

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of red lightning bolts with black outlines, set against a white background. A solid light blue vertical bar runs along the left edge of the page.

**NATHALIE  
DU PASQUIER.**

**DON'T TAKE  
THESE DRAWINGS  
SERIOUSLY.**

**1981-87.**

# Don't Take These Drawing Seriously

By Nathalie Du Pasquier  
Edited by Omar Sosa

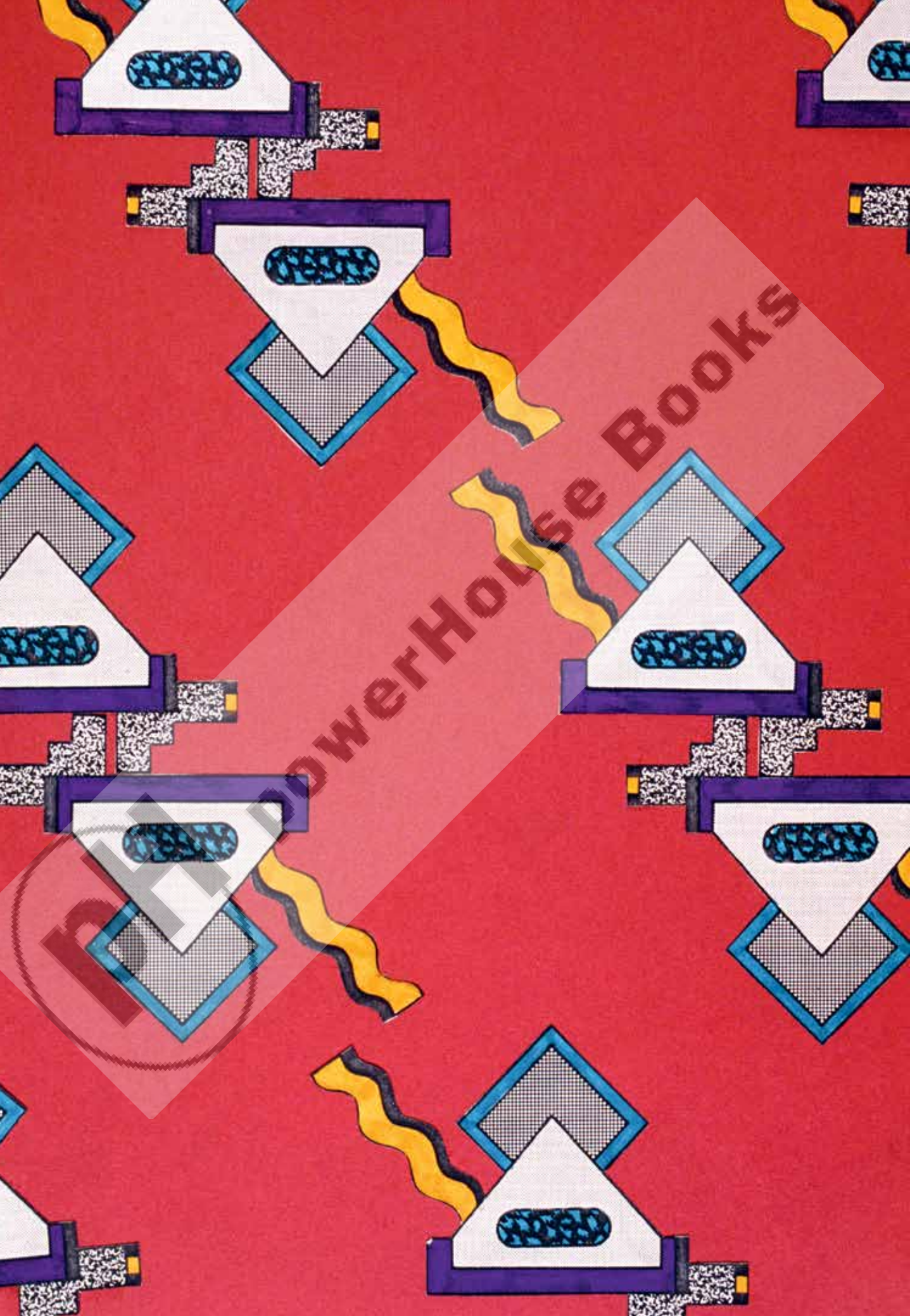
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# HEADPHONES. JEWELRY. WATCHES. PAPERS AND POSTERS.

This collection of lost and found drawings will not follow a chronological order. We decided to go from small things to bigger ones. From things on the body to things outside the body.

In 1980 or 1981 the first Sony Walkman arrived from Japan. At that time they were only for the American girls who were magically appearing twice a year in Milan for the fashion shows. Beautiful, tall girls walking to the rhythm of music that we could not hear. It was incredible, and the idea of being isolated from the crowd was very cool indeed.

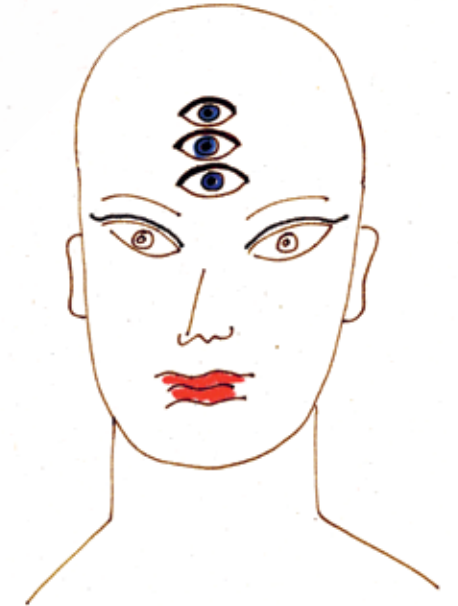
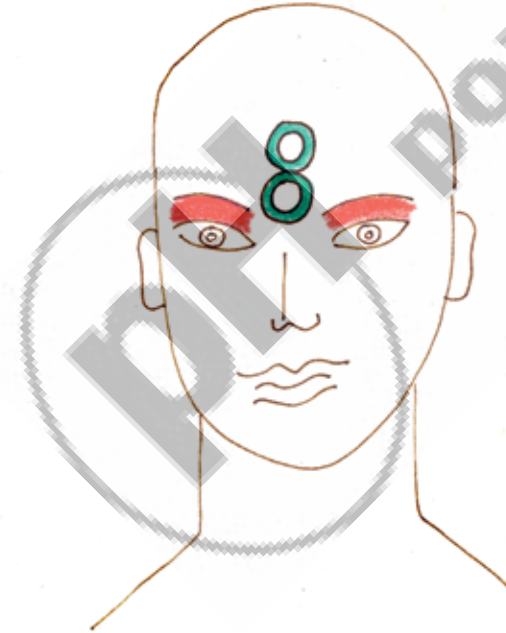
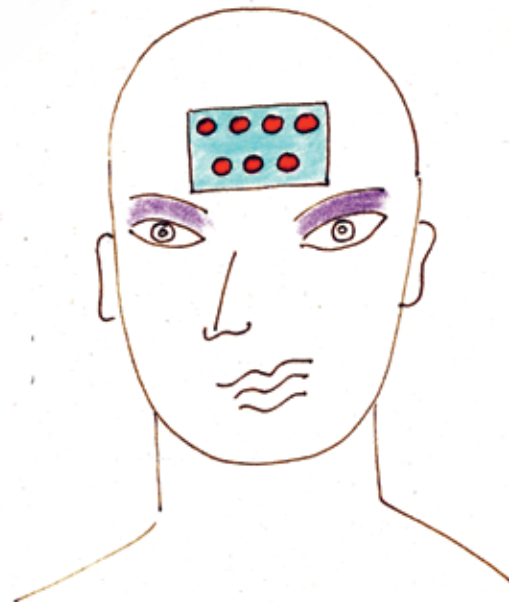
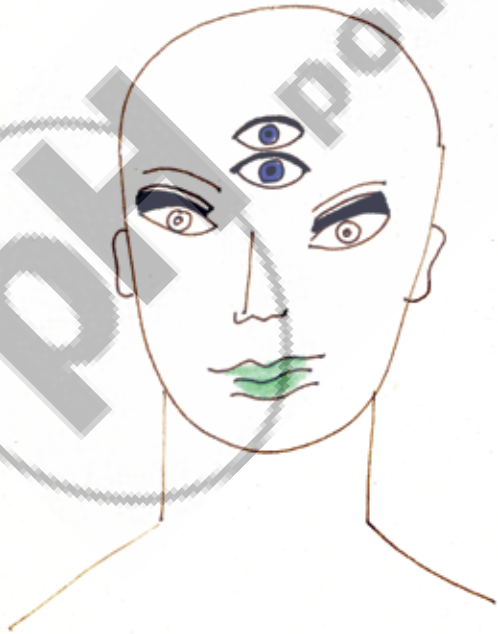
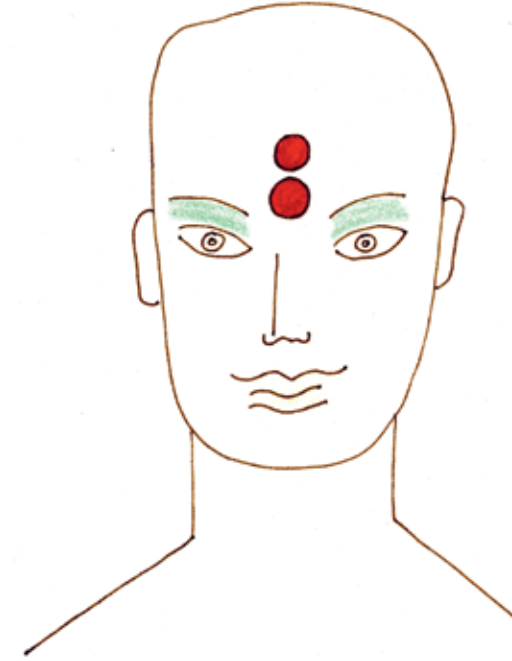
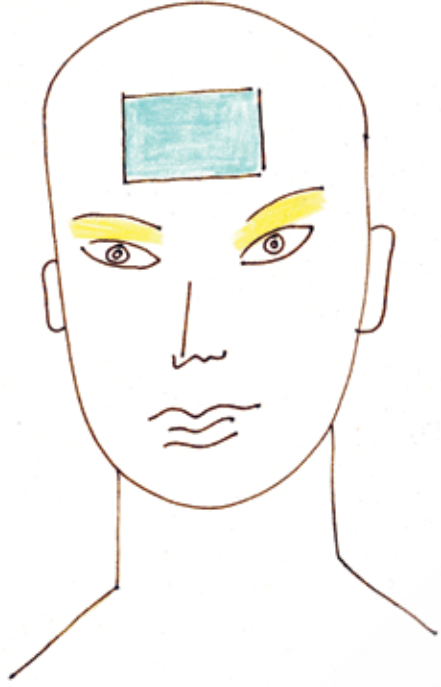
That was modern. A Walkman, this indispensable gadget for the modern-day person, should also be an ornament; it could be like a crown, a jewel, you could decide to walk around like an African queen.

I liked the idea of jewelry; the fact that it is small, the fact that you give jewelry to the people you love and it becomes a kind of symbol. Like clothes, jewelry also reveals something about the tribe you belong to, but it travels in time in a way that clothes do not and it can fit in your pocket. In 1984 the Memphis designers were contacted by Acme. Acme was a small American company based in Hawaii that was producing jewelry in enameled metal. Sottsass was designing a home for Acme's owner. That was the link. Enameled metal was the perfect material for my ideas. I could work on a drawing and it did not need to be built, it could be pure surface and have as many flat colors as I wanted.

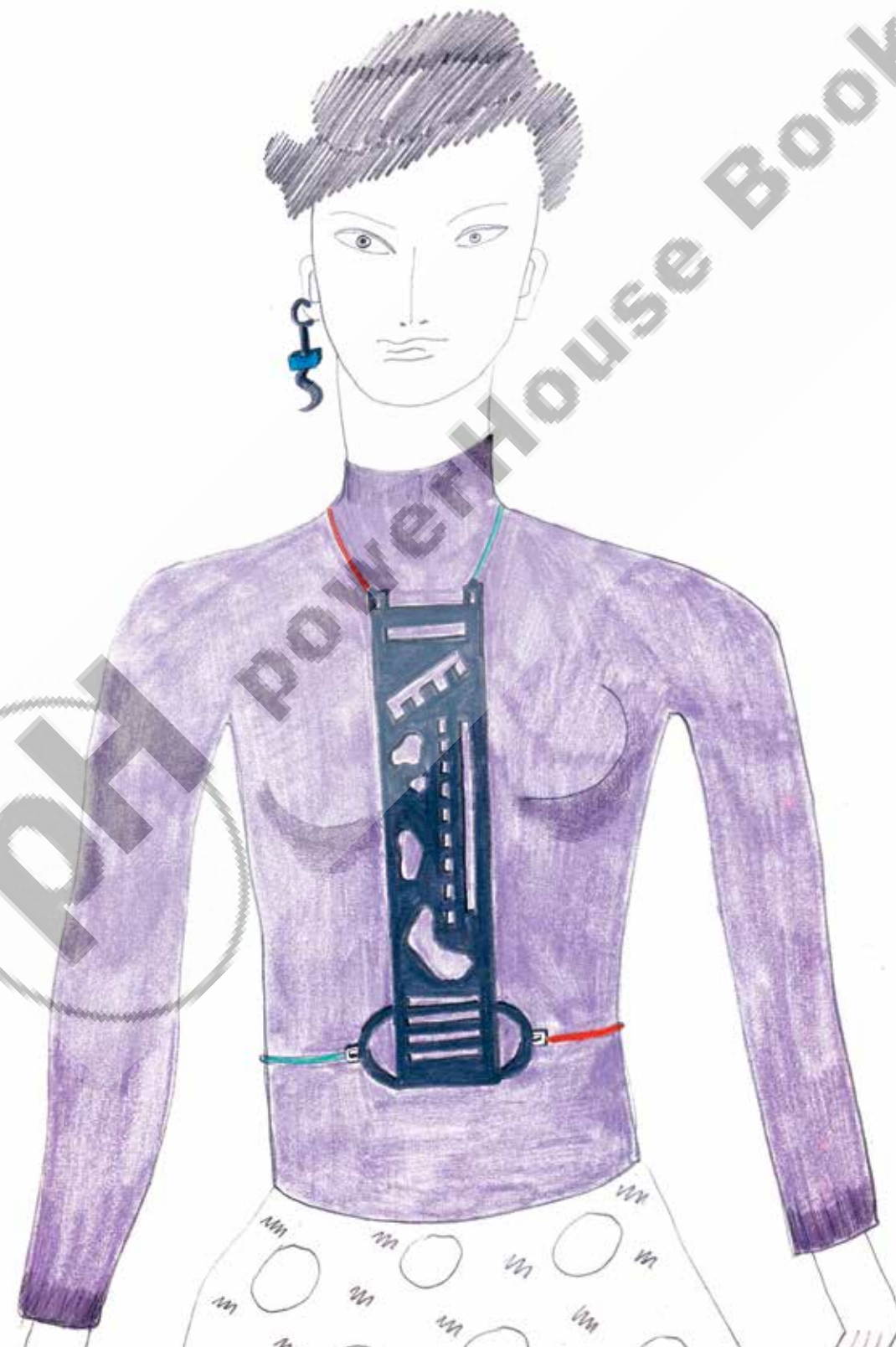
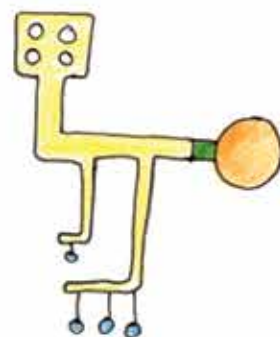
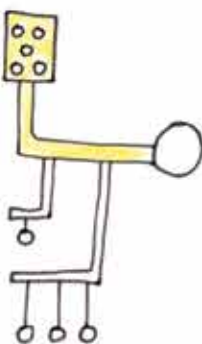
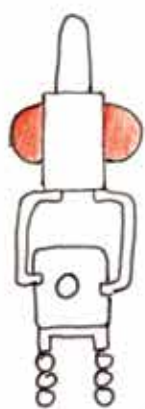
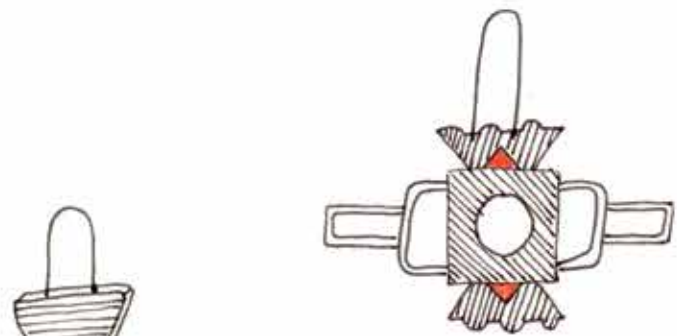
During the period George Sowden and I had a studio together (between 1982 and 1985), we worked for an Italian company called Lorenz, designing a collection of watches, wall clocks, and table clocks. That all happened because of the table

clocks we presented in the first Memphis collection; clocks in very simple shapes that George designed and that we both covered with silk screen prints. We contacted Lorenz when we were looking for tiny mechanisms for the clocks, which they very kindly provided us with. I think that was when the idea for "Objects for the Electronic Age" started to grow in our minds. This was happening before all the manufacturers expatriated to Asia, and Lorenz was a family business. The Bolletta family were nice people who were interested in novelties. Federico Bolletta, the son of the founder, was the person we were mainly in contact with. When he was young he began working for his father's business, touring Italy in his Fiat Cinquecento with his *campionario* (sample catalog). There were Lorenz retailers all around the country. They had a shop in the elegant Via Montenapoleone, and our collection, called Neos, was put on display in their window. When I started working my ambition was to design record covers. That never happened, but I have always liked the idea of printed paper, cards, posters, books. They are cheap, they are visible—they are pure communication. I was glad when Lorenz asked me to design some little cards for them.

Through Memphis we had met Javier Mariscal, and through him Mirella Clemencigh, another eccentric Italian woman with hundreds of ideas. She introduced George and I to Camper, the Spanish shoe company that was not yet the global brand that it is today. We designed some shoe boxes for them. For me it was an ideal project, like a poster but in the three-dimensional shape of a box. We also designed the checkout counter for their first shop in Barcelona and we visited them in Inca, Majorca. We thought it was a very nice company.







# TRAVEL. SUITCASES. JAPAN.

When I was 18 I decided that the experience of traveling would take the place of university for me, as I had no desire to study. I traveled, and worked in order to continue traveling. I had very little luggage and no camera. I was always observing and certain things really were etched in my mind. In the end it was like going to a school with lessons in aesthetics and humanity.

One day, when I was not working for his company anymore, Elio Fiorucci called on me to design some luggage. By then I knew many people who were traveling for work, taking airplanes, going to New York for two days or to Tokyo for a week, dressing up for meetings, etc. Traveling, the way I had done it just a few years before, seemed to belong to another life or another tribe. The suitcases and bags I wanted to design would need an exotic covering on top of luxurious modern materials and production methods. Fiorucci had said, "Something between Louis Vuitton and Samsonite." My idea of Louis Vuitton was vague, but I knew I wanted my luggage to be eccentric and different from any luggage that already existed. They were never produced.

Today I realize that at the time there weren't even suitcases with wheels. They were all so primitive...

In the 1980s I had several occasions to do some work in Japan. These gave me the opportunity to travel there three times, and those trips were important for me.

In the 1980s Japan was avant-garde and rich, which was a nice combination. It was super technological, and you felt it was a modern life very different from the American one. There were no highways or big spaces to travel through in big cars; the country was small and there were bullet trains in which they served you green tea. Tokyo was huge, it was dense, it was mysterious.

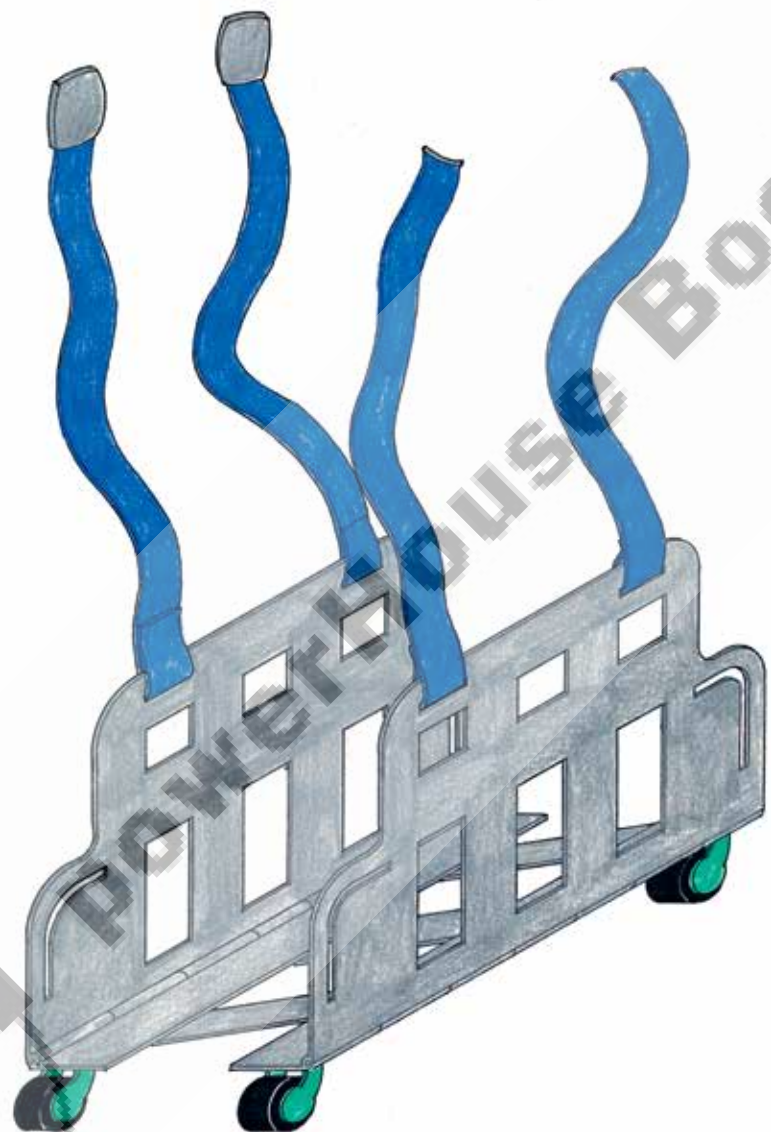
The faces were different, the food had a completely different look and taste—it was not only an aesthetic experience.

At the beginning of the 1980s when I "approached" Japan, I could feel the ambiguity of a modern country still very much linked to traditions and values I knew nothing about. I also probably mystified a lot of it myself, just like the Japanese of the nineteenth century who had misunderstood Western culture, or had only caught some superficial aspects of it.

I had been asked to design bedding textiles, and in that regard the Japanese had a different idea about it all, and that was stimulating. The client wanted something in the Memphis style, but it was 1985 and I was a bit tired of being the "Memphis girl." So I proposed something that was quite different. I tried to use different types of colors and in stranger combinations. I avoided strong colors and organized the elements in grids, rigid structures. The final result was neither Memphis nor what I had wanted... But it didn't matter, I had been to Japan and it was important.

Once, I was contacted by a group from Tokyo and they asked me to create a little fashion collection. At the time I was working with a Korean assistant who had lived in Japan most of her life. Despite being very critical of Japan due to the way Koreans were treated there, she knew Japan very well and was a good translator for much of the culture. In the proposal for the collection I thought about trying to mix aspects from both cultures—a global idea that was a mix, a juxtaposition, instead of a common denominator. That collection was not produced and now that I think of it, maybe the Japanese client had never intended to produce it at all, but was instead making an inquiry about taste.



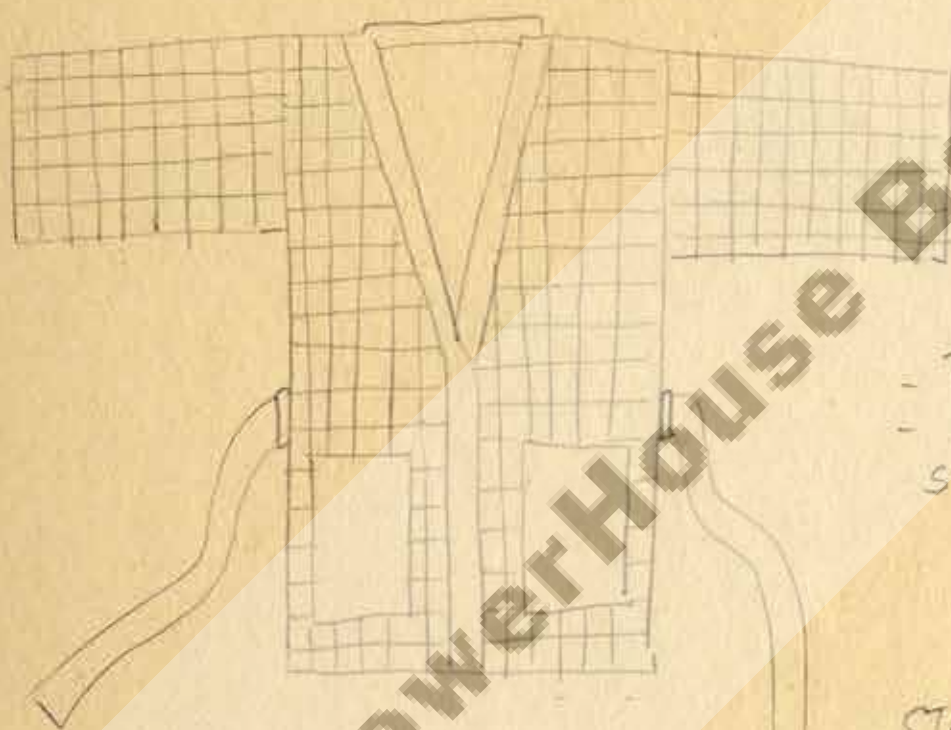






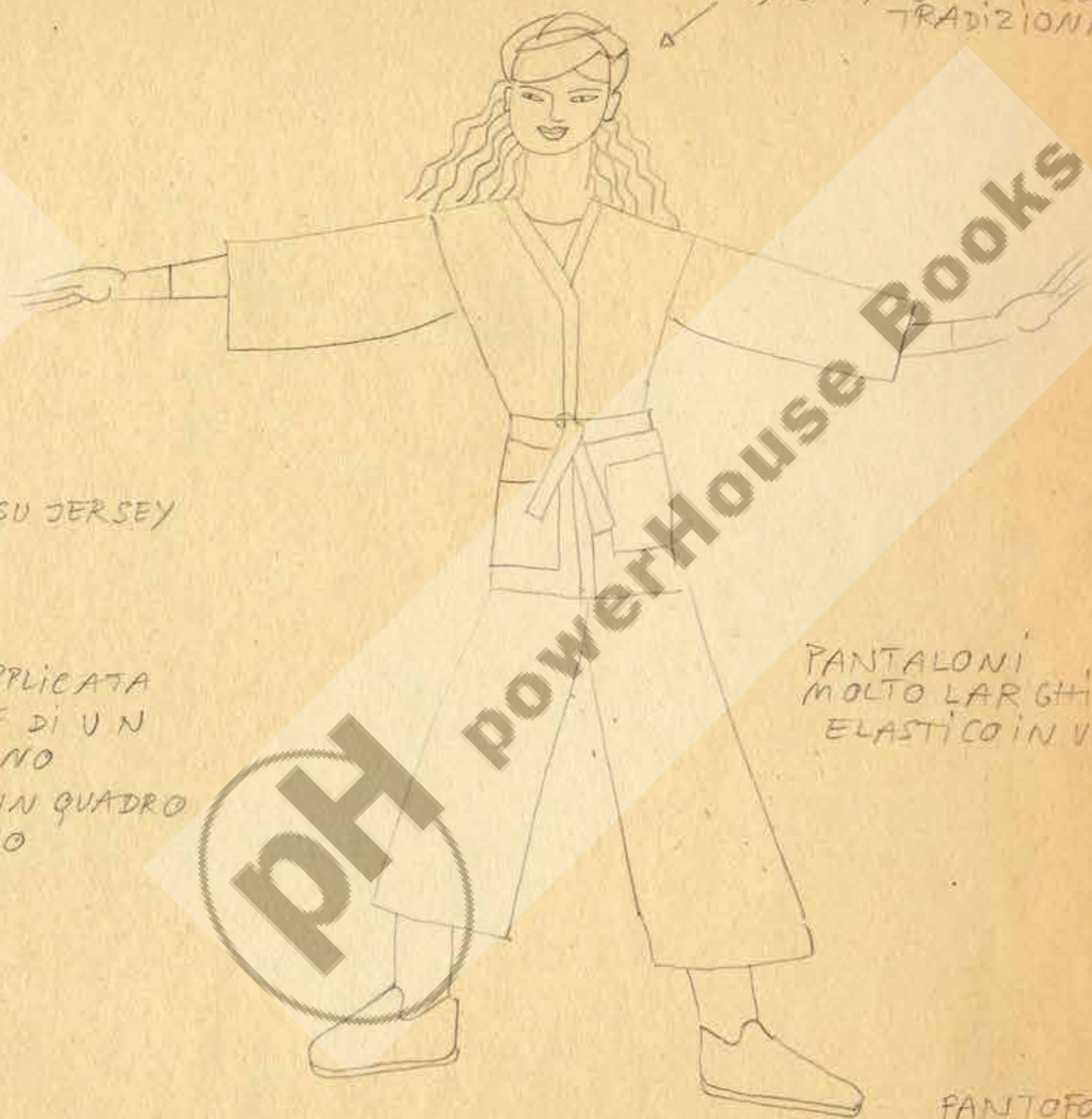
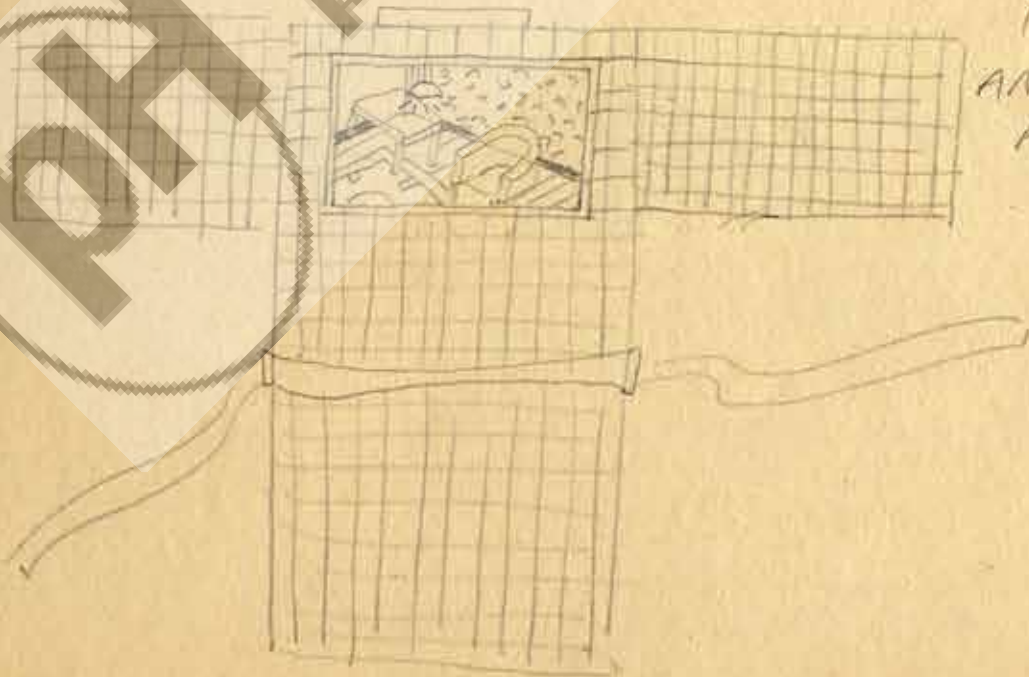


TURBANTE  
STOFFA GIAPPONESE  
TRADIZIONALE



- TARTAN  
- MADRAS  
STAMPATO SU JERSEY

STAMPA APPLICATA  
RIPRODUZIONE DI UN  
INTERNO  
ANCHE UN QUADRO  
ANTICO



PANTALONI  
MOLTO LARGHI  
ELASTICO IN VIT

PANTOFOLA  
DI FELTRO



# **FUTURE. RADIOS. CLOCKS. LAMPS. BOXES AND THINGS.**

In the future, which means tomorrow—now that we have entered the postmodern era—form no longer needs to follow function. That was one of the ideas of Memphis: design is communication. George, being a designer at Olivetti, had a particular relationship to technology and wanted to concentrate on objects. Of course, I thought that was the revolution that we had to start. Our motto was that technology could become so small that it could completely disappear visually and not interfere with the shape of things.

Between 1983 and 1984 George Sowden and myself decided to make a group of objects that would speak about the future of design when applied to electronics.

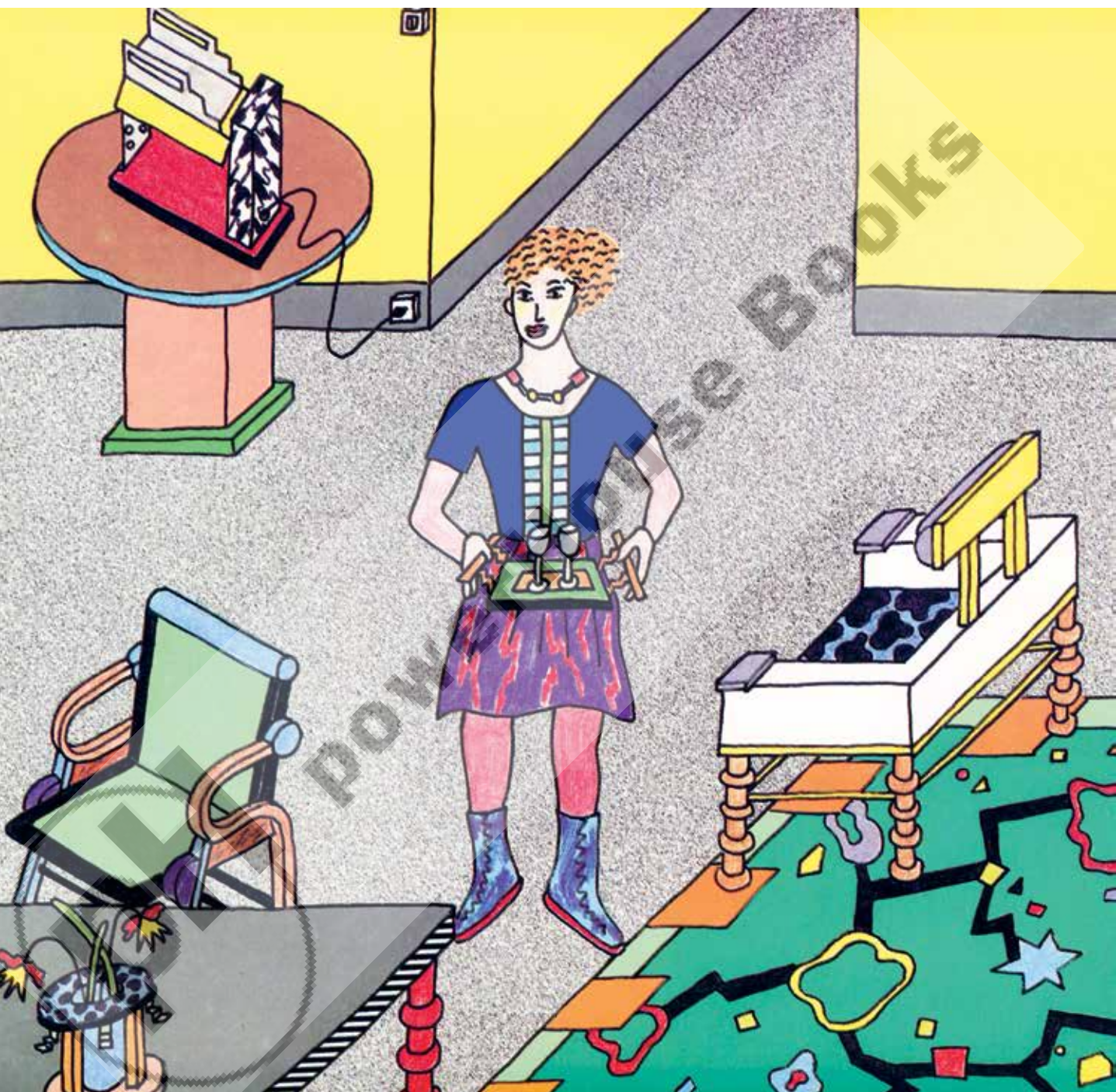
“Objects for the Electronic Age” was a collection of objects in folded metal sheet and plastic laminate. It consisted of 14 pieces—seven designed by George Sowden and seven by me—and it was produced by Arc 74 in an edition of 30 for each project and assembled by hand by

a clever man named Giuseppe Verdi (this is true). Many of the plastic laminates used on these objects had been made specially by Abet Print with the papers we had printed previously for the series “These Papers.” The laminates had been the reason for several visits to the Italian town Bra, where we had the possibility to do small sheets of our decors in a press that was used for experiments. That was real industry, a big factory. But for the electronic part we did not have many options. We managed to do some lamps and clocks but the rest—boxes, trays, and vases—despite having a very weird, modern aspect, were pretty low-tech.

Many drawings were done in preparation for this collection and many dreams were dreamt.

I would have loved to apply our theories on more hi-tech objects—I did several drawings for radios and televisions—but at the end of the day the industries that we were in contact with were artisan workshops...













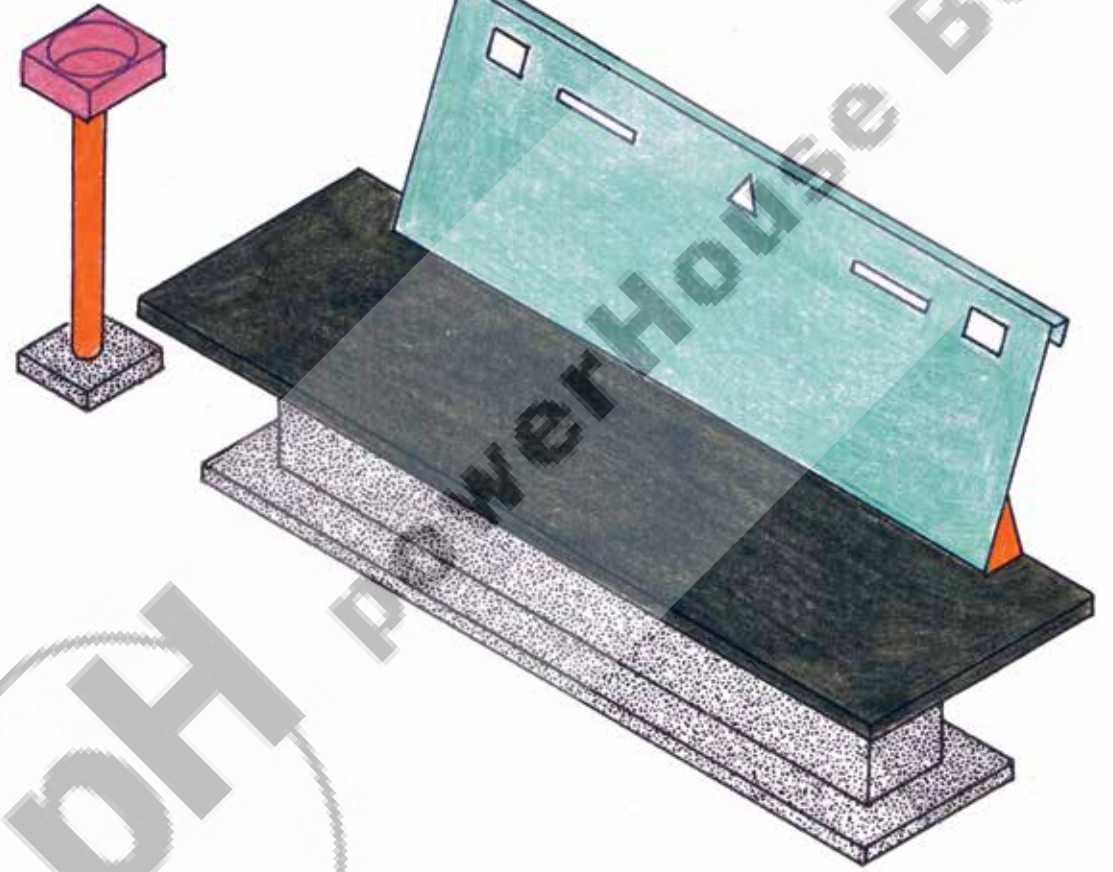
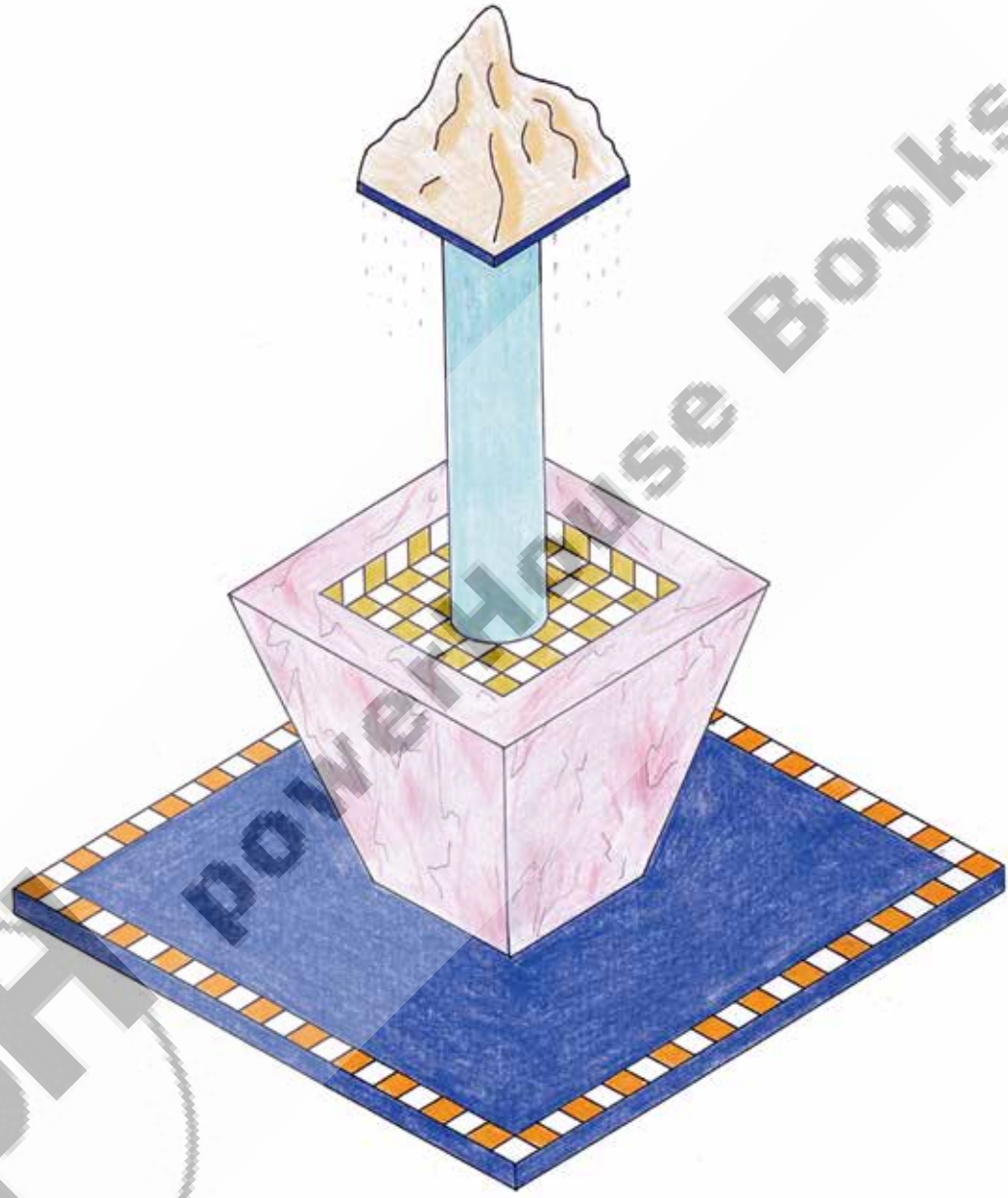




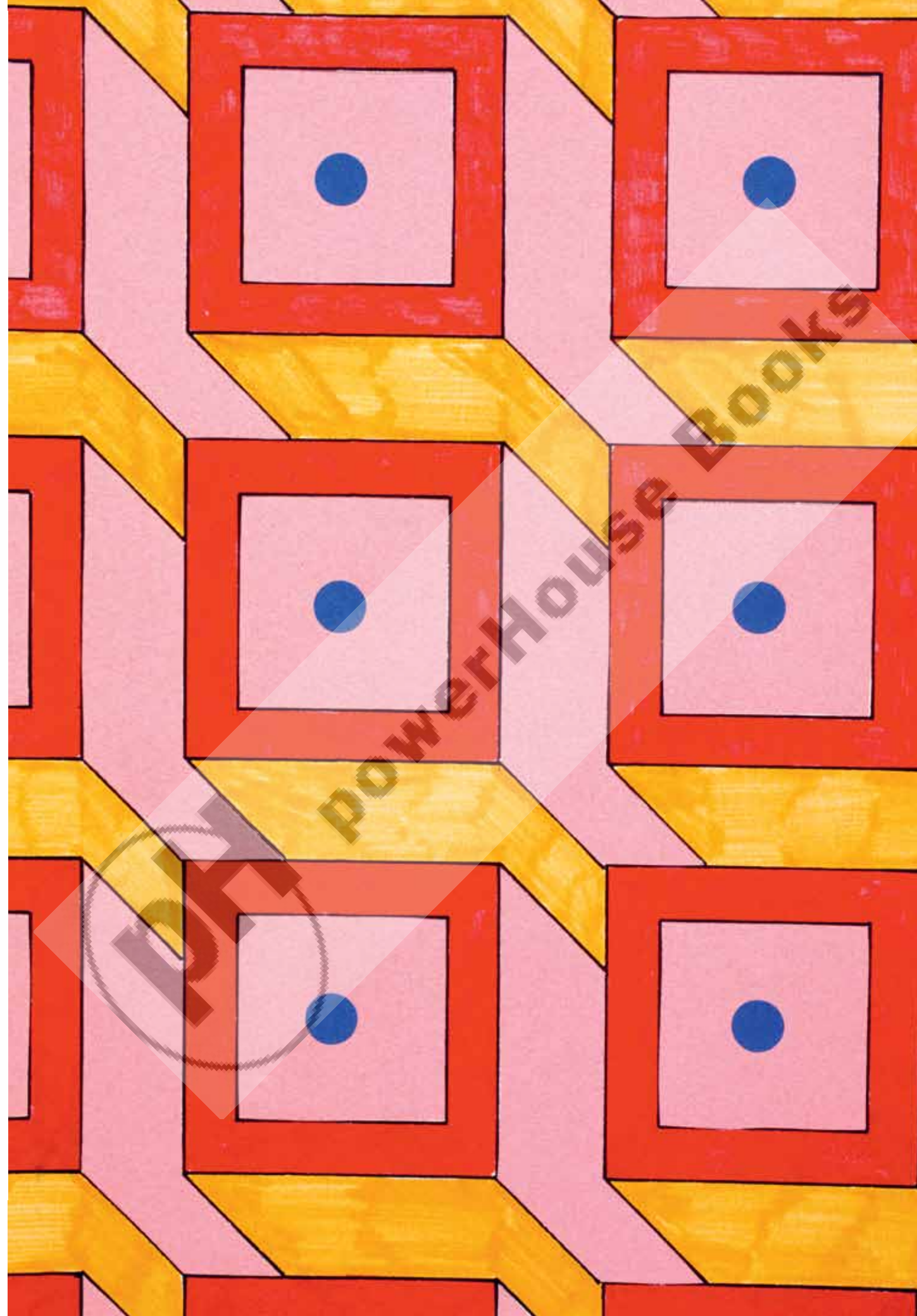
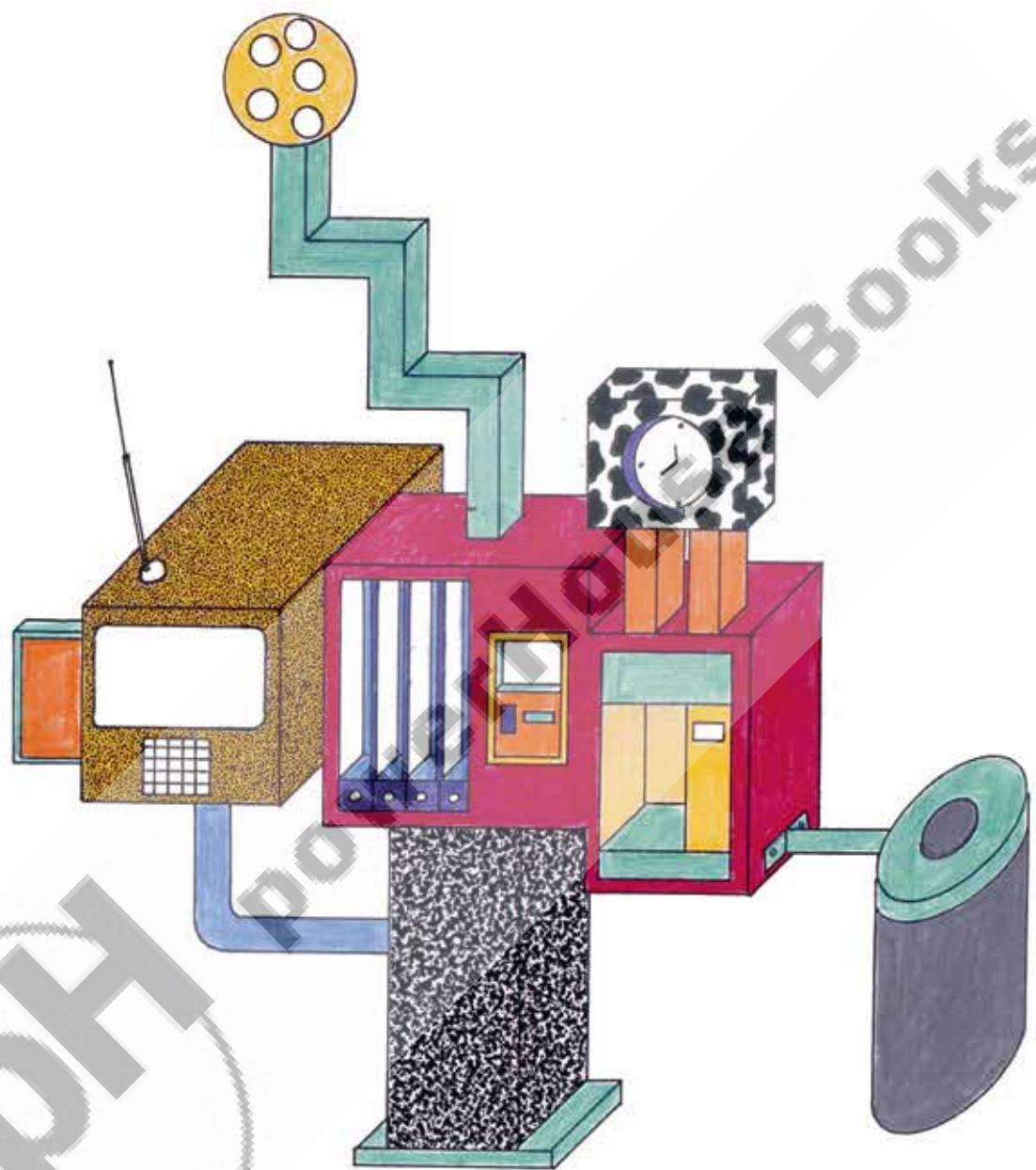








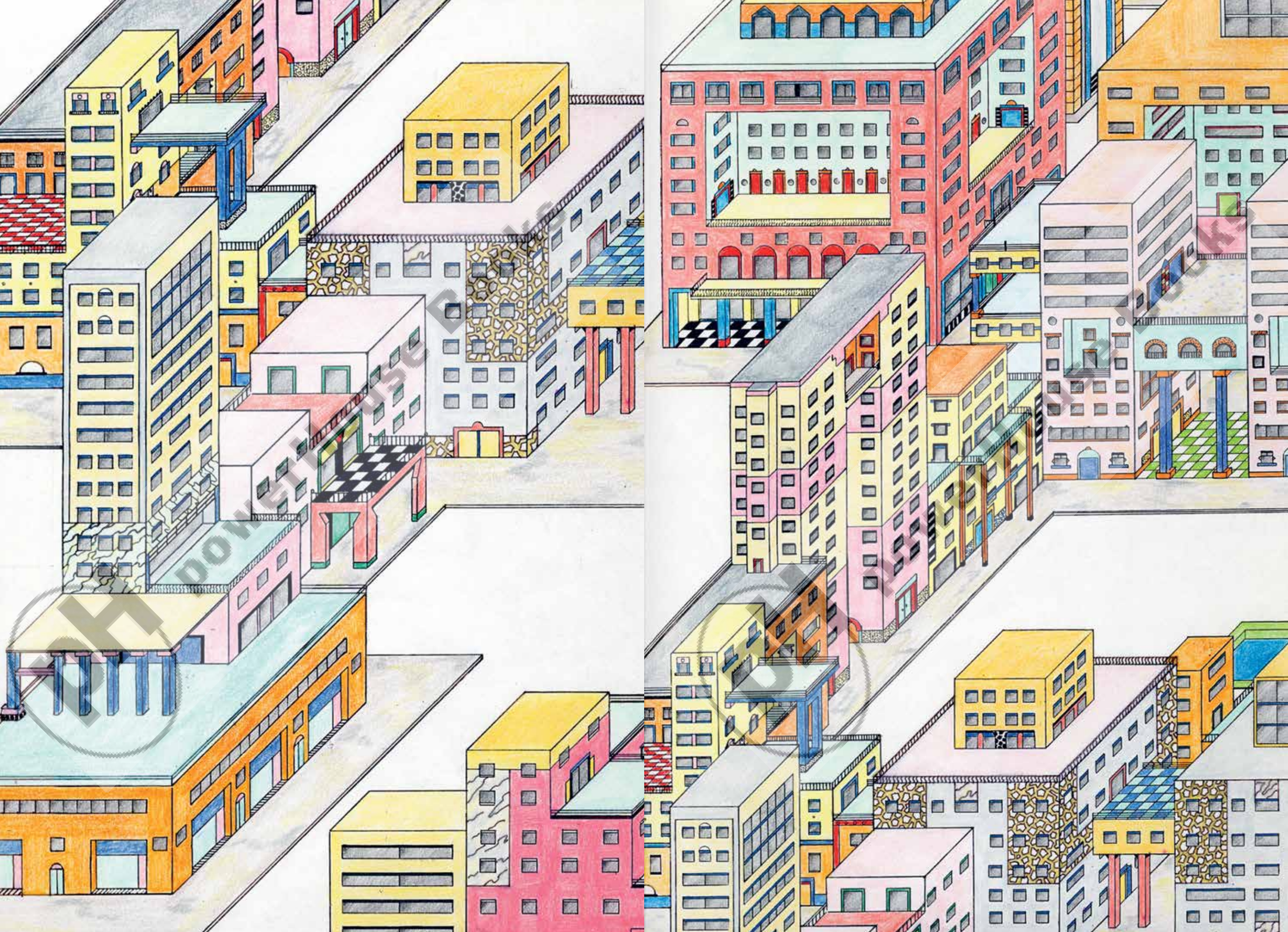














**INTERVIEW  
3236 WORDS.  
NATHALIE  
DU PASQUIER  
AND OMAR SOSA  
BY EMILY KING.  
LONDON  
DECEMBER 2013.**

Omar, how did you discover Nathalie's work?

Omar: I saw it online. I am not sure where, on a blog or something. The first thing I saw was a still life—a painting—I think it was a composition around a little stone. I was searching for images for *Apartamento*—I wanted to include more still lifes in the magazine. As I carried on looking, I found more and more great paintings by Nathalie. When I mentioned them to Marco Velardi he said, "Don't you know she was the Memphis designer?!"

So you didn't know about Nathalie's earlier work at that point?

O: I had no idea. I just liked the paintings and was thinking they were perfect for *Apartamento*.

And so you featured her in the magazine?

O: Yes, in Issue 8.

Nathalie: And then we made an exhibition in Paris.

O: For the launch of that issue, we did an exhibition in the bookshop of Yvon Lambert.

What did you show?

N: Drawings. There was this little room attached to the Yvon Lambert bookshop so they said, "Why not organize an exhibition?" What is a cheap exhibition you can organize in three days? A drawings show! That year I had done a lot of drawings, so we chose some of them. It took 15 minutes to go to a shop on the Boulevard Voltaire to buy some prefabricated frames and then we hung everything in about half an hour.

It's funny, isn't it? Some exhibitions take two years to organize, but others happen in two hours.

N: That's what I like. Making art is not mythical. It is part of life, part of what we do. Things shouldn't be complicated and expensive.

O: And it was a very nice exhibition, I have to say!

N: And the *Apartamento* crowd came. It was really fun. I have done exhibitions in France before and they have been a bit boring, but, after this show, I thought, "In the end France is not so bad." Of course they are mostly foreigners, your crowd, Omar.

When did you decide to work on this book?

O: That was a couple of years later. I was in Nathalie's studio one day and I saw some drawings. I think the first things I saw that really caught my attention were the drawings of the city. They really blew my mind. I have always been a bit afraid of asking you about the past and about Memphis, Nathalie. I didn't want to start asking you to show me more and more old stuff, because I prefer to think about the future and also I like what you do currently. But I loved these drawings so much, and I think you were also a bit curious about seeing that work again.

So you hadn't looked at it in a while, Nathalie?

N: No, I hadn't looked at it in a very long while, although I made books of all my patterns about six or seven years ago.

You mean the books with all your patterns grouped according to the year in which you designed them? I thought you had made them at the same time you made the designs.

N: No, I was not at all interested in the process of conserving what I was doing at the time. Some designers keep everything neatly, all cataloged, but for me everything is mixed. Those boxes are still a terrible mess. And my sketchbooks are started and then abandoned for months, or even years, and then picked up again.

So you're very different than someone like Alan Fletcher—he filled his sketchbooks consecutively and then kept them all in chronological order.



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