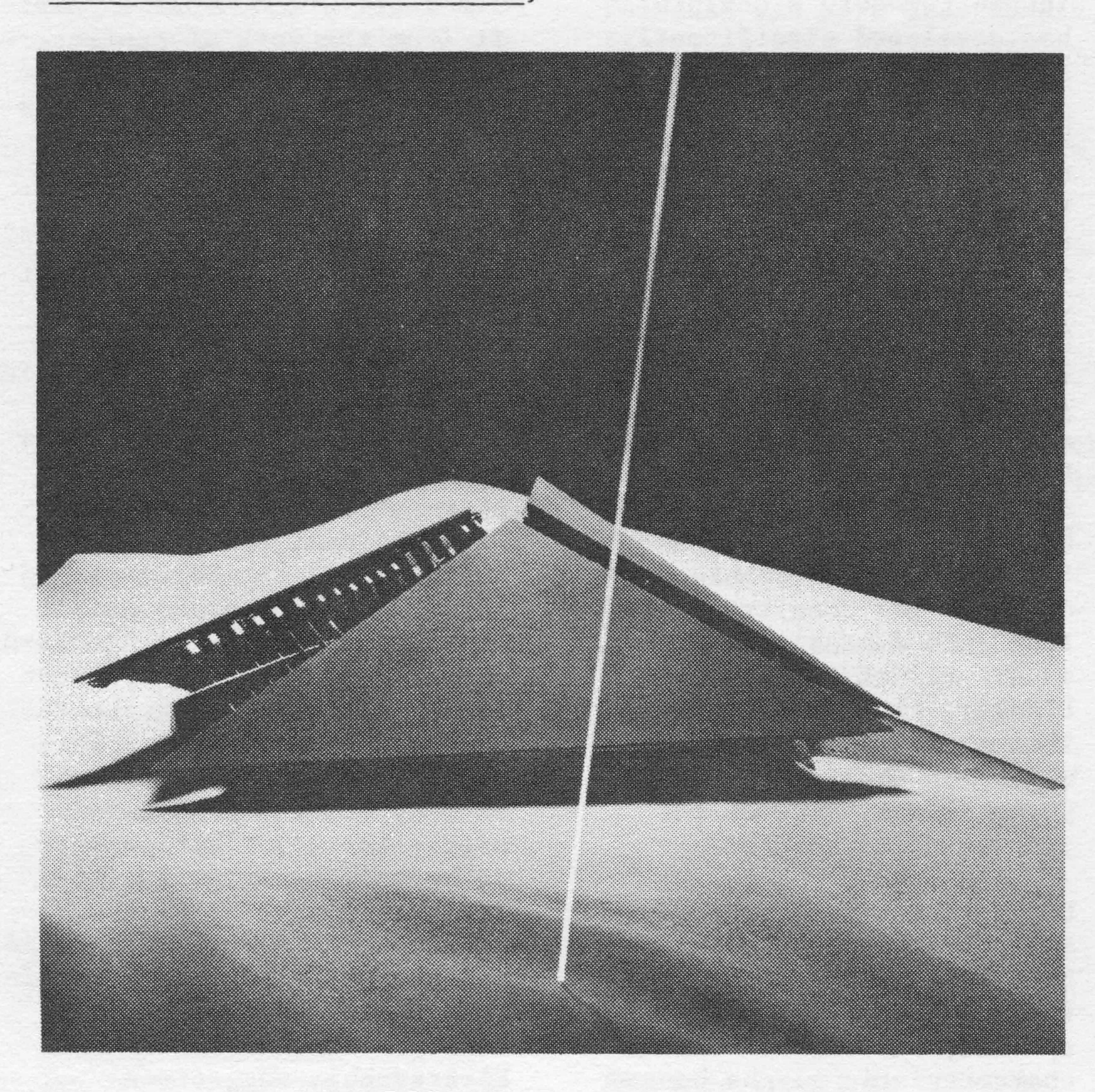
A Fortress-Tent for a Desert, 1975-80



Arnaldo Pomodoro, one of Italy's leading sculptors, was trained as an architect and, as a young artist, began designing metal jewelry. These two extremes of sculpture have been factors in his work throughout his career—the jeweler's attention to craft and detail acting as a foil to the increasingly architectural character of the sculpture.

Though Pomodoro's sculpture has developed significantly since his first exhibition of jewelry and metal reliefs in Milan (1954), it has remained non-objective and immediately recognizable by the receding and protruding lines and shapes, often called glyphs, which interrupt otherwise highly polished surfaces. Early inspiration for the glyphs came from jewelrymaking techniques as well as Pomodoro's studies of the drawings and etchings of Paul Klee. He first adapted the linear marks to his own drawings and then translated them into dimensional elements in his relief sculptures. Finally, they were transformed into a personal set of signs which, in their more organic permutations, suggest the process of corrosion.

During the sixties, Pomodoro's sculptures became large and free-standing, taking the form of cubes, cylinders, spheres, and cones. The characteristic glyphs became deep fissures or holes, as in Rotator with a Central Perforation, 1969, in the collection of the University Art Museum, Berkeley and placed in its Sculpture Garden. Rotator, a cored bronze sphere, exemplifies the smooth, streamlined exterior surfaces of Pomodoro's works, which have been compared with the unflawed, timeless forms of

the Rumanian-French sculptor Constantin Brancusi, whose work Pomodoro has long admired. The addition of the fractured and eroded elements in Pomodoro's sculpture, however, are the literal and symbolic denial of the perfection Brancusi reflects in his idealized shapes. In fact, it is the expressive content of Pomodoro's work, along with his insistence on maintaining a physical involvement with its fabrication, that separates it from the work of contemporary American sculptors of the sixties and seventies such as Tony Smith and Don Judd.

Nine models for sculptural commissions comprise MATRIX 42. It is especially fitting that Pomodoro's projects of the last decade be shown at the University Art Museum, Berkeley, since eleven years ago UC Berkeley's Powerhouse Gallery and Faculty Glen were the sites of his first major American exhibition. His contact with the Bay Area had been extensive, as an artist in residence first at Stanford University, 1966-77, and then at UC Berkeley during the fall of 1968 and summer of 1970.

In most cases the proposed pieces in this MATRIX unit go beyond the large-scale, public sculpture with which Pomodoro has become identified. All of the projects are architectural, either in scale or concept. The Village of Pietrarubbia suggests a dwelling; Fortress-Tent for a Desert is a true shelter; Project for the New Urbino Cemetery is, in fact, landscape architecture; A Wall with Elementary Signs is an architectural element designed to reflect the rich architectural heritage of Italy; Lighthouse with a Mobile Signal for a Port: Sea Fever, Sky Triangle for a Signal

Light, and Platform for a Theater are planned to perform specific and useful functions. Falling Movement, a sculpture composed of columns for the piazza of the Milan Cathedral, and Gateway to Europe, two bronze portals for Montgomery Square, Brussels, though not strictly utilitarian, are also not conventional monuments. Certainly, in full scale, both would be enormous, but unlike most monuments which are static reminders of a person or event, these proposed works are abstract and active, enlivened by the life around them. In an interview Pomodoro noted that "I can enjoy my sculptures in a park, in an ancient public square like Pesaro, or on a great university campus as they were at Berkeley. I like to see people lean their bicycles on the sculpture and pigeons come to rest, to see them humanized." Feeling that the artist must maintain an active social and political role, in these recent proposed works Pomodoro has moved towards a sculptural form that functions both on a purely practical level as well as on an emotional and personal level. The cemetery and desert tent, for example, are designed as private contemplative spaces set in a public context. Though Pomodoro's typical surface treatment continues to appear in the new work, its form varies. In Lighthouse with a Mobile Signal, for example, the cracks seem almost organic in origin; the surfaces of others, such as Sky Triangle, are covered with all-over groupings of patterns resembling industrial machinery parts.

In a recent conversation, Pomodoro expressed a belief that the future of sculpture is linked with that of architecture. Noting that the integration between architecture and sculpture which flowered during the Renaissance has been lost in our time, he feels that modern public sculpture is too often merely a benign adornment to a corporate ediface, and that to be meaningful, sculpture and architecture alike must serve the individual aesthetically, spiritually, and functionally.

Pomodoro was born near Pesaro, Italy, in 1926. Since his parents resisted the idea of his becoming an artist, Pomodoro studied architecture and engineering, teaching himself art in local and nearby libraries and museums. He moved to Milan in 1954. His first exhibition there, with his brother Gio, was a critical and popular success. He still lives in Milan but now spends several months each winter teaching and working in the San Francisco area.

Constance Lewallen

Concurrent with this MATRIX unit, Pomodoro will be showing work at the Stephen Wirtz Gallery, San Francisco.

"Invenzioni" by Arnaldo
Pomodoro (works in MATRIX):

The Village of Pietrarubbia:

A Sculpture, 1975, bronze and iron, each element 30 cm x 50 cm.

A Fortress-Tent for a Desert, 1975-80, bronze and Corten steel, each side 50 cm, 25 cm (h).

Gateway to Europe, 1978-79, bronze, each element 40 cm

x 80 cm (h).

Platform for a Theater, 1971, white epoxy, 61 cm x 62 cm (overall)

A Wall Covered with Elementary Signs, 1979, epoxy and iron dust, 82 cm x 36 cm (h).

Falling Movement: A Sculpture, 1972-73, bronze, base 81 cm

Lighthouse with a Mobile Signal for a Port: Sea Fever, 1977, painted bronze and Plexiglas, 120 cm x 80 cm x 100 cm (h).

x 136 cm, 90 cm (h).

Sky Triangle for a Signal
Light, 1979, bronze, each
side 10 cm, 300 cm (h).

Project for the New Urbino
Cemetery, 1973, bronze, 152
cm x 177 cm (overall).

All works above lent by Arnaldo Pomodoro.

Dialmo Ferrari, 14 drawings interpreting projects of Pomodoro, 1980, colored pencil on paper, each 50 cm x 70 cm. Lent by the artist.

Technical advice by Cesare Fiorese.

Selected one-person exhibitions:
Galerie Montenapoleone,
Milan, Italy '54; Kolnischer
Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany
'58, '65, '69; University Art
Museum, Berkeley, CA '70
(travelling exhibition, cat.
pub. with complete list of oneperson exhibitions and bibliography); Studio Marconi, Milan,
Italy '68, '71, '76; Sculture
nella citta: Pesaro, Italy '71;
Rotonda di via Besana, Comune

di Milano-Ripartizione Cultura, Italy '74 (cat. pub.); Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris '76 (cat. pub.); Stephen Wirtz Gallery, San Francisco '78, '81 (cats. pub.).

Selected group exhibitions:
Kassel, Germany, Documenta 3
'59 (cat. pub.); Venice, Italy,
Biennale Internazionale d'Arte
'56, '64 (sculpture prize),
'72 (cats. pub.); Sao Paulo,
Brazil, VII Biennale de Sao
Paulo '63 (sculpture prize;
cat. pub.); Storm King Art
Center, Mountainville, NY,
Summer Exhibition '77.

Selected bibliography in English about Pomodoro:

See also catalogues as indicated under one-person and group exhibitions.

Dorfles, Gillo. "Arnaldo Pomodoro, Sculptor for the Cosmos," Studio International, (London), vol. 167, no. 852 (April '64).

Whittet, G.S. "Pomodoro-Jewels," Studio International, vol. 196, no. 861 (Jan. '65).

O'Hara, Frank. "Trireme"
(a poem dedicated to Arnaldo
Pomodoro) catalogue of his
exhibition, Marlborough Gerson
Gallery, NY (Oct. '65).

Del Renzio, Toni. "Arnaldo Pomodoro: Invention of a Sculptural Style," Art International (Lugano), vol. XII, no. 6 (Summer '68).

Sculptures by Arnaldo
Pomodoro, Ed. Gabriele Mazzotta
(Milan: Mazzotta '74). Contains
several essays and complete
biographical and bibliographical
information.

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