance, and locales of permanent war thwart what might be our new Babylon: utopia has broken apart. Mery-Go-Round picks up the pieces, asking “what have we left in the playground – and what is there to salvage?”

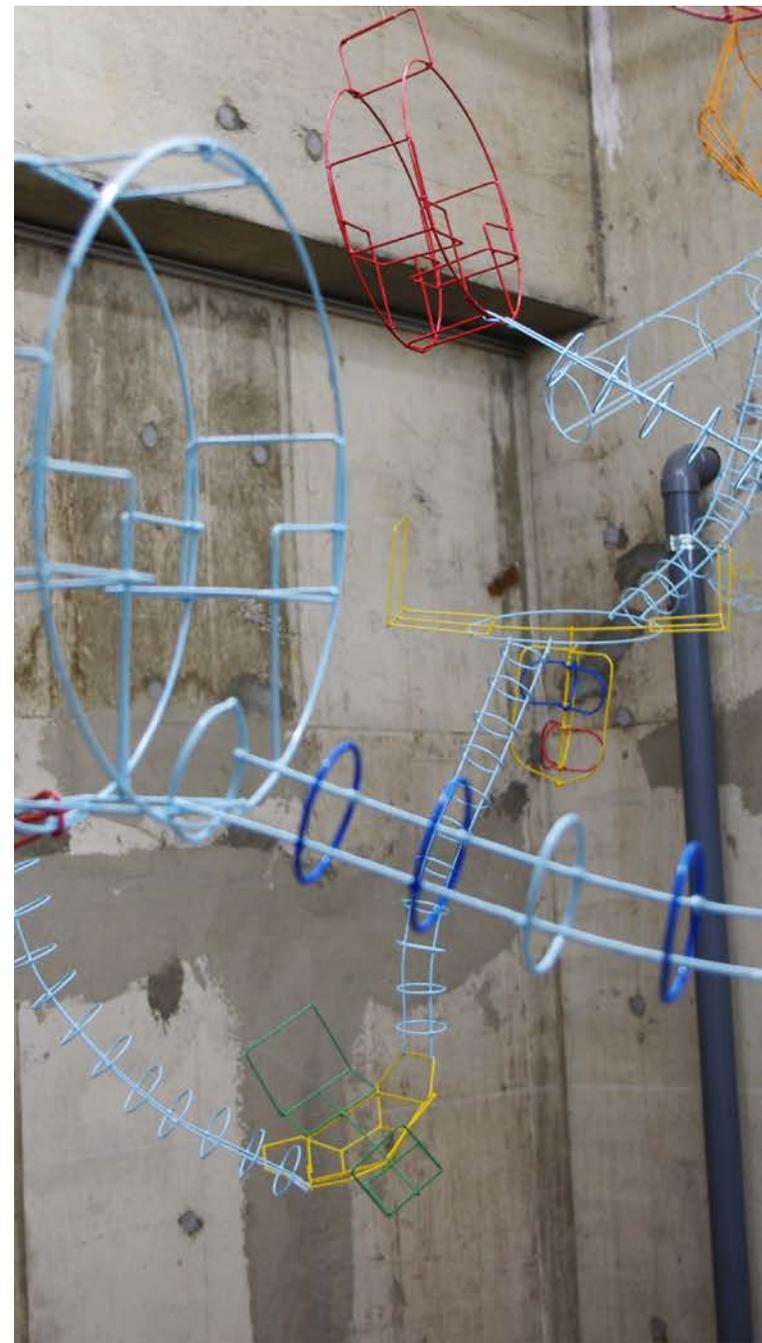
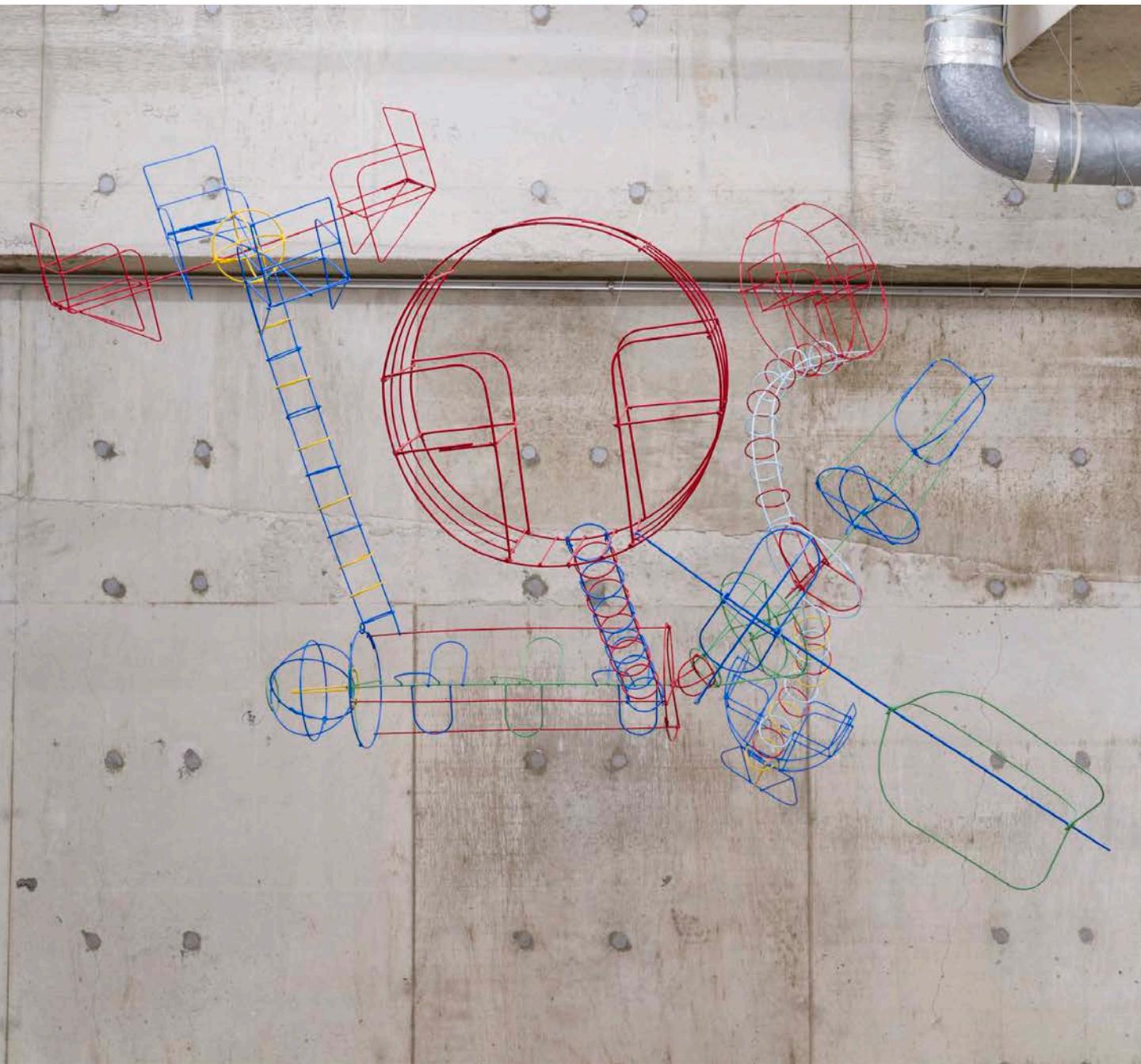
Salvage is a theme deliciously embraced in Mery-Go-Round. Drawings, collages, maquettes and sculptures unfold from the artists’ photo-documentation of playgrounds and playground equipment. Components from Japan, India and North America have been visually archived by the artists before being decommissioned at the rationalising hands of bureaucrats (who are perhaps the obstructive ‘grown-ups’ in Mery-Go-Round’s narrative). Then, plundering their own piecemeal resource, Malgeri and Endo combine the fragments in novel ways, reminding us that there are often more ways to construct one’s daily life than meet the eye, and that it is always possible to merge (pre)cultures, sparking new possibilities of relationship. Their synthesis of material play-structures brings us closer to an idea that we share a common root: in children from any culture, the mind is plastic and relatively unencumbered, existing in a fertile space of experimentation, vivid perception and candid interpretation. The collages in this exhibition, especially, express a childlike dynamism and instinctive action – perspectives warp, scales shift, and forms emerge then reform. This plasticity should be valued and maintained at

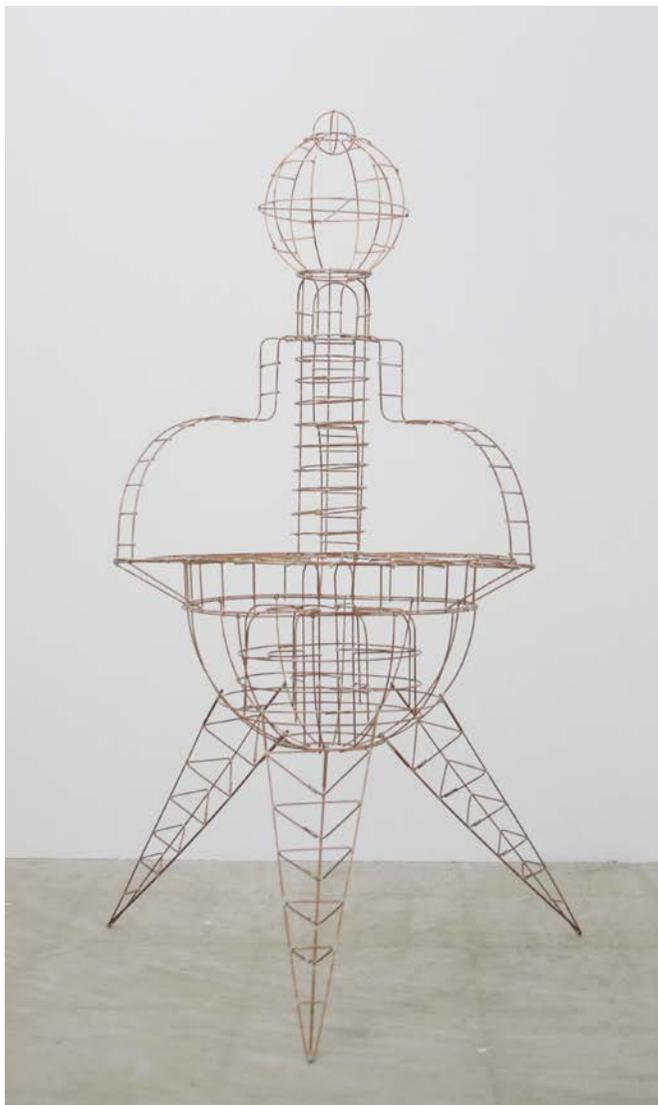
all costs; petrification is enemy to be resisted, the enemy of play.

The objectives that Malgeri and Endo identified in *Homo Ludens*, they now extend in Mery-Go-Round, addressing anew the ambition of *New Babylon* but on a more discreet and modest scale. Unlike *New Babylon*, Mery-Go-Round dispenses with the grandiose and with the conceit that one idea can structure the world. These are not mega-structures presuming to cover the planet, they are rather anthropomorphic, human-scale, relational structures that themselves seek to dodge and play. They are not waiting for the collapse of capitalism before getting on with the more important business of the playground. In this space, which is a mindset, we join with each other in schemes frivolous gravity; always a new scene is conceived, another figure is encountered, challenged, absorbed, discarded. Life is ‘just’ a game.









**Mery-Go-Round #2, 2019**  
copper, soldering  
65 x 65 x 119 cm



**Mery-Go-Round #3, 2019**  
copper, soldering  
61 x 61 x 146 cm



**Mery-Go-Round #7, 2019**  
copper, soldering  
60 x 60 x 122 cm



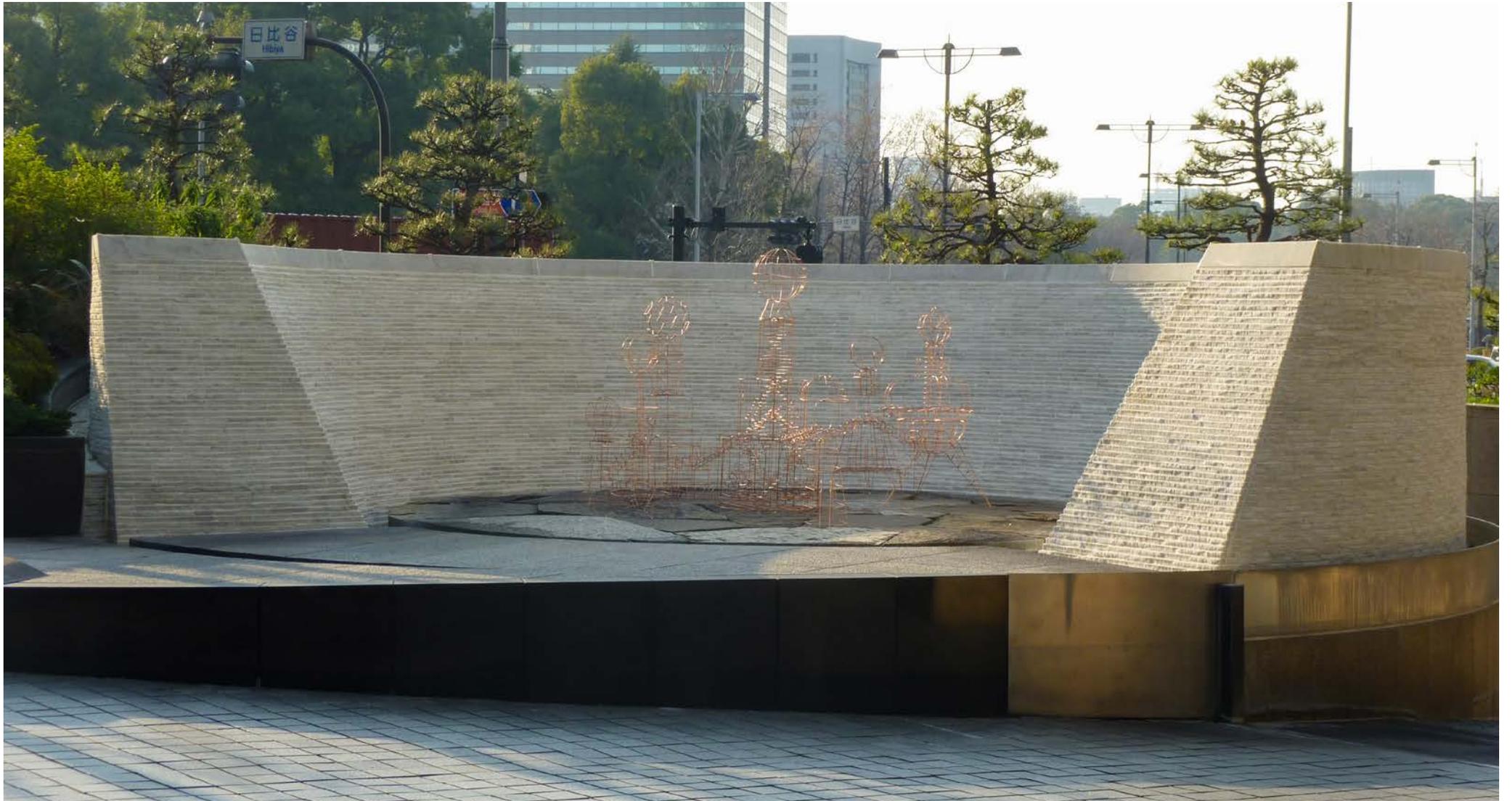
**Mery-Go-Round #9**, 2019  
copper, soldering  
41 x 41 x 98 cm



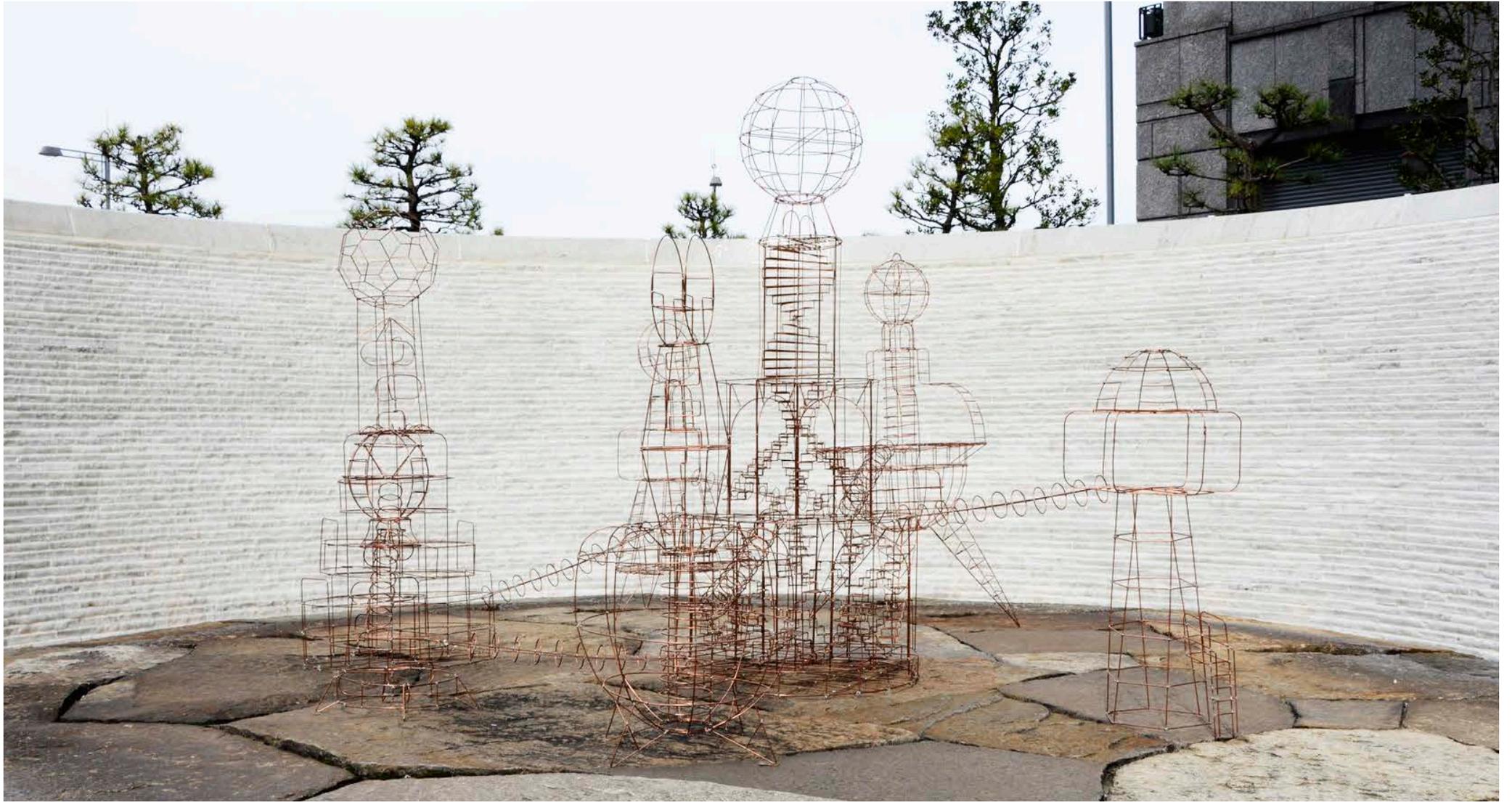
**Mery-Go-Round #11**, 2019  
copper, soldering  
40 x 40 x 98 cm



**Jellyfish**, 2019  
copper, soldering  
75 x 75 x 82 cm



Art Fair Tokyo 2019 at The Peninsula Hotel, Tokyo



Art Fair Tokyo 2019 at The Peninsula Hotel, Tokyo

## The curious positive machines of Hermès' Japanese shop windows

Designed by artist and designer Gianluca Malgeri, the new windows of Hermès stores in Japan are devices of well-being, thinking of communication as a desire to participate.



AUTHOR  
Marco Petroni  
PUBLISHED  
17 December 2020

Irony and beauty, in a pure Munari style, in the Japanese windows of Hermès. The desire of sharing is the core idea of the project *Taking an Airing* by Italian artist and designer Gianluca Malgeri for Hermès stores in Japan. Thanks to a fruitful collaboration with Arina Endo, Malgeri has given life to a small crowd of curious machines, able to release physical and mental pleasures, like practicing Yoga or unleashing one's singing talent in an open-air Karaoke.

These "wellness machines", made of wheels, pedals, propellers, antennas, transmitters and parables connected to each other, create a joint narrative between the different windows of the renowned luxury brand venues in Japan. The desire is to represent the joy of open-air sociality and the respect of the natural human pace, while at the same time, to emphasize the role of global media, that offered us support during the confinement caused by the pandemic.

Indeed, the project, was developed during the first lockdown, focusing the attention on the viewers of these colorful "theaters" that, aside from the influences of artists such as Bruno Munari, they also issue cross references Futurist artists like Fortunato Depero. The Passersby, the curious and the observers are absorbed by dream-like, suspended and colorful settings, where dynamism and reciprocal connections evoke a desire of a new vitality and positivity.

A project that Malgeri himself defines a "tribute to communication as a desire for participation". *Taking an Airing* shows a strong wish to revive a memory made up of inspirations and homages marked by a vocation to positive thinking, through a brilliant and equally thoughtful game.





## Viavài

Curated by  
Federica Sala

January – March 2021

A contemporary art show in vacant storefronts on Via della Spiga in Milan

The project has been realized with the collaboration of store owners on Via della Spiga in Milan.

The idea is to use the storefronts now empty due to the pandemic as exhibition spaces for art works and installations, so to transform the void into an opportunity for creativity while also communicating a message of artistic vitality.

VIA is a Milanese project. Not just because it is planned and curated by Milanese people, or because it starts on Via della Spiga - one of the most “Milanese” streets in the city - but above all because it epitomizes the ability of Milanese to roll up their sleeves during times of difficulty and draw on the creative resources the city has always relied upon.

The contemporary art show Viavài (“coming and going”) launches the project. It aims to be an outdoor exhibition for the city when many museums and galleries often remain closed. The works exhibited in the storefronts, which are not accessible to the public, are clearly visible from the street and described by vinyl captions placed on the windows – that are legible from a safe distance.

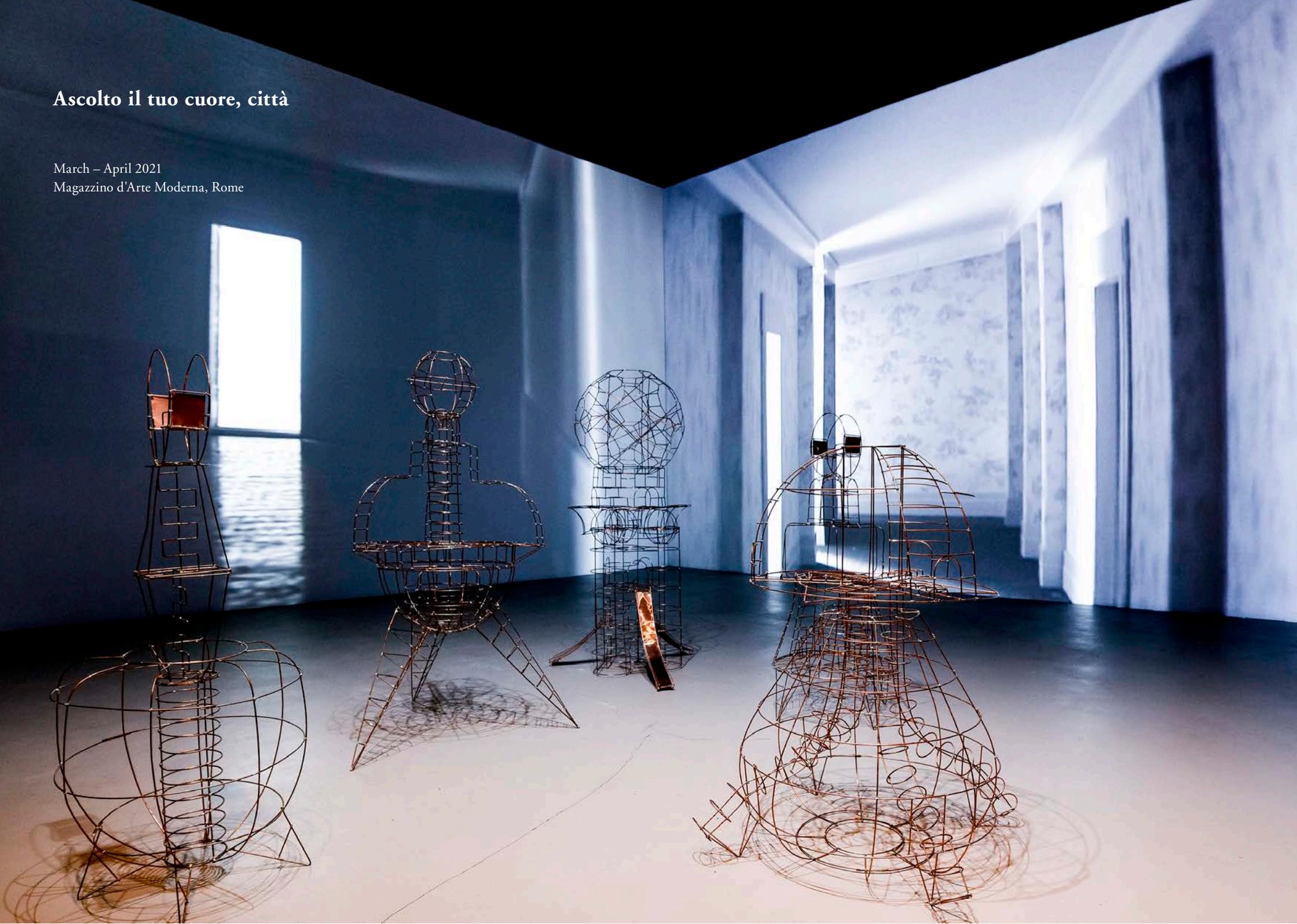
Transforming the road into an extended exhibition space, Viavài is a fluid exhibition format, both because the artworks are displayed in different shop windows and because it is constantly evolving.

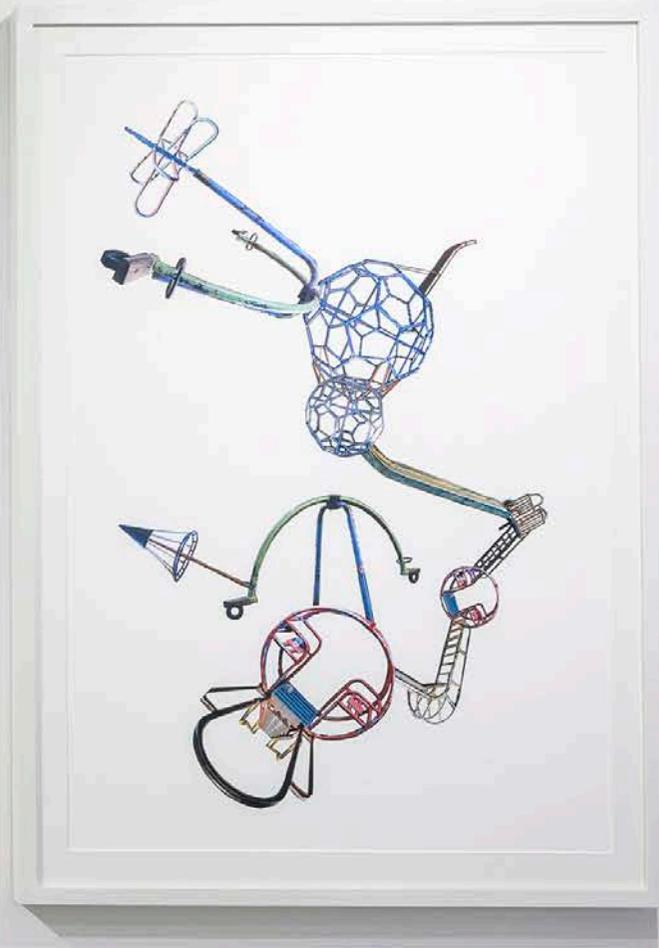
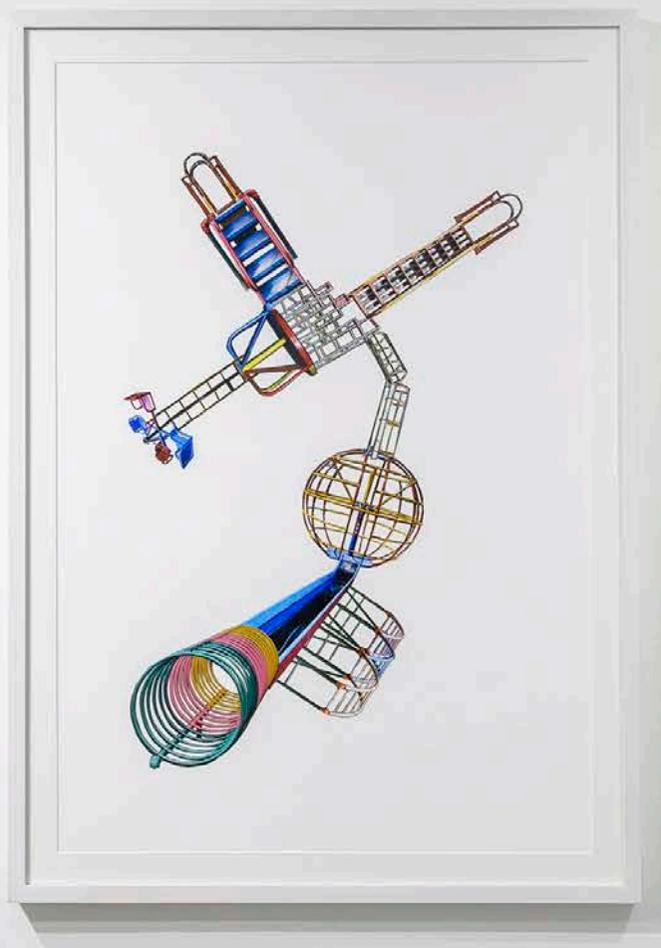
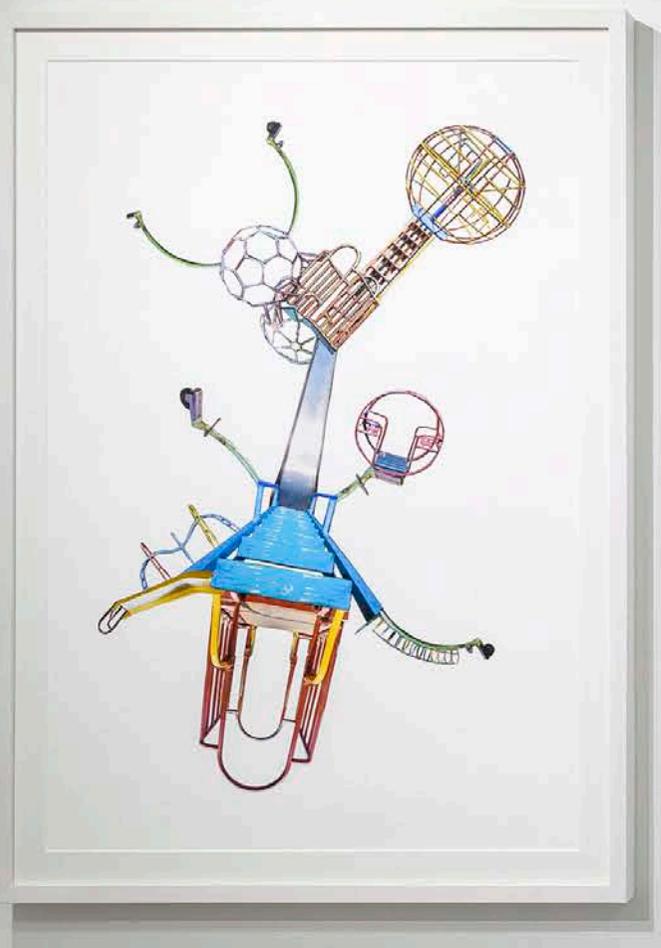


Photo © Valentina Angeloni

# Ascolto il tuo cuore, città

March – April 2021  
Magazzino d'Arte Moderna, Rome



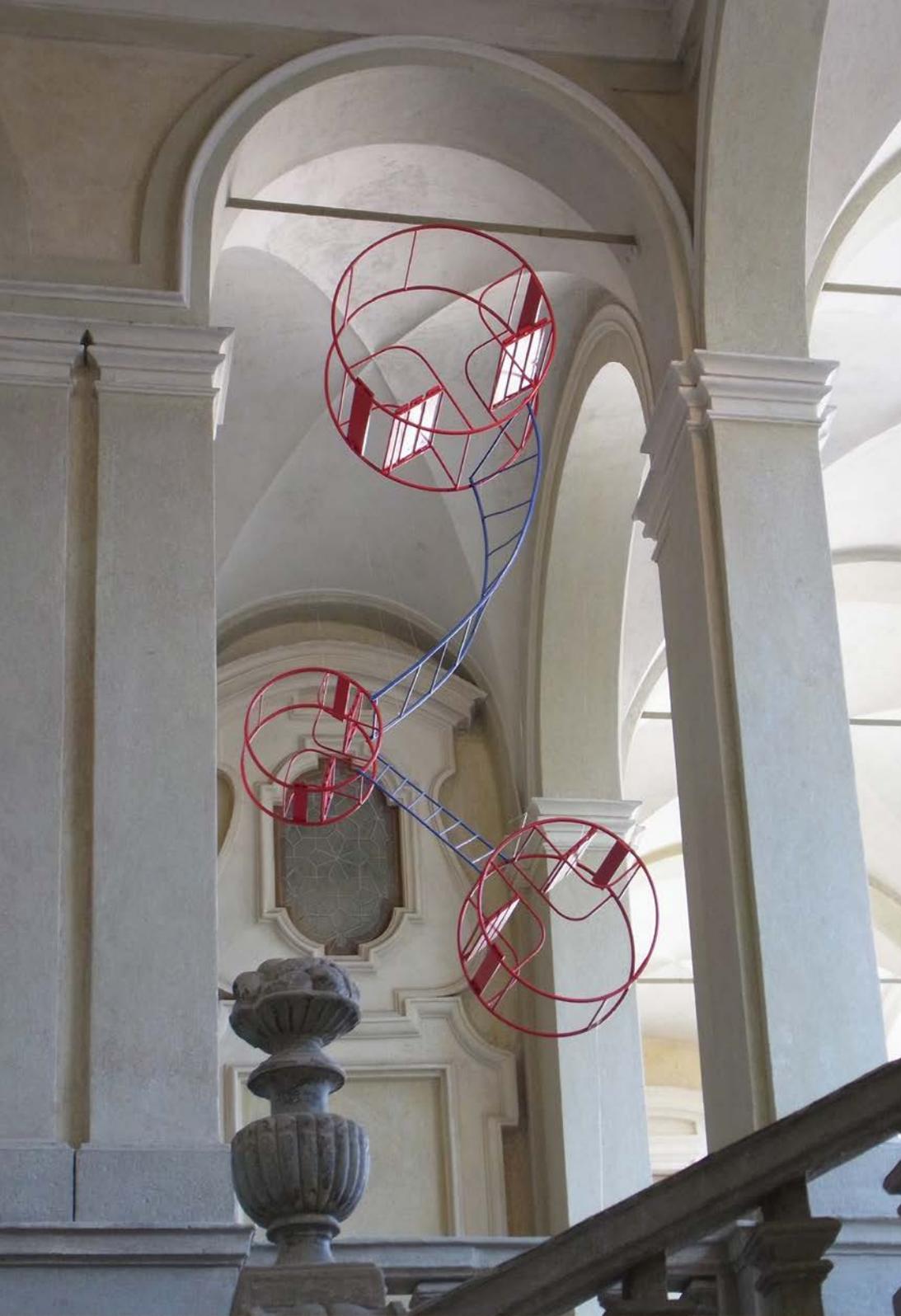


Jonas Dahlberg's videos *Untitled (Horizontal Sliding)* (2000) and *Untitled (Vertical Sliding)* (2001), feature empty interiors whose reality is both enigmatic and suggestive. The slow movement of the camera reveals one room after another, evoking archetypal spaces that look familiar and foreign at the same time. Light seeps from under closed doors, but there's no reason to think anyone's home, or rather, in their rooms. Appearances, of course, prove deceptive. Dahlberg's sets are architectural models, built to a circular plan, and filmed with a centrally positioned rotating camera. What seem to be tracking shots are really 360° pans, describing loci that inevitably read as nodes in a labyrinth—a subtly scary one, since its vertical and horizontal extension implies the impossibility of finding an external vantage point.

Gianluca Malgeri & Arina Endo's works, that include both collages and sculptures are part of their research about playgrounds that started in 2013. This attention led to an ample photographic documentation that was the starting point for a first series of collages that drafted the subsequent – and natural – shifting of the project to the third dimension through sculpture and maquettes, directly related to the images assembled in the collages. Whereas the first articulations of the project were related to more static and isolated structures, seen like impossible buildings or islands, through the years the works have shifted progressively to a more combinatorial and communicative dimension, where the single items can be easily identified as organic elements of a whole world.



**Untitled, 2019**  
collage  
112 x 76 cm



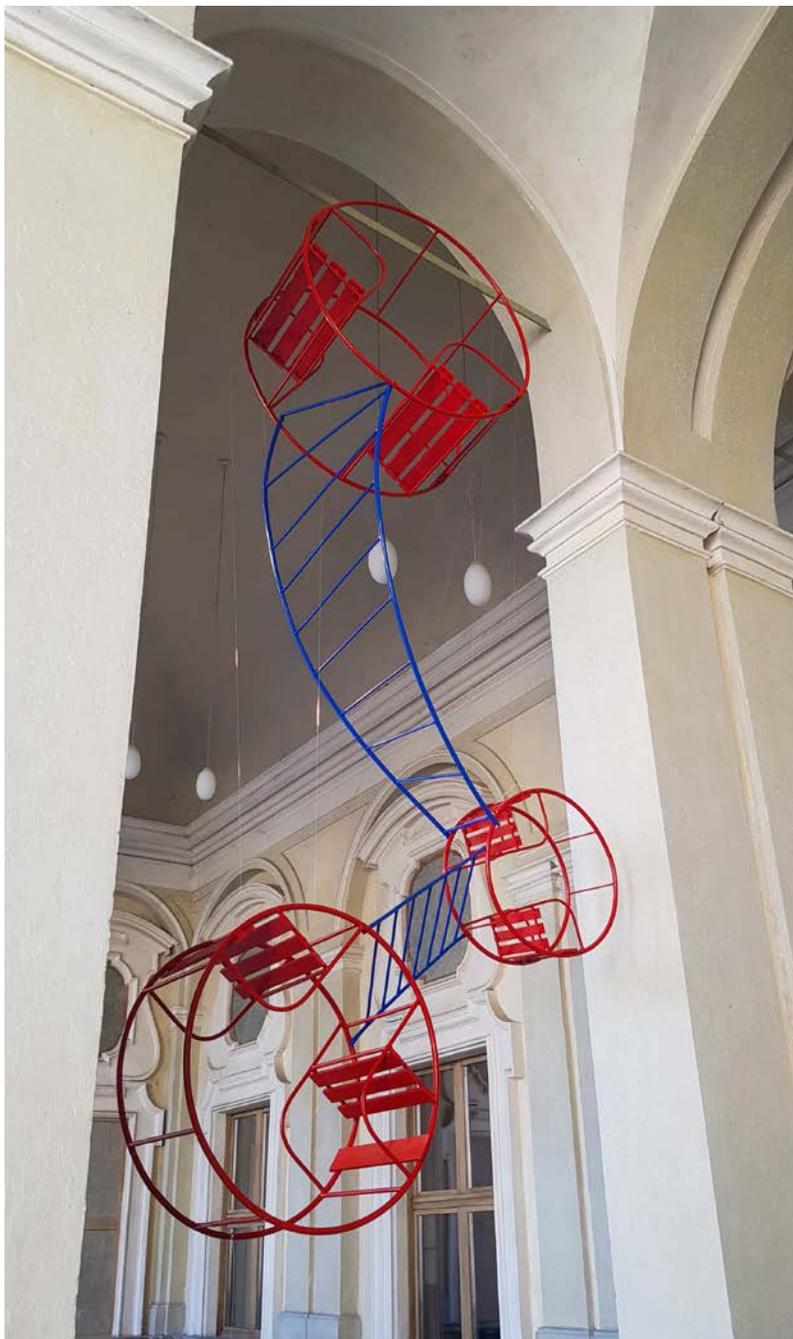
## Orizzonti del corpo

Curated by  
Marina Dacci

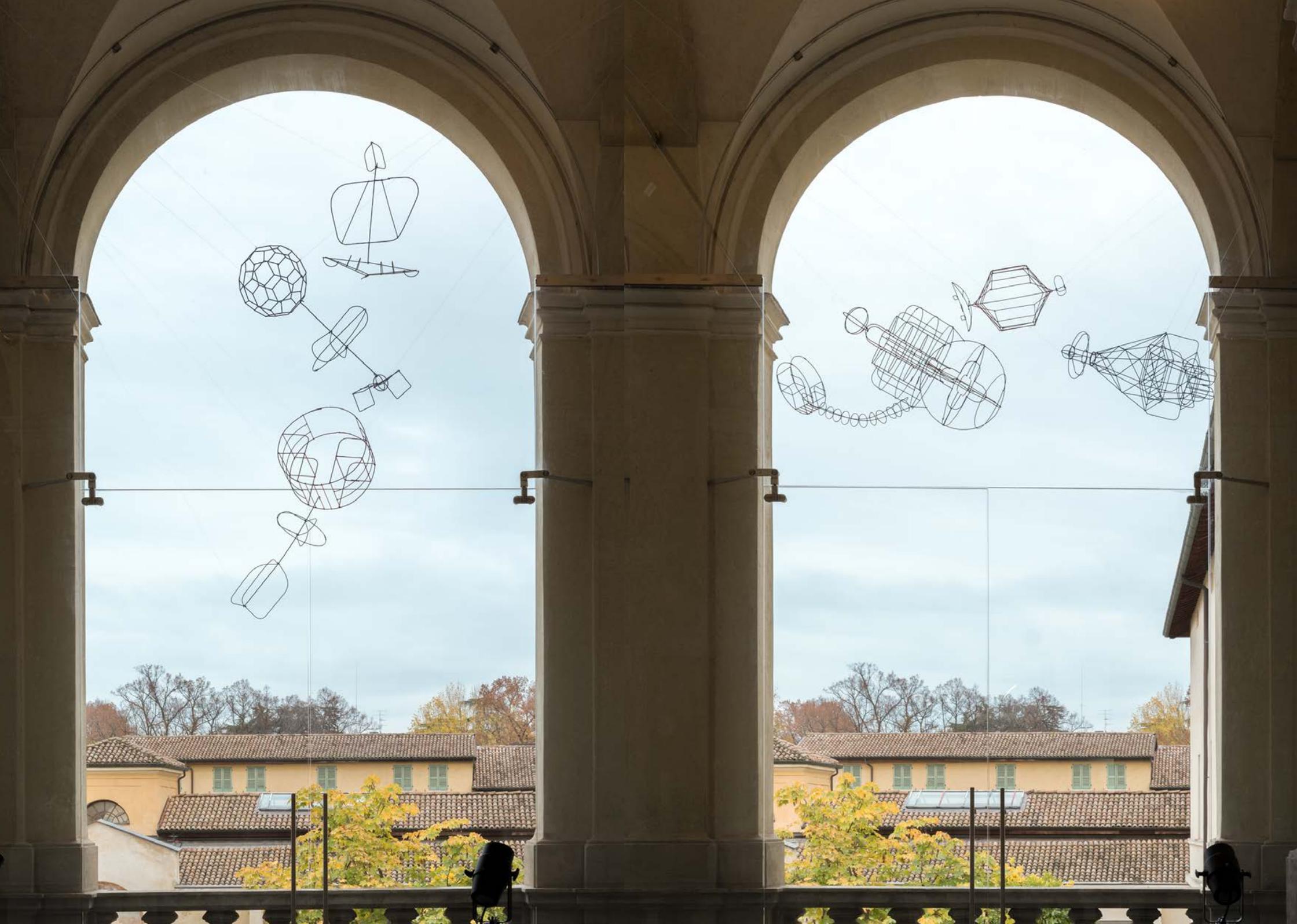
November 2021 – January 2022  
Palazzo da Mosto, Reggio Emilia

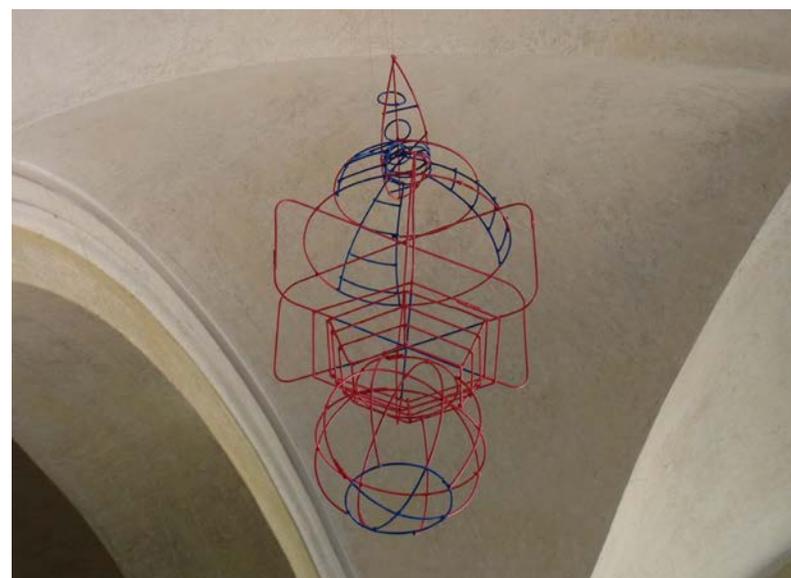
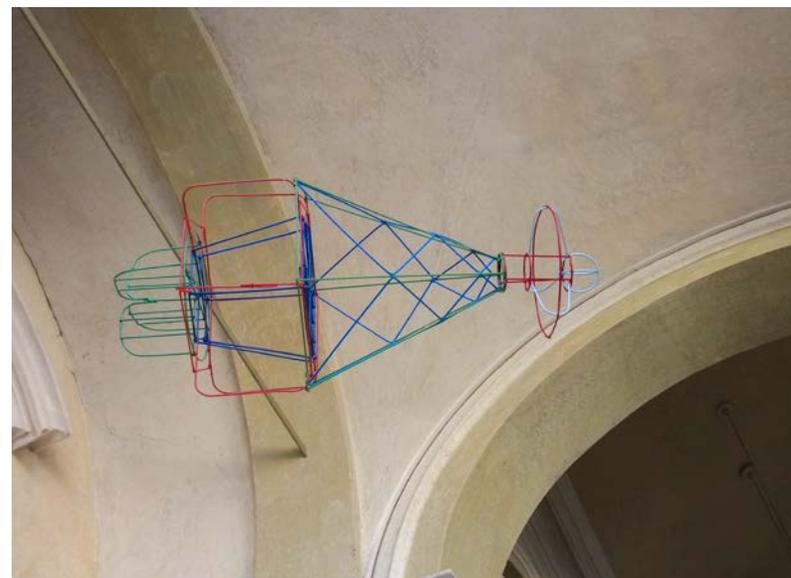
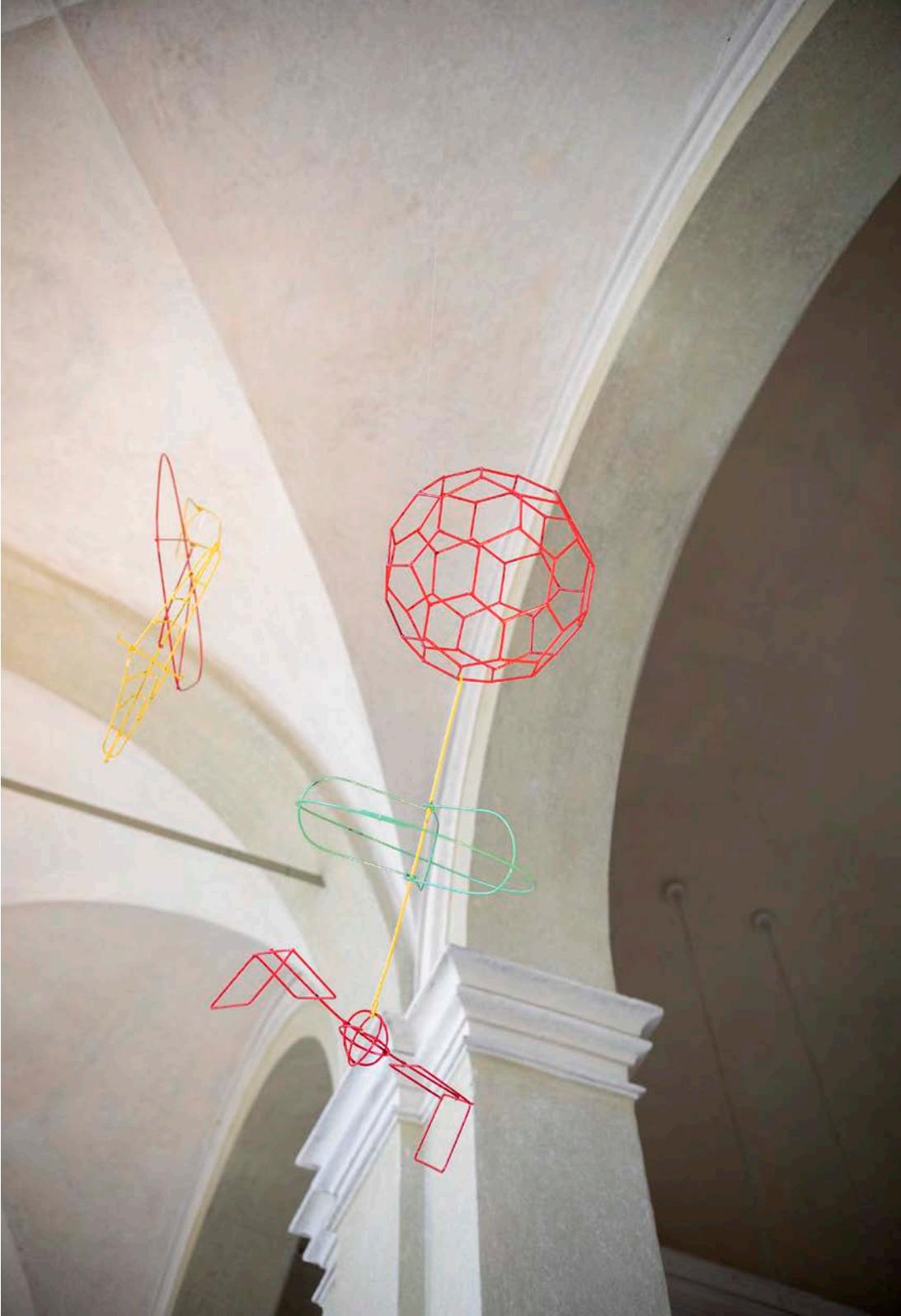
The project combines visual, performing arts and technology in a continuous exchange: Art will be represented by the works of thirteen contemporary artists; Dance will be contributed with the MicroDances created by five international choreographers and Technology will play its role with virtual and immersive instruments that will allow visitors to watch the performances – which will be live only in the opening and closing days – for the entire duration of the exhibition, allowing them to meet both the physicality of the dancers and the matter of art in a totally new way and triggering a new relation with space.

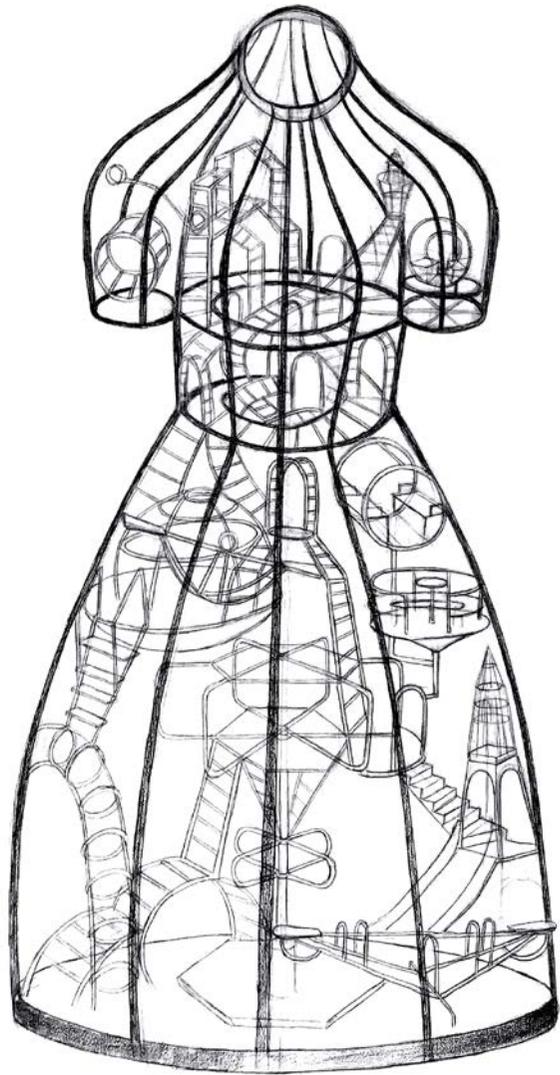
The exhibition path, curated by Marina Dacci, occupies eight rooms in the historical building of Palazzo da Mosto with dance installations interconnected with about thirty contemporary art works of the thirteen contemporary artists invited.



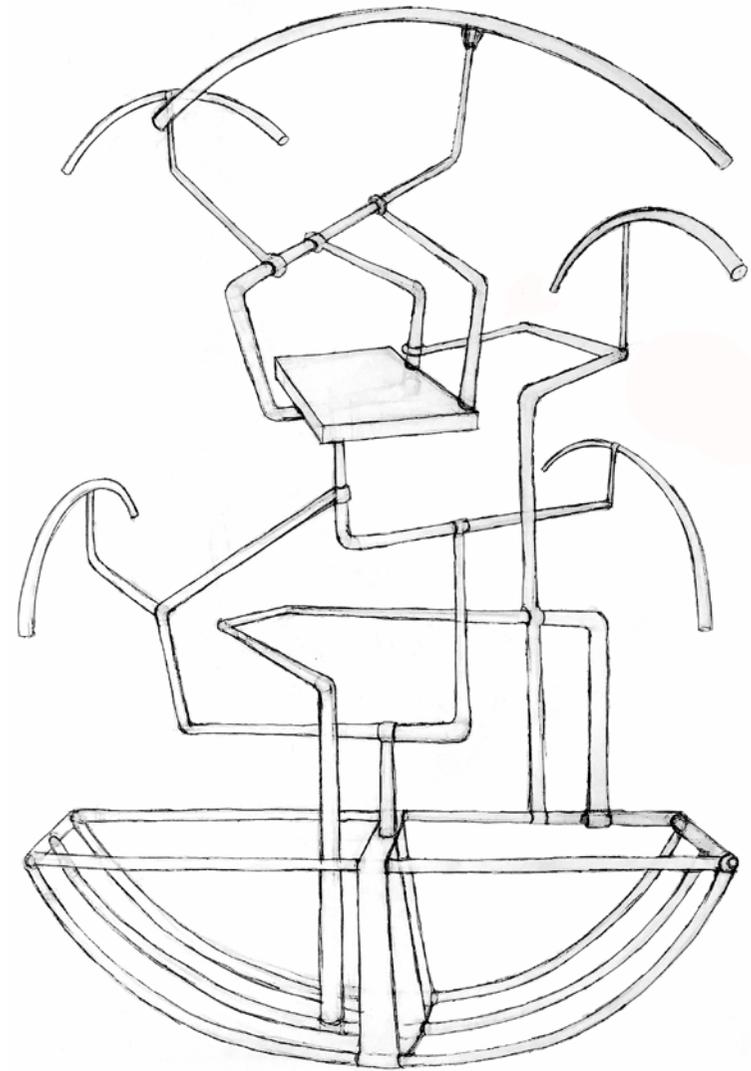
**Untitled, 2021**  
copper, brazing, paint  
118 x 300 x 55 cm







**Penelope**, 2021  
pencil on paper  
50 x 70 cm



**Argo**, 2021  
pencil on paper  
50 x 70 cm



PlayGround Rocket Project

## Play-ground Project

*Play-ground Project* comprises of a collection of collages and a series of delicate copper sculptures developed by Gianluca Malgeri in collaboration with Arina Endo.

The official starting point of the ongoing research coincides with the exhibition *Edge of Chaos* (2015) in Venice, curated by Vita Zaman.

Nevertheless, the project evolved from an unexpected intuition revealed back in 2006, in Denmark, more specifically inside a playground in Copenhagen that immediately struck the Gianluca attention.

The idea has then frozen for some years only to resurface in 2013 when the two artists undertook a journey to India and got inspired by different playgrounds scattered throughout several gardens in New Delhi. They started to realize wide photographic documentation, which marks a very important part for the first series of collages, that anticipate the first maquettes and sculptures unfold from the artists' photo-documentation of playgrounds.

Berlin is where the project took shape out of a series of multi-layered observations of the city itself: Berlin is seen as a sort of "toy land" the tale of *Pinocchio*, which the artists repeatedly have tackled, precisely entails the awareness of being free from social enforced conventions.

Over the past three years, the research has moved to Japan, enriching the photographic archives of almost all of Tokyo's Gardens.

**Gianluca Malgeri** Born in Reggio Calabria 1974, lives and works between Berlin and Tokyo. His work often re-writes certain fundamental images of our culture, reinserting them in a shifted context: the myth of Apollo and Daphne is transformed into a hall of hunting trophies; the supposed secret relation between Sultan Abdul Aziz and Eugenia di Montijo speculated in the Ottoman architecture; the relicts of stoves transformed into anphoras and oriental towers that seem to emerge from a strange past. Amongst his solo exhibitions: Magazzino, Rome (2007, 2011); GaleriArtist, Istanbul (2011, 2012); Apollo and Daphne, white rabbit, Berlin (2009). Amongst the group exhibitions: Edge of Chaos (2015, Casa Donati, Venice), ItAliens (2009, Italian Embassy in Germany), The Naturalists (2013, Castelluccio di Pienza, curated by Peter Benson Miller).

**Arina Endo** Born in Hyogo, Japan 1983, lives and works in Tokyo. After university degree from the Department of Architecture and Design of Kyoto' s Institute of Technology and Design, Arina Endo moves to Florence, where she specializes in graphic arts at the International School Il Bisonte and she attends the Academy of Fine Arts. Endo' s production is characterized by meticulous attention to detail, and to the shapes, patterns and geometries of nature reproduced with meticulous technical diligence, and with sophisticated and sober elegance. Her work has been exhibited in Italy, India, Germany, Turkey, and Japan.