

BENEDIT ———

Works 1968–1978

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Introduction

In late 2001, Luis Fernando Benedit became a member of the Fundación Espigas's Advisory Board. On the verge of what would prove to be one of the worst crises in local history, the Argentine artist came forward to support the preservation of our institution's archives of Argentine and Latin American art as well as making them available to the public.

Benedit's support was by no means atypical. Since the time of its creation in 1993, Espigas has been built on the cooperation of persons and organizations committed to the task of safeguarding cultural memory. It is thanks to the partners and donors who back our programs that the five hundred and seventy-five documentary fonds and collections the foundation has made available to the public continue to grow. That same spirit of collaboration is what led to the partnership, formalized in 2017, of the Fundación Espigas and the Centro de Estudios Espigas of Tarea - Instituto de Investigaciones sobre el Patrimonio Cultural of the Universidad Nacional de San Martín. The two institutions are currently working together on a model archive for the preservation of records and documentation pertinent to Argentine and Latin American art.

Benedit. Works 1968–1978 celebrates the collaboration on which Espigas was founded, the spirit that has guided its growth over the years. With the support of the artist's collectors, friends, and family, as well as the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art in New York, this book—through the research by Mari Carmen Ramírez, David Elliott, Daniel R. Quiles, and Marcelo Pacheco it contains—analyzes a period central to the experimentation and transnational ties that Benedit established. The inventory assembled by Francisca Mancini, the chronology by Fernando Davis, and the bibliography by Victoria Lopresto salvage crucial information on that decade.

The archives and collections housed at Espigas, among them the ones on the Centro de Arte y Comunicación, on critic Alberto Collazo, and on the artists in the Grupo de los Trece, will make it possible to develop new hypotheses on those international ties. One of the aims of *Benedit. Works 1968–1978* is to trigger further research on the basis of the advances this book makes. With a sentiment akin to the one that led the artist himself to join Espigas in 2001, it is our hope that this publication will encourage commitment to the preservation and public availability of archives.

Agustín Díez Fischer
Director

Centro de Estudios Espigas (TAREA-IIPC / UNSAM)

Luis F. Benedit, *Hábitat para tortugas de agua* [Habitat for Sea Turtles], 1968

Criollo Customs, Territory, and the International

This book encompasses ten years of production by Luis Fernando Bedit, 1968–1978—the pinnacle of the artist’s career on the international scene. During that period, he was producing works related to systems art, live art, and cybernetic art. He received a great deal of recognition for his work at the Venice Biennale in 1970 and for his participation in *Projects*, an exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1972. That decade also witnessed a great many group and solo shows at institutions and museums of contemporary art in Europe, some of them as a member of the Grupo de los Trece, a collective close to the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAyC) in Buenos Aires, founded and directed by Jorge Glusberg.

This text, however, does not focus on that period of Bedit’s production. It does not set out to act as an introduction to this book or to be an essay on Bedit’s art as a whole. What it attempts to do, rather, is discern and trace some of the characteristics of his work as a brief narrative of the lines of intervention at stake in his production, an approach that may complement the analyses and studies proposed by the authors of this book.

Bedit is probably the most Criollo of all contemporary Argentine artists, if the term “Criollo” is understood in a broad sense. Bedit is Criollo not only due to his choice of rural themes and themes related to Argentine history, his series on nineteenth-century traveling painters, or his constant references to Florencio Molina Campos—emblematic painter of the Argentine countryside. He is Criollo due as well to his way of absorbing the local and the foreign, the acquired and the inherited, the national and the international. His process is, in fact, quite ruminant: one thing or another might be a bolus that, as in a cow’s digestive system, returns to the mouth twice to be chewed. As early as 1923, magician, artist, and astrologer Alejandro Xul Solar proposed ruminating the European along with the regional to create a new art, an art specific to the Americas. He developed what he called *arte criollo* or *neocriollismo* in a number of essays and articles, mostly on the avant-garde, he wrote in subsequent years. Indeed, that was the first topic Xul Solar discussed with his friend Jorge Luis Borges.¹

Though Argentine art history may have crossed *neocriollismo* off the list of variables pertinent to its modern period, the process of swallowing up was evident for decades; it has been particularly powerful in contemporary art. Bedit is a typical case of the ruminant artist in terms of how he shaped his artistic language, mainly, through proximities and distances, originalities and singularities, combining the local with the horizons of the most advanced international tendencies.

Criollismo as envisioned by Xul provided Bedit with ample room for taking action. It is not a question of crossbreeding or *mestizajes* in the manner of colonial art, but rather of caves within caves that enact a being different in quality

and intent. What's at stake is not a crossing, but ways of birthing new objects bound by kinship. Bénédict's works create a second language, a support for multiple meanings, networks of open signs that are neither symbolic nor paradigmatic, and of narratives capable of telling stories. They are not the historicism of modernity with its mandates and causalities, but the historicism of men and the temporality of objects. Time pierces subjects and things with their projects and agendas. What matters is not what happened in the past, but rather how what happened is read from the present, which is where historical meanings are seen.

Bénédict is Criollo in his way of swallowing up and participating in the international; he is Criollo in the horizon of his identity, which is constantly making insider references to things Argentine, to a rural and urban species of being in a Buenos Aires founded alongside a lion-colored river to which it turns its back; an Argentineness between fictions and realities with no visible distinctions; an identity that experiences itself as split between the local and the fantasy of cosmopolitan privilege, ashamed of the regional while clamoring for a Europeanness that it is denied; a country that holds fast onto the memory of having been the "breadbasket of the world" and doesn't see decline brought by decade after decade of violence and infighting, of extremism of a military and religious, partisan, and economic and social nature. Bénédict is Criollo in the typically Argentine wavering between his national and Latin American self, his memories of the Old World, and his rhetoric on the United States.

But he brought other frames of reference to bear on Xul's modern *Criollismo*, reformulating the equation. On the one hand, he studied native peoples, but their current lifestyles as well as the iconographic universes of the surveys carried out by European expeditions that, despite colonialist vision, created a unique universe of information and images of the original natives that managed to endure and see the nineteenth century. On the other, with bold intentionality, he made his own Florencio Molina Campos, Juan del Prete, and Madismo—three foundations of Argentineness not uncontroversial for local art history.

His interest in the polemic Molina Campos gave rise to works somewhat humorous as they carefully recorded the traits and customs of local country folk. Del Prete introduced concrete art in Buenos Aires with two exhibitions, one in 1933 and the other in 1934; he built a model of proletariat concrete art with concerns different from those of the original Parisian group of which he formed part. Del Prete, who experimented with all the languages of modernism and forged new paths in each one, was another ravenous ruminant. The Madí group was the concrete art group that emerged in Buenos Aires in the mid-1940s. Its members were all from the Río de la Plata region: Carmelo Arden Quin and Rhod Rothfuss from Uruguay; and Gyula Kosice, Diyi Laań, and Martín Blaszkó from Buenos Aires. Their experiments with cut frames, mobile and articulated works, interactive works, and humor, were ahead of their times and have served to earn them, in recent years, a degree of attention in the northern hemisphere.

To his *Criollismo*, Bénédict added a third element—a very peculiar component of his acts of international swallowing. His art, particularly his watercolors and drawings, relentlessly foretell what Pablo Picasso would make today. These are not references or appropriations. Original and free, our Argentine artist explored

Fig. 1
Luis F. Benedit, *Serie de Schmidel (B)*
[Schmidel Series (B)],
1993



the endless creative wealth of the Spanish artist in works that he himself might have made. They are bound by a sense of strangeness and fantasy. It is not a question of outgrowths or of consequences; the process entails, rather, determination to produce forms capable of creating chains of images with like genomes.

These overlaps involve the work Picasso produced in his final years, 1953–1972, and Benedit in the 1980s and 1990s, for the most part. Consider, of the Argentine artist's work, *Serie de Schmidel (B)* [Schmidel Series (B), 1993] (fig. 1); *Pensando en F. M. C.* [Thinking of F. M. C. (A), 1990]; and *In memoriam Rudecindo*, 1993. Of Picasso's work, think of *Femme nue au rocking chair*, 1956, Sydney; *Homme et femme nus*, 1971, the Nasher Collection; and *Nu couché*, 1972, private collection.²

Picasso in Benedit suggests a current creative vision of what the Spanish artist might be making today; it contains like fictional worlds, rather than memories or legacies, a random encounter of adjacent creative imaginations.

The post-1970s Criollo evidences the effects of a double digestion, constitutionally complex results that heighten the artist's battles with symbolic values and values of consciousness both within the field of art and beyond. The *neocriollo* grows more complex in ruminations that render in present form transversal relations between the local and the foreign. But the mechanism never ceases to be relevant. It holds onto territorial utterances and, in its international interventions and adherences, a singular creative dialectic.

Criollo author and author of *Criollismo*, Benedit used a careful construction system to produce his works, a double play of bodies and focalizations that sustains the structure of his works. There is a level that moves both horizontally and vertically, that sees to laying the foundations of his creations. It is a support that combines material, visual, and formal fields on which sequences of focalizations that arise from narrative, figured, and aesthetic domains circulate smoothly. These are not independent spaces, but spaces intertwined in a single fabric; they not only share borders, but on occasion infect one another; they operate not only by means of juxtaposition, but also by taking pleasure in a transversal dynamic.

Material, Visual, and Formal Bodies

The discourses in Benedit's works are always performative, that is, intended to be acted. His works are not passive, but unfolding actions where one fold leads to the next, down to the tiniest fold of Japanese philosophy in origami, folds within folds of paper or networks of threads in fabrics. Two arts—the art of Eastern paper and the art of the Pampas' ponchos—always fascinated him.³ His works ask the viewer to engage in a process of decipherment, one that may not be complex

but is always painstaking. They unfurl over meanings that shift simultaneous or sequentially. The artist imagines and sets off that perpetual motion on the basis of a structure that combines three fields: the material, the visual, and the formal.

The **materialities** in Benedit's work are unique, and their manifestations unmistakable and many. By materialities, I mean everything in the works that resides in the physical aspects of their production, but also formal and visual levels as supplementary materialities. Outstanding examples are his Pop series (1964–1967) and his macro-installations from the 1980s and 1990s.

Benedit's works of Pop art include paintings in industrial enamel with iconography reminiscent of things as varied as comic strips, toys made of tin, plasticine models, children's lunchboxes, colorful pinball motifs, animated drawings, children's books, set designs, advertisements, and movie posters. Some of that work was made in Madrid. Indeed, while he was in Europe he came into contact with an array of products from different places that made use of production processes not common in Buenos Aires.⁴

His final work in enamel was produced in 1967, though there are sketches and canvases from as late as 1969. The image was of a cat in front of a bird on top of which the artist placed a cage with a real bird. The title of the work was *El hambre sin solución* [The Hunger that Cannot Be Satisfied].⁵ That same year, he turned one of his three-dimensional heat-modeled acrylic structures painted on the back into a fish tank (cat. no.1) and then added a recipient on to the front. The origin of those experiments seems to lie in Jannis Kounellis's work, which had a great impact on Benedit when he saw it in Rome in 1967. As early as 1962, though, live art, specifically Alberto Greco's work, was seen on the Buenos Aires scene—and Benedit was familiar with that tradition.

Due to the variety of iconographies employed and the technique used, the enamel works became material bodies. The images are always exuberant, oversized, voluminous, rigging systems divided up into three-dimensional profiles; they are generous, mechanical, and exhibitionist breathing forms that seem to want to grow beyond the boundaries imposed by the canvas stretchers. Those characteristics—along with the texture, light, shine, imaginary volume, and use of airbrush—accentuate the material physical presence of the panels. There are a great many arches, sped-up perspectives, swirls, and diagrams making their way up or down architectures, landscapes, and characters. The paintings look like animated drawings in action. The acting, performative component appears—at great speed—constructing a fictitious materiality that, from the surface of the painting, turns into an amusement park apt for all audiences.

The material thickness of Benedit's macro-installations from the 1980s and 1990s coexists with a narrative constitution.

The artist would create spaces from a front wall made in an array of materials; the wall would open up onto the real space containing some objects, and the entire thing would be laid out in a sort of large imaginary cube. He would generate an articulated system of pencil and watercolor drawings, either framed or stuck to the wall, some of them in irregular shapes; epoxy figures in boxes or alone; wooden objects; tracing paper; projections of photographs; texts; and color planes that acted as supports; a wide variety of real objects; and elements taken from nature. In these works, there is a much broader world of materials

in a state of tension or opposition, or in harmonious company. In the space are truncated-cone-shaped and four-sided bases, projection devices hung in the air or placed on a base, especially designed supports like tables and wooden boxes.

On the basis of its own dimensions as virtual corporal substances, this material physical variety enhances the visual and the formal elements.

The material field is by no means anecdotal or coincidental to the process of making the works. It not only determines the structure of the piece, but also shapes one of its main bodies of action. Rather than supports, frames, bases, and tables, those bodies are a substance not only physical; their qualities are magnets that draw in contexts and meanings. The cut frames and the ghostly projections of photographs, for instance, are not random in their function as meaning.

Another territory of creation for Bénédict is the **visual** field. The inventory of his visuality is wide and complex. The artist is a sort of grinding machine or tireless inventor of images that operate within the aforementioned chain of folds and its processes in the art of origami or on the canvas. The visual dimension is basic and excessively ruminant.

His visual encyclopedia and determination explore all the options made available by postmodernism, as well as its modern precedents. His work makes use of the quote, parody, appropriation, pastiche, allegory, and crossbreeding, as he causes to intersect in his own language colonial prints, works by nineteenth-century traveling painters, homages to Madí, to Del Prete, to Pablo Ruiz, his special relation to Molina Campos, his son Tomás's childhood drawings, architectural models, book illustrations, toys, memories of trips taken, photographs and slides from a wide range of periods, rural objects, toy formats, live and embalmed animals, things taken from nature, illustrations from manuals on biology, botany, the flora and fauna, farm houses, Criollo clothing and customs, geography, topographies, and books on local and international art history. There are the paintings within paintings, the paintings intervened with objects, views of models, animals, historical themes, individual and group portraits. The variety is not only in style, but also in form,

imagination, in presentation and representation, in iconographic tradition, with different times and geographies.

Bénédict moved seamlessly and without losing his own voice between works like, for instance, the charcoal *Del viaje del Beagle* [Traveling in the Beagle, 1987]—with its oversized interior, documentary realism, and monumentality—; *Cuchillo* [Knife] (fig. 2), *Tijera de castrar* [Gelding Scissors], and *Caja de maíz*

[Corn Box], all of them rural crates from 1978; *Los dibujos de Tomás* [Tomás's Drawings], a series from the late 1970s with three constituent parts (a drawing by his five-year-old son, a blueprint of the motif of the drawing with its sections and perspectives, and a toy, like *King Kong blanco* [White King Kong] (fig. 3) made in epoxy); and works like *Rhea Darwini*, 1988, an irregular painting with layered parts and epoxy figures added on.

Fig. 2
Luis F. Bénédict,
Cuchillo [Knife], 1978





Fig. 3
Luis F. Benedit,
King Kong blanco
[White King Kong],
1979/1980
(Drawing by Tomás,
project and object)

The **formal** body in Benedit's work is evident in the care taken in how the work is perceived. This body is manifested in vision, in the way the works speak in relation to the psychology of elements, and the structures of the representation and of objects real and manufactured. All there is on this level is vision and forms like lines, colors, fragments, bodies, tones, segments, surfaces that act as force vectors, as presences. The formal is where the complex inner working of the piece is manifested, that which in its structure takes the shape of the internal back and forth of figuration and of the edge and outline of that figuration. The relationships between the different dimensions are clear: the visual shows the figurations, the identities; the formal shows the work's perceptual map; what surfaces in the narrative is the story underlying the iconography; and the figures express the tensions in the meaning, a sort of iconology of the times.

Benedit is an artist who turns forms, the x-ray vision of his works, into an active supplement of the material. In his drawings and watercolors especially, the formal accidents are strikingly pregnant and plentiful in a great many characters, animals, landscapes, and garments. The materialities of the forms cause variations in what is accentuated: forms are not perceived in the same way on a transparent slide as in a drawing on paper or in an object taken from nature like a branch.

Works where the formal structure is particularly interesting include *King Kong VIII*, 1980, with its three parts (drawing by Tomás, epoxy toy, and construction blueprint); the Pop art diptych *El supercómodo* [The Super Comfortable, 1969]; and *Dama criolla Madí con piedras y huesos* [Madí Criollo Lady with Stones and Bones, 1993/1994] (fig. 4). At stake in these works is not a capricious formalism, but a downright contemporary *maniera*.

Discursive, Figured, and Aesthetic Focalizations

Just as the bodies of the work's structure engage chiefly their physical existence and perceptions, the focalizations and domains introduce in the creative process dimensions related to open signs and multiple associations of meaning laid out

Fig. 4
Luis F. Benedit,
Dama criolla Madí
con piedras y huesos
[Madí Criollo Lady
with Stones and
Bones], 1993/1994



in the world of the works. That is not because the structural fields do not bear meaning, but rather because it is in that second realm that the mechanisms that open the works up cluster. Furthermore, the aesthetic domain is the superstructure that gives the works their resounding qualities of cohesion and flexibility.

The term “focalization” comes from narratology. It is the word that Mieke Bal proposed to replace the traditional concepts of “point of view” and “angles of view”—that is, the intentions underlying any work in the terrain of narrative.⁶ In discourses, things are seen and presented, but they are always seen in a certain way. There is an act of display and an act of speech, and the particular slant they express is what Bal calls focalization. The idea is provocative in relation to works of art, since it introduces, at the borders of its meanings, an interesting point of view. Benedit’s works are there to be seen, but also to be asked from whence they speak, what their narrative, figurative, and artistic inklings are.

The first focalization in Benedit’s work is primarily **narrative**. Benedit always had narrative intentionalities. He never shied away from the difference between anecdote, chronicle, story, report, and narration. He would model a poodle, make an epoxy rope (*Lazo* [Rope]), and paint *El campo I* [The Countryside I]; he presented *Relativo a la indumentaria* [On Attire]; he constructed his versions of bolas (see the works *Boleadoras* [Bolas]); he developed the work *Warrah, el Zorro lobo de las Malvinas extinguido hacia 1870* [Warrah, the Falkland Islands Wolf, Extinct in the 1870s] (fig. 5). The work’s discursive motif required a certain format that Benedit would discover and invent during the production process. In his series, he would choose the material support, which is also a part of the content, and—beyond the obvious combinations—his most important series look to similar visualities created for the topic of the specific narrative. If a series was very long and the figures in it very diverse—think, for instance, of *Del viaje del Beagle*—different modalities might be used.

There is, over the course of Argentine art history, a rich line of narrative works, some of them historical and others contemporary. Because of the Argentine propensity for forgetting and for invention, collective memory is a constant source of conflict and violent clashes. The Argentine ability to eliminate his-



Fig. 5
Luis F. Bénédict,
Warrah, el Zorro lobo de las Malvinas extinguido hacia 1870
[Warrah, the Falkland Islands Wolf, Extinct in the 1870s], 1987

torical meaning produces biased or outright false readings. That idiosyncrasy is perhaps one of the reasons why Argentina's visual art has been a steadfast alternative for the functioning of memory; hence, its structure makes frequent use of the narrative model. Starting with his first show at Galería Lirolay in 1960, Bénédict never ceased to act as a recorder-of-stories, one that made visible use of testimonies and documentation—and that is even the case of his works of systems art, like the *Biotrón*, which is related to the history of beekeeping in the country. The four-thousand-bee apiary was produced at the height of the expansion of the honey industry and of honey export in Argentina (the country was even, at one point, the second or third largest honey producer in the world). That work, then, attests to a specific situation in Argentine economic history.

There are times when Bénédict shows a unique level of concentration in his narrative abilities, even delving into the founding territory of myth. Thanks to his poetic condensation, Bénédict enters the terrain of art that opens up worlds. The most interesting example of this is *Sur* [South, 1991] (fig. 6), an installation with the figure of *El primer caballo* [The First Horse] in a harness being lowered onto the southern shores of the new continent. The work's first instance consists of the constellations of the austral sky—sixteen prints attached to the wall with the blades of knives displayed on walls adjacent to the projection of a photograph of the southern sky on the right side of the same support. For the artist, the knife was the paradigmatic Argentine object. The horse, origin of the Pampa's wild cattle, and the Indian riding bareback into the horizon, dominate the small frame in which the scene's origin lies—the beginning or annunciation, under the austral skies and stars, of two realities previously unknown to the world.



Fig. 6
Luis F. Bénédict,
Sur [South], 1991
(detail)

In addition to history and documents, at stake in the enactment of Benedit's narrative are the real and fiction—or sometimes the tensions between them—modes of figuration that can deploy artistic objects. Works like *Manea* [Hobble, 1990], *Espuela Pampa* [Pampa Spur, 1990], and *Alpargata* [Espadrille, 1990], suggest the fragmented visions part and parcel of Surrealism; in *Cincha y encimera* [Girth and Blanket], *Bolas perdidas* [Lost Balls], and *Rebenque* [Whip], all from 1990, useful objects are seen in and of themselves in a tautological operation that has been reformulated a number of times since Marcel Duchamp and that, in Dada, took on a political bent (Benedit combined both approaches); the contemporary nature of the production in sculptures in epoxy, wood, or enamel like *Cuadrera* [Horse Race], *Cinchada* [Tug of War], *Yerra* [Cattle Branding], all from 1991, is legible in the minimal approach to the material.

The second focalization, the **figured** focalization, is explication or imagination, the gestures that dominate a work's narrative. At stake here is the ideology, theory, or history evident in his system's speech. The narrative is not organized by iconography or subject, but rather by inner tensions, signaling it and pointing in a certain paradigmatic direction (the Criollo, Argentineness, the scientific, the artistic, the autobiographical, for instance).

I mention specifically ideology, history, and theory because they are three fields of intervention that act on a period's specific set of circumstances, that is, on the contemporary, and Benedit's works have always been conceived in a state of tension with the real horizon of the times, beyond the artistic field. In terms of ideology, there are clear examples of works that engage the country's structural violence (*Los duelistas* [The Duelists] series, for instance, from the 1980s); in terms of history, think of the installation *La carne* [Meat, 1992/1993] and the dirty deals of the infamous decade;⁷ in terms of theory, his pseudo-scientific works like the *Fitotrón* speak of the need to find alternative crop systems to deal with the planet-wide shortage of food.

The figured in Benedit is tied to a significant literary body on the basis of which to grapple with the notion of Argentina. Specifically, a set of novels and essays written after 1930, the year of the civic-military coup that ousted democratically elected president Hipólito Yrigoyen. Beatriz Sarlo has called that group of writings key to the foundation of narratives of Argentineness.⁸

Those are not history books, yet, without arguing, they formulate arguments, without explaining, they explain. They provide accounts that ended up becoming central to the local milieu. The list of authors includes Arturo Jauretche, Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz, Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, and Eduardo Mallea, and their texts, *El Paso de los Libres*, *El hombre que está solo y espera*, *Radiografía de la pampa*, and *La historia de una pasión argentina*. The accounts in essayistic tone cover topics that range from British imperialism to the definition of national evils, from democratic barbarism to the questions of who we are and how our identity was constructed; their texts deal with the notion of America in opposition to civilization, the fate of failure foretold, and the conflict between the two Argentinas—one visible and one invisible.

This bibliography, which was central during Benedit's formative years, is enacted in works like *Leopoldo Lugones, 1874-1938* (fig. 7), an installation from 1990 that also includes two other suicides committed during that decade



Fig. 7
Luis F. Benedit,
Leopoldo Lugones,
1874–1938, 1990
(detail)

(by Alfonsina Storni and Horacio Quiroga); and his early series *Federal, Prócer federal, El candidato* [Federal, Federal Hero, The Candidate], portraits of Quiroga and Facundo. The poster for his first exhibition shows a gaucho, a member of a *montonera*,⁹ on horseback—the sign under which the artist was born. In history, like in science, publications by authors like José Luis Busaniche, José Luis Romero, and Tulio Halperín Donghi marked a turning point.

The third focalization, the **aesthetic** focalization, was central to Benedit's work starting in 1996.¹⁰ This use of the concept of “superstructure” was taken from Teun van Dijk, who describes it as the global shape of a discourse, in other words, that which defines its arrangement and the hierarchical relations of its fragments.¹¹ It is a dominant of formation.

The artistic signals distributed between the bodies and focalizations are what give his works' structure the cohesion of a language within the field of aesthetics. Everything in his oeuvre is conceived from within a domain subject to “good forms” and the entire constellation of relations that those forms imply: fullness, balance even in instability, a constructive drive, lines and swirls that are taut though flexible, the urgency of the detail or of the differential mark, combinations of colors studied in relation to their individual qualities and as system, correct compositions, rhythms, and sequences harmonic even when inverted or in disarray. What is correct and what is befitting operate as open categories of vision of the structure.

A number of agents and actions come together in the aesthetic dominant of the artistic field. In the 1960s, Benedit had to choose between pursuing the visual arts and his career as an architect. Those were vertiginous years: he entered a specific field as an active player; he came into contact with Jorge Glusberg and the CAYC; he decided to exhibit work in Buenos Aires and in Europe. Everything conspired to confirm his decision to pursue art. All of those events marked the production of his work, as well as its visibility and circulation.

Benedit's is not an arbitrary or fanciful artistic domain, but rather a contemporary *maniera* produced in all its singularity by the intersection of his bodies and domains. *Maniera* is an Italian term from the sixteenth century, when each

artist was identified by how original or different his particular *maniera* was; the term eventually led to the art history category of mannerism. There is unquestionably a Bénédict *maniera*.

Two Local Points of Reference: Alberto Greco and Vicente Marotta

Bénédict got his professional start at Galería Lirolay, directed by Germaine Derbecq. At that time, the gallery exhibited the most radical young artists in the local milieu. The shining star in the Lirolay circle was Alberto Greco (1931–1965); Bénédict knew Greco personally, and he was familiar with his work since they were part of the same group, though Greco formed part of a previous generation (he had been active on the art scene since 1956). After living in Paris for a number of years, he had spent a year dividing his time between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

A pioneer in the field of live art, Greco's most important contribution was the creation of the *vivo-dito* or signaled art: he would wander about the city with a piece of chalk in hand and draw circles on the sidewalk and pavement around persons and a variety of things (mailboxes, cars, carts), thus signaling them. In Piedralaves, Ávila—the town he himself named the international center of “Greco-ism”—he would put handwritten or collage signs with different mottoes (“work of art signaled by Alberto Greco,” for instance) on old ladies, donkeys, locals, clothes lines, mailmen, self-portraits, and so forth.

Bénédict was particularly interested in two aspects of Greco's work. At an exhibition organized by Derbecq in Paris in 1962, Greco showed a glass box with thirty rats inside. The work caused a scandal. News of the work and the uproar undoubtedly reached Bénédict, who was in Buenos Aires at the time. The many descriptions of the box of rats stuck with him from then on.

In 1964, when both Greco and Bénédict were living in Madrid, a show of living and live paintings by Greco was held at Galería Juana Mordó. The fact that Bénédict visited that show is documented. The living paintings were white canvases on which a model would lean while, using large brushes and sweeping strokes, Greco painted an outline of the model's form and its surroundings in oil paint; once the model had left, what remained was the silhouette of her absence, that is, the blank space where the model had posed—a sort of counter-painting or negative image. The live paintings, on the other hand, were canvases, large and white as well, but without a single mark; they were exhibited in their original state, with a woman, and a bucket or some other object, in front of them. The work, with the person live, was presented at the exhibition. Both strains of production must have had an impact on the workings of Bénédict's mind.

Those different strains of live works created by Greco early on—works that, directly or indirectly, Bénédict came into contact with—are important to a consideration of Bénédict's beginnings. Greco's formulations had major impact on a group of artists that emerged in the 1960s. In order to re-examine the influence of certain European avant-garde artists and tendencies, it is safe to assume that Bénédict needed a storehouse of memories of contemporary projects, like Greco's, that could serve as a bridge between the Pop paintings he

was working on and what he was able to see of the most radical forces on the local scene. As Michel Foucault points out, we always see much less than we believe; to see things, there must first be a horizon of thought that has created or digested those things. Seeing is not possible without thinking; things must first be thought to then be seen. In the case of Benedit, Greco may have been a necessary precondition for him to be bedazzled by, for instance, the works by Kounellis he saw in Rome in 1967.

Vicente Marotta (1928–1994) is one of so many ill-fated Argentine artists. After a career that spanned from the 1960s to the first years of the 1980s, he was in and out of mental institutions. He was a member of the CAyC group, and a close friend of Benedit's. In 1966, they produced *Barbazul* [Bluebeard], a walk-through installation, at the Museo de Arte Moderno de la Ciudad; they also shared a studio space. They would once again share a studio, this time in the Constitución section of the city, in the early 1970s, while participating in the CAyC and the same circuit of exhibitions; in 1980, they showed *King Kong* together at Galería Ruth Benzacar. Marotta is one of the nearly forgotten names in Argentine art history.¹²

Marotta was a close interlocutor of Benedit mostly regarding his works of systems art like the *Biotrón* and the *Fitotrón*. Marotta's chief concern was the misuse of natural resources in the production of food—a problem across the planet—specifically in terms of farming and exports, and the starvation and inequality that that misuse meant for much of the world's population. He believed in politics as a collective force but disdained political parties and leaders as inefficacious; in 1971, he exhibited a work entitled *República democrática* [Democratic Republic]—an installation where people used dozens of computers to vote and make decision on governing. He envisioned art as an active force of change in human consciousness and as a means to generate a new morality; aesthetics was, to him, a tool. Due to its revitalizing power, art was a catalyst that provoked crisis. Over the course of the 1970s, he exhibited a number of installations with containers of food and raw materials (the sachets in which milk is sold in Argentina and bags of wheat, for instance). In 1972, he made an installation that consisted of a large mound of mass-distributed natural products identified by the areas where they were produced and the areas where they were in short supply.

His overall vision of art, as well as his ideas about world starvation, are a counterpoint from which to grapple with Benedit's works with germination and photosynthesis, the beehives in Venice, and the artificial crop in New York. That is where Benedit's constructions become alternative technologies designed to yield more foodstuff and art takes active part in struggle as ethical and political medium. Benedit's tropical fish tanks and anthills, his habitats for snails, are scientific and experimental instruments; they are geared to use and to observation, and they are connected to Marotta's vision of humanity, which, in his way, Benedit indicated and attempted to reflect as the basis for his projects.

Like Greco, Marotta is a figure that should not be forgotten in reconstructing Benedit's horizon of thought on contemporary art; his interaction with those Buenos Aires imaginaries during the first decades of his career left its mark.

Swallowing up and Ruminating

Criollo due to his way of ruminating national and the international influences, due to his interest in Argentine identities, due to his relationship with art past and present, art modern and contemporary, Luis Fernando Benedit constructed structures with multiple meanings that were organized like discourses within the aesthetic domain.

Creator of tensions between his physical and perceptive bodies and between the discursive focalizations of those bodies, Benedit made use of three tools to intervene in ideology, history, and theory, tools that enabled him to act always on the specificities of the art scene and of contemporary power.

His figured focalization saw to the task of defining the dispositions and intentionalities that he found most pressing, which went from the Criollo to the Argentine essence, by way of science, the indigenous, history, the formation of the nation, Patagonian Darwinism, federalism, cybernetics, the countryside, and art history.

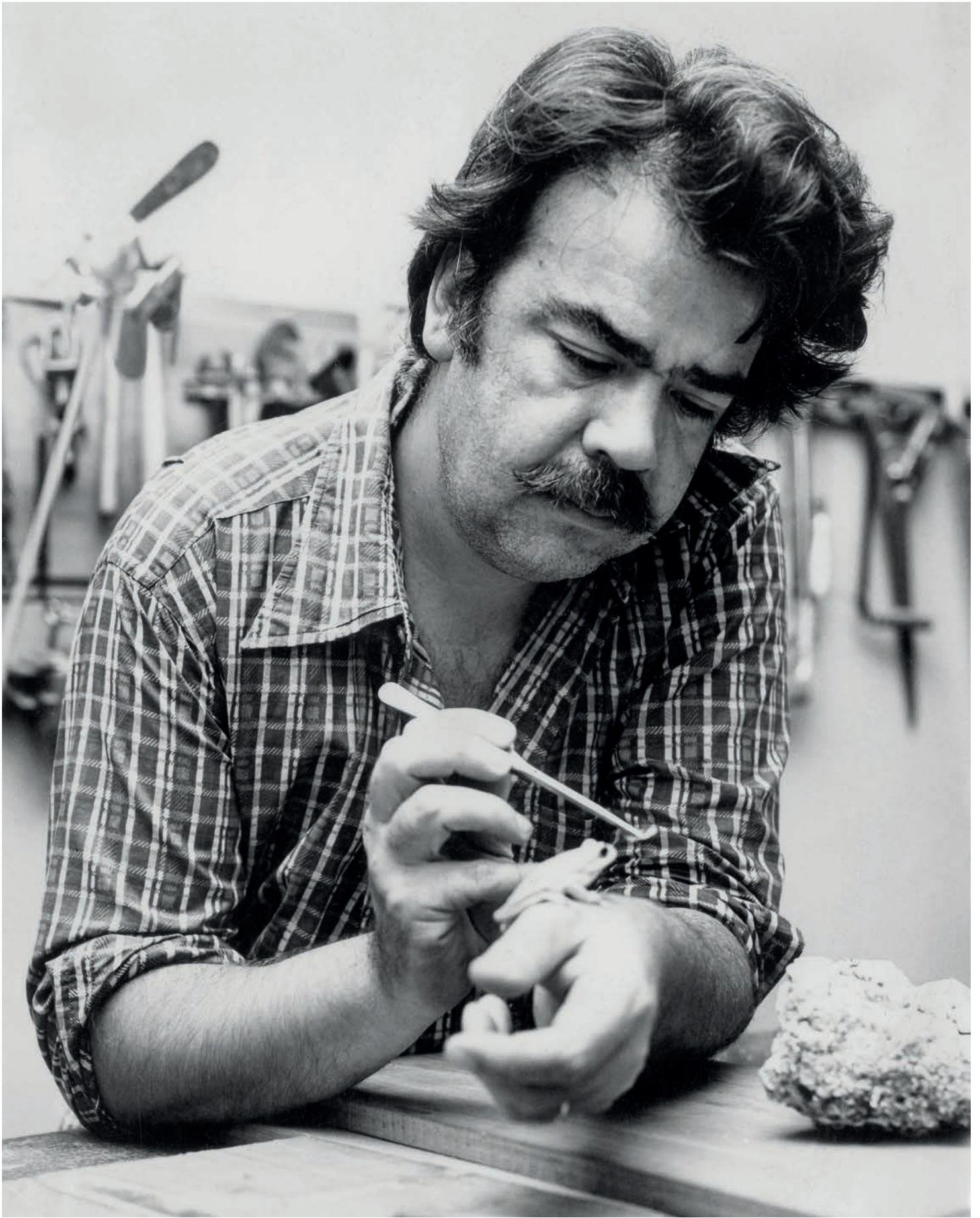
An artist of sequences, he always deployed narrative discourses that underscored and enacted the other dimensions of his work. It is in the ability of the figured to “narrativize history” that the value of a fundamental part of his production from the late 1970s lies. The rest of his work ensues between gesture and other figured forms—like science and iconographies of entertainment or close observation and humor—between the irony and the speech of locals, between the cultivated and the commonplace, between the Buenos Aires idiosyncrasy and a constant cosmopolitan and traveling being.

In his always renewed process of ruminating, he was able to act as a contemporary artist on the local scene and in its global outgrowths. There is still no impulse to place him in another space, a space where he could be envisioned as an actor in a story that, though recent, has evident historical significance. His figured forms on the Argentine essence and its origins are not reasons to dismiss him; on the contrary, they are the territorial in the context of globalization, that is, the local inquiring into how it is constituted in what is different and what is shared (fig. 8).

Fig. 8
Luis F. Benedit,
Rancho de azúcar
[Sugar Ranch], 1990



- 1— Patricia Artundo (org.), *Xul Solar, entrevistas y textos inéditos* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 1995), pp. 96–107.
- 2— In the case of Picasso, the references are from the catalogue to the show *Le dernier Picasso 1953-1973* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1988), pp. 161, 287 and 325.
- 3— Gilles Deleuze, *El pliegue. Leibniz y el Barroco* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1989).
- 4— For examples of popular motifs of this sort, as well as a look at their history, see *The Whole Pop Catalog. The Berkeley Pop Culture Project* (New York: Avon Books, 1991).
- 5— There is some doubt surrounding the date of that work due to the addition of the cage. As the reproduction of the work that appeared in the December 3, 1968 issue of *Primera Plana* magazine attests, it was exhibited in 1968 at *Microzoo*, a show at Galería Rubbers.
- 6— Mieke Bal, *Teoría de la narrativa (una introducción a la narratología)* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1995), pp. 107–123.
- 7— The “década infame” refers to the 1930s, a decade marked by political and economic upheaval in Argentina.—Trans.
- 8— Beatriz Sarlo, *Una modernidad periférica: Buenos Aires 1920-1930* (Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1988), pp. 206 et seq. (most of the ideas presented on this issue are hers).
- 9— A *montonera* is a self-organized or unauthorized platoon of fighters on horseback that fought in the civil wars that beset Argentina, and other countries in South America, in the nineteenth century.—Trans.
- 10— See my texts “Luis Bénédict, ejes conceptuales”, *Cultura*, issue no. 56, Buenos Aires, 1996, pp. 16–17, and “Luis Bénédict y Oscar Bony, identidades y memorias”, *Atlántica*, special edition on Latin America, Spain, 1996, pp. 39–48.
- 11— Teun van Dijk, *Estructuras y funciones del discurso* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1995), p. 53.
- 12— The very few bibliographical references to his work include Jorge Glusberg, *Del pop art a la nueva imagen* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de Arte Gaglianone, 1988), pp. 187–196.



**A Paradoxical Notion of Image:
Luis Fernando Bénédit's "Living Systems"**
Mari Carmen Ramírez

"Outside the Game": Charting a Course

In 1968, the American writer and art theorist Jack Burnham offered a provocative assessment of radical developments taking place in twentieth-century sculpture, observing how the combined impact of science and technology was resulting in the rejection not only of traditional sculpture but also of the notion of the *art object* itself. This trend—the origins of which could be traced to 1920s and 30s Constructivism—had increased momentum in the decades immediately following World War II. In Burnham's view, the "downfall of the sculpted object"—evident in the embrace of science and technology by postwar movements such as Kinetic art, Luminous art, and ecological art—originated in the modern artist's long-standing yearning to eliminate the boundaries between art and life by producing objects that could interact with the viewer. In the place of the *traditional object*, Burnham argued a "systems consciousness" was emerging which implied a shift away from "the direct shaping of matter to a concern for organizing quantities of energy and information."¹ Burnham went on to coin the expression "systems aesthetics" to paradoxically refer both to the new tendency that privileged modes of organization beyond traditional aesthetics and to the resulting "relations between people and between people and the components of their environment."² According to this view, to the extent that any situation involving people, ideas, and messages—whether inside or outside the context of art—constitutes "a complex of components in interaction," it could function as a system.³

As polemical as it was at the time, Burnham's art historical framework serves as a useful entry point to re-evaluate the Latin American contribution to "systems art" embodied in the early radical production of Argentinean multimedia creator Luis Fernando Bénédit and position it vis-à-vis parallel avant-garde developments of the 1960s and 70s in Europe and the United States. A full-fledged architect⁴ and self-taught artist, Bénédit emerged in the thriving Buenos Aires art scene of the mid-to-late 1960s with a series of enamel paintings featuring animals and acrylic environments that housed live organisms (bees, birds, fish, ants, snails, and plants). After his much-acclaimed participation at the XXXV Venice Biennale with *Biotrón* (1970), a large environment for four thousand bees, he quickly transitioned to the international arena where he achieved a certain renown for his "living systems." The decade from 1968 to 1978—duly covered by the present volume—represented for Bénédit a period of intensely focused research of biological and ethological phenomena that crystallized in both large- and small-scale habitats and objects. Writing about the artist's defiant participation in Venice, American novelist, essayist, and art writer Frederic Tuten observed in *The New York Times*:

The only truly experimental and audacious work of the serious section of the Biennale was that presented by the Argentinean Luis Fernando Bedit, whose environments for live bees, snails, insects and fish—a sort of micro zoo—raised key questions concerning the nature of art, its materials and objectives: questions intrinsic to all forms of radical art.⁵

Despite the singular nature of his accomplishments and a long and prolific career, Bedit's unique contributions to the presumed demise of traditional sculpture and its substitution with organized systems outlined by Burnham have not yet attained the level of critical attention they deserve, a fact that serves as one important motivation for these lines. Instead of solid critical recognition, his works have merely achieved the status of *cult objects* among enthusiasts of conceptual, environmental, and systems art. Moreover, there is an ostensibly perplexing quality to his work that challenges any curator or art historian seeking to unravel it. A number of reasons can be cited to explain what at first glance may appear as the impenetrability of his proposals. First, Bedit undoubtedly emerged in one of the most intense decades of artistic innovation in the twentieth century, when trends succeeded themselves in rapid sequence and the boundaries between them were either collapsible or extremely porous. As was the case with most of the artists of the rebellious 1960s, Bedit's staunch experimental focus translated into an evasive attitude regarding specific movements, labels, media, or visual strategies. Indeed, during the ten-year period covered by this volume, he moved from two-dimensional to three-dimensional supports, from painting and drawing to environments and habitats, only to settle on objects and works on paper that blend the skills of the craftsman, the naturalist, the exquisite draftsman, and the watercolorist who was trained and operated as an architect.

Second, despite Bedit's tendency to dodge labels and categories, he did adhere firmly to the tenets of the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAyC) [Center for Art and Communication] established between 1968 and 1969 by the charismatic entrepreneur and intellectual *caudillo* Jorge Glusberg.⁶ Until the conclusion of its first stage in 1977,⁷ CAyC functioned as an interdisciplinary space that brought together artists, critics, scientists, architects, and urban planners. It also doubled as a network connecting Argentinean artists and critics with their international counterparts.⁸ From CAyC's inception, Glusberg promoted Bedit as one of the emblematic artists of this group; the two met in the mid-to-late-60s and forged a long-term friendship and collaboration lasting several decades. In a series of groundbreaking exhibitions as well as influential and widely circulated texts—written between 1968 and 1977, the key period of CAyC's activities—Glusberg articulated a critical framework that positioned Bedit as one of the leaders of an object-based "Arte de Sistemas" ["systems art"], a movement that he claimed to have conceived and that must be considered a politicized Argentinean version of Burnham's "systems aesthetics."⁹ In his view, the distinguishing feature of Arte de Sistemas was its ideological bent. Solidly attuned to their context, CAyC artists denounced through their works and pronouncements the conditions of censorship, repression, and violence that took hold of Argentinean society during this period. Furthermore, for

Glusberg, *Arte de Sistemas* also crossed borders with a politicized form of conceptualism (operating under authoritarian regimes and military censorship) that the Spanish art historian Simón Marchán Fiz labeled “conceptualismo ideológico” [ideological conceptualism].¹⁰ By locking into place this particular interpretation of Bénédict’s art, Glusberg projected the artist’s achievements into the international arena while simultaneously subordinating them to CAYC’s—and obviously his own—programmatic agenda.

With the advantage of hindsight, however, I will argue that the multifarious poetics of Bénédict’s work are far more complex than Glusberg’s perceptive yet somewhat doctrinaire and self-interested assessments would lead us to believe. Despite the fact that the artist’s *living systems* served to illustrate theoretical and ideological positions at CAYC and, later, Grupo de los Trece [Group of Thirteen]—an artistic laboratory which emerged out of CAYC of which Bénédict was a founding member—it is impossible to avoid the outright differences separating his “biological sculptures”¹¹ from the widely diverging—primarily language-based or de-objectified—proposals of the referenced circles. This leads me to raise the following questions: Did Bénédict’s *living systems* actually represent these groups’ avowed theoretical positions and artistic stratagems? To what extent did they motivate and/or exceed them?¹² Writing in 1978, art critic and semiologist Carlos Espartaco—one of the few professional Argentinean critics besides Glusberg to attempt a detailed analysis of Bénédict’s œuvre until that point—suggested such an iconoclastic approach as a core concern: “In the artistic context of the last twenty years, [Bénédict’s work] appears to go against the grain. In some way, he situates himself ‘outside the game,’” by which he meant the development of the twentieth-century avant-garde and neo-avant-garde movements.¹³

Clearly at odds with the “official,” one-sided interpretation of Bénédict’s art espoused by Glusberg, Espartaco’s perspective nevertheless finds justification in certain salient features of the artist’s production, the most important traits being Bénédict’s refusal to break away from both “the tradition of the image” and the craft of art-making,¹⁴ a stubbornness traceable to constructive parameters such as *good form* that persist throughout his entire production. Indeed, unlike other exponents of ecological or systems-based art, Bénédict rebutted painting’s illusionistic nature while maintaining the human or animal referent. His environments thus stand out for the *persistence* of the image in the form of live organisms (i.e. bees, fish, snails, etc.) that he combined with rational systems of organization or observation. Hence, when compared to many of his contemporaries—both at CAYC and abroad—Bénédict’s art, either through its privileging of the object or its display of craftsmanship and technical virtuosity, exudes a certain anachronism that not only makes it intriguing but also extremely rewarding. These characteristics, already evident in the critical decade under consideration, would become even more pronounced in the work that he produced after 1978.

Taken together, these singular features of Bénédict’s œuvre point to an intriguing, complex, and ultimately “unclassifiable” legacy that escapes any Eurocentric parameters and deliberately stands outside of Argentinean avant-garde movements, thus demanding a more distanced and axiological critical reassessment.



Fig. 1
Luis F. Bénédict,
Prócer federal
[Federal Hero], 1960



Fig. 2
Luis F. Bénédict,
El anunciante
[The Announcer],
1962

As a result, what distinguishes Bénédict's early production in the context of postwar art in Europe and the Americas is an innovative idea of the image that operates not *against the grain* of innovations but *within* highly experimental, systems-based proposals. Its origins can be traced back to postwar existentialist humanism as well as to the tenets of Arte Povera, the Italian radical movement that the artist absorbed during his stay in Rome in 1967. In this sense, rather than fully accepting the rational, cybernetic, forward-moving impulse at the core of Burnham's "systems aesthetics," Bénédict opted for a neo-humanistic approach that sought to divest the image of its artificiality by returning it to its "real," pre-iconic state. In his own view, only through this regressive strategy, could art *resist* the dehumanizing effects provoked by the increasingly pervasive influence of technology. From this updated perspective, Bénédict's embrace of systems art and the scientific paradigm, rather than being ends in and of themselves—as Glusberg would have liked us to believe—can be considered part of a broader ideological and political project aimed at reversing the dehumanizing effects of Developmentalism¹⁵ and technology on contemporary culture in Argentina and beyond.

An Artisan of Systematic Images

The focus on the iconic image was evident in Bénédict's earliest work due to the artist's inclination toward a postwar neo-humanist, left-oriented political position that eschewed the conventions of figurative painting in favor of the production of unsuspected "artistic" meanings; in other words, a position that considered the signifier its real and persistent structuring paradigm. In 1961, the oil and enamel paintings presented in his first solo exhibition at Buenos Aires' Galería Lirolay, exemplified by *Prócer federal* [Federal Hero, 1960] (fig. 1) and *El anunciante* [The Announcer, 1962] (fig. 2), bring to light two unquestionable issues from that period: the background of rural animals (the poster of the exhibition carried the image of a horse) and the affinities with Luis Felipe Noé's paradigmatic *Serie federal* [Federal Series].¹⁶ These works already stood out for their unapologetically bright, cartoonish, and viscerally rendered images of inflated, animal-like individuals—mostly parodic portraits of indistinct politicians—grounded in such unorthodox sources as the matteric humanism of Jean Dubuffet, the abstract patterns and motifs of the ancient Incas, and the work of the internationally recognized Argentinean master of parody and assemblage, Antonio Berni.¹⁷ In a similar vein, the series he produced between this first solo exhibition in 1961 and the 1968 Galería Rubbers show in Buenos Aires that launched his *living systems* was in line with contemporary figurative painting trends such as the Argentinean *Otra Figuración*¹⁸ and the French-led international Figuration Narrative movement. Both tendencies represented a reaction to the hegemony of abstraction—embodied by American Abstract Expressionism and the School of Paris—as well as to the ascendant influence at that time of American Pop art (and, by extension, American values) throughout Europe.

In this context, Bénédict's participation early on in the groundbreaking exhibition *La figuration narrative dans l'art contemporain* [Figuration Narrative in Contemporary Art] is not only revealing but also sheds light on the left-leaning ideological underpinnings of his earliest production. Organized in October 1965 by the French-Algerian curator and critic G  rald Gassiot-Talabot, the show originally served to consolidate the loosely held together international Figuration Narrative movement.¹⁹ Gassiot-Talabot's selection highlighted the multifarious explorations of the iconic image through serialization, film sequences, and "narrative" resources—linked to poetry, cinema, photography, theater, and politics—by a broad and heterogeneous group of artists.²⁰ Additionally—as I have discussed elsewhere²¹—many of those participating—Antonio Berni included—turned to cartoons for strategies (comic distortion, zooming, close-ups, foreshortening, text bubbles, appropriation, quotation) that would allow them to explore the critical potential of the image in contemporary bourgeois society. By tapping into these image-based resources, Figuration Narrative attempted to both "reinvent" painting from an updated perspective as well as to turn it into a critical tool to counter what Gassiot-Talabot and others saw as the commercially driven values of Pop art.²² Early autobiographical paintings by Bénédict such as *La casa del arquitecto* [The Architect's House, 1964] (fig. 3) and *El matrimonio* [The Couple, 1964] (fig. 4), shared with Figuration Narrative artists the emphasis on comic books, science fiction, and other popular culture sources

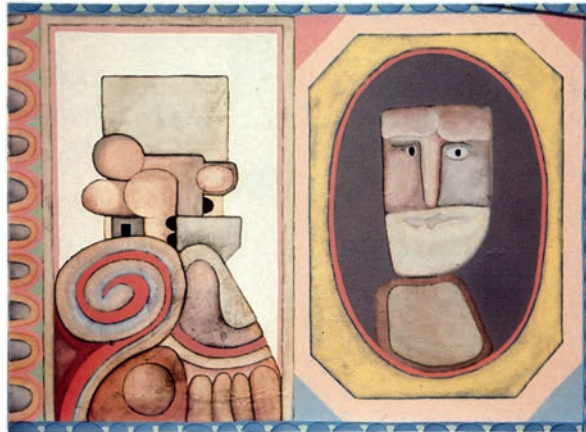


Fig. 3
Luis F. Benedit,
La casa del arquitecto
[The Architect's
House], 1964



Fig. 4
Luis F. Benedit,
El matrimonio
[The Couple], 1964
Museo Provincial de
Bellas Artes Emilio
Pettoruti, La Plata

combined with the serial, narrative format.²³ In these and later works, Benedit also used the industrial enamel Albalux—a staple of advertising and commercial graphic design adopted by Figuration Narrative and other avant-garde groups of the period—to endow the painting with a flat, lustrous quality associated with commercial advertisements and promotional posters.²⁴ In this way he further called into question the preciousness and privileged status of painting.

Benedit's pictorial explorations of the iconic image took a new turn in 1966–67 when—in sharp contrast to the comic strip or biographically inspired narratives of his early paintings—animals associated with Argentinean rural industries (cows, bulls, sheep) became the focus of a series of oil and enamel paintings which he exhibited at Galería Rubbers.²⁵ As the artist himself revealed to a reporter a few years later, animals had not only been a special interest of his since childhood, but their presence in his work carried strong emotional, even metaphorical connotations. In his words: “they remind me of the happy summers . . . of my childhood in [the Argentine province of] Entre Ríos.”²⁶ Unlike the early paintings, however, Benedit's focus on animals in this intriguing series went beyond playful or ironic representations. In this case, the artist appeared intent on exposing the negative impact of technology on these animals and, by extension, on the surrounding environment.

Fig. 5
Luis F. Benedit,
*Margaritas a los
chanchos* [Daisies for
the Pigs], 1967

Fig. 6
Luis F. Benedit,
Lo que hay que pasar
[What Must Be
Endured], 1967



As Marcelo Pacheco underscores, “the rural element is his foundation”; for him the ambiguity experienced in the Argentinean countryside, divided between the worker and the rural elite, was a tension whose contradiction he assimilated from long periods spent at his estate in Santa Coloma.²⁷ It must be stressed that in order to highlight the industrialization of the countryside, the artist developed a series of visual strategies. As illustrated by *Margaritas a los chanchos* [Daisies for the Pigs, 1967] (fig. 5), in some of these works he amplified the shape of the animals and—by means of airbrush-produced sfumato—compartmentalized their bodies to suggest mechanically driven robotic toys. In other paintings, he introduced ironic inversions that straddle the line between humans and beasts. In *Lo que hay que pasar* [What Must Be Endured, 1967] (fig. 6), for example, a hieratic cow patiently endures having its horns cut by a headless and greatly diminished human figure. The smart application of his trademark Albalux enamel painting in strident colors further underscores, because of its commercial associations, the natural and animal worlds as lucrative commodities in an age of capitalist consumption.

The dichotomy between endangered nature and the devastating effects of industrial mechanization upon the natural environment—a fixture of Benedit’s later work—first appeared in this series of oil and enamel paintings and rapidly evolved into the central theme of his increasingly more experimental explorations.²⁸ The next step in this process was the gradual shift from two-dimensional, pictorially rendered images (art) to their three-dimensional counterparts in the form of living animals or organisms (life). In this art-life dialectic, the incorporation of real specimens as artistic proposal could be traced to the interest he developed in ecology and biology while in Rome in 1967 on a fellowship to study landscape architecture and industrial design.²⁹ There, as part of his research on natural habitats, he experimented with the idea of combining artistic objects with containers for live animals.³⁰

Such a transition, in turn, was grounded in several factors that converged around that year. First, there was the recognition on the part of Bénédict that painting—as well as sculpture—had lost its long-held and, in his view, unjust primacy as a medium of artistic creation and experimentation. By contrast, consumer society had created “a new objects aesthetic” that erased the conventional hierarchies between high and low art, or traditional art and popular and applied arts. This meant that an automobile or a machine could be as artistically valuable as a painting or sculpture by a recognized artist.³¹ Second, Bénédict firmly believed that unbridled urban and industrial growth were not only annihilating nature but also leading humanity toward an artificial state. Third, he saw the appeal of science as a rational antidote to the suffocating chaos of the environment. In his words, “We must say good-bye to natural life as best we can, [and embrace] an artificial nature. I am not a nostalgic person. I believe in the evolution towards artificiality.”³² The constellation at play is not just about the simple opposition between the human and the artificial. Being “an artist of inverse dialectical paradigms,” as Pacheco would characterize him, the *inverted utopia* to which he aspired is not monophasic but varies according to the diverse narratives that each epoch imposes. From his point of view, Bénédict’s solution was “to take the animal out of its natural habitat and insert him in an artificial ecological niche.” If the animal survived, this solution would provide *hope* for the human species.³³ Hope here, however, does not mean salvation. Tempering pessimism with an openness to latent possibilities, his words shed light on the underlying concerns that motivated the abrupt shift from painting to environmental works: on one hand, he saw humanity spiraling downward into a de-humanized world; on the other hand, he felt the need to find solutions (as temporary as they may be) for the continuation of human life in such adverse conditions.

In this context, *Microzoo*, the monumental environment that opened at Galería Rubbers in November 1968, was a pivotal work that represents the first comprehensive instance of the artist’s incursions into the ecological realm, thereby allowing insights into the motivations for this somewhat abrupt turn in his art production.³⁴ Bénédict’s advisor and collaborator in this project was Antonio Battro—a psychologist specializing in artificial intelligence—who provided the scientific parameters for the visual experiment.³⁵ Inspired by Battro’s research on the intelligence of frogs and bees, the artist designed dozens of artificial habitats for parrots (mostly macaws and Australian parrots), turtles, fish, ants, salamanders, a beehive, onion and potato bulbs, and flowering plants (fig. 7), which he installed in the black, fabric-covered spaces of Galería Rubbers. In such a dramatic setting, brightly focused lights brought to life the animals and objects on display.³⁶ Bénédict also incorporated hundreds of domesticated bees that circulated outside the gallery through a transparent tube connecting to a patio. Free to fly through the tube, the bees—as observed by an amused journalist—ended up fluttering their wings at the nearby Plaza San Martín.³⁷ Writing in the exhibition catalogue, Glusberg observed how the impulse behind such a complex work already underscored “the need to return to the real,” an operation that, in turn, abolished sculpture in its traditional sense, substituting it for a relational “system.”³⁸

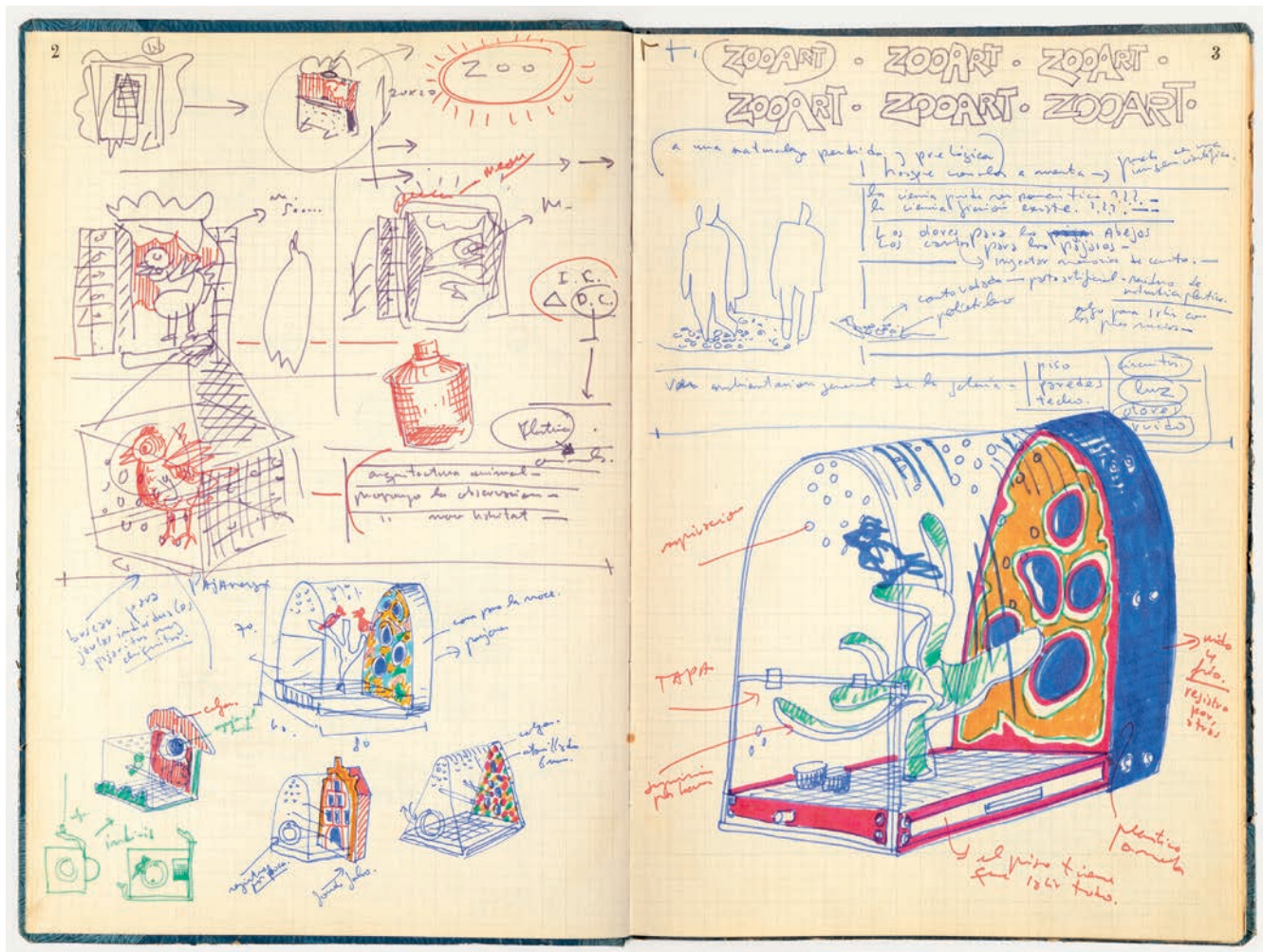


Fig. 7
Luis F. Benedit,
sketchbook, c. 1968

In his attempt to position Benedit as part of the latest artistic trend, Glusberg missed—perhaps ignored—a key point about *Microzoo*: the installation did not really leave pictorial artifice—or the image—behind. Instead, an outstanding, if little understood aspect of the mega-installation was the fact that, unlike the habitats he produced a few years later, the environment consisted of both genuine and artificial polychrome birds and animals that literally—and didactically—exposed the viewer to the limits between “real” (living organism) and “artificial” (image). In order to underscore this key aspect of the work, many of the habitats and animals appeared attached to large canvases with images painted in bright colors.³⁹ In other cases, transparent bags containing water with live fish or bird cages with live specimens were hung next to the canvases (figs. 8 to 11). The viewer was thus able to compare images with their real-life sources. These strategies allowed Benedit to restore “life” to the image and in the process stage and manipulate the “real”/“life” dichotomy to render it as (art)ifice.

Clearly, far from constituting a full-fledged “system,” *Microzoo* was an unwieldy installation, part “reality” experiment, part “science” spectacle that nevertheless illustrated the paradoxes at the core of Benedit’s initial forays into *living systems*. The uniqueness of his approach becomes clear when we compare his early incursions into this realm with the work of David Medalla (Filipino) and Hans Haacke (German), two pioneers of this brand of experimental art. In the early 1960s, the visionary Medalla proposed a series of *Collapsible Sculptures* that incorporated living things such as snails, shrimps, and ants. In Medalla’s works, snails would move over touch-sensitive plates setting off different tones; shrimp could be induced to perform in an underwater ballet; or ants could be made part of a magnified pattern of shapes in a glass farm.⁴⁰ However, by 1964 Medalla had abandoned these image-based proposals—many of which never materialized—to focus on abstract processes related to nature, as illustrated by his *Cloud Canyons* or *Bubble Machines* series (1963) (fig. 12). While Medalla used bubbles to replicate the processes of cloud formation, Haacke, in particular, turned to natural and/or technological systems impacted by environmental changes. These proposals included either the condensation of water in *Condensation Cube* (1965) (fig. 14) or the incubation of eggs highlighted in *Chickens Hatching* (1969) (fig. 13). Describing the goal of his ecological systems, Haacke underscored the need “to make something which experiences, reacts to its environment, changes, is non-stable, make something that reacts to light and temperature changes . . . Make something that lives in time and allows the ‘spectator’ to experience time.”⁴¹

By contrast, and as suggested above, in its embrace of the evasive real/artificial paradigm and the iconic image, Benedit’s *Microzoo* finds a more productive connection to the Italian Arte Povera movement first conceptualized by critic and curator Germano Celant. Benedit’s sojourn in Rome in 1967 coincided with the official emergence of this highly influential movement that transcended the Italian art scene.⁴² In addition to questioning the parameters of object-based production, Arte Povera artists were among the first to incorporate animals, vegetables and minerals—all key interests of Benedit—into their artistic expressions. Celant observed how, attracted by their “physical, chemical and biological possibilities,” the artist—as well as the ecologist and scientist—had become interested in the behavior of the animate and inanimate.⁴³ To that end, he eschewed description and representation in favor of the actual, real dynamics offered by microorganisms. According to Celant’s view, Arte Povera thus represented the taking back of nature and the environment from the negative forces of capitalism. In his words,

it is a moment that tends toward de-culturization, regression, primitiveness and repression, towards the pre-logical and pre-iconographic stage, towards elementary and spontaneous politics, a tendency towards the basic element in nature (land, sea, snow, minerals, heat, animals) and in life (body, memory, thought), as well as in behavior (family, spontaneous action, class struggle, violence, environment).⁴⁴

Fig. 8
Reproduction of
El hambre sin solución
[The Hunger that
Cannot Be Satisfied],
1967, in catalogue
to *Microzoo*, Buenos
Aires, Galería
Rubbers, 1968



Figs. 9 to 11
Luis F. Benedit,
sketchbook, c. 1968

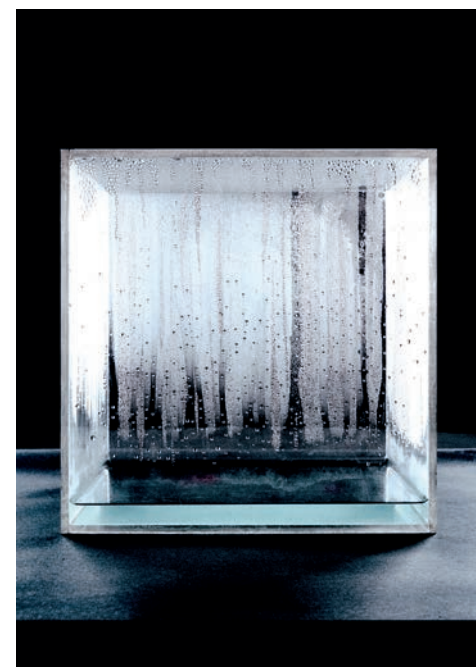




Fig. 12
David Medalla, *Bubble Machine BGSP #1*,
1963/2013
Courtesy of Baró Galeria, São Paulo

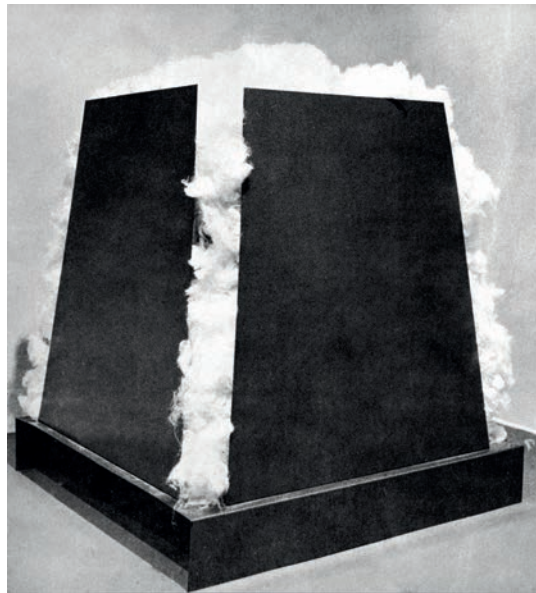
Fig. 13
Hans Haacke, *Chickens Hatching*, 1969
© Hans Haacke-Artists Rights Society (ARS)

Fig. 14
Hans Haacke, *Condensation Cube*, 1965
(2006) (2013)
Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona,
MACBA
Fundación MACBA. Donation from the
National Committee and Board of Trustees
of the Whitney Museum of American Art

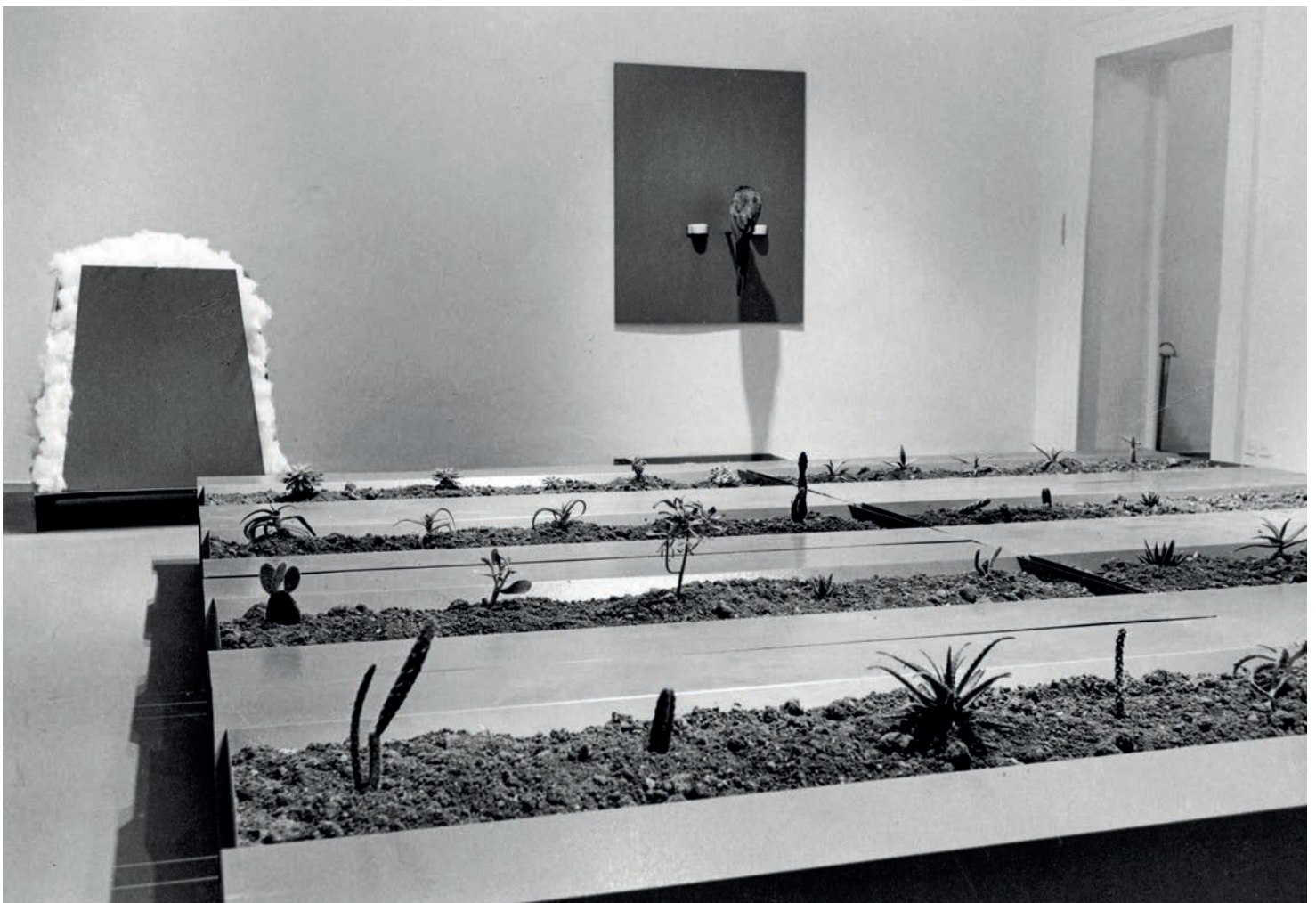


Benedit's pronouncements as well as the series of strategies that he put into play in *Microzoo* reveal points of contact with Celant and the work of key exponents of Arte Povera, in particular the Greek sculptor Jannis Kounellis. Indeed, Benedit's 1967 stay in Rome coincided with Kounellis's first installation at the Galleria L'Attico where he displayed both organic and inorganic elements in the form of "live birds in cages along with rose-shaped, cloth cut-outs pinned to canvas"⁴⁵ The ensemble included a live parrot that sat on a perch fixed to a metal panel on the wall—a motif that Benedit would replicate in *Microzoo*⁴⁶—along with eight horizontal iron troughs filled with earth and cacti, a bale of cotton compressed inside four steel plates, and an aquarium with goldfish set on an iron base (figs. 15 to 17).⁴⁷ By introducing these "live" elements into the artistic proposal, Kounellis was not so much merging art and life but rather making life a constitutive element of the work. He referred to the inorganic elements as "structure" and to the organic elements as "sensitivity," thereby underscoring the tension between the rational and subjective aspects of any artistic proposal.⁴⁸ The artist reached further into these investigations when, two years later, he introduced twelve horses of various breeds and colors attached to wall rings inside the same gallery space (fig. 18).⁴⁹ The carefully positioned horses carried art historical references to heroic painting and equestrian sculpture and, in the artist's view, functioned as a living "tableau." Kounellis's goal in both cases was not to dissolve but rather to extend the limits of art by embracing the emotional and subjective features lost to contemporary capitalist societies. The result was the equivalent of a three-dimensional still life infused with the unpredictable interaction between all the live elements displayed and the participant-viewer.

Benedit's *Microzoo* shared the general art-centered thrust of Kounellis's early Arte Povera installations while at the same time diverging from them. Unlike the environments Benedit produced in the 1970s, the persistence of his earlier paintings and handcrafted objects next to the animals pointed to a "pre-systems" proposal. Indeed, as he explained, his intention was to provide "two levels of reading: the first involving the design of the boxes and cages as well as the surrounding paintings that nevertheless stood on their own; the second comprised the marvelous spectacle (new for urban man) of the exposed animals."⁵⁰ Hence, as in the case of Kounellis, the purpose of *Microzoo* was not to merge art and life but to establish them as distinct parallel realms that would not only expand the notion and experience of art but would also stimulate some kind of interaction with the work on the part of viewers. Benedit's proposal, however, differed from those of Kounellis in his adoption of a scientific or pseudo-scientific model as an overall framework for the individual components of *Microzoo*. In the short text included in the exhibition catalogue, Battro expanded upon the aims of this type of strategy by taking it into the realm of science. He explained that the goal was not to illustrate or promote scientific theory or industrial design but rather to articulate "a particular 'metabolism' between *living beings* and *plastic forms*, that is, between *biological* and *artistic spaces*."⁵¹ Confronted by the stark contrast between aesthetic artifice and the architecture of the biological habitat, the viewer was forced to combine two heterogeneous if not opposing registers.



Figs. 15 to 17
Jannis Kounellis, *Senza titolo* [Untitled], 1967,
Galleria L'Attico, Rome
Courtesy of the author
© Claudio Abate, Rome



The opposition thus becomes a genre unto itself in this proposal. In Battro's view—by transforming art into industrial design and science into technique—Benedit had been able to bridge, for the first time, pure art and pure science.⁵²

On another level, both the emphasis and level of craftsmanship of the installation did not pass unrecognized by critics and audiences. In this regard, it is interesting to compare Battro's and Glusberg's pseudo-scientific explanations of the work with those of art critics reviewing the already mentioned exhibition. In a lengthy article, Cayetano Córdova Iturburu—an original *martinfierrista* who became the chief promoter and critic of the Argentinean avant-garde—provided exhaustive details of the installation, highlighting above all the “hallucinating” and completely unanticipated effects produced by its dramatic mise-en-scène. The critic attributed to Benedit's work “a curious sensation of primary, elemental energy” that emanated from its multicolor and multiformed mottling. Yet, rather than dwell on the relationship between art and science, he related it to the goal of artistic integration of everyday life and art through the embellishment of objects surrounding man in urban and domestic settings, a longing pursued since the nineteenth century by a host of artists, from John Ruskin to the Bauhaus.⁵³ Drawing attention to the role of craft in *Microzoo*, Córdova Iturburu declared it to be at the conjunction between arts and crafts.⁵⁴

Fig. 18
Jannis Kounellis, *Senza titolo* [Untitled], 1969,
Galleria L'Attico, Rome
Courtesy of the author
© Claudio Abate, Rome



Microzoo provided Benedit the first real opportunity to test the real/artificial paradigm and, in my view, he does so dialectically. And the results, filtered through the insights provided by Arte Povera, clearly pointed to the tendency—already present in his previously-cited early series—to affirm “the real”—that is, life—over “the artificial.” The reference to his *modus operandi* is not gratuitous. When co-curating with me the exhibition *Inverted Utopias* (MFAH, Houston, 2004), Héctor Olea based his constellation framework in Theodor Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics* (1966). Hence, in exemplifying here the real/artificial constellation, I am conscious of the fact that, as in the non-conventional Adornian proposal, neither the thesis nor the anti-thesis are expected to culminate in a synthesis.⁵⁵ If this is the axis that sustains Benedit’s production, it does so in the sense of creative negativity that characterizes it. In each case, Benedit tested the limits only to return to the exaltation of life in a pre-technological state. A year later, the artist once again probed this tension in the context of an invitation extended to him and five other artists to experiment with drawing images with a plotter linked to an IBM 1130 computer.⁵⁶ Benedit’s experiment consisted of registering the flight of a bee. From the outset, however, it became clear to him that while the machine could function as a tool for drawing, it was not a medium for composing novel images. The fact that it had to be fed information beforehand made everything too predictable, eliminating “real life,” spontaneity, and chance. Such an experience only reinforced his faith in the iconic power of the image as well as in the anti-technological concerns which had drawn him to the Arte Povera artists, while steering his art into uncharted territory.

A Systematic Practitioner of Theories

Between 1970 and 1975, Benedit continued his active investigations of ethological phenomena through the production of large-scale habitats for living organisms that significantly expanded the opposition between the *real* and *artificial* first introduced in *Microzoo*. Yet, in sharp contrast to this early work, he eliminated any material evidence of painting or sculpture, producing instead technically complex room-size acrylic containers filled with insects or plants. Complementing these major works—exemplified by *Biotrón* (1970) and *Fitotrón* (1972)—were a series of smaller scale proposals and multiples intended for individual use. In each case, however, the virtual “representation” was replaced with three-dimensional live specimens engaged in their own natural cycles of activity (flying, eating, exercising, growing). To the extent that they embodied natural or manmade “multileveled organizational structures of living forms,”⁵⁷ such living habitats completed Benedit’s full transition into systems art. The concept of “system” itself was an abstraction that allowed the artist to register ad infinitum the transformations of certain properties or behaviors either by themselves (closed) or in relation to other systems (open).⁵⁸ It also allowed for establishing dynamic systems of formal or structural relations across networks of human and animal activity unrelated to art.

At first glance, the artist's *living systems* seemed to signal a radical abandonment of art in favor of science or cybernetics. Notions of "model habitats" and/or "controlled situations" associated with scientific research methods led Benedit to reconfigure the artistic experience away from the object status associated with any form of painting or sculpture—no matter how experimental—while at the same time providing a more detached, open-ended structure that stimulated the viewer's visual and cognitive engagement with the work. Additionally, implicit in the methodology that made possible his *living systems* was the abandonment of the traditional role of the artist and its substitution for that of head researcher in charge of setting up and controlling situations that allowed for systems to work within a given set of variables. Indeed, in order to produce such complex works, Benedit relied on interdisciplinary teams that included, in addition to himself, ethologists, engineers, biologists, bio-chemists and horticulturists.⁵⁹

Closer to laboratory rooms than to sculpture, the first of these environments, *Biotrón*—meaning "a place apt for life"—consisted of a monumental Plexiglas and aluminum container filled with four thousand live bees inside a transparent beehive (cat. no. 5).⁶⁰ Expanding on the concept and mechanism he had introduced in *Microzoo*, Benedit connected the bees to the Biennale gardens through twenty-five artificial flowers that produced a sweet nectar controlled by an electric device. In order to feed themselves, the insects could consume the nectar from the artificial flowers, or they could go outside into the gardens to find nourishment in the real plants. The *Fitotrón*, by contrast, was a monumental aluminum and acrylic climatized chamber featuring a hydroponic system made up of sixty Japanese cabbage plants sown in processed volcanic rock (Perlit) (cat. no. 44). An automatic system fed the plants water and chemicals, and their growth was stimulated by six lamps that recreated natural conditions. While in *Biotrón* the focus was the bees' patterns of flight and nourishment, in *Fitotrón*, the emphasis was on the actual growth and transformation of the plants from seedlings to full-grown specimens inside the artificially controlled environment. Moreover, through the alteration of variables such as light, heat, humidity, or chemicals, the growth process could be altered to produce mutations or hybrids.⁶¹

In both works, the presence of this dialectical constellation signaled Benedit's assimilation of technology as an indispensable tool for the preservation of life on the planet, even if artificially. Rather than involving a strict dichotomy, he approached these elements as complementary components of a more encompassing process. Such a position represented a change from the nature/technology antinomy that marked his early series of oil and enamel paintings featuring mechanized animals. Instead, Benedit, like other artists who subscribed to system aesthetics, engaged both nature and technology as different versions of the same cybernetic phenomena.⁶² Indeed, for Benedit, the living organisms—whether plant or animal—embodied machines with their own self-regulating mechanisms and forms of organization. In the case of *Fitotrón*, the roots, leaves, and stems were all components of a larger system—photosynthesis—where each part had a specific function in the processing of light into food and energy. As Glusberg observed, "Benedit shows how every

plant constitutes by itself a laboratory.”⁶³ Despite the ostensible intention to reject art in favor of science, however, the artist’s statements indicate that his relationship to these two realms of activity was far more complex. Worth keeping in mind here is the fact that both *Biotrón* and *Fitotrón* were conceived to be displayed either in art events or in museum spaces. *Biotrón* was Bedit’s submission to the XXXV Venice Biennale in 1970 to which he had been selected as Argentina’s official representative;⁶⁴ *Fitotrón* was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, in 1972, marking his introduction to the influential New York art scene.⁶⁵ Asked about the status of *Biotrón*, the artist observed that the work was an experiment born out of an artistic impulse: “it is a visual art since it expands the aesthetic realm by introducing an unprecedented element: the observation of animal life.”⁶⁶ He thus described the new proposal as “a biological occupation of space” that, insofar as it involved live species in constant movement, redefined the relationship between the traditional artistic “container” (i.e., “form”) and that which it “contained” (“content”).⁶⁷ These words suggest that Bedit was less interested in the scientific aspect of the works than in the authority that science could yield with regard to the relationship between art and the natural world.⁶⁸ Hence, for him the choice of “science” was as much strategic as ideological.

At the core of such an iconoclastic proposal, however, was the artist’s undeniable fascination with the formal and conceptual possibilities which “live forms” offered to the contemporary artist. Bedit, indeed, reveled in the exaltation of the organisms and phenomena that made up his environments, an aspect that he shared with other systems-art practitioners. Burnham observed that while the system is a fundamental concept of cybernetics, its value as an artistic idea lies in its power to cope with kinetic situations, and particularly the connecting structures of evolving events. The longstanding yearning among modern artists “to break down the barriers between art and living reality, not only to make an art form that is believably real, but to go beyond and to furnish images capable of intelligent intercourse with their creators”⁶⁹ was behind such seemingly disparate trends as Kinetic art, Arte Povera or ecological art. In each case, the “artistic object” was substituted by either a motor-driven machine or the retinal processing of the viewer or, as in this case, by living phenomena. Bedit’s abandonment of pictorial or sculptural “representation” and his embrace of systems art can thus be traced to this goal of breaking down the static nature of conventional media by generating images that in some form or another would interact among themselves or with the viewer. This was the case of the back-and-forth movement of the flying bees, mice chasing food in labyrinths, or plants photosynthesizing in front of the viewer’s very eyes. Unlike Kounellis, however, Bedit’s aim was not merely to compare “art” and “life,” but instead to promote through such an experimental form of art “a social phenomenology of animal behaviour” that would jolt the most rudimentary observer, bringing him closer to a natural world from which he had been alienated.⁷⁰ To the extent that he worked with “real-time systems,” his project proved to be far more radical than any other attempted thus far by the Arte Povera artists.⁷¹

Intrinsic to Bénédict's living habitats—as well as to systems art in general—was a form of didacticism grounded in the audience's reaction to the piece. As Burnham observed, “In a society thus estranged, only the didactic function of art continues to have meaning. . . . The specific function of modern didactic art has been to show that art does not reside in material entities, but in relations between people and between people and the components of their environment.”⁷² The *Biotrón* and *Fitotrón* not only exposed viewers to insect and plant behavior but also encouraged them to learn and to develop their own conclusions based on the active observation of these phenomena.⁷³ Active viewer engagement was both a key goal of the large *living systems* and also the motivational impulse for the series of multiples that he coined “Minibiotrones.” These small-scale objects, which allowed viewers to observe insects and small animals, were designed as readymade receptacles with openings for breathing. The *Minibiotrón* in particular consisted of a transparent acrylic cylinder with a magnifying glass to reveal up close the movements of insects and small animals (bugs, bees, spiders or worms) (cat. no. 10). Moreover, the artist created prototypes for multiples containing snails as well as a fish tank with water that functioned as a distorting magnifying glass, all of which he exhibited with the *Biotrón* in Venice (cat. no. 17).⁷⁴ His intention was to encourage people to buy these readymade containers and take them home so they could live with and observe the small organisms.⁷⁵ In this way, he sought to jolt viewers out of their complacent existence and make them aware of and more connected to the life unfolding around them. Implicit in this strategy was an attempt to transcend the idea of an exhibition as a static, institutional event while at the same time dissolving the margin that separates public from private.

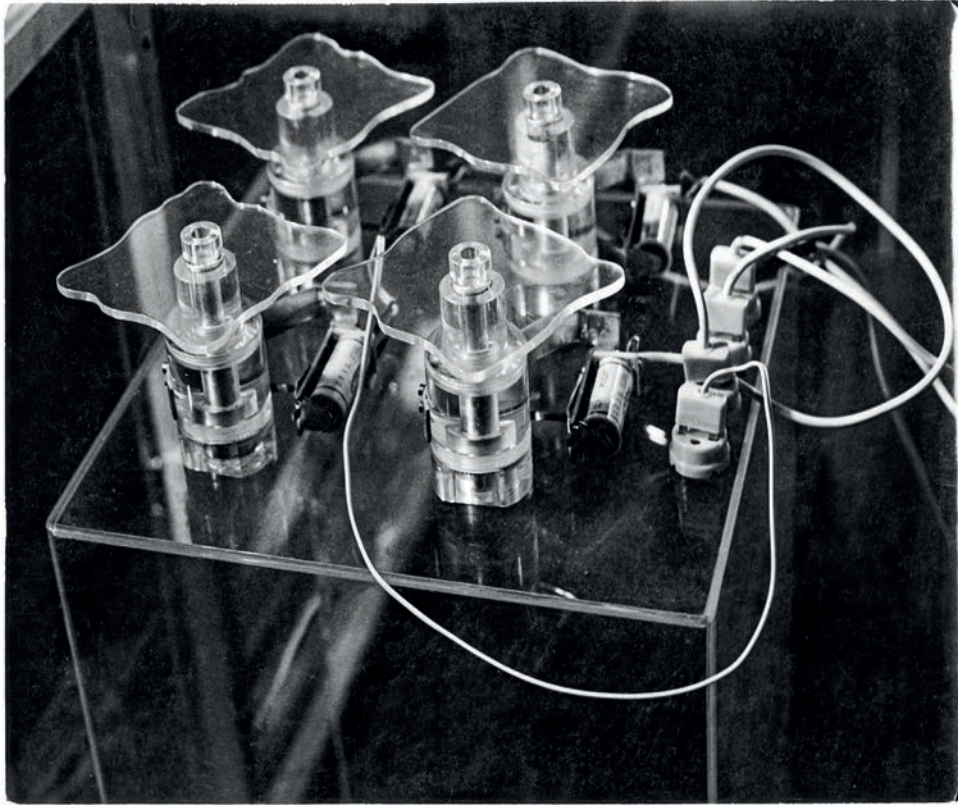
The aim of challenging people's routines and expectations also animated Bénédict's research into another related system in the form of a series of labyrinths for ants, rodents, and cockroaches which he began in 1970. Yet, unlike the *Biotrón* series, where the insects were contained inside the Plexiglas structures, these works operated by creating intricate mazes and setting up a series of variable conditions that induced specific patterns of animal behavior. *Laberinto para ratones blancos* [Labyrinth for White Mice] (cat. no. 20 and 21)—exhibited with *Fitotrón* at MoMA in 1972—for example, consisted of water and an opaque chamber where six mice lived. The mice chased food through an intricate passageway, the conditions of which changed every forty-eight hours. By observing how the mice confronted these challenges, viewers could learn about their cognitive and survival patterns. In an ironic twist, the labyrinths series also included the *Laberinto invisible* [Invisible Labyrinth, 1971] (cat. no. 35), an intricate trial-and-error learning experience that substituted the animals with the actual viewer.⁷⁶ The implied interchangeability of this strategy suggests that in some instances even when the viewer is watching the animal he/she is also watching him/herself. In this work the participant had to reach the end of the complex spatial configuration without making mistakes in order to observe the behavior of a Mexican axolotl. The boundaries of the structure were invisible but real and were protected by beams of light and alarms that went off every time the participant crossed them. In this way, Bénédict completed a strategic operation whereby the viewer

not only took the place of the caged animals but also embodied a living image. At the same time, beyond noting the works' status as controlled experiments in animal and human behavior, it is impossible to ignore a further interpretive register for this series. I refer to their value as metaphors for the conditions confronting Argentinean citizens in the extremely volatile political climate that dominated the period between 1966 and 1976, characterized by a series of successive military coups, the suspension of civil liberties, and popular unrest that lasted one more decade. While Bénédict did not explicitly allude to the political rationale surrounding any of his works, this particular series seems to conjure the same defense of humanism expressed in the oil and enamel painting series of 1967–68.

The combination of a rigorous systems model with live images that went as far as including viewers themselves clearly set Bénédict apart from other exponents of systems or ecological art, gaining him a great deal of international attention and visibility. His extremely positive reception in Venice unequivocally confirmed the distinct appeal that his brand of systems art exerted on both the critical establishment as well as on the general public. Critics in Europe and America concurred on the assessment that Bénédict was the Biennale's "outstanding innovator" and the artificial bee-house the "popular hit of Venice."⁷⁷ Some even argued that, after the *Biotrón*, the majority of so-called "process" and "ecological" art seemed tentative or even naïve in comparison (fig. 19). Argentinean critics covering the Biennale also enthusiastically endorsed Bénédict's achievement, which they considered of even greater importance given the backdrop of extreme social and political turmoil that marked the event as well as the financial and logistical challenges confronted by the Argentinean delegation.⁷⁸ Taking stock of these factors, Buenos Aires critic Lorenzo Amengual declared the success of *Biotrón* the "the only positive [result]" to come out of the complete failure of that year's exhibition.⁷⁹ The Venice success, in turn, translated into increased opportunities for Bénédict in the form of both collective and solo shows in major galleries and museums in Europe, the United States, and Latin America, a distinction that very few artists from Argentina had previously enjoyed.⁸⁰

Meanwhile Glusberg was keen to capitalize on Bénédict's success by organizing the first exhibition of systems art ever held in Argentina. Indeed, Bénédict was one of three artists that the entrepreneur-curator Glusberg displayed in *De la figuración al arte de sistemas* [From Figuration to Systems Art]—the second exhibition sponsored by the recently created Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAyC) at the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio A. Caraffa in Córdoba—which served to officially launch this movement in Argentina.⁸¹ The other two featured artists were Nicolás García Urriburu, who gained visibility after tinting the Grand Canal green during the 1968 Venice Biennale, and Edgardo Antonio Vigo, who exhibited woodcuts, objects and documentation related to site-specific interventions. Despite the innovative nature of their work and Glusberg's vague efforts to justify their inclusion in the exhibition, there was little in Urriburu's or Vigo's art that could be considered systems art in the sense outlined earlier by Burnham.⁸² More closely aligned with experimental trends such as happenings or concrete poetry, their somewhat more modest proposals could not

Fig. 19
Luis F. Benedit,
Biotrón (Flores
artificiales)
[Biotron (Artificial
Flowers)], 1970



compete on equal footing with the conceptual and technological sophistication of *Biotrón*, *Fitotrón*, or any of Benedit's *living systems*. This type of public relations "branding" strategy was also at play in the Buenos Aires version of the same *Arte de sistemas* exhibition which took place in June 1971 at the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires as well as in its sequel, *Arte de sistemas II* [Systems Art II], organized by CAYC in 1972 in its headquarters on Viamonte street. In the first case, Glusberg expanded the original three-artist roster to include one hundred and one experimental artists from all over the world⁸³ who submitted works in the diagrammatic format favored by the center.⁸⁴ In the show's sequel, he presented works by all of the members of Grupo de los Trece.⁸⁵ This all-inclusive practice continued to shape all exhibitions of CAYC between 1970 and 1975 in Buenos Aires and abroad, confounding both local and international critics.⁸⁶

The idea of grouping these heterogeneous artists together under one label attests, on one hand, to the intrinsic pluralism that lay at the core of systems art and, on the other, to the radical diversification this artistic label attained since the publication of Burnham's thesis in *Artforum* in 1968. Indeed by the early 70s, systems art had become an all-inclusive term to denote "an expanded field of practice, implying a shift from singular art objects to the use of systems as artistic mediums."⁸⁷ These included almost every avant-garde tendency of the 1960s and early 70s: Arte Povera, ecological art, conceptual art, idea art,

process art, cybernetics, as well as the entire gamut of anti-formalist proposals that emerged during these critical decades of the twentieth century with the intention of re-envisioning the very notion of art.⁸⁸

In the case of Argentina, however, such a strategy must be seen as part of the institutional platform Glusberg was laying out for CAyC. This platform sought to articulate a somewhat autonomous regional movement capable of projecting Argentinean artists in the international scene by using as a starting point the latest avant-garde tendencies exemplified, in this case, by systems art.⁸⁹ Indeed, in texts introducing the group shows organized by the Center, and in a few writings published in its newsletters, Glusberg is credited with having conceived and coined this novel category,⁹⁰ that is even explained through the lens provided by the next experimental trend or theory in vogue at that moment: conceptualism, structuralism, semiotics, and so on.⁹¹ In his view, such an artistic and theoretical potpourri was justified on the grounds that it represented the significant expansion of the category of systems art at the hands of Argentinean artists who explored a vast number of networks linked to broad-ranging disciplines. By embracing this tendency, Argentina, in turn,

...contribute[d] to the international avant-garde an art that undoubtedly modified the relations viewer-work-producer-environment-society. . . . [Such a development] allowed for the expansion of the ACTIVE field of art, thus breaking the PASSIVITY that until recently afflicted it and to which the viewer was subjected a priori.⁹²

Throughout this process, Benedit remained one of the key exponents—if not the inspiration—of the brand of systems art promoted by Glusberg through CAyC. With the benefit of hindsight, however, it could be argued that the cultural caudillo's all-inclusive strategy negatively impacted Benedit's position (and unquestionable contribution) within the international coordinates of this movement. That is, rather than underscoring his pioneering role vis-à-vis European or North American exponents of systems art, Glusberg's strategy ended up somewhat marginalizing it by positioning it as one more version of a regional collective manifestation.

Moving Beyond the Commonplace

At the core of Benedit's adoption of systems art there lay a profound paradox which resulted from *his refusal* to completely eliminate the role of artist-craftsman from the systems-based artistic proposal. After all, the ultimate objective of systems art in an advanced technological society was ostensibly to eliminate the artist's position as maker of objects. Such an eradication could only take place through the rejection of *craft*. In Burnham's words: "the *significant* artist strives to reduce the technical and physical distance between his artistic output and the productive means of society. . . . Gradually this strategy transforms artistic and technological decision-making into

a single activity.”⁹³ This process does not imply (in a positivist way) that scientists and technicians are converted into “artists,” rather that the artist becomes a symptom of the schism between art and technics. Progressively the need to make ultrasensitive judgments regarding the uses of technology and scientific information becomes “art” in the most literal sense. Haacke, Warhol, Morris, and many other artists of the postwar period took this road, a fact that led Burnham to observe how in such a historical and socio-political context “the artist operates as a quasipolitical *provocateur*.”⁹⁴

As discussed earlier, with *Biotrón* and *Fitotrón*, Bénédict presumably left behind the traditional role of “*Homo-Faber: man the maker* (of tools and images)” in order to emerge as the “*Homo Arbitrator Formae* (man the maker of aesthetic decisions)”⁹⁵ or *artist-researcher-coordinator* of a broad range of cybernetic or specific scientifically oriented activities. Yet, at the same time, his biological *mise-en-scènes* relied on meticulously designed and executed containers and props (cat. no. 3), as well as on hundreds of annotated drawings and preparatory sketches that preceded each and every one of these manufactured objects. While many other systems-based artists relied on unconventional objects, or “unobjects” in Burnham’s terms,⁹⁶ to convey their experimental concerns, very few held on to traditional aspects of artmaking, such as drawing or watercolor painting.⁹⁷ In Bénédict’s case, such a deft display of artistic technique is related to a pair of seemingly paradoxical aspects: on one hand, it belied his refusal to completely let go of the particular features and pleasures associated with the more traditional understanding of the artistic *métier*; on the other hand, it underscored the artist’s belief in the signifying potential of form and material. That is, in his view, the strategic use of these elements functioned as a valuable reinforcement of the information being conveyed at the level of the image.⁹⁸ Such a seamless integration of the formal and conceptual aspects of the work was present in the artist’s production from the very beginning, marking the transition from New Figuration, Pop, and Arte Povera to systems art. However, this feature became even more pronounced between 1972 and 1976—a four-year period that marked a new stage in his work characterized by the increasingly important role played by drawing as a fully autonomous element of his production.

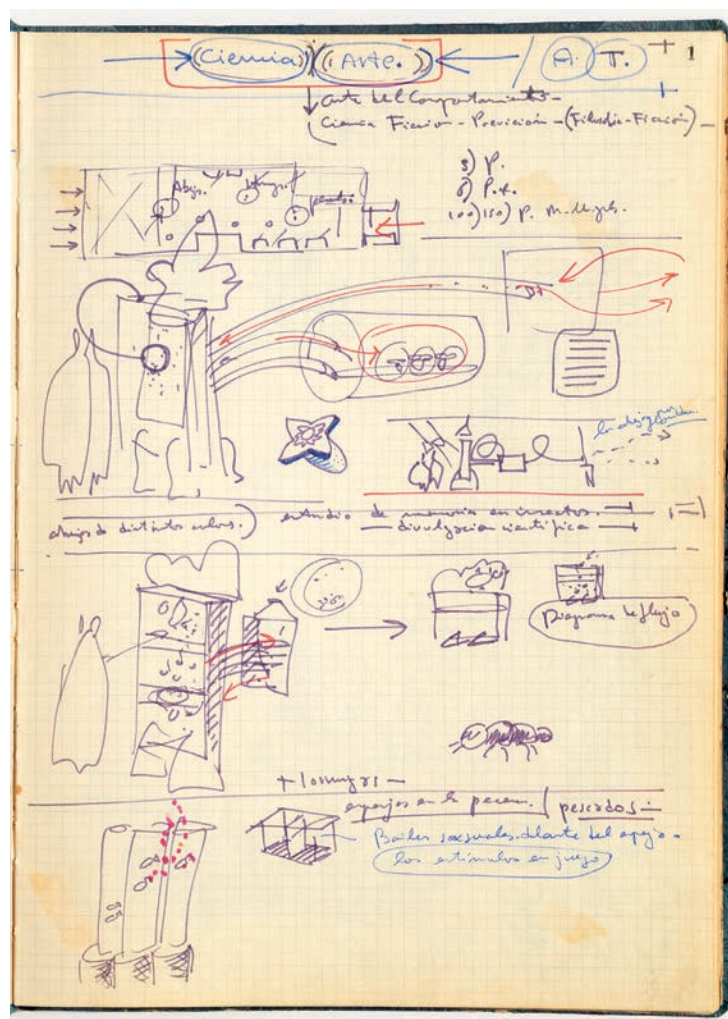
In order to understand the essential significance of this phase of Bénédict’s oeuvre, we must break down the different stages of drawing in his work. Fully grounded in his everyday architectural practice, the works on paper he produced before 1972–73 can be separated into several categories that include: annotated sketches of habitats and multiples; architectural renderings and projections for the three-dimensional fabrication of large- and small-scale habitats; and colorful drawings for multiples and labyrinths. In the first group—exemplified by the series that accompanied *Microzoo*—Bénédict took elaborate pains to indicate with both drawn images and written words and phrases the specific visual features of every component of the *living habitat* or multiple. He used handwriting to provide detailed instructions regarding the object’s construction and maintenance as well as reports regarding its status together with lists of pending chores. Additionally, he introduced in the drawings codified symbols such as arrows, numbers, or signs that provided

linguistic materiality to the image. In many cases, he also used rich color schemes reminiscent of his early painting series, thereby imbuing the images with formal—if not aesthetic—seductiveness. Each sketch thus functioned as a multi-leveled “linguistic system” composed of interdependent parts (figs. 20 to 25). In the architectural renderings, by contrast, the emphasis was placed on the isometric projection of the object or technical blueprint with minimal text references (cat. no. 18). Other drawings—such as *Laberinto para ratones blancos*, 1972—played with the formal elements to produce whimsical or intriguing compositions that explored the contrast between natural and artificial elements (cat. no. 21 to 23).

In 1972, however, Benedit began several large series of works on paper featuring amphibians, fish, birds, mechanically articulated or propelled mollusks, and crustaceans that, despite some similarities, differed significantly from the annotated sketches and architectural renderings. Focused on the opposition between natural and artificial life, an outstanding trait of these series was the contrast, made explicit through negativity, between intricately rendered species and, in Benedit’s own words, the “despiece”⁹⁹ or “destructuring,” of each of the constitutive parts of the featured insect or animal. For this reason they have been described by certain critics as “analytical drawings.”¹⁰⁰ These works—exemplified by the series *Natural-artificial* [Natural-artificial, 1972–75] and *Homenaje a Fabre* [Homage to Fabre, 1975], a portfolio of drawings referencing the French entomologist Jean-Henri Fabre—appear to have been initially conceived as sketches for potential *living systems* projects, yet they never materialized into objects or habitats of any kind. Indeed, by the time he undertook these new series, Benedit had begun to reduce the scale of his *living habitats*, focusing on small organisms such as ants and cockroaches which he presented in easily accessible multiples or labyrinths. According to Ed Shaw, a local critic and friend of the artist, both the structural and technical complexity as well as the costly execution of habitats like *Biotrón* and *Fitotrón* led Benedit to search for more manageable and self-sustaining artistic formats with which to continue to explore biological systems.¹⁰¹ By 1974 Benedit had indeed abandoned his *living habitats*, substituting them with their virtual depictions through drawing.¹⁰² In Shaw’s words, he “returned the animals to nature and he himself went back to working on paper.”¹⁰³ Moving beyond the commonplace, he transitioned from “the systemic” to “the analytical.”

In contrast to the annotated sketches, the analytical drawings provided Benedit with an opportunity to return with great gusto to the two-dimensional image. Indeed, if there is anything that characterizes these drawings it is their sharp, objective, and laser-like attention to detail tempered by the nuanced and technically sophisticated application of watercolor. With the same scientific spirit that he approached his *living habitats*, the artist took on the role of entomological illustrator. In *Homenaje a Fabre n° 6 (Proyecto para una cigarra metálica)* [Homage to Fabre no. 6 (Project for a Metallic Cicada), 1975] (cat. no. 64), for example, he presents extremely detailed views of the top and sides of a real cicada and its artificial counterpart. Following the method he developed in the sketches, he also introduced text to describe or annotate the images.

Figs. 20 to 22
Luis F. Bénédict,
sketchbook, c. 1968



However, unlike the earlier series, the emphasis in this case is not on the descriptive or instructional function of the representation but rather on its “painterly” qualities, which Benedit approached with a certain detachment originating in the presumed objectivity of the “naturalist’s” approach. As if to reinforce the distance that separates the *illusionistic representation* from its natural source, he left the traces of his materials and tools exposed, such as pencil lines and color markings that are visible throughout the paper. The results imprint a disturbing quality to these beautifully crafted images, inevitably underscoring their artificial status as representation.¹⁰⁴ Reviewing an exhibition of these drawings at Estudio Actual in Caracas, the well-known Argentinean critic Marta Traba observed: “These are works that return to us the faith in images through some sort of literal communication of the visual element.”¹⁰⁵

Traba may have been too quick to celebrate Benedit’s return to traditional forms of art (an inherent trait of her always ungraspable conservatism) given that, with the exception of their fine craftsmanship, there was little in these works that related to traditional painting or drawing. With intricately rendered images and annotations, each drawing, indeed, can be seen as constituting a multi-leveled and interrelated “system” where each figurative or textual element is linked to the next as well as to external referents in a network of signification. It is thus impossible to dissociate the seductive appearance of these drawings—i.e., their “craft” quality—from their potential to create or designate meaning within a specific linguistic or conceptual framework. The result was a new approach to the *living system*, one where the exquisitely rendered drawing became a constitutive element of an image or set of images in a transformation that did not hide their status *as work-in-progress*. Moreover, these drawings are also predicated on a form of didacticism that emanates from the viewer’s attempts to reconcile the relationship between the visual and written elements that make up the image. As Carlos Espartaco observed:

When the attention is led to focus on the traits of the figurative “writing,” a fluctuation is produced that simultaneously impacts aesthetic perception. [In this way] his familiar observations are transformed into denotative marks imbued with strangeness.¹⁰⁶

From this point of view, while the “medium” of these works is different, the approach to a given “system” is the same as in the already mentioned artist’s real-time *mise-en-scènes*.

The analytical drawings thus closed a critical cycle in Benedit’s unusual trajectory, one characterized by his paradoxical relationship to the image. As I have tried to show in this text, this trajectory began with two-dimensional painting, culminated with the liberation of the living image into three-dimensional space, and began again with the image to which he reinstated its status as representation. The presumed antinomy of *artificial/real* thus found its rich dialectical inversion as *real/artificial*. Yet, throughout this process, Benedit stubbornly adhered to the principles of systems art: he approached every situation as “a complex of components in interaction,” and went on to map the

changes and transformations in its structure and organization under varying conditions and enriching factors. Yet, he also refused to abandon the skills of the artist's craft, imparting a very personal specificity to his *living systems*. In this way he not only challenged local expectations but earned for himself an enviable position at the forefront of "similar" tendencies in Europe, the United States, and Latin America. For decades, Bénédict's contribution has continued to be largely unrecognized or misunderstood. In my view, one blunt explanation for this failed understanding or acknowledgment lies in the reality that legitimization and a true layered and thoughtful history of Bénédict's extremely unconventional art is impossible if we continue to utilize only predictable or traditional frameworks or paradigms. Fortunately, the present volume provides a new lens, revealing what, undoubtedly, is one of the most experimental, *meta*-artistic, and polemical chapters of twentieth-century art, known as systems art.

- 1 — Jack Burnham, *Beyond Modern Sculpture. The Effects of Science and Technology on the Sculpture of this Century* (New York: George Braziller, June 1968), 369–70.
- 2 — Burnham coined the term in an even more influential essay published in *Artforum* only a few months after the referenced book appeared. See Burnham, “Systems Esthetics,” *Artforum* 7, no. 1 (September 1968): 30–35.
- 3 — Ibid.
- 4 — Benedit inherited the Buenos Aires studio of his father-in-law, the distinguished architect Alberto Prebisch (1899–1970), who had recently passed away.
- 5 — Cited in “Visión panorámica de 1970,” *Bellas Artes, La Nación* (1970), n.p. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.
- 6 — Jorge Glusberg (1932–2002) was a business entrepreneur, art critic, and cultural promoter best known for being the founder and intellectual force behind CAyC. Aggressive, polemical, and visionary in his own right, he was, after Jorge Romero Brest (the well-known critic who founded the innovative Instituto Torcuato Di Tella in the 1960s), the driving agent behind the international positioning of Argentinean artists in the 1960s and 70s. Having trained as an art historian with Romero Brest, he had intellectual aspirations and, in addition to his job as director of a lamp factory, was known for hiring local ghostwriters to pen his numerous articles, essays, and books. This may explain the myriad theoretical inconsistencies and cannibalizations that plague the writings that bear his name. This essay detects some of them.
- 7 — On the basis of the available documentation, it is impossible to determine the exact dates of the opening and closing of CAyC. María José Herrera traces its establishment to late 1968. The first documented activity of the center was the exhibition *Arte y cibernética* [Art and Cybernetics], which opened on August 18, 1969. In 1977, after the award bestowed upon Grupo de los Trece at the XIV Bienal de São Paulo, it may be possible—as Mariana Marchesi observes—to speak of the “end of a cycle.” In the exhibitions that followed, which continued until at least 1994, the group presented itself as Grupo CAyC, with Benedit as one of its participants. See María José Herrera and Mariana Marchesi, *Arte de sistemas. El CAyC y el proyecto de un nuevo arte regional, 1969–1977* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Fundación OSDE, 2013).
- 8 — A critical history of CAyC is yet to be written. The difficulties of exhaustively researching and studying such a complex and diverse movement are quite challenging. For a first attempt, undertaken from a strictly local perspective, see Herrera and Marchesi, 2013.
- 9 — Glusberg first outlined the terms for Arte de Sistemas in *De la figuración al arte de sistemas* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Centro de Arte y Comunicación, 1970), n.p. [see ICAA Digital Archive, Record ID 761141]. As will become evident from other footnotes in this essay, Glusberg’s text was fraught with direct yet unannotated references to Burnham’s text on “systems aesthetics,” published two years earlier in *Artforum*. Additionally, Glusberg takes credit for having coined the name of the movement in “Verso un’aprossimazione strutturale dell’Arte de Sistemas,” in *Argomenti e immagini di design*, no. 8 (November–December 1972), and, many years later, in *Del Pop-Art a la Nueva Imagen* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de Arte Gaglianone, 1985), 113.
- 10 — Simón Marchán Fiz, *Del arte objetual al arte de concepto (1960–1974)*, third edition (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1988), 268–271; originally published in 1972 by A. Corazón (Madrid: Comunicación).
- 11 — The artist used this term often to refer to his *living systems*. See Benedit, “Artist Statement,” c. 1975, one typed sheet, Whitechapel Gallery Archives. L.F. Benedit Archive.
- 12 — The complex relationship between Benedit and CAyC—as well as Grupo de los Trece—merits an in-depth discussion that lies outside the scope of the present essay. Such a study will have to take into consideration the relationship of Benedit to the objectives of both groups as well as to the work of the other members.
- 13 — Carlos Espartaco, *Introducción a Benedit* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Ruth Benzacar, 1978), 8.
- 14 — Ibid.
- 15 — “Developmentalism” was a state and national doctrine imposed in Latin American countries in the 1960s and 70s. In Argentina it was set in motion during President Arturo Frondizi’s administration (1958–62) through its fiercest advocate, Rogelio Frigerio, the minister and founder of the Movimiento de Integración y Desarrollo [Movement for Integration and Development].
- 16 — Facts corroborated with my colleague and friend of decades, Marcelo E. Pacheco, e-mail correspondence with the author, Buenos Aires–Houston, December 2016.
- 17 — See Rafael Squirru, introduction to *L. F. Benedit* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Galería Lirolay, 1961), n.p.
- 18 — Otra Figuración brought together artists Luis Felipe Noé, Jorge de la Vega, Rómulo Macció, and Ernesto Deira in an attempt to redefine the tenets of figurative painting along existential and political lines. The group first came together at the exhibition *Otra Figuración* held at Galería Peuser in 1961 and showed together until 1965. See Mercedes Casanegra, *Nueva Figuración 1961–1965—Deira, Macció, Noé, De la Vega* (Buenos Aires: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 2011). Benedit’s early paintings share with Noé an interest in historic episodes, particularly his *Serie federal* (1961) (see *Convocatoria a la barbarie* [Call to Barbarism, 1961], as well as for Argentinean history in particular exemplified by *Imagen agónica de Dorrego* [Dorrego’s Head, 1961]. This is an ideological component that will remain in his work until late series such as *Los suicidas* [The Suicides, 1990] or *Del viaje del Beagle* [Traveling in the Beagle, 1988–1994].

- 19— The show was held October 1–29, 1965, at Galerie Creuze and Galerie Europe, Paris. It followed Bénédict's first individual exhibition outside of Argentina organized by Galerie Europe a few months earlier. Figuration Narrative did not represent a specific theory or aesthetic tendency—or even a homogeneous group—but rather a shared philosophical and ideological position aimed at countering the influence of American Pop art. Among the artists who participated in *La Figuration Narrative*, Bernard Rancillac and Hervé Télémaque (Haiti) exploited comic books; Eduardo Arroyo (Spain) and Erro (Icelandic Gundmundur Gundmundsson) transformed icons appropriated from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century painting into contemporary political allegories; and the Brazilian-born artist of Swedish descent Öyvind Fahlström concocted fantastical, childlike stories that engaged the present. Argentinean Antonio Berni was one of the stars of this group and was probably represented with assemblages from the Juanito Laguna series. See G  rald Gassiot-Talabot, "La figuration narrative dans l'art contemporain," in *Figuration Narrative. Paris 1960–1972* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2008), 91; "La figuration narrative dans la peinture contemporaine," *Quadrum* no. 18 (1965), 20–21; Ram  rez, "Juanito and Ramona in Paris: Everyday Myths or Third-World Icons?" in Mari Carmen Ram  rez and Marcelo Pacheco, *Antonio Berni: Juanito and Ramona*, ed. H  ctor Olea and Mari Carmen Ram  rez (Houston: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2013), 82–103.
- 20— See Jean-Paul Ameline, "Aux sources de la figuration narrative," in *Figuration Narrative. Paris 1960–1972*, 17–32: 18.
- 21— Ram  rez, "Juanito and Ramona in Paris. . ." 82–103; see specifically, "Figuration Narrative or Berni's Re-humanized Image."
- 22— Ameline, 18.
- 23— For the role of narration in B  n  dict's work, see David Elliott's essay in this book.
- 24— Patricia Rizzo, "Biograf  a documentada," in *Luis Fernando B  n  dict. Obras 1960–1996* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1996), 283.
- 25— The show took place in March and April of 1967. See *B  n  dict: Pinturas 1966–67*, with an introduction by Aldo Pellegrini (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Galer  a Rubbers, 1967), n.p.
- 26— "El micro-zoo [sic] de ac  rico," *Primera Plana* (Buenos Aires), December 3, 1968, no. 310, n.p.
- 27— To exemplify this point, Pacheco notes a parallel between B  n  dict and another artist who is in the background of many of his paintings: Molina Campos (e-mail, December 2016).
- 28— Indeed, this group of enamel paintings on canvas was the last that the artist undertook in the pictorial medium. For the rest of his career, he worked mostly in watercolor and also produced objects and non-traditional sculptures in various media.
- 29— He studied with Professor Francesco Fariello at the Architecture Faculty in Rome. Rizzo, 283–84.
- 30— The first of these objects seems to have consisted of an acrylic silhouette—molded by fire, cut-out, and painted—to which he adhered a plastic container with water and live fish.
- 31— Alicia Dujovne Ortiz, "Luis B  n  dict y la caja de cristal," *Revista La Naci  n*, June 28, 1970, 16–17: 17. B  n  dict's belief that a car or machine could be as artistically valuable as a work of art can be traced back to the Italian Futurist movement. In the group's first manifesto published in *Le Figaro* (Paris, February 20, 1909), Filippo Tommaso Marinetti exalted the virtues of mechanical force, stating: "a roaring car that seems to be driving under shrapnel is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*."
- 32— Dujovne, *ibid.*
- 33— *Ibid.*
- 34— B  n  dict first publicly displayed live animals in the installation *Tuttovetro y los pescados* [Tuttovetro and the Fish], a glass and fiberglass container with water and live fish that he presented in Buenos Aires upon his return from Rome at the exhibition *Materiales, nuevas t  cnicas, nuevas expresiones* [Materials, New Techniques, New Expressions] at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (1968). The work represented the continuation of the experiments he had initiated in Rome the year before [see note 29 above]. Following the show at Galer  a Rubbers, he re-conceived the *Microzoo* into the more condensed *Micropara  iso de caracoles* [Microparadise for Snails] presented at the Instituto Di Tella's *Experiencias 1969*. See Davis, "Chronology," in this publication.
- 35— B  n  dict and Battro had been friends since the mid-1960s. Battro received a PhD in psychology from the Universit   de Paris. He returned to Buenos Aires in 1968 after having spent a period in New York on a Guggenheim Fellowship. As a researcher at the Centro de Investigaciones Filos  ficas [Center for Philosophical Research] of the Universidad de Buenos Aires, Battro studied the brains of frogs and bees as part of a multi-disciplinary project he spearheaded focusing on the biochemical processes and mechanisms of memory. In his view, "today it is impossible to study human cognition without taking into account what takes place in animals and robots." See "Pl  stica: Las abejas van a bailar a Venecia," *Panorama* (weekly review) April 28, 1970, 46. One of Battro's research projects was an interdisciplinary study of the biochemical mechanisms of memory using as a test case the *Apis mellifera* bee, the conventional producer of honey. Inspired by the cutting-edge work of his friend, B  n  dict constructed an artificial flower-beehive for live bees that was a variation of the automatic system used for the cited project. According to Battro, B  n  dict proceeded almost immediately to expand his experiments by incorporating all sorts of living organisms. The result of these efforts was *Microzoo*. Antonio M. Battro, "Introduction" to *Microzoo. B  n  dict* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Galer  a Rubbers, 1968), n.p.
- 36— To the best of my knowledge, B  n  dict never provided detailed descriptions of the *Microzoo*, and there are very few surviving images of the installation. In order to visualize what it may have

- looked like, one must turn to reviews of the period such as “El micro-zoo [sic] de acrílico” [see note 26 above]. Of these, the art critic Córdova Iturburu provided by far the most substantial description of Bénédict’s environment set against the signature black walls, ceiling, and floor of Galería Rubbers. See Córdova Iturburu, “Alegria de vivir en el micro-zoo de Bénédict,” *Atlántida*, February 1969, n.p.
- 37— According to a newspaper review, the bees gathered for Bénédict’s piece were “tamed” by ethologist Jorge Núñez, whom the artist had met through Battro and with whom he would later collaborate on *Biotrón* (1970). See “Teorías y abejas volaron por Florida,” *Panorama*, December 10, 1968, n.p.
- 38— Glusberg, untitled text in *Microzoo. Bénédict*, n.p. As I have frequently pointed throughout this essay, Glusberg’s text, written less than two months after Burnham’s “Systems Esthetics” article appeared in *Artforum*, is not only informed by the aforementioned text but, in a number of cases, appropriates entire phrases, sentences, or paragraphs without directly acknowledging the source.
- 39— Ibid.
- 40— He also projected *Hydroponic Rooms*: chambers with walls and ceilings of special porous rock on which thousands of edible mushrooms would be grown. However, none of these projects materialized. See Burnham, *Beyond Modern Sculpture*, 346.
- 41— Ibid., 347.
- 42— The first exhibition of the group took place at Galleria La Bertesca in Genoa, Italy, from September 27 through October 20, 1967. Curated by Germano Celant, it was titled *Arte Povera—In Spazio*. See Germano Celant, ed., *Art Povera* (New York: Praeger, Publishers, 1969), 225; original edition by Gabriele Mazzotta Publishers (Milan: 1969), 30–31.
- 43— Ibid., 225.
- 44— Ibid., 230. This sentence from Celant’s piece merits comparison with the following frequently cited quote from a key text on Bénédict’s *living systems* by Glusberg: “Bénédict’s models tend toward a pre-iconographic regression of the elements that compose the image: it is a return to the primitive, to the free action of living beings in the world, a free nature that has no use for theological principles. Bénédict does not establish a cultural dialogue with the viewer, but liberates the capacity for action and existence of the animal world, in a process where all intellectual intervention is reduced.” See Glusberg, “Los modelos interesados de Luis F. Bénédict: De la figuración al arte de sistemas,” in *De la figuración al arte de sistemas* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Centro de Arte y Comunicación, 1970), n.p. As noted earlier, Glusberg introduced Argentinean readers to the notion of *Arte de Sistemas* in this seminal text.
- 45— Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, ed., *Arte Povera* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1999), 32. Bénédict acknowledged to friend and researcher Francisca Mancini—who assisted him with the early planning and organization of materials for this book—that his visit to Kounellis’s groundbreaking exhibition in 1967 had forever changed the course of his art. Conversation between the author and Francisca Mancini, Buenos Aires, May 2016.
- 46— According to Córdova Iturburu, the first thing the audience encountered when entering the blacked-out space of the *Microzoo* was “an impressive multi-colored parrot—not a representation but a real specimen—perched on a trapeze [followed by] an impressive amount of cages with small polychrome birds attached to large canvases and panels painted in bright colors.” Córdova Iturburu, n.p.
- 47— Christov-Bakargiev, 107.
- 48— Ibid.
- 49— The exhibition took place at Galleria l’Attico in Via Beccaria, Rome in 1969. The horses remained there for three days. The installation was reconstructed at the Venice Biennale in 1976. See Celant, *Arte Povera*, 1969; Christov-Bakargiev, 109.
- 50— Bénédict cited in “El micro-zoo [sic] de acrílico,” n.p.
- 51— Ibid.
- 52— Battro, Introduction to *Microzoo. Bénédict*, n.p.
- 53— Córdova Iturburu, n.p.
- 54— The critic observed: “His works are the result of a conjunction that I do not hesitate to qualify as fortunate, of craft and art, of primary invention, of elemental creation, and aesthetic refinement.” Ibid.
- 55— Adorno observes that “*negative dialectics* is a phrase that flouts tradition. As early as Plato, dialectics meant to achieve something positive by means of negation; the thought figure of ‘negation of negation’ later became the succinct term. This book seeks to free dialectics from such affirmative traits without reducing its determinacy. The unfoldment of the paradoxical title is only one of its aims. . . . As the latest esthetic discussions feature the ‘anti-drama’ and the ‘anti-hero,’ this *negative dialectics* in which all esthetic topics are shunned might be called an ‘anti-system.’” “Preface,” *Negative Dialectics* [1966], translated by E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1999), xix–xxi. *Apud* Héctor Olea, “Versions, Inversion, Subversions: The Artist as Theoretician,” *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America* (Houston and London: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Yale University Press, 2004), 443–539.
- 56— The invitation was extended by the Centro de Cálculo de la Escuela Técnica ORT [Calculus Center of the ORT Technical School] in the context of a series of dialogues between artists and mathematicians organized by the recently established Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CeAC), which later changed its acronym for CAyC. In addition to the center’s programmers, participating

- artists included Antonio Berni, Osvaldo Romberg, Humberto Vidal, and Eduardo McEntyre. See Carlos Claiman, "Las computadoras de la cuarta generación," August 24, 1969, 36–37; and Davis, "Chronology."
- 57— Burnham, *Beyond Modern Sculpture*, 317.
- 58— Ibid., 318.
- 59— The production of *Biotrón* included Dr. Jorge Núñez, the ethologist who assisted Benedit with *Microzoo* and was responsible for the scientific basis of *Biotrón*; engineers Eduardo Silberstein, who worked on the electronic aspects of the light-powered environment, and Alberto Iribarren, who designed the mechanical flowers. The installation was partially sponsored through a contribution from Agua y Energía [Water and Power], an Argentinean company. See Dujovne Ortiz, 16–17. According to Pacheco, the topic of the bees relates to the importance of honey production in the farms of the Province of Buenos Aires, which constituted a local industry in and of itself, known for the use of wooden honeycombs (e-mail correspondence, December 2016).
- 60— It should be noted that Benedit also produced a second version of this piece—*Biotrón II*—which is a self-standing work. In this smaller piece, the actual activity of the bees is organized in three stacked levels that in their flatness and organization evoke two-dimensional painting. From this point of view, the work can be read as a living tableau.
- 61— See Centro de Arte y Comunicación, "Luis F. Benedit (GT-255)."
- 62— Haacke, for example, explained: "The difference between 'nature' and 'technology' is only that the latter is man-made. The functioning of either can be described by the same conceptual models, and they both obviously follow the same rules of operation." See "Hans Haacke in Conversation with Jean Siegel" (1971), in Edward A. Shanken, ed., *Systems*, Documents of Contemporary Art (London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2015), 120.
- 63— Glusberg, "Luis Benedit's Botanical Experiences," in *Benedit: Phitotron* [sic] (exh. cat.) (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1972; Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos Aires, 1973–75.
- 64— That year the Biennale was dedicated to the relationship between art and science. Benedit designed, constructed, and tested this complex piece in sixty days after being designated the official Argentinean representative at the Biennale. See Benedit, "Mi participación en Venecia," *Artinf*, Buenos Aires (October 1970), n.p.; Davis, "Chronology."
- 65— Glusberg, "Luis Benedit's Botanical Experiments." It should be noted that Benedit reconstructed *Fitotrón* for the retrospective exhibition of his work at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires in 1996. This version was shown in the United States in the paradigmatic exhibition *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (June–September 2004), curated by Héctor Olea and myself. The only extant example of Benedit's large-scale *living systems*, it was acquired by Malba in Buenos Aires and was on permanent display at this museum, in a special gallery created for this work, until December 2015.
- 66— Benedit, "Mi participación en Venecia," 6; Dujovne Ortiz, 16.
- 67— Benedit, "Mi participación en Venecia," 6.
- 68— Benedit, "Artist Statement," c. 1975.
- 69— Burnham, *Beyond Modern Sculpture*, 312–13.
- 70— Ibid.
- 71— Haacke, for instance, observed how "If you work with real-time systems . . . , you probably go beyond Duchamp's position. Real-time systems are double agents. They might run under the heading 'art,' but this culturization does not prevent them from operating as normal." See "Hans Haacke in Conversation with Jean Siegel" (1971), in Shanken, ed., *Systems*, 122.
- 72— Burnham, "Systems Esthetics," 31.
- 73— In Benedit's words, "the value of *Biotrón* is that it makes one think. No one can see it without re-assessing [pre-established] concepts." Dujovne Ortiz, 16. He also observed: "Anyone wishing to see how a mouse learns to run a maze or to watch bass feed, or to find out how a plant finds its way through a labyrinth to get to the source of light, can watch my habitats." Benedit, "Artist Statement."
- 74— Benedit also showed in Venice the *Minibiotrón*; *Pecera para peces tropicales* (multiple) [Tank for Tropical Fish]; and *Hábitat para caracoles* [Habitat for Snails].
- 75— The *Minibiotrón* was an edition of 30.
- 76— Bernice Rose, "Luis benedit of the group of thirteen at the museum of modern art, new york [sic]," Centro de Arte y Comunicación [CAyC], 1972 (GT-255); and Daniel Quiles's essay in this publication.
- 77— The Canadian Dorothy Cameron was one of these enthusiastic critics. See Dorothy Cameron, "Summer '70. The Crisis of Canada International. Part 2: Venice," *Artscanada* (December–January 1970/1): 45.
- 78— Amengual observed how, under siege from violent workers' strikes and street protests which included indictments against the Biennale itself, that year's exhibition emerged as a frustrated event. This fact, together with the complete lack of effective official support for Benedit's piece from the Argentinean government (they did not even print a handout or catalogue, only last-minute mimeographed sheets with the details and artistic synopsis of the work), contributed to the Biennale's failure. See Lorenzo Amengual, "Plástica: Una Biennale con tante cose pazze" [Art: A Biennale with So Many Crazy Things], *Confirmado*, July 8, 1970, 66.

- 79— Ibid.
- 80— See Davis, “Chronology.” The Argentinean artist who came closer to sharing such a degree of international recognition was Antonio Berni, winner of the Drawing and Printmaking Prize (with his Juanito Laguna series) in the XXXI Venice Biennale (1962).
- 81— The show was held at the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio A. Caraffa in Córdoba in August 1970. It tracked the evolution from Pop-based painting to systems art in the work of Nicolás García Uriburu, Edgardo Antonio Vigo, and Bénédict. Bénédict presented works from the oil and enamel series *El gran tornado* [The Great Tornado], 1966; *Madre hay una sola* [There Is Only One Mother], *Margaritas a los chanchos* and *Lo que hay que pasar*, 1967; *El hambre sin solución* [The Hunger that Cannot Be Satisfied, 1968] and *El Supercómodo n° I* and *n° II* [The Super Comfortable, 1969], as well as photographic documentation and blueprints for *Biotrón*, *Tanque para peces* [Fish Tank], and *Hábitat para caracoles* [Habitat for Snails] (1970) along with two acrylic objects: a model for *Jaula* [Cage, 1968] and the multiple *Minibiotrón*, produced that year in an edition of thirty and also exhibited in Venice. See *De la figuración al arte de sistemas* (exh. cat.) (Córdoba: CAYC and Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio A. Caraffa, 1970). ICAA Digital Archive, Record ID 761141. See Herrera and Marchesi, 20. A few months later, in February 1971, CAYC organized the second exhibition of *arte de sistemas* in London’s Camden Arts Centre under the title *From Figuration Art to Systems Art*. Bénédict showed drawings and photographs of the *Biotrón* and other artificial habitats. See Davis, “Cronología,” in this publication.
- 82— The one CAYC artist whose work came closest to exemplifying the notion of systems art was Víctor Grippo. The latter’s *Sistema*, which pre-dated Burnham’s thesis, was probably one of the first “systems art” works ever produced and presented in Argentina in the group show *Investigación sobre el proceso de la creación* [Research on the Process of Creation] at Buenos Aires’ Galería Vignes in 1966. See Herrera, 15. His *Analogies* series (1971–72)—where he used potatoes to generate electricity under different conditions—were science-based models that shared strong affinities with Bénédict’s *living systems*. See Víctor Grippo (Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 1995).
- 83— In addition to Bénédict, García Uriburu, Vigo, and Grippo, the roster of international artists that Glusberg included in the Buenos Aires version of *Arte de Sistemas I* included Arte Povera, performance, and conceptual-based artists such as Vito Acconci, John Baldessari, Mel Bochner, Allan Kaprow, Gilbert and George, Dorothea Rockburne, and many others whose relationship to systems art was marginal if not circumstantial. It should be noted that Grippo was represented with *Analogía I* [Analogy I, 1971], a work that measured with a voltmeter the amount of energy contained in a system made up of eighty potatoes, a food staple that originated in the Americas and was only introduced in Europe in the era of discovery. See CAYC, “Arte de sistemas,” exh. brochure (Buenos Aires: Museo de Arte Moderno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, July 1971). ICAA Digital Archive, Record ID 747665.
- 84— For the innovative format adopted by CAYC for international exhibitions, see Herrera and Marchesi, 22–23.
- 85— The Grupo de los Trece was established in 1972 by artists affiliated with CAYC. In addition to Bénédict, it included Jacques Bedel, Gregorio Dujovny, Carlos Ginzburg, Víctor Grippo, Jorge González Mir, Jorge Glusberg, Vicente Marotta, Luis Pazos, Alberto Pellegrino, Alfredo Portillos, Juan Carlos Romero, Julio Teich, and Horacio Zabala.
- 86— Writing about the first *Arte de Sistemas* exhibition at the Museo de Arte Moderno in Buenos Aires, an anonymous reviewer observed: “It is difficult to find a common denominator to the show. The heterogeneity goes from a portrait of Kennedy made by machines, but a portrait nevertheless, to the oranges on the floor by Peter Hutchinson; from the proposal of approaching nature through fire, to the ideological underpinnings of Juan Pablo Renzi’s attitude exposed in a letter pinned to the wall.” “ARTE DE SISTEMAS en el museo de arte moderno [sic],” *Lyra* (Buenos Aires), no. 21, 1972, 21. His opinion was echoed by a London-based writer reviewing an exhibition of systems art from Argentina presented at the ICA: “The work shown is uneven. It ranges from gesturalism, angry or empty, through the ingenious, to work which insists, intelligently but aggressively, that the viewer should formulate several questions in a new and more rewarding way. But the question remains whether, taken as a whole, it really provides evidence of a ‘launching pad for a new aesthetic’ born out of the specific conditions prevailing in Latin America.” *Arts Review* (London), December 13, 1974, n.p.
- 87— Francis Halsall, “Systems of Art” (2008), in Shanken, ed., *Systems*, 132.
- 88— The relevance and applicability of Burnham’s concept to contemporary artistic practices has been the subject of recent assessments that credit him with having identified early on a key shift in the making and production of art that took place in the 1960s. See Caroline A. Jones, “Systems Symptoms: Jack Burnham’s ‘Systems Aesthetics’” (2011), in *ibid.*, 136–40; and Shanken, “Reprogramming Systems Aesthetics” (2009–14), in *ibid.*, 123–29.
- 89— The first half of the 70s was marked by a series of texts and theoretical positions that advocated for the uniqueness of Latin American culture with regard to the international context. There are plenty of examples that include, among others: Damián Carlos Bayón, “When Will the Art of Latin America Become Latin American Art” (see ICAA Digital Archive, Record ID 1061734); as well as the papers presented at the Austin symposium on *El artista latinoamericano y su identidad* [The Latin American Artist and His Identity] (1975). These include: Juan Acha, “Latin American Art Today Does and Does Not Exist as a Distinct Expression” (ICAA Digital Archive, Record ID 1065080); Aracy A. Amaral, “Latin America: A Culturally Occupied Continent” (ICAA Digital Archive, Record ID 776786); and Marta Traba, “We Are Latin Americans: The Way of Resistance” (ICAA Digital Archive, Record ID 1065742). In the Argentinean case, it is worth citing *El arte latinoamericano*, by Jorge Bedoya and Noemí Gil (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1973).

- 90— In 1973, he wrote: “I decided to call Arte de Sistemas those processes and experiences that concern artists working in this last third of the 20th century. Included in this term are idea art, political art, ecological art, proposals art or cybernetic art.” See Jorge Glusberg, “III Bienal de Coltejer, Medellín. Hacia una aproximación estructural del arte de sistemas,” typescript, Archivo Luis F. Benedit, Buenos Aires.
- 91— Glusberg, “III Bienal de Coltejer, Medellín. . .”; and unsigned, “CAyC: Un arte de sistemas concretado como objeto (GT-212; GT-212-I; GT-212-II). Typed statement, March 19, 1973, n.p. ICAA Digital Archive, Record ID 747494. This last text was written by Vigo even though it was published without his name in the CAyC’s newsletter. It also appeared with some changes in a newspaper of La Plata. See Edgardo Antonio Vigo, “Arte de Sistemas,” *El Día*, La Plata, March 25, 1973. The text reviews the exhibition *El Grupo de los Trece en Arte de Sistemas* [The Group of Thirteen in Systems Art], presented at CAyC between December 1972 and March 1973. Vigo’s ideas and his own position with respect to systems art deserve to be researched in depth. Such a task, however, lies outside the scope of this text.
- 92— “CAyC: Un arte de sistemas concretado como objeto.”
- 93— Burnham, “Systems Esthetics,” 31.
- 94— Burnham, *ibid.*, 31; the emphasis is mine. Compare to the following passages from Glusberg’s 1970 text: “Benedit not only materially designs an animal habitat: he is acting as a *provocateur* of social situations involving animals. . . .”; “Benedit is something like a provocateur who questions the basic premises of a culture. . . .” Glusberg, “Los modelos interesados de Luis Benedit,” [Benedit’s interested models], n.p.
- 95— Burnham, “Systems Esthetics,” 35.
- 96— *Ibid.*, 31.
- 97— Such an object-based approach to systems art was shared by other CAyC artists including Víctor Grippo, Jacques Bedel, Gregorio Dujovny, Carlos Ginzburg, Vicente Marotta, Alberto Pellegrino, Eduardo Vigo and Horacio Zabala (see note 85), all members of the Grupo de los Trece. Glusberg not only appeared to acknowledge it but seemed to justify it in terms of an eccentric trait that established the Argentinean specificity vis-à-vis similar tendencies in Europe and the United States. An unsigned text published in CAyC’s newsletter, only recently attributed to Vigo, sets forth the view that the presence of the object is indeed a trait of Argentinean *arte de sistemas*. The fact that the object had never really been negated only suggested that the local version “is not an exclusive proposal for reading, but rather an exchange between a literary proposal and a documented proposal (photography, films, reproductions, posters), which generates a NEW READING within the phenomenon of contemporary art today.” See unsigned, “CAyC: Un arte de sistemas concretado como objeto.” Typed statement (see note 91).
- 98— I agree with Marcelo Pacheco on this point which he made in his essay, “Entre la ficción y la narración histórica,” *Luis F. Benedit en el Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Obras 1960–1996* (Buenos Aires: MNBA, 1996), 155–60.
- 99— According to Espartaco, this term was coined by Benedit. It literally means “de-piecing” or pulling apart piece by piece. See Espartaco, 23.
- 100— Espartaco used this term to refer to this stage of Benedit’s drawing production. See Espartaco, 21–23.
- 101— Edward Shaw, “Luis F. Benedit – Un arquitecto que reinterpreta la realidad,” *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 10, 1984. Reprinted in *Benedit. 1965–1975* (Buenos Aires: Fundación San Telmo, 1988), n.p.
- 102— That year he produced four *Labyrinths for Ants* (A, B, C, D) which he exhibited in the solo show at London’s Whitechapel Gallery. These were his last *living systems*.
- 103— Shaw, n.p.
- 104— Espartaco, 8–9.
- 105— Marta Traba, “Volver al principio,” *El Universal* (Caracas) (May 25, 1975).
- 106— Espartaco, 9.

Drawings in the Sands of Time.
Poetics and Politics in Luis F. Bénédict's Work
David Elliott

1. The Storyteller

*I feel that as a character I am an Arabian *munar*. The Arabs have a great oral tradition, and in it the *munar* is the person who writes in the sand; that is, he draws in the sand to illustrate the narration for those who are present at that moment. In the end, I am a moralist. I want to inform my compatriots or translate for them certain events, actions or characters that interest me, that have a social significance because they have shaped the culture of this country.¹*

Luis Bénédict uttered this perceptive self-analysis in the mid-1990s, two decades after the period with which this volume deals. Undoubtedly, as drawing in sand was his chosen metaphor, he was thinking about that moment and his recent composite report-works (*obras-informe*) rather than referring back to earlier paintings or to his “cybernetic” installations, objects and drawings of the 1960s and 1970s. Yet, in spite of the tempestuous storms that had blasted relentlessly across the culture, society and politics of Argentina between then and the time of writing, the idea of the image in sand still stands for his earlier work. Bénédict was instinctively a *munar*, a teller of stories, a weaver of truths for particular times.

The development of Bénédict's work had always depended on the need to uncover and decipher hidden narratives. As he himself acknowledged, these took many different forms: those engendered by the artist, trying to understand and build on his own imagination and actions in relation to the world around him, those perpetrated by his beloved “compatriots,” for whom the question of what actually constituted Argentine art in a period of profound political instability was a continuing vexation,² and by those, like me, looking on from outside and trying to locate what we see in his work within a broader aesthetic, social and political pattern.

In 1990, referring back to his early large habitats for animals and plants such as *Biotrón* (1970) and *Fitotrón* (1972) (cat. no. 5 and 44), which made such a strong impact on the international art world, as well as to the countless smaller studies which are both an explication of and a counterpoint to these larger works, Bénédict embraced this necessity for a multiplicity of understandings:

I believe that there are various readings of my works on different levels. I am not interested in these works scientifically but as the communication of a social phenomenology of animal behaviour that is accessible to even the most unsophisticated viewer. Humanity is an integral part of nature, and hence those ecological laws in which everyone is interrelated with everyone else, and everything with everything else also apply to us. We are going to be living in a crowded world and must learn to think in totalities.³

These early “biological sculptures,”⁴ made within the confines of a machine-like art laboratory, are ostensibly based on experiments that reveal the behaviour of bees, snails, hamsters, ants, fish, white mice, turtles, pepper plants, flowers, cabbages and other creatures and organisms under controlled conditions. Although their replication of the experimental procedures of science extended the formal boundaries of Bénédict’s art, these works were conceived as both poetic models and ecological paradigms that examined microcosmic effects of confinement and overcrowding. The impression of these different kinds of husbandry could be, if one wished, extrapolated onto a human scale.

From his knowledge, observations and research, Bénédict was concerned by the general problem that humanity was growing exponentially in both its numbers and needs and could see that this would create unbearable pressures. As his paintings from the early and mid-1960s show, he was also aware of more local issues relating to the pressures that politics could assert on culture. These observations of the negative effects of power on both society and nature have an acerbic humour that transcends the political equivocations of western Pop art to reveal deeper roots in *art brut*, advertising, comic books and children’s drawings. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, his work had taken a cooler, more conceptual, object-based turn but, as an examination of his related drawings of cyber-insects, birds, and other creatures clearly shows, a dark, sardonic humour had been retained from his earlier paintings.

Although the content of Bénédict’s work was to change decisively throughout his career, an expanding idea of totality, moulded by political and social circumstance, governs his artistic development. As *munar*—storyteller, educator and instructor—his ideas and drawings needed the compliant metaphor-medium of sand. As is the case with all artists, his work could become irrelevant, obsolete and have to be modified or destroyed but, in the times of military dictatorship through which he and many others tried to survive, the ideas and images of art could suddenly appear “decadent,” “degenerate,” “dangerous” and have to be swept away.⁵

By the mid-1970s the form of his work was to change yet again as he moved away from the exposition of systems and process to a presentation of the traces or results of what seemed to be arcane experiments or programmes of research. There are certain Duchampian echoes here, particularly in the idea of the viewer being complicit in an experiment in which he or she has little idea of its purpose. These works often included bizarre items of agricultural equipment, shown not as readymades but as carefully crafted objects, presented “scientifically” in elegantly made wooden cases either for contemplation, or

ironically for worship as if they were some precious relic or fetish: a device to open the mouth of a cow, shears for clipping wool or castrating sheep, a branding iron, a set of bolas,⁶ a “gaucho” knife in a leather sheath.⁷

In this last period of Benedit’s work, distinguished by what he described as his report-works (*obras-informe*),⁸ there are no longer distractions from living things but enigmatic, “dead” items of “evidence” submitted for interpretation: objects, models, sketches, paintings, projections and simulations. He began to illustrate the flora, fauna, history and culture of Argentina as if he were one of its early explorers, reimagining Charles Darwin’s *Voyage of the Beagle* (1831–1836) or showing traces of the now extinct Yagan Indians that Robert FitzRoy had encountered in Tierra del Fuego in 1833.⁹ His earliest works of this kind, which fall within the scope of this book, marked the change in stylistic approach by a return to first principles. *Huevos* [Eggs] and the *Proyecto Huevos* [Eggs Project, 1976] (cat. no. 120), and drawings and objects based on obsolete agricultural instruments (1978) that recalled the settler past of colonial Argentina¹⁰ were meditations on both sustenance and origins, while *Los juguetes de Tomás* [The Toys of Tomás, 1977–1982] record and expand the minutiae of his child’s drawings of toys into a violent reflection of the actual world.

These series of works postulate a sinister, absurd and complex reality that is remodelled in different ways and from different points of view in his subsequent work. Here, as before, he built on his earliest concerns about *who* and *where* we are and, by extension, about *what* we can realistically hope for in an increasingly uncertain future.

2. Dark Figures, Bright Landscapes

Educated as an architect, self-taught as an artist, at the age of twenty-four Benedit held his first exhibition at the Galería Lirolay in Buenos Aires in 1961.¹¹ Looking back, he remembered specifically Argentine influences on these paintings—Roberto Aizenberg’s (1928–1996) Kafkaesque surrealist towers, Alberto Greco’s (1931–1965) wild monochrome paintings and installations, and the particularly Argentine synthesis of expressionism with *informel* that had surfaced in the works of the veteran avant-gardist Antonio Berni (1905–1981) and the artists of the Nueva Figuración [New Figuration], among them *bricoleur* Jorge de la Vega (1930–1971).¹²

Benedit’s earliest works, however, also suggest influences from further afield. While the ironical combination of honorific titles with warty, stunted figures in such paintings as *El presidente* [The President, 1960], *Prócer federal* [Federal Hero, 1960] or *El candidato* [The Candidate, 1961] echoes the political chicanery of these years, the building up of their surface textures and Ubu Roi-like imagery suggests knowledge of the work of Jean Dubuffet and *art brut*, perhaps mediated through the work of Alberto Greco.¹³

In 1963 Benedit graduated from the Faculty of Architecture in the Universidad de Buenos Aires; the following year he moved to Madrid for further study. This remained a base for further travel in Europe until he returned to Buenos Aires in 1966 to present at the Museo de Arte Moderno, with Vicente Marotta,

a sequence of works based on a multimedia enactment of “Blue Beard,” the brutal French folk tale. He appears to already have been aware of the impact of systems theory on new art in both Europe and America at this time because, in a preview of his concern with response and feedback in his work of the early 1970s, he had incorporated into this piece an analysis of audience response and participation.¹⁴ *Barbazul* was also predictive in another respect: it contained his first three-dimensional models, the painted decapitated bodies of the mass murderer’s female victims cut out of sheet metal.¹⁵ In 1968 Benedit returned to Europe, on an Italian government scholarship to study Landscape Architecture at the Università di Roma; here he was particularly impressed by the minimal installations of Arte Povera artists such as Jannis Kounellis.

Benedit’s direct exposure to European culture culminated in the move from two to three dimensions in his art and the realisation that material reality was as important as depiction. Later, he described this as “the trigger” for making installations and objects rather than paintings.¹⁶ But first, the muted, even sombre, *art brut* colours he had used in Buenos Aires transmuted into a bright, acid pop palette; human figures were replaced by landscapes, animals and cyborgs; pictorial space was no longer compressed as before but cut up into series of receding metallic-looking planes rather like the flats in a stage set. The influence of Pop art, advertising, cartoons and comic books can be seen in the stylisation of these works and, in an echo of the origins of *art brut*, child-like distortions of scale are incongruously collided with the conventions of mechanical and architectural drawing to create comical yet monstrous hybrids.¹⁷

Some contemporary critics regarded these works as a continuation of Surrealism, a genre that had been rooted in Argentina as well as in other parts of Latin America since the end of the 1920s. But in their intense, dark humour and sci-fi vision these bright paintings are concerned not with dreams, the unconscious, or the unravelling of the past but with a starkly dystopian future firmly rooted in the present.¹⁸ Locked in interdependence, culture and nature appear in these works as both perpetrators and victims. *El hambre sin solución* [The Hunger that Cannot Be Satisfied, 1967] (fig. 1) sets out a systemic paradox of an insolvable symbiosis. In a metallic landscape, an outsized cat, painted like a dysfunctional machine, stands on a corrugated, terraced mountain top gazing hungrily at an equally mechanical bird entrapped within an adjacent peak. Illustrating the idea of hunger, Benedit highlights how it can never be satisfied because, being recurrent by nature, it is the perpetrator of an infinite loop of gratification and desire. The dramatically contrasting colours in *La ciudad de Knopp* [The City of Knopp, 1968] (fig. 2) playfully extend this predatory nightmare: a vast cartoon-like woodpecker with a toothed



Fig. 1
Luis F. Benedit,
El hambre sin solución
[The Hunger that
Cannot Be Satisfied],
1967



Fig. 2
Luis F. Benedit,
La ciudad de Knopp
[The City of Knopp],
1968
Museo Nacional de
Bellas Artes, Buenos
Aires

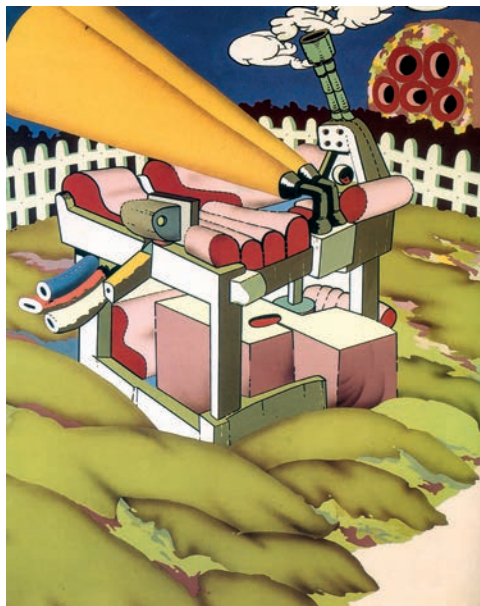


Fig. 3
Luis F. Benedit,
El supercómodo
[The Super
Comfortable], 1969



beak malevolently perches on the outskirts of an anthropomorphic, “frightened” city, the towers of which appear to be shuddering as if in the throes of an earthquake.

Prefiguring his later concern with colonisation in Argentine history, *Mi casa africana* [My African House, 1969] depicted a landscape partitioned by a wicket fence dominated by an absurdly large image of a colonial solar topee. A pierced organic “gravestone” presages the confinement of the two mechanised figures who stand not far away. The large two-panel painting ironically entitled *El supercómodo* [The Super Comfortable, 1969] (fig. 3) illustrates how a city despoils nature through its need for power. Outside its walls, aggressive fragments of industrial plant are directed like weapons against encroaching nature.

A series of compartmentalised, shaped works from 1968, made out of perspex and painted in enamel, mark Benedit’s return to three dimensions. Here nature itself is clunky, mechanised (expressed by painted birds and humans that look as if they have been fabricated out of the remains of a scrap yard) and contrasted satirically with the streamlined aerodynamics of hydroelectric power stations (culture) depicted in bright limpid colours as if they were advertisements for a tourist brochure.¹⁹ The interpenetrating world of man and nature that Benedit conjures for us here is both a primordial battle and an ecologist’s nightmare: nothing is “natural,” simple or pure.²⁰

During 1968 the identification of the image with the real became even more manifest. Benedit tried this out in *Microzoo*, one of his first environments, shown at the Galería Rubbers in Buenos Aires in 1968, and then in *Tuttovetro y los pescados* [Tuttovetro and the Fish] (cat. no. 2), that was included in the thematic exhibition *Materiales, nuevas técnicas, nuevas expresiones* [Materials, New Techniques, New Expressions] at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in the same year.²¹

3. The Elephant in the Sitting Room

Benedict was born in Buenos Aires in 1937, the middle of the so-called *Década Infame* [Infamous Decade],²² and the years during which he grew up saw the penetration of politics into every aspect of Argentine society and culture. This cannot be separated from an understanding of Benedict's work.

Ever since the 1930s, modern Argentine politics had been characterised by a succession of increasingly extreme swings (and overlaps) between democracy and populism, military government and resistance as one revolution succeeded another, each one destroying the achievements of its predecessor. The Revolution of 4 June 1943 heralded the presidential emergence in 1946 of Juan D. Perón as the “saviour” of his country but, although popular with workers, his economic policies and curbs on human rights led to a virtual civil war until he was unseated and forced into exile in 1955 on the wave of *Revolución Libertadora* [The Liberating Revolution] (1955–1958).²³ This illusory liberation by the military opened a quarter century of continuing conflict, violence and instability during which no lasting political consensus could be reached and all elected governments were swiftly unseated by the army. What became known as *La Revolución Argentina* [The Argentine Revolution] (1966–1973) initially led by General Juan Carlos Onganía, polarised the cultural climate. Freedoms of expression and association were suppressed as the military became firmly entrenched, countered by an increasingly well organised armed opposition.²⁴

After a violent interregnum during which Perón returned briefly as President, the even more disastrous *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional* [Process of National Reorganisation] (1976–1983) pretended to provide the stability the country so badly needed. In fact, it created a self-serving and brutally authoritarian chaos and is remembered in horror and shame for having tortured and killed many thousands of its own citizens.²⁵

In spite of, or perhaps because of, this tragic history, Buenos Aires had, by the beginning of the 1960s, become one of the world's most avant-garde cities for the arts.²⁶ As is clear in Benedict's earliest paintings, he was firmly part of that new generation of artists who had begun to reject the corruption and inequity of the past to imagine a new, more equal future. Yet, in his politics as well as in his art, he remained rooted in the real world rather than in a quest for the ideal.

Because of the extent of mass poverty and oppression, the hunger for change was keenly felt throughout large swathes of Latin America as well as the then so-called Developing World. In the climate of the Cold War, a by-product of which had significant advances in computer and information technology, societies had become clearly polarised between rich and poor, businessman and worker, functionary and civilian, occupier and colonised, “right” and “left”. Supported by the super-powers, military Juntas had seized power with impunity from weak or faltering democratic governments.²⁷

In Argentina in 1968, a botched government cover-up of a plan to close the sugar refineries in Tucumán, a desperately poor province in the North West of the country, brought opposition to a head. *Tucumán arde* [Tucumán Is Burning], a mass action of artists and workers culminating in an exhibition, began with

gathering information and interviews that were first published clandestinely to expose the appalling conditions in the region. Under the cover of organising the Primera Bienal de Arte de Vanguardia [First Biennial of Avant-garde Art], the artists then prepared a multimedia presentation about the government's intentions and actions that opened with the union support of the CGT [Confederación General de Trabajo] in the large industrial city of Rosario.²⁸ This exhibition then moved to the CGT headquarters in Buenos Aires, where, after a few days, it was closed down by the police.²⁹

For many Argentine artists the closing of *Tucumán arde* was the beginning of the end. Some were to leave the country altogether, others stayed and stopped working as artists, yet others continued to work without exhibiting, making their withdrawal a statement about the barrenness of cultural life.

After the cultural community had been shattered, both art and its discourse under the military became oblique.³⁰ What was obvious was suppressed. Rather like ignoring an elephant angrily wedged in one's own sitting room, everyone knew that political disaster was there—dangerous and violent—but no one would talk about it. Accordingly the “elephant” became the unstated subject of much of the art of this time.

Argentina was not unique in this respect. Such a phenomenon was, and still is, common in countries governed by dictatorships.³¹

4. Framing and Being Framed³²

On his return to Buenos Aires in 1968, Benedi found the Argentine art world radically polarised.³³ The authority and language of traditional aesthetics had been supplanted by Marxist theories of class struggle, or by a sense of powerlessness in the face of overwhelming events, or by the new languages of Conceptual Art. This last phenomenon, which had been developing in many different directions throughout that decade, incorporated, and was often based on, responses to new ideas in cybernetics, linguistics, psychoanalysis, semiotics, sociology, structuralism and technology.³⁴ Brought together under a broad ideological rubric, this was championed in Buenos Aires by the newly formed interdisciplinary workshop of the Centro de Arte y Comunicación [Centre of Art and Communication] (CAyC) that Jorge Glusberg had set up during August 1968.³⁵ Radical in its forms of representation and in step with developments in Western Europe and North America, this new approach to art was mediated through an academic, often self-contradictory, language of critical theory that was cryptically rather than overtly leftist.³⁶

Although in Argentina it had become dangerous for artists to state clear leftist political positions, this did not mean that through the poetic mechanisms of metaphor, parody or even satire, politics was not inscribed in their work.³⁷ This revelation was made not through “struggle” but through the ways in which particular bodies of work were “framed” as well as by the structure and details of specific works and how these could be related to the “systems” of the places within which they had emerged. In this way, Benedi's active “framing” of his work through the creation of poetic meta-narratives—using

at first metaphors of control, growth and fertility and, latterly, the untrammelled innocence and violence of a child—underscored how society had been covertly “framed” by the military to stifle debate and free expression.

Because this essentially “post-Structuralist” autonomous aesthetic diverged so markedly from the clear political affiliations of previous radical art activism,³⁸ few contemporary critics outside Glusberg, who tended to submerge the political implications of the works he presented in a wider elaboration of theory, remarked on this new expression of politics in Argentine art.³⁹

Benedict had become an early member of CAyC and was quickly identified with this new approach. His *Biotrón*, described by Glusberg as an “analysis of consumer society,”⁴⁰ was originally designed for an exhibition at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and subsequently shown at the Venice Biennale in 1970 where it made a considerable impact.⁴¹ A transparent beehive and open environment for four thousand bees, its denizens could choose their sustenance between the man-made nectar pumped into twenty-five computer controlled flowers or the flora of the surrounding Giardini. Apparently, the majority of bees “preferred” the artificial solution thereby negating their natural role as pollinators and neutralising their beneficent effect on the environment.⁴²

In the same year, Benedict also began to construct a series of variable mazes in which he placed white mice, ants, cockroaches and other creatures, ostensibly to observe their behaviour.⁴³ A reward was placed at the heart of each maze and, once the animal had mastered the way through, the route was changed so that it had to adapt. Glusberg stated that two categories of behaviour—territorial and exploratory—could be inferred from the ways in which the animals responded to the tasks the artist had set them.⁴⁴ Even at this stage of his work, Benedict was primarily concerned with the stories that could be extrapolated from what he presented: “[I am] less interested in the scientific aspect of the works than in what they make manifest”.⁴⁵ The mazes, therefore, should be regarded as poetic or metaphorical responses to the current state of life in Argentina—and elsewhere. The “territorial behaviour” of some of their occupants, with their ability to “appropriate, recognize, use and defend,” could be understood as a reference to the reactionary instincts of the military that was set in opposition to the “exploratory behaviour” of other creatures that expressed a desire for openness and the need to take risks, qualities that enshrined the radical creativity of the artist.⁴⁶

In 1972 Benedict’s *Fitotrón*, a closed environment for plants, was, along with a labyrinth for white mice—*Laberinto para ratones blancos* [Labyrinth for White Mice]—, shown in the Project Room of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In the same year, under the auspices of CAyC in Buenos Aires, Benedict became a founder member of the Grupo de los Trece [Group of Thirteen], who shared Glusberg’s platform of “Conceptual art, art as an idea, opaque art as opposite to ideological (prevalence of transparent signs)” [sic].⁴⁷

In the *Letter of Intent* submitted by Benedict when he joined this group, he ironically referred to artists as “a sort of ethnic subgroup that may be in danger of extinction,” adding that “This is not a pessimistic reflection, since I am convinced that ideas grow stronger in a ‘hostile environment’”. Such conditions were necessary, he argued, if artists were to “truly alter the environment,”

because “If we artist-researchers mollify an environment until it accepts us, we will have lost the ability to effect cultural provocation and with it, in my view, our purpose.”⁴⁸

The question of the “extinction” or survival of different life forms was not ostensibly on the agenda and was certainly not referred to by Glusberg or any other art writer at this time, yet, as a political expression, it remains a fundamental element within Bénédict’s work.⁴⁹ In a statement for his Whitechapel Art Gallery exhibition in London in 1975, he elaborated on the necessity for “cultural provocation” by reminding the visitors that the *purpose* of his works was to “make manifest,” to reveal, that which had been “hidden from view.”⁵⁰ Bénédict’s intention was, therefore, not to become a competitor of David Attenborough by showing the intimate secrets of animal life, but, as he later explained when referring to himself as a *munar*, to present a complex moral lesson embedded in its own time.⁵¹

As part of the superstructure of theory that Glusberg was then constructing around the work of the Group of Thirteen, he now, somewhat paradoxically, characterised Bénédict’s work as being a return to first principles that minimised intellectual intervention:

[His models] tend to a pre-iconographic regression of the elements which make up the image; it is a return to the primitive, to the free answer of the world’s beings [sic], a liberation which wants to reinvent inventions and identify man with nature, for whom theological principles are no longer valid . . . He tries to eliminate all historical or symbolical super-structure from his artistic language, emphasising the empirical character of the work of art, and not the speculative character of the investigation.⁵²

Expressed in this way, the allusive, poetic nature of Bénédict’s approach is minimised in favour of an essentially reductive materialist project, not unlike that of Donald Judd or Carl Andre in New York who, during the early 1960s, had sought to make “non-specific objects” that could not refer to any other art or object.

Such a view overlooks Bénédict’s persistent use of metaphor on both poetic and parodic levels throughout his work—modes of expression that were being widely employed in contemporary Argentine art.⁵³ Even in the early 1970s, at the time his work was regarded as part of an international movement of the conceptual avant-garde, “cyborg” animals elaborated from his paintings of the mid-to-late 1960s began to frequent his drawings and sketches, but with the innovation that they were often covered in military camouflage and armed: outsize caterpillars built like troop carriers, mechanical flies transmuted into fighter planes, stealthily painted fish doubled as mines, self-propelled squid transformed into torpedoes.⁵⁴

5. Child's Play

Benedit's drawings from 1974 predate the production of "Transformers" although they share the same logic. In these popular toys, relatively innocuous objects like a person, car or spaceship were, through a series of swift movements, transformed into a warrior, tank or fighting machine.⁵⁵ The disingenuously innocent impulse that lay behind them led to the next major change in his work.

Begun in 1976, the series known as *Los juguetes de Tomás* (figs. 4 and 5) was based on simple drawings that Benedit's four-year-old son had made of different toys. These "originals" became part of the installation and were exhibited alongside his father's variations on them in different media. Citing first principles, Benedit presented renderings, or expanded drawings, of Tomás's "primitive" visions of different submarines, tanks or terrifying "King Kong" totems and sometimes transformed them back into three dimensions in painted epoxy models.⁵⁶

Benedit's decision to employ the toys and the drawings of a very young boy as both the subject and style of his work not only made reference to the failure of the adult world and its descent into violent chaos, but also to the ways in which infantile fantasies of violence, horror and cruelty were being acted out to become unavoidable features of daily life.

Across the whole world, the year 1968 had been the first skirmish in the demise of what Jean-François Lyotard later labelled the *grandes histoires*: meta-narratives of politics, culture and society originating from the European Enlightenment.⁵⁷ As these played out, opposing narratives of Communism, Capitalism and their fellow travellers were beginning no longer to attract the same loyalty as before, or to succeed in claiming high moral ground. Over the next forty years, it became evident that both extremes were vicious, corrupt and riven with self-interest and that neither system could deliver sustainable happiness or stability.

In spite of the proliferation of new media and digital technology, to many artists Marshall McLuhan's much quoted prescription "the medium is the message" began to sound hollow because it implied the voiding of moral content in favour of control, and of individual expression in favour of technocracy.⁵⁸ "The personal is political," a feminist slogan of the same time, resonated much longer and wider and, although initially targeted against the conservative values of the nuclear family, swiftly transmuted into a celebration of the layered complexities of individual identities of gender, ethnicity and shared experience.⁵⁹

This enabled, and in the case of the USSR revitalised, a new poetics of individual consciousness that was inevitably political although not affiliated to any party or organisation.⁶⁰ Its possibilities today have not yet been exhausted. This has nurtured some of the best art made from the 1960s until now, as well as, through the conformity of political correctness, some terrible things too. In Argentina, such an approach subverted and eventually defeated the bankrupt conservatism of the military.

Fig. 4
Luis F. Benedit,
Proyecto Juguete
n° 62 (*Barco de*
guerra según Tomás)
[Toy Project no. 62
(Warship According
to Tomás)], 1978



Fig. 5
Luis F. Benedit,
Proyecto de juguete n° 10
[Toy Project no. 10], 1977
Museo Nacional
de Bellas Artes,
Buenos Aires



In the aftermath of 1989, State Communism fell or was transformed. Twenty years later, the world financial crisis severely challenged Capitalism and its foundations. Flickering for decades, the flame of the Enlightenment eventually faltered and went dark. New narratives, new stories were needed to see what paths could be taken.

Luis Benedit—who wrote and made drawings in the sand—was one of those artists who showed a way through. The poetics of his work responded to the parameters within which he had to operate. His idiosyncratic, reactive, fragmentary analyses of the world were based on ways of seeing that expressed multiple viewpoints while simultaneously revealing different thresholds of truth. Benedit’s eye and mind brought together what he knew to create parallel worlds that no one could predict. He never blamed impediments on external factors, on *dei ex machinae* or nebulous “Others”. These, he realised, were little more than a distraction—phantoms, wishful projections—when what, in fact, mattered were the “We” and the “I”.

- 1 — Luis Fernando Benedit in María Helguera, "Conversaciones en el taller," in *Otro mirar: Arte contemporáneo argentino* (Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Departamento de Cultura, 1997) (trans. Albert G. Bork). *Me siento como el personaje del munar de los árabes. Los árabes tienen una gran tradición oral, y en ella es el munar el que escribe en la arena, o sea, dibuja en la arena para ilustrar la narración a los que en ese momento están. En el fondo soy un moralista. Yo quiero informar o traducir a mis compatriotas determinados hechos, actos o personajes que a mí me interesan, que socialmente han sido importantes porque han configurado la cultura de este país.*
- 2 — This was a problem for Benedit too. See Benedit in Alejandro Sáez-Germain, *Encuentro con los genios II: conversaciones con Soldi y Benedit* (Buenos Aires: Ed. Perfil, 1993), pp. 38–39. "I am consumed by the enigma of why there is an Argentine literature and no Argentine painting. . ." [*Me apasiona el enigma de por qué existe una literatura argentina y no existe una pintura argentina...*]. Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) had already confronted this question in relation to literature in his essay *El escritor argentino y la tradición* [The Argentine Writer and Tradition] (1951/1957), but this had been written before the years of military government from the 1960s to the 1980s.
- 3 — Benedit, in *Luis Fernando Benedit. Memorias australes* (Buenos Aires: Philippe Daverio, 1990), p. 31 (trans. Jane Brodie). *Creo que mis obras tienen lecturas diferentes y a distintos niveles. No me interesan científicamente sino como divulgación de una fenomenología social del comportamiento animal al que tiene acceso el observador más rudimentario. Todos los hombres somos miembros del conjunto de la naturaleza. De ahí que también sean válidas para nosotros las leyes ecológicas, el entrelazamiento de todos con todos y todo con todo. Vamos a vivir en un mundo apretado y debemos aprender a pensar en totalidades.*
- 4 — Benedit described these works in this way in "Benedit Writes about His Work," *Luis Fernando Benedit Projects and Labyrinths* (exh. cat.) (London: Whitechapel Art Gallery), 1975, n.p.
- 5 — I have examined this phenomenon in detail in relation to Germany, the USSR and Italy in "The Battle for Art," in *Art and Power. Europe under the Dictators 1930–45* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1995), and have discussed it more broadly in the lecture *Art as a Virus. Patterns of Production, Transmission and Reception in Art*, given at the British Museum, London, in 2010, and the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, in 2013. This is at present being expanded into a book. See also Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Tactics for Thriving on Adversity. Conceptualism in Latin America 1960–80," in Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea (eds.), *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America* (exh. cat.) (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2004).
- 6 — *A missile consisting of a number of balls connected by a strong cord, which when thrown entangles the limbs of the quarry* (The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1998).
- 7 — A number of such works with their related drawings were first shown at a solo exhibition at the Galería Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires, in 1978. Some of them had previously been included in group exhibitions.
- 8 — Helguera.
- 9 — I refer here to such works by Benedit as *Señales del fin del mundo* (1991), *Informe del fin del mundo* (1992) and *13 retratos fueguinos* (1987–1992).
- 10 — These works were probably conceived of as a series. See Benedit's notebook from 1977 where he lists several projects under the title "Serie del campo," Benedit archive, Buenos Aires.
- 11 — The Galería Lirolay continued to show his work annually until 1964.
- 12 — Nueva Figuración first showed together as a group in the exhibition *Otra Figuración* in 1961, the year of Benedit's first solo exhibition. Out of its members Benedit singled out Rómulo Macció's (1931–2016) paintings as being of particular interest. It is not clear what impressed him about these, but probably he was attracted by the expressionist impasto of his earliest work as well as by the fact that he had previously worked in advertising. This would certainly have struck a chord with Benedit's more pop-based work of the mid-1960s. Benedit in *Ver y Estimar previo al Di Tella* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1994), p. 59.
- 13 — Jean Dubuffet (1901–1985) was a French painter and sculptor who in the late 1940s pioneered a quasi-primitive, anti-psychological form of portraiture using heavy impasto. He had been strongly influenced by Surrealism and the Prinzhorn Collection of art of the mentally ill as well as by the writings of Alfred Jarry and Antonin Artaud. He coined the term *art brut* to describe this kind of work as well as that by other outsider artists. His work does not appear to have been shown publicly in Buenos Aires until 1965 when an exhibition was held at the Instituto Di Tella, although Guido Di Tella had purchased some of his works in 1960. Dubuffet's work and ideas, however, would have been in circulation in Buenos Aires from 1957, when J.E. Cirlot's book *El arte otro* was published by Seix Barral. See Mercedes Casanegra, *Deira, Macció, Noé, De la Vega: El estallido de la pintura* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 2010), pp. 195 and 197. I am grateful to María Torres for having pointed this out. Patricia Rizzo suggests that Benedit's earliest portraits may also have been inspired by folk art that the artist had brought back from a trip to Peru. See "Biografía documentada," in *Luis F. Benedit en el Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Obras 1960–1996* (Buenos Aires: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1996), p. 282.
- 14 — From the beginning of the 1960s systems art developed out of mathematical adaptations of Constructivism and overlapped with Minimalism, Process Art and Conceptual Art. It was particularly influenced by cybernetics and systems theory in both analyzing and devising social and anthropological frameworks as a means of making art.

- 15— Jorge Glusberg, *Luis Benedit* (exh. cat.) (Los Angeles: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1980), p. 8. After 1976 models were to become a significant element within Benedit's "report works" and I suspect that their origin can be found in his knowledge and respect for the three-dimensional elements used by the artists of Nueva Figuración in their work.
- 16— Glusberg, "Luis Benedit: Las memorias del olvido," in *Luis F. Benedit en el Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Obras 1960–1996*, p. 15. Benedit described this realization as "*una idea 'gatillo'*."
- 17— I have been unable to trace any obvious sources in animated cartoons or comic books for Benedit's paintings of this time other than a desire to parody in these works the cruel antics of the anthropomorphic animals and objects created by the Walt Disney Studios and other North American animators.
- 18— Benedit's work was included in Aldo Pellegrini's comprehensive *Surrealismo en la Argentina* exhibition held in 1967 at the Instituto Di Tella in Buenos Aires.
- 19— See, for example, *La sopa de pollo* [Chicken Soup] and *Los físicos* [The Physicists] (1968).
- 20— If one were to compare Benedit's work of this time with that of contemporary writers, it would be much closer to the bizarre brutality of J.G. Ballard than to the softer whimsy of Raymond Quenau.
- 21— Glusberg, "Luis Benedit: Las memorias del olvido," p. 15.
- 22— The Década Infame lasted from 1930 to 1943 and began with a military coup that unseated President Hipólito Yrigoyen's long-standing Radical government.
- 23— This "liberation" was instigated by General Eduardo Lonardi, who banned Peronism and for a short time returned the country to limited electoral democracy. Perón returned to Argentina and took office as president in 1973, but died the following year and was succeeded by his widow until she was ousted by a military coup in 1976.
- 24— The Montoneros, a left-wing Peronist urban guerrilla group active during the 1960s and early 1970s, was wiped out by the military government (1976–1983). These were later joined by the union-based Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación [Armed Forces of Liberation] (FAL) and the Marxist Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo [People's Revolutionary Army] (ERP). Paramilitary death squads included the right-wing Peronist Alianza Anticomunista Argentina [Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance] (AAA), founded in 1973, which targeted the Montoneros among its enemies.
- 25— There is no agreement on the number of people who were murdered ("disappeared") during the dictatorship, but it could have been as many as 30,000. Defeat in the war with the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands (1982) led to the fall of the military junta and to a return to democratic government in the following year.
- 26— See John King, *Art and Cultural Development 1956–1976*, in David Elliott (ed.), *Art from Argentina 1920–1994* (exh. cat.) (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1994), pp. 66–75. In this he describes the Buenos Aires art world in the 1960s. If I were asked to make an alphabetical list of the most energetic and exciting contemporary art cities in the 1960s it would include Buenos Aires, New York, Paris, São Paulo and Tokyo.
- 27— At this time the opposing Super-Powers were the USA with its allies, and the USSR with the Eastern Bloc. The USA regarded Latin America as its sphere of influence and actively supported military juntas in the region. It could be argued that the Argentine junta's "mistake" was to have become involved in a war with Britain because this restricted supplies of arms and other goods from western Super-Powers. During the late 1970s, there were thirty-one oppressive military regimes around the world, of which eleven were located in Latin America and the Caribbean, thirteen in Africa and seven in Asia. For an overview see Peter Chippendale and Ed Harriman, *Juntas United!* (London: Quartet Books, 1978).
- 28— The CGT was the largest national trade union federation in Argentina.
- 29— Andrea Sueldo, Silvia Andino and Graciela Sacco, *Tucumán arde* (Rosario: Sacco-Sueldo, 1987), pp. 57–79.
- 30— In 1976, following death threats from the military, activist artist León Ferrari (1920–2013) was forced to move from Buenos Aires to live in São Paulo, Brazil until 1991. His son Ariel, who stayed behind, was detained and "disappeared". Pablo Suárez (1937–2006), who had also been an active participant of *Tucumán arde*, moved between 1972 and 1973 to the city of San Luis, in Midwestern Argentina, where he worked as a caretaker. At this time he again began to make art but in a completely different way: hyperrealist paintings with no ostensible political content followed by "versions" of the muted still-lives of classic painter Fortunato Lacámara (1887–1951). He continued this work throughout the period of military government. See Liisa Roberts, "Pablo Suárez: A Portrait of Resistance," in Elliott, pp. 110–112. See also "IV: Art Under the Paradigm of Politics," in Inés Katzenstein (ed.), *Listen Here Now! Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-garde* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), pp. 260–327.
- 31— In countries under fascist or socialist dictatorships Conceptual Art took a different complexion from that in the West. In Poland, for instance, during the early 1960s it evolved out of Op art and *informel* as part of a specifically anti-Soviet impetus using a consciously solipsistic platform that focused on different modes of representation. As part of this, strong links were created with western artists but, because of the different political environment, text works in particular had a very different significance. The background of meaningless (official) pronouncements meant that Conceptual Art inevi-

- tably flirted with absurdity, even to the point of parody. Some critics involved in a current research programme devoted to this subject have questioned, in my view wrongly, whether the term “Conceptual Art” can be applied to either Eastern Europe or Latin America in the 1960s; see Zdenka Badovinac et al., *Conceptual Art in Eastern Europe: Parts I & II*, e-flux (<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/conceptual-art-and-eastern-europe/>). A similar engagement with absurdity can be seen in the work of the Moscow Conceptualists who were “unofficial artists” because the kind of work they made automatically excluded them from membership of the Artists’ Union. But their choice to work in this way was not so much a reaction to the pervasive influence of the State but a negation of its authority. For instance, Ilya Kabakov (born 1933) worked as a children’s book illustrator and many of the multi-stranded stories in his art adapt the narratives and language of children’s books to parody the attitudes and conditions of everyday life. Kabakov’s “Fairy Tales” have much in common with the short stories of Nikolai Gogol or one of the darker “Incidents” of Daniil Kharms. See, for instance, Ilya Kabakov’s Albums *Sitting-in-the-Closet Primakov* (1970–1974) or *Agonising Surikov* (1970–1974). Nikolai Gogol (1809–1952) was a Russian/Ukrainian novelist, dramatist and short story writer with a taste for the grotesque who satirized political corruption. Daniil Kharms (1905–1942) was an avant-garde Russian performance artist and posthumously published writer whose violent *Sluchai* [Incidents] are early masterpieces of Absurdism.
- 32— *Framing and Being Framed. 7 Works 1970–75* is the title of German artist Hans Haacke’s (born 1936) first book (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975). There are a number of similarities between Haacke’s work of the early to mid-1960s and Benedi’s of the late 1960s and early 1970s in that they both presented processes within nature as paradigms of social and political systems.
- 33— The Marxist artists’ organisations, the Frente Antiimperialista de Trabajadores de la Cultura [Anti-Imperialist Front of Cultural Workers] and the Grupo de Artistas de Vanguardia [Group of Avant-garde Artists], were both formed in 1968.
- 34— Haacke had been one of the first artists in the 1960s to move from an examination of natural processes or systems towards a consideration of how politics and power were both producers and products of systems. *Condensation Cube* (1963–1965), one of Haacke’s best known works from the 1960s, showed how a relatively closed system reacted to the environment in which it was situated through the evaporation and condensation of droplets of water inside it. After he moved from Germany to New York in 1967, he became one of the pioneers of institutional critique by researching and revealing systems of a different kind: how political, economic, and social forces tried covertly to influence, and often act against, public interests.
- 35— CAyC, founded by author, curator and museum director Jorge Glusberg (1932–2012), had a strong international identity and presence and organised many exhibitions of its artists outside Argentina, particularly during the period that the military was in power. In 1969, CAyC organised an influential exhibition, *Arte y cibernética* [Art and Cybernetics], at the Galería Bonino in Buenos Aires, which was subsequently shown at the Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo in Lima (1971), as well as at various international venues (see “Chronology” in this publication).
- 36— The “stream of consciousness” approach of these early formulations can be clearly seen in Jorge Glusberg’s essay “Arte e ideología,” in *Arte y cibernética* (exh. cat.) (Peru: I.A.C./IBM - Buenos Aires: CAyC, 1971), n.p. In this Glusberg defines a new systemic form of ideology in which “Art is one form of meaning reality, that is to say, a semiology system, whose laws and mechanism have begun to be explored [sic].” Internationally, the effect of the “failure of 1968” marked a general retreat of the left into the academicism of critical theory from which it has not yet recovered.
- 37— Mari Carmen Ramírez has written extensively on the importance of parody in understanding modern and contemporary Argentine art. See her catalogue *Cantos paralelos. La parodia plástica en el arte argentino contemporáneo* (Austin: Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art, 1999).
- 38— Structuralism was a theoretical paradigm originating out of linguistics that had extended to many other fields. It argued that elements of human culture could only be understood in terms of their relationship to those larger systems, or structures, which governed them and to which they contributed. By the 1960s many theorists were critical of the reductive determinism implicit in Structuralism and, while acknowledging the importance of structures, factored in the complexity and unpredictability of human action on them as well as the impossibility of the theorist being able to escape from structures in order to study them in a way that was not influenced by them.
- 39— One marked exception was Gillo Dorfles who, writing for the *Corriere della Sera* in May 1972 about the Argentine artists, including Benedi, presented by CAyC at the Tercera Biental Coltejer in Medellín, Colombia, referred to the techniques and procedures of these artists in political terms: “...from concrete poetry which has already been rendered academic to the more contemporary experience of visual poetry, as well as ecological research and statistical documentation—it is possible to create something like a document of political protest.” I am very grateful to Fernando Davis for pointing this out, as well as for his insightful comments on political expressions in Benedi’s work. Other artists of the Grupo de los Trece, such as Víctor Grippo (1936–2002), also expressed the realities of his time in similarly oblique ways. For example, in works such as *Analogía I* [Analogy I, 1970–1977], a vast pile of tubers in which each one has been penetrated by an electrode wired to a central ammeter, measures the electrical charge caused by the breaking down of the starch in the potato. In this “experiment” the electricity moves from the periphery to the center yet, considering the widespread resort to torture during these years, a reverse reading of the work was possible in which the potatoes were not the generators of current but passive recipient victims. The pseudo-religious title of his work *Vida, muerte, resurrección*

- ción [Life, Death, Resurrection, 1980], in which lead boxes filled with beans were slowly burst by the growth of the sprouting beans inside them, could refer to the victory over the *años de plomo* [years of lead], a term commonly applied to the period of military government.
- 40— Glusberg, *Luis Bedit*, p. 8.
- 41— See, for example, *Art International* (Lugano), summer of 1970; Dorothy Cameron, "Venice," *Arts Canada* (Toronto), 1970, p. 45; Peter Fuller and Maxine Molyneux, "Letter from Argentina," *Arts Review* (London), June 16 1971; Paolo Rizzi, "Dopo la ver-nice per i critici ieri l'apertura al pubblico. Biennale: adesso la gente. Le api alienate," *Il Gazzettino* (Venice), 25 June 1970, p. 3.
- 42— Museum of Modern Art, New York, *Press Release No. 125 A, Projects: Luis Fernando Bedit*, typescript, November 14, 1972.
- 43— Any consideration of the maze works, which unlike the *Biotrón* were closed structures, cannot avoid comparison with the imagery of Franz Kafka (1883–1924) or Jorge Luis Borges. Bedit continued to make different mazes until 1974.
- 44— Glusberg, *Luis Bedit*, p. 10.
- 45— Bedit, *Luis Fernando Bedit Projects and Labyrinths*.
- 46— Glusberg, *Luis Bedit*, p. 10.
- 47— Glusberg, "Arte e ideología," n.p. Although the opacity of this statement is in line with Glusberg's stated aims, I assume that poor translation into English has considerably added to this.
- 48— Bedit, "Letter of Intent," presented at the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAyC) in Buenos Aires in relation to the formation of the Grupo de los Trece in 1972. I am most grateful to Fernando Davis for having supplied this reference.
- 49— Bedit touched on this question directly in later works that referred to the now extinct indigenous people of Argentina and to how their removal or demise had been suppressed.
- 50— Bedit, "Bedit Writes about His Work."
- 51— See note 1. David Attenborough (born 1926) is a British broadcaster, writer and naturalist whose films and books on nature and animals have been distributed worldwide.
- 52— Jorge Glusberg, *Luis Bedit's Botanical Experiences*, type-script, Bedit archive, Buenos Aires, n.p. [Originally published in Spanish in Jorge Glusberg, "Los modelos interesados de Luis F. Bedit, de la figuración al arte de sistemas", in *De la figuración al arte de sistemas* (exh. cat.) (Córdoba: Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio A. Caraffa, 1970), n.p.]
- 53— See Marcelo E. Pacheco, "Parody and Truth Games," "La parodia y los juegos de la verdad," in Ramírez, *Cantos paralelos*. . . , pp. 90–120. This refers to the role of parody in Bedit's later work but I believe that this, along with other readings, can also be applied to Bedit's work of the 1960s and 1970s.
- 54— See, for example, the pencil and watercolour drawings *Proyecto para un calamar a propulsión (1)* (1974) and *Proyecto para una sepia articulada y a reacción* (1974). Even though these works were not shown in Argentina before 1983, other projects involving similar metaphors were included in Bedit's solo exhibitions at Galería Bonino (1975), Gabinete del Grabado (1976) and Galería Ruth Benzacar (1978).
- 55— As Transformers were only produced in Japan from 1975 and in the USA and Europe from 1984, it is unlikely that they influenced Bedit's drawings of this time. Almost certainly the artist was thinking about camouflage and transformations in nature in relation to these works.
- 56— See, for example, *Proyecto juguete n° 10* (1977), *Proyecto juguete n° 23* (1977), *Proyecto juguete n° 45* (1978), as well as *Proyecto juguete n° 58 (Submarino Tomás)* (1977). The King Kong series was not based on a toy but on a supersized figure of the gigantic ape that had visited Buenos Aires in 1977 as a promotion for the second film version of *King Kong*. See Glusberg, *Luis Bedit*, p. 16.
- 57— Jean-François Lyotard (1924–1998), *La Condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979).
- 58— This phrase was first used in McLuhan's 1964 book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Mentor).
- 59— This phrase was coined by Carol Honish in 1969 in the title of her essay "The Personal Is Political," in Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt (ed. and pub.), *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Pamphlet), 1970.
- 60— The Soviet avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s had been checked by Stalinism, yet it continued underground in forms that are only recently beginning to be acknowledged.

Luis F. Bedit is the only member of the Grupo de los Trece, the collection of “systems artists” promoted by the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAyC) throughout the 1970s, included in *Heterotopías. Medio siglo sin-lugar: 1918-1968*, Héctor Olea and Mari Carmen Ramírez’s paradigmatic reorganization of the Latin American modernist canon.¹ Discussing *Fitotrón* (1972–1973), a work produced after the date range selected for the Spanish version of the exhibition, Ramírez identifies Bedit as a dystopian end-point for the project of synthesizing art and life in postwar Latin America:

As a bizarre counterpoint to all these transgressions, the controlled insect and plant environments by Luis Fernando Bedit—developed since 1968 and ending in the *Fitotrón*...—offer a caustic metaphor of confinement... to illustrate the tragic outcome of the Latin American utopias of the last critical rebuttal of the century: the 1960s.²

Bedit’s practice is positioned as metaphorical rather than engaged; as referring to political realities obliquely instead of modeling new relations between subjects or directly intervening in social experience.

If liberation rhetoric is privileged as the criteria for the avant-garde, an artist who specialized in the physical construction of apparatuses that contain and control living things appears defeatist at best and, at worst, the antithesis of canonical Latin American conceptualism as exemplified by *Tucumán arde* [Tucumán Is Burning].³ What alternative readings are possible that might revise this subordination of Bedit (and perhaps other such scientific or hermetic artistic endeavors of the 1960s and 1970s) to the radical propositions of the 1960s?⁴ A starting point might be to examine the importance of cybernetics for Bedit as well as so many of his contemporaries. A sprawling, interdisciplinary community of thinkers more than it was a scientific movement, cybernetics approached social problems as it did everything else: from the perspective of relational, real-time systems. It was less a philosophy of revolution, which would involve tearing down and replacing existing structures, than a set of investigations into how systems function and might be improved.⁵ Visualized or condensed into works that are equal parts empiricism and poetry, cybernetics offered the inherently optimistic possibilities of new knowledge and control. Bedit’s drawings, sculptures, and interactive works between 1968 and 1978 display a sustained commitment to creating, comprehending and controlling real-time systems. The artist’s cybernetic aesthetic should not be reduced to a metaphorical illustration of pessimism or powerlessness; rather, it should be placed in the lineage of cyberneticians’ original efforts to take the “black box” of an unknown system and render it a transparent, self-evident source of heuristic inquiry.

Bedit’s many notebooks, newly available to researchers since his passing in 2012, cast light on a neglected component of his practice—the sketch—that stands in contrast to the professional, exacting blueprints that the artist frequently exhibited alongside his containers and labyrinths for living things.



Fig. 1
Luis F. Benedit,
sketchbook, c. 1968

The latter derive from Benedit's training as an architect, which consistently informed his artistic practice throughout his career.⁶ Ink-marker studies produced for the artist's acrylic paintings circa 1967–1969, found in Notebook 5 of the Benedit archives, offer repeated images of mechanomorphic animals set in brightly colored psychedelic landscapes. Futuristic buildings or infrastructure dotting the landscape sometimes echo the metallic prostheses on the animals' bodies—perhaps a sci-fi intimation of a future world in which technology and nature are synthesized. Such landscape images served as painted backgrounds for the Plexiglas three-dimensional containers for live animals in the 1968 *Microzoo* exhibition.⁷ One such machine-bird is captioned, in the artist's script, "*l'oiseau mecanique*" [sic] (fig. 1), a possible reference to *Ballet mécanique*, Fernand Léger's film of 1923, a key "historical avant-garde" fusion of art and technology.⁸ Using a medium, film, that was at that time the very embodiment of a non-artisanal, mechanized art, Léger's "ballet" is comprised of the lifelike technology of industrialized modernity that had been so recently unveiled as a nightmare in the first World War. Benedit, using the artisanal, preparatory medium of the notebook sketch, hints at reconciliation: between his hand and industrial materials utilized in the final product; between painting and live sculpture; between animal and machine. This is a salient example of cybernetics' utility in the art of this era: it facilitated dialogue with prewar modernism while offering new associations, forestalling mere repetition.

This complex interplay between content, form, and art history testifies to the subtle manner in which cybernetics appeared in Argentine art at this time—as one node in a larger ecology of available concepts and references. In some sense, this is appropriate for cybernetics itself, which, as many scholars have attested, defies easy definition, particularly by the 1960s and 1970s. As Claus Pias writes, "Cybernetics is less a discipline than an epistemology; it becomes activated within disciplines."⁹ Coined by the American scientist Norbert Wiener, "cybernetics" derives from the Greek word meaning "steersman,"

in reference to “autopoietic” systems that monitor and correct themselves. Cybernetics emerged out of Wiener’s attempts to transform World War II Air Force bombers into servomechanisms—self-correcting machines—that could track changing conditions and make real-time adjustments to more accurately hit targets.¹⁰ In order to correct itself, the bomber would have to produce a feedback loop of information about its own functioning, taken from real-time data and then immediately applied to make corrections in mid-operation. After the war, Wiener saw the possibilities of applying his work to other systems, such as the emerging fields of communications, computing, and systems theory. He increasingly built networks between a generation of researchers that included Ross Ashby, Stafford Beer, Gregory Bateson, Jay Forrester, Humberto Maturana, Gordon Pask, Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, Grey Walter, and many others. As expressed in the title of one of his books on his new science, *Cybernetics: or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, a key principle of cybernetics was to model machines on animals, and especially humans, with the human nervous system as the ultimate “black box” to decipher and replicate.¹¹

Argentine artists absorbed cybernetics in roughly two stages, and never as a strictly delineated discipline. It was disseminated alongside related yet distinct schools of thought, such as structuralism and media theory, which had their own lexicons. Eliseo Verón, a close associate of Oscar Masotta, cites Wiener and Bateson in his sociological texts of 1963 and 1964, and cybernetic terms such as “redundancy” figured prominently in Masotta’s lectures on Pop art in 1965.¹² One of the most direct transpositions of a cybernetic diagram into art in this era was *Sistema* [System] (1966), by Víctor Grippo, a later colleague of Bénédict’s at CAYC.¹³ It consisted of three poster boards illustrated with text, photographs, and diagrams corresponding to the “ARTIST/TRANSMITTER,” on the left, the “WORK/CHANNEL,” in the middle, and the “PUBLIC/RECEIVER,” on the right (fig. 2). Structuralists and cyberneticians alike had explored and published versions of this model of communication: Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver in 1948, and Roman Jakobson ten years later, among many others.¹⁴ Both diagrams share a tripartite structure and the movement of a message from left to right: from a speaker, or source of a message, to a receiver, or addressee. Grippo found equivalents for the communicational terms in the art system (artist-work-public), giving the viewer an integral position. It is interesting in this case to speculate what happens to “noise”—anything which distorts the message—in this artwork-cum-diagram. Given that images of Grippo’s own circuit-like paintings are held up as examples of artworks, it is possible that he understands the work itself as an uncertain or mutable message, or that he is optimistic enough to see the possibility for perfect communication, free of noise, between an artist and his audience. A similar ambiguity persists in Bénédict’s work of the early 1970s, with its highly accurate blueprints and axonometric diagrams of his inventions. Whether the viewer was to take the drawing—and, by extension, the work—literally, as sincere explanation or even scientific research, or whether a poetic ambiguity could be read into the systems being displayed as art was not directly addressed by the artist.

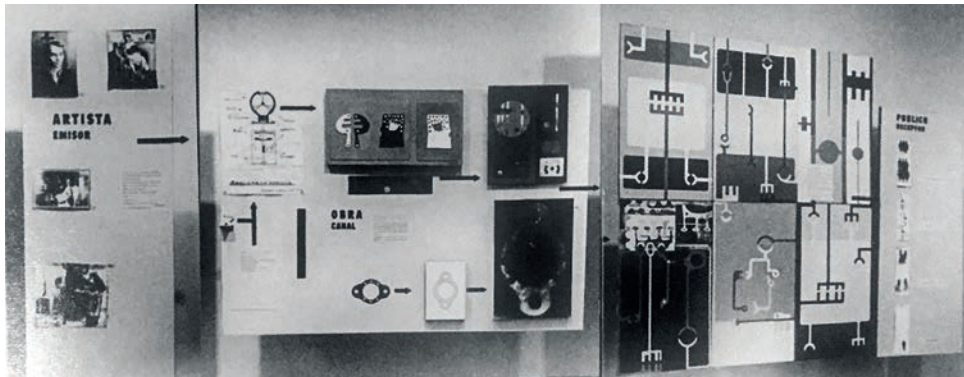


Fig. 2
 Víctor Grippo,
*Emisor-Canal-
 Receptor o Sistema*
 [Broadcaster-
 Channel-Receptor
 or System], 1966

This same year, 1966, marks the critical explorations of the *arte de los medios de comunicación* group that would be documented in Masotta's book *Happenings*, which attempted to intervene in mass media communication in Buenos Aires, as well as Benedit and Vicente Marotta's environment *Barbazul* [Bluebeard] (sometimes written as *Barba Azul*) (fig. 3), at the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (MAM).¹⁵ This take on the Bluebeard myth (in which a proto-serial killer is discovered by his wife) is known as the first of the artist's works to incorporate feedback, yet it makes for a striking contrast with Grippo's transposition of academic diagram into work of art. Using quasi-figurative painted steel and iron sculptures, Benedit and Marotta created an experience of sensory overload to provide a dynamic, interactive relationship to the narrative; MAM director Hugo Parpagnoli likened it to a "mirror" reflecting the viewer's own process of reception.¹⁶ If this work instantiated real-time feedback, however (Parpagnoli's text is admittedly vague in its description), Benedit had not yet placed cybernetic elements front and center in his practice—he was still grounded in representation, however fantastical.

With the aforementioned *Microzoo* project, Benedit found an intermediate space between his painted sculptures and an altogether different sort of practice. The Plexiglas habitats in this exhibition housed live birds, cats, ants, lizards, fish, turtles, and bees, physically placing these living things in front of or just beneath the artist's Surrealist acrylic landscapes and mechanomorphic animals such as the "*oiseau mécanique*" of the notebooks.¹⁷ *Microzoo* is an essential intermediate work for Benedit's practice at this moment that juxtaposes representation with demonstration. Viewers to the show were also observers, witnessing behavior alongside static images. These habitats are distinct from those of Arte Povera artist Jannis Kounellis, a favorite of Benedit's from his time in Rome. In 1967, Kounellis exhibited planters with live cacti; he would famously display live horses in Galleria L'Attico in Rome a year later.¹⁸ Benedit's use of Plexiglas and his insistence on *containment* made an explicit association between the painterly frame and the animal vitrine, cage, or tank. The *Microzoo* was not a destabilization of the boundary between the gallery and the outside world. Its objects captured and held living material from the outside world up to analysis. Although this project successfully shifted the register of his work from representation to demonstration, Benedit had not yet arrived at an incorporation of systems or feedback into artistic form.

Fig. 3
Luis F. Bedit
and Vicente Marotta,
Barbazul [Bluebeard],
1966
Museo de Arte Moderno
de Buenos Aires



Appearing just after the political activism that swept the Argentine art world in 1968, the second wave of cybernetics in Argentine art arrived in the form of an institution: the CAYC.¹⁹ Director Jorge Glusberg had acquired a keen eye for international developments in art by the late 1960s; in 1967, for example, he hosted an Argentine “sequel” to the influential *Primary Structures* exhibition at Jewish Museum in New York.²⁰ In 1968, cybernetics had begun to feature in international exhibitions that combined conceptualist experimentation with the interactivity of “art and technology.” Hans Haacke was an important early proponent of such experiments, which received institutional backing with art-science collaborations such as E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology, founded by Robert Rauschenberg and Billy Kluver), as well as Jasia Reichardt and Jack Burnham’s writing and exhibitions.²¹ Developed with the British curator Reichardt and closely modeled on computer art that was featured in her *Cybernetic Serendipity* show, the Center’s inaugural exhibition in August 1969 (then called the Centro de Estudios de Arte y Comunicación) was *Arte y cibernética* [Art and Cybernetics], presented first at Galería Bonino and later in additional venues internationally.²² In this case, “cybernetics” specifically referred to computer technology, a relative novelty in Argentina at this moment.²³ For Glusberg, what united the artists he assembled for the show, which included Luis Bedit, Antonio Berni, Ernesto Deira, Osvaldo Romberg, and others, was “computation,” primarily demonstrated through computer graphics.²⁴

Bedit’s contribution to *Arte y cibernética* consisted of computer renderings of bees, set in spiraling serial repetition. Although this exhibition might appear a rather humble gesture from the early years of the technology, Bedit nonetheless used the opportunity to comment on thinking the living thing through the machine, an explicitly cybernetic logic. If *Arte y cibernética* was more aspirational than revolutionary, Glusberg’s next step—developing a program based in the concept of “arte de sistemas,” or systems art—permitted the artists associated with CAYC to utilize methods and technologies that were no less cybernetic than computers. In a sense, they began to collectively figure

just what a cybernetic aesthetic might look like.²⁵ This focus on “systems” more generally, rather than merely computer technology, embraced the broad, transdisciplinary focus to which cybernetics had evolved in the 1960s, particularly in the work of Gregory Bateson, and it remained in accord with structuralism’s objective of identifying common structures in vastly different phenomena and fields.²⁶ With CAyC and the Grupo de los Trece, Glusberg took a step that artists such as Hans Haacke had not taken: to *collectivize* cybernetic art—to make its production an expressly communal endeavor developed in a quasi-academic setting.²⁷

It is in this context that Bénédict’s best-known “habitat” works, *Biotrón* and *Fitotrón* (cat. no. 5 and 44), were produced and promoted internationally.²⁸ These signature works emblemize systems art in a way that rivals the other artists in the CAyC orbit. The systems on display in these major works—pollination, hydroponic plant production—are not properly termed “natural” but are the precise result of human and technological intervention upon the natural. They are additionally systems that are ostensibly self-sustaining, if not self-correcting per se. Perhaps most important to note, however, is that these larger projects, along with the many smaller versions of hydroponic devices and contraptions for simultaneously nurturing and exhibiting living things, are not merely organic systems. They are also systems related to creation and knowledge, and this is the reason for the consistent inclusion of notes and blueprints alongside their installations in galleries. Ultimately, this surfeit of preparatory drawings and plans can only represent Bénédict’s real-time process of production, persisting as traces after the fact. Yet the viewer is able, if he or she wishes, to instantiate a loop between the plans themselves and their final products within the space of the gallery. The poster-pamphlet for *Biotrón*’s appearance at the 1970 Venice Biennale features a photographic portrait of the artist’s head in profile set directly to the left of the drawn plans for the work, intimating this role of organizational thought process as part of Bénédict’s ecology and aesthetic.²⁹ Thanks to CAyC’s rich material culture—its myriad *gacetillas* and exhibition catalogues, in which Bénédict was a perennially featured artist—there are diverse ways that thought-process is figured in the ephemera around these works. An entry in the *Arte de sistemas II* catalogue features a photograph of *Fitotrón*, collaged and Xeroxed on the identical template that all artists in the show were given to represent their work. It is not blank, but again suggests graph paper, the substrate of architect and scientist alike. Beyond the margins of the photograph, *Fitotrón* is surrounded by notes specifying its materials and measurements, pointing to both the cybernetic artist at work and the representation of his thought process for the reader. It is a kind of proof.

A more complicated case is presented by Bénédict’s labyrinths for insects, rodents, and people, where feedback is effectively the motor of the work. As the chosen animal negotiates the containing architecture that surrounds it, it makes choices, mistakes, and corrections autopoetically. The system in which it does so, however, is less so symbiotic than a pre-arranged dilemma; the micro-architectural container only constitutes an essential part of the system if that system is “problem-solving.” A plan for a cockroach labyrinth

from 1971 is titled *Hábitat-laberinto para cucarachas* [Habitat-Labyrinth for Cockroaches] (cat. no. 25), suggesting that the life-sustaining functions of *Biotrón* might be reconciled with the real-time apprehension of the maze (perhaps the reward at the end is enough to keep the insects going). As a viewer of an enclosed system, however, it is clear that one also observes a test subject, exposed to challenging conditions—and indeed, he or she becomes one in *Laberinto invisible* [Invisible Labyrinth] (1971) (cat. no. 35), a maze using motion-sensitive light beams that would sound an alarm at any wrong turn or collision with a “wall.” Upon completion, one could enjoy “the privilege of observing the looks and behavior of a ‘Mexican axolotl’ (an amphibious creature which is supposed to be related to the origin of the human species).”³⁰ Here Bénédict does seem to invite metaphorical associations. One acts like a rat in a maze only to come upon a vision of oneself—a human—not futuristically conjoined with a machine, but as animal.³¹

- 1 — See Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea (eds.), *Heterotopías. Medio siglo sin-lugar, 1918-1968* (exh. cat.) (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2000), and *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America* (exh. cat.) (New Haven: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Yale University Press, 2004), and Daniel R. Quiles, "Exhibition as Network, Network as Curator: Canonizing Art from Latin America," *Artl@s Bulletin*, vol. 3, no. 1 (spring 2014), pp. 62–78.
- 2 — Ramírez, "Reflexión heterotópica: las obras," in *Heterotopías...*, p. 42, and "A Highly Topical Utopia," in *Inverted Utopias...*, p. 14.
- 3 — Ramírez began to construct this canon in essays dating from the early 1990s. It has been expanded in Luis Camnitzer's recent book on the topic, in which he compares the urban guerrilla faction Tupamaros with *Tucumán arde*, and in the activities of the Red Conceptualismos del Sur. See Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007); Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Blueprint Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin America," in Waldo Rasmussen, Fatima Bercht and Elizabeth Ferrer (eds.), *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century* (exh. cat.) (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1993), pp. 156–167, and "Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America, 1960–1980," in Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver and Rachel Weiss (eds.), *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin* (exh. cat.) (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), pp. 53–71, and Southern Conceptualisms Network, "Micropolitics of the Archive," *Field Notes* 02 (http://www.aaa.org.hk/FieldNotes/Issue?Issue_num=2).
- 4 — Indeed, this touches on a larger question of other overlooked, cybernetics-inflected experiments from this era that have been neglected by art historians in favor of *Tucumán arde*'s overt politics and implicit institution critique. This would include Bedit and Marotta's *Barbazul* and Víctor Grippo's *Sistema*, mentioned below, as well as, to name only a few other examples, Roberto Jacoby and Eduardo Costa's audio recordings of "oral language" in 1966; Margarita Paksa's interactive sculptures and environments from *Ultra*, 1967, forward; Jacoby's *Parámetros*, 1967; Lea Lublin's site-specific *Fluvio subltunal*, 1969; the interactive, closed-circuit television projects of Grupo Frontera (Inés Gross, Mercedes Estévez, Adolfo Brunowsky) between 1969 and 1970, and many more. See Daniel R. Quiles, "Mediate Media: Buenos Aires Conceptualism," exhibition essay for *Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960–1980* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2015) (https://www.moma.org/d/pdfs/W1siZiIsIjIwMTUvMTIvMTcvODg0aGN1dmd3cV9tcDAxOTA2M19xdWlsZXNfZmlyYWxfMTJfMTcucGRml1d/mp019063_quiles_final_12_17.pdf?sha=e47b5fcdea912909).
- 5 — In recent years, the history of cybernetics has been explored by a variety of historians and theorists. See, among many other titles, Adam Frank and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 21, no. 2 (winter 1995), pp. 496–522; Slava Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), and Andrew Pickering, *The Cybernetic Brain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).
- 6 — Bedit graduated with a degree in architecture from the Universidad de Buenos Aires in 1963, initially working in the architecture studio of Acevedo-Becú-Moreno and designing his first house for the Santa Coloma family in San Isidro in Greater Buenos Aires. In 1963 he traveled to Madrid, where he worked in the studio of the architects Faci and Larrea Cisneros. In 1967 he returned to Europe, overseeing the construction of a house in Rome and studying with the architect Francesco Fariello on a grant from the Italian government. He continued to practice as an architect during his association with CAyC in the 1970s, and later appeared in Jorge Glusberg's book and exhibitions on architecture at the end of the decade. See Patricia Rizzo, "Biografía documentada," in *Luis F. Bedit en el Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes: obras 1960–1996* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1996), p. 282 et seq.
- 7 — Luis Bedit, *Microzoo* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Galería Rubbers, 1968).
- 8 — Here I refer to the term Peter Bürger introduced in 1974. Bürger's argument is that the postwar "neo-avant-garde" could merely repeat the singular ruptures of the original or "historical" artists in their radical attempts to fuse "art" and "life." Recently, Andrea Giunta has suggested that in the Southern Cone the interplay between "historical" and "neo" has been more fluid than previously understood, leading from European abstraction directly to the shaped canvases of the *Arturo* and *Ruptura* artists and canonical postwar participatory art. See Peter Bürger, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), and Hal Foster in *Return of the Real* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), pp. 1–33. Andrea Giunta made these remarks in a presentation delivered as the 2012 Norma U. Lifton Lecture at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, October 2012.
- 9 — Claus Pias, "'Hollerith Feathered Crystal': Art, Science, and Computing in the Era of Cybernetics," *Grey Room*, vol. 29 (winter 2008), p. 111.
- 10 — See Peter Galison, "Ontology of the Enemy," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 21, no. 1 (autumn 1994), pp. 228–266; Norbert Wiener, "Cybernetics," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 7 (April 1950), pp. 2–4, and *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society* (New York: Doubleday, 1954).
- 11 — Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics: or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1961).
- 12 — Eliseo Verón, "El análisis estructural en ciencias sociales (1963)" and "Comunicación y neurosis: el aprendizaje de estructuras (1964)," in *Conducta, estructura y comunicación: Escritos teóricos 1959-1973* (Buenos Aires: Amorrortu editores, 1995), pp. 89–120, in particular pp. 92 and 109. See also Oscar Masotta, *El "pop-art"* (Buenos Aires: Columba, 1967).
- 13 — *Investigación sobre el proceso de la creación: Renart, Kemble, Barilari, Grippo* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Galería Vignes, 1966).

- 14— See Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1949), p. 5, and Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," in *Language in Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 66.
- 15— See Oscar Masotta, *Happenings* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Jorge Álvarez), 1967.
- 16— Hugo Parpagnoli, untitled introduction, in *Barbazul* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1966), p. 1.
- 17— See "Artes y espectáculos: Plástica: El micro-zoo [sic] de acrílico," *Primera Plana*, December 3, 1968.
- 18— Rizzo, p. 284. See *Zero to Infinity*, pp. 160 and 237–250.
- 19— María José Herrera and Mariana Marchesi, *Arte de sistemas: El CAyC y el proyecto de un nuevo arte regional* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Fundación OSDE, 2013).
- 20— Jorge Glusberg (ed.), *Estructuras primarias II* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Sociedad Hebrea Argentina, 1967).
- 21— See Jack Burnham, "Systems Aesthetics," in *Great Western Salt Works: Essays on the Meaning of Post-formalist Art* (New York: G. Braziller, 1974), pp. 16 and 24, and Luke Skrebowski, "All Systems Go: Recovering Hans Haacke's Systems Art," *Grey Room* 30 (winter 2008), pp. 54–83.
- 22— See Jorge Glusberg, *Arte y cibernética* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Galería Bonino, CeAC, 1969), *Arte y cibernética* (exh. cat.) (Montevideo: Comisión Nacional de Artes Plásticas, 1970), and *Arte y cibernética* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Museo Municipal de Bellas Artes Juan B. Castagnino, CAyC, 1970).
- 23— In an assessment of computing capabilities among Argentine educational institutions in that year, a North American researcher noted that there were less than 200 computers in Argentina, the most powerful being a GE/BULL 625 at the national petroleum company, Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales; that nine universities visited throughout the country were using a total of 11 computers, and that no computer science curricula yet existed at any of them. Aaron Finerman, "Computing Capabilities at Argentine and Chilean Universities," *Communication of the Association for Computing Machinery*, vol. 12, no. 8 (August 1969), pp. 425–431.
- 24— See *Art Journal*, vol. 3, no. 67 (fall 2008), in particular María Fernández, "Detached from History: Jasia Reichardt and Cybernetic Serendipity," pp. 6–23.
- 25— The term repeatedly featured in CAyC group exhibitions of the early 1970s, among them *De la figuración al arte de sistemas* in 1970, *Arte de sistemas* in 1971, *Arte de sistemas II* in 1972 (which consisted of three separate shows: *Arte de sistemas internacional*, *Arte de sistemas Argentina*, and *Arte e ideología. CAyC al aire libre*), *Arte de sistemas en Latinoamérica* in 1974, and others. See Jorge Glusberg, *Art Systems in Latin America* (exh. cat.) (Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, and Espace Pierre Cardin, Paris: Buenos Aires: CAyC, 1975; *Arte de sistemas* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: CAyC, 1970); "Arte de sistemas en la III Bienal Coltejer, Medellín, Colombia," GT-116 and 116-A, April 19, 1972, and May 10, 1972; *Arte de sistemas: X (Víctor Grippo), Y (Alberto Pellegrino), Z (Alfredo Portillos)* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: CAyC, 1971); *Arte e ideología: CAyC al aire libre* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires, CAyC, 1972); *Center of Art and Communication in Camden Arts Centre: From Figuration Art to Systems Art in Argentina* (exh. cat.) (London: Camden Arts Centre, 1971); *De la figuración al arte de sistemas* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: CAyC, 1970), and *El Grupo de los Trece en arte de sistemas* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: CAyC, 1972).
- 26— See Gregory Bateson, "Redundancy and Coding," in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: The New Information Sciences Can Lead to a New Understanding of Man* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972), and William Kaizen, "Steps to an Ecology of Communication: Radical Software, Dan Graham, and the Legacy of Gregory Bateson," *Art Journal* (fall 2008), pp. 86–107.
- 27— The Grupo de los Trece (which included Benedi) was formed following a visit by Jerzy Grotowski to CAyC in September 1971. Cybernetic / "anti-psychiatry" theorist David Cooper was later brought in to help structure the group's interactions and collective work.
- 28— See Jorge Glusberg, *Luis Benedi: Phitotron* (exh. cat.) (New York: Museum of Modern Art - Buenos Aires: CAyC, 1972).
- 29— Jorge Glusberg, "Los modelos interesados de Luis F. Benedi," in *Argentina: 1970—XXV Biennale de Venezia—Italia*, exhibition pamphlet (Venice: Direzione Generale di Relazioni Culturali, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Argentina, 1970).
- 30— Jorge Glusberg, "Luis Benedi at the Museum of Modern Art, New York," GT-181-A and -181-A-1, December 28, 1972. The exhibition was presented by Bernice Rose, an associate curator at MoMA.
- 31— *Laberinto invisible*, and perhaps a larger discussion of the design and legacy of CAyC, in general, beg comparison with cybernetics' ameliorative role in Chile at this same time in the creation of Cybersyn, a real-time system for monitoring the entire country's economy and labor dynamics. Certainly CAyC's futuristic design and ambitious aims as a control center for discussion and innovation have common ground with Stafford Beer's team's attempt to utilize cybernetic principles to contribute to Salvador Allende's socialist revolution. Aside from the obvious distinction of Argentina being under dictatorship at the time, there is also the question of what it meant for CAyC to be an art center rather than a social project. CAyC (and Benedi) succeeded in manifesting cybernetics in art, but only through framing operations that made it recognizable as such. See Eden Medina, *Cybernetic Revolutionaries: Technology and Politics in Allende's Chile* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011).

Luis F. Benedit,
Furnarius rufus and
Proyecto Huevos
[Eggs Project],
unidentified
exhibition, 1970s



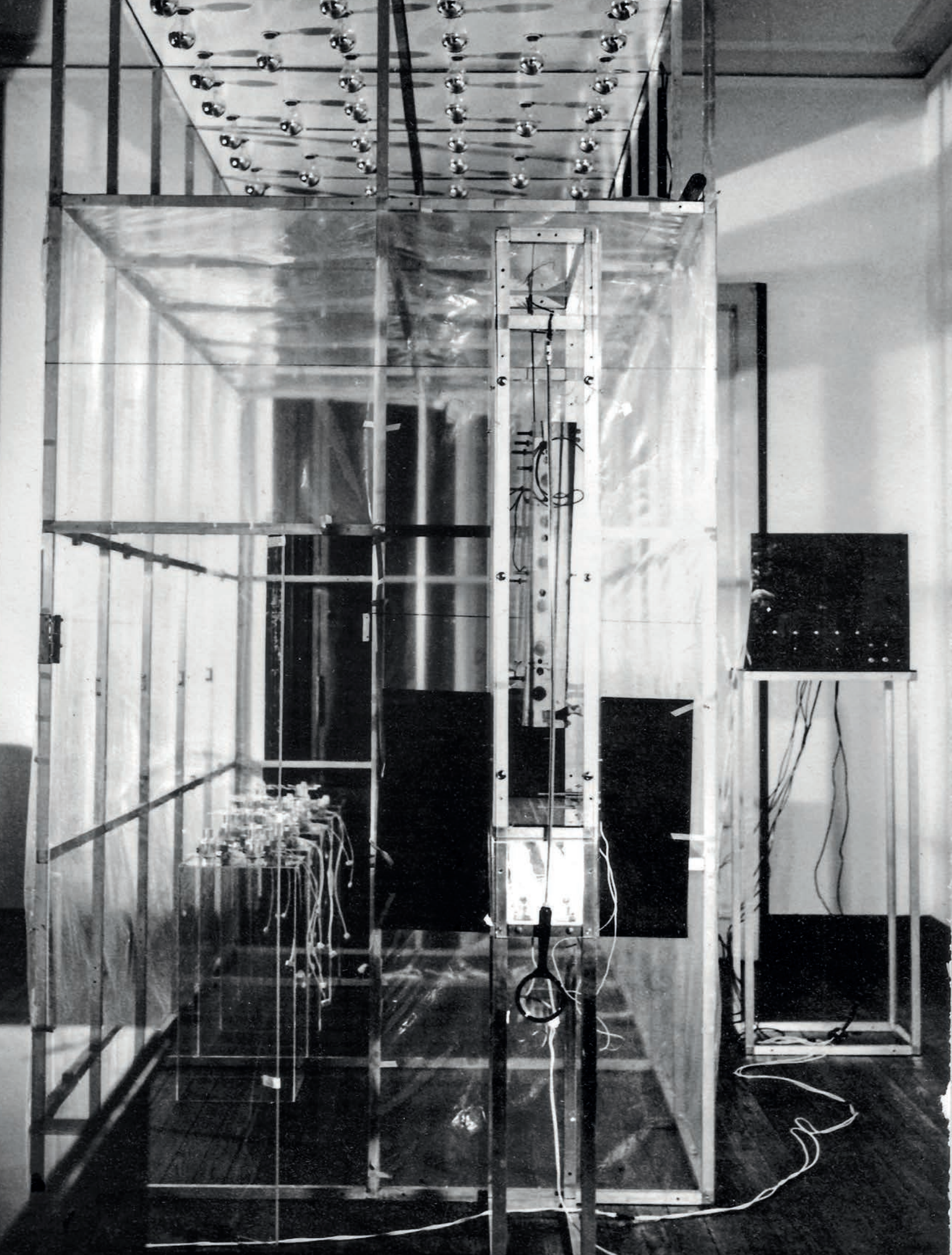




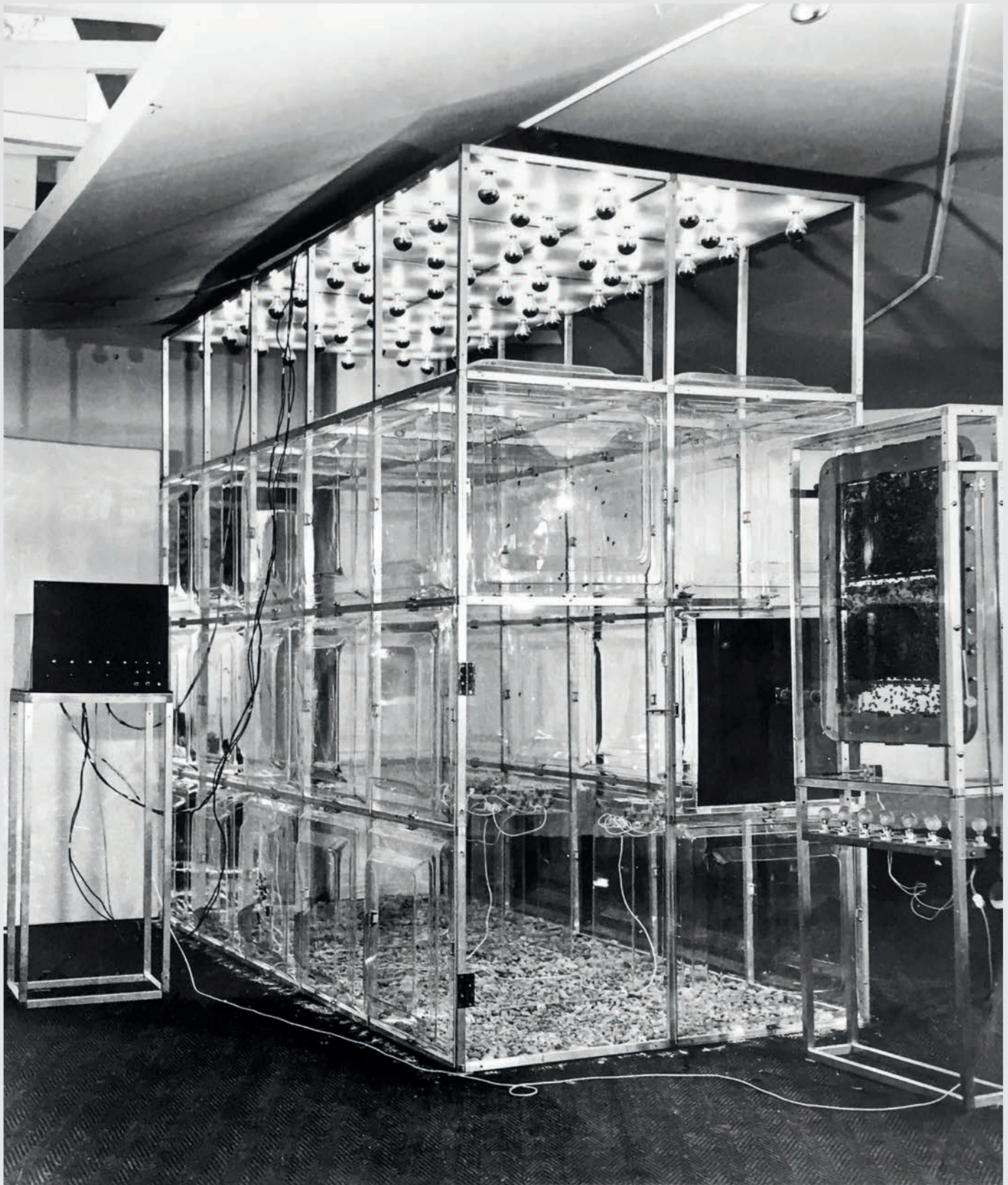


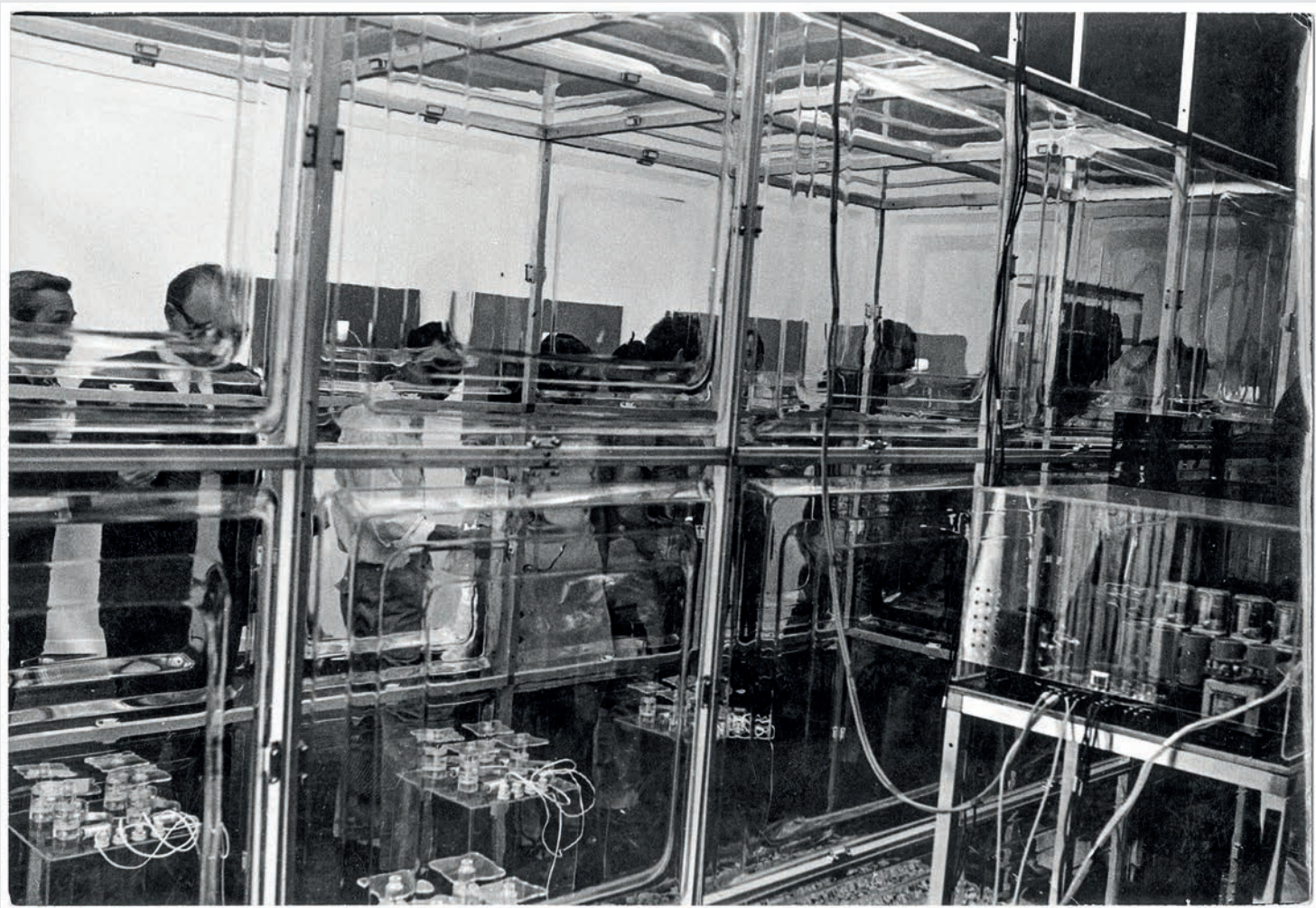


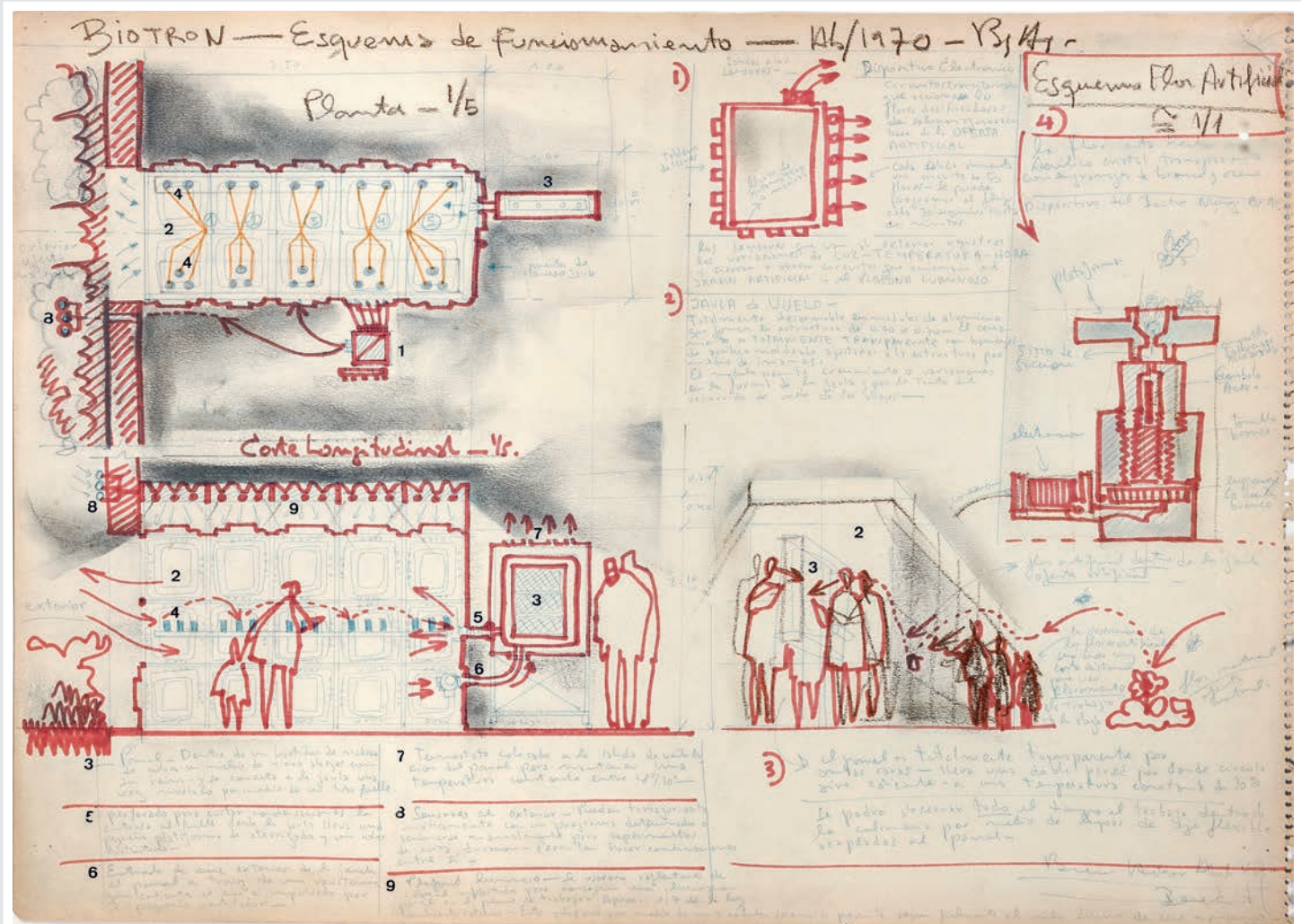


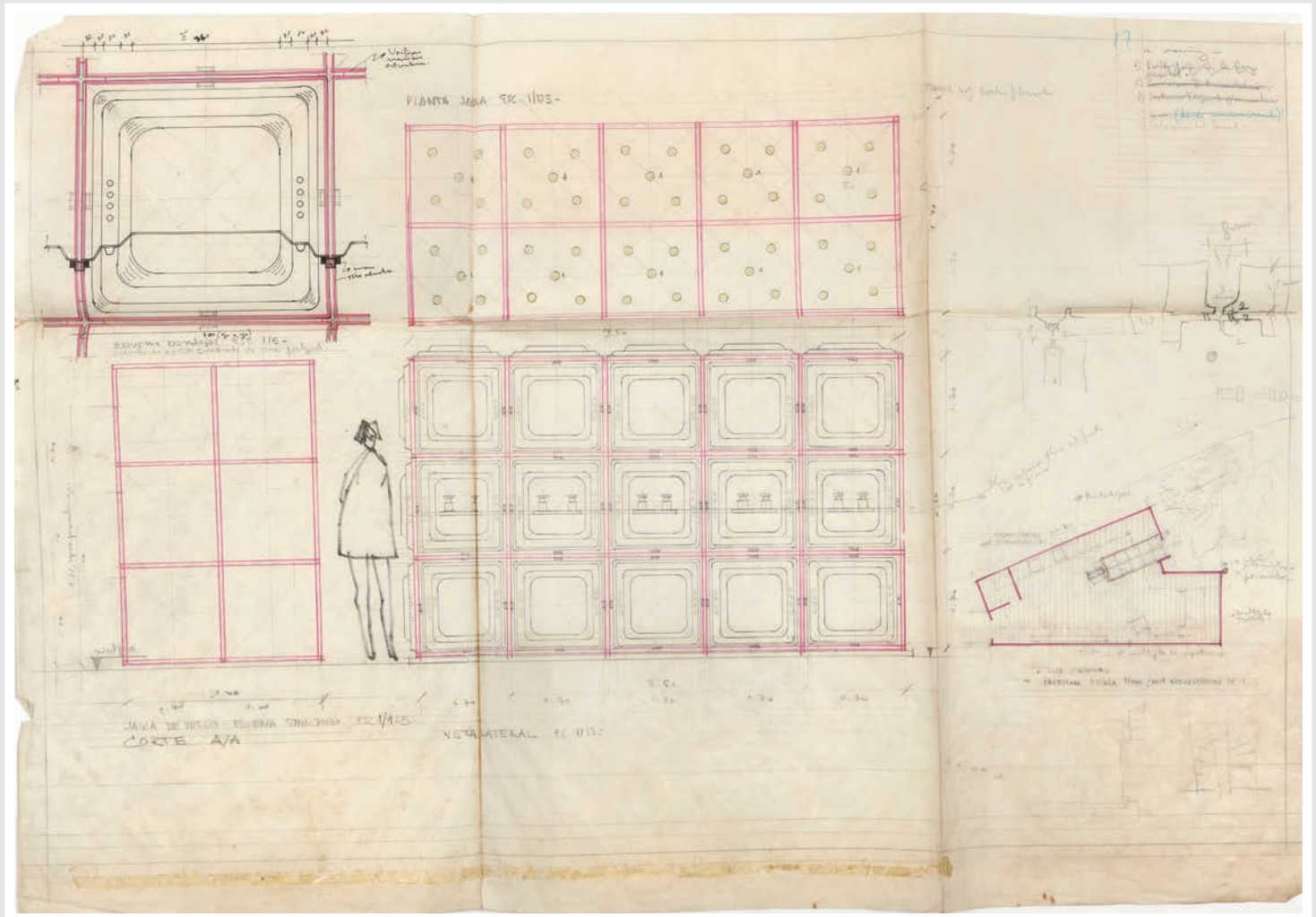








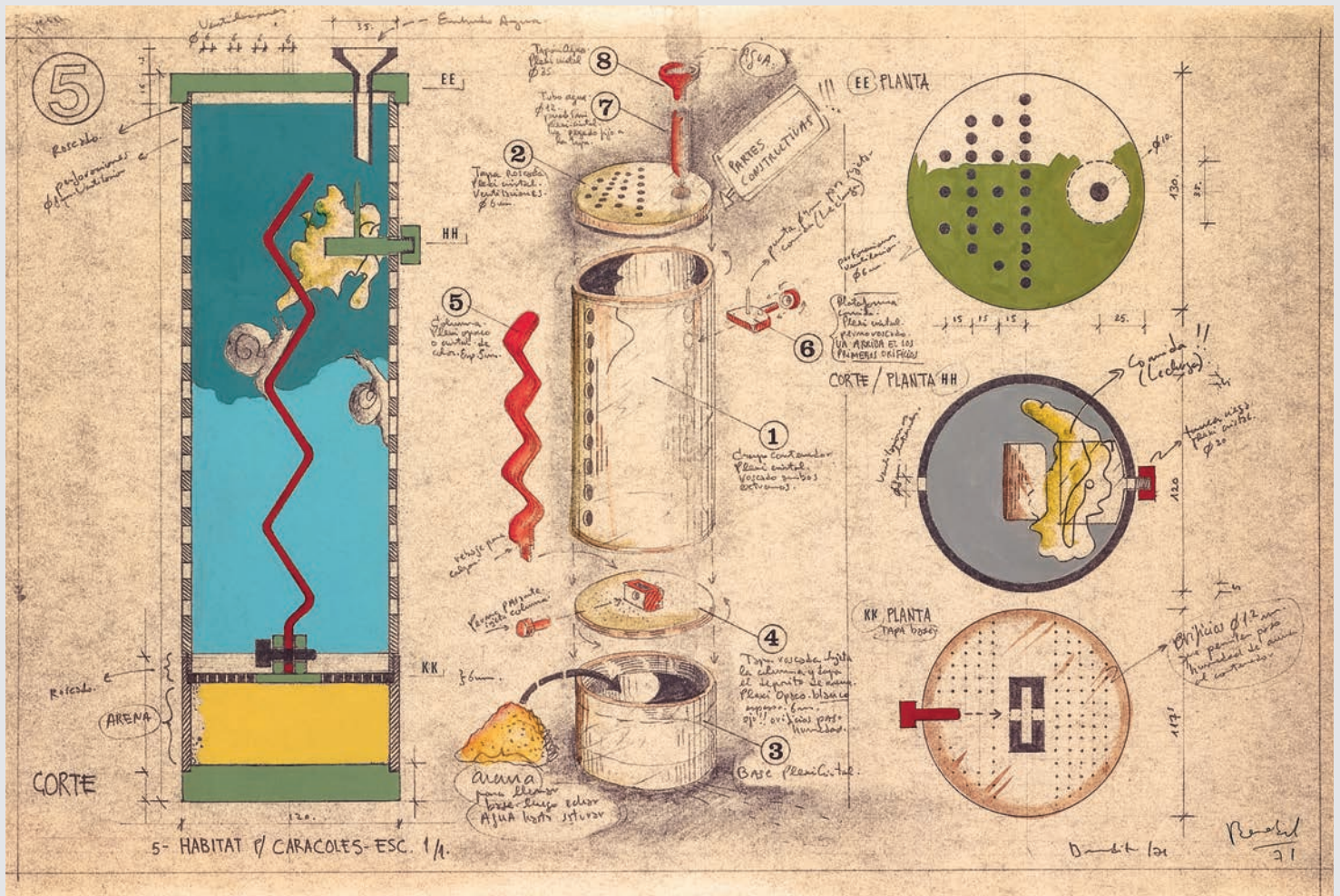


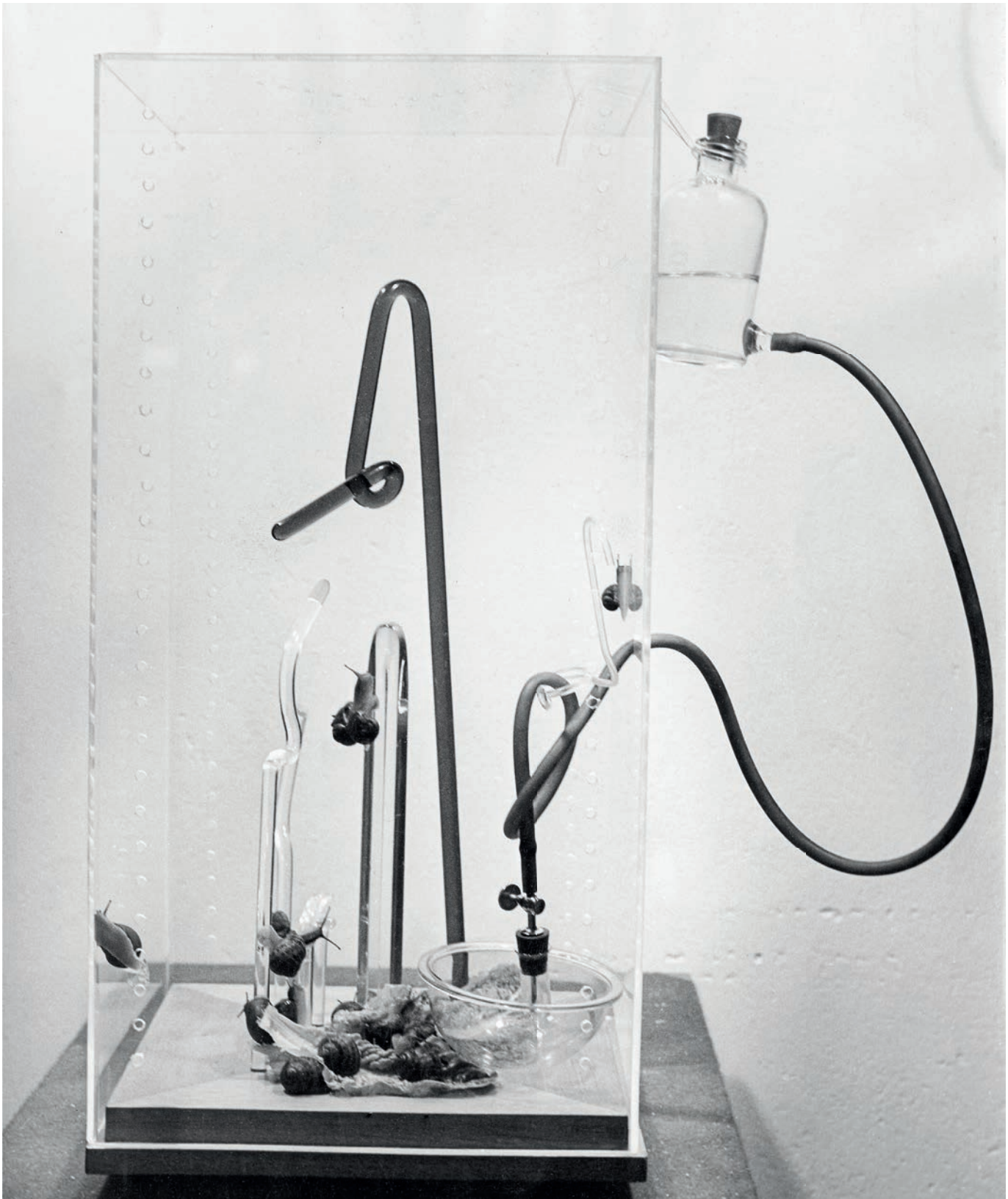


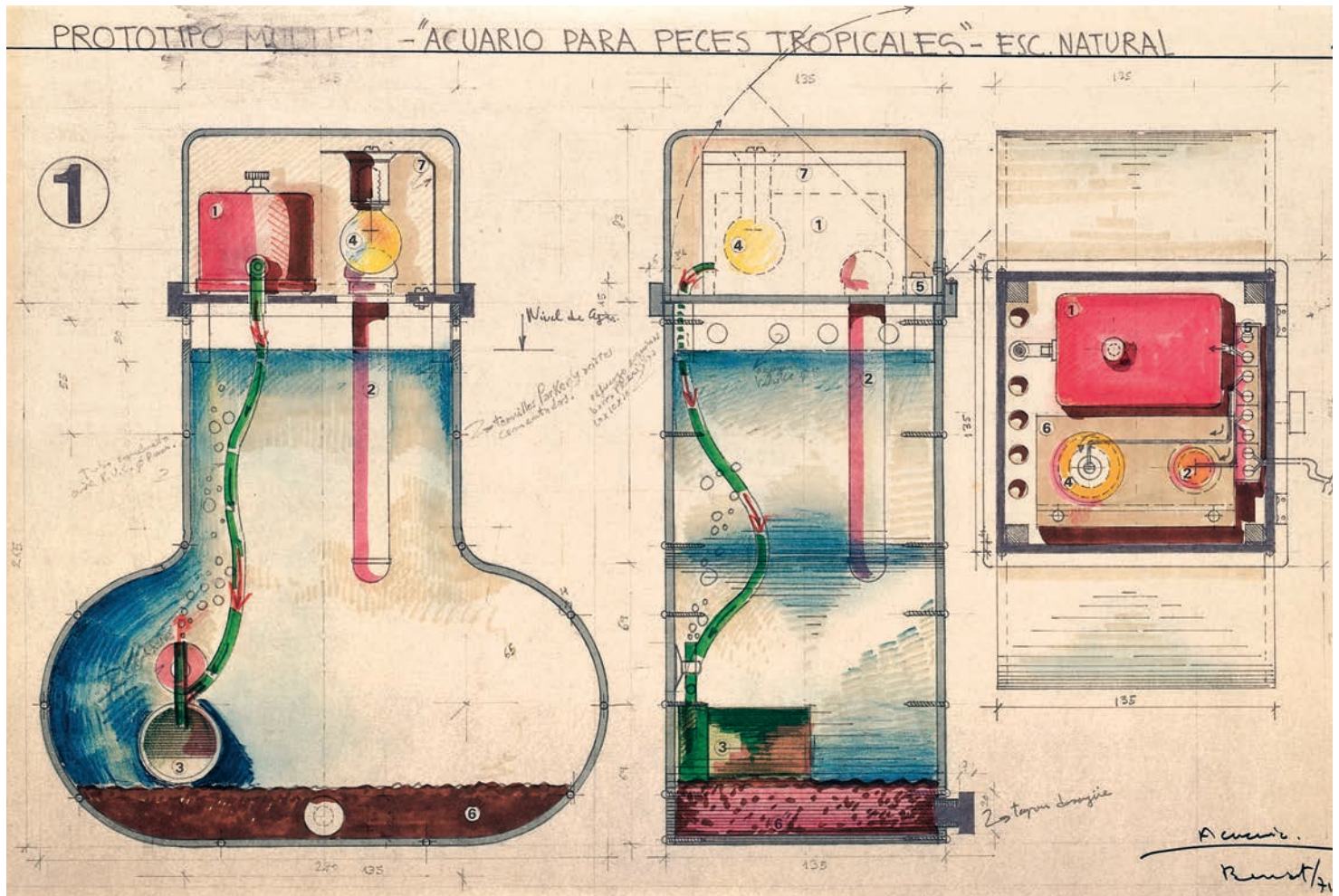


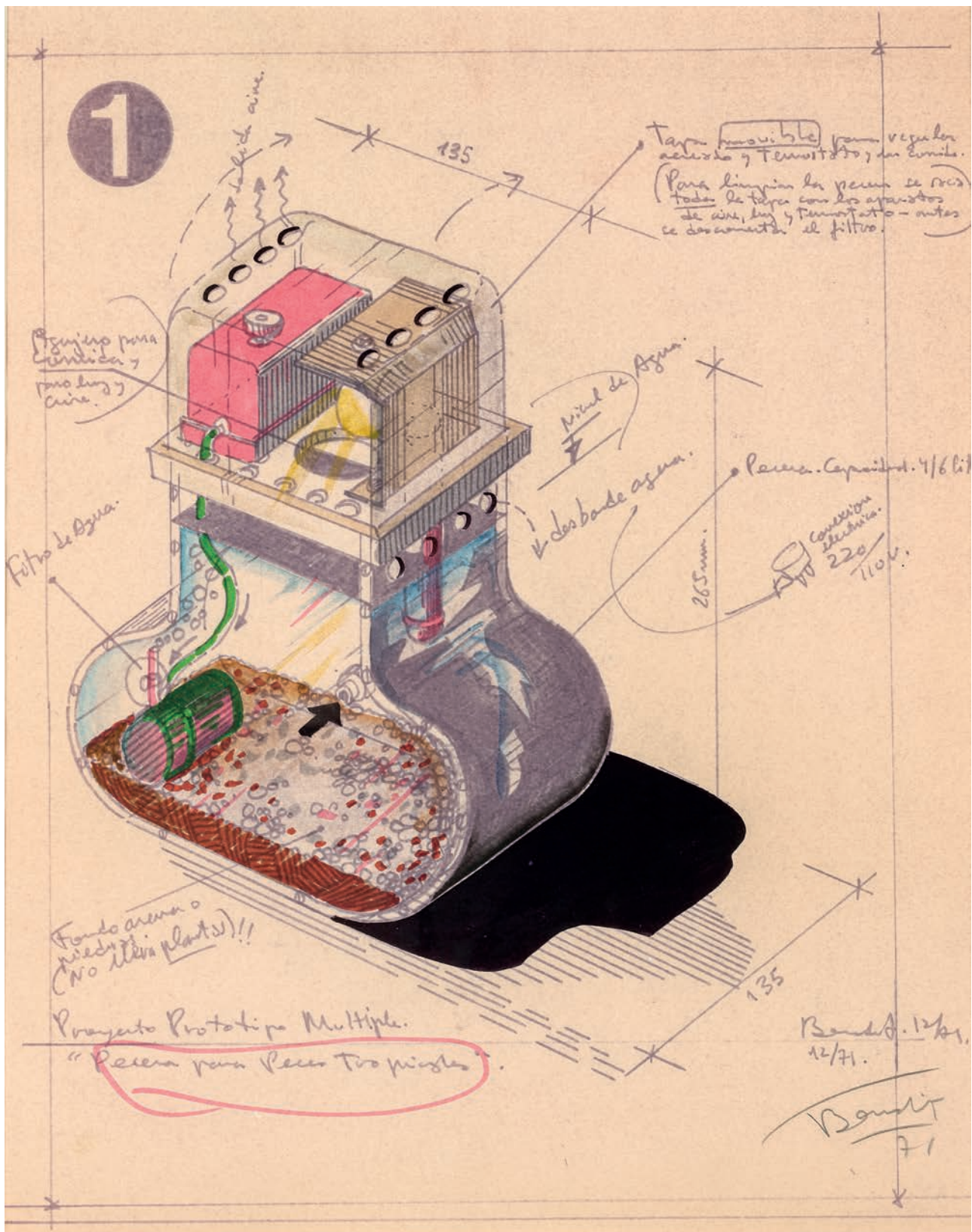


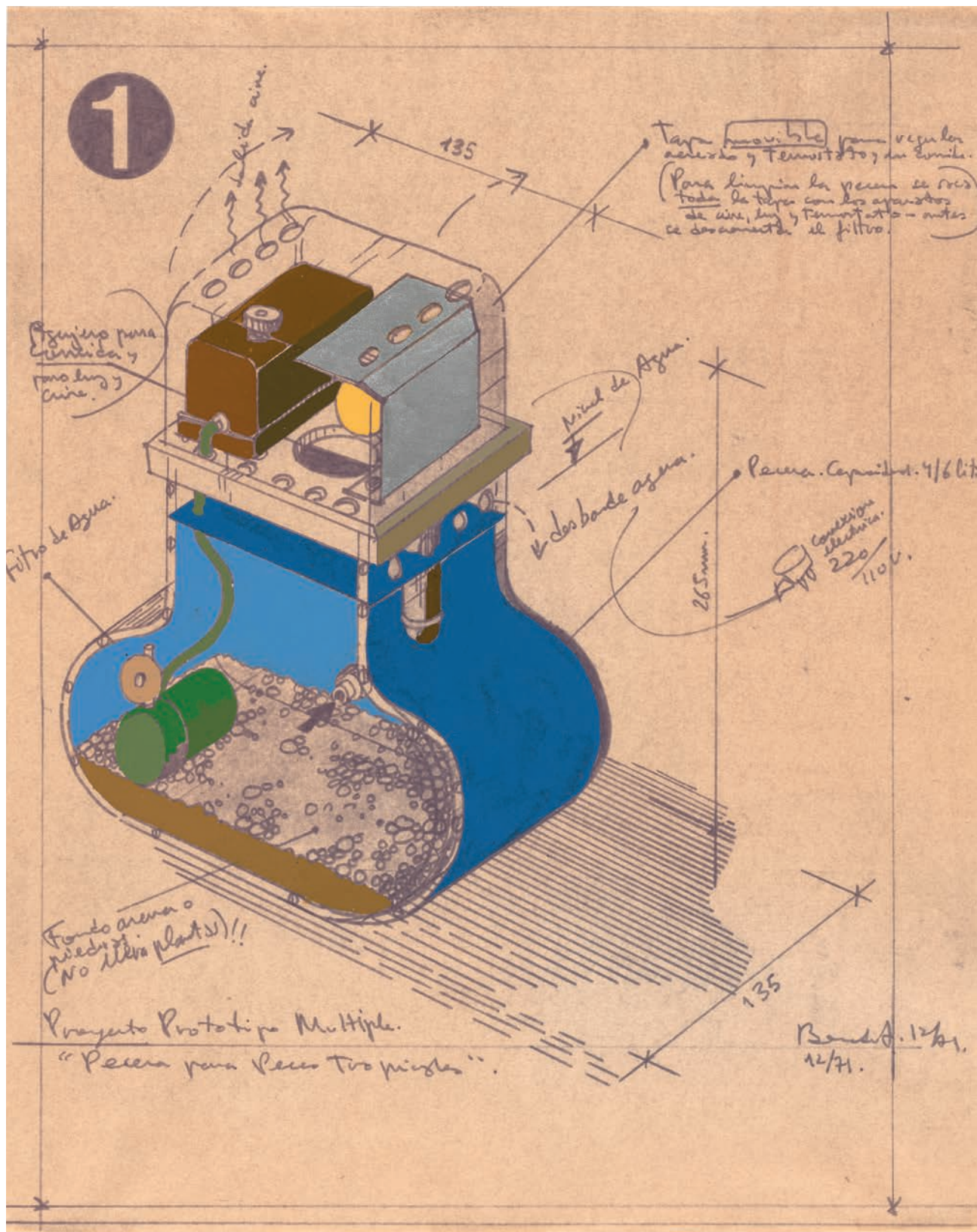










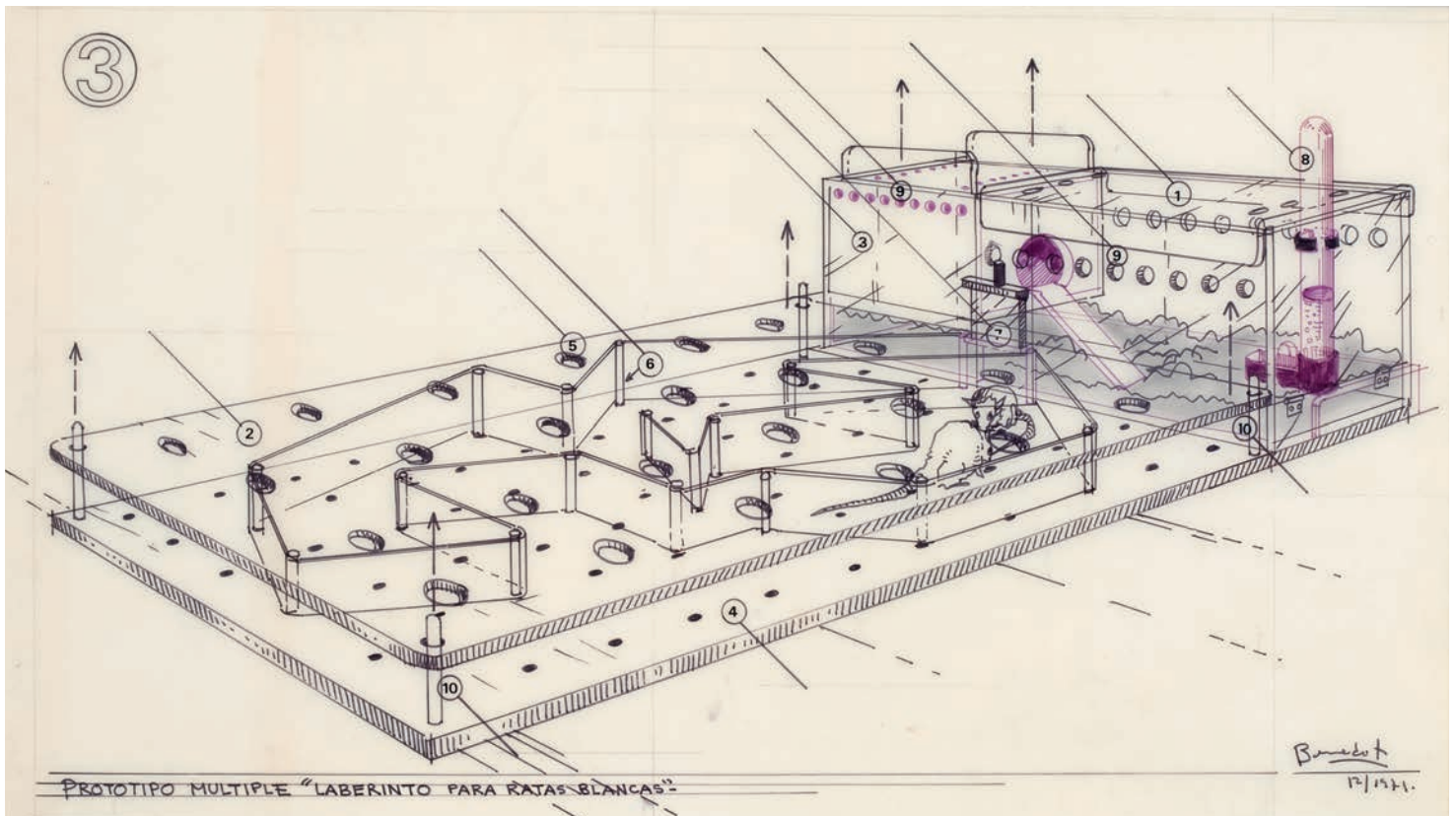


Pecera para peces tropicales

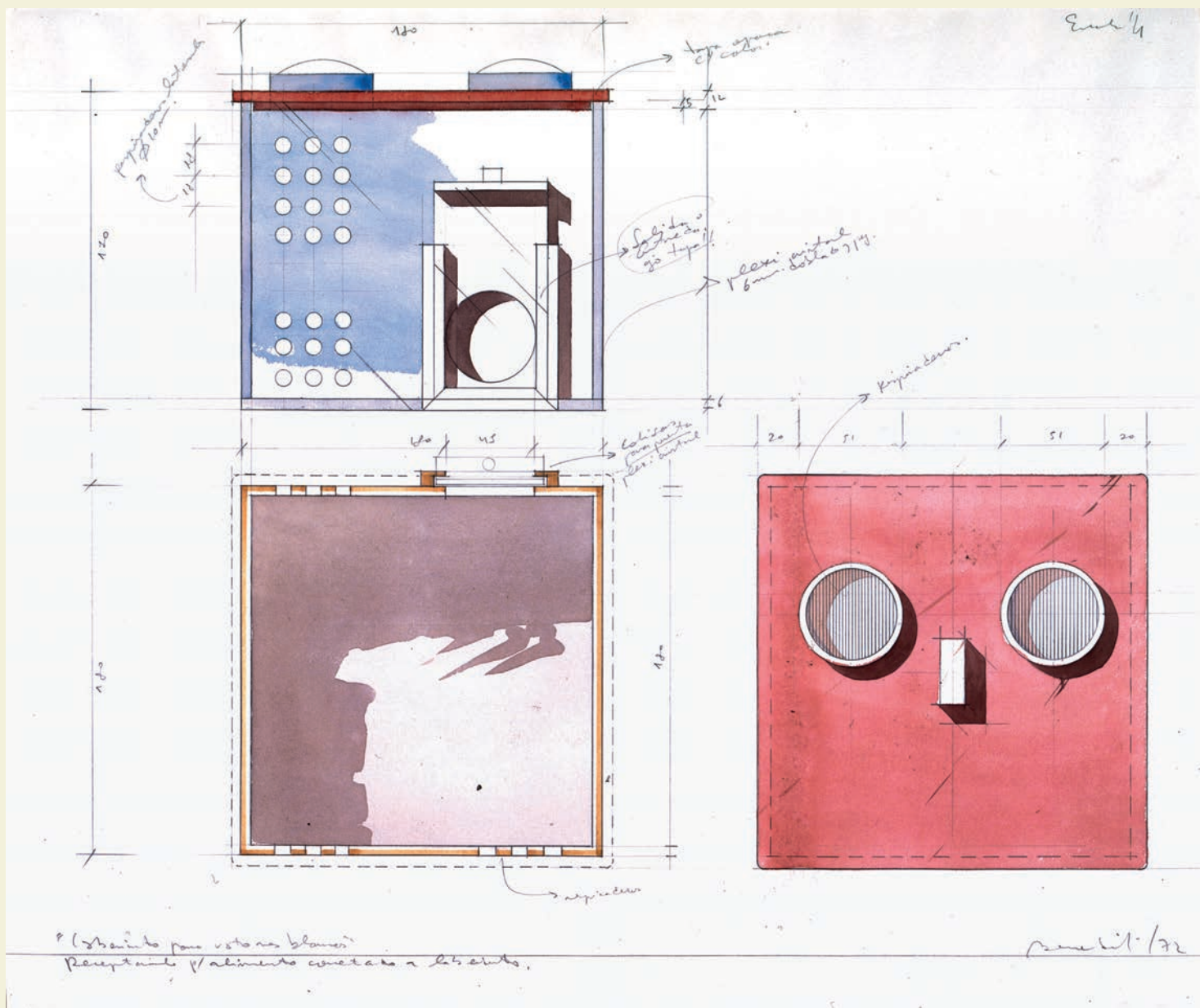
[Fish Tank for Tropical Fish] (multiple), Venice Biennale, 1970







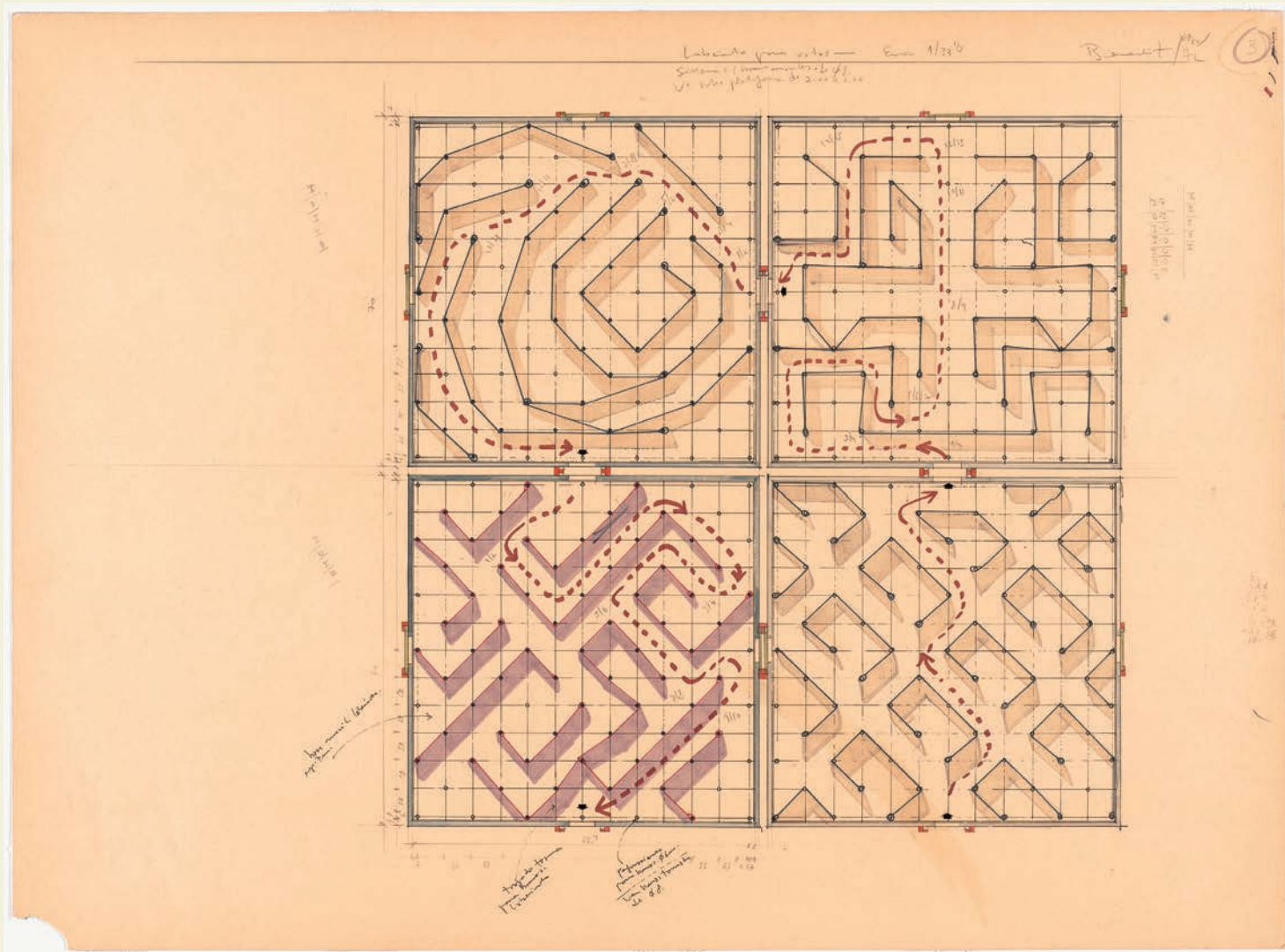




Study for Labyrinth for White Mice, 1972

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

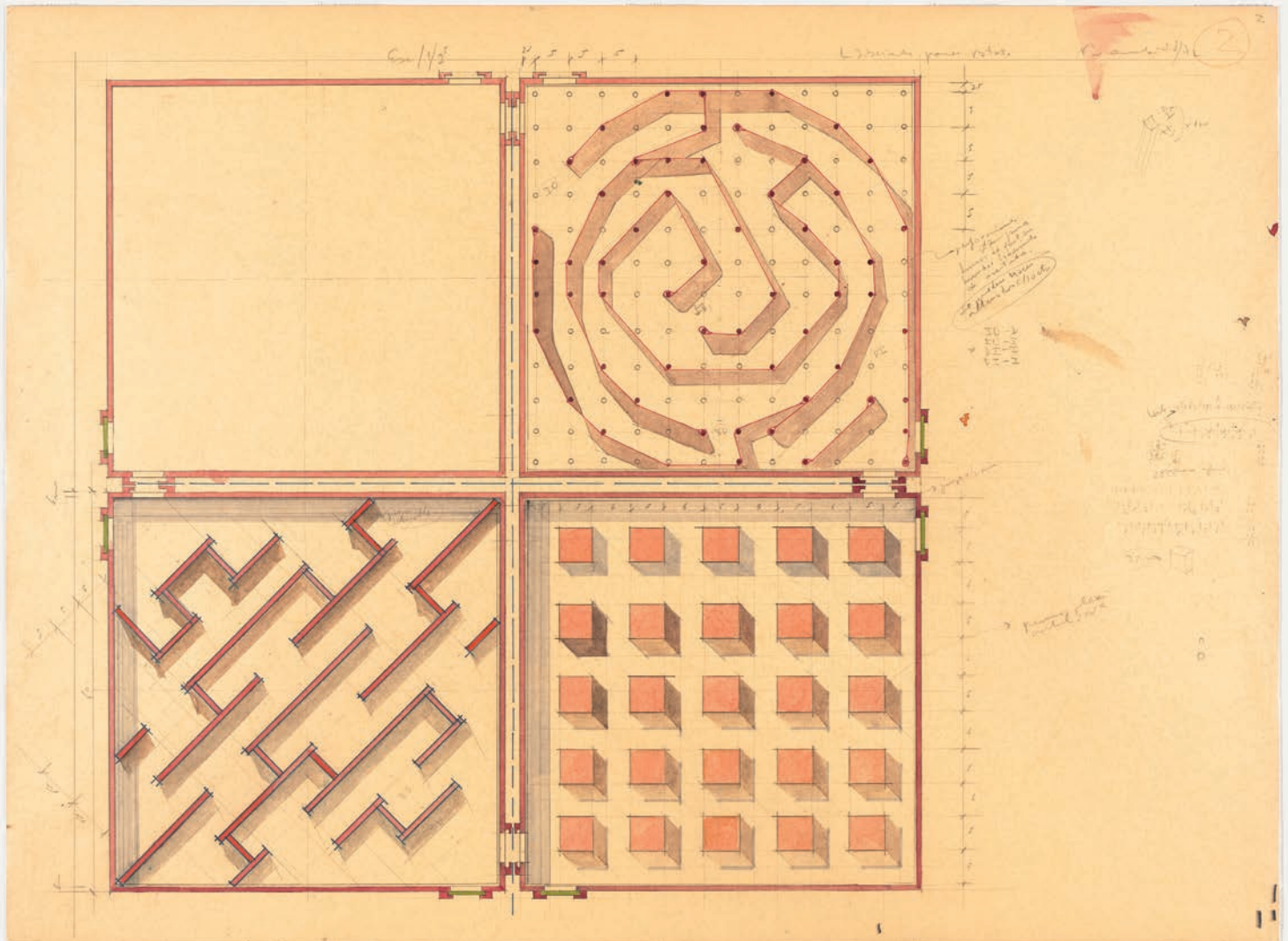
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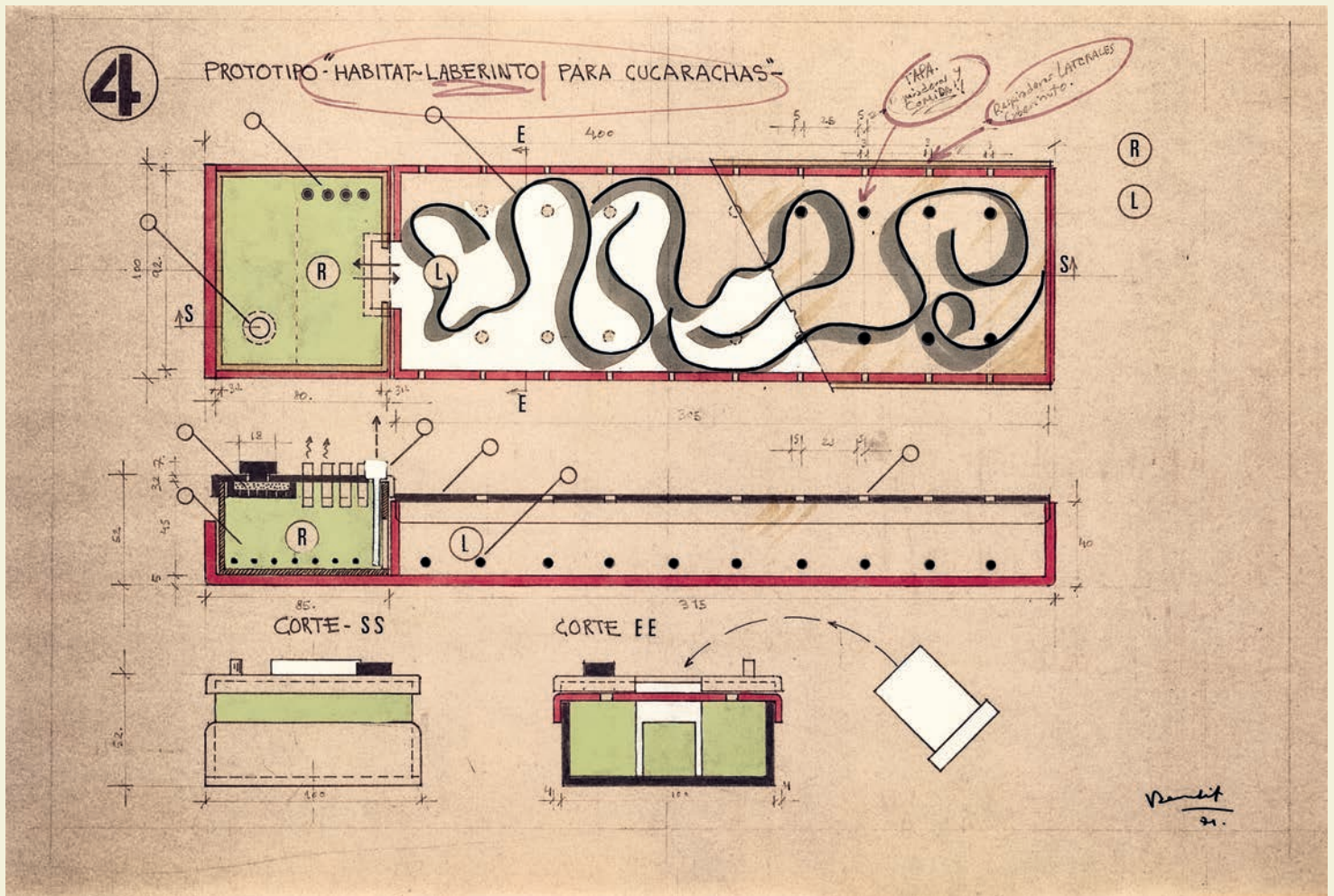


Study for Labyrinth for White Mice, 1972

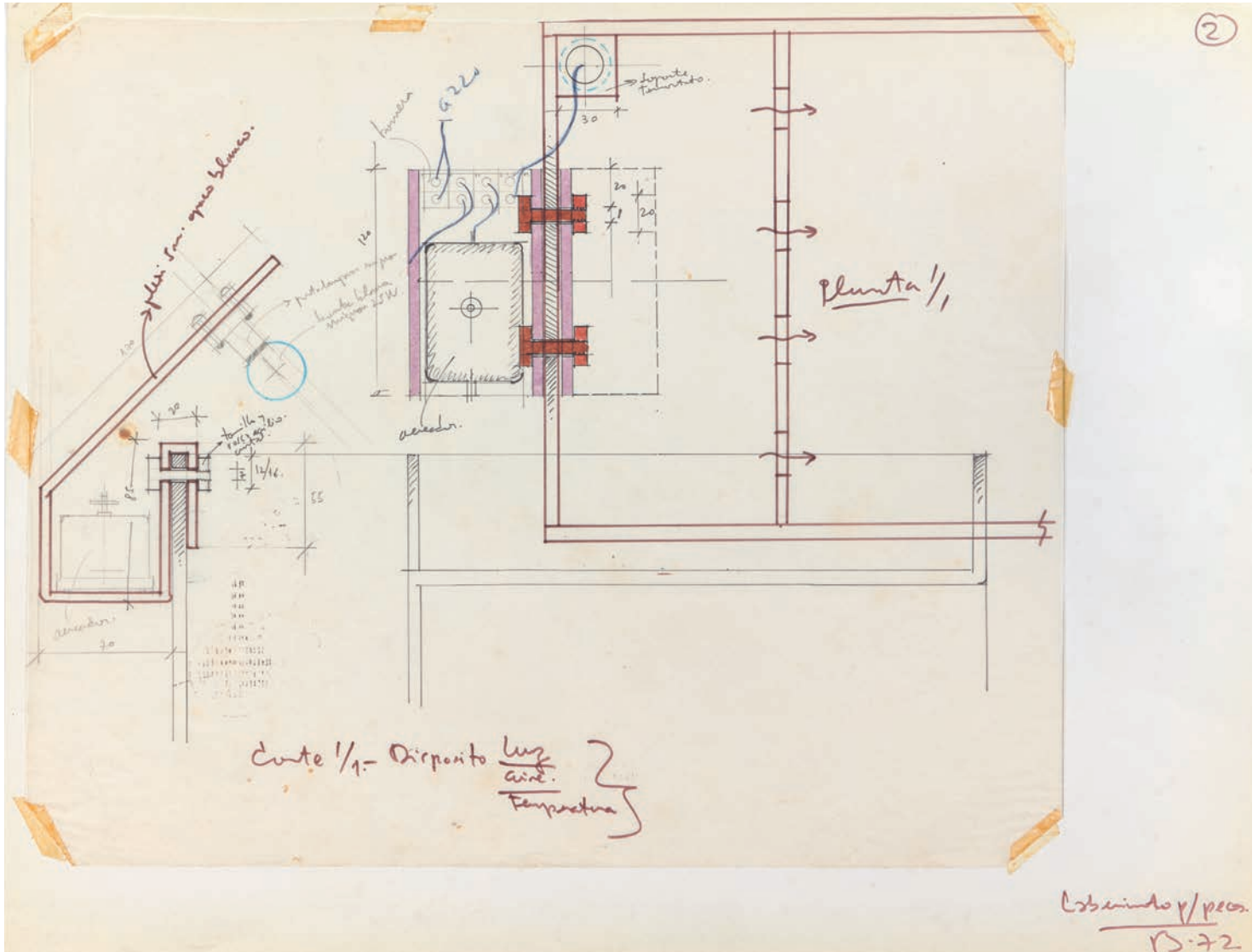
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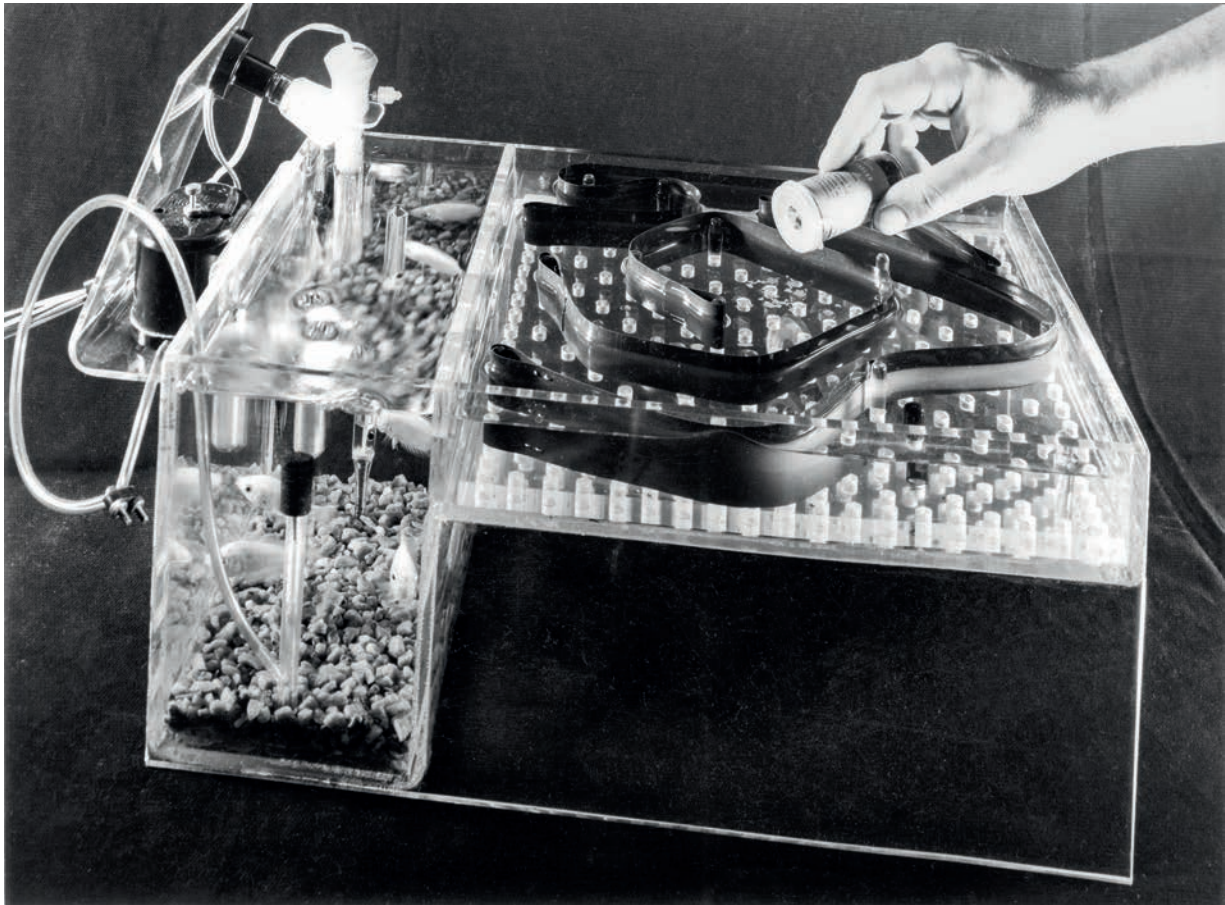
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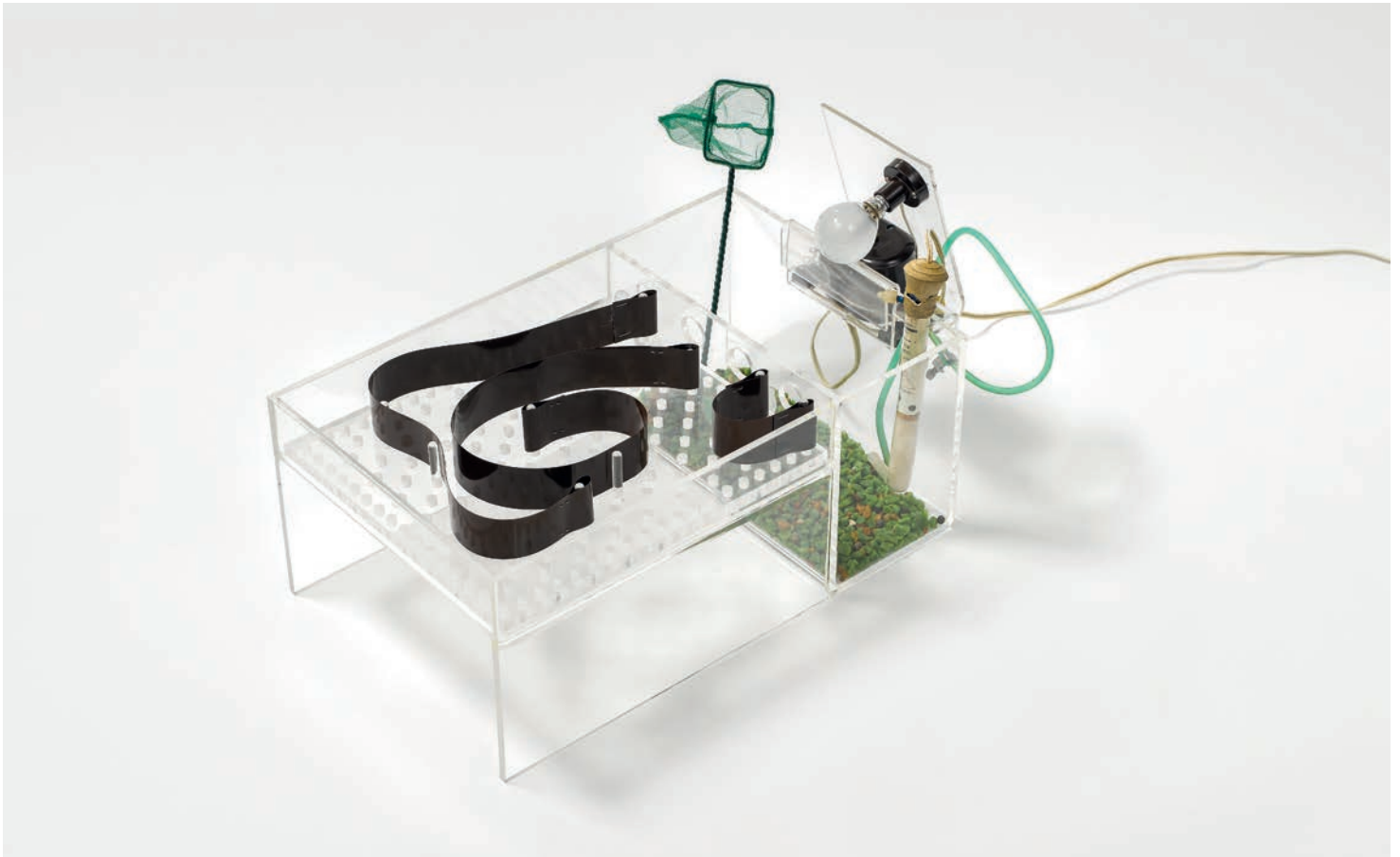


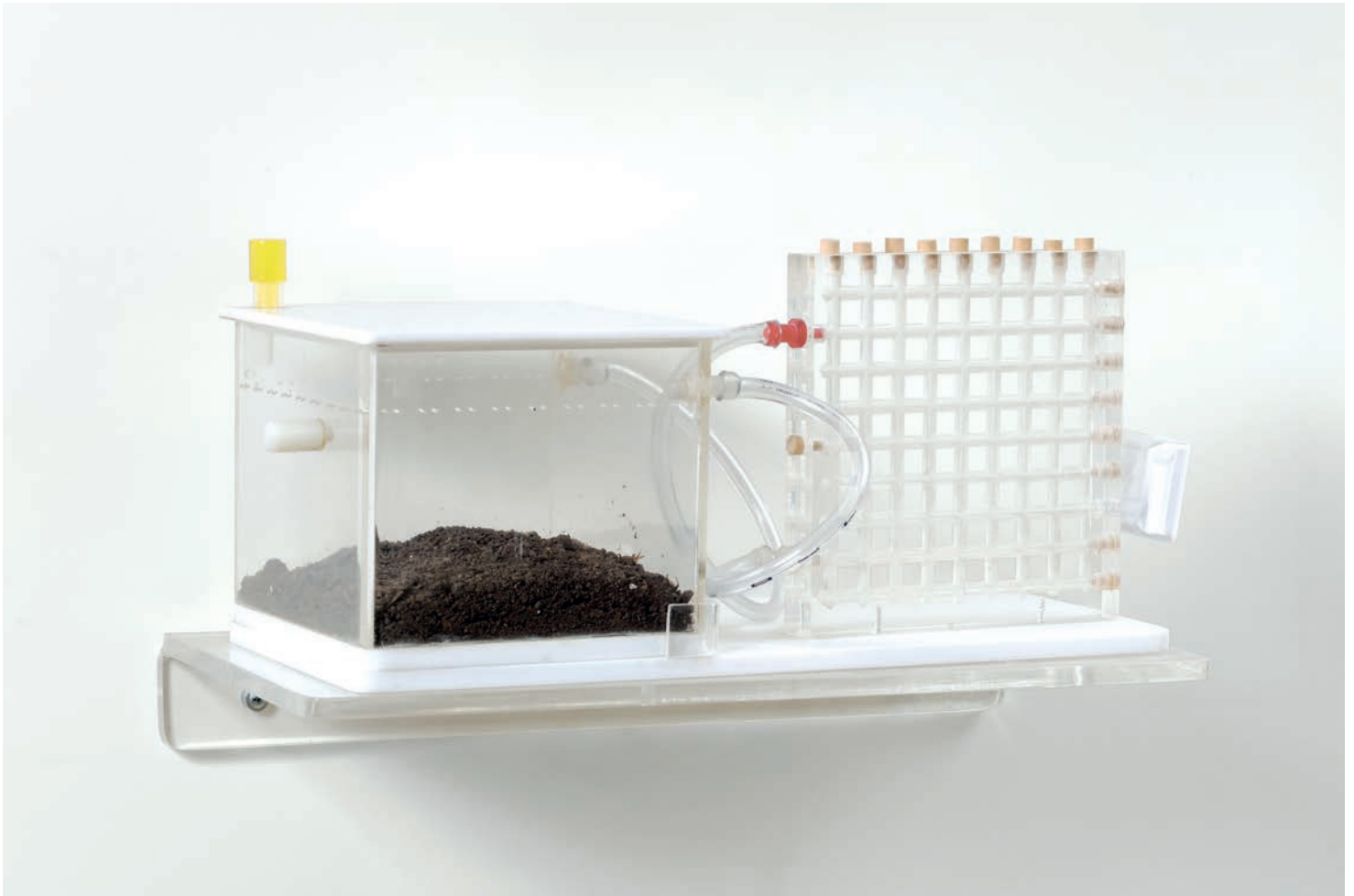


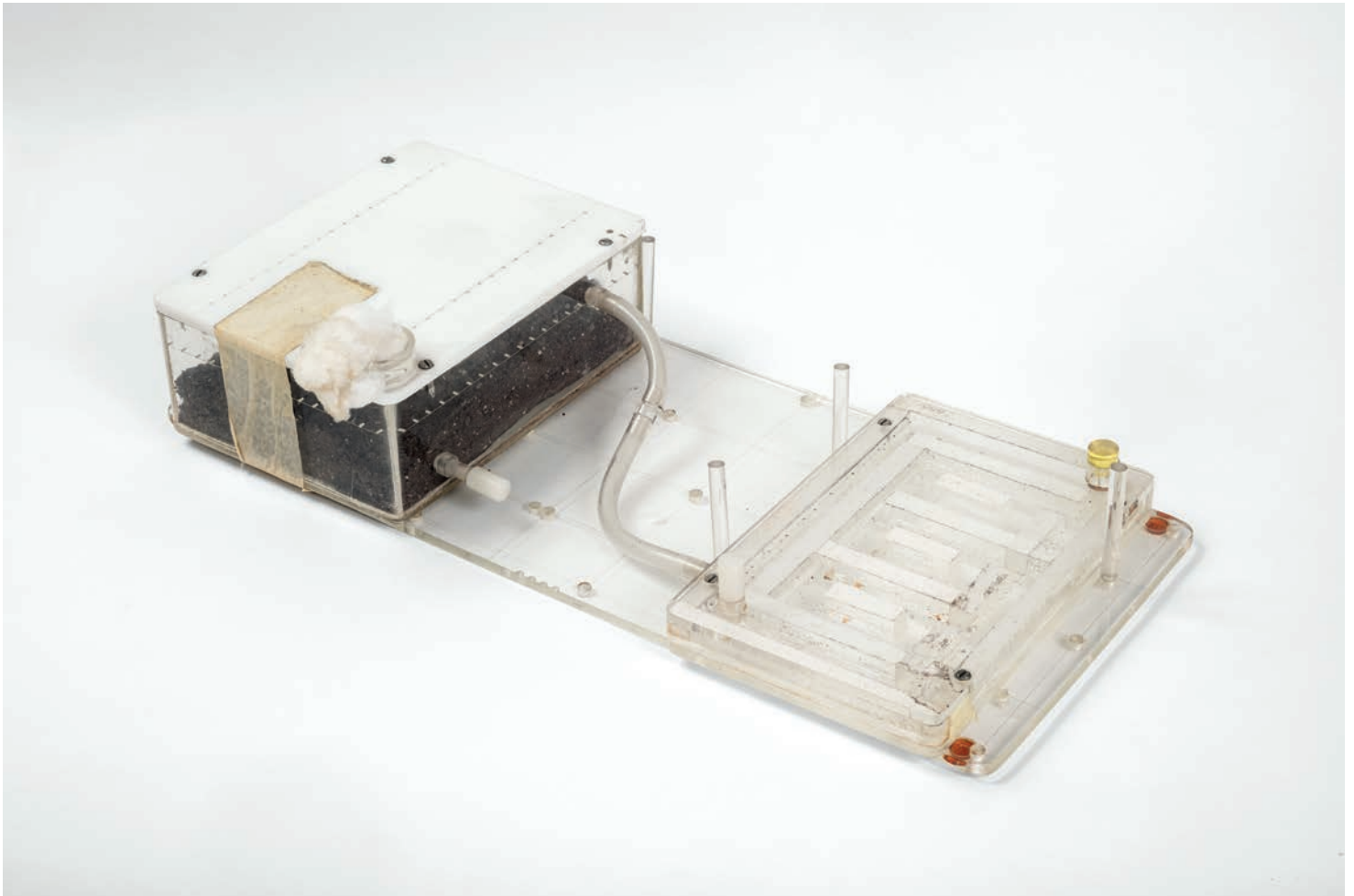






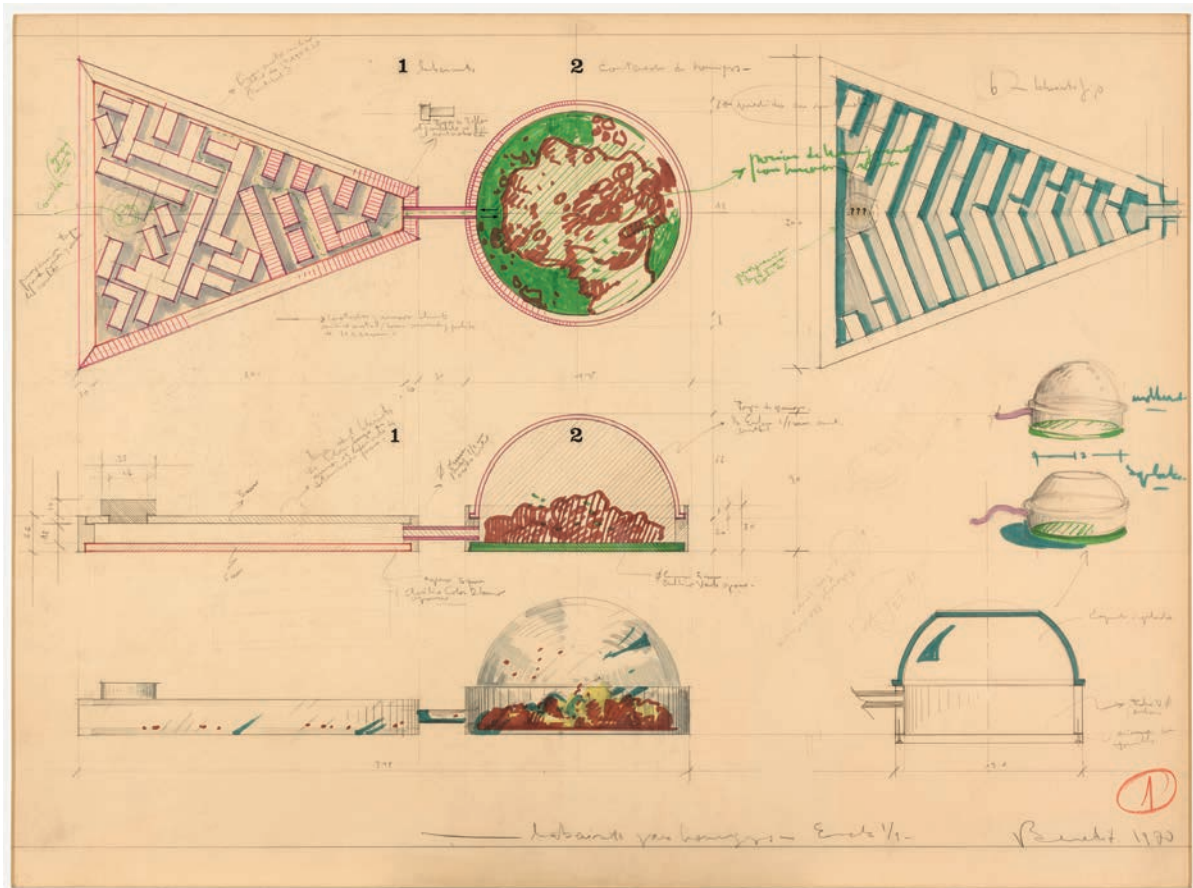




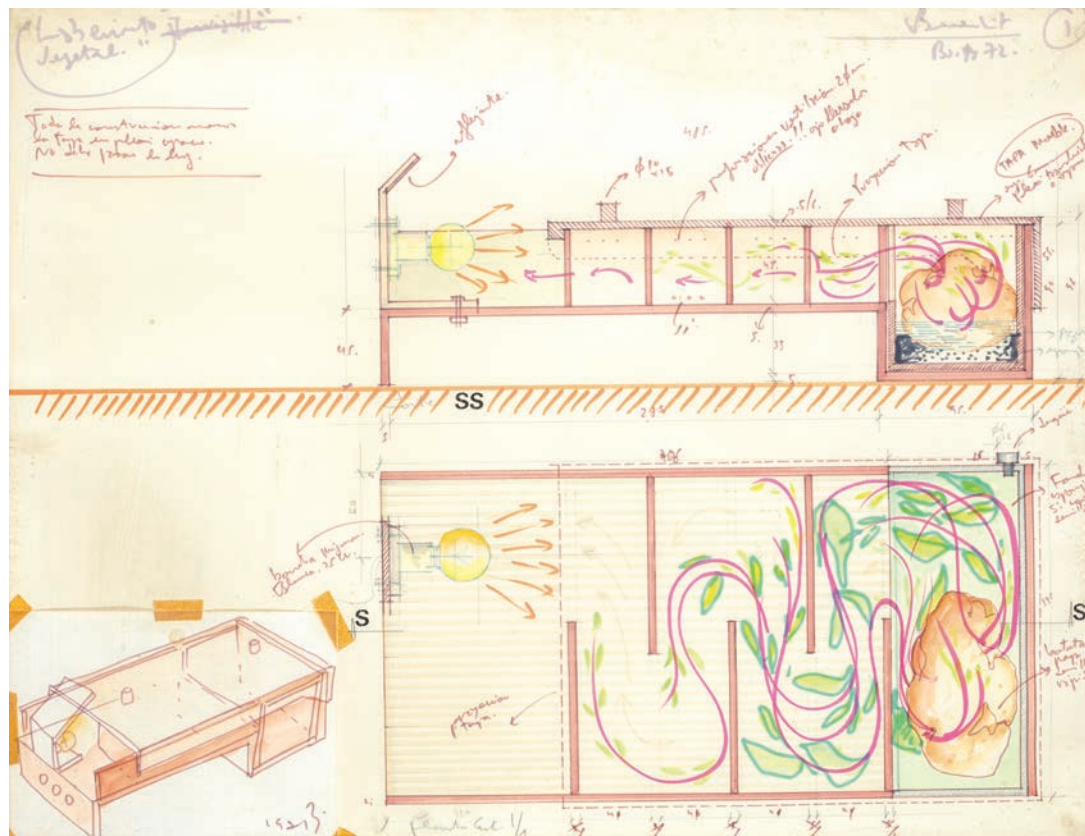


Labyrinth for Ants, 1970

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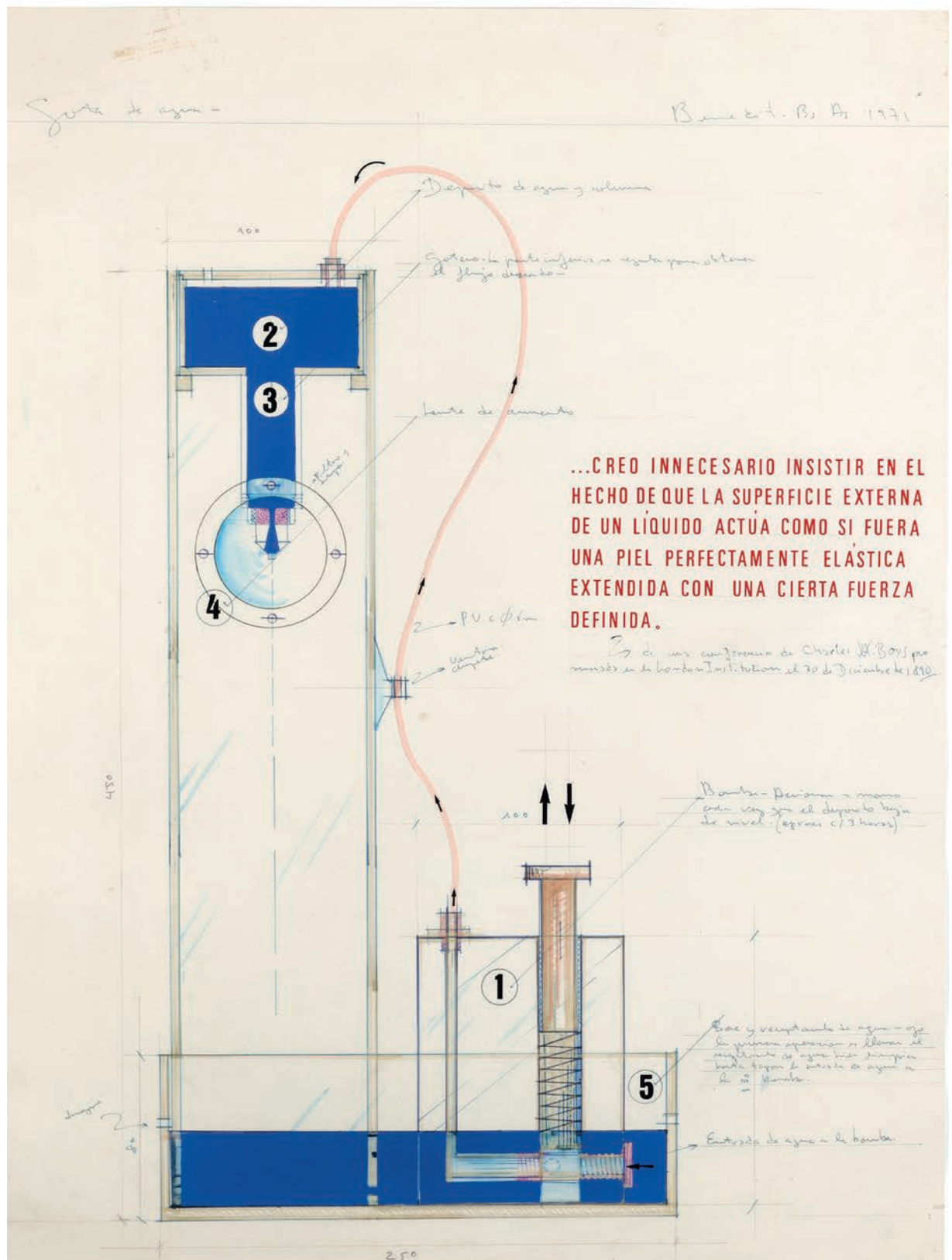








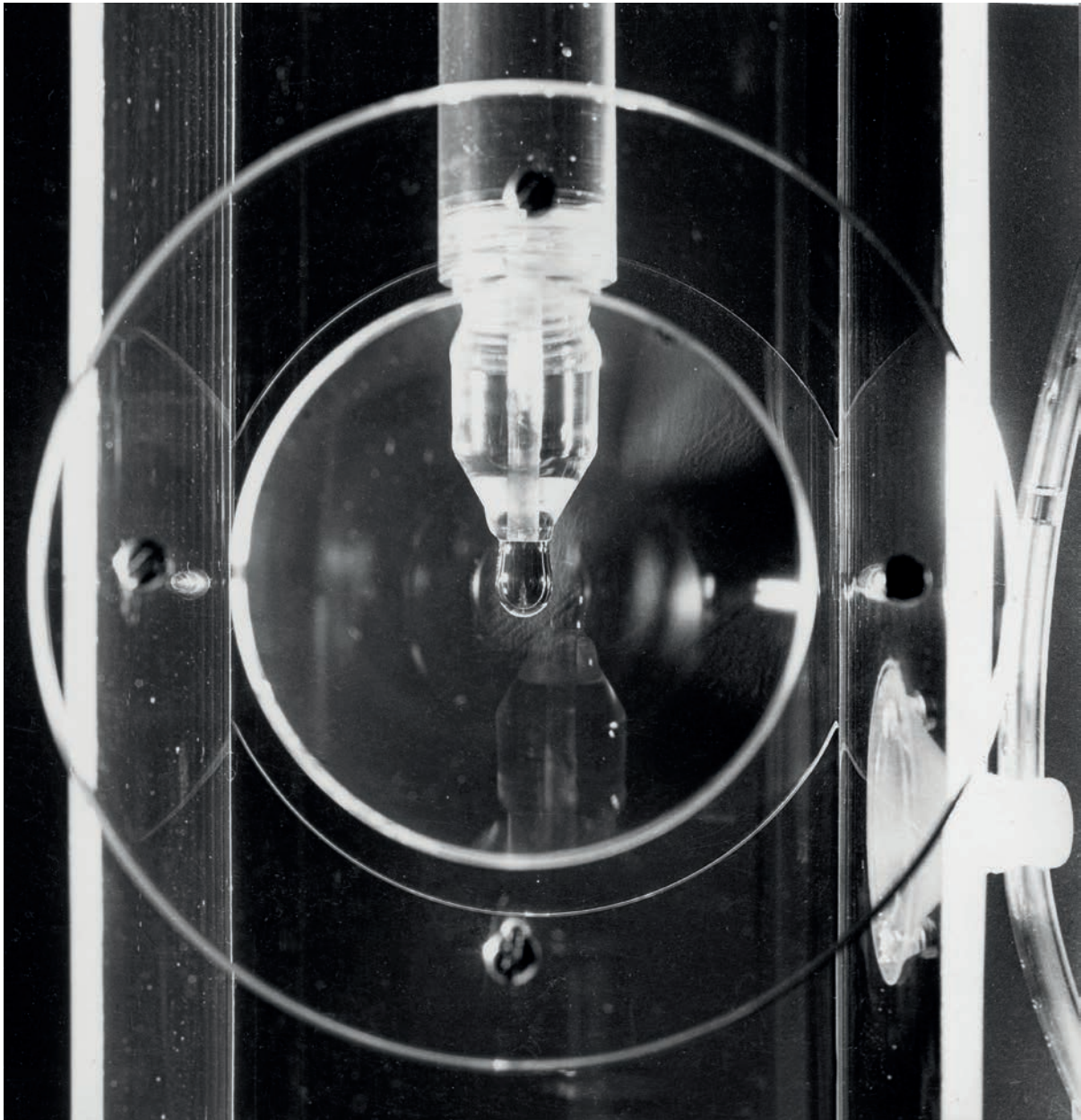


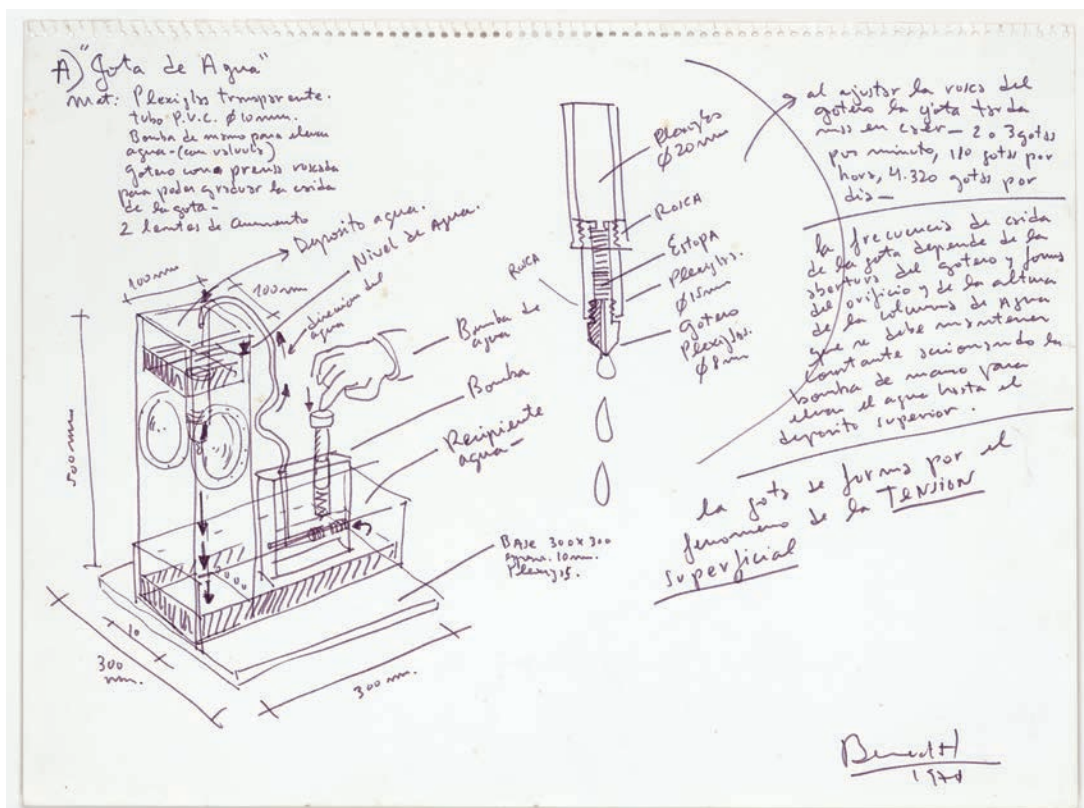
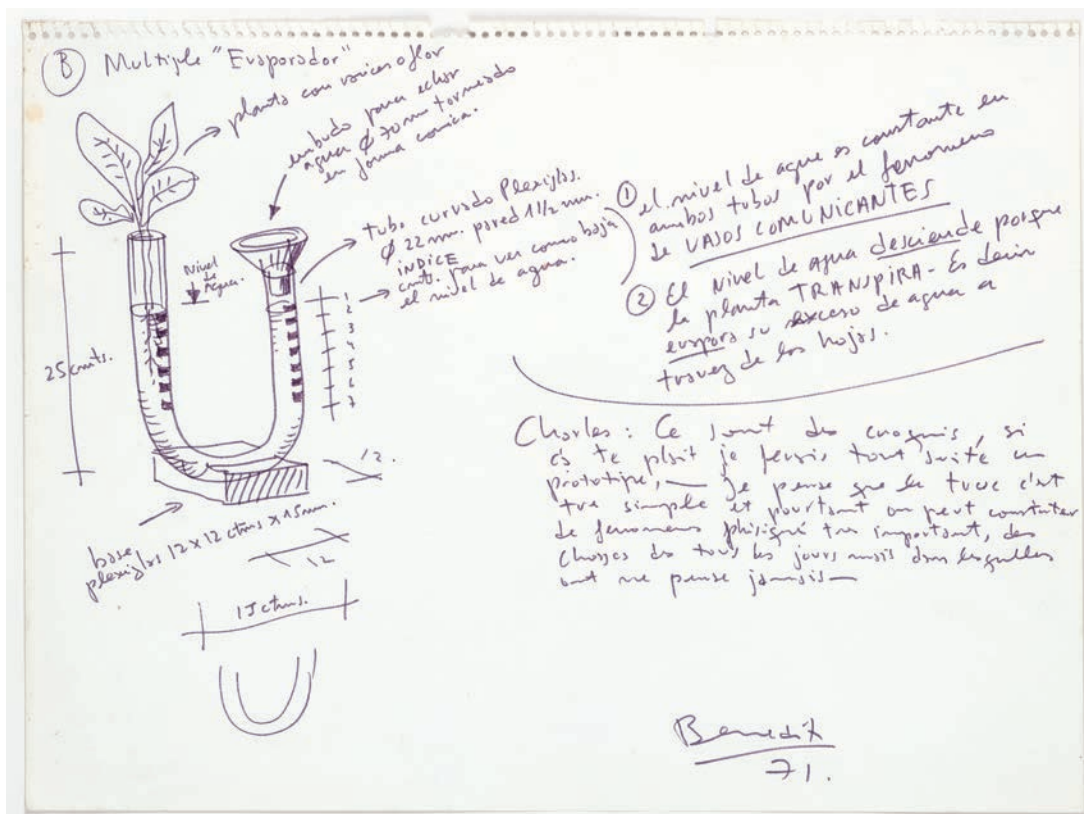


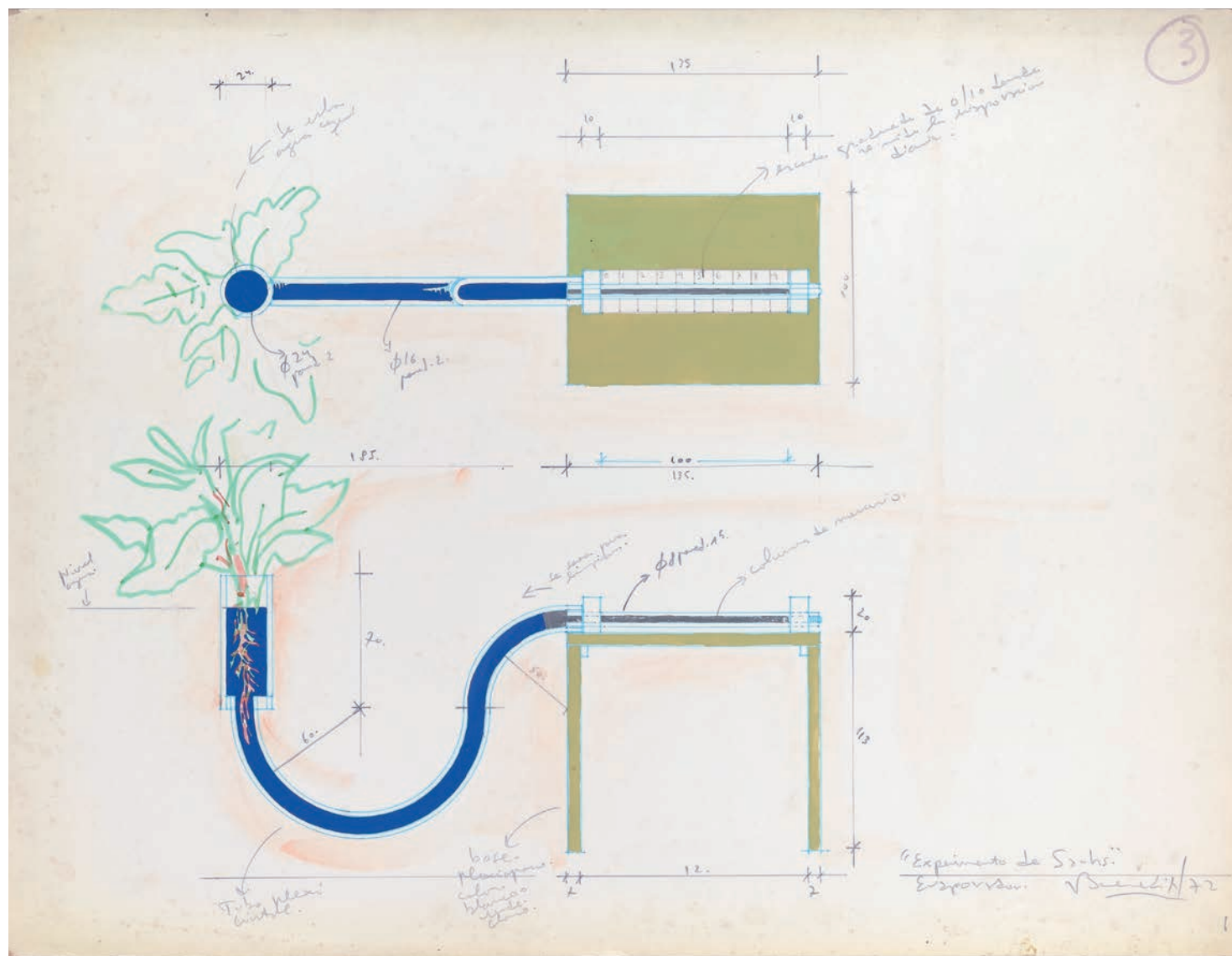


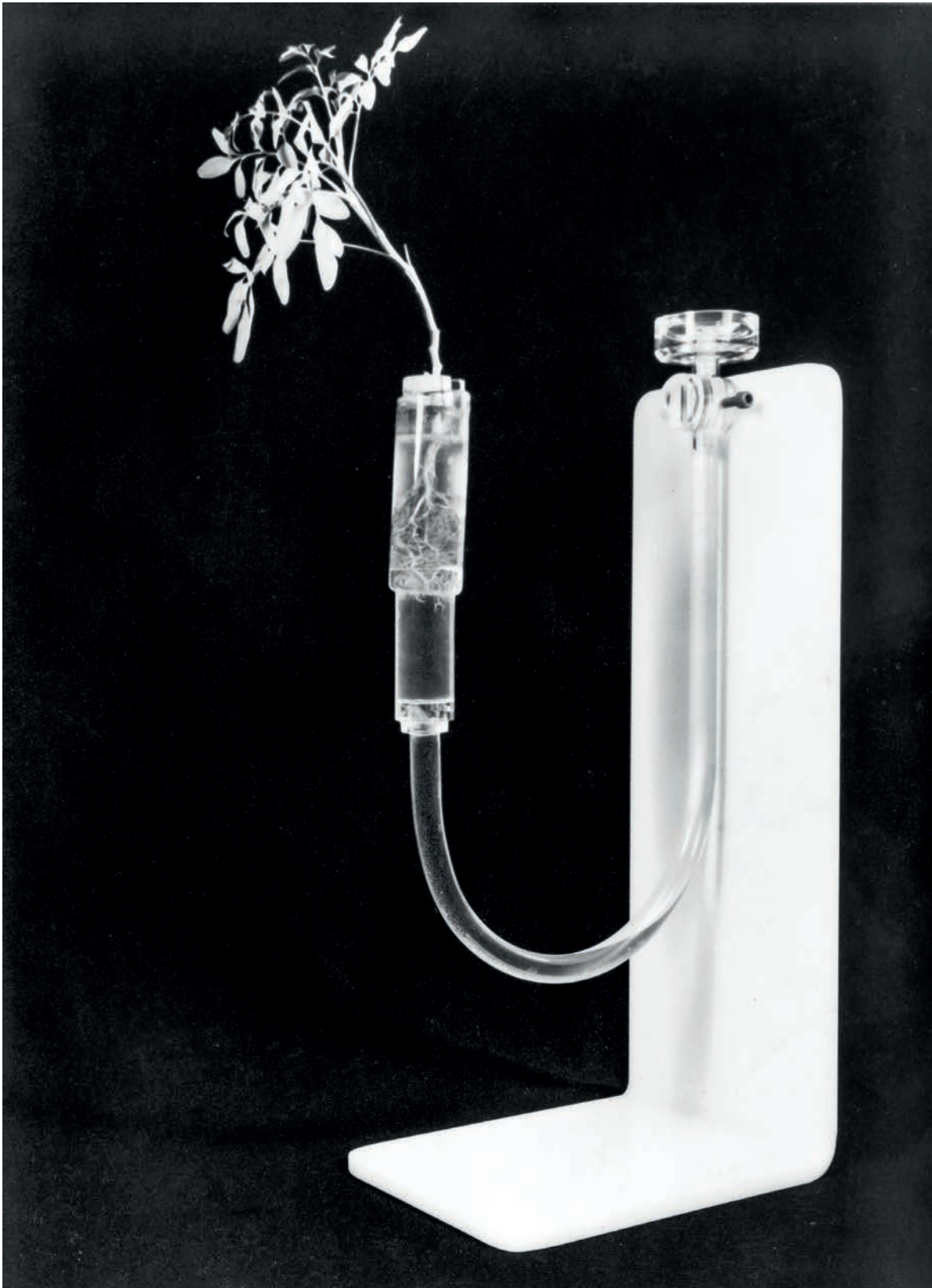
Gota de agua [Drop of Water], 1971
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin



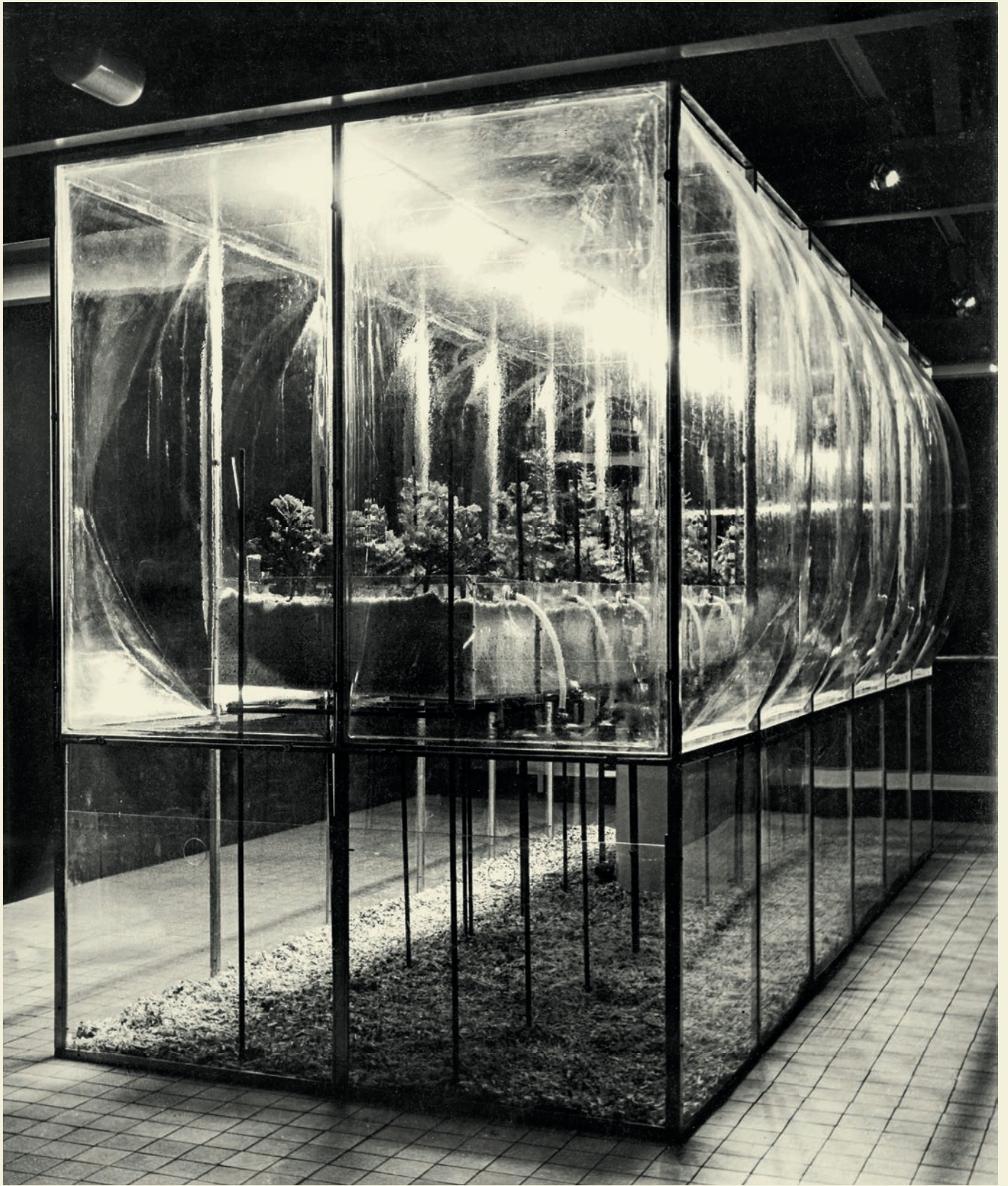




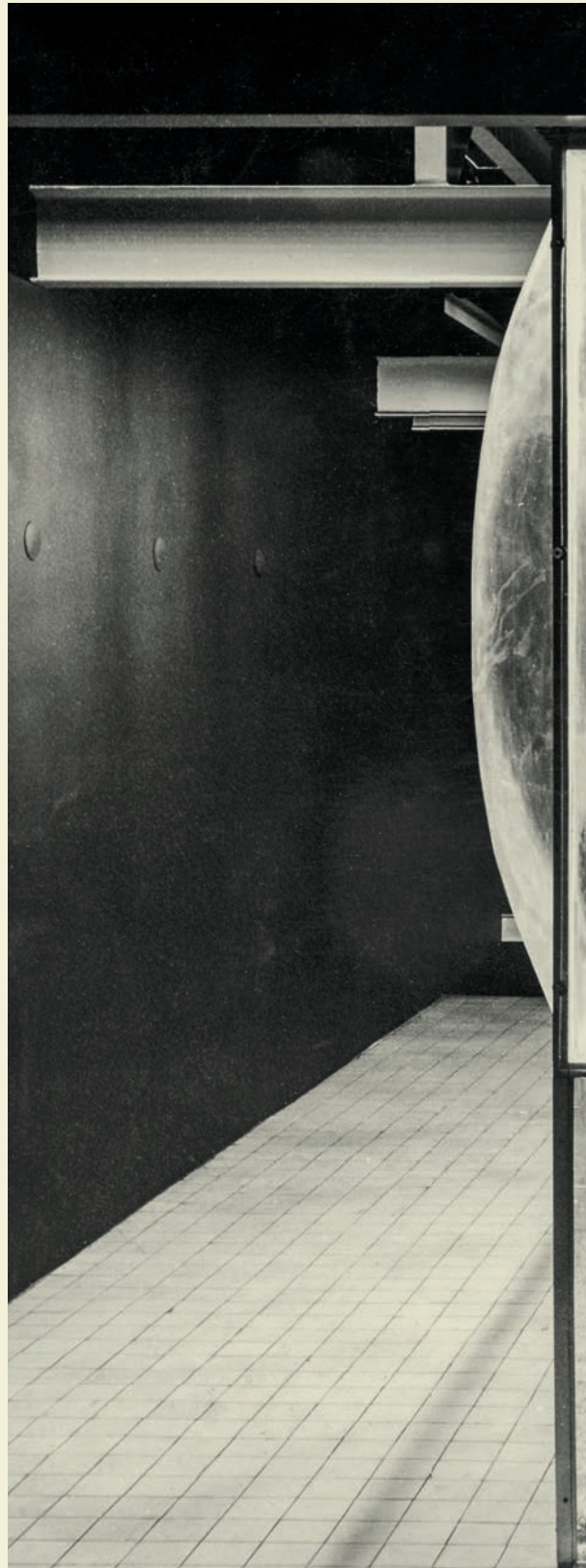


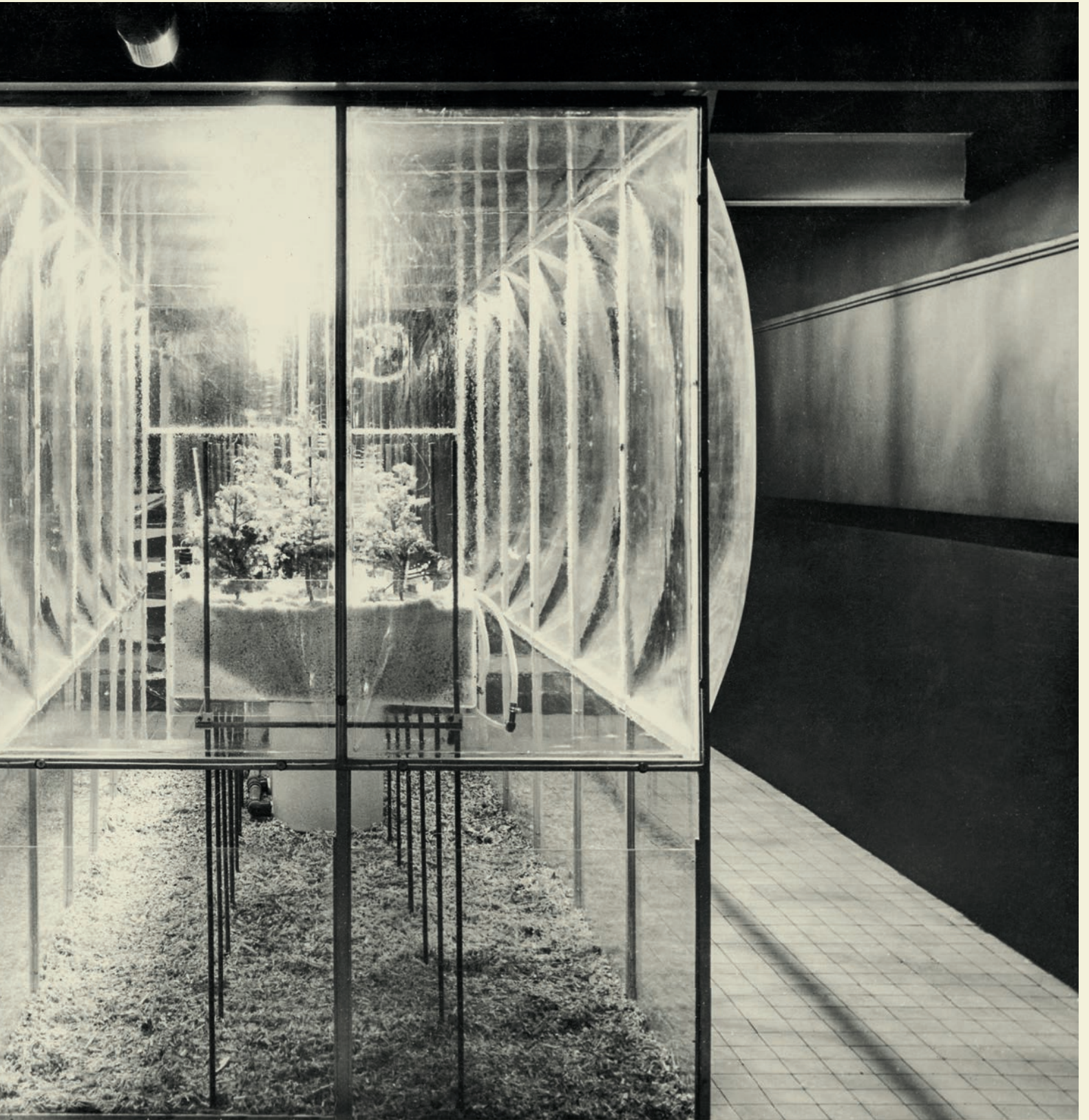








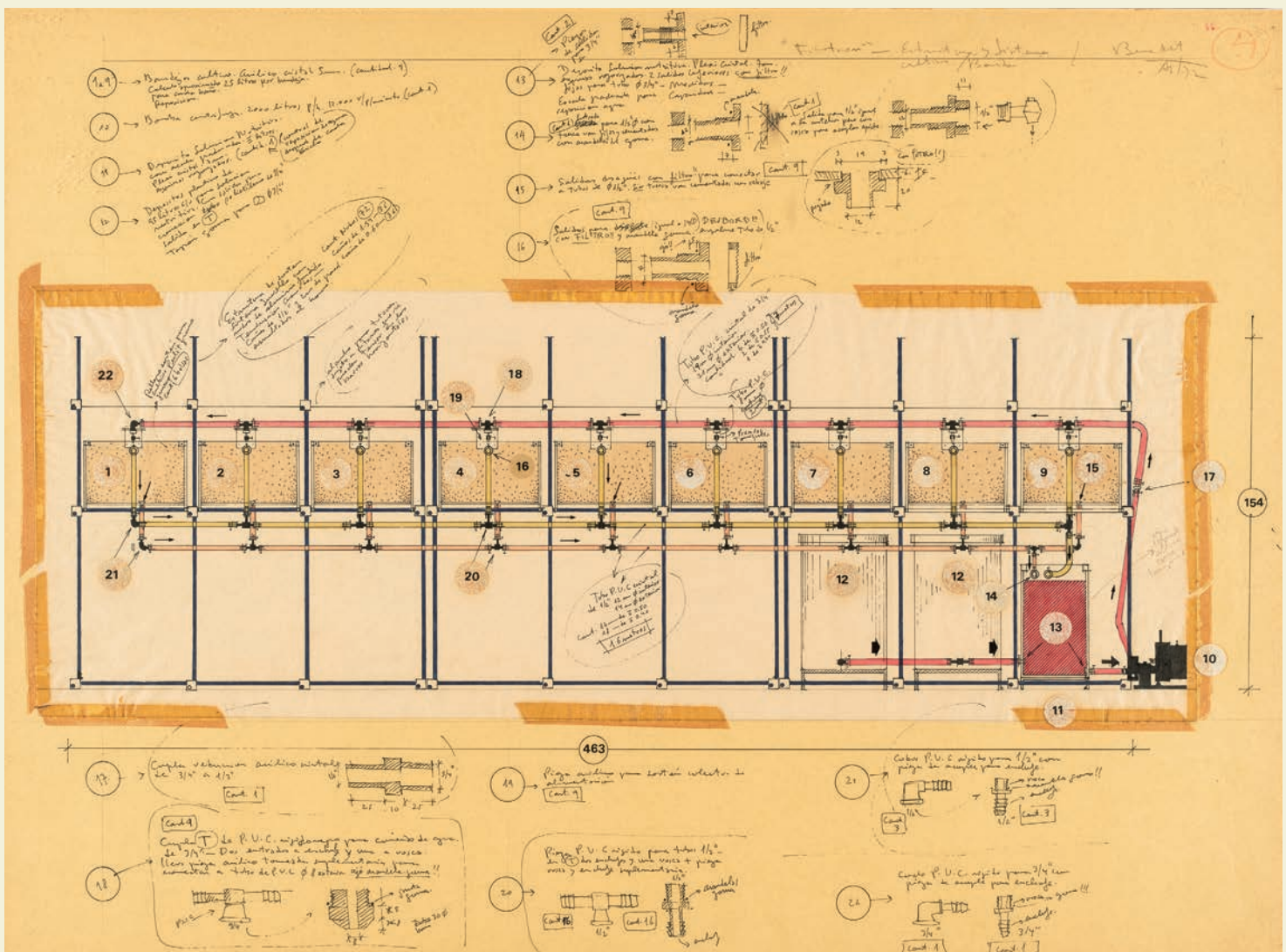




Drawing for Phytotron: Hydroponic Environment for Plants, 1972

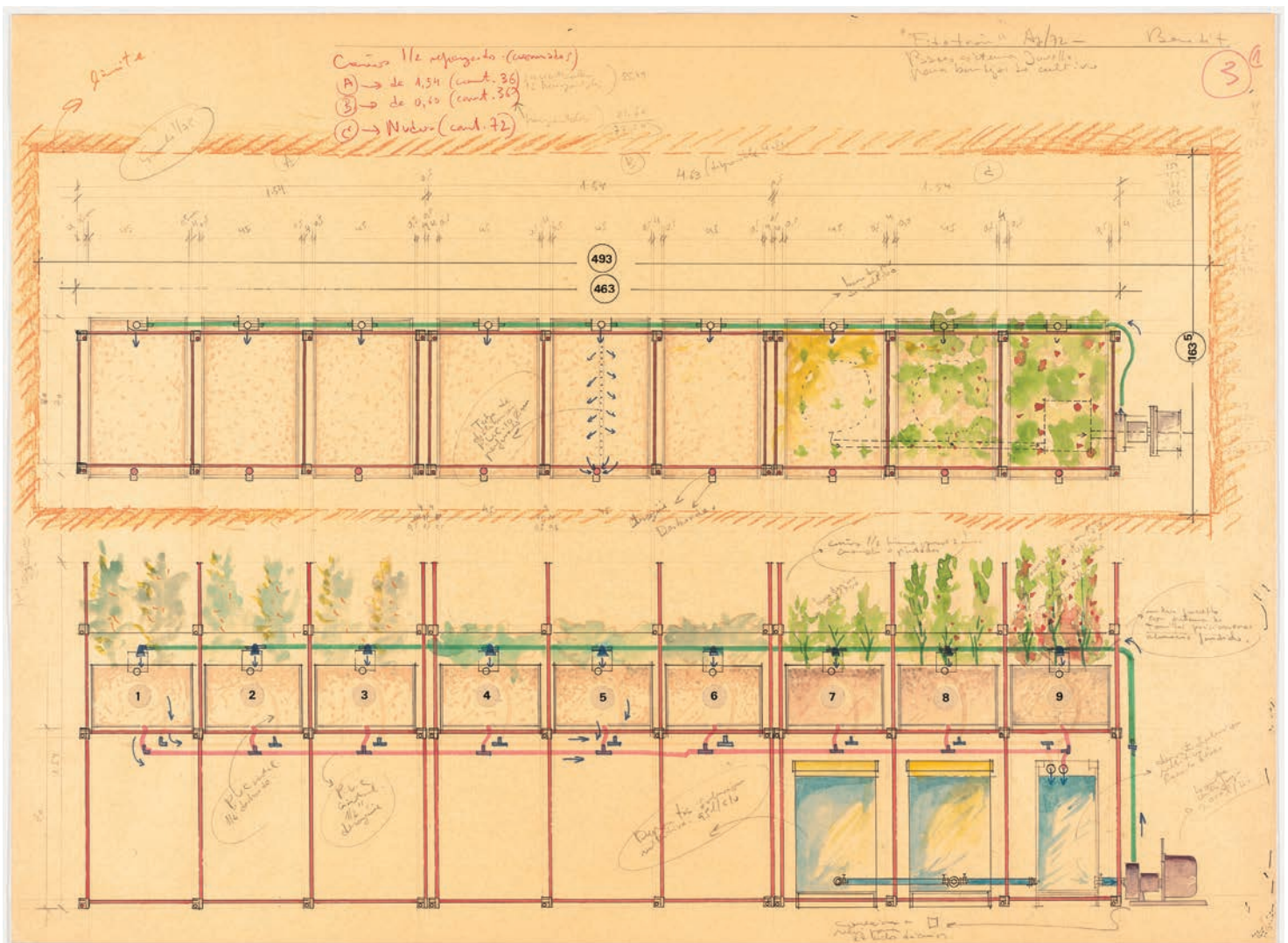
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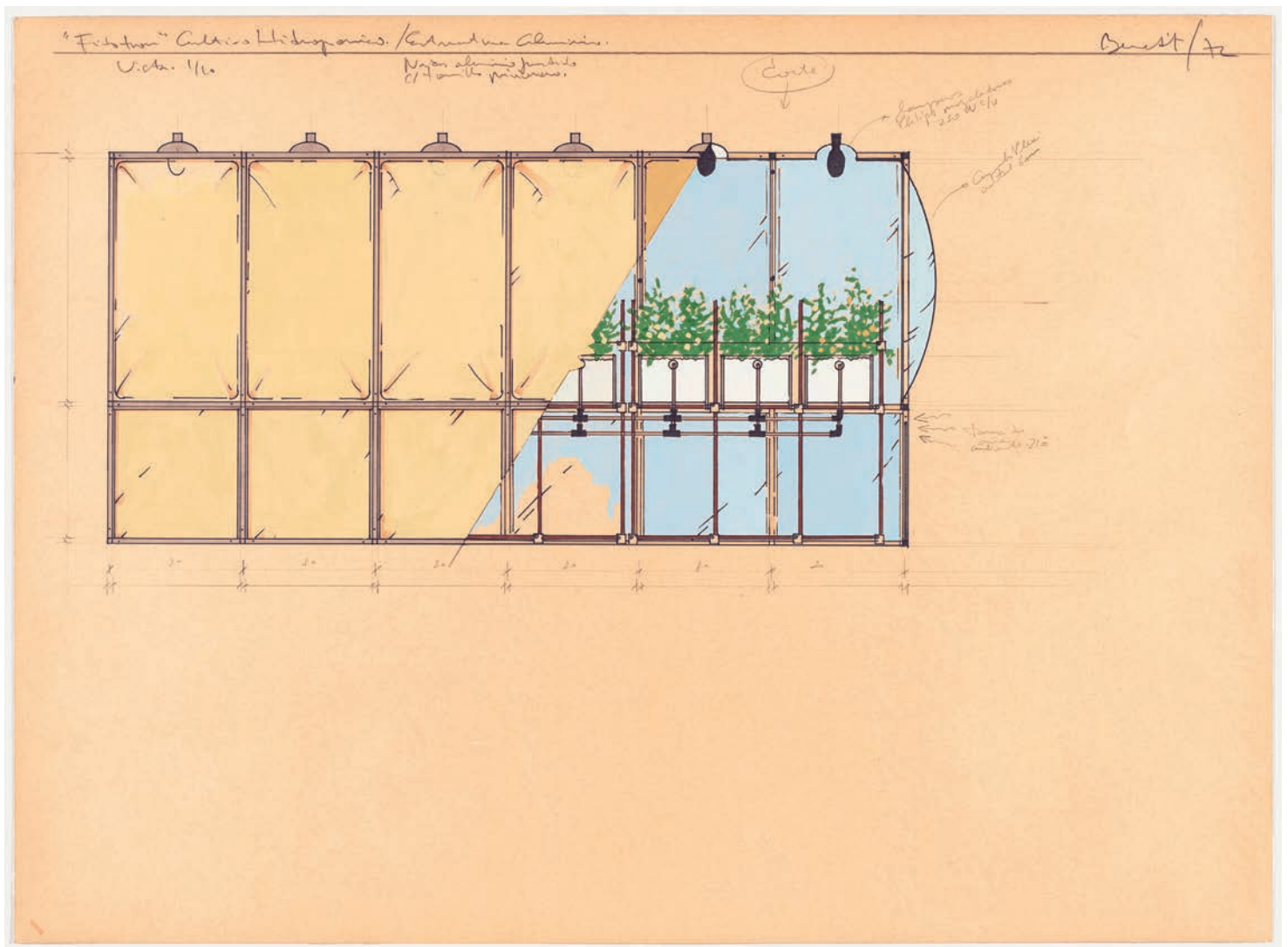
**Drawing for Phytotron: Hydroponic
Environment for Plants, 1972**

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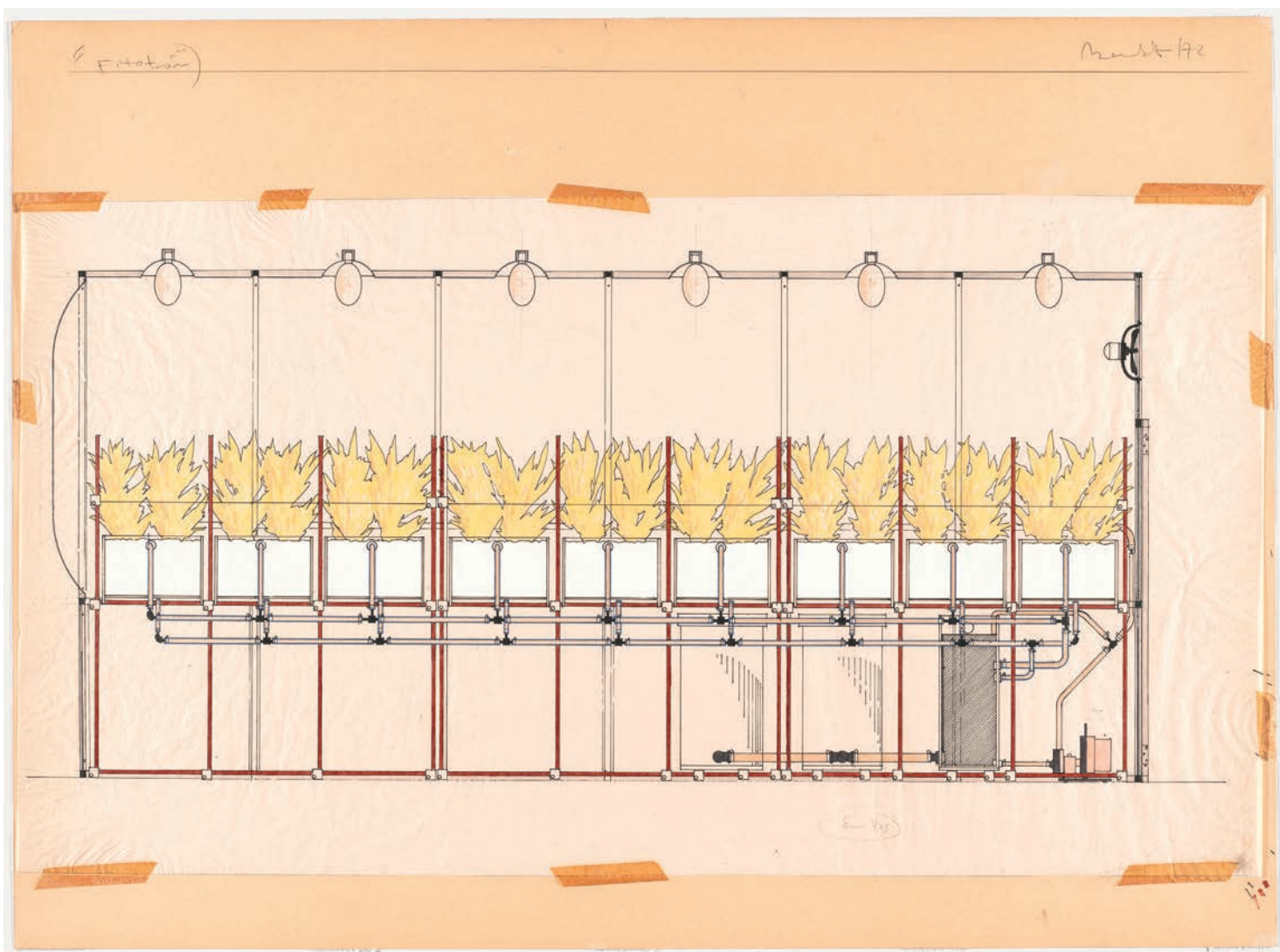
**Drawing for Phytotron: Hydroponic
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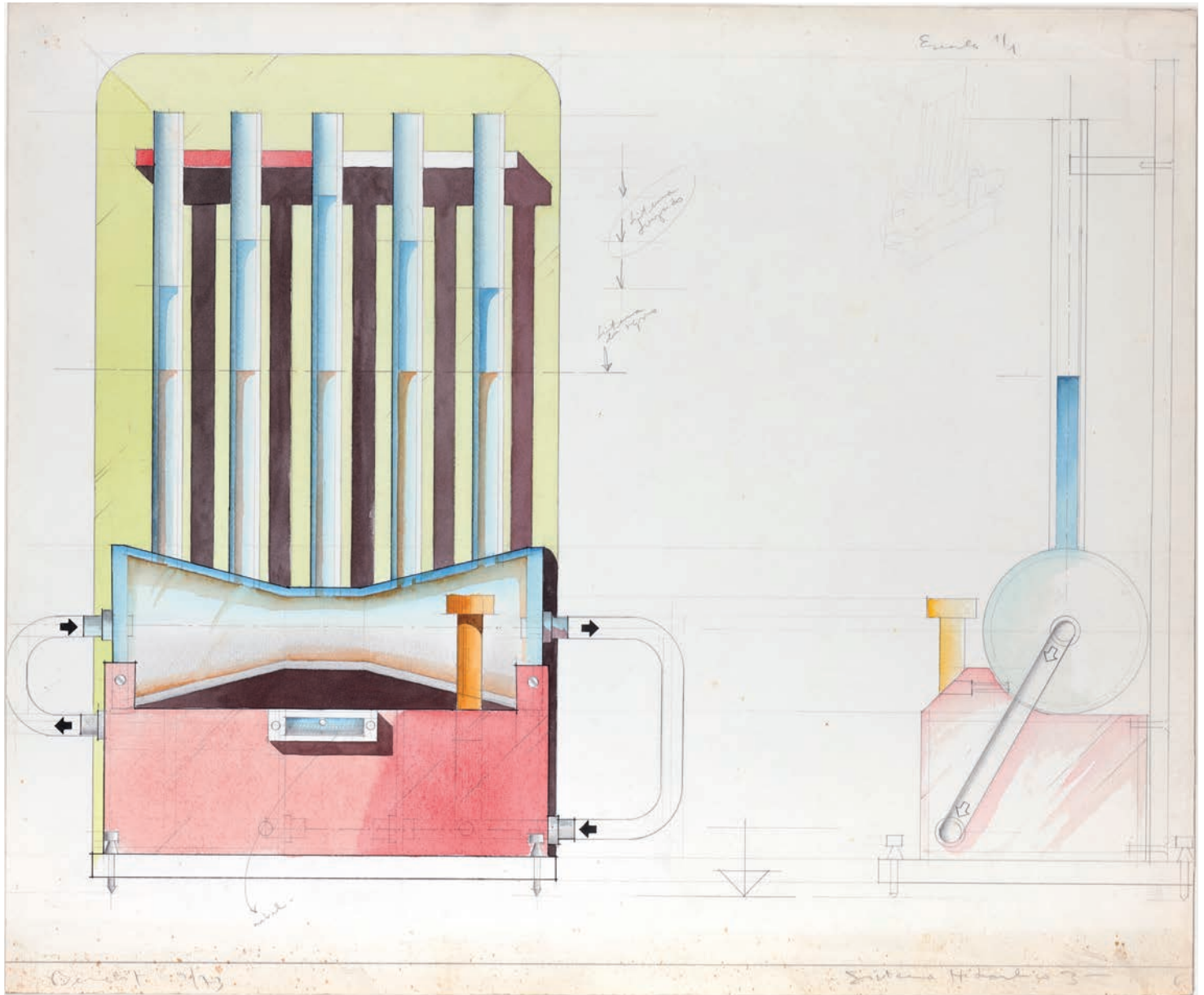
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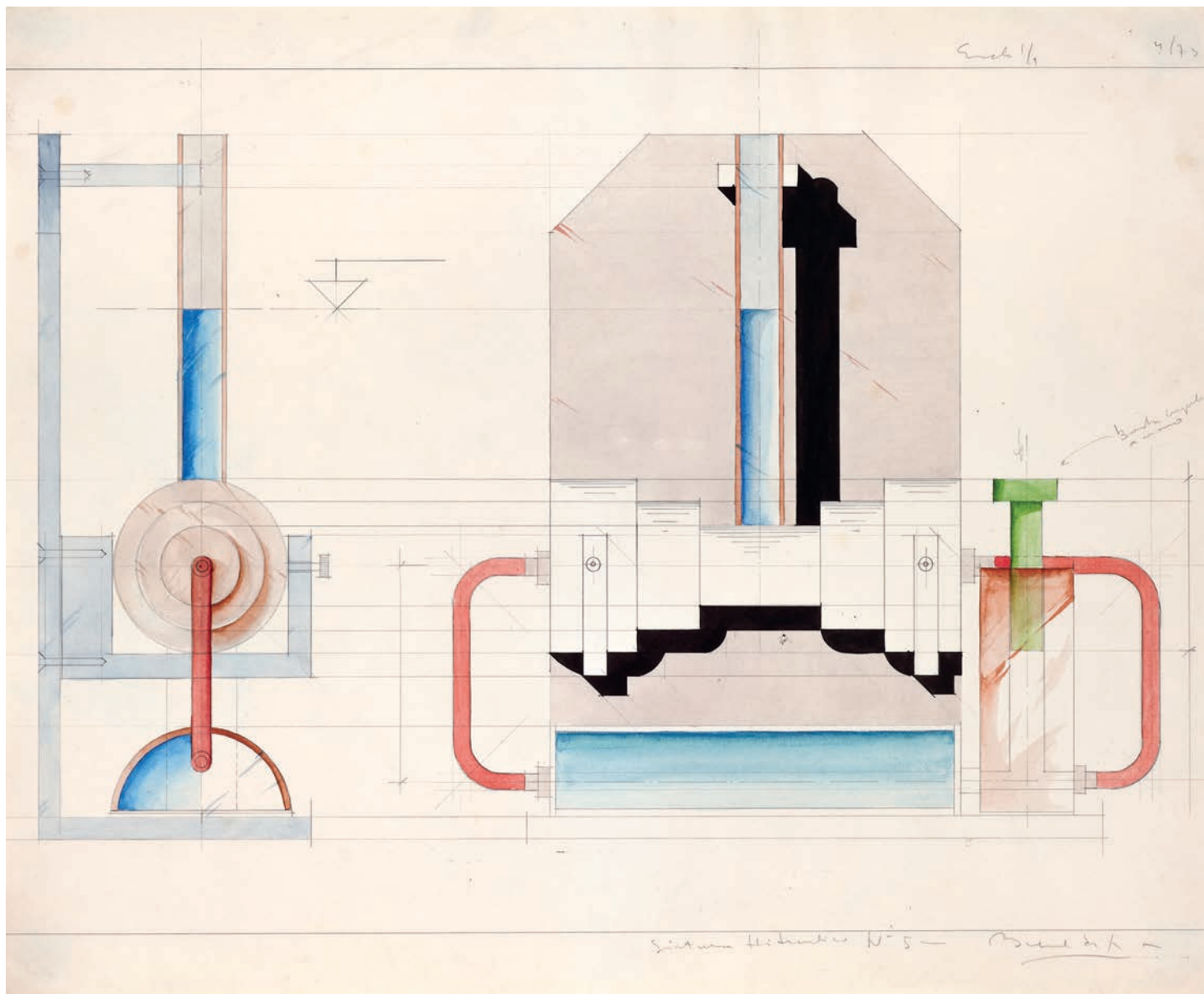


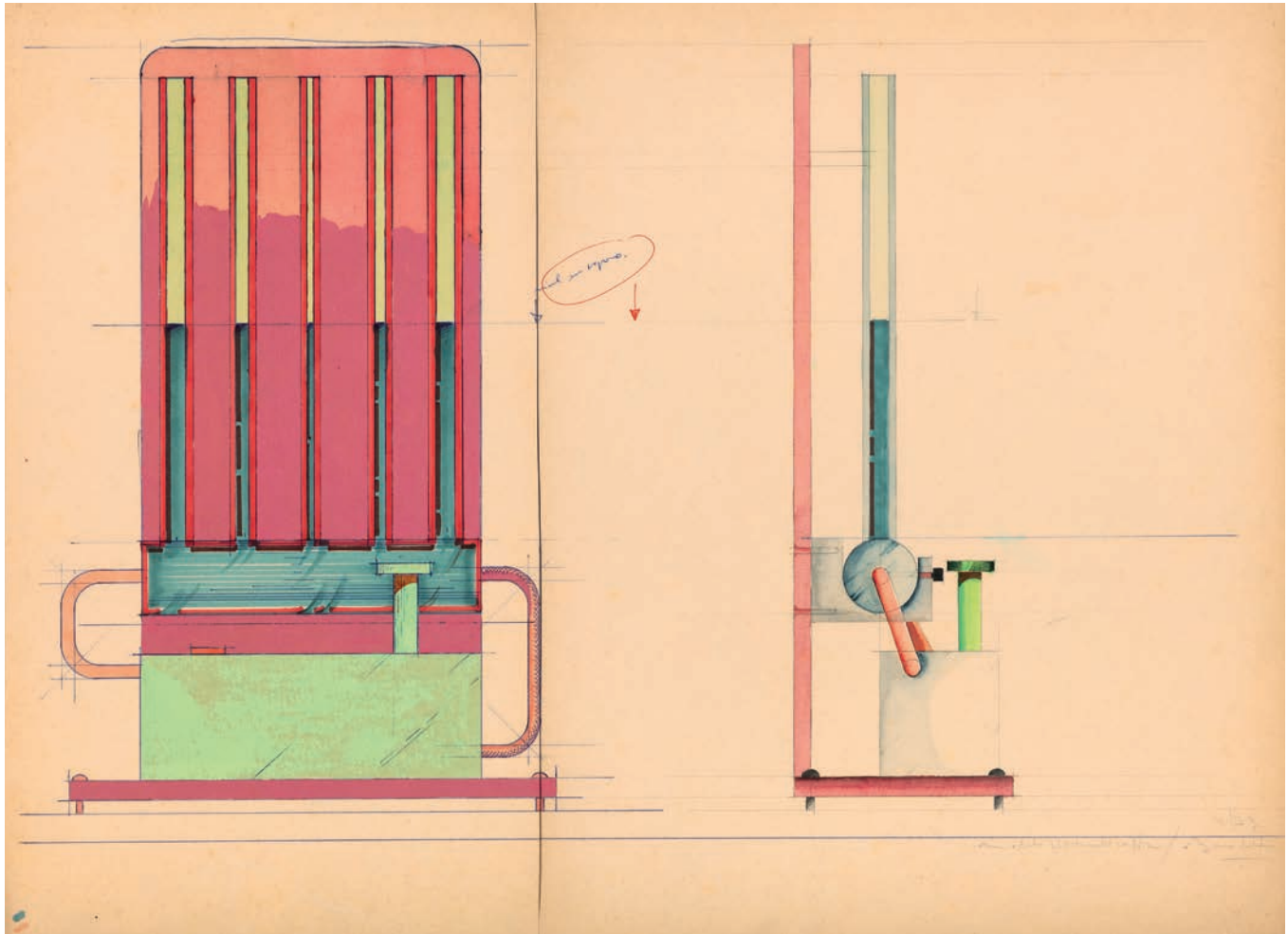
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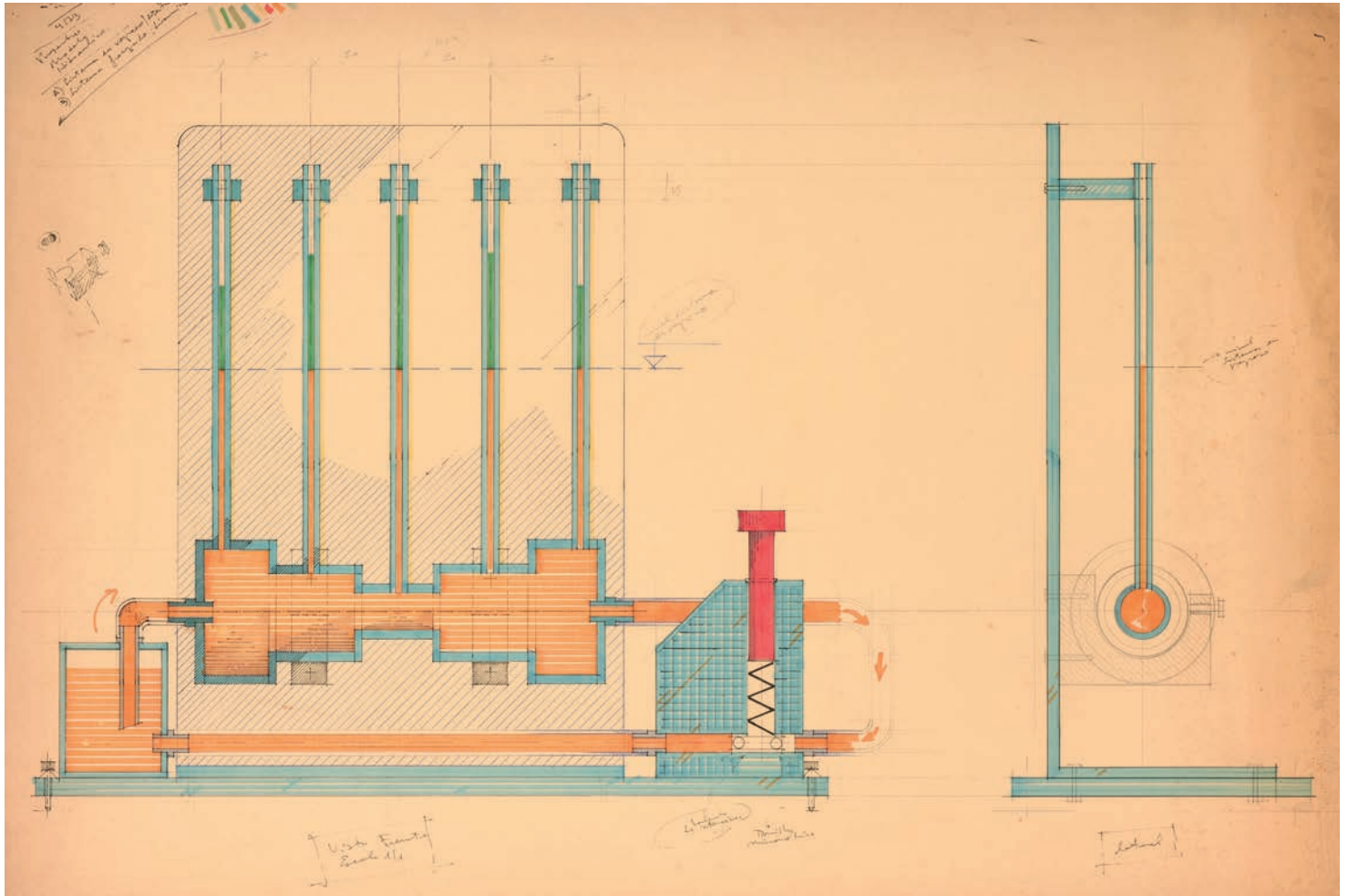
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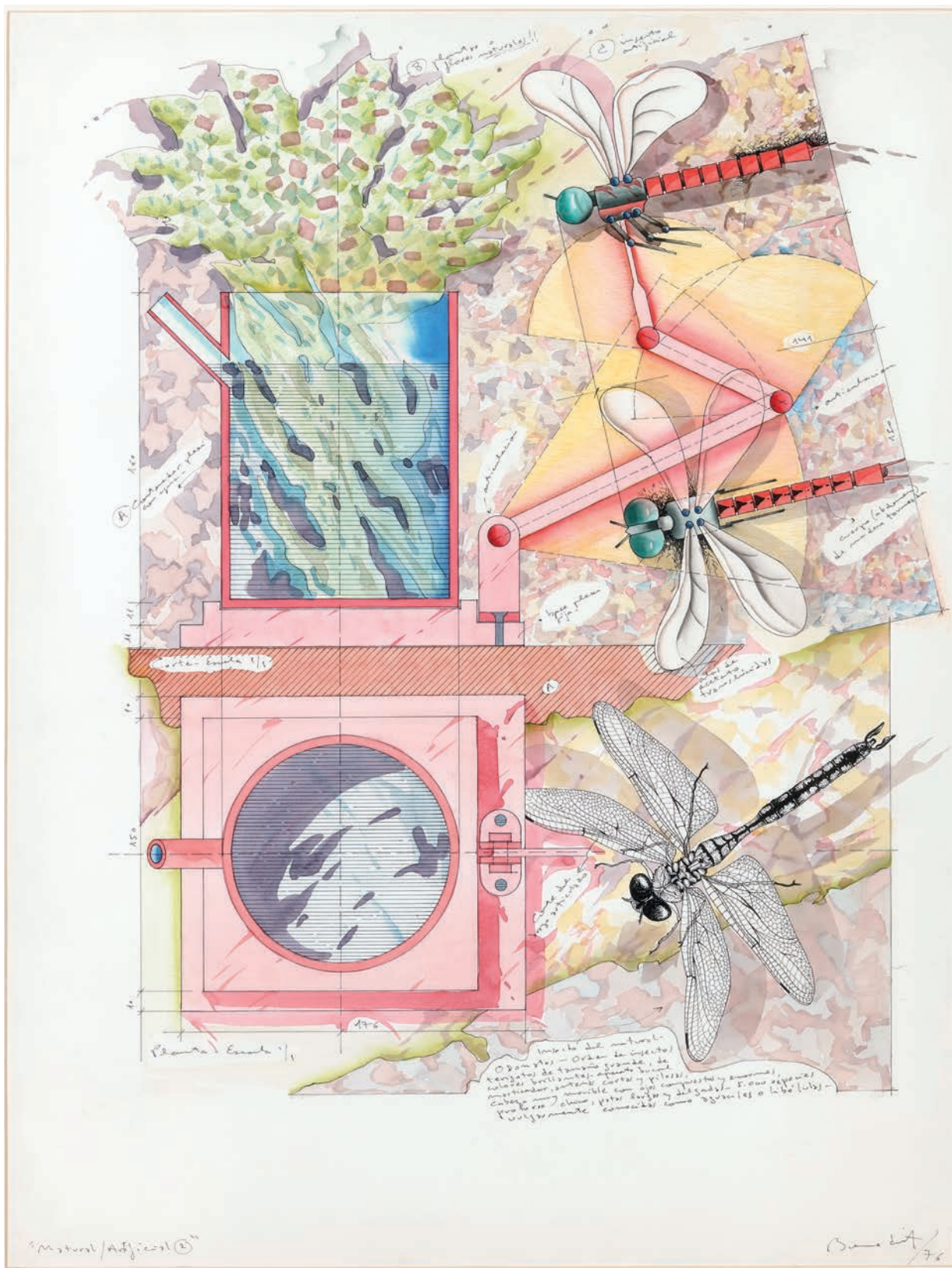




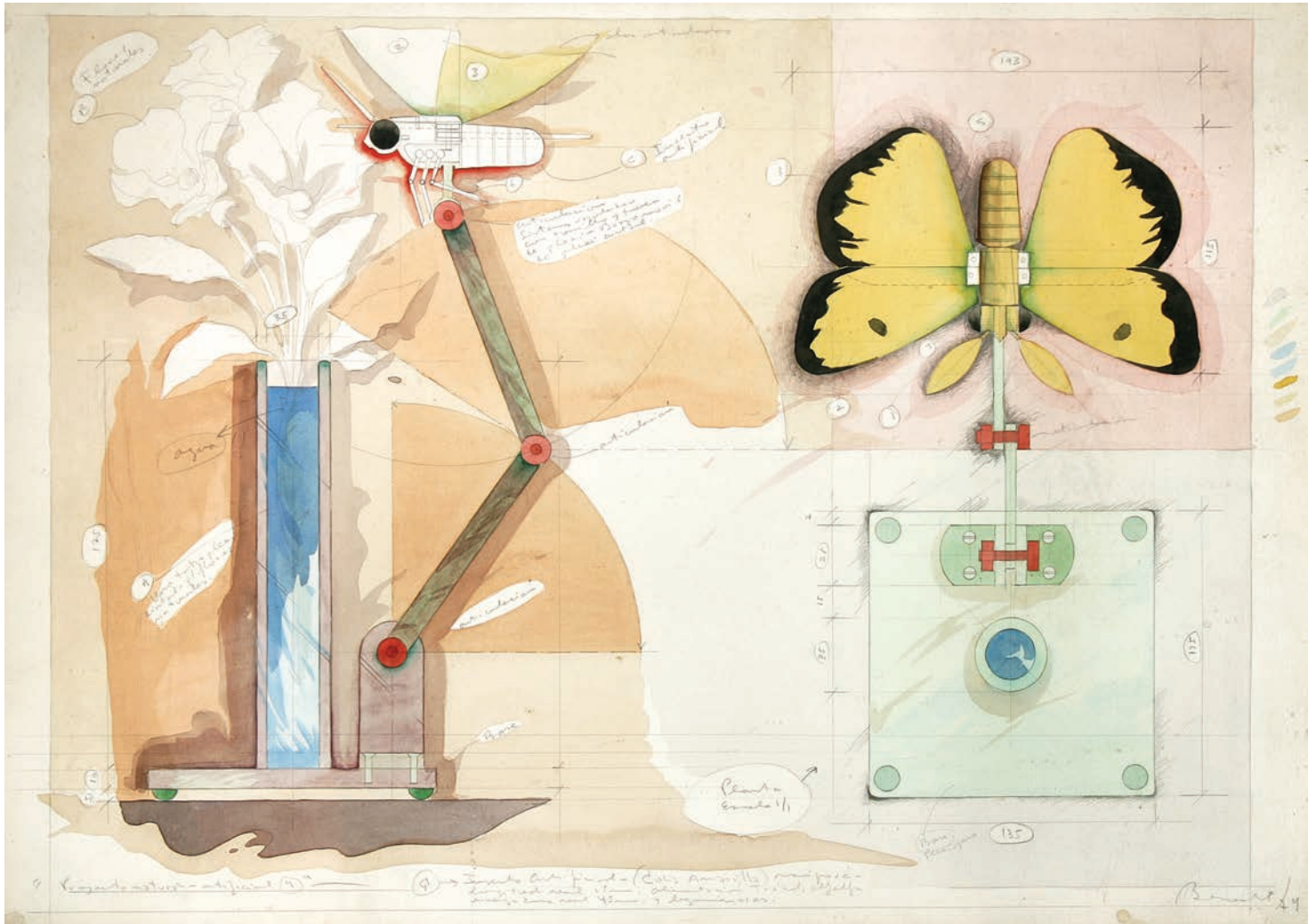


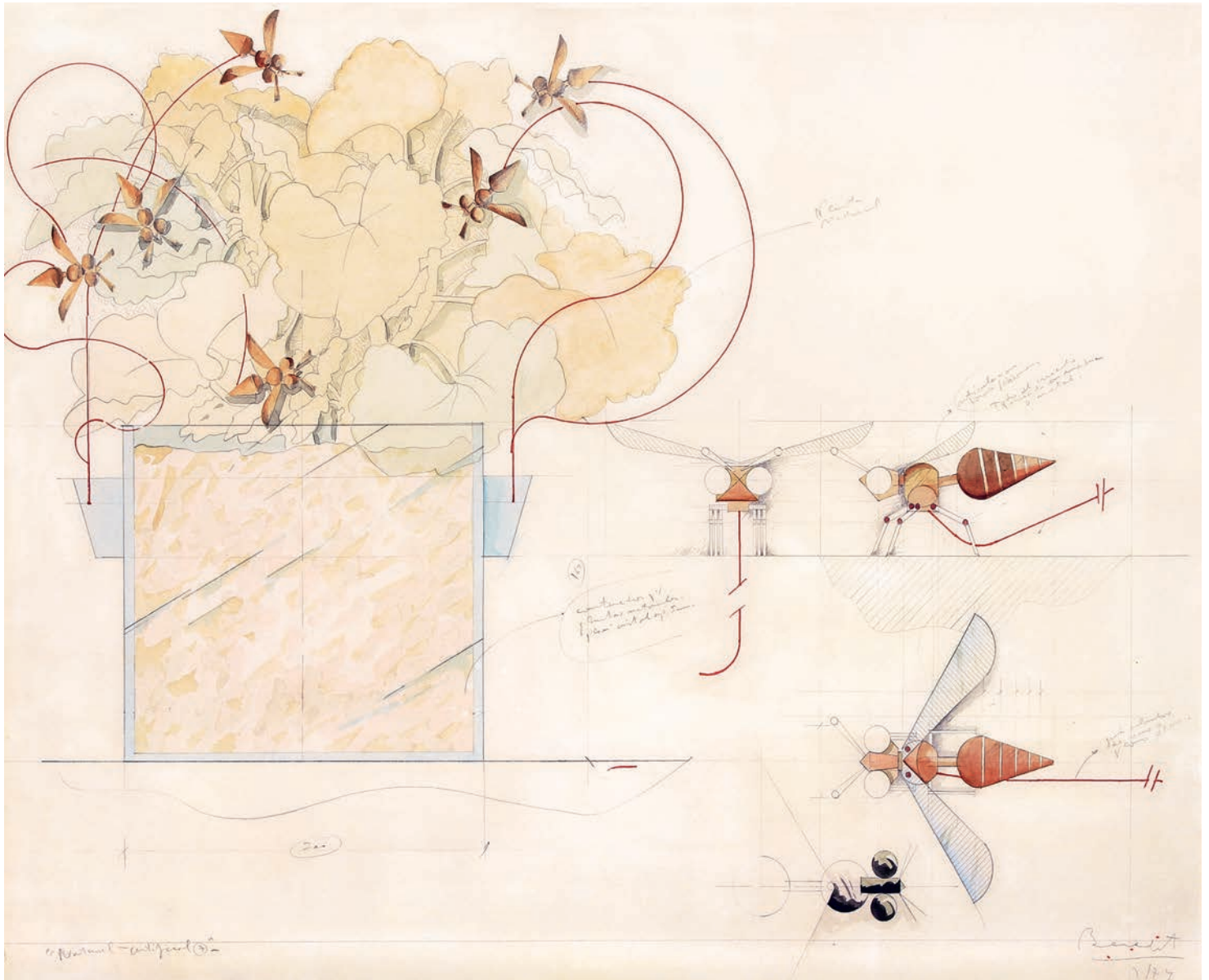


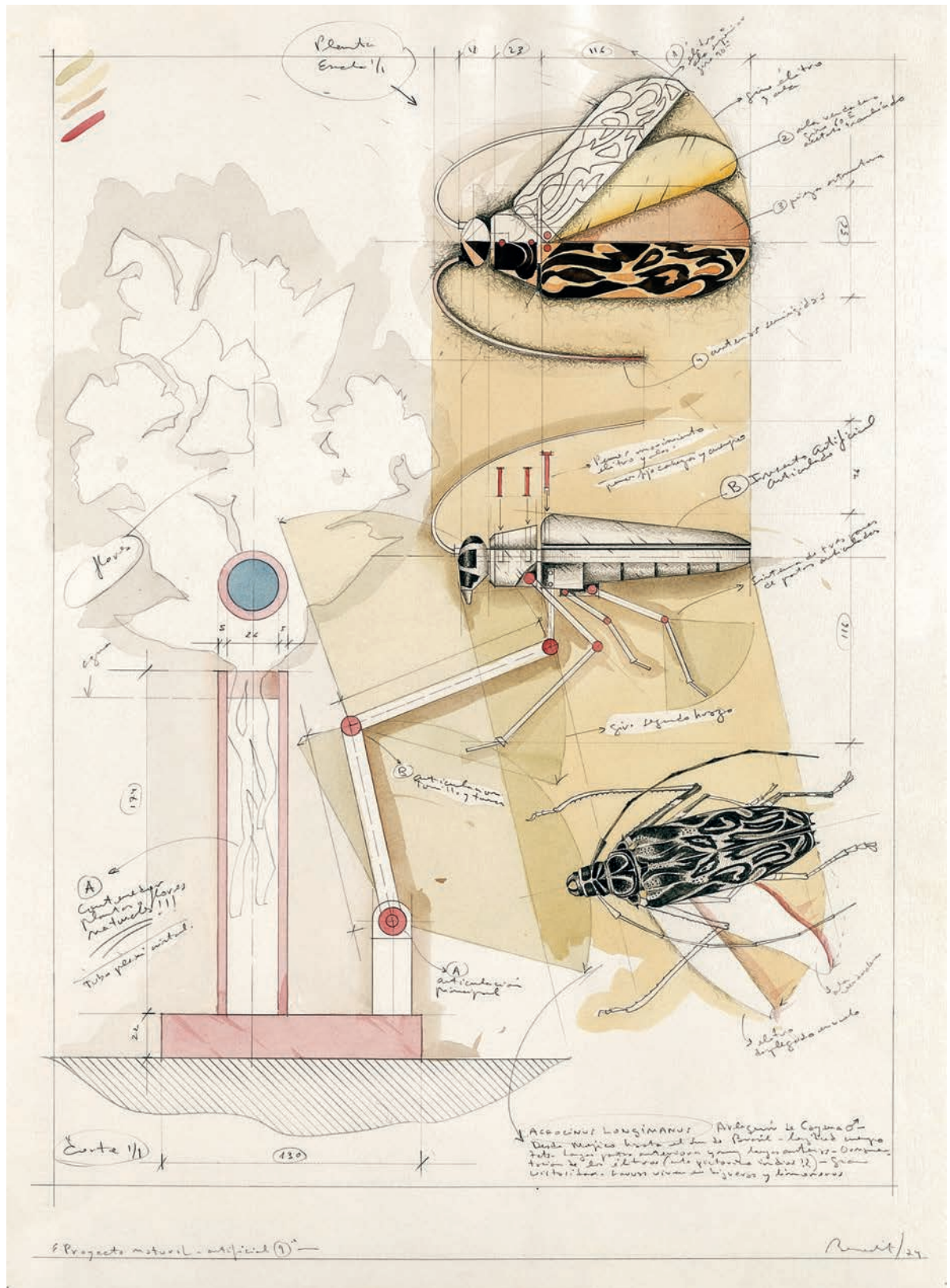


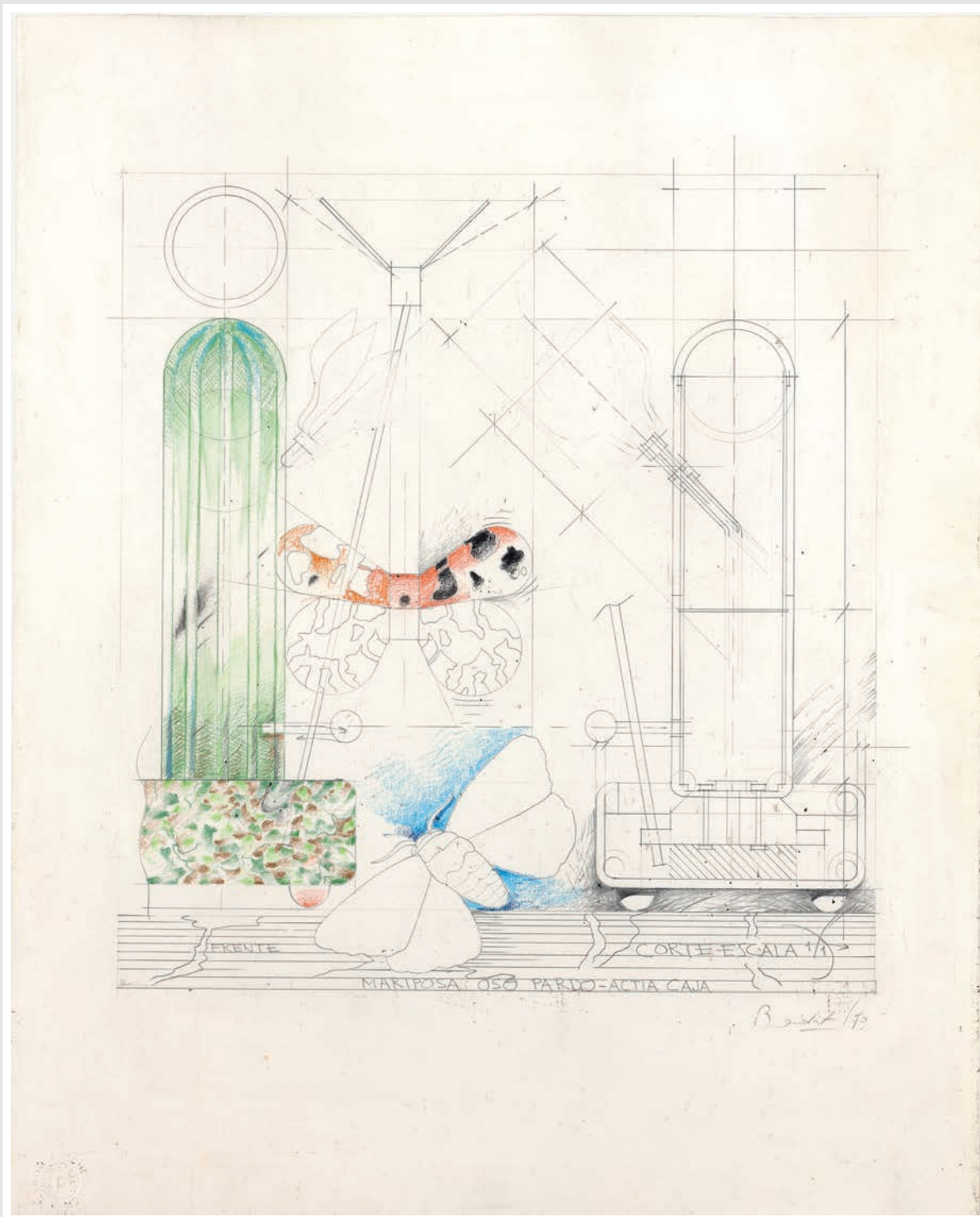


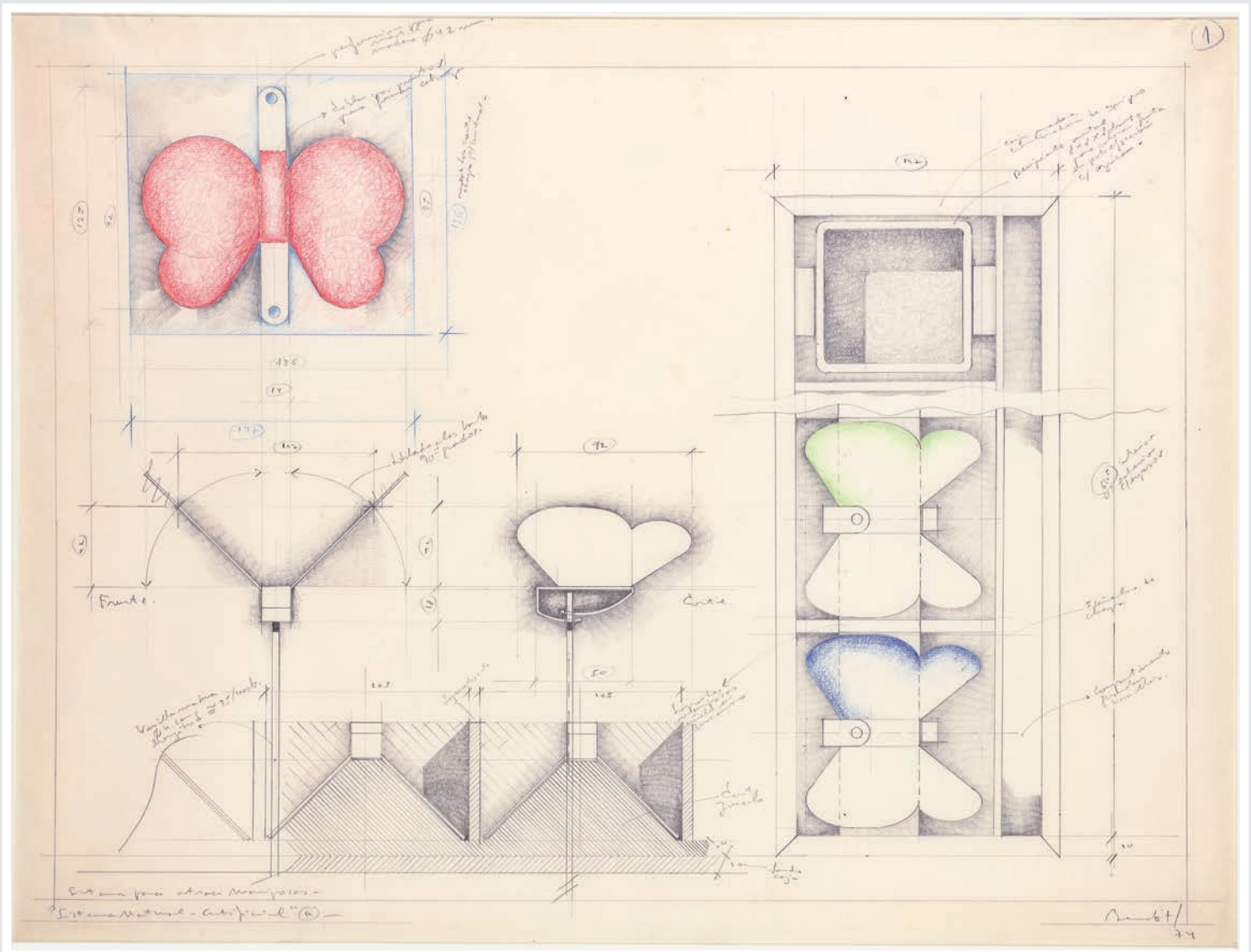


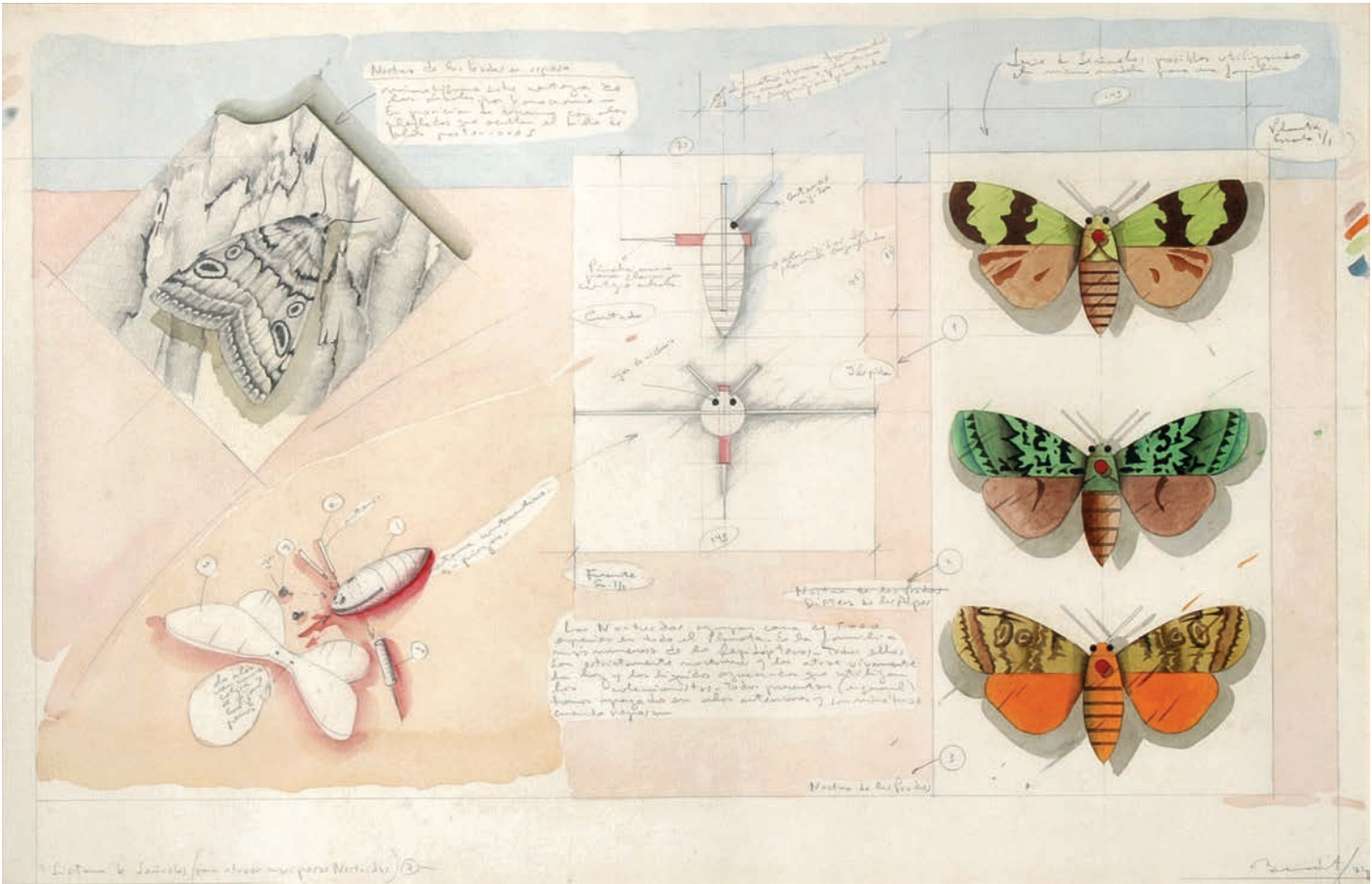


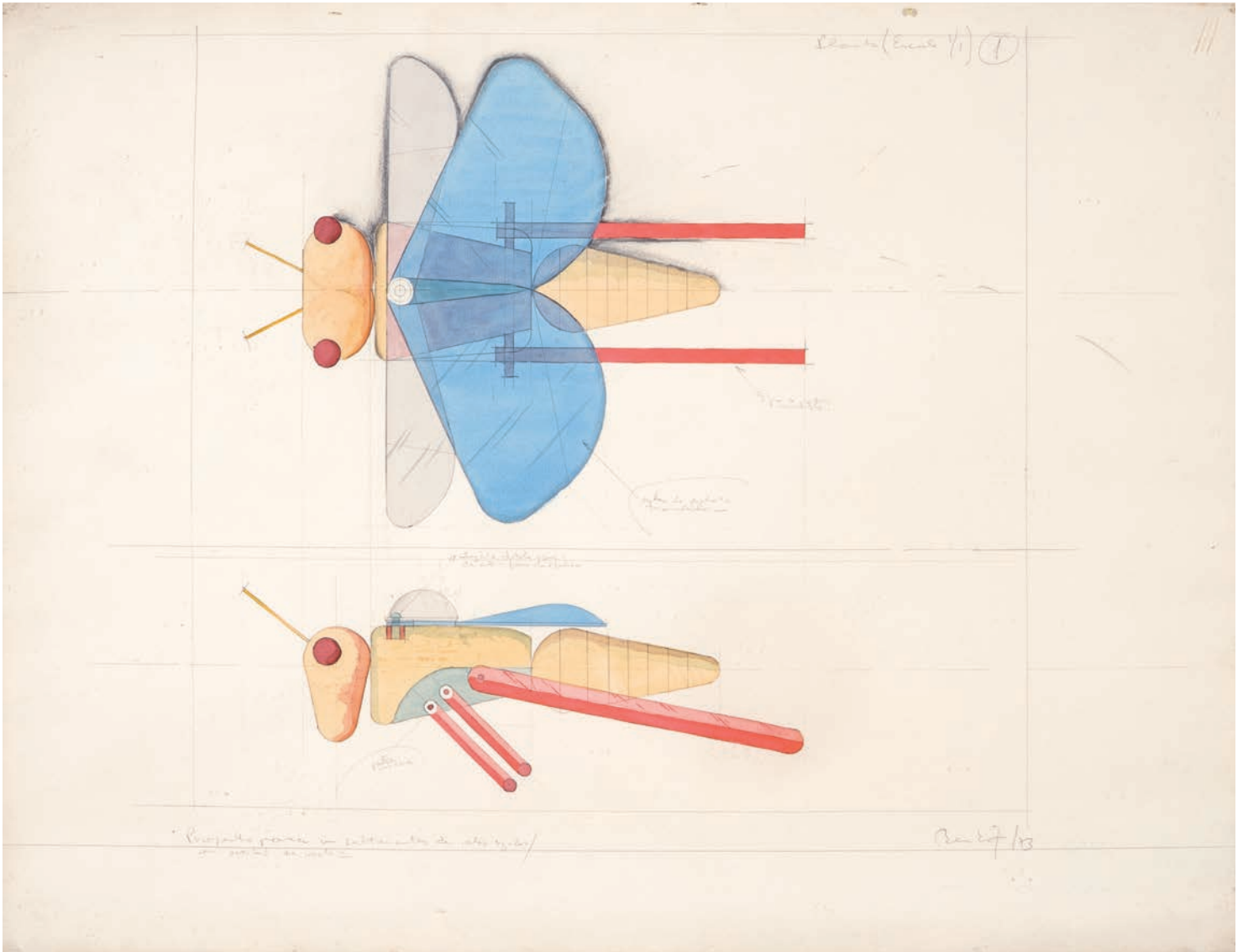






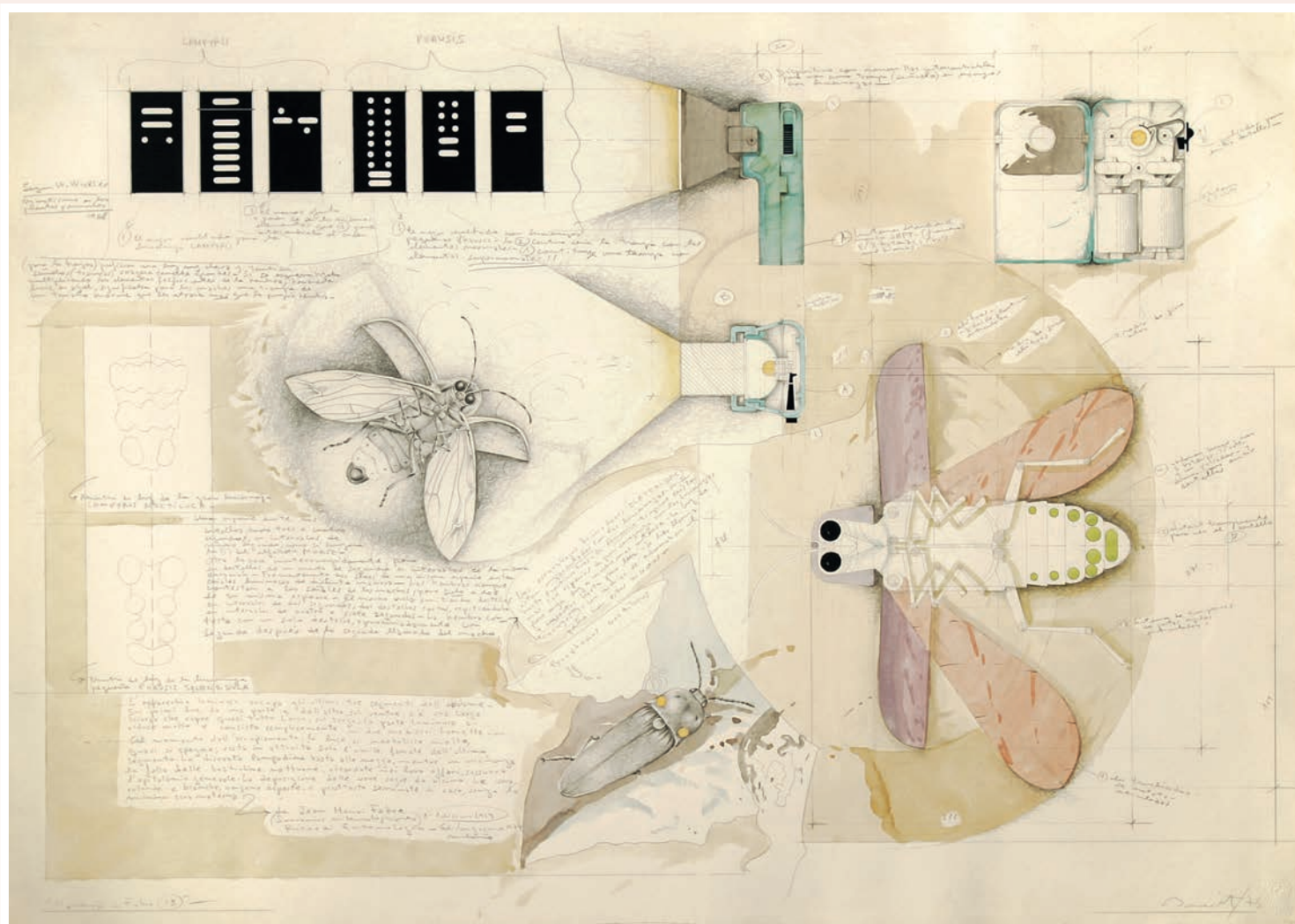


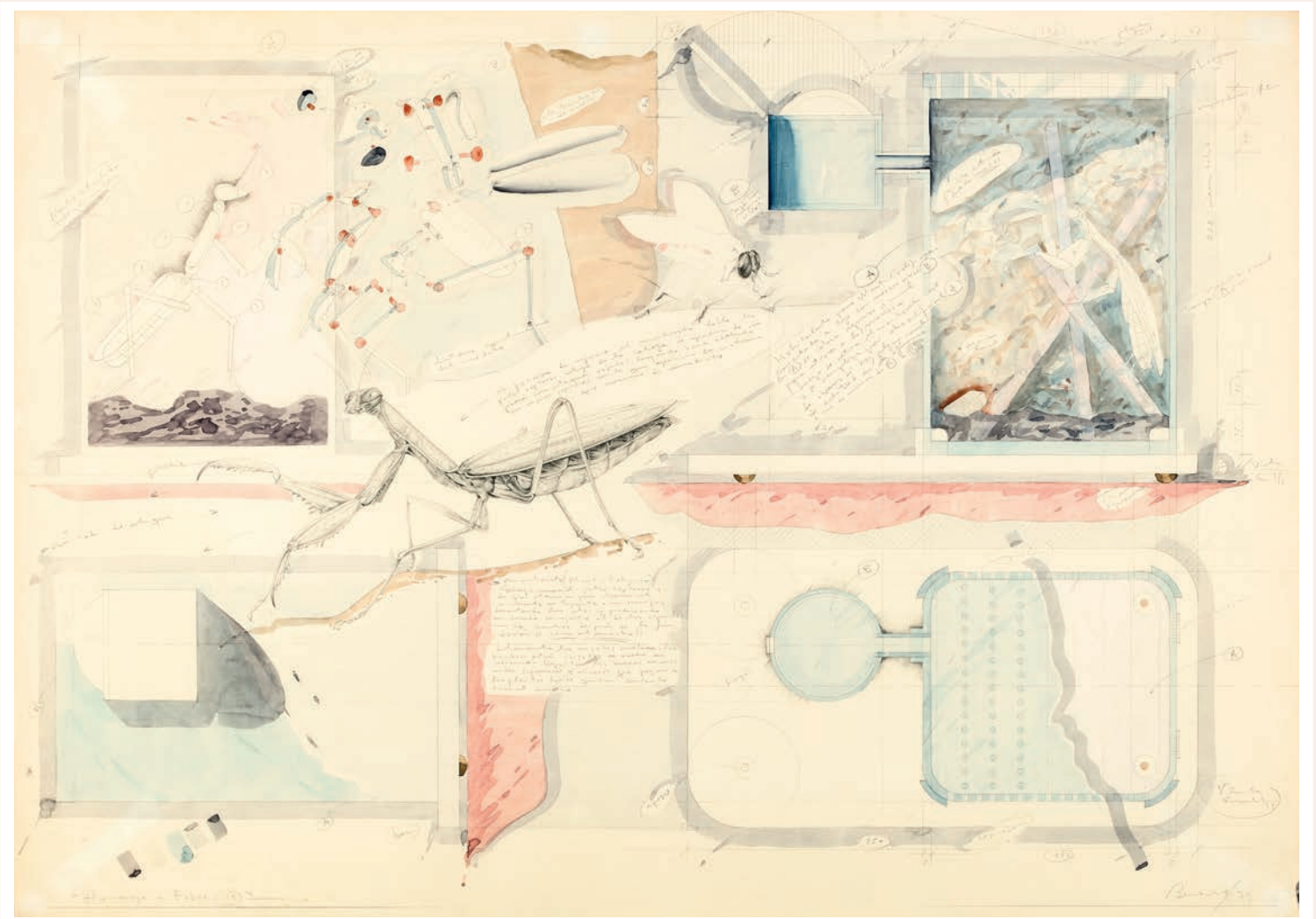


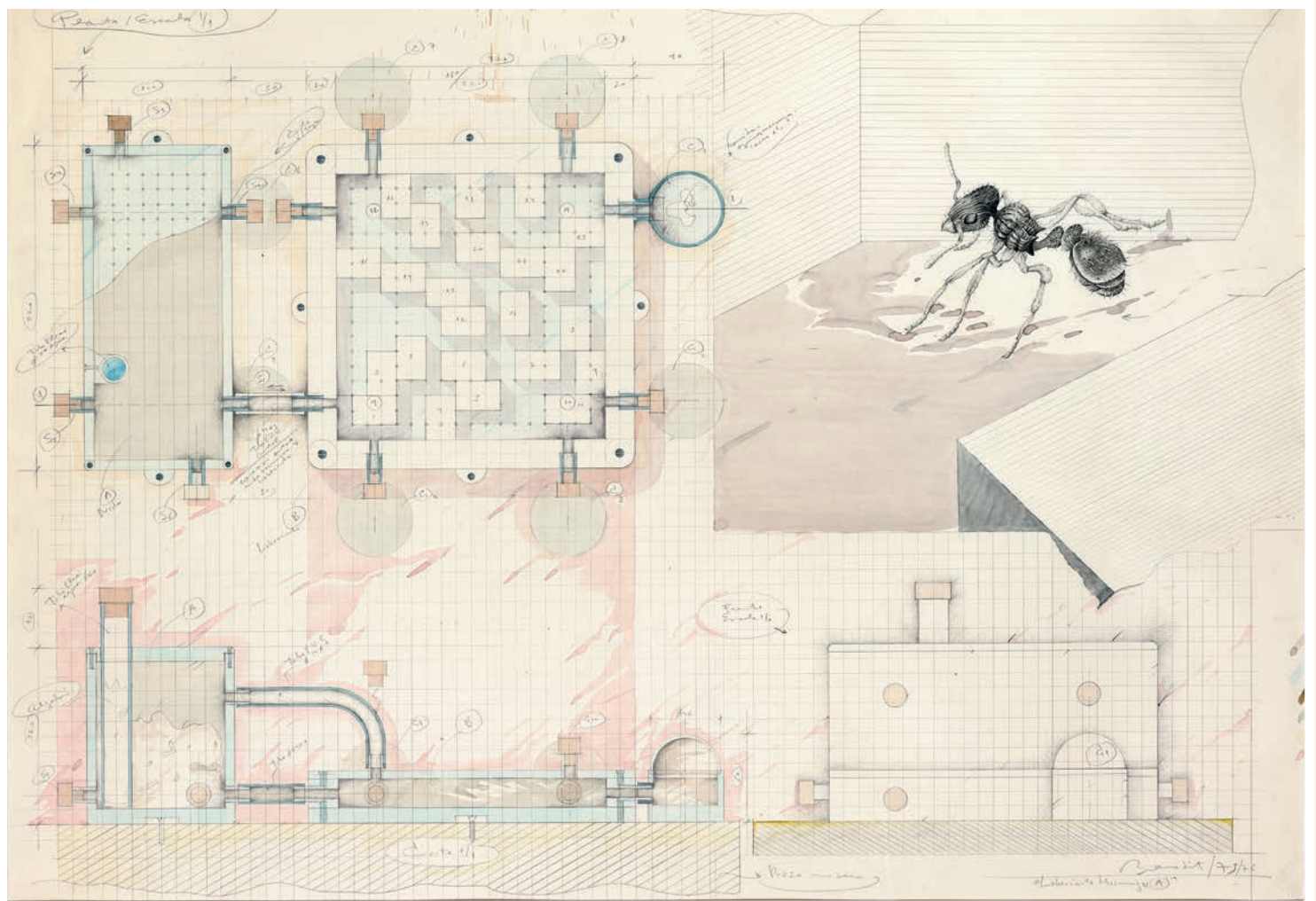


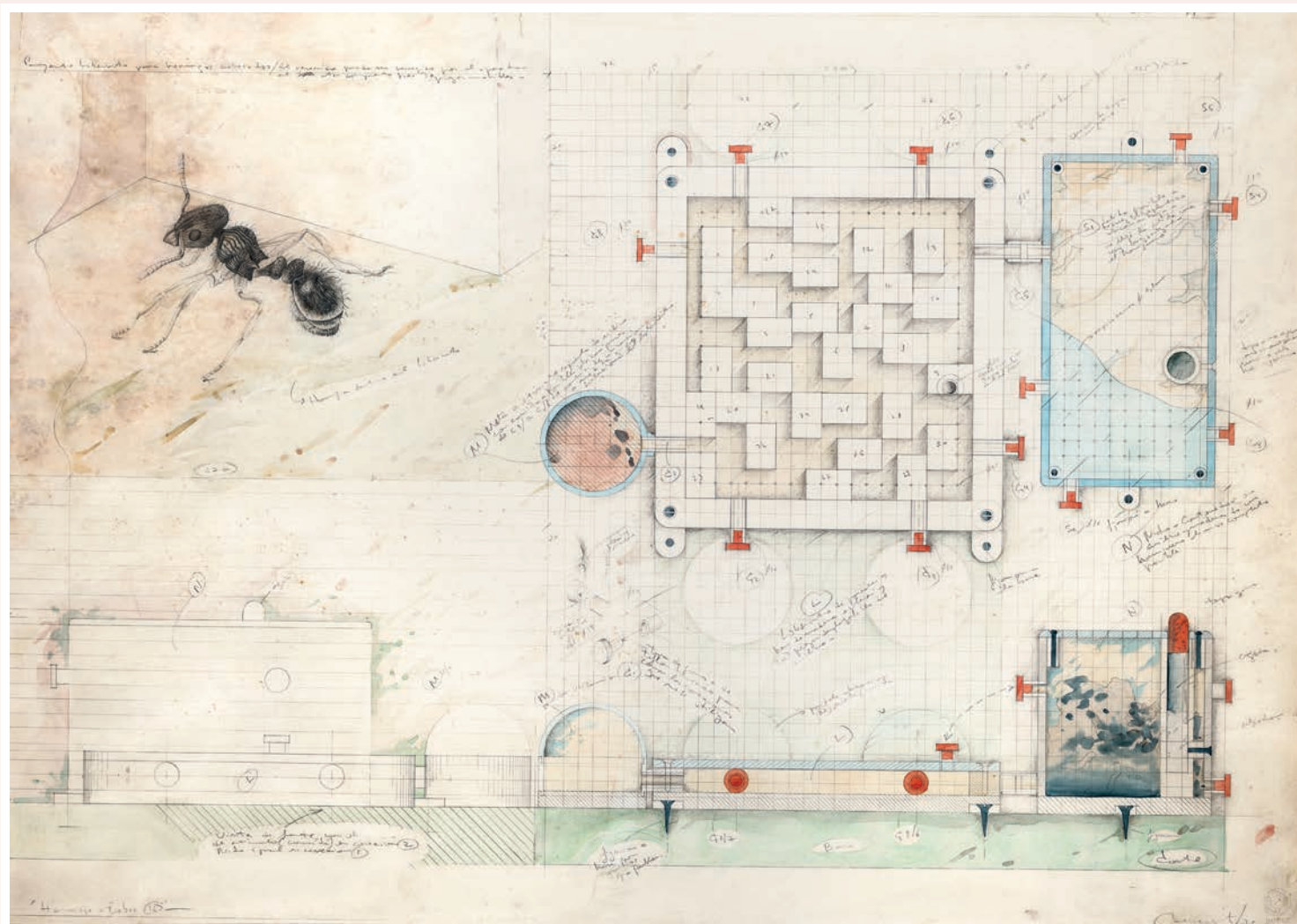


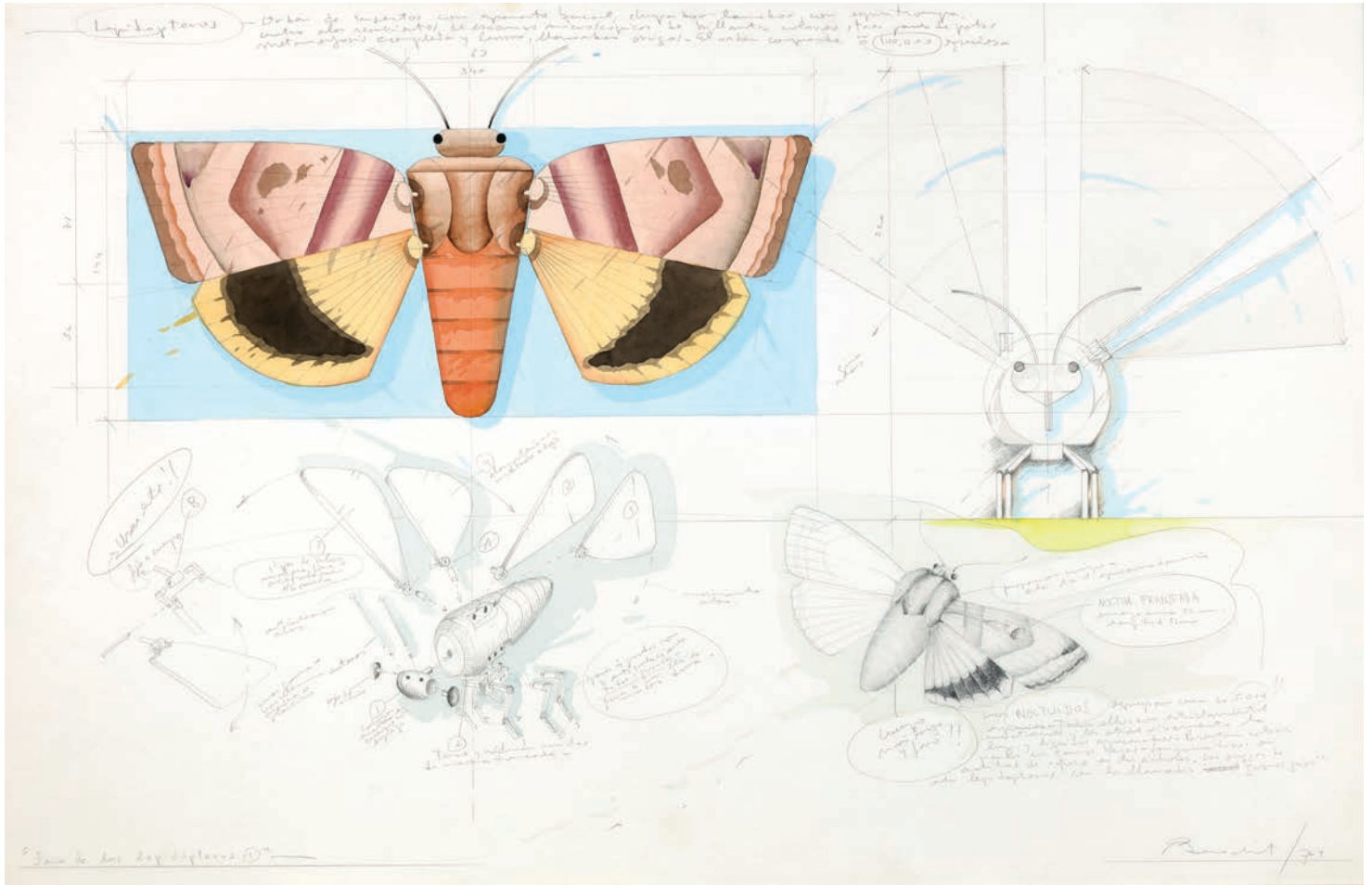


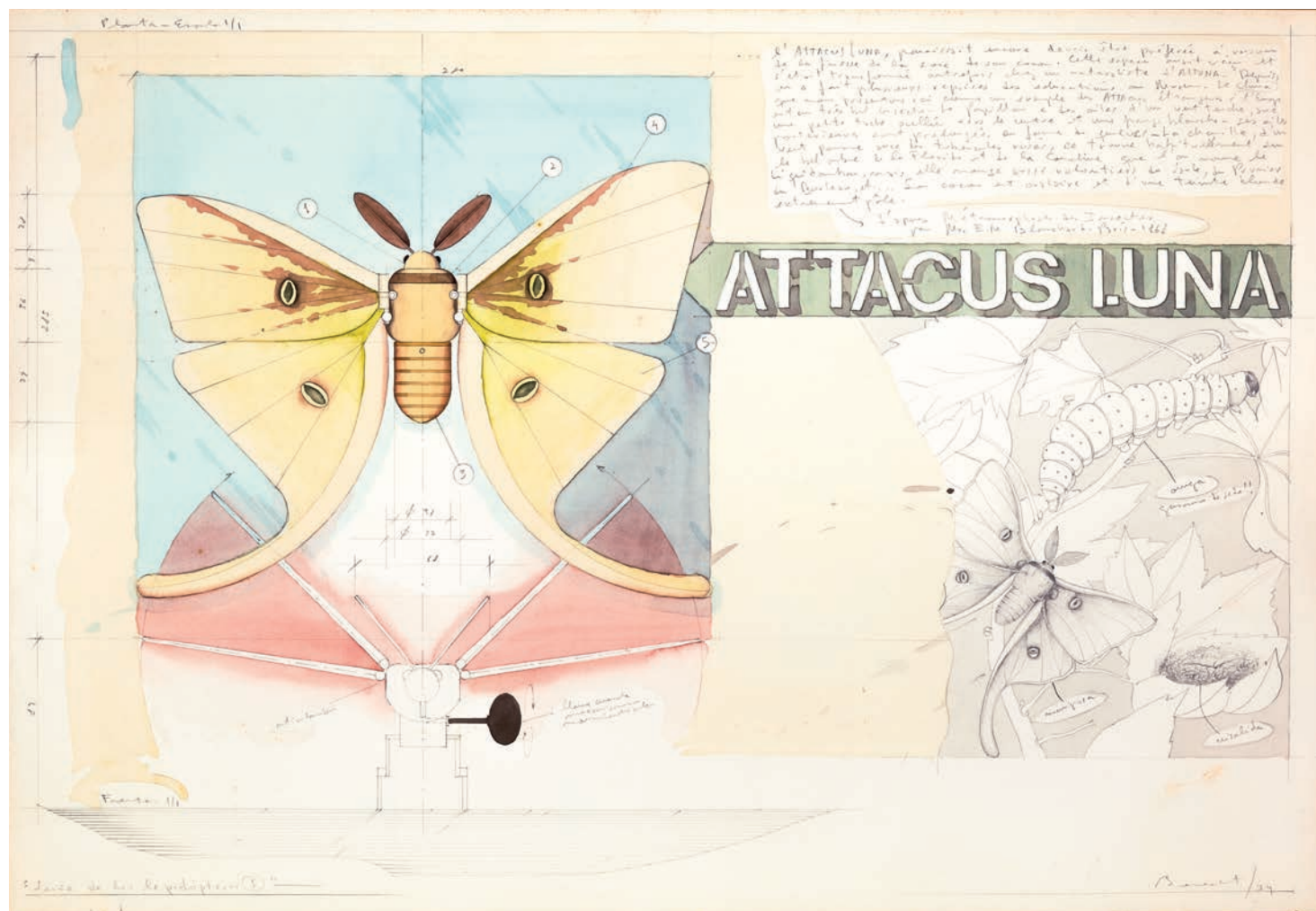


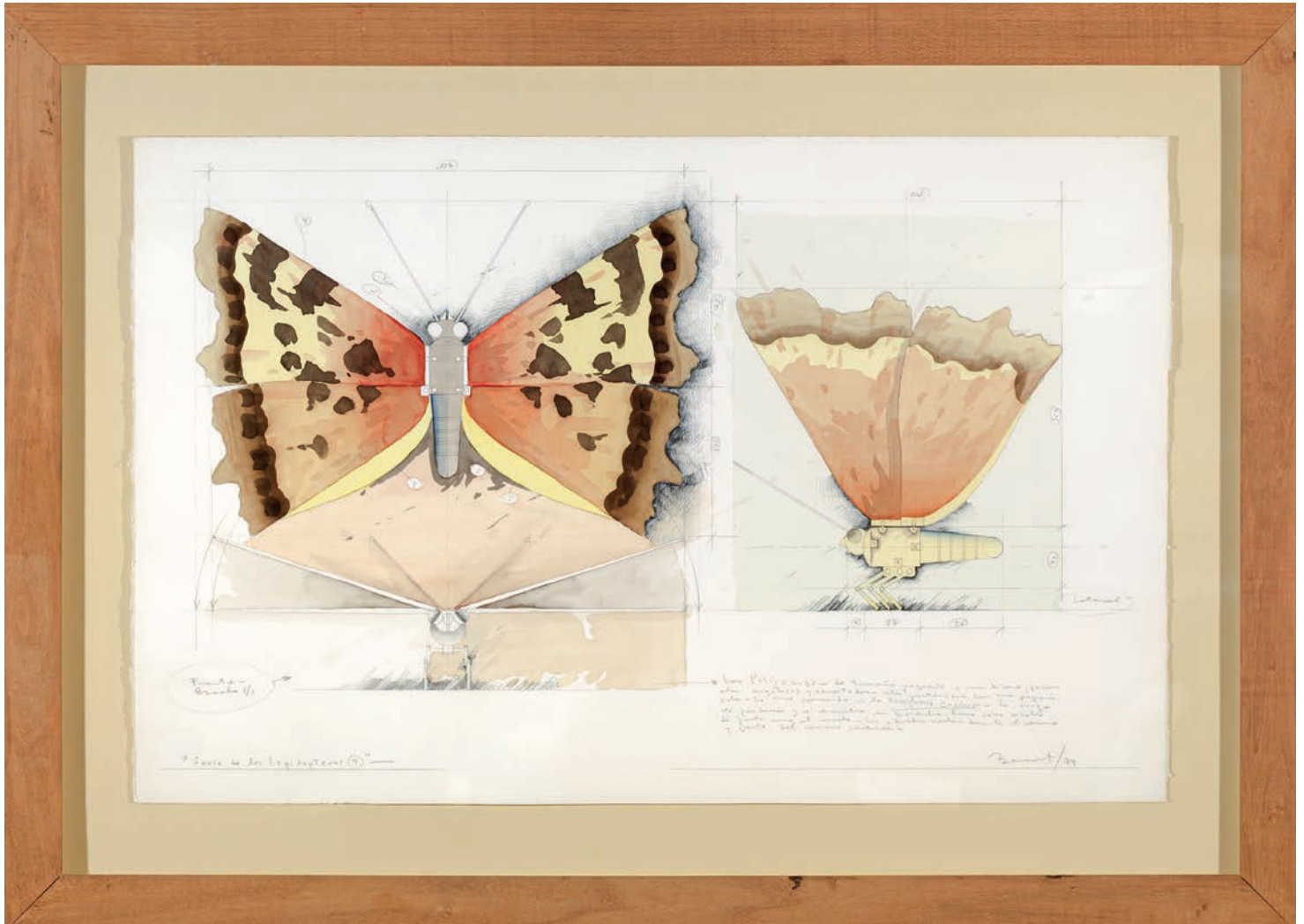






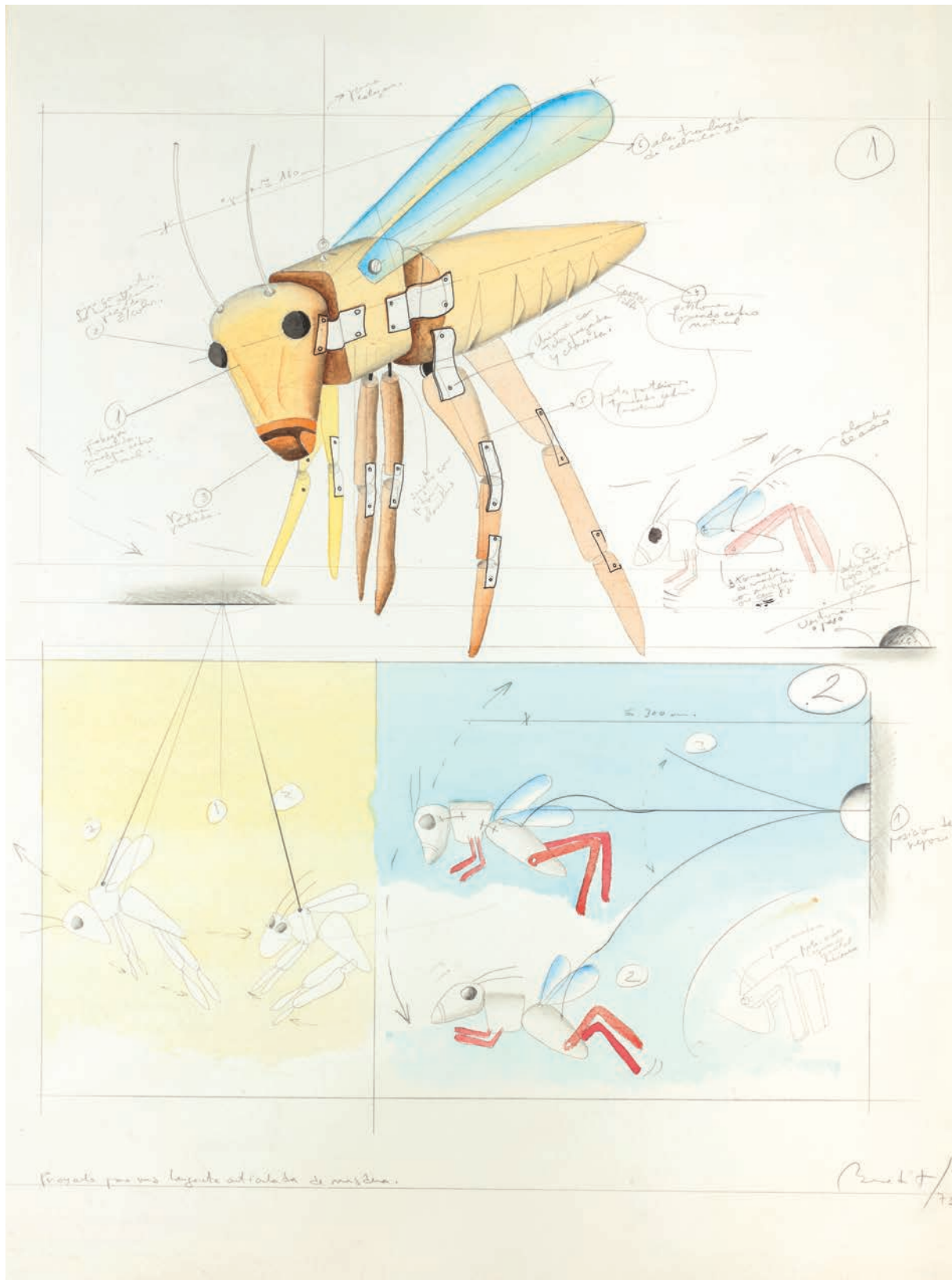


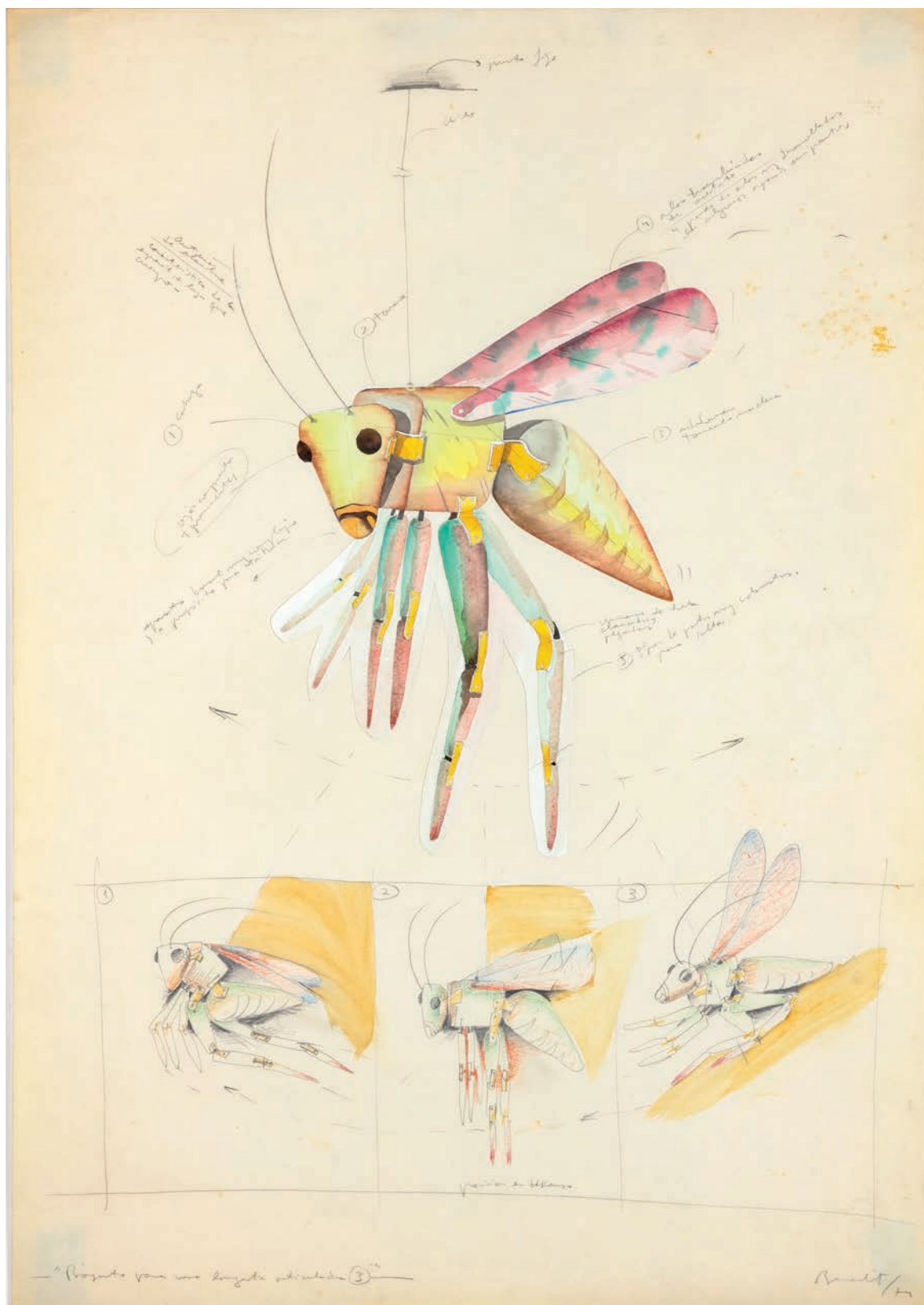


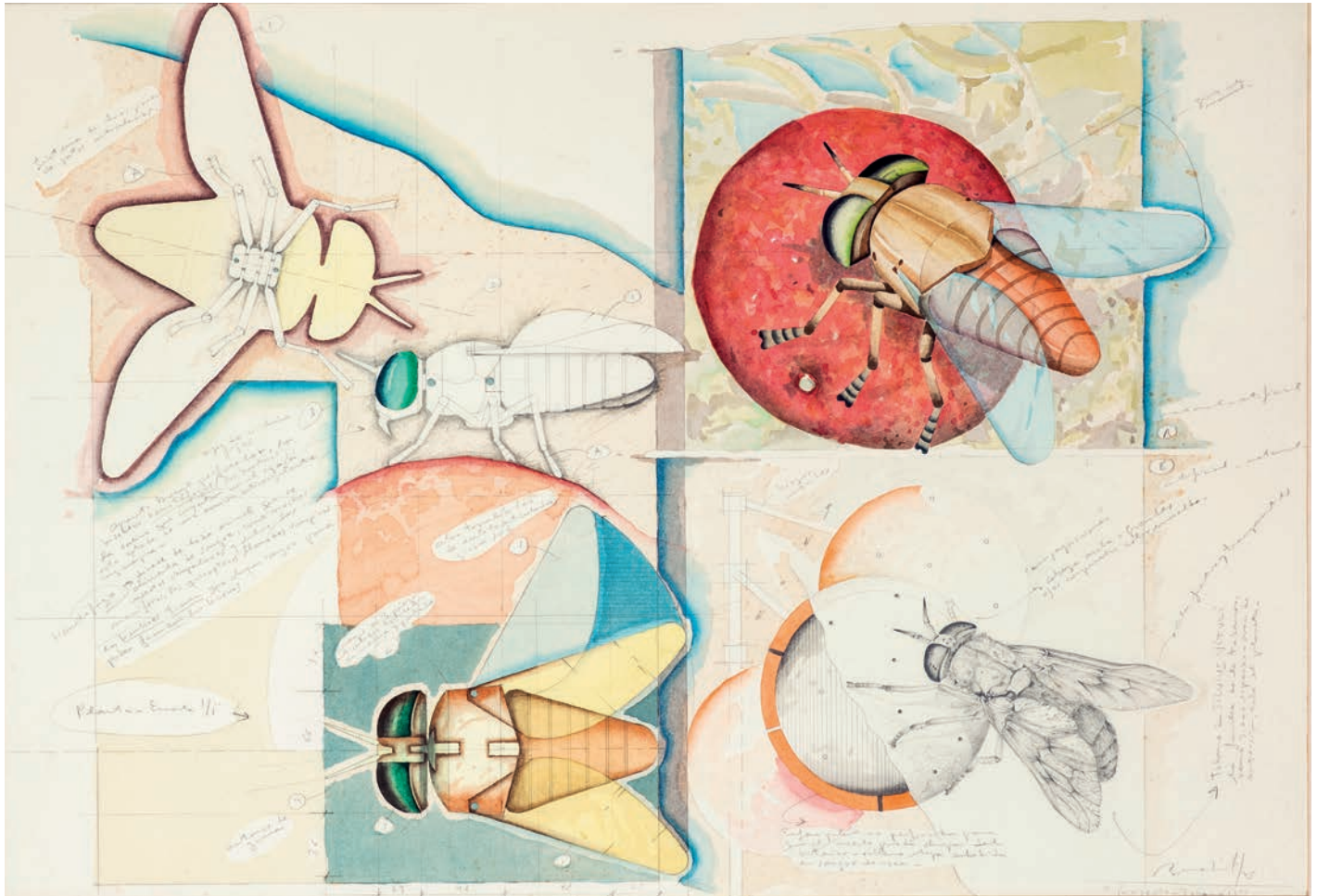




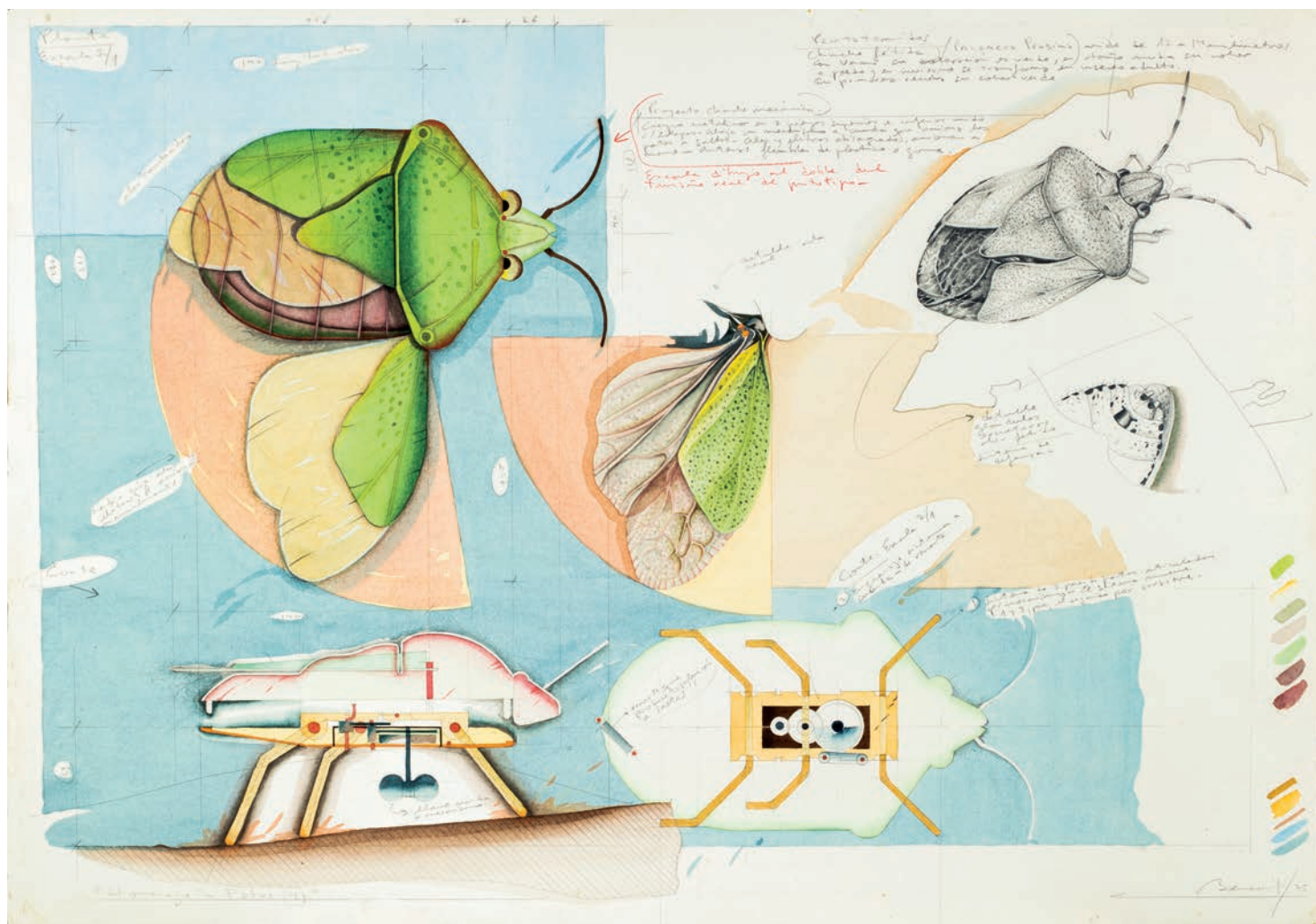
Proyecto para una langosta articulada de madera
[Project for an Articulated Wooden Lobster], 1973





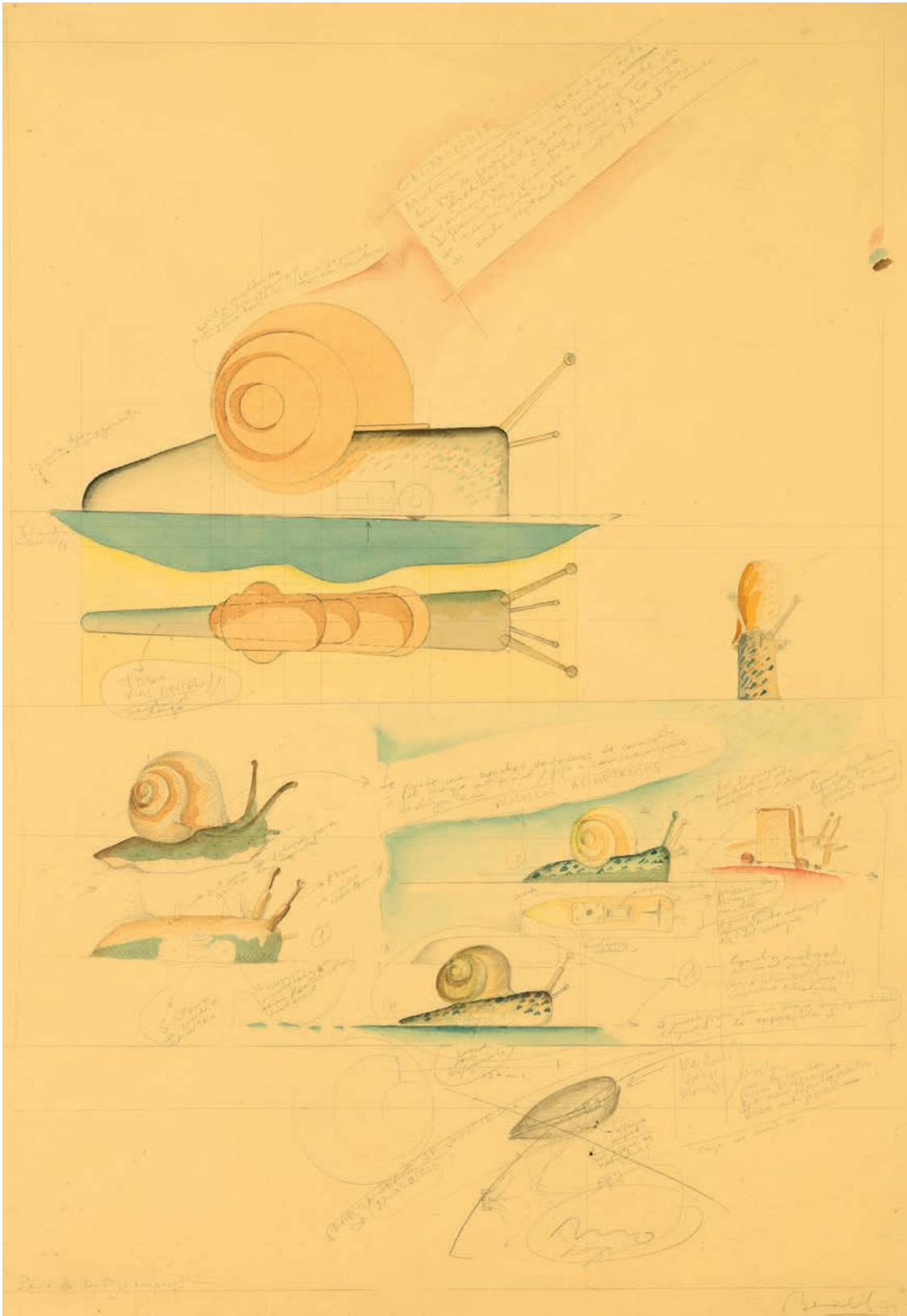


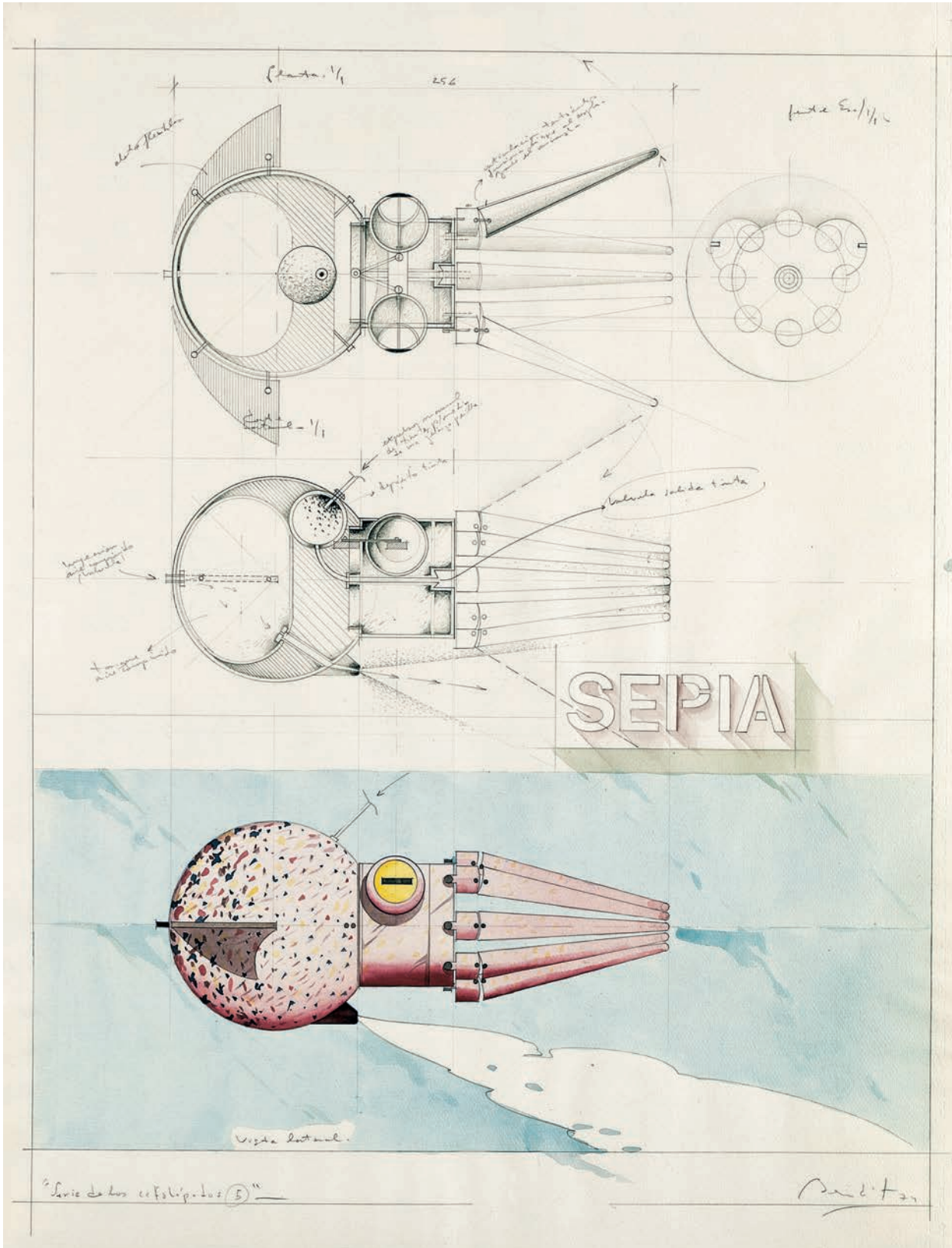




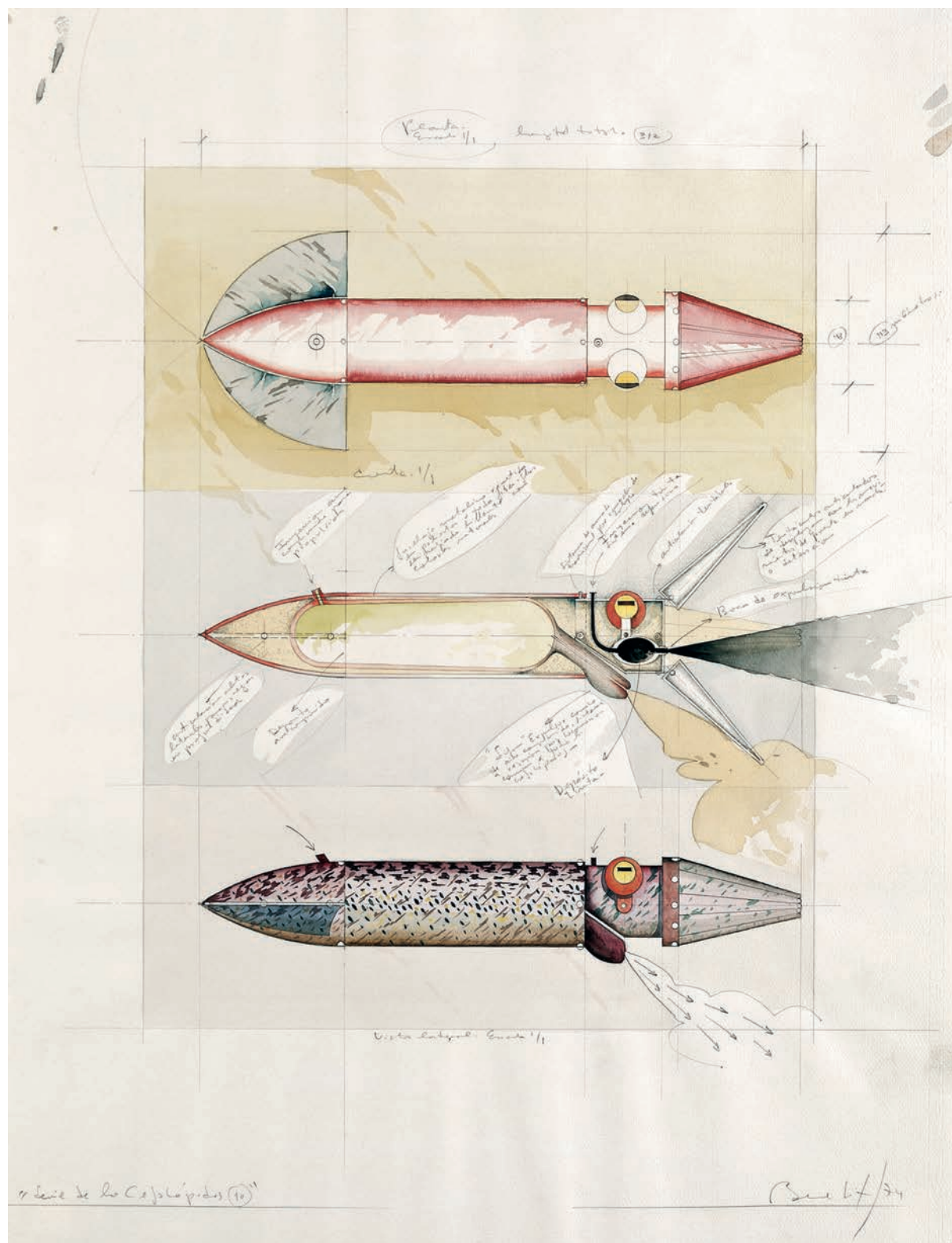








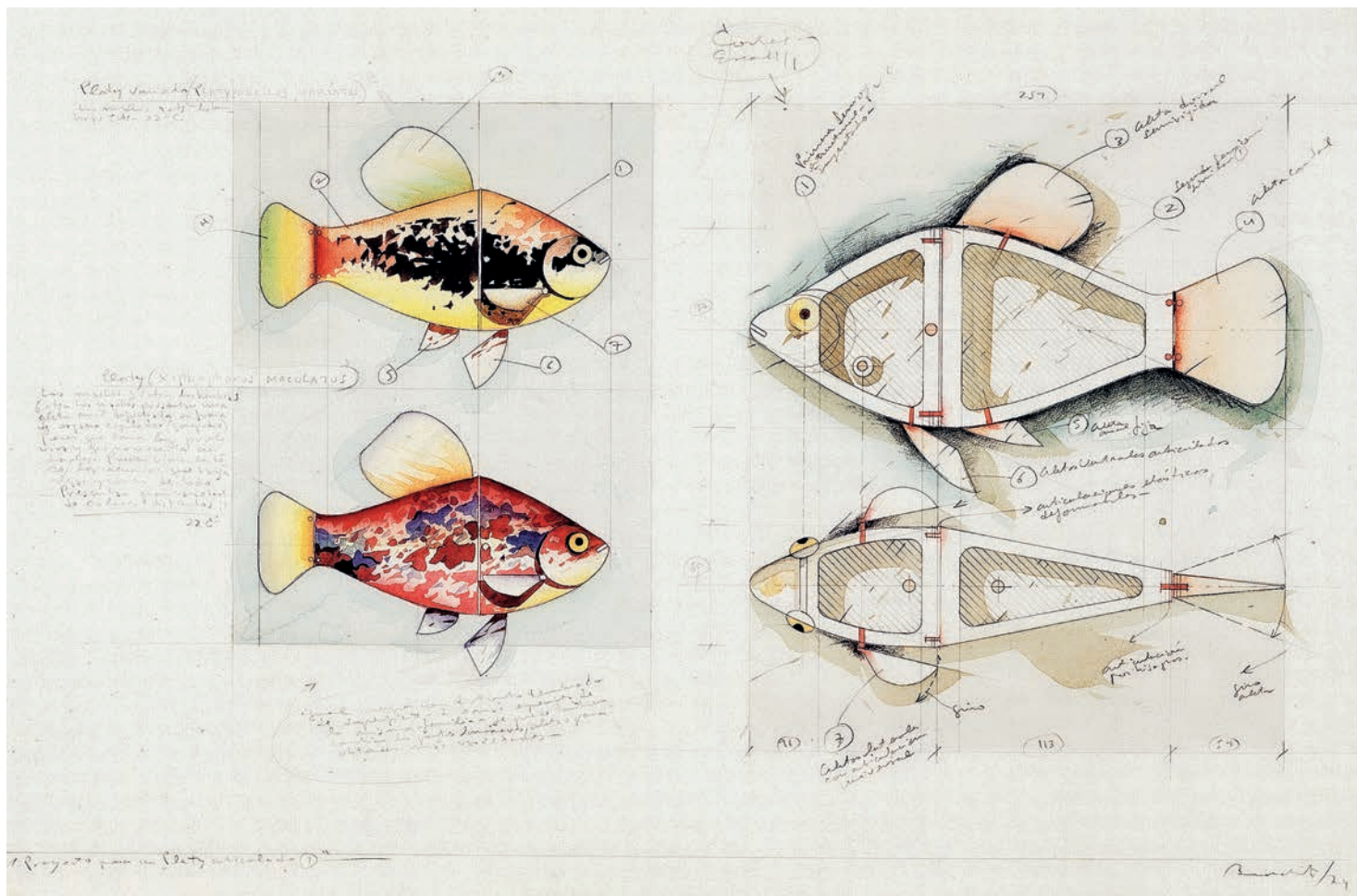


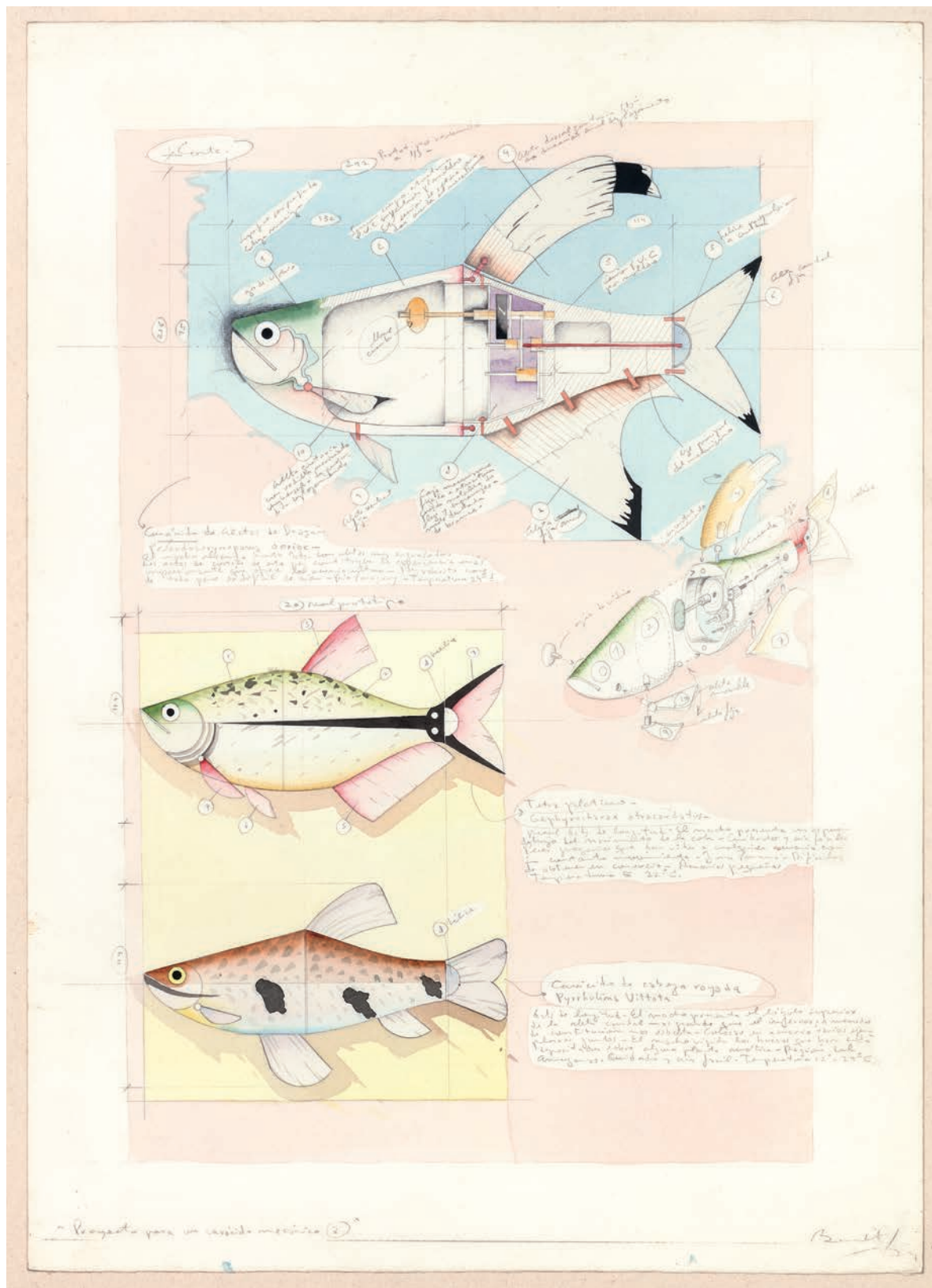


Proyecto para un Platy articulado 1

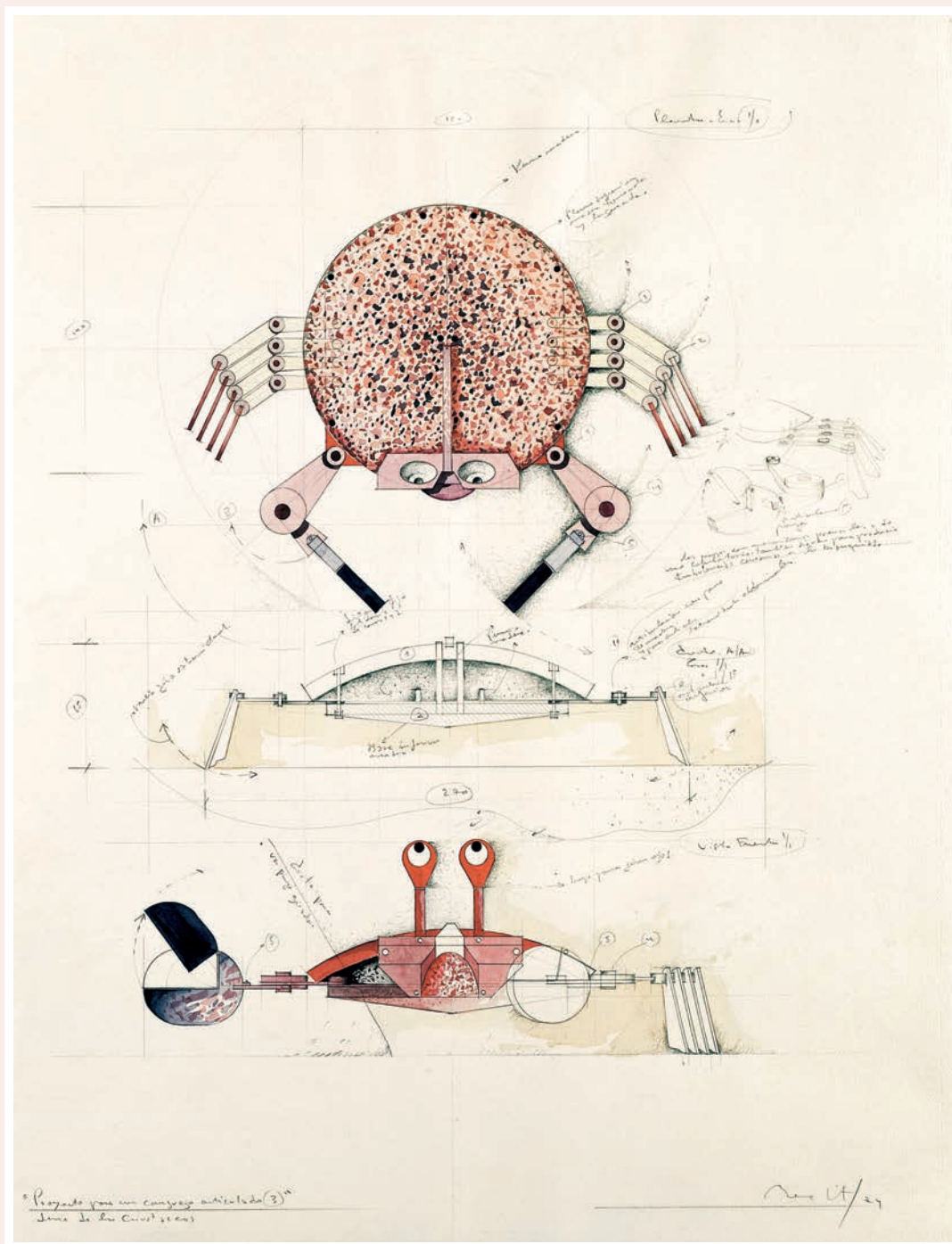
[Project for an Articulated Platy 1], 1974

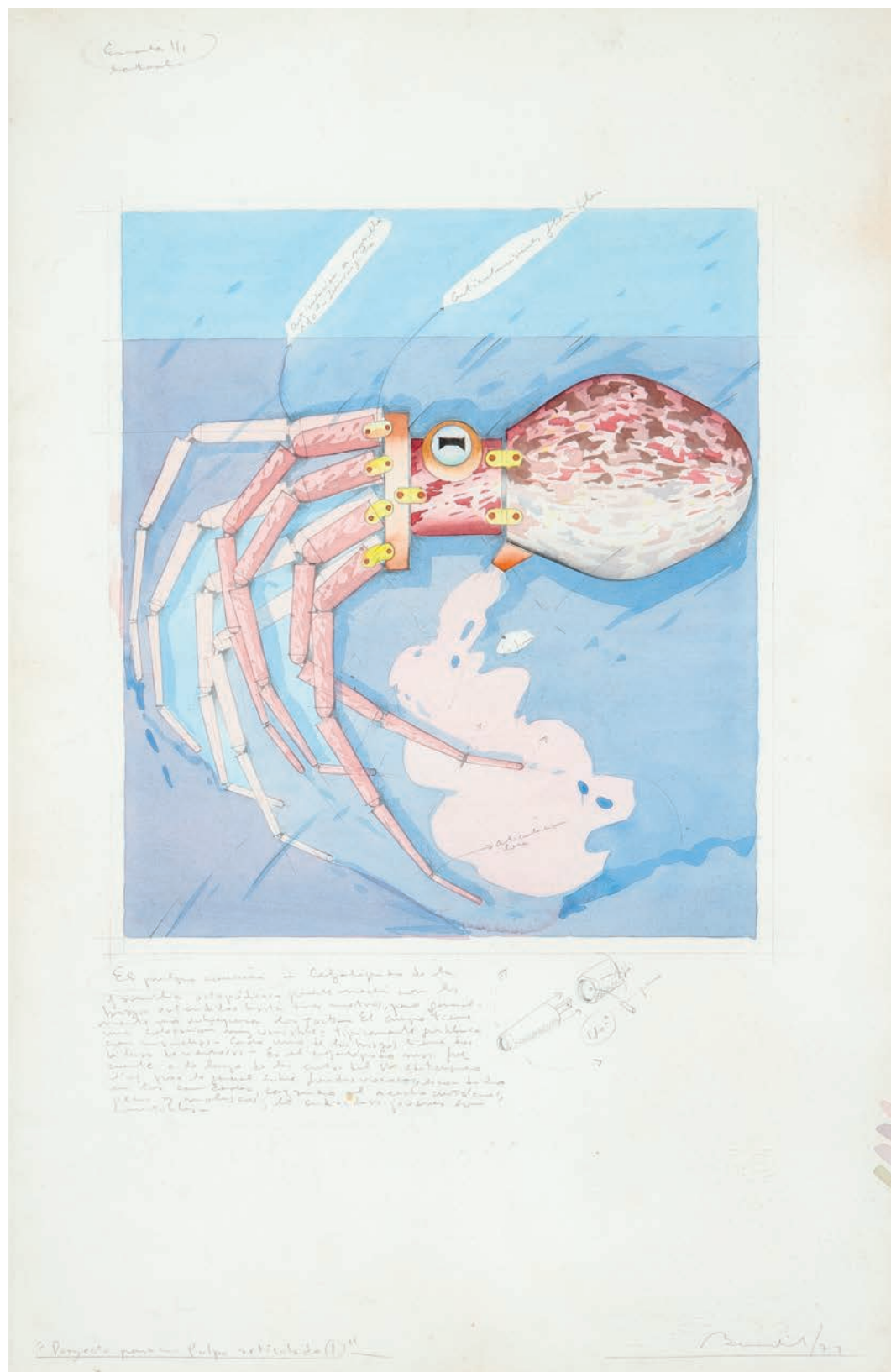
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin

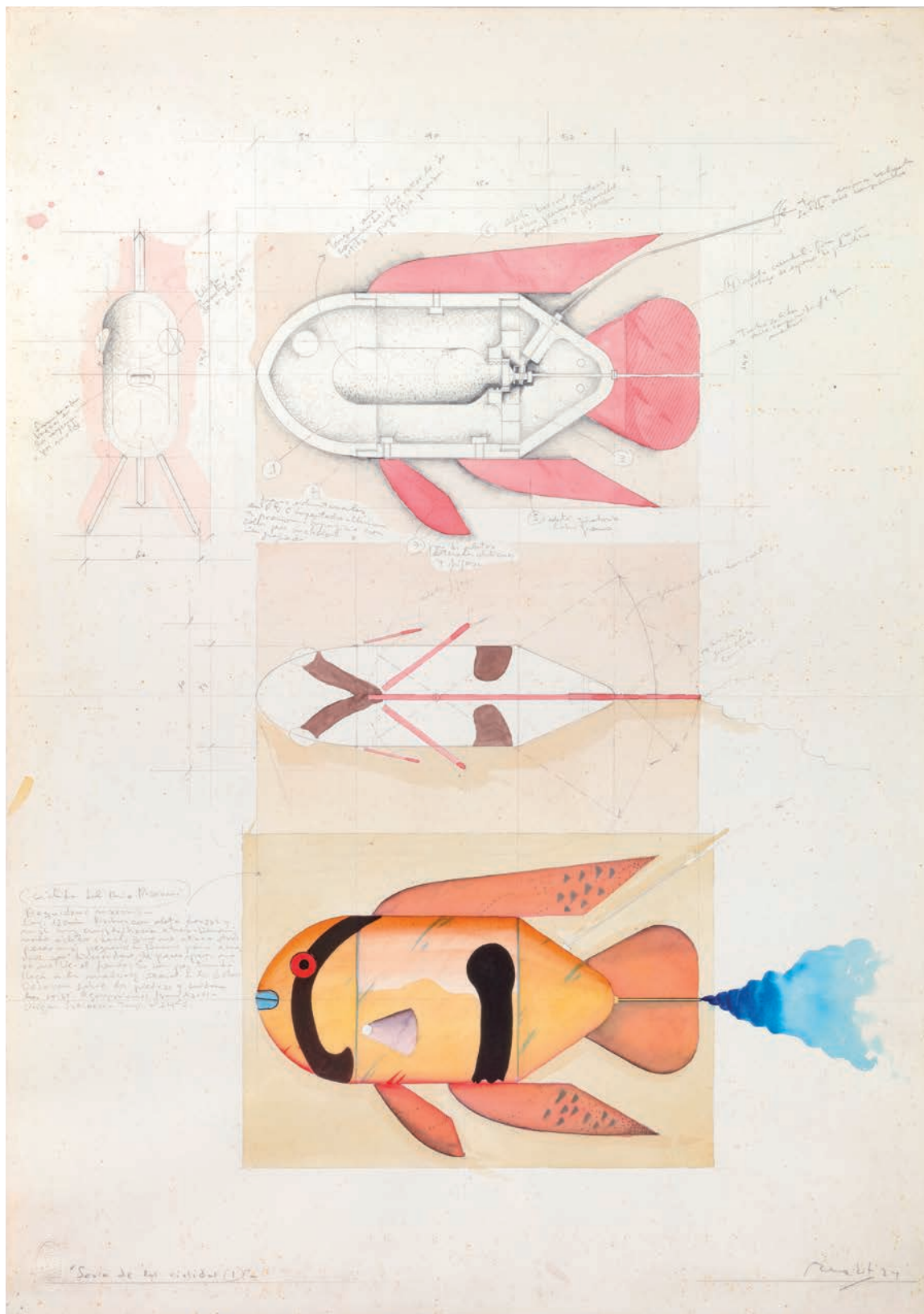










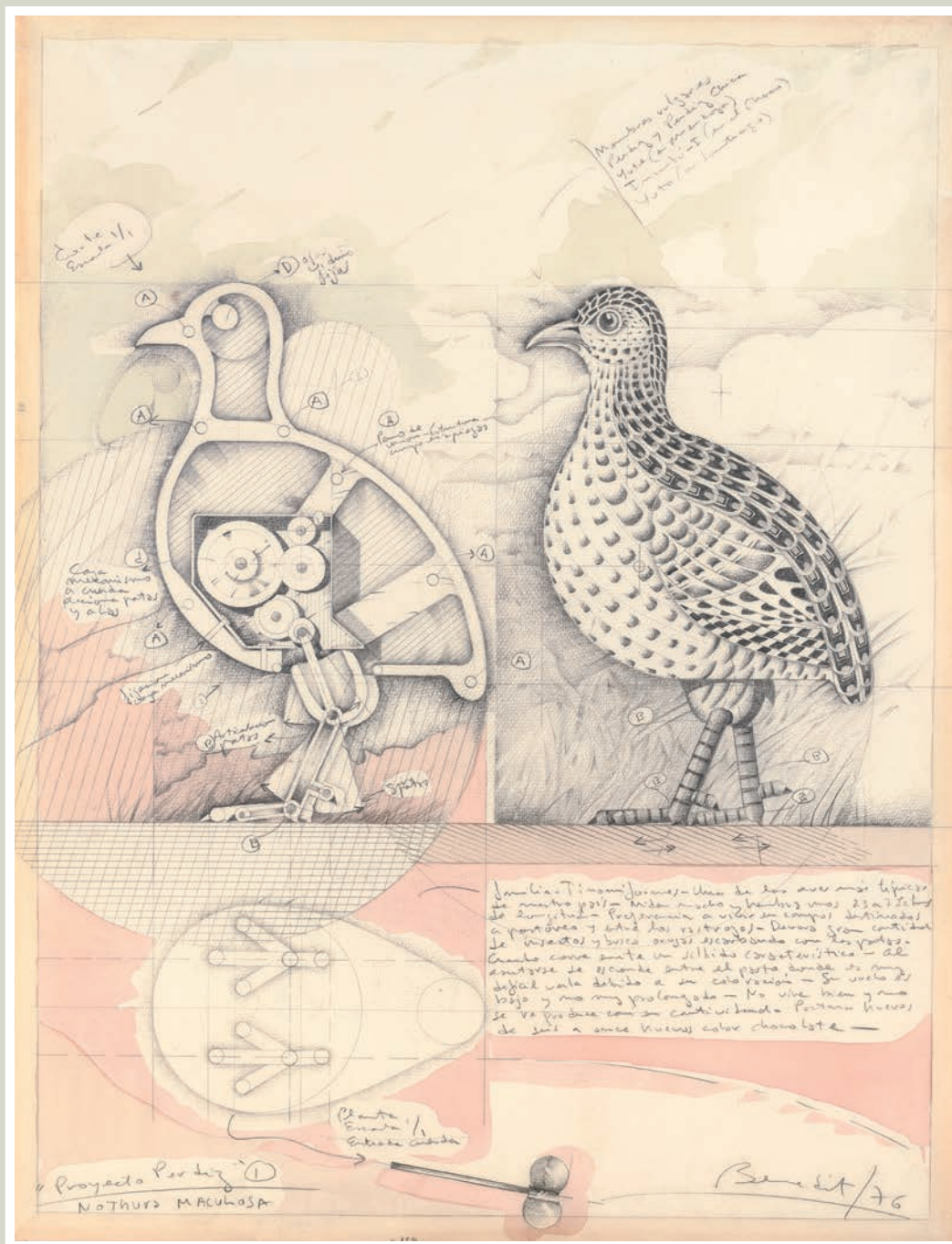










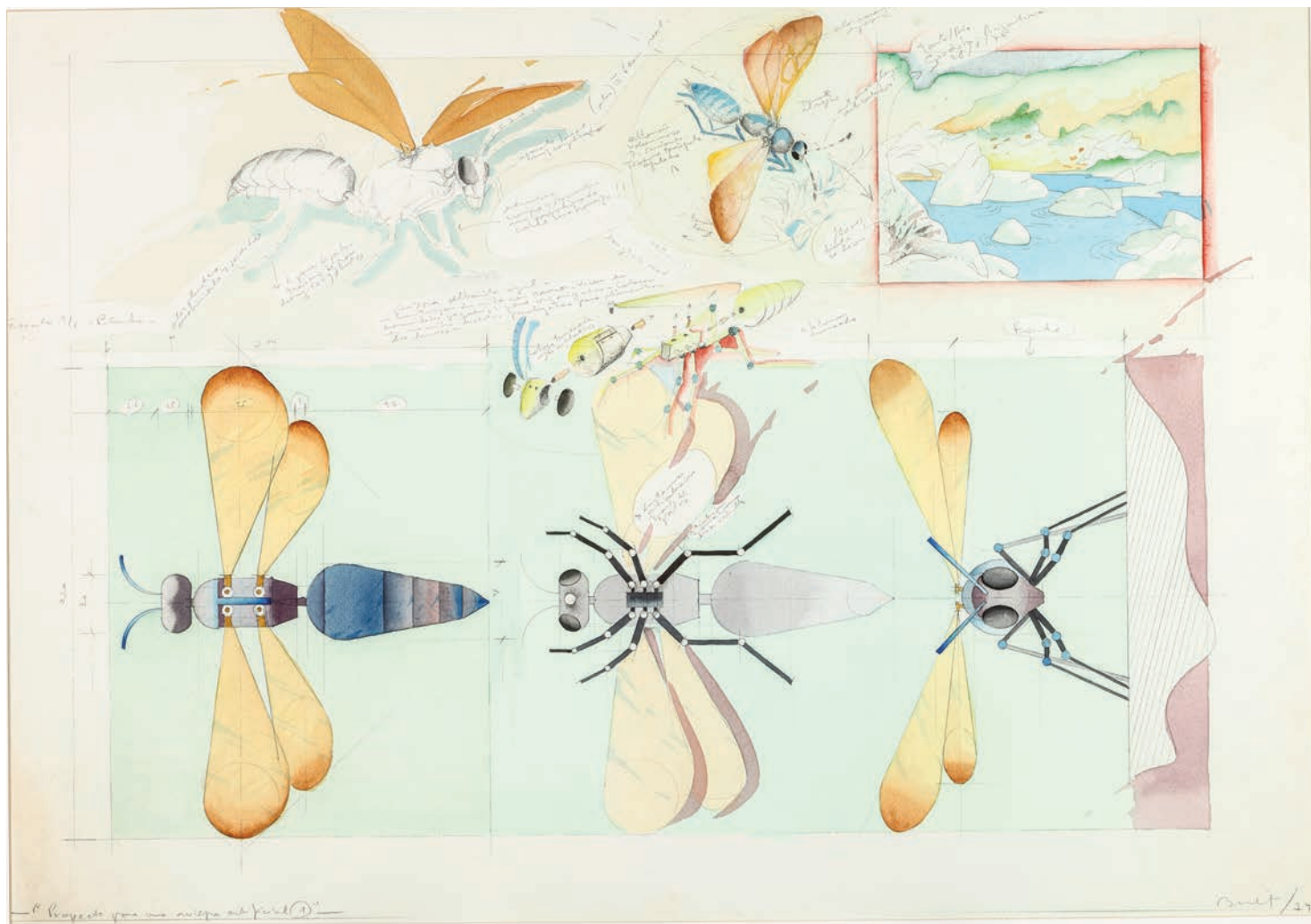




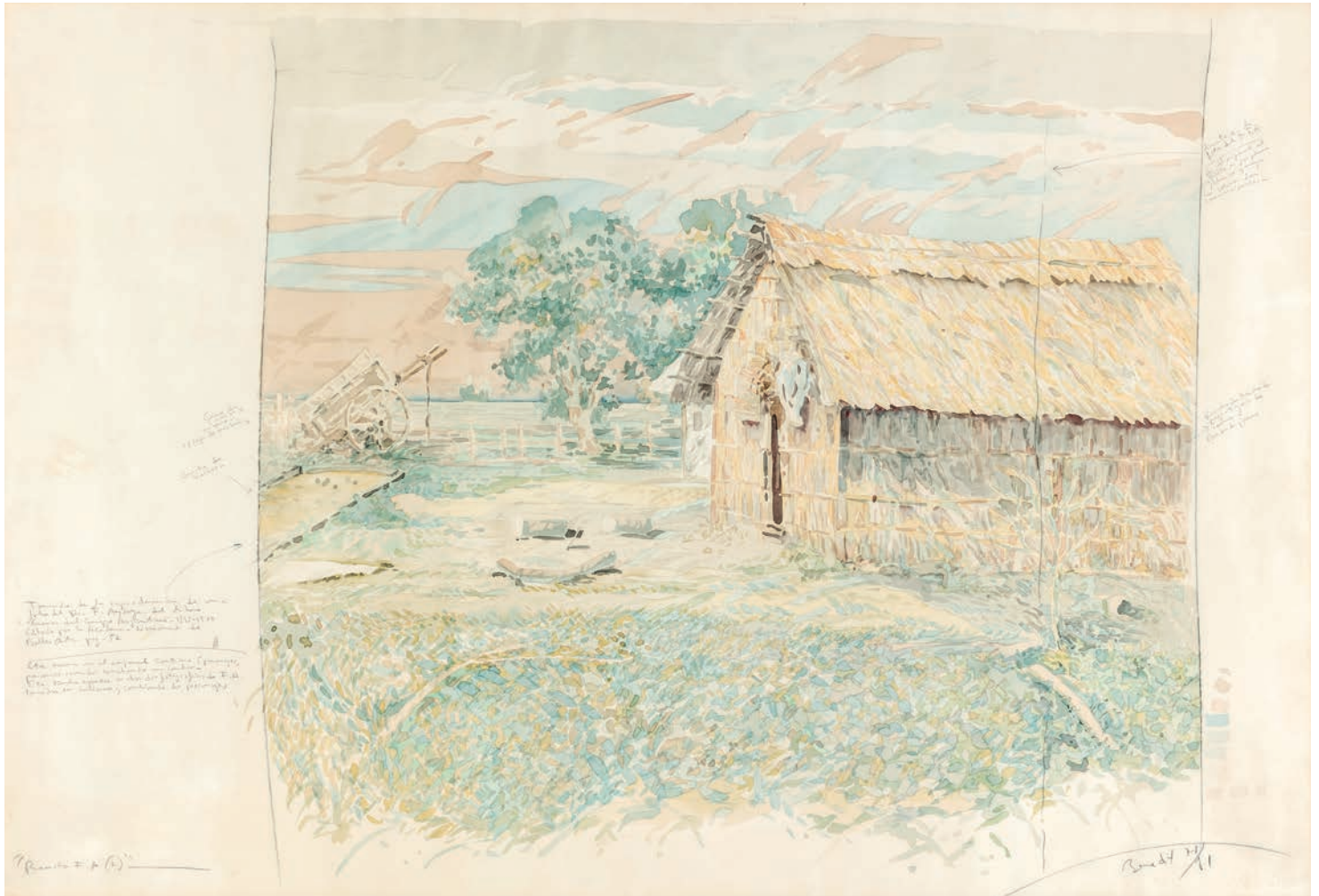






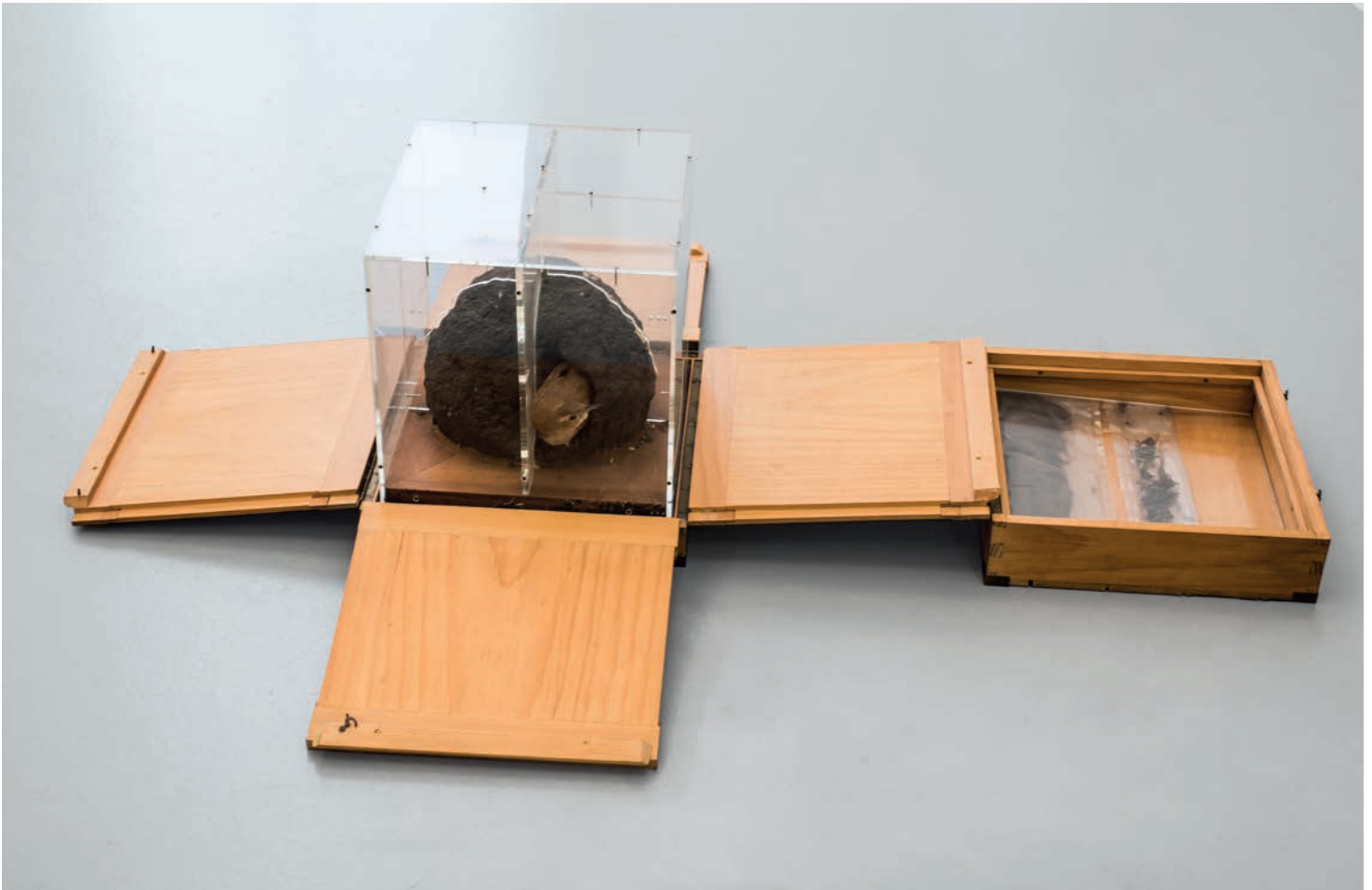


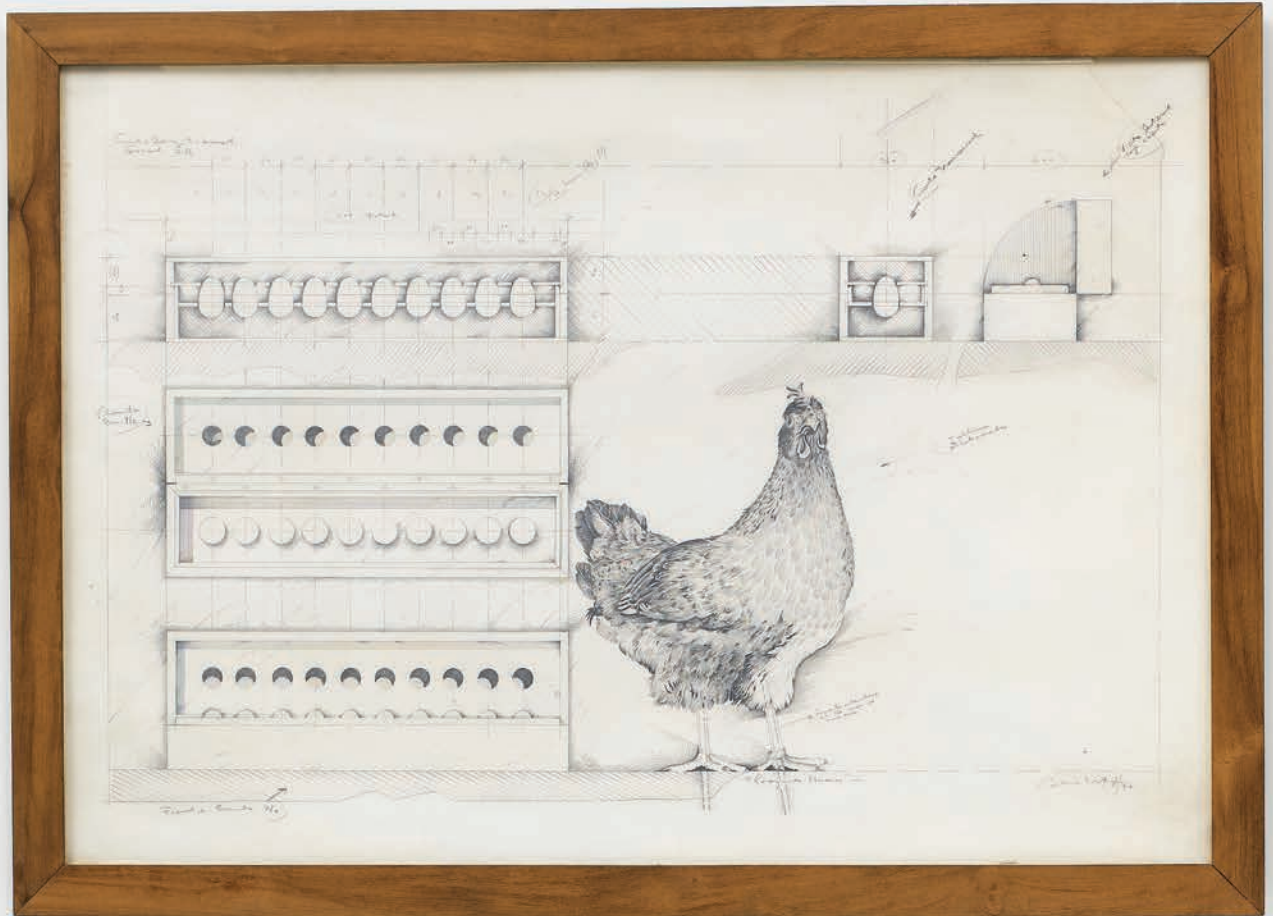




















African Queen (Objeto flotante sobre agua que se desplaza por diferencias de tensiones empapando el algodón con alcanfor)
[African Queen (Object Floating on Water Propelled by Differences in Tension, Soaking the Cotton in Camphor)], 1977



Chronology 1961–1978

Fernando Davis

Luis Fernando Beltrán Benedit, son of Beltrán Benedit and Mariquita Iribarren, was born in Buenos Aires on July 12, 1937. He began studying architecture at the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA) in 1956, and graduated in 1963. A self-taught artist, he started painting while in the university. As a student, he worked at Juan Manuel Acevedo, Alejandro Becú, and Pablo Moreno's architecture firm and, later, with Alberto Prebisch—a leading figure in European rationalism in Argentina.¹ In 1963, the year he graduated from the UBA, he married Mónica Prebisch, Alberto Prebisch's daughter.

Throughout his career, Benedit worked in the sphere of architecture as well as the visual arts.

1961

Regarding how he got his start in painting, Benedit stated in an interview:

It was while I was still in architecture school, in 1958—I think—that I started to get serious about art. I remember conversations with two of my classmates, Nicolás García Urriburu and Osvaldo Romberg. Nicolás insisted that I should have a solo show, since I had already been in group shows with them and others. That finally happened in 1961, when—much to my surprise—I was given a show at Galería Lirolay. In any case, I didn't identify with the figure that is usually called "an artist."²

In June, while he was still an architecture student, his first solo show was held at Galería Lirolay in Buenos Aires. Since the time of its opening in August 1960, the gallery—directed by French artist and writer Germaine Derbecq, art critic for the newspaper *Le Quotidien* and wife of sculptor Pablo Curatella Manes—was committed to experimental work by young artists, many of whom, like Benedit, held their first solo shows on its premises.³

In that exhibition, he showed a series of paintings that combined oil and enamel paint. The exhibition was sponsored by the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires. In a brief catalogue text, critic and poet Rafael Squirru, the director of that museum, spoke of the affinity between Benedit's work and the oeuvre of French artist Jean Dubuffet. He also pointed out the "American influence" on his work and the importance of "the local indigenous imaginary" thanks to a trip the young artist had taken to Peru the year before. In addition, Squirru addressed "the problem of originality" in Benedit's production, asserting that the relationship between the work of the young artist and Dubuffet was one of "support, not [a model to be] copied." That interpretation posited displacement or re-elaboration in relation to a series of aesthetic or formal repertoires rather than their wholesale appropriation or a direct influence. Squirru also pointed out the comic nature of Benedit's work.

“His portraits of bloated figures and small-headed brass hats attest to the artist’s great sense of humor, a humor in the style of the classic notion that *castigat ridendo mores*.”⁴

In December, Benedit, along with García Uriburu, Roger Haloua, Marta Minujín, and Delia [Dalila] Puzzovio, participated in a group show at the same gallery entitled *Cinco pintores presentados en sus primeras muestras individuales por Lirolay en 1960-61*.

1962

Another solo show of his work was held at Lirolay. He was invited by critic Jorge Romero Brest to take part in the third edition of the Premio de Honor Ver y Estimar, a juried show and prize organized by the association of the same name, which was housed in the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes⁵ (Romero Brest was the museum’s director at the time). Since 1960, the prize had been one of the main avenues to increase the visibility of “emerging trends in the visual arts.”⁶ Many of the young artists who held their first shows at Galería Lirolay were invited by Romero Brest to participate in the Ver y Estimar prize. In 1963, when the critic left his post at the museum to become the director of the Instituto Di Tella’s Centro de Artes Visuales, the National Prize granted by the Instituto Di Tella became key to the legitimation of experimental and avant-garde tendencies. The artists who exhibited work at the Ver y Estimar show in 1962 included Osvaldo Borda, Delia Cancela, Jaime Davidovich, Lea Lublin, Minujín, Noé Nojehowiz, Puzzovio, Emilio Renart, Rubén Santantonín, Elsa Soibelman, Pablo Suárez, and Luis Wells. Benedit’s painting *El candidato* [The Candidate] was awarded a band of honor.

He participated in the 39th edition of the Salón de Santa Fe held at the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Rosa Galisteo de Rodríguez, where he was awarded the Premio Rosa Galisteo.

1963

A solo exhibition of his paintings was held at Galería Rubbers in Buenos Aires. Regarding his production from this period, Benedit stated in an interview:

[The works] combined oil and enamel paint on canvas in figurative images, some of which alluded to characters from the world of childhood, architectural elements; the work was a bit surrealist-ish [sic] and slightly neo-figurative . . . After a second and then a third solo show—the latter in Rubbers— . . . the animals appeared. The painting was very smooth—I would rub with my fingers—and the characters very visceral.⁷

According to the artist, his points of reference in Argentine art included “[Roberto] Aizenberg, [Alberto] Greco, and the Nueva Figuración group, especially Rómulo Macció.”⁸

In April, along with Carlos Alonso, Víctor Chab, Jorge Demirjian, Kenneth Kemble, Jorge López Anaya, Wells, and Antonio Seguí, he participated in the show *Gato/63* at Galería Lirolay, and in October in the *Exposición de pintura argentina* held at the Museo de Bellas Artes de Caracas, Venezuela.

1964

He and his wife, Mónica Prebisch, traveled to Europe, settling in Madrid for two years. While there, he worked on a series of architectural projects with the Faci and Larrea Cisneros firm. He took an interest in Spanish vernacular architecture:

I was completely captivated by vernacular architecture; I would buy and read anything about it I could get my hands on. As soon as I arrived, I started to work like crazy . . . Commission after commission came my way, and I became part of a pretty wonderful world. A mental hospital was to be built on the Mediterranean, a tourist complex to the south of Málaga. And, since the firm believed—and rightfully so—that I didn't know enough about Spanish vernacular architecture, they sent me and my wife to visit Andalucía in its entirety, all expenses paid.⁹

In Spain, in addition to his work as an architect, Benedit continued painting. He used industrial enamel paint in bright colors “in works akin to European Pop art that entailed synthesis and flatness reminiscent of the technique used in advertising posters.” He looked to “a language derived from comics and graphics associated with childhood to address themes developed in long series from a narrative vision of the image.”¹⁰

In December, the solo show *Benedit en Madrid. Pinturas* opened at Galería Lirio. A number of the works he produced this year, among them *El matrimonio* [The Couple] and *La casa del arquitecto* [The Architect's House], make reference to personal experiences.

1965

His first solo show in Europe was held in Paris, at the Galerie Europe directed by art dealer Paul Haim.

His work was featured in the following group shows: *Artists of Latin America* at The Studio Gallery, in Virginia; *La Figuration narrative* at the Galerie Creuze in Paris; and *Argentina en el mundo. Artes visuales 2*, organized by the Argentine Foreign Office and the Instituto Di Tella. The artists featured in that third show, which was on exhibit from December 1965 to February 1966, included Marcelo Bonevardi, Martha Boto, Chab, Ernesto Deira, Jorge de la Vega, Hugo Demarco, Horacio García Rossi, Sarah Grilo, Julio Le Parc, Lublin, Macció, Minujín, Luis Felipe Noé, Rogelio Polesello, Mario Pucciarelli, Kasuya Sakai, Seguí, and Luis Tomasello. Benedit exhibited the paintings *El gran trono* [The Great Throne] and *Proyecto para un catre de serie* [Project for a Serial Cot].

His paintings *Matrimonio n° 1*, *n° 2* and *n° 3* [Couple no. 1, no. 2, and no. 3] were presented at the XXV Salón de Arte de La Plata held at the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes in the city of La Plata. At the jury's recommendation, *Matrimonio n° 1* was one of the works acquired by the museum. He also participated in the show *Últimas tendencias* held at the same museum. An initiative of the Movimiento Arte Nuevo (MAN), that show included artists from La Plata and Buenos Aires.¹¹

1966

A solo show of his work was held at the Galerie La Balance in Brussels, and he took part in the Salon de Jeune Peinture at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

In September and October, after returning to Buenos Aires, he and artist Vicente Marotta created an environment entitled *Barbazul* [Bluebeard] for the Museo de Arte Moderno. Based on a folktale about the serial killer of women in Charles Perrault's *Contes de ma mère l'Oye* [Mother Goose Tales] (1697), Bedit and Marotta's project consisted of a two-hundred-square-meter narrative environment that the public could explore under the guidance of a soundtrack created by Miguel Ángel Rondano. Marotta made enamel concrete sculptures of the heads of the women decapitated by Bluebeard. Bedit rendered the characters in zinc and tin plate painted in oil and enamel. *Barbazul* formed part of a series of experimental projects from those years that attempted to go beyond the limits between traditional artistic disciplines and the established frameworks of painting and sculpture, proposing more active viewer participation. In the catalogue, the museum's director, Hugo Parpagnoli, wrote:

The architecture, painting, and music in "Barbazul" compose a Bedit-Marotta mirror that unfolds over time like a play in which the audience walks and the stage stays still . . . the image looks to the future because of what this new attitude in the arts might possibly incite: a new way of learning, of having fun, and of behaving; a further step towards bringing poetic carefreeness into all the affairs of daily life.¹²

He was invited to submit work to two of the most prestigious prizes awarded to experimental art: the Premio Nacional Di Tella and the Premio Braque. The latter of the two, which was granted by the French Embassy and housed at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, consisted of a fellowship to study in Paris. Bedit submitted three paintings, *Mesa para una cátedra de zoología* [Table for a Zoology Professor], *Silla presidencial con aparato eyector* [Presidential Chair with Eject Mechanism], and *Cuento para conejos* [Story for Rabbits].

1967

Early in the year, he and fellow artists Inés Blumencweig and Mario Pucciarelli presented the exhibition *Narrazione - Struttura - Materia* at the Casa Argentina in Rome.

In March and April, *Bedit: Pinturas 1966-67*, featuring a new series of enamel paintings on canvas, was exhibited at Galería Rubbers. The show included *Al sur la oveja* [Southward, Sheep], *Margaritas a los chanchos* [Daisies for the Pigs], and *Lo que hay que pasar* [What Must Be Endured], which for the first time made use of motifs related to the rural environment, animals, and farm work. In them, he used an airbrush for the shadows and the *sfumato* technique for color planes in industrial enamel paint. In the prologue to the catalogue, poet, essayist, and art critic Aldo Pellegrini pointed out the coexistence of "the wondrous" and humor in Bedit's art.¹³

Pellegrini invited Bénédict to participate in the show *Surrealismo en la Argentina* he organized at the Instituto Di Tella. On the basis of historical works by Xul Solar, the exhibition brought together artists from different generations in order to take stock of surrealist tendencies in Argentine art. The show featured, in addition to Bénédict, artists Aizenberg, Antonio Berni, José Planas Casas, Juan Batlle Planas, Carmelo Carrá, De la Vega, Juan Carlos Distéfano, Demirjian, León Ferrari, Alberto Heredia, Eric Ray King, Macció, Renart, Humberto Rivas, Martha Zuik, and others. In the catalogue text, Pellegrini defined surrealism as “an ideological movement whose justification and expression lies in art.”¹⁴ As such, surrealism is by no means a “closed movement” limited to an identifiable repertoire of themes or a determined historical period, but rather “an endlessly experimental [movement] [by virtue of] its premise of total freedom.”¹⁵ For Pellegrini, surrealism’s poetic power lies in its unwavering insistence on an array of art forms; it is possible to identify surrealist influence in, for instance, informalism, new figuration, and Pop art.

In addition to organizing the show at the Instituto Di Tella, Pellegrini published the book *Panorama de la pintura argentina contemporánea*. Regarding Bénédict, in the chapter entitled “El surrealismo en la Argentina,” he wrote:

In his paintings, [Bénédict] transfigures reality by means of mechanisms close to the grotesque and the wondrous. In his most recent works, fantasy is bound to a very contemporary presentation of figures rendered in industrial enamel in a true celebration of color.¹⁶

Bénédict and his family traveled to Europe after the artist was granted a fellowship from the Italian government to study landscape architecture with Francesco Fariello at the Facoltà di Architettura in Rome. “The study of the treatment of exterior space and the possible transformation of the natural habitat by man and animals” would influence “his later experiments with animal and vegetable life. It was at this point that he began to pay greater attention to biology and botany.”¹⁷ In a later interview, the artist explained:

All of the Italian villas I had seen as an architecture student . . . took on new meaning. In observing the carefully designed gardens that once adorned those ruins, I could imagine the animals, birds, and insects, which gave them a latent pulsating dynamic that would alter the entire construction—an entire world of associations, of backs and forths between culture and nature, came before me with stark clarity.¹⁸

1968

While in Rome, he also became interested in Italian industrial design. He began working with acrylic, making animal shapes by fire bending and cutting out acrylic pieces on which he would then apply enamel paint. He made his first piece with live animals, “the shape of a swan halfway under water around which fish swam.”¹⁹

In July, he returned to Buenos Aires and set up his studio in the San Telmo section of the city.

He submitted work to the Premio Materiales, Nuevas Técnicas, Nuevas Expresiones, a juried show held at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes and sponsored by the Unión Industrial Argentina, the Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Industrial, and other public and private companies. The pieces submitted to the competition, one of a series of initiatives in those years funded by the companies producing new industrial materials, were required to make use of such materials. Benedit presented an object that furthered the research he had begun in Rome, a glass and fiberglass animal habitat with water and live fish. The title of the work was *Tuttovetro y los pescados* [Tuttovetro and the Fish].

In late November, his solo exhibition *Microzoo* opened at Galería Rubbers. The works in it entailed the design of artificial habitats to show the structures of animal and plant behavior and, as such, they extended and further complicated his work at the Museo Nacional. More specifically, he presented habitats and other devices in acrylic—some of them parts of paintings—with ants, fish, birds, turtles, lizards, and even a cat alongside germinating plants and a beehive with access to the outdoors via a tube. Those works looked to biology or, more precisely, ethology, a branch of biology concerned with analyzing animal behavior in relation to the environment.

In the project, the artist was assisted by Antonio Battro, founder of the Centro de Investigaciones Filosóficas, an affiliate of the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET), and an expert in the field of artificial intelligence. In the catalogue, Battro wrote:

It would seem that art and science only come together when art turns into industrial design and science into technique. But Benedit is perhaps the first artist to build a bridge between pure science and pure art. At stake in these works is not a new form of industrial design or popular science . . . What we have here is a particular “metabolism” between *living beings* and *visual forms*, that is, between *biological spaces* and *artistic spaces*.²⁰

A few years later, Benedit described his work in these terms:

The habitats I have designed are physical spaces that can be inhabited and explored by their protagonists and observed by us. . . They are eminently didactic objects where what is mainly manifested is a type of behavior, whether individual or collective, to which we usually do not have access in urban civilization. . . In animal labyrinths, we can observe an entire learning process, adjust complexity by changing routes, and reach our own conclusions on the basis of this confrontation between the natural and the artificial.²¹

In 1969, the weekly *Primera Plana* called Benedit’s exhibition at Rubbers “the best solo show of 1968.”²² The article mentioned not only the artist’s habitats for animals, but also his ideas about how to transform the urban space. It spoke specifically of his notion of “changing man’s habitat at every instant”:

[Benedit's] style is that of a narrator, of an inventor of worlds. "Nothing would please me more than to transform a plaza," he says, brimming with excitement, "the slopes in San Martín plaza, say, by placing six hundred square meters of reflecting material on it to copy the image of the Kavanagh Building, or to upholster the paths in order to see the shoes and the trees at the same time, or to cover the plants with plastic wrap and install a heating system."²³

At the end of the year, Benedit also took part in the show *Artistas argentinos. Obras de París y Buenos Aires para alquilar y vender*, held at the Instituto Di Tella. Fellow participants included Berni, Demirjian, Distéfano, Edgardo Giménez, Heredia, Kemble, Gyula Kosice, Macció, Marie Orensanz, Polesello, Alejandro Puente, Puzzovio, Renart, Osvaldo Romberg, Juan Carlos Romero, some members of the Centre de Recherche d'Art Visuel (Demarco, García Rossi, Le Parc, Francisco Sobrino), and others.

1969

He submitted work to the Premio Braque and to the *Festival de las Artes de Tandil*. This year's edition of that second event, organized by the Cultural Office of the Buenos Aires province Department of Education and sponsored by the Tandil city government, was geared solely to painting. Benedit's *La casa de Tarzán* [Tarzan's House] was awarded a prize and became part of the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes de La Plata collection. The work consisted of a wood and acrylic box with a styrofoam figure in "Pop rhetoric."²⁴

In July and August, he, along with fellow artists Berni, Deira, Eduardo Mac Entyre, Romberg, and Miguel Ángel Vidal, took part in a series of ten encounters with professionals from the Centro de Cálculo, directed by engineer Julio Guibourg, at the ORT School. The artists explored the possibilities of using information technology to produce graphic images, specifically an IBM 1130 computer connected to an automatic drawing machine or plotter. Benedit made the image of a bee, tracing the course of its flight by means of the repetition and displacement of its figure and the alteration of its scale. The series of encounters had been organized by the recently formed Centro de Estudios en Arte y Comunicación (CeAC, later known as the Centro de Arte y Comunicación, or the CAyC), directed by critic and businessman Jorge Glusberg; Benedit was a member of CeAC's steering committee. In August and September, the show *Arte y cibernética*, organized by the CeAC and featuring computer drawings by artists gathered under the name "Experiencias Buenos Aires," was held at Galería Bonino in Buenos Aires. The show at Bonino also included work by the Tokyo-based Computer Technique Group (CTG)²⁵ and the London-based Motif Editions.²⁶ Electronic music by Argentine composers was played during the exhibition. According to the catalogue, the main aim of the CeAC was "to encourage the production of projects and of shows where art, technological media, and the community's interests come together in an efficacious exchange that evidences the new union between art, science, and the social environment in which we live"²⁷—aims very much in keeping with the ones Benedit was pursuing in his artistic research. The new experiments were described not only as the mere "communication of forms produced by technicians and

scientists” but also in terms of their ability to effect “the joint creation of new languages and new forms of expression.”²⁸ Though Benedit did not continue to explore computer drawing, the works he made for *Arte y cibernética*, like those by the other artists in the show, were included by Glusberg in different exhibitions—some of them organized by the CAyC—in Argentina and beyond, through 1973. After the show at Bonino, these works by Benedit were exhibited, also in 1969, at the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Rosa Galisteo de Rodríguez in Santa Fe, at the Centro de Ingenieros in Olavarría in Buenos Aires province, and at the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio Caraffa in Córdoba province. On those occasions, the group of works was displayed under the title “Grupo de Arte y Cibernética Buenos Aires.”

In September, Romero Brest invited Benedit to participate in *Experiencias 69, I*, a series of events that had begun in 1967 under the name *Experiencias Visuales* to replace the Premio Nacional Di Tella. Under the new modality, what had been prize money was distributed to artists invited to produce a work for the event. The 1968 edition of *Experiencias* came to a premature end when the group of participating artists decided to take their works to the street and destroy them to protest the censorship of Roberto Plate’s installation.²⁹ In 1969, Romero Brest organized two series of *Experiencias*. The first consisted of visual artists, among them Benedit, who presented “situations created to enable participants to communicate with themselves and with others”;³⁰ the second consisted solely of architects. In addition to Benedit, the following artists took part in the show: Hugo Álvarez, Luis Camnitzer and Liliana Porter, Jorge de Luján Gutiérrez and Luis Pazos, the Grupo Frontera (Mercedes Esteves, Inés Gross, and Adolfo Bronowski), Lublin, Pablo Menicucci, and Romberg. Benedit exhibited *Microparaíso* [Microparadise], another artificial habitat, this one for land snails, that, according to a text on the show that Romero Brest wrote years later, requested that the viewer “convey in writing the reflexive impulses” that the work incited.³¹

In October, Benedit formed part of the Argentine representation at the VI Paris Biennale, curated by Aldo Pellegrini and housed at the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. He presented a project in paper and two animal habitats, *Hormiguero para ser llenado por hormigas rojas* [Anthill to be Filled with Red Ants] and *Hormiguero para ser llenado por hormigas negras* [Anthill to be Filled with Black Ants].

While his production in those years was geared to research in animal and vegetable behavior through the design of artificial habitats, he continued to show paintings at different venues. In October, *Benedit of Argentina*, a solo show of his works in oil and enamel paint, opened at the Pan American Union in Washington, D.C.

In November, he submitted the works *El supercómodo n° 1* [The Super Comfortable no. 1] and *El supercómodo n° 2* [The Super Comfortable no. 2] to the Automóvil Club Argentino’s annual salon “Pintura 1969.” He also participated in the *Panorama de la pintura argentina 3*, held at the Salas Nacionales de Exposición and organized by the Fundación Lorenzutti, directed by critic and poet Osvaldo Svanascini. The theme of the third edition of the event, which featured some 121 artists, was “From Figuration to Pop art.” Going beyond the boundaries of that theme’s formulation, one article on the show pointed out that “in Argentina, a

synthesis-art . . . based on national folk or Pop art pursues two different courses, primary structures and the art of ideas.”³² Benedit was presented as one of the artists representing “painters close to the Pop art tendency.”³³ In the catalogue, critic Roger Plá underscored the grotesque humor and irony in Benedit’s painting, which placed it at a distance from orthodox Pop art.³⁴

1970

Benedit represented Argentina at the XXXV Venice Biennale, which was dedicated to the relationship between art and science. He was selected by jurors Carlos Claiman, Fermín Fèvre, and Jorge López Anaya. The work he exhibited was the *Biotrón*, a large-volume and technically complex artificial habitat that he designed, constructed, and tested out in the sixty days between the time he was chosen for the Biennale and the date of its opening.³⁵ Ethologist José Núñez, an animal behavior specialist, assisted and advised him throughout the process. Benedit met Núñez through Antonio Battro who, as mentioned above, had assisted him in the design of the artificial habitats exhibited in *Microzoo* in 1968. The *Biotrón* consisted of a transparent structure in aluminum and Plexiglas (3 meters high by 5 meters long by 2.5 meters wide). Four thousand bees lived inside the structure in a transparent honeycomb connected to the Biennale’s grounds by means of an artificial meadow of some twenty-five artificial flowers that, with the monitoring of an electronic device, produced sweet nectar. The bees could go outside or use the nectar given off by the artificial flowers. Núñez created the scientific design, while engineers Eduardo Silberstein and Alberto Iribarren were entrusted with the electronic design and with the flower mechanism, respectively. Glusberg funded the production. Channel 13, an Argentine television network, produced a thirty-minute film on the work in Venice. In an interview, Benedit described the *Biotrón* as

. . . an animal system . . . It could be an ecology laboratory because a scientist could use it to draw conclusions . . . But, because located in an exhibition venue, it is a work of visual art insofar as it broadens the aesthetic outlook by proposing an unprecedented field: the observation of animal life.³⁶

In relation to the “junction of art and science” that his creation proposed, Benedit spoke of art’s ability to set off processes capable of acting on the scientific environment: “Not only does science have an impact on artists and suggest new experiences to them, but artists also design objects that can serve scientific ends and, by chance, influence scientific method.”³⁷ At Venice, Benedit also presented a prototype of a container of land snails and two multiples: the *Minibiotrón* (a transparent acrylic cylinder with magnifying glass to observe the life and evolution of insects and arachnids), and a fish tank designed such that the water enlarged and distorted what was on the other side.

Fruit of “interdisciplinary work”³⁸ in which the spheres of art, science, and design intersected, the *Biotrón* was based on the developments of cybernetics, a branch of science tied to systems theory. Its aim is the study of the structure of systems used to regulate, control, and provide information about animals and machines. In the words of Glusberg, Benedit’s work:

. . .studies the self-regulation of a process, of a system, when its conditions of production vary. It develops on the basis of artificial modifications and programs, on production conditions that take into account the system's self-regulating mechanisms and permanence . . . When the organism detects an external modification, it processes that information in order to subsist, adapting its metabolism in response to the novelty. These are machine, that is, predictable processes, which is what turns them into cybernetic objects.³⁹

Along with Deira, Lublin, Macció, and César Paternosto, Benedi took part in the II Bienal Coltejer, sponsored by the textile company of the same name and held at the Museo de Zea in Medellín, Colombia. In the context of the Biennial, the CAyC organized *Arte y cibernética*, featuring works produced by computers one year earlier.

In August, the CAyC exhibited *De la figuración al arte de sistemas* at the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio A. Caraffa in Córdoba. The show included works by Benedi, García Uriburu, and Edgardo Antonio Vigo. On the basis of the notion of “systems art” that Glusberg used for the show's title, the CAyC brought into its realm a series of practices related to conceptualism that the Buenos Aires-based center would advocate greatly in the coming years. In that show, Benedi presented a series of paintings in oil and enamel produced from 1966 to 1969;⁴⁰ photographic documentation of and designs for his projects *Biotrón*, *Pecera* [Fish Tank], and *Habitáculo para caracoles* [Habitacle for Snails], from 1970; and two acrylic objects, the prototype for *Jaula* [Cage], 1968, and the multiple *Minibiotrón*, an edition of thirty produced that same year and exhibited at Venice as well. In the catalogue, Glusberg described Benedi as a “social anthropologist” and his work as an “art of relations [that] becomes social as soon as its final aim becomes human presence.”⁴¹ He went on, “Benedi's micro-worlds are systems where reason and sensation, concept and aesthetic fact, personal creation and empirical observation of reality, converge.”⁴² The work of art turns into

. . .a sociological experience . . . Benedi not only physically designs an animal habitacle; he also acts as an agent that provokes social situations in animals. Through his model, he broadens the concept of art. His work . . . is an interdisciplinary attack that re-focuses aesthetics.⁴³

The concept of “model” that Glusberg proposed to grasp Benedi's production made reference to the realm of science, since each branch of science uses models

. . .at different levels of abstraction to anticipate different sorts of events and realities. The models act as “objects of representation,” as constructions that produce phenomena to make them more accessible to research . . . Thanks to modeling, the operator—in this case, the artist—can come up with a precise analysis of a system, and establish correspondences and connections between the model and the empirical facts.⁴⁴

In the case of Bénédict, “the frame of reference chosen is social research through an animal model, a scientific laboratory that studies the collective conducts of a community.”⁴⁵

In November, as part of the Semana de Buenos Aires sponsored by the Buenos Aires Cultural Office, the CAyC organized *Escultura, follaje y ruidos* at Rubén Darío plaza. Rather than a stance in opposition to traditional exhibition venues, the decision to hold the show outdoors represented a proliferation of spaces capable of giving shape to new, sometimes collective, ways of seeing and engaging art. The press release issued by the CAyC stated:

This exhibition will take to the street to dialogue with the public in an exchange that will bring us closer. The works will leave museums and galleries behind to mingle with passersby, with children playing in plazas.⁴⁶

A number of the projects in the event attempted to act on perception of daily life or to alter the plaza’s space itself (examples include “signalings” by Vigo and Carlos Ginzburg and the intervention by the Grupo de Experiencias Estéticas, whose members were Jorge de Luján Gutiérrez, Héctor Puppo, and Pazos. Bénédict, along with Glusberg and Marotta, proposed a playful exploration called *Circuito* [Circuit], a structure with exit and entry, signs and “anti-collision bundles.” The work was described as

...a dynamic space determined by an audience-artist-participation system that replaces the objects; the space is defined by the exercises performed by the children and by participants’ perception . . . [it is] a poetic representation that attempts to jar the comfortable and deadened perception of an audience that has been brainwashed by TV.⁴⁷

1971

In February, the CAyC held a show at the Camden Arts Centre in London based on the same idea that Glusberg had formulated for the 1970 exhibition at Museo Caraffa. The number of participants in *From Figuration Art to Systems Art* was greater than in that earlier show, and they included Berni, Oscar Bony, Jorge Carballa, Deira, De la Vega, Demirjian, Mirtha Dermisache, Gregorio Dujovny, García Uriburu, Ginzburg, Lublin, Juan Pablo Renzi, Romberg, Romero, and Vigo. The exhibition featured as well the computer drawings by the Grupo Arte y Cibernética. Bénédict presented the design of the *Biotrón* and a series of photographs of that work, as well as photographs of *Pecera* [Fish Tank] and *Hábitat para caracoles* [Habitat for Snails], and a series of drawings of other projects.

During this period, conceptual artists made wide use of the photographic register to document their works. In April 1971, the CAyC organized a roundtable as part of a debate series entitled “Jornadas intensivas de discusión” on the topic of art and photography. The issues discussed included the “consequences of the current use of photography by avant-garde art groups.”⁴⁸ Bénédict was one of the participants, along with Romero—who had been using photography in his graphic systems since 1970—photographers Alicia D’Amico and Anatole Saderman, filmmaker Jorge Prelorán, and critics Carlos Claiman, Glusberg, and

Bengt Oldenburg. Miguel Ángel Otero, editor-in-chief of the magazine *Fotografía Universal*, coordinated the debate. Benedi spoke of the use of photography to document the interventions of artists that produced land art, or “works that are perishable or difficult to get to, works that do not last a long time or that undergo transformation.”⁴⁹ He mentioned specifically the production of Christo and of Dennis Oppenheim, both of whom had exhibited at the CAyC in those years. (Christo, along with Barry Flanagan, in November 1970, and, in August 1971, *9 Días con Dennis Oppenheim*, a show featuring the experimental films Oppenheim had made between 1969 and 1971.) Those shows by Christo, Flanagan, and Oppenheim at CAyC’s venue in Buenos Aires evidenced the institution and its director’s growing interest in conceptual art. Conceptualism and land art had emerged internationally in the mid-1960s; a series of exhibitions held in the late 1960s and early 1970s was geared to legitimizing those practices, shows like *Earthworks* at the Dwan Gallery in New York (1968); *When Attitudes Become Form* at Kunsthalle in Berne, Switzerland (1969); *Konzeption/Conception* at the Städtisches Museum in Leverkusen, Germany (1969); and *Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects* at the New York Cultural Center, as well as the emblematic *Information*, curated by Kynaston McShine, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (both in 1970). Major publications that legitimized conceptual proposals included the book *Arte povera*, published in 1969 by Italian critic Germano Celant (the English translation, entitled *Arte Povera: Earthworks, Impossible Art, Actual Art, Conceptual Art*, came out that same year); Gregory Battcock’s anthology *Idea Art. A Critical Anthology*, which was published in 1973; and North American critic and writer Lucy Lippard’s *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, also released in 1973.

In keeping with this conceptual turn, the exhibition 2.972.453, organized by Lippard, took place at the CAyC in 1970. The title of the show, which featured works by artists from the United States and Europe, made reference to the number of inhabitants in the city of Buenos Aires (as written in Spanish, with decimal points rather than comma). It was envisioned as an extension of two other exhibitions curated by Lippard: 557,087, held at the Seattle Art Museum Pavilion in 1969, and 955,000, at the Vancouver Art Gallery in Canada, in early 1970. In 1971, the CAyC featured *El arte como idea en Inglaterra*, organized by Charles Harrison, featuring works by Victor Burgin, the Art & Language group, and others; it also held a monographic exhibition of North American artist Joseph Kosuth.

In July, the center directed by Glusberg organized *Arte de sistemas*, inarguably the most ambitious event held at that institution thus far. Housed at the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, the show featured some 101 artists from Argentina and abroad, among them Vito Acconci, John Baldessari, Christo, Agnes Denes, Antonio Dias, Flanagan, Ken Friedman, Gilbert & George, Dan Graham, Hans Haacke, Allan Kaprow, On Kawara, Kosuth, Les Levine, Richard Long, Oppenheim, Ed Ruscha, Bernardo Salcedo, Richard Serra, and Lawrence Weiner. In the introduction to the catalogue, Glusberg formulated “systems art” as a category that grouped together a diverse group of practices (“art as idea, political art, ecological art, project art, and cybernetic art”) all of which, in his words, were geared more to “processes than to the finished products of ‘good art.’”⁵⁰ In keeping with what, one year before, he had formulated regarding Benedi’s “models” at the Museo Caraffa, he argued that

. . .looking to the methodology of science, its capacity for abstraction and for modeling, it is possible to delve into these creative experiences and to study their results as variable functions within society, as operations . . . The study of these experiences depends on links across disciplines with clearly defined theoretical networks.⁵¹

In *Arte de sistemas*, Bedit exhibited *Tuttovetro y los pescados* [Tuttovetro and the Fish]—a work, as previously mentioned, he had shown in *Materiales, nuevas técnicas, nuevas expresiones* in 1968—*Laberinto animal* [Animal Labyrinth] (with live cockroaches), and *Laberinto invisible* [Invisible Labyrinth], a project with mirrors, an electronic system with photoelectric cell and an alarm that entailed public participation. On his page in the catalogue, Bedit presented his proposal in these terms:

A learning experience based on “trial and error” is formulated. The experimenter must reach the end (the reward) of a maze-like passage without making mistakes. The limits are invisible, but real, and determined by a beam of light that is reflected in mirrors. When the beam of light is turned off, an alarm indicating the wrong direction goes off while the error is computed.⁵²

If the participant was able to make their way through the maze and reach the end, they were granted, as a “reward,” the opportunity “to observe the appearance and behavior of a ‘Mexican axolotl’ (an amphibian believed to be tied to the origin of our species).”⁵³ Bedit’s work attempted to foster in “experimenters”

. . .personal willingness to engage skills in play, attention, and testing out, but [the work] mostly challenges interest in an outcome . . . It is not necessary to dig any deeper to find a series of analogies in the individual and social life of man.⁵⁴

In a set of instructions handed out at the exhibition, Bedit spoke of producing “a learning chart” with coordinates determined by the number of errors and trials until the maze had been worked through.

At the end of the year, pursuant to a public conversation at the CAYC by Polish theater director Jerzy Grotowski, creator of the groundwork for “poor theater,” Glusberg proposed that a group of artists start a “laboratory studio”⁵⁵ (like the “Grotowski laboratory”) under the auspices of the center. The members of the group were Jacques Bedel, Bedit, Dujovny, Ginzburg, Glusberg, Jorge González Mir, Víctor Grippo, Marotta, Pazos, Alberto Pellegrino, Alfredo Portillos, Romero, Julio Teich, and Horacio Zabala. In a brief statement of intentions that he wrote for one of the meetings prior to the founding of the group, Bedit declared: “I believe that working with the strength of a group, in as many fields as possible, through operations that may or may not be defined as artistic, will allow us to gain valuable ground, which will hence [give us] the chance to truly modify a milieu.”⁵⁶

This year, Bedit also took part in the group show *Argentinische Kunst der Gegenwart*, held first at the Kunsthalle in Basel, Switzerland, and then at the Galerie Christoph Dürer in Munich, Germany. Fellow participants included

Aizenberg, Bonevardi, Ary Brizzi, Distéfano, Raquel Forner, Grilo, Ennio Iommi, Le Parc, Macció, Mac Entyre, Paternosto, Puente, Renart, Robirosa, Seguí, Carlos Silva, Clorindo Testa, and Vidal.

1972

The group show *Argentinische Kunst der Gegenwart* was held at the Rheinisches Landesmuseum and at the Kunsthaus, in the German cities of Bonn and Hamburg, respectively.

Benedit took part in *Fotografía tridimensional 1* at the CAyC.

In May and June, part of the show *Arte de sistemas* was exhibited at the III Bienal de Arte Coltejer in Medellín, Colombia. At the invitation of the Biennial's director, Leonel Estrada, Glusberg presented, under the auspices of the CAyC, two selections of Argentine and foreign artists, as well as a show of prints on heliographic paper entitled *Hacia un perfil latinoamericano del arte*.⁵⁷ Benedit's participation consisted of designs and photographs of his works *Gota de agua* [Drop of Water] and *Laberinto para hormigas* [Ant Labyrinth]. The first was a piece based on physics; drops of water fell out of the end of a tube connected to a system of channels and test tubes.

In his introduction to the group of exhibitions, Glusberg explained the intention to contribute

. . . to the understanding of a Latin American profile in art. Though we don't believe that a specifically Latin American art exists, we do believe Latin American art has a problematic of its own due to the transcendental situation each artist in this part of the hemisphere has experienced. The conflicts resulting from the social injustice prevalent in Latin America and endured by its peoples cannot but make themselves felt in this facet of cultural life.⁵⁸

This formulation by Glusberg would prove crucial to recognition of the specificity of conceptual practices in Argentina and Latin America in general, a position that the critic advocated from the CAyC. He affirmed this difference from other setting even when, as he himself stated, "our artists . . . work with methodologies and information similar to the methodologies and information used in Europe, North America, and Asia."⁵⁹ In an article on the Biennial published in the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, Italian critic Gillo Dorfles, one of the event's jurors, spoke of the existence of "a sizeable group of conceptual artists, mostly from Argentina" (he mentioned Benedit specifically) whose proposals could be seen as "a sort of document of political protest" "thanks to the various techniques and procedures used."⁶⁰

The exhibition of heliographic engravings in Medellín provided the framework for later shows. This year, the group of heliographic images was exhibited at the Salón de la Independencia in Quito, Ecuador; CAyC in Buenos Aires; the *Encuentros de Arte de Pamplona* in Spain; and the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio A. Caraffa in Córdoba. Benedit did artificial habitat projects: *Habitáculo para ratas blancas* [Habitacle for White Rats], *Habitáculo para cucarachas* [Habitacle for Cockroaches], and *Habitáculo para peces* [Habitacle for Fish].⁶¹ All of the works in the shows made use of the same format and procedure: they were all rendered

on tracing paper and then reproduced via heliograph, a technique used often in architectural blueprints. The dimensions of the works were in keeping with norms no. 4504 and no. 4508 of the Instituto Argentino de Racionalización de Materiales (IRAM). The choice of the heliograph medium, Glusberg argued, was due to “continued lack of access to certain technological media [because of limited] funding.”⁶² In addition to its low cost, the heliographic copy allowed for multiple editions of a single work and, as a result, widespread circulation and simultaneous exhibition in different venues.

In late June, a solo show of Bénédict’s work opened at Buchholz gallery in Munich; it included a labyrinth for cockroaches and a series of drawings in pencil and watercolor, and designs for the construction of mechanical insects and other animals. In the coming years, he would continue to make designs for mechanical, articulated, and propelled amphibians, fish, birds, crustaceans, and mollusk; those drawings interested him as project designs, since—unlike the artificial habitats drawings—they were not produced in object form. If, thus far, Bénédict’s work had been geared to “*naturalizing the artificial*,” it now seemed aimed—at least in the case of the designs of mechanical animals—to doing just the opposite, mainly “*artificializing the natural*.”⁶³

In September, the CAyC organized *Arte de sistemas II*. The event consisted of two simultaneous exhibitions, one featuring Argentine artists held on the CAyC’s premises and the other featuring foreign artists, at the Museo de Arte Moderno. *Arte de sistemas II* also included a series of experimental music concerts held at both institutions and another outdoor exhibition, this time in Roberto Arlt plaza in downtown Buenos Aires (its eloquent title was *Arte e ideología. CAyC al aire libre* [Art and Ideology. CAyC Outdoors]). The event in the plaza featured not only an exhibition of prints, but also performances and concerts.⁶⁴ In his presentation of *Arte e ideología*, Glusberg returned to the question of a specifically Latin American profile in art, proposing the idea of “ideological conceptualism” to refer to the specificity of conceptual practices in the region:

Our artists have become aware of what the specific realities of their nations demand and they have formulated regional responses in keeping with changes in all realms of human life . . . what matters is this ideological conceptualism’s openness . . . as a new form that emerges as a result of a regional problematic, one that uses a methodology common to different contexts.⁶⁵

Spanish philosopher Simón Marchán Fiz, a specialist in aesthetics, would use that term to address Argentine and Spanish conceptualism in his book *Del arte objetual al arte de concepto*, published in 1974.⁶⁶ The artists Marchán Fiz discusses include Bénédict and the other members of the Grupo de los Trece.

Bénédict exhibited a prototype of a hydroponic habitacle, that is, a waterless cultivation system, at *Arte de sistemas II*. He explained the fundamentals of the work in the catalogue:

Earthless cultivation refers to a method where plants receive the elements they need to grow not from their habitacle of water and earth, but from a synthetic solution of water and different mineral salts.⁶⁷

It was this interest in earthless cultivation that led to the design and production, this same year, of the *Fitotrón*, an aluminum and acrylic climatic chamber measuring 2 meters high by 5 meters long by 2.30 meters wide. The *Fitotrón* contained a hydroponic crop of sixty Japanese cabbage plants in perlite (processed volcanic rock). The plants were fed automatically by a chemical solution, while six 250-watt blended light bulbs provided the light needed for photosynthesis and 200 liters of water were released in doses at regular intervals. Thus, the plants grew in an artificial environment with conditions like those found in nature.

Like the *Biotrón*, which Bénédict had produced two years before, the *Fitotrón* put the viewer “before a natural system of live organisms in totally artificial conditions that developed and changed, thus enabling direct appreciation of phenomena related to behavior, growth, mutation, and reproduction.”⁶⁸ Therefore,

...by means of vegetable evaporators or of hydroponic recipients, [Bénédict] studies how a process or a system self-regulates, altering its conditions of production. It is a process based on artificial and scheduled modifications, conditions of production that consider the system’s mechanisms of self-regulation and endurance.⁶⁹

In November and December, Bénédict exhibited the *Fitotrón*, as well as a version of *Laberinto para ratones blancos* [Labyrinth for White Mice], an opaque chamber that acted as a habitat supplied with water in which six mice had to work their way through a maze to obtain food, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

This year, he was one of the international artists and designers invited to form part of the *Toys by Artists* project, an initiative of the New York-based Bonnier International Design firm with branch office in Stockholm. Fellow participants included Italian artist Enrico Baj and French artist Niki de Saint Phalle. At the New York opening of the show—which would later visit art spaces in other cities—Bénédict presented two habitats in Plexiglas, one for birds and one for hamsters.

He exhibited *Laberinto para hormigas prototipo múltiple* [Multiple Prototype Labyrinth for Ants] and *Proyecto múltiple “Evaporador”* [“Evaporator” Multiple Project] at *El Grupo de los Trece en arte de sistemas*, a show held at the CAyC from December 1972 through March 1973.

1973

He took part in the show *Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano* held at the Amadís gallery in Madrid and at the Współczesna gallery in Warsaw, Poland.

In May, he participated in the Grupo de los Trece’s *Arte en cambio* show, which opened just a few days after democratically elected President Héctor Cámpora was sworn in, putting an end to the dictatorship that began with a military coup in 1966. Cámpora quickly pardoned political prisoners, mostly union leaders and leftist activists in guerrilla organizations. At the show, Bénédict presented *El mundo de las hormigas según Rémy Chauvin* [The World of Ants According to Rémy Chauvin] (Chauvin was a well-known French entomologist specialized in animal behavior).

In August, he exhibited the *Fitotrón* and the *Laberinto para ratones blancos* [Labyrinth for White Mice] at the CAyC.

The video cooperative Ediciones Tercer Mundo (Danilo Galasse, Glusberg, and Pedro Roth) produced *Diálogo con Luis Benedit* [Dialogue with Luis Benedit], a nine-minute video in which the artist and Glusberg discussed his work. The CAyC organized the *Festival para formatos no comerciales*, an event at which a selection of experimental videos from around the world, as well as local productions by Ediciones Tercer Mundo, was screened.

1974

In January, in the framework of MoMA's *Open Circuits. The Future of the TV*, Glusberg exhibited the video *Diálogo con Luis Benedit* [Dialogue with Luis Benedit]; in March, a selection of videos produced by Tercer Mundo was featured first at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and, later, in the framework of the *Latin American Film and Videotape* show held at the Media Study in Buffalo, New York.

This year, Benedit took part in group shows like *Arte conceptual frente al problema latinoamericano*, at the Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Arte in Mexico City, and *Art and Ideology in Latin America*, at Agora Studio in Maastricht, the Netherlands (both organized in conjunction with the CAyC). His heliographic engravings were exhibited at the Havat Huvit gallery in Helsinki, Finland, and at the Dudley Peter Allen Memorial Art Museum, at Oberlin College in Ohio. Once again at the invitation of the CAyC, he took part in a show of prints and drawings by Argentine artists at the Illinois Bell gallery in Chicago. Fellow participants included Jorge Alvaro, Bedel, Héctor Borla, Sergio Camporeale, Delia Cugat, Demirjian, Juan Carlos Gómez, Oscar César Mara, Pablo Obelar, Mirta Tocci, García Uriburu, and Daniel Zelaya.

This same year, the CAyC planned another exhibition of systems art from Latin America to be held in different venues in Europe. In April, the show, entitled *Kunstsystemen in Latijns-Amerika*, opened at the Internationaal Cultureel Centrum (ICC) in Antwerp, Belgium. Benedit's works *Laberinto para ratas blancas* [Labyrinth for White Rats], *Estudio para laberinto* [Study for Labyrinth], and *El mundo de las hormigas* [The World of Ants] were featured. The Latin American Week—which included screenings of videos produced by the Ediciones Tercer Mundo cooperative, as well as a Latin American film series, and a concert of electro-acoustic music—was held in the context of the show. The Week opened on April 24 with a roundtable coordinated by Glusberg and the director of the ICC, Florent Bex, entitled “Art and Culture in Third World Countries.” Benedit, along with other artists and theorists, participated in the discussion.

In June and July, the show held in Antwerp traveled to the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, Belgium, and in December, under the title *Art Systems in Latin America*, it was presented at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, where a second Latin American Week took place. The show's final stop, in 1975, was the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna Palazzo dei Diamanti in Ferrara. At that Italian institution, the CAyC organized the *Third International Open Encounter on Video*, which included screenings of some of Ediciones Tercer Mundo's videos, among them, *Diálogo con Luis Benedit* [Dialogue with Luis Benedit].⁷⁰

This year, Benedit took part in *Actuelles tendencias de l'art argentino* at the Centre Artistique de Rencontres Internationales in Nice, France, a group show sponsored by Air France, the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Buenos Aires, and the Argentine Foreign Office; he also participated in the 9th *International Biennial Exhibition of Prints in Tokyo*, held at the end of the year at the National Museum of Modern Art in that city and in early 1975 at the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto, Japan. On that occasion, he showed *Proyecto de pez artificial 1, 2 y 3* [Artificial Fish Project 1, 2, and 3], three versions of one of his mechanical animal designs.

1975

A solo show of his work was held at Galería Bonino in March and April. The exhibition consisted of twenty-four pencil and watercolor drawings and two editions of silk screens produced in 1974 and 1975 with designs for mechanical and articulated animals. Those works included *Proyecto para una rana mecánica* [Project for a Mechanical Frog], *Proyecto para una coridora a propulsión* [Project for a Propelled Catfish], *Proyecto para una carpa artificial* [Project for an Artificial Carp], *Serie de los lepidópteros* [Lepidoptera Series], *Proyecto para un cangrejo articulado* [Project for an Articulated Crab], *Proyecto para un mirlo mecánico* [Project for a Mechanical Blackbird], *Proyecto para una chinche verde artificial* [Project for an Artificial Green Stink Bug], *Libélulas* [Dragonflies], *Proyecto Natural-artificial* [Natural-Artificial Project], *Proyecto para una langosta articulada* [Project for an Articulated Lobster], and others. Regarding the show, Hugo Monzón wrote:

Benedit connects naturalist references of the sort found in zoological or botanic illustrations with schematic designs, diagrams, scale drawings and explanatory texts; he breaks an organism into pieces as if it were an erector set, rendering it mechanical or, rather, translating its normal functions into something artificial, motorizing it, inserting gears and batteries on the body of a frog, a precise set of joints on the legs and pincers of a crustacean.⁷¹

In June, at the invitation of critic and curator Jasia Reichardt, a solo show of his work was held at Whitechapel Gallery in London. Entitled *Projects and Labyrinths*, the exhibition brought together a sizeable selection of the artificial habitats and labyrinths he had produced from 1968 to 1974—projects for ants, hamsters, birds, mice, and plants—as well as his *Laberinto invisible* [Invisible Labyrinth] exhibited in 1971 at *Arte de sistemas* and two series of pencil and watercolor drawings (the *Proyecto Natural-artificial* from 1974 and projects for animal habitats). In a brief text in the catalogue, Benedit explained the meaning of this work:

My animal and plant habitats are biological sculptures. There is a definite relationship between the forms and their inhabitants (mice, ants, fish). They reflect both the forms I wish to create and the needs of the plants or animals for which they are intended and thus each work can be seen on several levels. I am less interested in the scientific aspect of the works than in what they make manifest.

Their purpose is to divulge those areas of plant and animal life which are normally hidden from view. Anyone wishing to see how a mouse learns to run a maze or to watch bees feed, or to find out how a plant finds its way through a labyrinth to get to the source of light, can watch my habitats. I think of them as ecological objects where the balance of interacting elements is created artificially. Ecology as a field of concern is important to me as an artist, as indeed it must be to anyone who has thought about it. What I am trying to do is to focus on it and draw attention to it.⁷²

Other exhibitions of his production were held at Galerij Spectrum in Brussels, at the Galerie Buchholz in Munich, and at the Estudio Actual gallery in Caracas—where he showed a selection of drawings for mechanical animal projects produced in 1974 and 1975, some of them presented at Bonino a few months before.

Group shows featuring his work included *Graphiciens du Río de la Plata*, organized by the CAyC and held at the Institute of Art History of the Lund University, Sweden; and *Modern Argentine Drawing* at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. A joint production of that gallery and the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Buenos Aires, *Modern Argentine Drawing*, featured works by Aizenberg, Badii, Mildred Burton, Chab, Deira, De la Vega, and others.

Along with Alfredo Hlito, Guillermo Roux, and María Simon, he was selected to represent Argentina at the XIII São Paulo Biennial, which opened in October. He exhibited nineteen pencil and ink drawings from the *Homenaje a Fabre* [Homage to Fabre] series (Jean-Henri Fabre was a French entomologist). The Grupo de los Trece—the collective that, as mentioned above, Bedit had formed part of since 1971—was awarded a gold medal at *Peace 75/30 UNO*, an international exhibition held at the Slovenj Gradec Art Gallery, in Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia, in the former Yugoslavia, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

He participated in *Máximo 40 x 50*, a group show held from December 1975 to January 1976 at the Galería Bonino. Fellow participants included Alvaro, Mercedes Esteves, Kemble, and Soibelman. Bedit presented two pencil and watercolor drawings entitled *Lepidóptero 36* [Lepidoptera 36] and *Lepidóptero 37* [Lepidoptera 37].

1976

Solo shows of his work were held at the Galerie Arnesen in Copenhagen, Denmark, and at the Internationaal Cultureel Centrum (ICC) in Antwerp, Belgium (two years before, he had participated in a group exhibition of Latin American system art organized by the CAyC held at that second venue). The show at the ICC was called *Luis F. Bedit. Plant – En dierhabiaten*; the catalogue included drawings for two projects: *Fitotrón II* and *Modelo hidráulico* [Hydraulic Model].

In September, the same month the show in Antwerp opened, a solo show of his work was held in Buenos Aires, at the Gabinete del Grabado, a professional printing workshop and exhibition space in the La Boca section of the city. The space was run by gallerist Víctor Najmías and printmakers Pompeyo Audivert and his son, Eduardo Audivert.⁷³ The Bedit show was the first one held at the Gabinete; it included a selection of pencil and watercolor drawings, as well as

etchings and colored etchings printed at the workshop, projects with insects, crustaceans, and other mechanical animals.

Over the course of the year, Bedit participated in a series of group shows organized by the CAyC: *Art Systems II in Latin America*, at the Louisiana Museum in Copenhagen; *La década del 70*, at the Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC-USP) and at that university's Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo; and *Gráficos rioplatenses*, at the CAyC's premises in Buenos Aires. In *La década del 70*, the CAyC exhibited a selection of heliographic pieces—works in that medium were featured on a number of occasions starting in 1972—by the Grupo de los Trece and guest artists. Participants in *Gráficos rioplatenses* included some of the artists who had taken part in the first edition of that show in Chicago in 1974, as well as Grippo, Romberg, Romero, Vigo, Uruguayan artist Haroldo González, Brazilian artists Regina Silveira and Regina Vater, and Spanish-born artist Julio Plaza, who lived in Brazil. The CAyC housed *Arte en cambio II*, a project whose title made reference to an exhibition held at the same venue three years earlier. This time, the theme of that first show was coupled with the question that Glusberg formulated for this second event: “Is there an avant-garde in Latin America?” Participating artists included Bony, Dermisache, González Mir, Grippo, Lublin, Marotta, Minujín, Pazos, Peralta Ramos, Vigo, and Zabala. Bedit exhibited *Modelo hidráulico* [Hydraulic Model] and participated in a roundtable of artists and critics entitled “Is there a Latin American avant-garde in the visual arts?”

He took part in the *10th International Biennial Exhibition of Prints in Tokyo*, held at the National Museum of Modern Art in that city in late 1976 and at the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto in early 1977.

1977

In February and March, he participated in the group show *América Llatina '76*, held at the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona, Spain, with the collaboration of the CAyC. In the framework of that show, the CAyC organized, also at the Fundació Joan Miró, the VII Encuentro Internacional de Video. Also through the CAyC, Bedit took part in *20 Artistas argentinos*, held in May at the Continental gallery in Lima, and in *21 Artistas argentinos*, held in November at the Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Arte in Mexico City. Fellow participants in that last show included Eduardo Audivert, Bedel, Esteves, García Uriburu, Glusberg, González Mir, Grippo, Leopoldo Maler, Marotta, Minujín, Obelar, Orensanz, Margarita Paksa, Pazos, Porter, Portillos, Federico Manuel Peralta Ramos, Testa, Rafael Viñoly, and Zabala. The exhibition in Mexico formed part of a larger event, *Arte conceptual internacional década del 70*, held at the same museum; it featured heliographic engravings by artists from a number of countries. Bedit participated with heliographic designs of two projects for artificial habitats: *Hábitat para peces* [Habitat for Fish] and *Hábitat para cucarachas* [Habitat for Cockroaches].

In June, the solo show *Luis Bedit. Aquarelles - Objets* was held at the Galerie Art Actuel Anne van Horenbeeck in Brussels.

In Buenos Aires, he took part in the group show *Homenaje a Duchamp* at the Galería Arte Nuevo.

The Grupo de los Trece (which kept its name, even though in 1975 some of its members had left the group and, two years later, it had only ten members)⁷⁴ was featured at the XIV São Paulo Biennial. They were awarded the Itamaraty Grand Prize for the installation *Signos en ecosistemas artificiales* [Signs in Artificial Ecosystems]. The title provided the framework for the proposals of each of the group's members (Bedel, Bedit, Glusberg, González Mir, Grippo, Maler, Marotta, Pazos, Portillos, and Testa). The project "condensed the individual poetics in a complementary fashion to give rise to a collective reading . . . each work acted as its own fragment of a total narrative."⁷⁵ Bedit submitted the works *El pato* [Duck]—in reference to a game typical of the Argentine countryside—*Laberinto para ratones blancos* [Labyrinth for White Mice], *Proyecto Huevos* [Eggs Project]—a wooden box with twelve holes and twelve artificial wooden eggs—and *El super artificial* [The Super Artificial]—composed of two cars for children, one handmade in Salvador, Bahía, Brazil, and the other an acrylic reproduction of the first made by Bedit. In addition to the overall framework that Glusberg had formulated for the group's installation, Bedit's contribution was presented under the title "Sociedades artificiales" [Artificial Societies],⁷⁶ which provided a sense of the meaning of the works as a whole.

In 1977 and 1978, he took part in the show *Recent Latin American Drawings* (1969–1976) / *Lines of Vision*, organized by the International Exhibitions Foundation in Washington D.C.

1978

Solo shows of his work were held at the Galerie Mathias Fels in Paris (*Bedit. Aquarelles et Objets*) and at Galería Ruth Benzacar in Buenos Aires. At the Buenos Aires show, he exhibited two series of work, both of them containing objects, drawings, and watercolors. The first consisted of projects for toys "in drawings with volumes and then depicted in blueprints or in their composite parts."⁷⁷ He began making those works in 1977 on the basis of drawings by his five-year-old son, Tomás. Bedit described the process of making those works as follows:

I redesigned one of Tomás's drawings with some modifications, turning it into a blueprint for a future object . . . The next step was to make a rough version in tin, wood, and epoxy resin, and then to paint it in oil or enamel. So each work consists of three pieces: the original drawing, my drawing, the blueprint and the object. Why do this recreation? Because I am interested in the passage in scale and in state, the move from fantasy to reality, that the process entails.⁷⁸

Thus, he would translate his son's drawings into projects and pencil and watercolor designs of three-dimensional objects that he would then construct.⁷⁹ The second set of works exhibited at Ruth Benzacar was related to rural themes and customs: objects made from tools and utensils for farming placed in wooden boxes. Such works included *Tijera de castrar* [Gelding Scissors], *Cuchillo* [Knife], *Tabas* [Talus Bones], *Caja de alambrado* [Wire Mesh Box], and *Caja de maíz* [Corn Box], and a series of watercolors in which, on the basis of the codification system in his drawings of mechanical animals—also present in his toys series—the artist exhibited the project for the construction of a wagon, a watering hole,

and a shack. Together, the objects drew attention to “the tools or technological systems that have produced changes in the structure of Argentine rural society. How tools change nature and society is tied to the nature-culture antinomy.”⁸⁰ This interest in rural themes, which would grow in Benedit’s work in the coming years, “indicated another topic of study and another direction in his work: the analysis of human conduct, the construction of cultural spaces, and the active role of rural life as constituent element of Argentineness and as symbolic and material component of the local mentality.”⁸¹

This year, Benedit was awarded first prize in drawing at the Premio Benson & Hedges al Nuevo Grabado y Dibujo en Argentina, celebrated at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. He participated in the show *Arte argentino '78*, also housed at the museum, in the framework of the I Jornadas Internacionales de la Crítica organized by the Argentine chapter of the International Association of Art Critics. At that show, he exhibited objects and designs based on drawings by Tomás. Group shows featuring his work included *Homenaje a Lacámara*, held at the Galería Balmaceda in Buenos Aires, and *Mitos de oro*, at the CAyC.

In the following years, Benedit continued pursuing the two lines of production he had first shown at the exhibition at Ruth Benzacar. From December 1980 to January 1981, he exhibited forty works from the *Los juguetes de Tomás* [The Toys of Tomás] series, including objects and designs in pencil and watercolor, at the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art. In 1981, the Center for Inter-American Relations in New York held a major retrospective of his work from 1963 to 1980. During the first half of the 1980s, he continued working with images that made reference to “the *Criollo* tradition, gaucho activities, and peasant life,”⁸² that is, imaginaries related to Argentine cultural identity. He also made a series of drawings based on mid-nineteenth-century costumbrist images of the Argentine countryside by traveling painter Juan León Pallière. In the late 1980s, he began research on Patagonia that eventually led to the series of objects, drawings, and watercolors in the *Del viaje del Beagle* [Traveling in the Beagle] series, based on the survey of the Patagonian flora and fauna carried out by naturalist Charles Darwin from 1831 to 1836.⁸³ In 1987, his work *Paso del Soldado* was awarded first prize in painting at the LXXXVI Salón Nacional. In 1988, a retrospective of his production from 1965 to 1975 was held at the Fundación San Telmo in Buenos Aires. From 1989 to 1992, he produced a series of watercolors and drawings based on the work of Florencio Molina Campos, some of which were included in the exhibition *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, curated by Waldo Rasmussen for the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1993. The next year, he presented the installation *Del viaje del Beagle* at *Art from Argentina 1920–1994*, a show that David Elliott, the director of the Museum of Modern Art Oxford, curated for that institution. That same year, a solo show of his work was featured at the Rachel Adler Gallery in New York. In 1996, a major retrospective of his oeuvre since 1960 was held at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. He took part in *Parallel Cantos: Visual Parody in Contemporary Argentinean Art*, a show curated by Mari Carmen Ramírez and Marcelo Pacheco held, over the course of 1999 and 2000, at the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art (The University of Texas, Austin), the Phoenix Art Museum

(Arizona), the Biblioteca Centro Cultural Luis Ángel Arango (Bogotá), and the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (Argentina). The rural theme is found in later solo shows as well, among them *Circular n° 1* (Galería Daniel Maman, 2002), *Luis F. Bénédict. Equinus Equestris* (Malba, 2009, curated by Patricia Rizzo), and the posthumous *Luis F. Bénédict. Genealogías del campo argentino* (Colección de Arte Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat, 2013, curated by Rodrigo Alonso).

Bénédict's conceptual work from the late 1960s and 1970s has been included in a number of group exhibitions. He participated in *Re-Aligning Vision. Alternative Currents in South American Drawing*, a group show curated by Edith A. Gibson and Mari Carmen Ramírez held, in 1997 and 1998, at El Museo del Barrio (New York), the Arkansas Art Center (Little Rock), the Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery (The University of Texas, Austin), and the Museo de Bellas Artes (Caracas). In 2000, he exhibited *Fitotrón II* at Galería Ruth Benzacar. It was featured in *Heterotopías. Medio siglo sin-lugar: 1918-1968*, a show curated by Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea held at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid from December 2000 to February 2001, and then presented, under the title *Inverted Utopias. Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in 2004. In November, 2003, his work was featured in *Between Silence and Violence*, held in the galleries of Sotheby's New York and curated for arteBA Fundación by Mercedes Casanegra. One year later, and through March 2005, that show, now under the title *Entre el silencio y la violencia. Arte contemporáneo argentino*, was held at the Espacio Fundación Telefónica in Buenos Aires.

A work of his authorship that forms part of the Daros Latinamerica Collection in Zurich was featured in *Face to Face. The Daros Collections. Part 1*, an exhibition curated by Hans-Michael Herzog held at the Daros Museum in 2007 and 2008. From 2009 to 2015, *Fitotrón* [Phytotron] was on display at Malba as part of its permanent collection. In 2010, he took part in *The Modern Myth: Drawing Mythologies in Modern Times*, organized by Geaninne Gutiérrez-Guimarães and Luis Pérez-Oramas for MoMA. In 2011, he participated in *Sistemas, acciones y procesos 1965-1975*, curated by Rodrigo Alonso at Fundación PROA, and in 2013, in *Arte de sistemas. El CAyC y el proyecto de un nuevo arte regional 1969-1977*, curated by María José Herrera and Mariana Marchesi for the Espacio de Arte Fundación OSDE. In 2011, Henrique Faria gallery in New York held a solo show of his work from the 1970s, which was presented in Buenos Aires the following year under the title *Conductas, control y condicionamientos*. In 2013, he took part in *Open Work in Latin America, New York & Beyond: Conceptualism Reconsidered, 1967-1978*, curated by Harper Montgomery and held at Leubsdorf Gallery, New York, and in *Berni y las representaciones argentinas en la Bienal de Venecia*, curated by Rodrigo Alonso and held at the Colección de Arte Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat. His work was featured in the exhibition *Dark Mirror: Art from Latin America since 1968*, a selection of works from the Daros Latinamerica Collection held at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg in 2015 and 2016. Between 2015 and 2018, the works of his authorship in the collection of the Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo formed part of the exhibition *Vizinhos Distantes: Arte da América Latina no Acervo do MAC USP*, curated by Cristina Freire.

Bénédict died in Buenos Aires on April 12, 2011.

- 1 — Projects designed by Alberto Prebisch include the Mercado de Abasto in Tucumán (1927), the Obelisco in Buenos Aires (1936), and the Cine-Teatro Gran Rex (1937), as well as several projects for Victoria Ocampo.
- 2 — Luis F. Benedit, cited in Alfredo Andrés, “Una colmena para vivir,” *La Opinión Cultural*, Buenos Aires, June 18, 1978, p. 10.
- 3 — Galería Lirolay, which was owned by Mario and Paulette Fano (a married couple), was opened until 1981. Its first director was Derbecq, a post she held from 1960 to 1963.
- 4 — Rafael Squirru, untitled, in *L.F. Benedit* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Lirolay, 1961).
- 5 — The first edition of the Premio Ver y Estimar (1960) was held at Galería Van Riel in Buenos Aires; from 1961 to 1964, it was celebrated at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes; in 1965, once again at Van Riel; and from 1966 to 1968 (its ninth and final edition), the prize was housed at the Museo de Arte Moderno.
- 6 — Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, *Del Di Tella a “Tucumán arde.” Vanguardia artística y política en el '68 argentino* (Buenos Aires: El Cielo por Asalto, 2000), p. 38.
- 7 — Benedit, cited in Andrés, p. 10.
- 8 — Luis F. Benedit, untitled, in *Ver y Estimar previo al Di Tella* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1994), p. 59.
- 9 — Benedit, cited in Andrés, p. 10.
- 10 — Patricia Rizzo, “Biografía documentada,” in *Luis Fernando Benedit. Obras 1960-1996* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1996), p. 283.
- 11 — Florencia Suárez Guerrini, “A la deriva del arte moderno. Una lectura sobre la irrupción del MAN y sus repercusiones,” *Boletín de Arte*, year 11, no. 12, La Plata, Instituto de Historia del Arte Argentino y Americano, Facultad de Bellas Artes, Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP), August 2010, pp. 117–145.
- 12 — Hugo Parpagnoli, untitled, in *Barbazul* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1966).
- 13 — Aldo Pellegrini, untitled, in *Benedit: Pinturas 1966-67* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Galería Rubbers), 1967.
- 14 — Cited in Aldo Pellegrini, *Panorama de la pintura argentina contemporánea* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1967), p. 118.
- 15 — Ibid., p. 119.
- 16 — Ibid., p. 125. This book contains a reproduction of Benedit's *Lo que hay que pasar* [What Must Be Endured] featured, as mentioned above, in his solo show at Galería Rubbers.
- 17 — Rizzo, p. 284.
- 18 — Benedit, cited in Elba Pérez, “Luis Fernando Benedit. Los juegos de la naturaleza,” *Panorama*, Buenos Aires, January 1977, p. 77.
- 19 — Benedit, cited in Andrés, p. 10.
- 20 — Antonio M. Battro, untitled, in *Microzoo* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Rubbers, 1968). Italics in the original.
- 21 — Benedit, cited in Susana Sulic, “Benedit,” *Pintores Argentinos del Siglo XX*, no. 62, Buenos Aires, Centro Editor de América Latina, 1981, p. 3. Conversation with the author.
- 22 — Unsigned, “Muerte y transfiguración de la pintura,” *Primera Plana*, no. 333, Buenos Aires, May 13, 1969.
- 23 — Ibid.
- 24 — María Florencia Suárez Guerrini, “Nuevos dispositivos de producción artística. Arte argentino de la década del sesenta en la Colección del Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes,” *I Concurso de Investigación en Historia de las Artes Visuales de la Provincia de Buenos Aires*, La Plata, Instituto de Cultura, 2005, p. 15.
- 25 — Glusberg had seen the work of this group of artists, engineers, and mathematicians in Tokyo in February 1969.
- 26 — Later shows included as well Demarco, Gregorio Dujovny, Mario Mariño, Isaías Nougués, Polesello, Josefina Robirosa, Romero, and Norma Tamburini, who also participated in the encounters at the ORT School.
- 27 — Unsigned, “Qué es el C.E.A.C.,” in *Arte y cibernética* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Bonino, 1969).
- 28 — Jorge Glusberg, “Arte y cibernética,” in *Arte y cibernética*, n.p.
- 29 — See Longoni and Mestman.
- 30 — Jorge Romero Brest, *Arte visual en el Di Tella. Aventura memorable de los años sesenta* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1992), p. 157.
- 31 — Ibid., p. 158.
- 32 — Unsigned [Jorge Glusberg?], “Las últimas etapas,” *Dinamis*, no. 15, December 1969, p. 56.
- 33 — Ibid., p. 57.
- 34 — Roger Plá, “Luis Fernando Benedit,” in *Panorama de la pintura argentina 3* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Fundación Lorenzutti and Salas Nacionales de Exposición, 1969).
- 35 — Luis Fernando Benedit, “Mi participación en Venecia,” *Artinf*, no. 2, Buenos Aires, October 1970, p. 2.

- 36— Benedit, cited in Alicia Dujovne Ortiz, “Luis Benedit y la caja de cristal,” *Revista La Nación*, Buenos Aires, June 28, 1970, p. 16.
- 37— Ibid.
- 38— Ibid.
- 39— Jorge Glusberg, “Luis Benedit: las memorias del olvido,” in *Luis Fernando Benedit. Obras 1960-1996*, pp. 16–17.
- 40— *El gran tornado* [The Great Tornado], 1966; *Madre hay una sola* [There Is Only One Mother], *Margaritas a los chanchos* [Daisies for the Pigs], and *Lo que hay que pasar* [What Must Be Endured], 1967; *El hambre sin solución* [The Hunger that Cannot Be Satisfied], 1968; and *El supercómodo n° 1* [The Super Comfortable no. 1] and *n° 2* [The Super Comfortable no. 2], 1969.
- 41— Jorge Glusberg, “Los modelos interesados de Luis F. Benedit: de la figuración al arte de sistemas,” in *De la figuración al arte de sistemas* (exh. cat.) (Córdoba: Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio A. Caraffa, 1970).
- 42— Ibid.
- 43— Ibid.
- 44— Ibid.
- 45— Ibid.
- 46— Unsigned, “Escultura, follaje y ruidos,” CAyC press release, Buenos Aires, GT-08, October 7, 1970.
- 47— Luis Benedit, Jorge Glusberg, and Vicente Marotta, “Circuito,” CAyC press release, Buenos Aires, November 8, 1970.
- 48— “Jornadas intensivas de discusión 1971. Primera reunión: Arte y fotografía,” Buenos Aires, CAyC, GT-31, March 25, 1971.
- 49— “Arte y fotografía,” *Fotografía Universal*, year IX, no. 85, Buenos Aires, May 1971.
- 50— Jorge Glusberg, “Introducción al arte de sistemas,” in *Arte de sistemas* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1971).
- 51— Ibid.
- 52— Luis Benedit, “Laberinto invisible,” in *Arte de sistemas*, n.p.
- 53— Ibid.
- 54— Federico Augusto Martino, “Los artistas argentinos en el Arte de Sistemas,” *Lyra*, year XXVIII, no. 219/221, Buenos Aires, 1st semester, 1972.
- 55— Letter from Jorge Glusberg to Juan Carlos Romero, Buenos Aires, December 1, 1971. Juan Carlos Romero Archive.
- 56— Luis Benedit, “Carta de Intenciones,” Buenos Aires, January 3, 1972. Juan Carlos Romero Archive.
- 57— This was the title used to refer to the exhibition in a CAyC press release (“III Bienal de Medellín. Arte e ideología. Diálogo con Jasia Reichardt y Jorge Glusberg,” Buenos Aires, CAyC, GT-124, May 5, 1972). Later, Glusberg called the exhibitions *Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano*.
- 58— Jorge Glusberg, “Arte de sistemas,” in *Tercera Bienal de Arte Coltejer* (exh. cat.) (Medellín, 1973).
- 59— Ibid.
- 60— Dorfles’s article was published in the *Corriere della Sera*, May 7, 1972. The next year, a fragment was included in the Biennial catalogue.
- 61— The exhibitions in Quito, Buenos Aires, and Pamplona included the Grupo Arte y Cibernética’s computer-drawing experiments.
- 62— Jorge Glusberg, “Presentación de la muestra,” in *Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: CAyC, 1972). Catalogue to the exhibition held in the framework of the *Encuentros de arte de Pamplona*, featuring the Grupo de los Trece and invited artists.
- 63— Glusberg, “Luis Benedit: las memorias del olvido,” p. 23. Italics in the original.
- 64— Two days after the opening, the exhibition in the plaza was suddenly shut down by the police pursuant to a complaint filed by a municipal civil servant who claimed that one of the works made direct reference to the Trelew massacre (on August 22, sixteen political prisoners from armed leftist factions, specifically the ERP, the FAR, and the Montoneros, who were being held at Rawson prison, were shot at close range in retaliation for an escape attempt). With the support of city officials, the police violently took down the show and seized the works; a law suit was filed against Glusberg. The act of censorship was met by condemnation both locally and internationally.
- 65— Jorge Glusberg, “Arte e ideología en CAyC al aire libre,” in *Arte e ideología. CAyC al aire libre* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: CAyC, 1972).
- 66— “Thus understood, conceptualism is not a pure productive force, but rather a social force. Self-reflection is not fulfilled in tautology, but addresses specific productive conditions and their consequences in the active and transformative process of appropriating and shaping the world from a specific ground and realm of action.” Simón Marchán Fiz, *Del arte objetual al arte de concepto* (Madrid: Akal, 1997), p. 269.
- 67— Luis Fernando Benedit, “Prototipo de habitáculo hidropónico,” in *Arte e ideología. CAyC al aire libre*, n.p.
- 68— Rizzo, p. 285.
- 69— Glusberg, “Luis Benedit: las memorias del olvido,” p. 16.

- 70— The video would be screened again at later editions of the Encuentros Internacionales de Video organized by the CAyC: in 1975, at the fourth edition of that event held at the CAyC in the framework of the Primer Coloquio Latinoamericano de la Comunicación; in 1976, at the Internationaal Cultureel Centrum in Antwerp; and in 1977, at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas, at the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona, and at the Continental gallery in Lima.
- 71— Hugo Monzón, “Cuando la Naturaleza aparece como una bella fantasmagoría,” *La Opinión* newspaper, Buenos Aires, March 25, 1975, p. 22.
- 72— “Benedit Writes about His Work,” in *Luis Fernando Benedit. Projects and Labyrinths* (exh. cat.) (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 1975).
- 73— The Gabinete del Grabado opened in 1975, though without a permanent location. It was housed in the workshop that Pompeyo and Eduardo Audivert rented in the San Telmo section of Buenos Aires at the time and at the Art Gallery International, a property that belonged to Víctor Najmías. After Najmías’s death, his son, Víctor Nicolás Najmías, took over the Gabinete project. The space was located on 1973/81 Pedro de Mendoza Avenue, just a few blocks from Benedit’s studio on the 2300 block.
- 74— Later, the group changed its name to the Grupo CAyC.
- 75— María José Herrera, “Hacia un perfil de arte de sistemas,” in María José Herrera and Mariana Marchesi, *Arte de sistemas. El CAyC y el proyecto de un nuevo arte regional 1969-1977* (exh. cat.) (Buenos Aires: Fundación OSDE, 2013), pp. 44–45.
- 76— Ibid., p. 48.
- 77— Unsigned, “La impronta lúdrica en una muestra memorable,” *La Nación* newspaper, Buenos Aires, June 17, 1978.
- 78— Cited in Sulic, p. 5.
- 79— Benedit would work on this series through 1982.
- 80— Sulic, p. 4.
- 81— Marcelo Pacheco, “Ideas básicas sobre la obra de Luis F. Benedit,” in *Luis Fernando Benedit. Obras 1960-1996*, pp. 42–43.
- 82— Rizzo, p. 287.
- 83— Ibid., p. 287.

Museums with Works by Benedit Produced from 1968 to 1978 in their Collections

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires

Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires

Malba - Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires

Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio Pettoruti, La Plata

MACLA - Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Latinoamericano, La Plata

Museo Castagnino + macro, Rosario

Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Rosa Galisteo de Rodríguez, Santa Fe

Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC-USP)

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

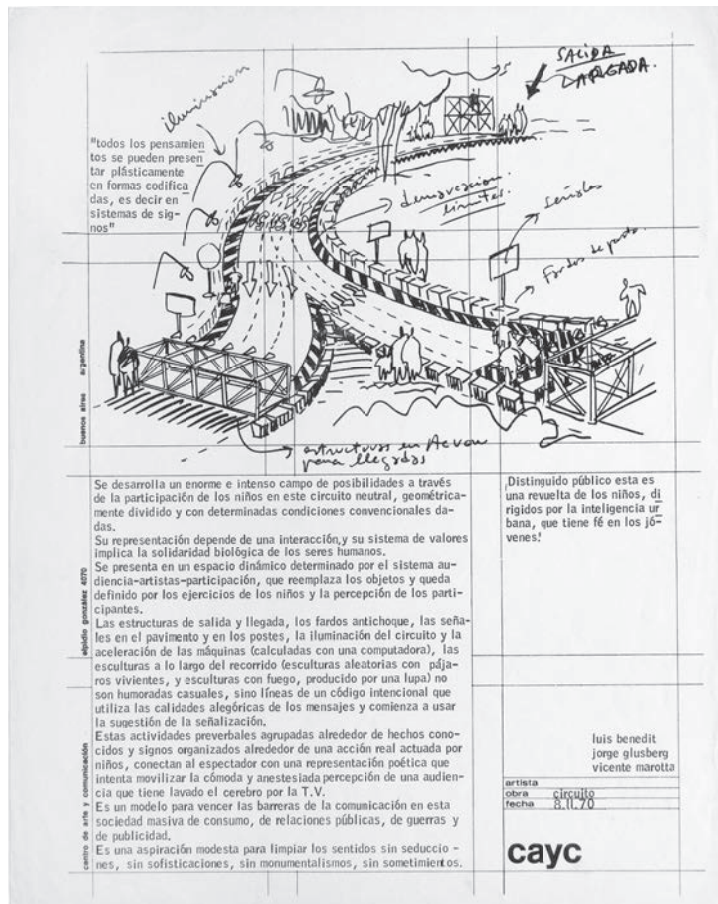
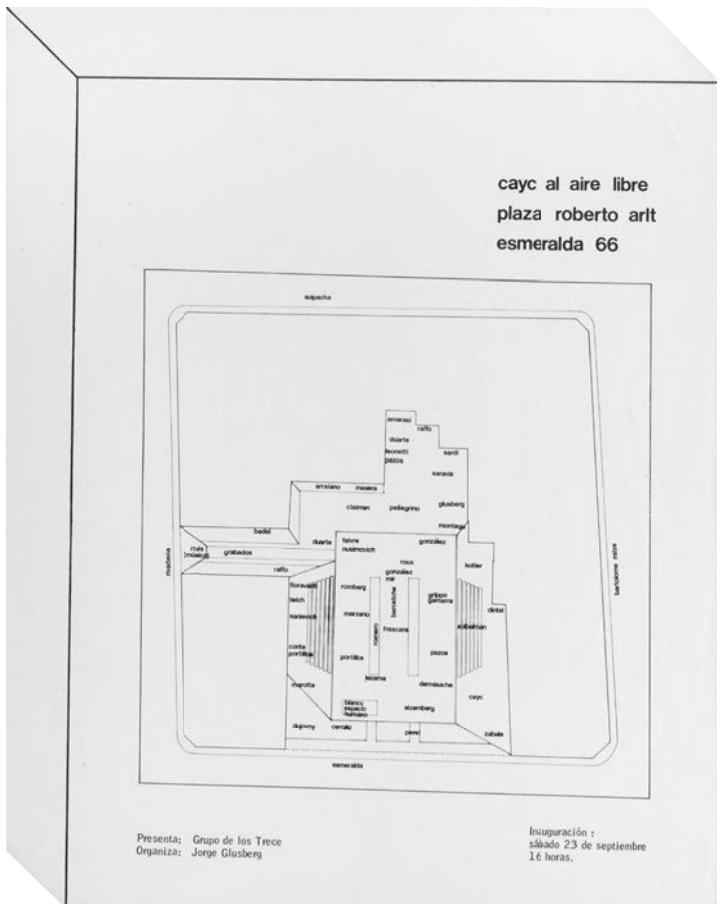
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin

Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich

M HKA Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, Antwerp

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

Entries in the catalogue to *Arte e ideología. CAYC al aire libre*, Buenos Aires, 1972, with illustration by Benedit



Carta de Intenciones.

Supongo que mi impulso primero a formar parte de este grupo es la "curiosidad" exploratoria, facultad altamente desarrollada en nuestra especie. Los artistas formamos etnicamente un subgrupo quizá en vías de extinción y estímulos profundos no concientes nos lleven al acercamiento físico entre individuos reconocibles como de comportamiento similar.

Esta no es una reflexión pesimista pues soy un convencido del fortalecimiento de las ideas en un "medio hostil".

Si los artistas investigadores ablandamos un medio hasta que este nos acepte, habremos perdido nuestra capacidad de provocación cultural y creo nuestra razón de ser. La pérdida de territorio del artista tradicional es irrecuperable cuantitativamente. Creo que el accionar con fuerza de grupo, en la mayor cantidad de campos posibles, mediante operaciones quizá no definibles como artísticas, nos permitirá una ganancia de territorios calificados, y estos la oportunidad de modificar realmente un medio.

L. Benedit
3/1/72

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Victoria Lopresto

This bibliography was assembled pursuant to a thorough review of Luis F. Bénédict's personal archive. Many of the documents mentioned in it form part of the holdings of the Centro de Estudios Espigas and of the Library of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Buenos Aires. This selection focuses on the 1968–1978 period. It encompasses important primary sources, such as catalogues of exhibitions in which the artist participated and press articles on his work, as well as more recent books and exhibition catalogues on Bénédict's production from these years. The documents are classified and arranged chronologically. Given the importance of the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAyC) to the artist and his work during this period, its publications (catalogues and press releases) are grouped in a separate section. Many of these materials are available at the digital archive of the International Center for the Arts of the Americas at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas. Essential to this bibliography was preliminary work by Patricia Rizzo¹ and by María Torres and Fernando Davis.

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Susana Sulic, *Bénédict*, Colección Pintores Argentinos del Siglo XX, vol. 62, Buenos Aires, Centro Editor de América Latina, 1981.

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Murcia, Centro de Documentación y Estudios Avanzados de Arte Contemporáneo (CENDEAC), 2009.

Daniel R. Quiles, "Trial and Error: Luis Bénédict's *Laberinto invisible*," *Arara*, no. 10, 2011.

Florencia Malbrán, "Conceptualismo y performance en el Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires," in Laura Buccellato et al., *Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires. Patrimonio*, Buenos Aires, Asociación Amigos del Museo de Arte Moderno, 2011.

Ana Longoni and Fernando Davis, *Doscientos años de pintura argentina*, vol. III, "En los márgenes de la pintura. De 1960 a comienzos del siglo XXI," Buenos Aires, Banco Hipotecario, 2013.

María José Herrera, *Cien años de arte argentino*, Buenos Aires, Biblos and Fundación OSDE, 2014.

Cristina Freire (ed.), *Terra incógnita. Conceitualismos da América Latina no acervo do MAC USP*, São Paulo, Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo, 2015.

Madeline Weisburg, "Finding a Techno-Utopia: Arte y cibernética," *Vistas: Critical Approaches to Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art*, no. 1, Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA), 2018.

Catalogues to Solo Shows

1968

Microzoo Bénédict, Buenos Aires, Galería Rubbers. Featuring texts by Jorge Glusberg and Antonio M. Battro.

1969

Bénédict of Argentina, Washington D.C., Pan-American Union. Featuring a text by José Gómez-Sicre.

1972

Bénédict, Munich, Galerie Buchholz. Featuring a text by Antonio M. Battro.

Projects: Luis Fernando Bénédict, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, press release no. 125 A, November 14.

1975

Luis Fernando Bénédict. Projects and Labyrinths, London, Whitechapel Art Gallery. Featuring a text by Luis Fernando Bénédict.

Bénédict, Caracas, Estudio Actual.

Luis F. Bénédict, Buenos Aires, Galería Bonino. Featuring a text by Guillermo Whitelow.

1976

Luis Fernando Bénédict, Copenhagen, Galerie Arnesen.

Luis Fernando Bénédict. Dibujos-Grabados, Buenos Aires, El Gabinete del Grabado, Víctor Najmías.

Luis F. Bénédict. Plant - En dierhabiaten, Antwerp, Internationaal Cultureel Centrum. Featuring texts by Florent Bex, Jorge Glusberg, and Antonio M. Battro. Typewritten versions of the texts in the artist's archives.

1977

Luis Bénédict. Aquarelles-Objets, Brussels, Galerie Art Actuel Anne van Horenbeeck. Featuring a text by Florent Bex.

1978

Bénédict. Aquarelles et Objets, Paris, Galerie Mathias Fels.

1981

Luis Bénédict, New York, Center for Inter-American Relations, 1981. Featuring a text by John Stringer.

2000

Bénédict. Fitotróp 2, Buenos Aires, Ruth Benzacar Galería de Arte, 2000. Featuring a text by Jorge López Anaya.

CAYC Catalogues and Other Publications

1969

Primera muestra del Centro de Estudios de Arte y Comunicación de la Fundación de Investigación Interdisciplinaria presentada en la Galería Bonino de Buenos Aires (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CeAC. Featuring texts by Jorge Glusberg, Ricardo Ferraro, Jasia Reichardt, and Martha Berlin. Exhibition later presented at the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Rosa Galisteo de Rodríguez, Santa Fe; the Centro de Ingenieros, Olavarría; and the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio A. Caraffa, Córdoba.

1970

De la figuración al arte de sistemas (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAYC - Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio A. Caraffa. Featuring a text by Jorge Glusberg, "Los modelos interesados de Luis F. Bénédict."

Arte y cibernética (exhib. cat.), Montevideo, Comisión Nacional de Artes Plásticas. Featuring texts by Ángel Kalenberg, Jasia Reichardt, Jorge Glusberg, Luis Osín, Marcos Payssé, and Ricardo Ferraro.

Arte y cibernética (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, Museo Municipal de Bellas Artes Juan B. Castagnino - CAYC.

II Bienal de Arte Coltejer. Arte y cibernética (exhib. cat.), Medellín, Museo de Zea. Featuring texts by Jorge Glusberg and Ricardo Ferrero.

"Escultura, follaje y ruidos. Adquisición Norglas" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAYC (GT-17), November 2.

Luis Bénédict, Jorge Glusberg, and Vicente Marotta, "Círculo" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAYC, November 8.

"Arte y cibernética. San Francisco - Londres - Buenos Aires" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAYC (GT-24), December 21.

1971

Arte de sistemas (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAYC - Museo de Arte Moderno. Featuring texts by Jorge Glusberg and participating artists.

Arte y cibernética (exhib. cat.), Lima, IAC/IBM - Buenos Aires, CAYC. Featuring texts by Jorge Glusberg and Ricardo Ferraro.

Arte y cibernética. San Francisco - Londres - Buenos Aires (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAYC. Featuring texts by Jorge Glusberg.

From Figuration Art to Systems Art in Argentina (exhib. cat.), London, Camden Arts Centre. Featuring texts by Jorge Glusberg.

"Argentinos en Checoslovaquia" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAYC (GT-26), January 14.

"From Figuration Art to Systems Art in Argentina in Camden Arts Centre" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAYC, February 23.

"Jornadas intensivas de discusión 1971. Primera reunión: Arte y fotografía" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAYC (GT-31), March 25.

"Arte de sistemas en el Museo de Arte Moderno" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAYC (GT-54), June 28.

1972

Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano (exhib. cat.), Córdoba, Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio A. Caraffa.

Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAYC. Featuring a text by Jorge Glusberg. Catalogue published in the framework of the Encuentro Internacional de Arte in Pamplona, Spain.

Arte e ideología. CAYC al aire libre (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAYC. Featuring texts by Jorge Glusberg and participating artists. Catalogue published for *Arte de sistemas II*, an exhibition

held simultaneously at the CAyC, the Museo de Arte Moderno, and Plaza Roberto Arlt, Buenos Aires.

Exposition internationale d'art à l'ordinateur / International Computer Art Exhibition (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Exhibition held at Place Bonaventure, Montreal, Canada.

El Grupo de los Trece en arte de sistemas (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Featuring texts by Jorge Glusberg and participating artists.

"Fotografía tridimensional" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-104), January 11.

"Fotografía tridimensional 1" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-105), January 24.

"III Bial de Arte Coltejer, Medellín. Arte de sistemas" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-113), April 17.

"Arte de sistemas en la III Bial Coltejer. Medellín, Colombia" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-116; GT-116-A), April 19 and May 10.

"III Bial de Medellín. Arte e ideología. Diálogo con Jasia Reichardt y Jorge Glusberg" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-124), May 5.

"El CAyC en el Salón de la Independencia, 10 de mayo de 1972. 'Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano'. Presentación del 'Grupo de los Trece' e invitados especiales" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-125), May 9.

"Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano. Muestra presentada por el CAyC. Grupo de los Trece e invitados especiales" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-128; GT-128-II; GT-128-III), June 12.

Jorge Glusberg, "Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-129; GT-129-II), June 12.

"Prolongación de la exhibición 'Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano'" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-143), August 9.

"Participantes en la muestra 'CAyC al aire libre'. Plaza Roberto Arlt" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-159), September 11.

"Participantes en la muestra 'Arte de sistemas II' (Argentina)" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-167), September 14.

"Clausura de la muestra 'CAyC al aire libre' en la Plaza Roberto Arlt" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC, September 26.

"Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano en el Museo Emilio Caraffa - Córdoba" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-183; GT-183-I; GT-183-II), October 7.

"Luis Benedit, del Grupo de los Trece, en The Museum of Modern Art, New York" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-181), October 11.

Jorge Glusberg, "Luis Benedit, of the Group of Thirteen at the Museum of Modern Art, New York" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-181-A; GT-181-A-1), December 28.

Bernice Rose, "Luis Benedit of the Group of Thirteen at the Museum of Modern Art, New York" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-255).

"Comunicado n° 2: Clausura de la muestra 'CAyC al aire libre' en la Plaza Roberto Arlt" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (no date).

"Comunicado n° 4: Duplicados de telegramas y cartas recibidas a raíz de la clausura de 'CAyC al aire libre', dirigidas al Excelentísimo Señor Presidente General Alejandro Agustín Lanusse, Balcarce 50, Buenos Aires" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (no date).

"Comunicado n° 5: Cartas recibidas a raíz de la clausura de 'CAyC al aire libre', dirigidas al Excelentísimo Señor Presidente Teniente General Alejandro Agustín Lanusse, Balcarce 50, Buenos Aires, Argentina" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (no date).

1973

El Centro de Arte y Comunicación en la Conferencia Internacional sobre las Computadoras y la Humanidad (exhib. cat.), Minneapolis, University of Minnesota. Featuring a text by Jorge Glusberg.

Luis Benedit Phitotron. Museum of Modern Art, Nueva York, 1972 - Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos Aires, 1973-1975 (exhib. cat., solo show), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Featuring a text by Jorge Glusberg.

Centro de Arte y Comunicación. Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano (exhib. cat.), Madrid, Galería Amadís.

[Edgardo Antonio Vigo], "Un arte de sistemas concretado como objeto" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-212; GT-212-I; GT-212-II), March 19.

"Arte en cambio" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-233), May 18.

Jorge Glusberg, "Arte en cambio. Exhibición del Grupo de los Trece" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-239), June 11.

"Argentine Computer Art at Zagreb (Yugoslavia) in Tendencias - 5" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-240), June 11.

"Luis F. Benedit" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-255) (no date).

"El CAyC en la Universidad de Minneapolis" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-256), August 7.

"Towards a profile of Latin American Art at the Współczesna Galley - Warsaw, Poland" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-270-A; GT-270-A-I; GT-270-A-II), September 2.

"Festival para formatos no comerciales" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-291; GT-292), September 27.

"Voces y formas para Chile. Poemas ilustrados para el pueblo chileno" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-331), December 26.

1974

Kunstsystemen in Latijns-Amerika (exhib. cat.), Antwerp, Internationaal Cultureel Centrum. Exhibition held at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, Belgium; the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, under the title *Art Systems in Latin America*; and, in 1975, the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna Palazzo dei Diamanti, Ferrara, Italy.

Art Systems in Latin America (exhib. cat.), London, Institute of Contemporary Arts. Featuring texts by Julie Lawson and Jorge Glusberg.

Latin American Week in London (exhib. cat.), London, Institute of Contemporary Arts.

13 New Artists. Prints and Drawings from Argentina (exhib. cat.), Chicago, Lobby Gallery. Featuring a text by Robert H. Glaubert.

Arte Conceptual frente al problema latinoamericano (exhib. cat.), Mexico City, Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Arte, UNAM. Featuring texts by Helen Escobedo and Jorge Glusberg.

"Alternative video" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-348), January 19.

"Video-alternativo latinoamericano en el Museo de Arte Moderno de Nueva York" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-349), January 21.

"Gráficos argentinos 74. Illinois Bell - Chicago" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-357), February 12.

"Un modelo de museo para los años ochenta. Helsinki" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-361; GT-361-I), February 27.

"Towards a Profile of Latin American Art" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-371-A), March 4.

"Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-359), March 11.

"Semana latinoamericana en Amberes" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-378; GT-378-I; GT-378-II), April 8.

"Participating Artists. Exhibition Art of Systems in Latin America. Internationaal Cultureel Centrum. Antwerpen-Belgium" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-381), April 15.

"Latin Americans in Zagreb" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-388), May 15.

"Participating Artists. Art of Systems in Latin America 74. Palais des Beaux-Arts. Brussels-Belgium" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-391), May 22.

"Argentine Computer Graphics Montreal" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-401), June 14.

"Troisième Triennale Bruges" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-404), June 14.

"Latin American Art in Hochschule für Bildende Künste Hamburg" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-417), July 16.

"Crítica mordaz y frío realismo desde Argentina" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-449), August 26. Translation of the article by Harold Haydon published in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, July 4, 1974, on the exhibition at Illinois Bell's art gallery.

"Importantes resultados obtuvieron las exhibiciones de films del CAyC en Estados Unidos y Bélgica" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC, September.

"Arte en cambio II" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-454), September 5.

1975

Art Systems in Latin America (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Featuring texts by Julie Lawson and Jorge Glusberg. Exhibition held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Nash House, London, and Espace Pierre Cardin, Paris.

Third International Open Encounter on Video (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Featuring a text by Jorge Glusberg. Encounter held at the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna Palazzo dei Diamanti, Ferrara, Italy.

Graphiciens du Rio de la Plata (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Exhibition held at the Institute of Art History, Lund University, Sweden.

"Art and Ideology in Latin America" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-474), January 15.

"Arte de sistema en América Latina. Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna. Palazzo dei Diamanti" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-485), April 2.

"Graphiciens du Rio de la Plata" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-543), August 20.

"Cuarto encuentro internacional de video" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-561), October 6.

"Art Systems II in Latin America" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-588), December 1.

1976

Década de 70 (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC - Universidade de São Paulo. Exhibition held at the Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo, Universidade de São Paulo.

Arte en cambio 76: ¿Hay vanguardia en Latinoamérica? - Respuestas de veintitrés artistas argentinos (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC.

América Latina '76 (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC - Fundació Joan Miró. Featuring texts by Francesc Vicens and Jorge Glusberg.

"Artists Who Have Confirmed Their Participation" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-605), January 31.

"Arte en cambio 76. ¿Hay vanguardia en Latinoamérica? Respuesta argentina" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-618), May 24.

"Arte en cambio 76. Exhibición y coloquios" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-620), May 24.

"The Seventies. Museum of Modern Art São Paulo - Brazil. September '76" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-655), August 19.

"Gráficos rioplatenses" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-660), September 2.

"VI International Open Encounter on Video, Museum of Contemporary Art, Caracas" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-706; GT-707), December 27.

1977

Arte conceptual internacional, década del 70, México D.F., Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Arte, UNAM. Con textos de Helen Escobedo y Jorge Glusberg.

VI Encuentro Internacional de Video, Caracas, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo. Con texto de Jorge Glusberg.

20 Latin American Artists (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Featuring a text by Jorge Glusberg. Exhibition held at the Centre d'Art et Communication, Vaduz, Liechtenstein.

CAyC Centro de Arte y Comunicación - Buenos Aires. 20 artistas (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC - Galería Continental. Featuring a text by Jorge Glusberg. Exhibition held at the Galería Continental, Lima, Peru.

América Latina '76 (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Featuring texts by Francesc Vicens and Jorge Glusberg. Exhibition held at the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, Spain.

Fundació Joan Miró: Seventh International Open Encounter on Video (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Featuring a text by Jorge Glusberg. Encounter held at the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, Spain.

Veintiún artistas argentinos en el Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Arte de México (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Featuring a text by Jorge Glusberg.

The Group of the Thirteen at the XIV Bienal de São Paulo (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Featuring a text by Jorge Glusberg.

"Art Core 18 Latin American Artists, Kyoto - Japan" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-717; GT-718), February 16.

"Luis Benedit" (press release), Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-745), May 19.

Jorge Glusberg, "Luis Benedit. Sociedades artificiales," Buenos Aires, CAyC (GT-800; GT-801), September 23.

1978

CAyC Group at the Museum of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Featuring texts by Jorge Glusberg, Roberto Pontual, and Frederico Moraes.

Primer Congreso Iberoamericano de Críticos y Artistas. Retórica del Arte Latinoamericano (exhib. cat.), Buenos Aires, CAyC. Featuring a text by Jorge Glusberg. Congress held at the Museo de Bellas Artes de Caracas, Venezuela.

1994

Grupo CAyC, Santiago de Chile, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Con textos de Milán Ivelic y Jorge Glusberg.

Catalogues to Group Shows, Prizes, and Participations in Biennials

1968

Materiales, nuevas técnicas, nuevas expresiones, Buenos Aires, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Featuring a text by Basilio Uribe.

Artistas argentinos. Obras de París y Buenos Aires para alquilar y vender, Buenos Aires, Instituto Torcuato Di Tella. Featuring a text by Jorge Romero Brest.

1969

Sixième Biennale de Paris, Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Featuring texts by Jacques Lassaigne and Aldo Pellegrini.

Premio Braque 1969, Buenos Aires, French Embassy - Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes.

Premio de Pintura Festival de las Artes de Tandil, Buenos Aires, Subsecretaría de Cultura - Museo Municipal de Bellas Artes de Tandil. Featuring texts by Fermín Fèvre, Jorge López Anaya, and Samuel Oliver.

Panorama de la pintura argentina 3, Buenos Aires, Fundación Lorenzutti - Salas Nacionales de Exposición. Featuring a text by Roger Plá.

Salón Anual del Automóvil Club Argentino "Pintura 1969", Buenos Aires, Automóvil Club Argentino.

1970

XXXV Biennale di Venezia. Argentina. Bedit, Venice, Direzione Generale di Relazioni Culturali, Ministero degli Affari Esteri - Argentina. Featuring texts by Jorge Glusberg and Antonio M. Battro.

1971

Argentinische Kunst der Gegenwart, Basel, Kunsthalle Basel. Featuring texts by Peter F. Althaus and Samuel Oliver.

1972

Artysci Dzieciom. Toys by Artists, Lodz, Muzeum Sztuki.

Toys by Artists, Stockholm, Bonnier International Design. Featuring texts by Jasia Reichardt.

1973

III Bienal de Arte Coltejer, Medellín. Featuring texts by Gillo Dorfles and Jorge Glusberg.

1974

Tendencias actuales del arte argentino, La Plata, Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio Pettoruti, Departamento de Asuntos Culturales, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de la República Argentina. Featuring texts by Samuel Oliver.

The 9th International Biennial Exhibition of Prints in Tokyo, Tokyo, National Museum of Modern Art.

1975

Modern Argentine Drawing, New Orleans, New Orleans Museum of Art. Featuring texts by Roy Slade and Samuel Paz.

Máximo 40 x 50, Buenos Aires, Galería Bonino.

XIII Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo. Featuring texts by Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho, Rafael Squirru and Guillermo Whitelow.

Argentina. 1975 - XIII Bienal de San Pablo - Brasil, Buenos Aires, Departamento de Asuntos Culturales del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto. Featuring a text by Rafael Squirru.

Peace 75/30 UNO, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, Slovenj Gradec Art Gallery.

1976

The 10th International Biennial Exhibition of Prints in Tokyo, Tokyo, National Museum of Modern Art.

1977

Recent Latin American Drawings (1969-1976), Washington D.C., International Exhibitions Foundation. Featuring texts by Barbara Duncan and Damián Bayón.

1978

Premio Benson & Hedges al Nuevo Grabado y Dibujo en Argentina, Buenos Aires, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Featuring texts by Adolfo Luis Ribera and Américo Castilla.

Jornadas de la Crítica, Buenos Aires, Asociación Internacional de Críticos de Arte. Featuring texts by Fermín Fèvre and Jorge Glusberg.

Homenaje a Fortunato Lacámara, Buenos Aires, Galería Balmaceda. Featuring a text by Martha Nanni.

1987

Animal Art, Steiricher herbst '87, 19. September - 11. Oktober. Galerie Hanns Christian Hoschek, Palais Attems, Atelier Körösstraße, Joanneum, Schloßbergplatz Graz, Graz, Austria, Richard Kriesche.

1988

Centro de Arte Contemporáneo. Artistas invitados, muestra inaugural: Carlos Alonso, Luis Bedit, Marcelo Bonevardi, Jorge de la Vega, Victor Grippo, Alfredo Hlito, Jorge Simes, Luis Alberto Wells, Córdoba, Centro de Arte Contemporáneo.

1992

Sally Baker (ed.), *Art of the Americas: The Argentine Project*, New York, Baker and Co. Featuring a text by Alisa Tager.

1993

Waldo Rasmussen (ed.), *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art. Featuring a text by John Alan Farmer, "Luis F. Bedit."

1994

David Elliott (ed.), *Arte de Argentina 1920-1994*, Oxford, The Museum of Modern Art. Featuring a text by Dan Cameron, "Luis Bedit. Trabajo de campo."

1997

María Helguera and Luisa Ortíz (eds.), *Otro mirar. Arte contemporáneo argentino*, Barcelona, Generalitat de Catalunya, Departamento de Cultura.

Mari Carmen Ramírez (ed.), *Re-Aligning Vision: Alternative Currents in South American Drawing*, Austin, Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, University of Texas. Featuring a text by María José Herrera, "Luis Bedit."

1999

Mari Carmen Ramírez and Marcelo Pacheco (eds.), *Cantos paralelos: la parodia plástica en el arte argentino contemporáneo / Visual Parody in Contemporary Argentinean Art*, Austin, Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas.

2000

Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea (eds.), *Heterotopías. Medio siglo sin-lugar: 1918-1968*, Madrid, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.

2003

Mercedes Casanegra (ed.), *Between Silence and Violence. Argentine Contemporary Art*, New York, Sotheby's / *Entre el silencio y la violencia. Arte contemporáneo argentino*, Buenos Aires, Fundación arteBA.

2005

Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea (eds.), *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, New Haven, Yale University Press - The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Meda Mládková (ed.), *Com.bi.nacion. Science Meets Art*, Prague, Museum Kampa - Jan and Meda Mladek Foundation. Featuring texts by Jorge López Anaya.

2008

Hans-Michael Herzog (ed.), *Face to Face. The Daros Collection. Part 1*, Zurich, Daros Latinamerica.

2009

Rodrigo Alonso (ed.), *El futuro ya no es lo que era. Imaginarios del futuro en Argentina 1910-2010*, Buenos Aires, Fundación OSDE.

2010

Diana Wechsler and Magdalena Faillace (eds.), *Realidad y utopía, 200 años de arte argentino. Una visión desde el presente*, Buenos Aires, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto.

2011

Rodrigo Alonso (ed.), *Sistemas, acciones y procesos, 1965-1975*, Buenos Aires, Fundación PROA.

2013

María José Herrera and Mariana Marchesi (eds.), *Arte de sistemas. El CAYC y el proyecto de un nuevo arte regional 1969-1977*, Buenos Aires, Fundación OSDE.

Rodrigo Alonso (ed.), *Berni y las representaciones argentinas en la Bienal de Venecia*, Buenos Aires, Colección Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat.

2015

Ralf Beil and Holger Broecker (eds.), *Dark Mirror. Lateinamerikanische Kunst seit 1968*, Wolfsburg, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg. Featuring texts by Holger Broecker, "What the Wind Tells You. A Foray into Art from Latin America," and Franziska Wilmsen, "Luis Fernando Bedit."

2016

Victoria Noorthoorn and Rafael Cippolini, *Argentina lisérgica. Visiones psicodélicas en la colección del Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires*, Buenos Aires, Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires.

Press

1968

Basilio Uribe, "Materiales, nuevas técnicas, nuevas expresiones," *Criterio*, Buenos Aires, September (undated clipping in the artist's archive).

"El presidente visitó una muestra en el Museo de Bellas Artes," *La Prensa*, Buenos Aires, September 24.

"El intento de un balance," *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, November 30.

"El micro-zoo [sic] de acrílico," *Primera Plana*, no. 310, Buenos Aires, December 3.

J.H.G., "La vuelta a lo primero," *Análisis*, no. 403, Buenos Aires, December 4.

"El zoo en el bolsillo," *Confirmado*, Buenos Aires, December 5.

Hernández Rosselot, "Arte alquilado, micro zoo y surrealismo," *La Razón*, Buenos Aires, December 7.

"Teorías y abejas volaron por Florida," *Panorama*, Buenos Aires, December 10.

C.M., "Un pintor que se divierte," *El Cronista Comercial*, Buenos Aires, December 10.

1969

Córdova Iturburu, "Alegría de vivir en el micro-zoo [sic] de Bedit," *Atlántida*, Buenos Aires, February.

"Muerte y transfiguración de la pintura," *Primera Plana*, no. 333, Buenos Aires, May 13.

"Ni la más mínima idea," *Primera Plana*, no. 344, July 29.

Edgardo A. Vigo. "Exp. 69-I / Di Tella," *Ritmo*, no. 4, La Plata, July.

Carlos Claiman, "Las computadoras de la cuarta generación," August 24 (clipping in the artist's archive, no further information available).

B.O. [Bengt Oldenburg], "Pintores y computadoras. Cibernética: un cierto rigor," *Análisis*, no. 441, Buenos Aires, from August 26 to September 1.

[Jorge Glusberg], "Las últimas etapas," *Dinamís*, no. 15, Buenos Aires, December.

1970

"Las abejas van a bailar a Venecia," *Panorama*, Buenos Aires, April 28.

"Bienal," *La Razón*, Buenos Aires, May 9.

"El Biotrón representará a las artes plásticas argentinas en Venecia," *Clarín*, Buenos Aires, May 10.

"Nuestro envío a la Bienal de Venecia," *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, May 10.

"Elección de la abeja," *Confirmado*, Buenos Aires, May 20.

"Biotrón para la Bienal," *Análisis*, Buenos Aires, May 26.

Paolo Rizzi, "Biennale: adesso la gente. Le api alienate," *Il Gazzettino*, Venice, June 25.

"Dopo la vernice per i critici, ieri l'apertura al pubblico. Biennale: adesso la gente. Nessuna cerimonia, qualche bizzarria," *Il Gazzettino*, Venice, June 25.

"Envío argentino a Venecia," *Criterio*, Buenos Aires, June 25.

Alicia Dujovne Ortiz, "Luis Bedit y la caja de cristal," *Revista La Nación*, Buenos Aires, June 28.

Duilio Morosini, "Visita ai padiglioni della rassegna. L'estetica al timone della XXXV Biennale," *Paese Sera*, Rome, June 30.

Raffaele Carrieri, "Biennale degli orrori a Venezia," *Epoca*, Milan, July 5.

Lorenzo Amengual, "Una Biennale con tante cose pazze," *Confirmado*, Buenos Aires, July 8.

Frederic Tuten, "Soggy Day in Venice Town," *The New York Times*, New York, July 12.

Fanny Kelk, "Experimenten op Biennale ook buiten het terrein van de beeldende kunsten," *Het Parool*, Amsterdam, July 20.

Jorge Glusberg, "Intra-Functional Modules," *Art and Artists*, vol. 5, no. 4, London, July.

Garibaldi Marussi, "La biennale dei giacobini addormentati," *Le Arti*, year XX, no. 7/8, Milan, July–August.

Jorge Glusberg, "Il Bial de Arte Coltejer de Medellín," *Revista Goya*, no. 97, Madrid, July–August.

"De la figuración al arte de sistemas," *Los Principios*, Córdoba, August 21.

"Figuración y arte de sistema," *Los Principios*, Córdoba, August 23.

Luce Hochtin, "Du nouveau à la Biennale?" *L'Œil*, Paris, September.

Luis Fernando Bedit, "Mi participación en Venecia," *Artinf*, no. 2, Buenos Aires, October.

Osiris Chiérico, "La XXXV Bienal de arte de Venecia: una vuelta de tuerca" (clipping in the artist's archive, no further information available).

Dorothy Cameron, "Summer '70. The Crisis of Canada International. Part 2: Venice," *Arts Canada*, Toronto, December 1970–January 1971.

1971

Peter Fuller and Maxine Molyneux, "Letter from Argentina," *Arts Review*, London, January 16.

"Aproximaciones: Luis F. Bedit," *Nosotros*, no. 6, Buenos Aires, April–May.

"Arte y fotografía," *Fotografía Universal*, no. 85, Buenos Aires, May.

"Algunas opiniones sobre la muestra argentina en el Camden Arts Centre," *Fotovisión*, no. 2, May–June.

G.D., "Los argentinos en el arte de sistemas," *Artinf*, no. 7, Buenos Aires, July.

"La vivienda individual: nuevo lenguaje para un tema vigente," *La Nación*, Section 2, Arquitectura, Ingeniería, Construcciones, Buenos Aires, August 25.

"Mona Lisa en el refrigerador," *Panorama*, Buenos Aires, August 31.

Jorge Glusberg, "Aproximación estructural para arte de sistemas," *IRAM*, no. 35, Buenos Aires, October–December.

1972

"La dimensión desconocida," *Primera Plana*, no. 469, Buenos Aires, January 25.

G.H., "Argentinien Beitrag zur Kunst. Das Kunsthhaus Hamburg bietet einen repräsentativen Überblick," *Weser Kurier*, Bremen, March 3.

Rudolf Hänsel, "Kehrseite der Olympia-Medaille. 'Griechische Spiele' kritisch untersucht - Argentinische Kunst der Gegenwart," *Kieler Nachrichten*, Kiel, March 6.

B.O. [Bengt Oldenburg], "Fotos: ¿para qué?" *Análisis*, no. 527, Buenos Aires, April 20 to 26.

"CAyC: experiencias desde un centro," *Lyra*, no. 219–221, Buenos Aires, first term.

N.P., "Arte de sistemas en el Museo de Arte Moderno," *Lyra*, no. 219–221, Buenos Aires, first term.

Federico Augusto Martino, "Los artistas argentinos en el arte de sistemas," *Lyra*, no. 219–221, Buenos Aires, first term.

Jorge Glusberg, "Los modelos interesados de Luis F. Benedit," *Lyra*, Buenos Aires, no. 219–221, first term.

Jasia Reichardt, "Art at Large," *New Scientist*, London, July 6.

Hugo Monzón, "Dos muestras de arte conceptual exhiben divergentes propuestas," *La Opinión*, Buenos Aires, July 19.

"Jeux et jouets d'artistes," *La Maison de Marie Claire*, October.

Silvia de Ambrosini, "Una visita a Benedit," *Artinf*, no. 15, Buenos Aires, October–November.

Jorge Glusberg, "Verso un'approssimazione strutturale dell'Arte de Sistemas," *Argomenti e immagini di design*, no. 8, Milan, November–December.

Diane Casselberry, "Toys by Artists. Museum Exhibit: Go Ahead and Touch," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, December 8.

P.A. Kr., "Exposition de jouets d'artistes. Aberrantes merveilles," *24 Heures*, Lausanne (undated clipping in the artist's archive).

1973

"Un artista argentino en Nueva York," *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, January 2.

"Grupo de los Trece: para ver y apreciar," *El Argentino*, La Plata, January 8.

Edgardo Antonio Vigo, "Arte de sistemas," *El Día*, La Plata, March 25.

M.M., "Cama, comida y techo para las hormigas," *Gente*, Buenos Aires, March.

Grupo de los Trece del CAyC, "El Grupo de los Trece frente a la Bienal de San Pablo," *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, May 31.

A.C., "Arte en cambio," *El Día*, La Plata, June 2.

"Computadoras ejecutan una gráfica atrayente," *La Opinión*, Buenos Aires, July 19.

"¿Arte o ciencia? El laberinto creador," *La Nación*, Section 2, Buenos Aires, October 13.

1974

"Films argentinos a Europa," *Noticias*, Buenos Aires, February 11.

"Biting Criticism and Cool Realism from Argentina," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Chicago, April 7.

"El Tercer Mundo en el arte. Un vasto plan cultural," *Mayoría*, Buenos Aires, April 9.

"Importante muestra de cine latinoamericano en Europa," *Clarín*, Buenos Aires, May 2.

"Panorama del cine y la TV," *La Prensa*, Buenos Aires, May 12.

"Cumple su quinto año de actividades el CAyC," *El Cronista Comercial*, Buenos Aires, June 28.

"Pavlov," *Revista La Nación*, Buenos Aires, July 7.

"Trabajos del CAyC en el exterior," *El Cronista Comercial*, Buenos Aires, August 3.

Jorge Glusberg, "Argentina. Il Centro d'Arte e Comunicazione e il Gruppo dei Tredici di Buenos Aires," *D'Ars*, no. 71–72, Milan, November–December.

"Art System in Latin America," *Arts Review*, London, December 13.

"Arte latinoamericano en Londres," *La Opinión*, Buenos Aires, December 28.

1975

Margarita D'Amico, "Arte conceptual latinoamericano," *El Nacional*, Caracas, February 9.

"Benedit: mutatie van natuur naar techniek," *De Nieuwe Gazet*, Antwerp, February 20.

Hugo Monzón, "Interesante muestra en Bonino. Cuando la naturaleza aparece como una bella

fantasmagoría," *La Opinión*, Plástica Section, Buenos Aires, March 25.

Marta Traba, "Volver al principio," *El Universal*, Caracas, May 25.

Roberto Guevara, "Steuer, Benedit: ilusión, ciencia, poesía" [*El Nacional*, Caracas], June 10.

"Plástica: Pintores," *La Opinión*, Buenos Aires, August 21.

"Se ha compuesto el heterogéneo envío que representará al país en la Bienal paulista," *La Opinión*, Buenos Aires, September 17.

E.B., "Argentina será representada por Benedit en la Bienal de San Pablo," *Clarín*, Buenos Aires, September 19.

1976

"Benedit explora nuevos diseños funcionales," *La Opinión*, Buenos Aires, April 8.

"The Mouse Race. Mickey and Minnie in Cage of Love," *Sunday Mirror*, London, July 6.

"Drie nieuwe tentoonstellingen in het I.C.C.," *Gazet van Antwerpen*, Antwerp, September 27.

"Luis Fernando Benedit," *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, October 2.

"Cela fourmille," *Notre Temps*, Paris, October 7.

Marc Callewaert, "Natuur als kunst. De 'biologische skulpturen' van Benedit," *Gazet van Mechelen*, Mechelen, October 14.

1977

"XIV Bienal 77. Os 13 do CAyC," *Artes*, no. 50, Rio de Janeiro, January 10.

Martín Müller, "La Bienal de San Pablo. Vaivén entre el caos y el éxito," *Carta Política*, no. 48, Buenos Aires, January 10.

Elba Pérez, "Luis Fernando Benedit. Los juegos de la naturaleza," *Panorama*, Buenos Aires, January.

Les Galeries, *Le Soir*, Brussels, June 23.

K. Lara, "À la Galerie Anne Van Horenbeeck Art Actuel. Luis Benedit: Aquarelles, objets," *Millions*, Brussels, June 30.

María Esther Vázquez, "El arte en San Telmo y La Boca," *La Nación*, Section 3, Buenos Aires, July 3.

"L'Art et la Science," *Spécial*, July 6.

Alain Viray, "Luis Benedit et l'invention devant la réalité," *Dernière Heure*, Brussels, July 7.

B.R., "Luis Fernando Benedit. El crimen perfecto," *Pluma y Pincel*, Buenos Aires, August 16.

"Alta distinción para artistas argentinos," *La Razón*, Buenos Aires, October 12.

Wagner Carelli, "Premiação da Bienal recebida com protestos," *O Estado de São Paulo*, São Paulo, October 12.

Martín Müller, "Premio a una estética que denuncia al mundo de hoy," *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, October 14.

"Felicito Videla a los premiados en San Pablo," *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, October 15.

Jorge Glusberg, "Un espacio para las vanguardias de arte. Una perspectiva de la XIV Bienal de San Pablo y sus nuevas propuestas," *La Opinión*, Buenos Aires, October 18.

"Rififi tropical," *Veja*, São Paulo, October 19.

Rodolfo La Sorsa, "Bienal de San Pablo. Los argentinos, a la vanguardia," *Somos*, no. 57, Buenos Aires, October 21.

Jorge Glusberg, "La XIV Bienal de San Pablo. El vanguardismo del 'Grupo de los Trece,'" *La Opinión*, no. 70, Buenos Aires, October 28 to November 3.

Luiz Maciel Filho, "Protesto do escultor," *Manchete*, no. 1352, Rio de Janeiro, October 29.

Miguel Briante, "XIV Bienal de Arte de San Pablo: Los argentinos en el arte mundial," *Confirmado*, Buenos Aires, November.

Fermín Fèvre, "CAyC: evaluación de una estética," *Correo de Arte*, no. 4, Buenos Aires, November.

Alfredo Andrés, "CAyC: una renovada visión," *Correo de Arte*, no. 4, Buenos Aires, November.

Jaime Zapiola, "La XIV Bienal de São Paulo. En el ojo del huracán," *Brasil/Cultura*, no. 26, Buenos Aires, November–December.

Jorge Glusberg, "El grupo de CAyC en São Paulo," *Brasil/Cultura*, no. 26, Buenos Aires, November–December.

—, "Report on the Exhibition of the Group of Thirteen of CAyC, at the XIV São Paulo International Biennial," *Leonardo*, vol. 1, London.

Alfredo Andrés, "Arte argentino de hoy es expuesto en México," *La Opinión*, Buenos Aires, December 29 to January 4, 1978.

1978

Francisco Fernández, "Ecosistemas artificiales: Imperialismo y cultura," *El Gallo Ilustrado*, Sunday supplement, Mexico, January 15.

Alfredo Andrés, "Muestra mixta argentino-mexicana," *La Opinión*, Buenos Aires, January 17.

—, "Con Alberto Beuttemüller," *La Opinión*, no. 83, Buenos Aires, January 26 to February 1.

J.K., "CAyC - 'Die Gruppe der Dreizehn'. Biennale-Preisträger in Sao Paulo," *Kunst Magazin*, no. 81, January.

Alfredo Andrés, "Una aventura en América," *La Opinión*, Buenos Aires, February 2 to February 8.

[Alfredo Andrés], "El constructivismo en América Latina. Su desarrollo según la óptica del crítico brasileño Roberto Pontual," *La Opinión*, Buenos Aires, February 7.

Juan José Gurrola, "El arte conceptual como paréntesis," *Unomasuno*, Mexico, February 14.

"Escándalo en el pop-art internacional: el Grupo de los Trece, ganador de la Bienal de São Paulo, confiesa todo: Hubo quien nos quiso quemar las obras. Fue un inteligente," *Radiolandia*, Buenos Aires, February 17.

Frederico Morais, "No MAM ratos, artistas e ecossistemas artificiais," *O Globo*, Rio de Janeiro, March 19.

Roberto Pontual, "CAyC 'Made in Argentina,'" *Caderno B. Jornal do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, March 21.

Alfredo Andrés, "Acerca de la vanguardia y de los vanguardistas argentinos," *La Opinión*, Buenos Aires, April 24.

"Los premios al Nuevo Grabado y Dibujo," *La Razón*, Buenos Aires, April 29.

"El premio Benson & Hedges," *Criterio*, Buenos Aires, May 11.

Badin Ron, "La posibilidad de un arte de concepto," *La Prensa*, Buenos Aires, May 14.

Ángel Bonomini, "La impronta lúdica [sic] en una muestra memorable. Luis F. Bénédict," *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, June 17.

Alfredo Andrés, "Luis Bénédict y las múltiples experiencias de un creador. Una colmena para vivir," *La Opinión Cultural*, Buenos Aires, June 18.

Jorge Glusberg, "El arte como antropología social," *La Opinión Cultural*, Buenos Aires, June 18.

[Raúl Santana], "Bénédict: la realidad desmontada," *Confirmado*, Buenos Aires, June 22.

Hernández Rosselot, "Bénédict, análisis y documentos estéticos," *La Razón*, Buenos Aires, July 8.

"Falta evaluar y proteger la producción artística," *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, July 27.

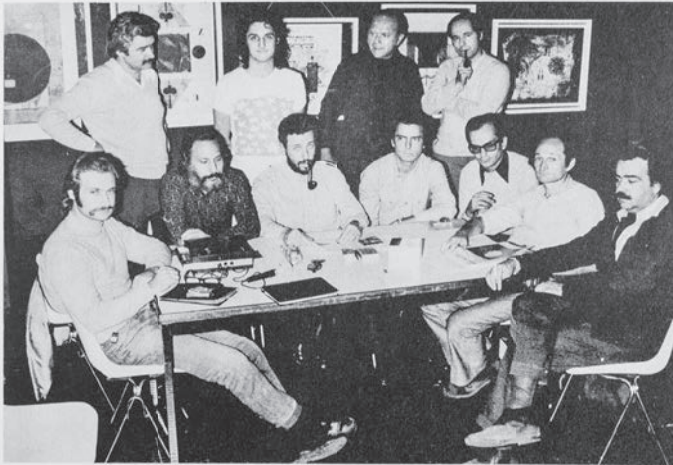
Enrique Horacio Gené, "El CAyC y el Grupo de los Trece: los caminos y los medios de la expresión plástica," *Editorial Palca*, no. 4, Buenos Aires, October 4.

Carlos Espartaco, "Bénédict: reconstruir la memoria," *Correo de Arte*, no. 7, Buenos Aires, December.

Carmen Medrano, "Luis Fernando Bénédict, pintor" (clipping in the artist's archive, no further information available).

Frederico Morais, "Exposição do 'Grupo de los Treze' no MAM," *O Globo*, Rio de Janeiro (undated clipping in the artist's archive).

Entries in the catalogue to *Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano*. Show of the Grupo de los Trece and guests, organized by CAYC in the framework of the *Encuentros de Arte de Pamplona*, 1972



El Grupo de los Trece en una de sus reuniones periódicas en el Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAYC).

Grupo de los Trece:

Jacques Bedel, Luis Benedit, Gregorio Dujovny, Carlos Ginzburg, Víctor Grppo, Jorge González Mir, Jorge Glusberg, Vicente Marotta, Luis Pazos, Alberto Pellegrino, Alfredo Portillos, Juan Carlos Romero, Julio Teich.

Group of the Thirteen:

The Group of the Thirteen at one of their periodical meetings in the Center of Art and Communication (CAYC).

e Invitados Especiales:

Marcel Alocce, Juan Navarro Baldeweg, Juan Bercetche, Guilielmo Deisler, Juan Downey, Ken Friedman, Jochen Gerz, Klaus Groh, Guerrilla Art Action Group, Dick Higgins, Richard Kostelanetz, Uzi Kotler, Auro Lecci, Oscar Maxera, Marie Orensanz, Osvaldo Romberg, Clorindo Testa, Enrique Torroja, Horst Tress, Jiri Valoch, Horacio Zabala.

and Special Guests:

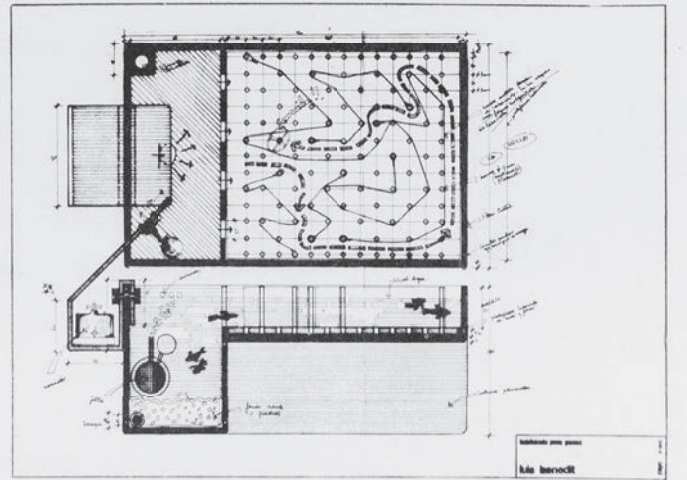
luis benedit

Nació en Buenos Aires en 1937. Arquitecto en 1963. Trabajó en Italia y en España durante 1964/65 y 1967/68. Exhibe desde 1961. Fue el único representante argentino en la Bienal de Venecia 1970. En 1972 expone en junio en Munich en la Galería Bucholz y en noviembre en el Museo de Arte Moderno de Nueva York. Integra el Grupo de los Trece.

Obras presentadas:
Habitáculo para ratas blancas
Habitáculo para cucarachas
Habitáculo para peces

Born in Buenos Aires 1937. Architect 1963. During 1964/65 and 1967/68 worked in Italy and Spain. Exhibits since 1961. Only Argentine representative at the Venice Biennial 1970. June 1972 presents in Munich at the Bucholz Gallery and in November at the Modern Art Museum of New York. Integrates the Group of the Thirteen.

Works exhibited:
Habitat for white rats
Habitat for cockroaches
Habitat for fishes



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december 74

1- Hábitat para un pez

[Habitat for a Fish], 1968
Enamel, Plexiglas, fish tank
108.6 x 72.4 x 15.4 cm
Malba - Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires
p. 93

2- Tuttovetro y los pescados

[Tuttovetro and the Fish], 1968
Glass containers, fiberglass, oxygen, and fish
(Not surviving)
pp. 94–95

3- Jaula para pájaros

[Cage for Birds] (multiple), 1968
Plexiglas, enamel, and live bird
55 x 45 x 40 cm
Private collection
p. 96

4- Hábitat para hormigas

[Habitat for Ants], c. 1968
Plexiglas, soil, and live ants
36 x 38 x 14 cm
Private collection
p. 97

5- Biotrón [Biotron], 1970

Aluminum, PVC, wood, 50 100-watt lightbulbs, electronic generator, 25 automatic flowers, and 4000 live bees (*Apis mellifera*)
300 x 500 x 250 cm
(Partly destroyed)
Private collection
pp. 98–101

6- Biotrón - Esquema de funcionamiento

[Biotron - Technical Sketch], 1970
Crayon, felt-tip pen, and ink on paper
50 x 69.5 cm
Private collection
p. 102

7- Biotrón - Esquema de funcionamiento

[Biotron - Technical Sketch], 1970
Pencil, felt-tip pen, and ink on paper
50 x 74 cm
Private collection
p. 103

8- 2 Minibiotrones para arañas o caracoles

[2 Minibiotrons for Spiders and Snails], 1970
Acrylic glass, wood, plastic, magnifying glasses, metal, and spider
Overall approx. 21 x 29 x 20 cm
Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich
p. 105

9- Proyecto prototipo múltiple - Hábitat para arañas. Escala 1/1 [Multiple Prototype Project - Habitat for Spiders. 1:1 Scale], 1971

Felt-tip pen on paper
38.5 x 87.5 cm
Private collection
p. 106

10- Minibiotrón (hábitat para arañas o caracoles) [Minibiotron (Habitat for Spiders and Snails)] (multiple), 1970

Plexiglas, magnifying glass, and live insect
15.7 x 9 cm diameter
Private collection
p. 107

11- Hábitat para caracoles. Esc. 1/1

[Habitat for Snails. 1:1 Scale], 1971
Varnish paint and watercolor on blueprint
50 x 75 cm
Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich
p. 108

12- Hábitat para caracoles

[Habitat for Snails], 1970
Plexiglas, polyethylene, wood, sand, vegetables, and live snails
80 x 40 x 40 cm
Private collection
p. 109

13- Sin título (Proyecto pecera para peces tropicales) [Untitled (Fish Tank Project for Tropical Fish)], 1970

Pencil, felt-tip pen, and ink on paper
67 x 89 cm
Private collection
p. 110

14- Prototipo múltiple - Acuario para peces tropicales - Esc. natural [Multiple Prototype - Aquarium for Tropical Fish - Scale Model], 1971

Color pencil and felt pen on blueprint
45 x 66.5 cm
Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich
p. 111

15- Proyecto prototipo múltiple. Pecera para peces tropicales [Multiple Prototype Project - Fish Tank for Tropical Fish], 1971

Felt-tip pen on blueprint
41 x 33 cm
Private collection
p. 112

16- Study for Proyecto Prototipo Múltiple, 1971

Synthetic polymer paint on diazotype
40.5 x 32.4 cm
Gift of the artist
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY
p. 113

17- Pecera para peces tropicales

[Fish Tank for Tropical Fish] (multiple), 1970
Edition of 6
Plexiglas, thermostat, oxygen generator, water, fish
42 x 32 x 22 cm
Private collections
pp. 114–115

18- Prototipo múltiple. Laberinto para ratas blancas 3 [Multiple Prototype. Labyrinth for White Rats 3], 1971

Intervened blueprint
38 x 67 cm
Private collection
p. 116

19- Labyrinth for White Rats, 1971

Watercolor, enamel, felt-tip pen on blueprint
paper
41.1 x 68.2 cm
David Rockefeller Latin American Fund
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
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p. 117

20- Laberinto para ratones blancos

[Labyrinth for White Mice], 1972
Plexiglas, sheet metal, galvanized wire mesh, water, and six live mice
18 x 200 x 200 cm
Private collection
p. 118

21- Laberinto para ratones blancos

[Labyrinth for White Mice], 1972
Pencil and watercolor on paper
49.2 x 59 cm
Gift of Waldo Rasmussen, 1982
1982.184
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin
p. 119

22- **Study for Labyrinth for White Mice**, 1972
Felt-tip pen, pencil, and transfer type on paper
56 x 76 cm
Gift of the artist
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art /
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p. 120

23- **Study for Labyrinth for White Mice**, 1972
Felt-tip pen and pencil on paper
56.1 x 76 cm
Gift of the artist
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
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p. 121

24- **Prototipo - Hábitat - Laberinto para cucarachas** [Prototype - Habitat - Labyrinth for Cockroaches], 1971
Varnish paint and felt pen on blueprint
42.5 x 63 cm
Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich
p. 122

25- **Hábitat - Laberinto para cucarachas** [Habitat - Labyrinth for Cockroaches], 1971
Acrylic glass, wood, metal, rubber, and cockroaches
9 x 76 x 27.5 cm
Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich
p. 123

26- **Plano Laberinto para peces (corte 1/1-depósito)** [Floor Plan, Labyrinth for Fish (Cross Section 1:1 Scale-Device)], 1972
Felt-tip pen and pencil on paper
50 x 65 cm
Private collection
p. 124

27- **Proyecto Laberinto para peces** [Labyrinth for Fish Project], 1972
Pencil, felt-tip pen, and watercolor on paper
42 x 57 cm
Private collection
p. 125

28- **Laberinto para peces tropicales** [Labyrinth for Tropical Fish], 1971
Acrylic glass, plastic, stones, water, aquarium supplies and fish
27 x 50 x 28 cm
Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich
pp. 126–127

29- **Laberinto para hormigas (prototipo múltiple)** [Labyrinth for Ants (multiple prototype)], 1972
Plexiglas, PVC, soil, cotton, and live ants
16 x 36 x 15 cm
Private collection
p. 128

30- **Laberinto para hormigas A** [Labyrinth for Ants A], 1974
Plexiglas, soil, PVC, ants, cotton, sugar
10 x 50 x 22 cm
Private collection
p. 129

31- **Labyrinth for Ants** 1970
Felt-tip pen, pencil, transfer type, and crayon on board
56.5 x 75.9 cm
David Rockefeller Latin American Fund
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
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p. 130

32- **Labyrinth for Ants**, 1971
Synthetic polymer paint, watercolor, and felt-tip pen on diazotype
56.3 x 93 cm
David Rockefeller Latin American Fund
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
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p. 131

33- **Laberinto vegetal** [Vegetable Labyrinth], 1972
Felt-tip pen and watercolor on paper
48.5 x 63 cm
Private collection
p. 132

34- **Laberinto vegetal** [Vegetable Labyrinth], 1972
Plexiglas, 40-watt light bulb, germinating seeds
13 x 44 x 21 cm
Private collection
p. 133

35- **Laberinto invisible** [Invisible Labyrinth], 1971
Electronic alarm, 150-watt light bulb, 7 flat mirrors, 1 concave mirror, stainless steel, and Mexican axolotl
Dimensions variable
Private collection
pp. 134–135

36- **Gota de agua** [Drop of Water] (project), 1971
Pencil, felt-tip pen, letter stickers, and enamel on paper
61 x 47 cm
Private collection
p. 136

37- **Gota de agua** [Drop of Water], 1971
Edition of 2
Plexiglas, magnifying glasses, plastic tubing, water, cotton, adjustable dropper, and hand pump (with metal screws)
44.1 x 25.1 x 25.1 cm
Gift of Waldo Rasmussen, 1982, 1982.186
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin
The second work in the edition of two forms part of a private collection
pp. 137–139

38- **Múltiple evaporador** [Evaporator Multiple] (project), 1971
Felt-tip pen on paper
30 x 41 cm
Private collection
p. 140, above

39- **Gota de agua** [Drop of Water] (project), 1971
Felt-tip pen on paper
30 x 41 cm
Private collection
p. 140, below

40- **Experimento de Sachs, Evaporador** [Sachs Experiment, Evaporator], 1972
Felt-tip pen and enamel on paper
50 x 65 cm
Private collection
p. 141

41- **Planta 1/1, Proyecto múltiple** [Floor Plan 1:1, Multiple Project], 1971–1972
Felt-tip pen and ink on blueprint
48 x 41 cm
Private collection
p. 142

42- **Evaporador de Sachs (prototipo múltiple)** [Sachs Evaporator (Multiple Prototype)], 1972
Edition of 3
Plexiglas, water, and live plant
32 x 15 x 11 cm
Private collections
p. 143

43- Hábitat hidropónico (Hydroponisches habitat) [Hydroponic Habitat], 1972

Acrylic glass, wood, water, chemical solution, sand, lamp, and plant

57 x 22.2 x 20 cm

Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich

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44- Fitotrón [Phytotron], 1972

Hydroponic environment for plants. Installation with Plexiglas, aluminum, 250-watt mercury light bulbs, PVC, centrifugal water pump, nutritional drugs, volcanic rock, and living plants

300 x 200 x 500 cm

Eduardo F. Costantini Collection

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45- Drawing for Phytotron: Hydroponic Environment for Plants, 1972

Watercolor, felt-tip pen, crayon, ink, graphite pencil, transfer type, pasted paper, and tracing paper taped with pressure sensitive tape to yellow paper

56 x 76.1 cm

Gift of the artist

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

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46- Drawing for Phytotron: Hydroponic Environment for Plants, 1972

Watercolor, felt-tip pen, pencil, crayon, transfer type, and pasted paper on paper

56 x 76 cm

Gift of the artist

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

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47- Drawing for Phytotron: Hydroponic Environment for Plants, 1972

Gouache, synthetic polymer paint, felt-tip pen and graphite pencil on paper

56 x 76 cm

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48- Drawing for Phytotron: Hydroponic Environment for Plants, 1972

Synthetic polymer paint, watercolor, ink, felt-tip pen, and pencil on transparentized paper with pressure sensitive tape

56.1 x 76.2 cm

Gift of the artist

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49- Sistema hidráulico 3

[Hydraulic System 3], 1973

Pencil and watercolor on paper

49 x 59 cm

Private collection

p. 154

50- Sistema hidráulico 5

[Hydraulic System 5], 1973

Pencil and watercolor on paper

49 x 59 cm

Private collection

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51- Proyecto para modelo hidráulico nº 2

[Project for Hydraulic Model no. 2], 1973

Felt-tip pen, watercolor, pencil, and ink on paper

56 x 76 cm

Private collection

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52- Proyecto modelo hidráulico

[Hydraulic Model Project], 1973

Felt-tip pen and ink on paper

51 x 76 cm

Private collection

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53- Natural-artificial 2

[Natural-Artificial 2], 1972

Ink and watercolor on paper

64 x 49 cm

Private collection

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54- Proyecto Natural-artificial 2

[Natural-Artificial Project 2], 1974

Pencil and watercolor on paper

44 x 66.5 cm

Private collection

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55- Proyecto Natural-artificial 4

[Natural-Artificial Project 4], 1974

Pencil and watercolor on paper

43 x 66 cm

Private collection

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56- Proyecto Natural-artificial 7

[Natural-Artificial Project 7], 1974

Pencil and watercolor on paper

50 x 63 cm

Private collection

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57- Proyecto Natural-artificial 9

[Natural-Artificial Project 9], 1974

Pencil and watercolor on paper

66 x 48 cm

Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich

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58- Proyecto para un contenedor natural artificial (A) [Project for a Natural-Artificial Container (A)], 1973

Pencil and watercolor on paper

50 x 65 cm

Private collection

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59- Mariposa oso pardo / Arctia caja

[Butterfly Brown Bear / Arctia Caja], 1973

Pencil on paper

44 x 35 cm

Private collection

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60- Habitación natural-artificial 5

[Natural-Artificial Habitable 5], 1974

Pencil and watercolor on paper

49 x 68 cm

Private collection

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61- Sistema natural-artificial A

[Natural-Artificial System A], 1974

Pencil and colored pencil on paper

50 x 65 cm

Private collection

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62- Sistema de señuelos (para atraer mariposas Noctuidas) [Bate System (to Attract Noctuidae Butterflies)], 1974

Pencil and watercolor on paper

43.5 x 69.5 cm

Private collection

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63- Proyecto para un saltamontes de alas azules en actitud de vuelo [Project for a Blue-Winged Grasshopper in Flight], 1973

Pencil and watercolor on paper

50 x 65 cm

Private collection

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64- Homenaje a Fabre nº 6, Proyecto para una cigarra metálica con mecanismo sonoro

[Homage to Fabre no. 6, Project for a Metallic Cicada with Sound Mechanism], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
72 x 50 cm
Private collection
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65- Homenaje a Fabre nº 5, Proyecto de una orquídea señuelo artificial –hembras falsas–

[Homage to Fabre no. 5, Project for an Artificial Orchid Bate—Fake Females], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
70 x 50 cm
Private collection
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66- Homenaje a Fabre nº 18

[Homage to Fabre no. 18], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
63 x 88 cm
Private collection
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67- Homenaje a Fabre nº 19

[Homage to Fabre no. 19], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
61 x 77 cm
Private collection
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68- Laberinto hormigas (A)

[Ant Labyrinth (A)], 1975/1976
Pencil and watercolor on paper
62 x 88 cm
Private collection
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69- Homenaje a Fabre nº 16, Proyecto

Laberinto para hormigas coloradas [Homage to Fabre no. 16, Labyrinth for Red Ants Project], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
60 x 85 cm
Private collection
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70- Proyecto Natural-artificial D

[Natural-Artificial Project D], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
66 x 48 cm
Private collection
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71- Serie de los lepidópteros 1, Colia articulada

[Lepidoptera Series 1, Articulated Colia], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
44 x 68 cm
Private collection
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72- Serie de los lepidópteros 5

[Lepidoptera Series 5], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
45 x 65 cm
Private collection
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73- Serie de los lepidópteros 9

[Lepidoptera Series 9], 1974
Watercolor with graphite on paper
44.5 x 68.6 cm
Gift of Judy S. and Charles W. Tate, 2014
PG 2014.14
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin
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74- Proyecto para mariposa artificial, prototipo

Attacus luna [Artificial Butterfly Project, Attacus Luna Prototype], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
47 x 60 cm
Private collection
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75- Sistema de señuelos (para atraer

mariposas) (1) [Bate System (to Attract Butterflies) (1)], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
43.5 x 69.5 cm
Private collection
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76- Homenaje a Fabre nº 2, Sistema de señuelos para atraer mariposas (Colias)

[Homage to Fabre no. 2, Bate System to Attract Butterflies (Colias)], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
50 x 72 cm
Private collection
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77- Homenaje a Fabre nº 9, Proyecto para un

bebedero con señuelo para picaflores [Homage to Fabre no. 9, Project for a Water Dispenser with Bate for Hummingbirds], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
70 x 50 cm
Private collection
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78- Proyecto para una langosta articulada

de madera [Project for an Articulated Wooden Lobster], 1973
Pencil and watercolor on paper
79 x 62.5 cm
Private collection
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79- Proyecto para una langosta articulada 3

[Project for an Articulated Lobster 3], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
70 x 50 cm
Private collection
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80- Libélulas 1 [Dragonflies 1], 1975

Pencil and watercolor on paper
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Private collection
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81- Proyecto Tábano 1 [Horsefly Project 1], 1975

Pencil and watercolor on paper
50 x 72 cm
Private collection
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82- Homenaje a Fabre nº 12

[Homage to Fabre no. 12], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
60.5 x 85.5 cm
Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA), Buenos Aires
Benson & Hedges prize for an original print and drawing in Argentina, 1976
Inv. no. 8738
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83- Homenaje a Fabre nº 3, Proyecto para

prototipo de escarabajo de agua a propulsión molecular [Homage to Fabre no. 3, Prototype for a Molecular-Propelled Water Beetle], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
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Private collection
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Pencil and watercolor on paper
50 x 72 cm
Private collection
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85- **Proyecto para una oruga mecánica 2**
[Project for a Mechanical Caterpillar 2], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
38 x 53 cm
Private collection
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86- **Proyecto para un anfibio mecánico 1**
[Project for a Mechanical Amphibian 1], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
45 x 70 cm
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía,
Madrid
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87- **Proyecto para una rana mecánica 1**
[Project for a Mechanical Frog 1], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
50 x 70 cm
Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA),
Buenos Aires
Gift from Amigos del Museo Nacional de Bellas
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Inv. no. 8263
Área de Documentación y Registro, MNBA,
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88- **Proyecto para una rana artificial B**
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90- **Serie de los gasterópodos**
[Gastropods Series], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
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91- **Serie de los gasterópodos 3**
[Gastropods Series 3], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
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92- **Serie de los cefalópodos 11**
[Cephalopods Series 11], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
70 x 50 cm
Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA),
Buenos Aires
Gift from Amigos del Museo Nacional de
Bellas Artes, 1976
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[Cephalopods Series 5], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
65 x 50 cm
Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich
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94- **Serie de los cefalópodos 8**
[Cephalopods Series 8], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
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Pencil, color pencil and watercolor on paper
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Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich
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[Project for a Jet-Propelled Fish 2], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
45 x 69.9 cm
Archer M. Huntington Museum Fund, 1986
1986.65
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas
at Austin
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[Project for an Articulated Platy 1], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
45 x 69.8 cm
Archer M. Huntington Museum Fund, 1986
1986.66
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas
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Pencil and watercolor on paper
69 x 50 cm
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Pencil and watercolor on paper
61 x 88 cm
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101- **Proyecto para un cangrejo articulado 3. Serie de los crustáceos** [Project for an Articulated Crab 3. Crustacean Series], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
65 x 50 cm
Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich
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102- **Proyecto para un pulpo articulado**
[Project for an Articulated Octopus], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
70 x 45 cm
Private collection
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[Cichlids Series 1], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
70 x 50 cm
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[Project for an Artificial Cichlid 1], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
43 x 69 cm
Private collection
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Pencil and watercolor on paper
50 x 72 cm
Private collection
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106- **Furnarius rufus - Vulgar "Hornero"**
[Furnarius rufus - Known as "Ovenbird"], 1976
Pencil and watercolor on paper
24 x 32.5 cm
Private collection
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107- **Proyecto para un mirlo mecánico 2**

[Project for a Mechanical Blackbird 2], 1974
Pencil and watercolor on paper
45 x 69 cm
Private collection
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108- **Proyecto Perdiz 1 (Nothura maculosa)**

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Pencil and watercolor on paper
64 x 50 cm
Private collection
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Pencil and watercolor on paper
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[Woodcreeper (Plunger)], 1977
Watercolor on paper
31.5 x 23 cm
Private collection
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Watercolor on paper
57 x 39 cm
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[Scarabaeus Sacer Project], 1975
Pencil and watercolor on paper
66 x 48 cm
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113- **Proyecto para un escarabajo artificial D**

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Pencil and watercolor on paper
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Pencil and watercolor on paper
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115- **Proyecto Saltamontes 2**

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Pencil and watercolor on paper
38 x 64 cm
Private collection
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116- **Del campo (5), Rancho**

[Of the Country (5), Shack], 1978
Pencil and watercolor on paper
76.3 x 57 cm
Gift of Barbara Duncan, 1994
1994.90
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas
at Austin
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117- **Rancho F.A. (2)** [Shack F.A. (2)], 1978/1981

Pencil and watercolor on paper
74 x 110 cm
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118- **Caja de mariposas** [Butterfly Box], 1976

Object in wood, iron, paper, and watercolor
70 x 30 x 11 cm
Private collection
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119- **Furnarius rufus**, 1976

Pencil and aquarelle on paper
64 x 90 cm
S0078
Mixed media
129 x 97 x 34 cm
S0079
M HKA / Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp
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120- **Proyecto Huevos**

[Eggs Project], 1976–1977
Stuffed hen, acrylic glass, wood and pencil on paper
Hen in vitrine: 45 x 51 x 29.3 cm
Open egg box: 23.7 x 74 x 26 cm
Drawing (framed): 77.7 x 107.8 x 3.2 cm
Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich
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121- **Trompos** [Spinning Tops], 1976

Object in wood, bronze, nylon, Plexiglas, and aluminum
21 x 55 x 14 cm
Private collection
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122- **Caja de maíz** [Corn Box], 1978

Object in wood, bronze, cotton, corn, oil paint, and enamel
31 x 33.7 x 27.5 cm
Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA), Buenos Aires
Gift of Claudia Caraballo de Quentin, 1979
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[African Queen (Project Toy no. 6)], 1977
Pencil and watercolor on paper
65 x 49 cm
Private collection
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124- **African Queen (Objeto flotante sobre agua que se desplaza por diferencias de tensiones empapando el algodón con alcanfor)** [African Queen (Object Floating on Water Propelled by Differences in Tension, Soaking the Cotton in Camphor)], 1977

Wood, acrylic, paper, cotton, and Plexiglas
47 x 55 x 30 cm
Private collection
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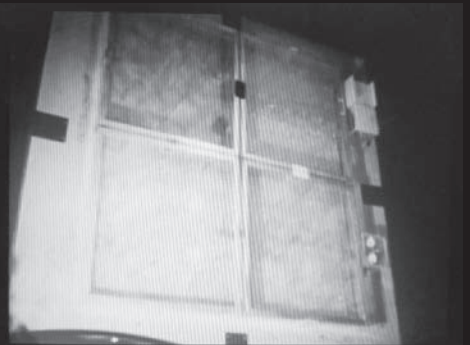
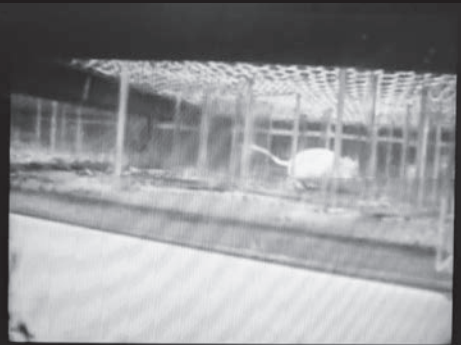
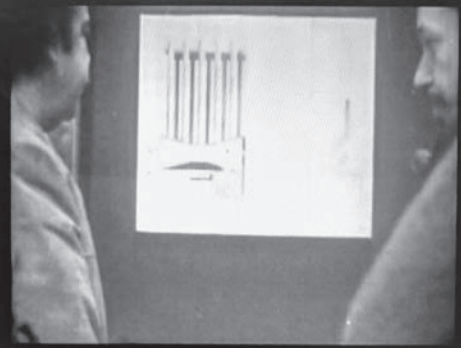
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Jorge Glusberg Talks to Luis Bedit, 1973
Museu de Arte Contemporânea da
Universidade de São Paulo, MAC-USP

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jorge glusberg talks to
luis benedit

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Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich

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