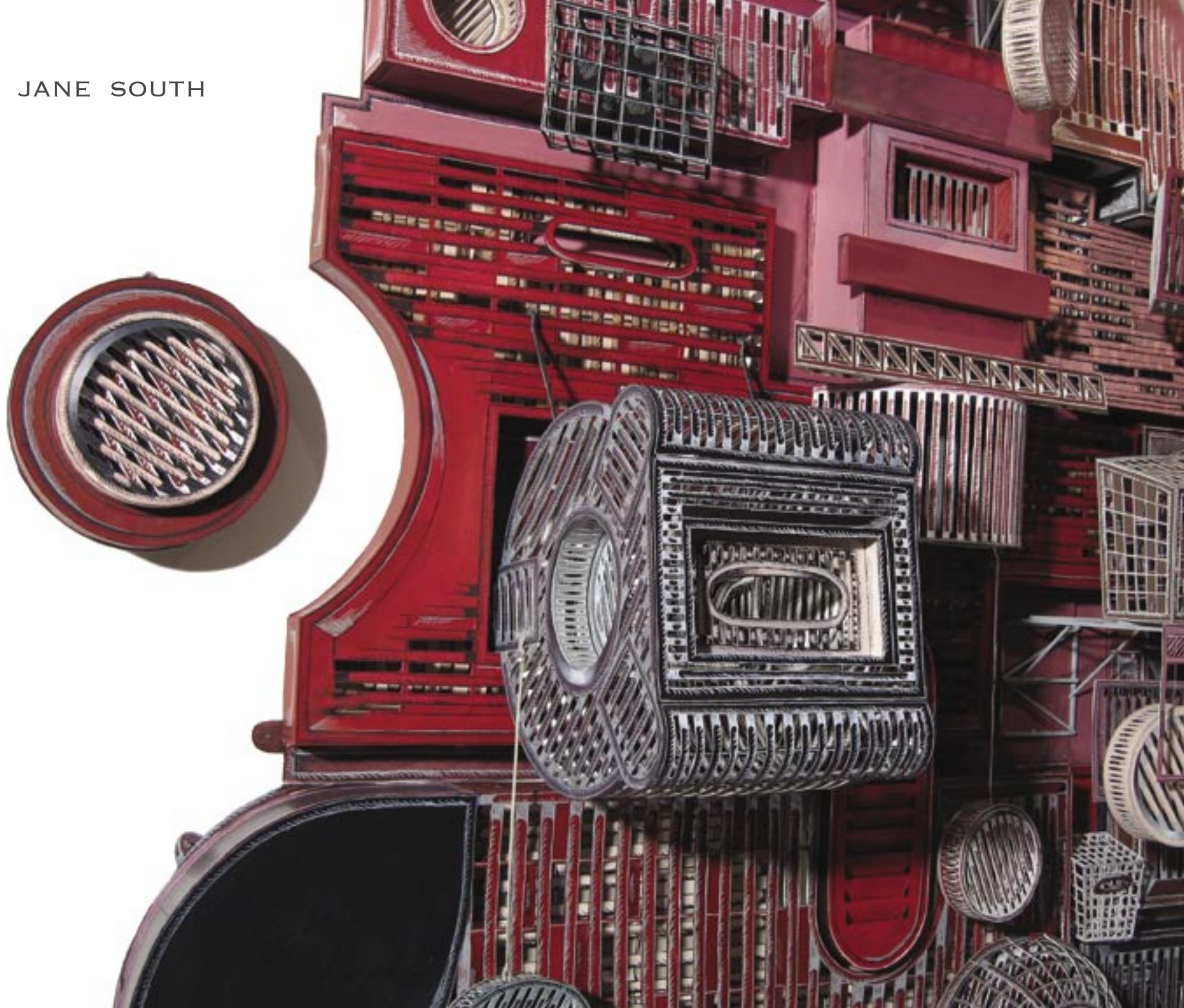
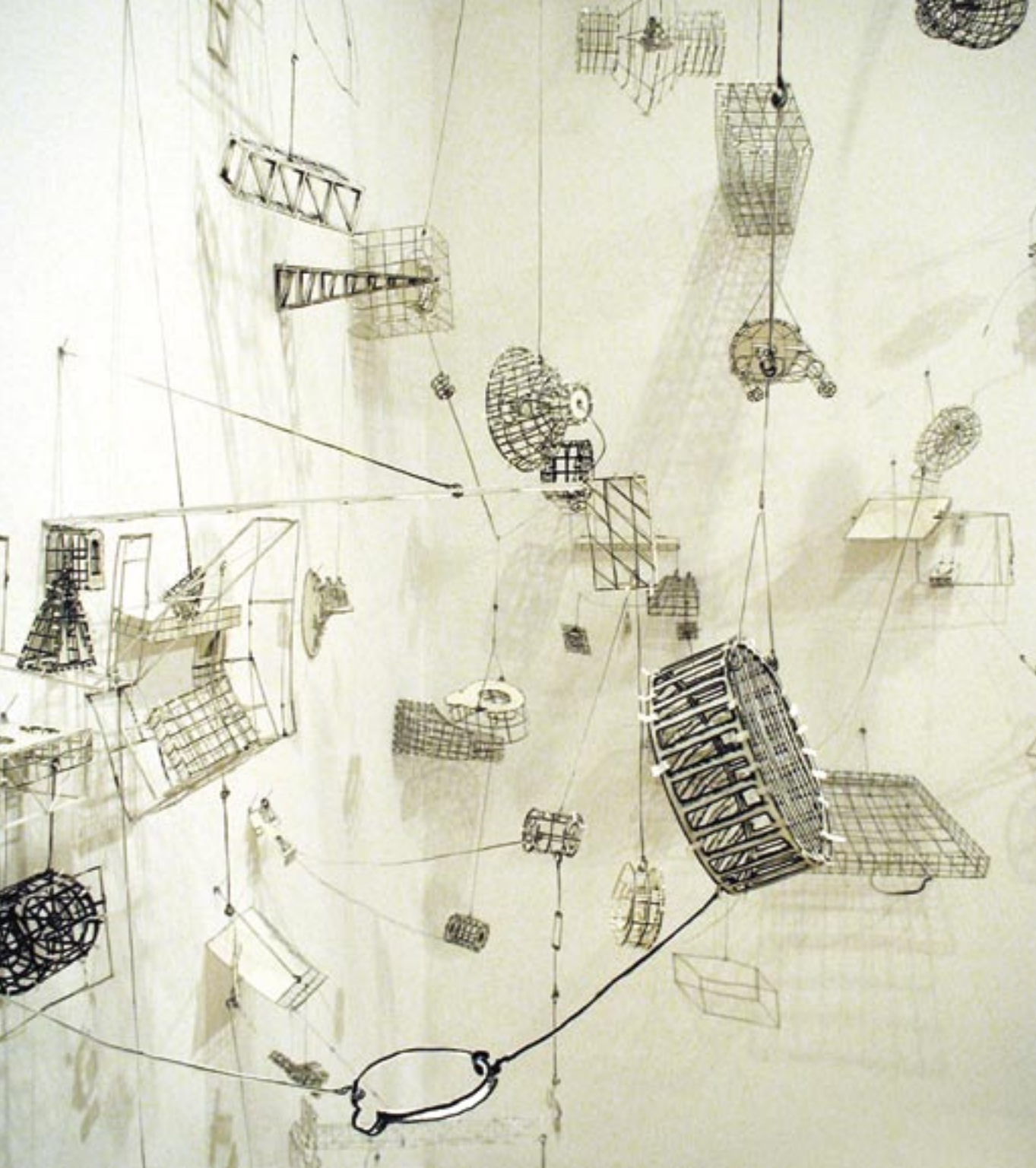


JANE SOUTH





Untitled (Drawing Number 1) 2001, detail
144" x 108" x 24"
hand-cut and folded-paper;
ink, acrylic and balsa wood
Installation at
The Drawing Center, New York, NY
Collection of John Friedman, New York, NY

Fluid Coordinates: The Work of Jane South

To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now. - Samuel Beckett

As I write this essay, residents of Queens, New York, have been without electricity for nearly a week. Recent power outages serve as a vivid reminder that we are all increasingly imbricated within and dependent upon grids, both abstract and real. Whether through power grids, IT networks, transportation routes, skyscrapers, or tract housing, we are interconnected through a surfeit of layered systems - fluid, concrete, and expanding. Just as the grid is an underlying, organizing structure of most urban life, it also informs Jane South's intricate hand-cut and folded-paper constructions.

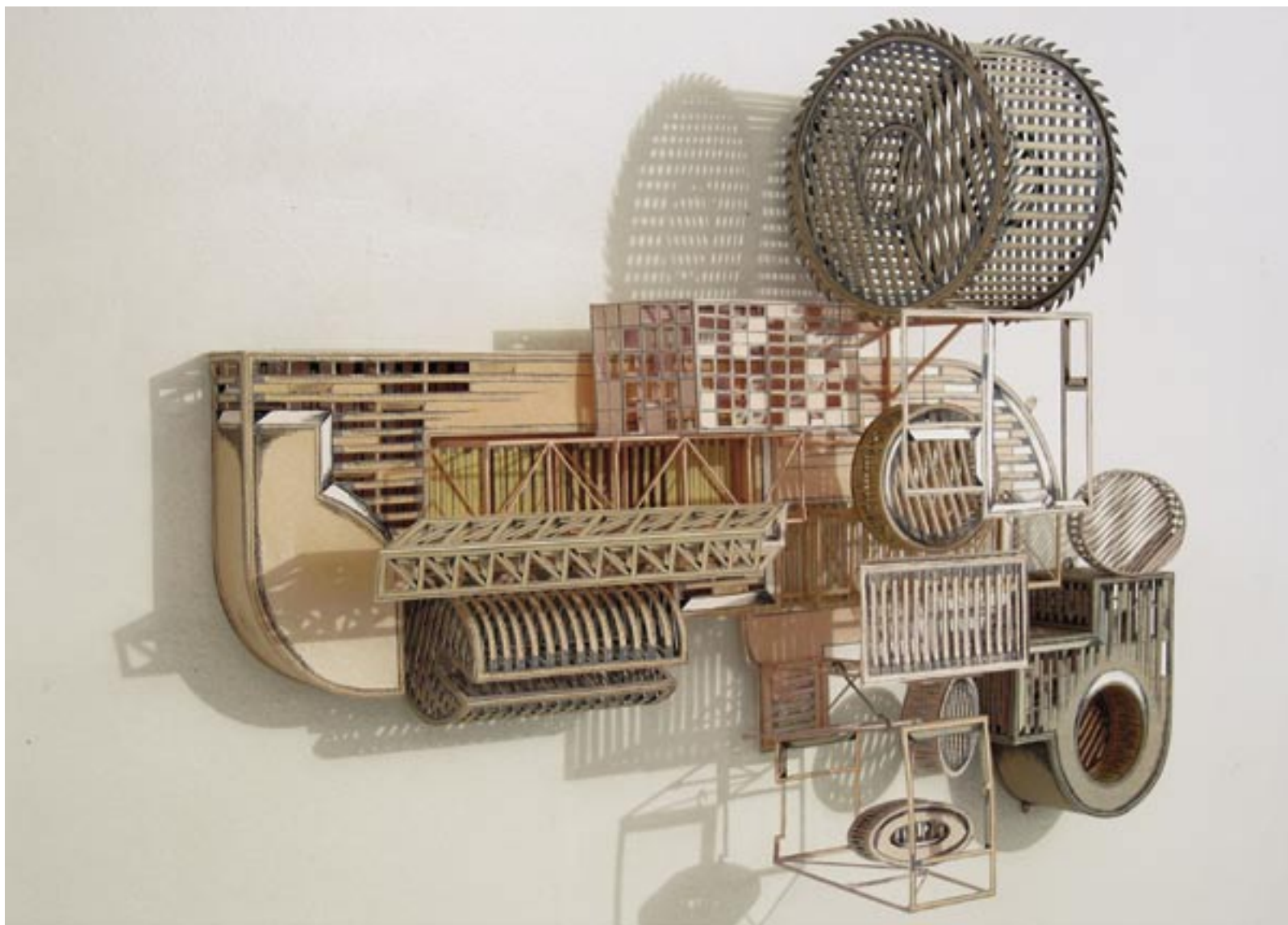
The view from South's studio in Brooklyn looks up into the steel girding of the Brooklyn Bridge and the span of the two granite towers connected by steel suspension cables. Not far in the distance, you can also see the layering of the Manhattan and Williamsburg bridges. Whether this is a fortuitous proximity or not, it is a germane entry point into the artist's work, which resides in the terrain between drawing and sculpture. Bridges, heating ducts, wheels, electric saws, grates, hooks, cranes, cages, ladders, information towers, pulleys, brackets - these are but a few of the objects that animate the cut forms in South's cantilevered constructions. Her visual lexicon derives from a mechanized, accelerated environment where several clicks of a mouse enable one to travel around the world, speeding through layers of information and images. Her work speaks to the interconnected, sprawling nature of our modern environment.

Although clearly inspired by the industrial world, many art historical references also surface throughout South's body of work. It is difficult not to recognize origins in Mondrian's Neo-Plastic grids that sought to achieve a balance between the universal and the particular; or the geometric innovations of the Bauhaus, or the kinetic sculptures of the Constructivists. But one also sees in South's oeuvre the contemplative work of Agnes Martin, for whom the grid was an abstract symbol of perfection that existed only within the mind's eye. South's pieces further resonate with the Postminimalist grids of Eva Hesse, whose concentric forms within a square represented balance between order and chaos.

South shares the closest aesthetic affinities with the process-oriented work of the 1960s and 70s. Indeed, the artist has cited the work of Gordon Matta-Clark as being an important influence, specifically his movement through space and form. Moreover, the compact density of her recent curvilinear works, such as *Untitled (Geodesic Dome)*, 2005, recalls the assemblage practice of Lee Bontecou, who brilliantly fused natural and man-made materials in her singular sculptures. Like Bontecou's assemblages, South's circles are at once both imposing and intimate.



Untitled (Geodesic Dome) 2005
60" diameter x 12"
hand-cut and folded-paper; ink, acrylic
and balsa wood
Private Collection, Los Angeles, CA



Untitled (Pink Cement) 2005

37" x 35" x 8"

hand-cut and folded-paper; ink, acrylic and balsa wood

Private Collection, Boston, MA

South has also experimented with welding, as Bontecou did. In fact, welding initially led her to make some of her first paper sculptures and to transform industrial material into soft, malleable, and delicate forms. Describing her fascination with the welding process, South has stated:

[It's] beautiful to watch up close. Definitely I liken the minutely focused experience of seeing metal melt into metal and fuse so completely into its opposite (hot, orange, wet, soft, cold, gray, hard, rock dry), to watching the glossy fluid inkiness of ink flow from the end of a nib and get absorbed into [the] rag of paper to make a line.¹

The impulse to see the line transposed in space undergirds South's practice. What begin as two-dimensional drawings become hanging, geometric tableaux. Light reinforces the three-dimensional quality of her work, as shadows cast on the wall render depth, character, and movement to her shapes and patterns. Her early, lyrical installations often spanned entire walls, traveling down corridors, around corners, and up to ceilings. At MASS MoCA in 2002, her installation, *Working Drawing*, spanned a 100-foot hallway. In her last solo exhibition at Spencer Brownstone Gallery in New York, her work penetrated a gallery wall; for *Untitled (Double Cut Wall)*, 2004, South first cut circles through two layers of Sheetrock and then filled the holes with laser-cut fiberboard. In some of her most recent constructions, lines become dense webs of hanging contours that inhere structurally. These large rectangles, circles, and strips become deceptive as their compactness makes them appear concrete, more solid than they are. In the last year her work has become more aggressive (a mark of our times, no doubt), as evidenced by her selection of darker colors and forms that resemble menacing machinery, such as electric saws with serrated blades. Her work, however, never strays far from the absurd.

South worked in theater for about six years, and her experience with movement, gesture, shadow play, psychological or emotive connection, and physical presence also informs her ideas about art. While working on productions of the linguistically precise plays of Samuel Beckett, she gained an aptitude for turning things on their head, paring down gestures, letting things be, and breaking the rules.² It is not difficult to see how she has translated these ideas into her art. This ability to conceptually play with the materiality of her environment makes her work contingent, imaginative, and invigorating. After all, the question of material is central to our experience of modern life, wherein the slippage between concrete reality and amorphous, digital environments (the seen and the unseen) grows ever wider. South's fluid coordination of opposites, or her ability to reconfigure both tangible and intangible grids, invites us not only to engage with her art but also refreshes our eyes to our own surroundings.

Apsara DiQunizio

Curatorial Associate, *Painting and Sculpture*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Epigraph. Quoted in Tom Driver, "Beckett at the Madelaine," *The Columbia University Forum*, Summer 1961, 23.

¹ Email correspondence with author, July 25, 2006.

² Ibid.

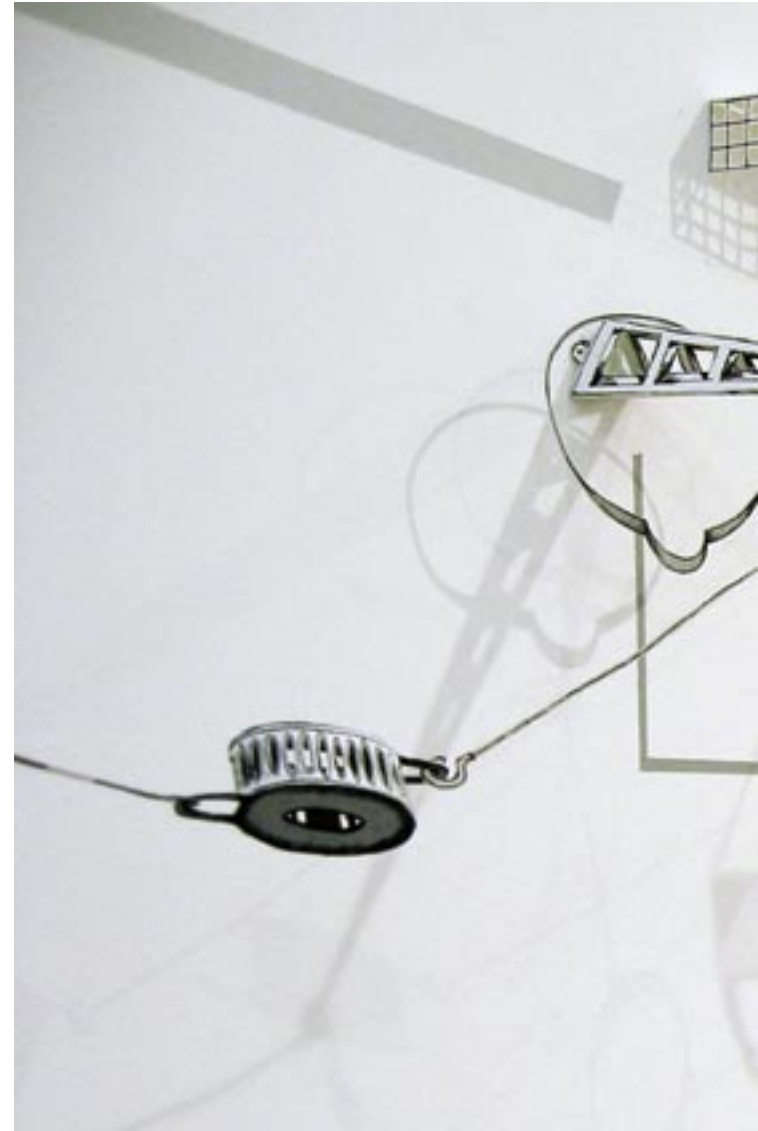


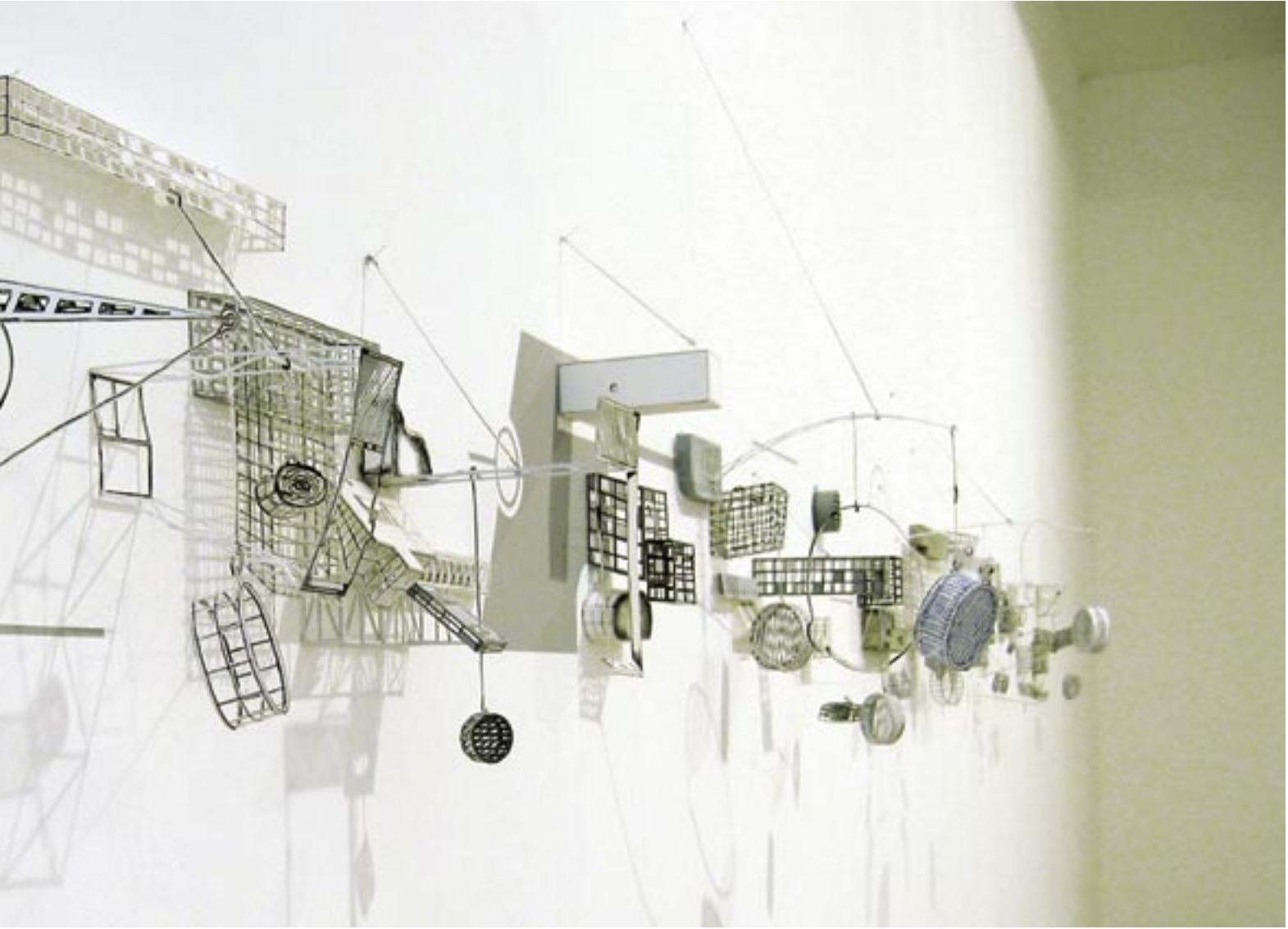
View from the artist's window, Brooklyn, New York, 2006

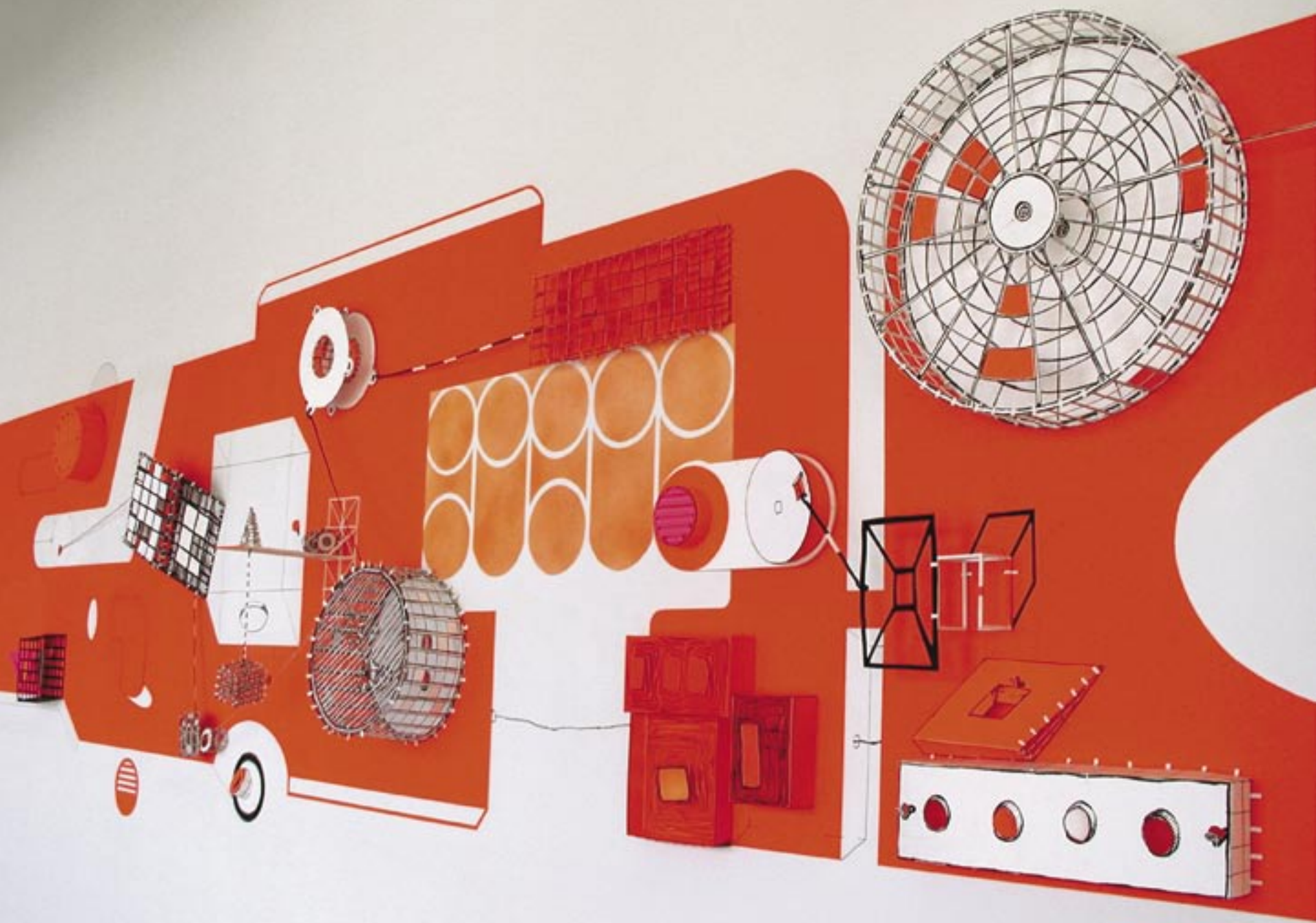
Untitled (Concave/Convex) 2005
60" diameter x 12"
hand-cut and folded-paper, ink, acrylic and balsa wood
Private Collection, Los Angeles, CA



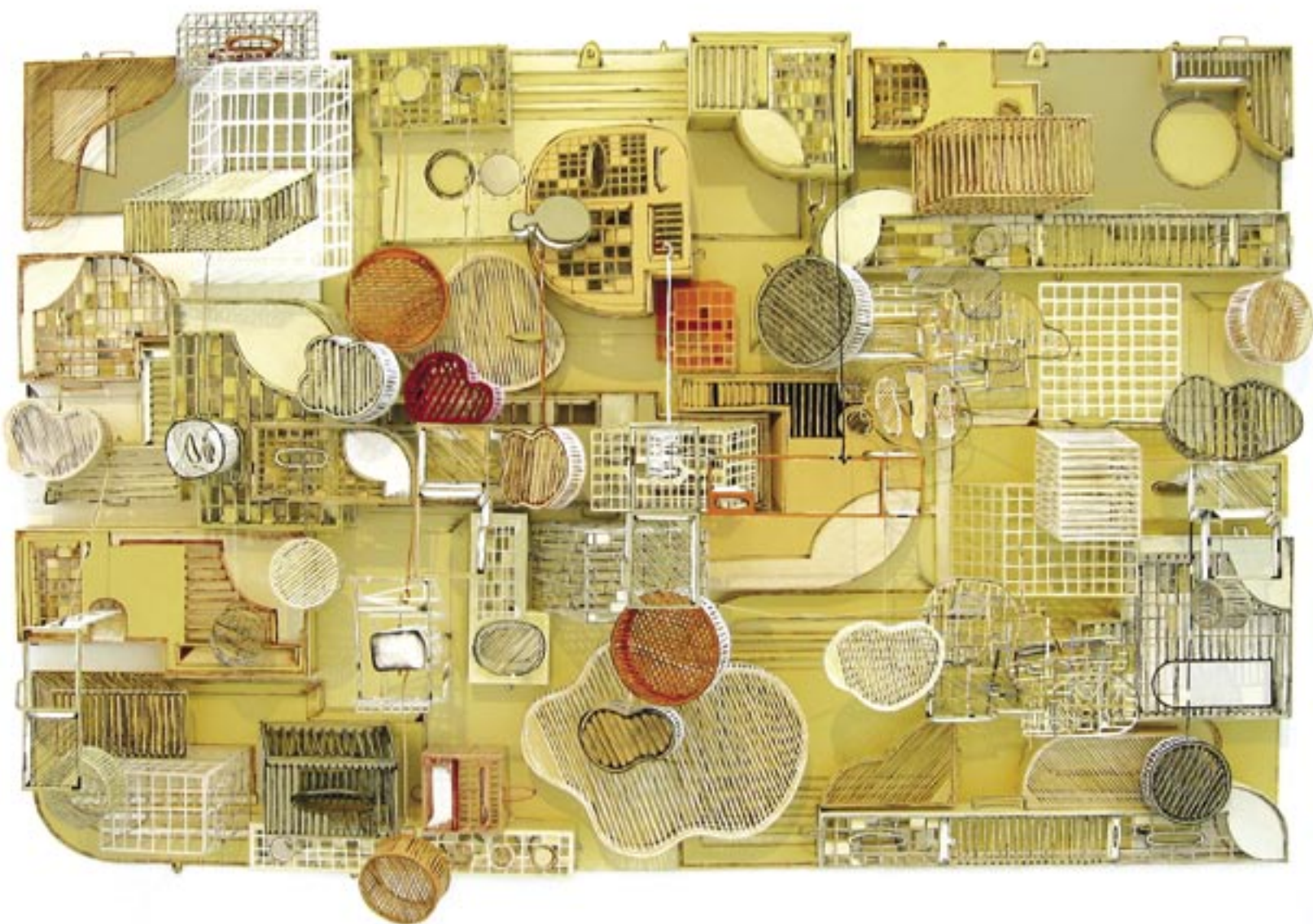
Untitled (Horizontal Strip) 2004, detail
Installation at Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA), Winston-Salem, NC
480" x 36" x 12"
hand-cut and folded-paper; ink, acrylic and balsa wood

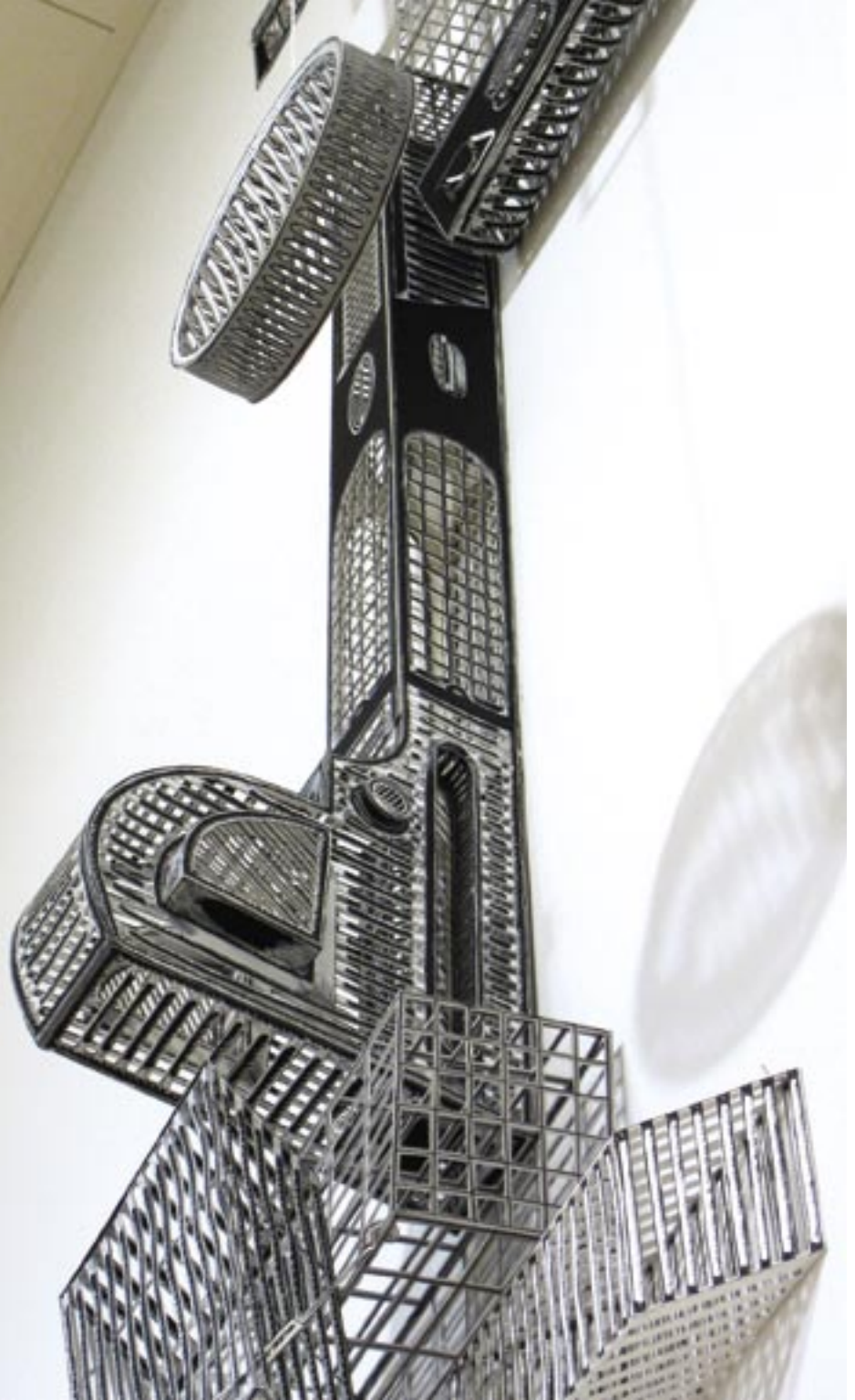






Untitled (Yellow Panel) 2004
48" x 60" x 9"
hand-cut and folded-paper, ink, acrylic and balsa wood
Collection of Bo Peabody, New York, NY





Untitled (Infrastructure) 2005, details
192" x 36" x 10"

hand-cut and folded-paper; ink, acrylic and balsa wood

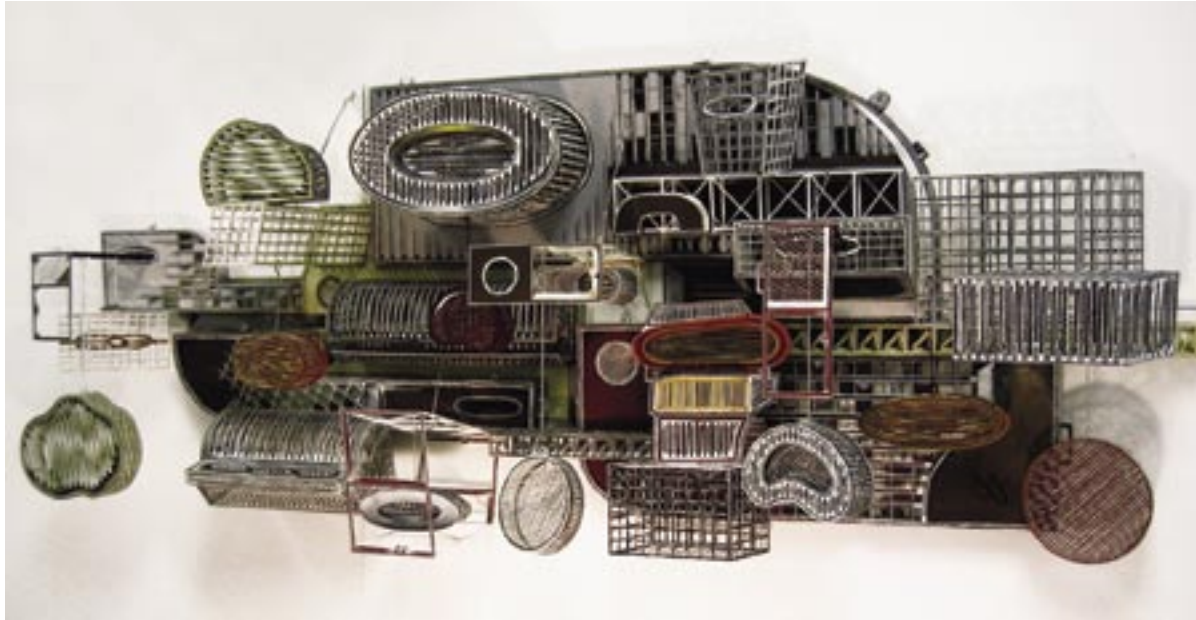
Installation at

The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT



Untitled (Green Construction) 2004
20" x 6" x 17"
hand-cut paper, ink, acrylic and balsa wood
Private Collection, New York, NY





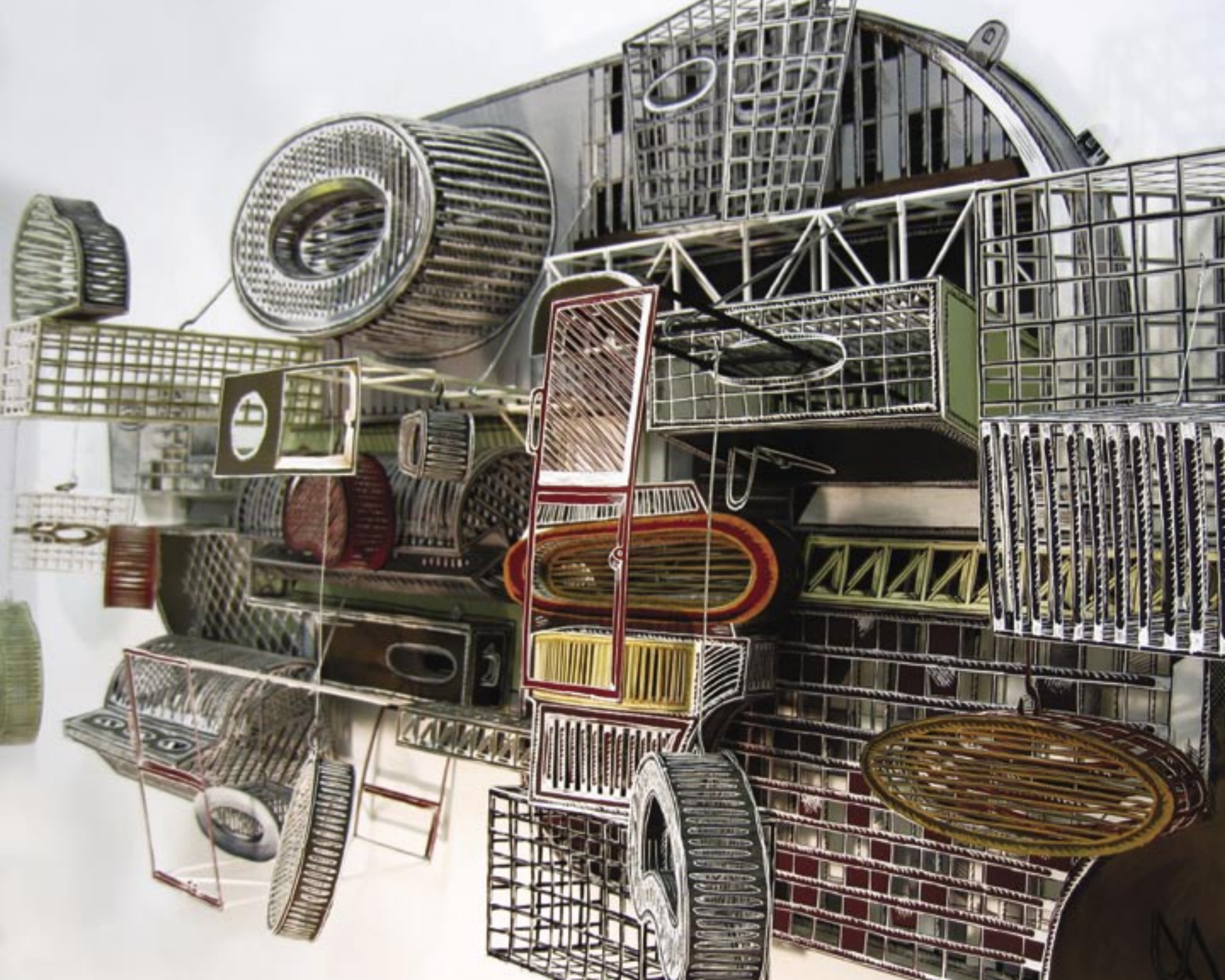
Above: *Untitled (Urban Strip)* 2005

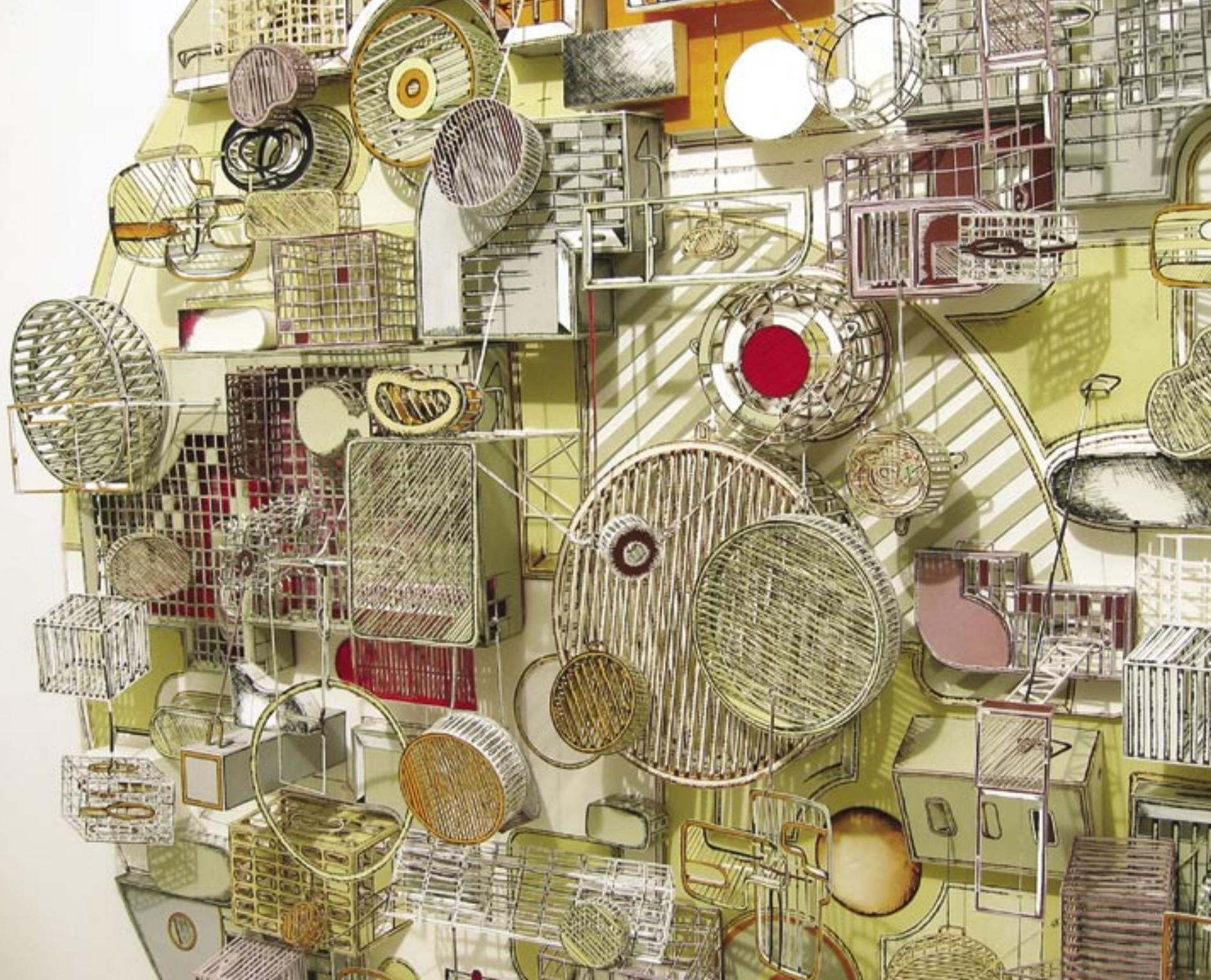
54" x 24" x 12"

hand-cut and folded-paper, ink, acrylic and balsa wood

Collection of Gregoris Papademetriou, Athens, Greece

Right: detail



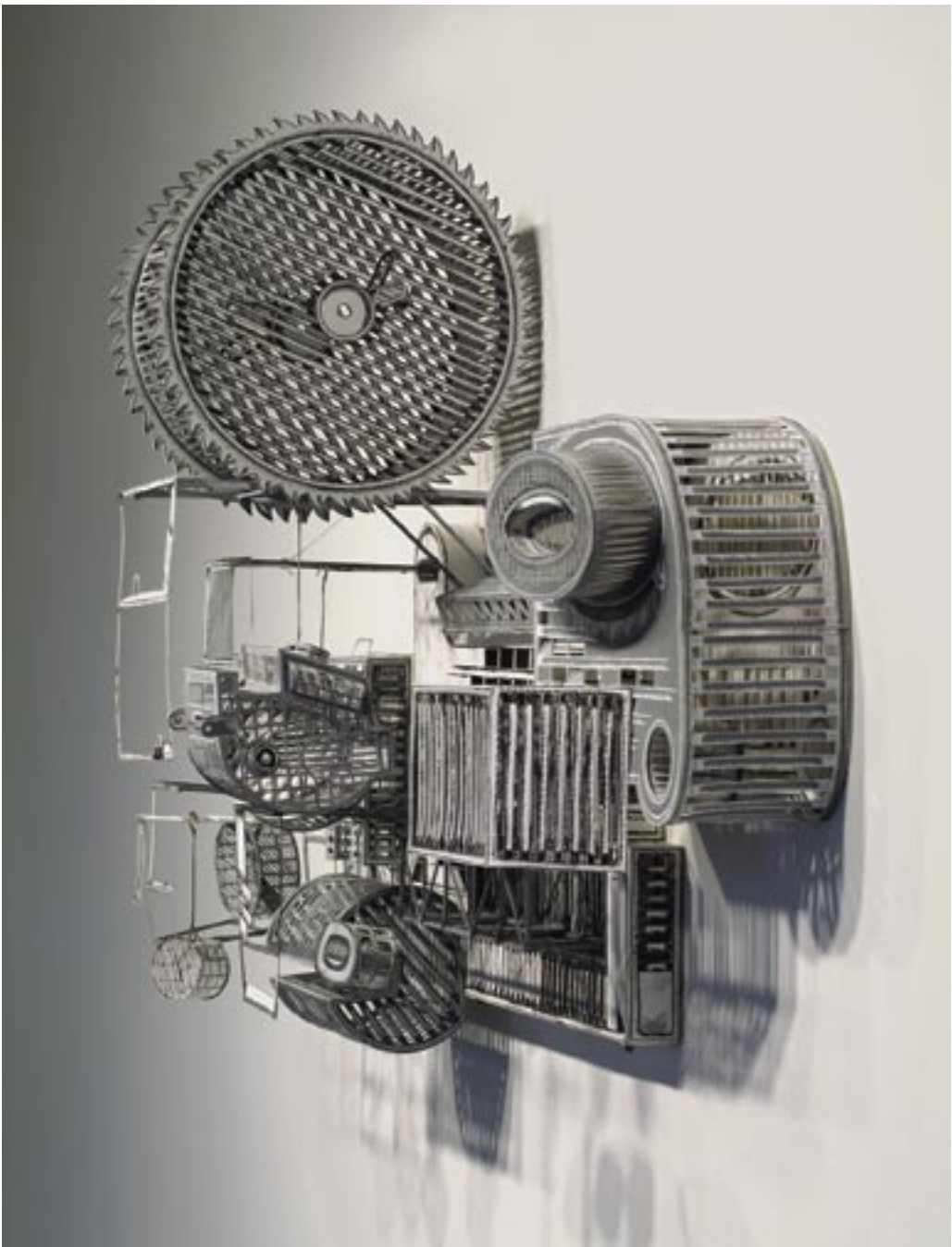




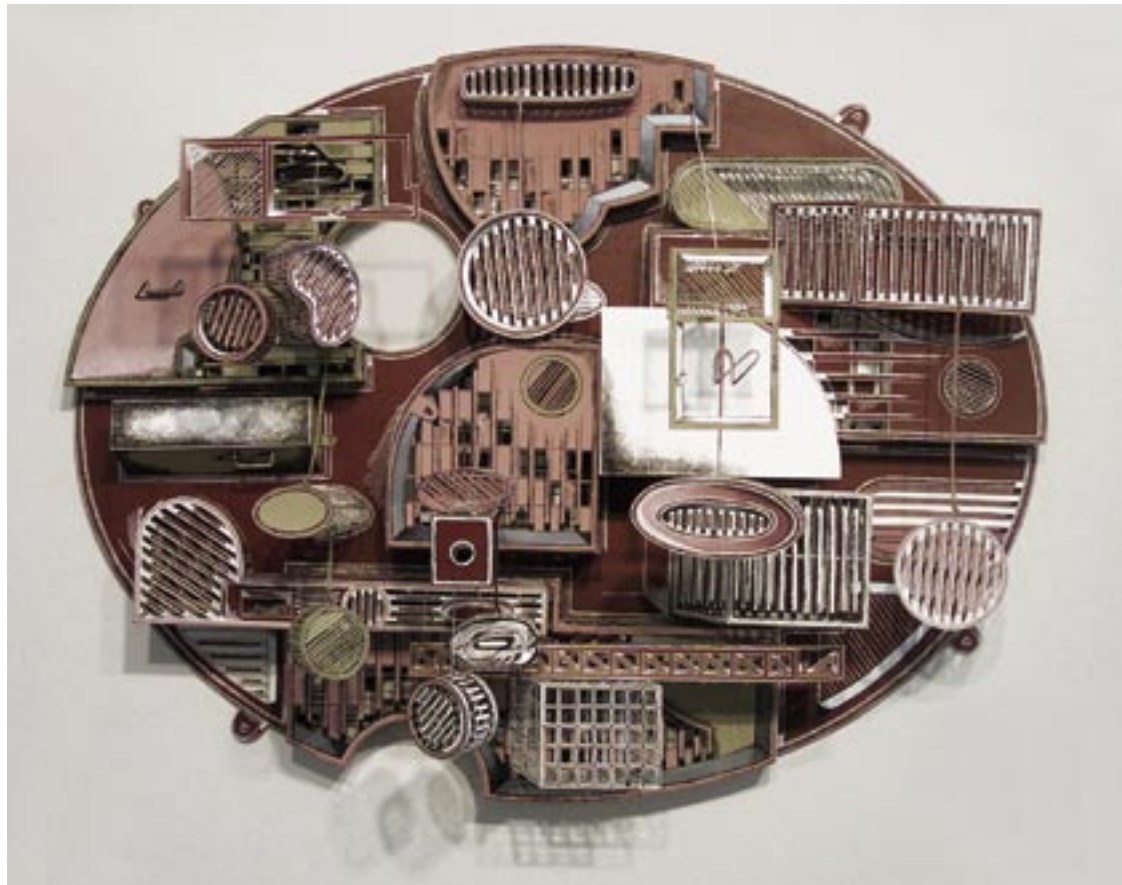
Above: *Untitled (Yellow Circle)* 2004
60" diameter x 12"
hand-cut and folded-paper; ink, acrylic and balsa wood
Collection of Peter Norton, New York, NY

Left: detail

Untitled (Gray Construction) 2005
25" x 37" x 11"
hand-cut and folded-paper, ink, acrylic and balsa wood
Private Collection, Los Angeles, CA







Above: *Untitled (Ellipse)* 2005
23" x 29" x 8"
hand-cut and folded-paper; ink, acrylic and balsa wood
Collection of Joseph Morsman, Los Angeles, CA

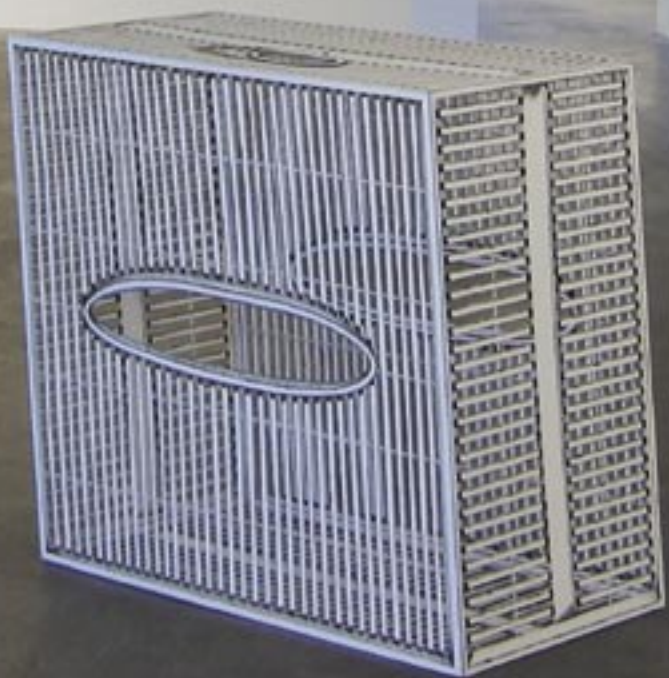
Left: detail

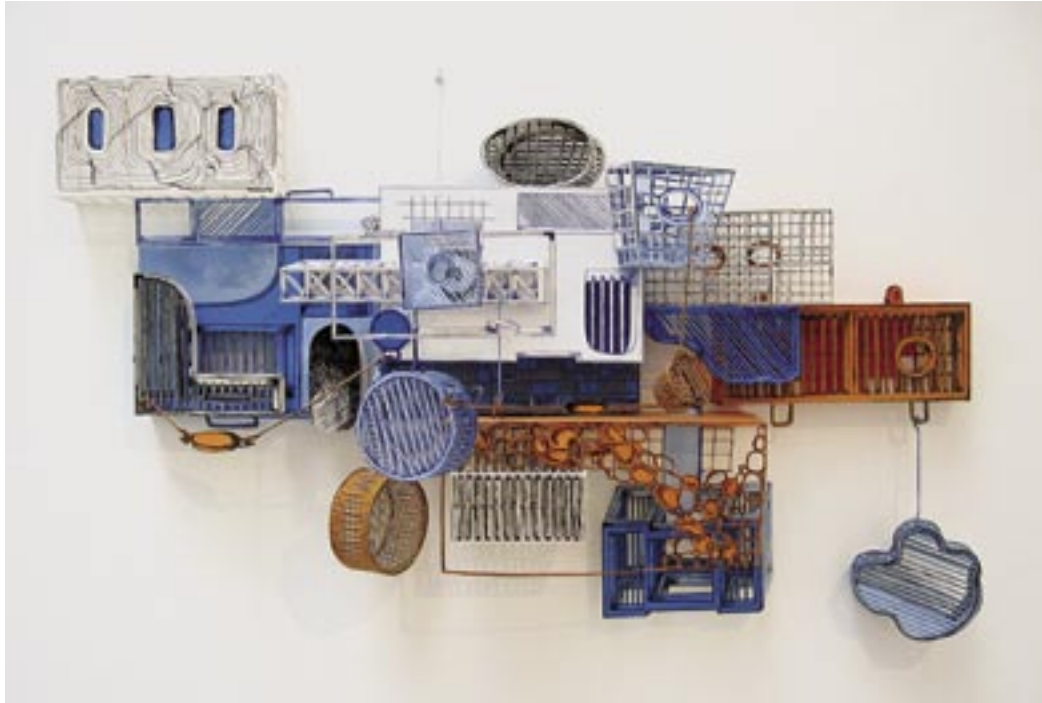




Left: *Untitled (Tilted Ellipse)* 2005
47" x 35" x 12"
ink on hand-cut paper
Collection of Eileen Norton, Los Angeles, CA

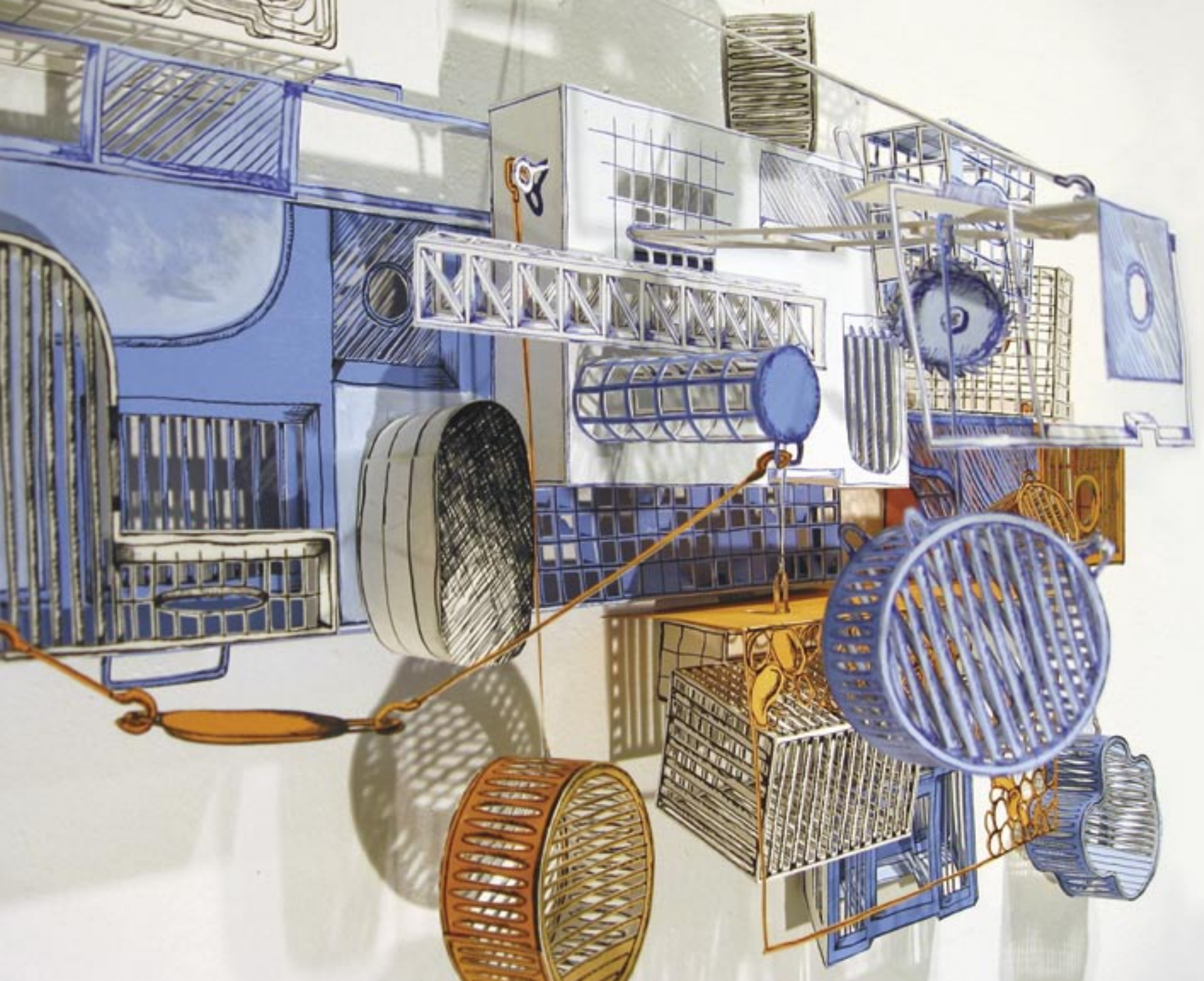
Right: *Installation View* 2005



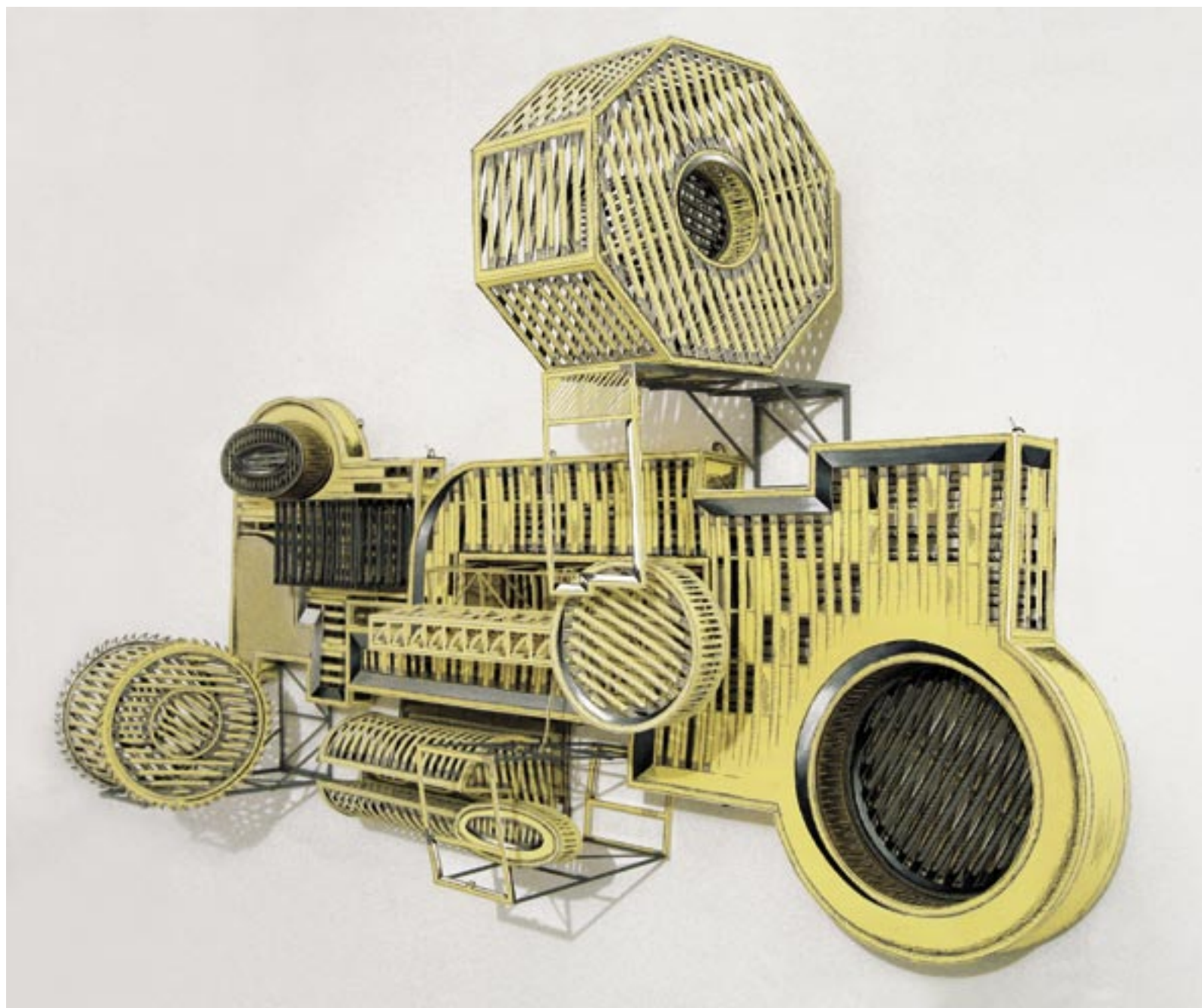


Above: *Untitled (Blue/Orange Construction)* 2003
16" x 23" x 9"
hand-cut and folded-paper, ink, acrylic and balsa wood
Private Collection, Paris, France

Right: detail



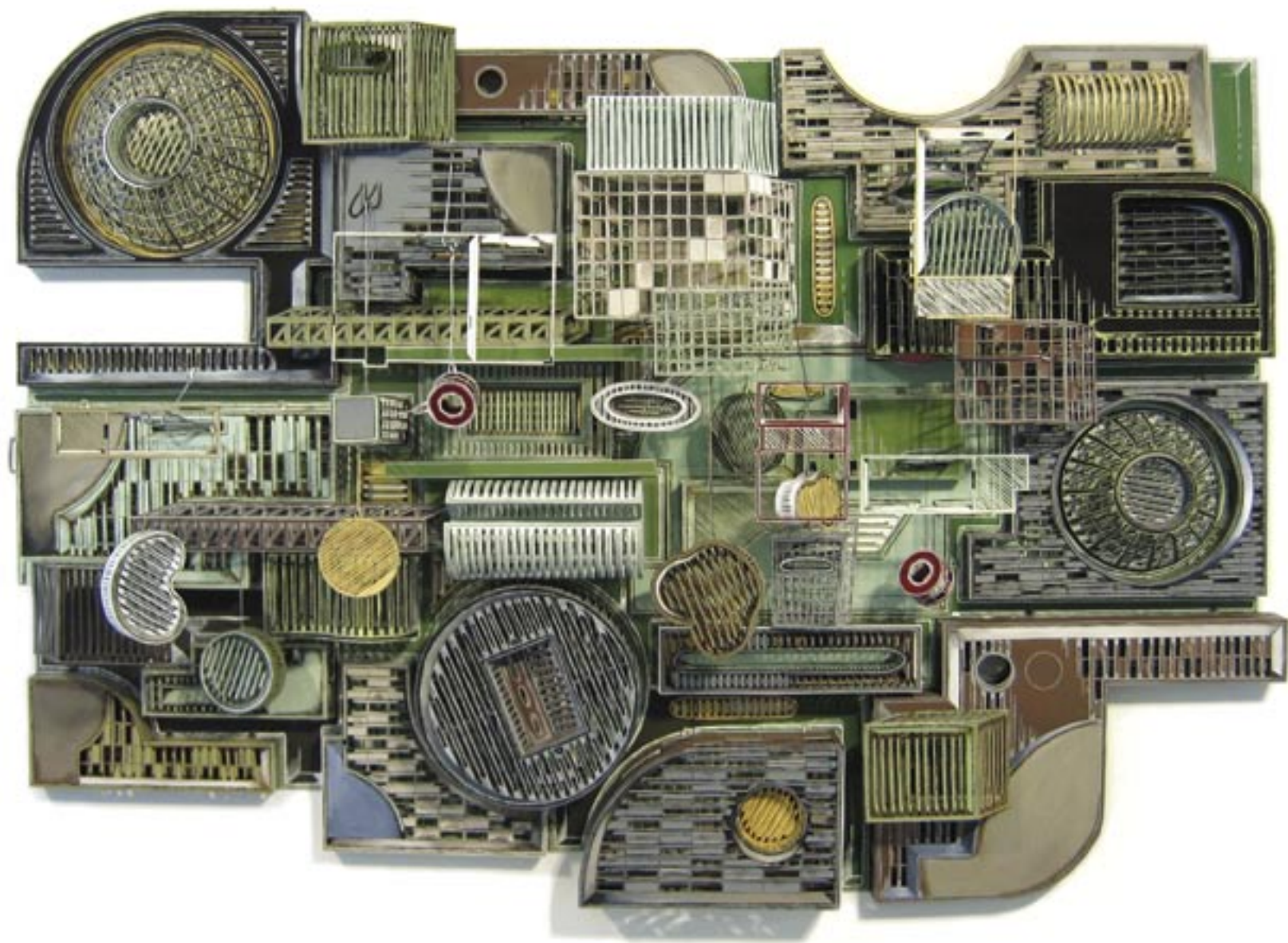
Untitled (Double Yellow) 2005
35" x 45" x 8"
hand-cut and folded-paper ink, acrylic and balsa wood
Collection of Charles Balbach, Buffalo, NY

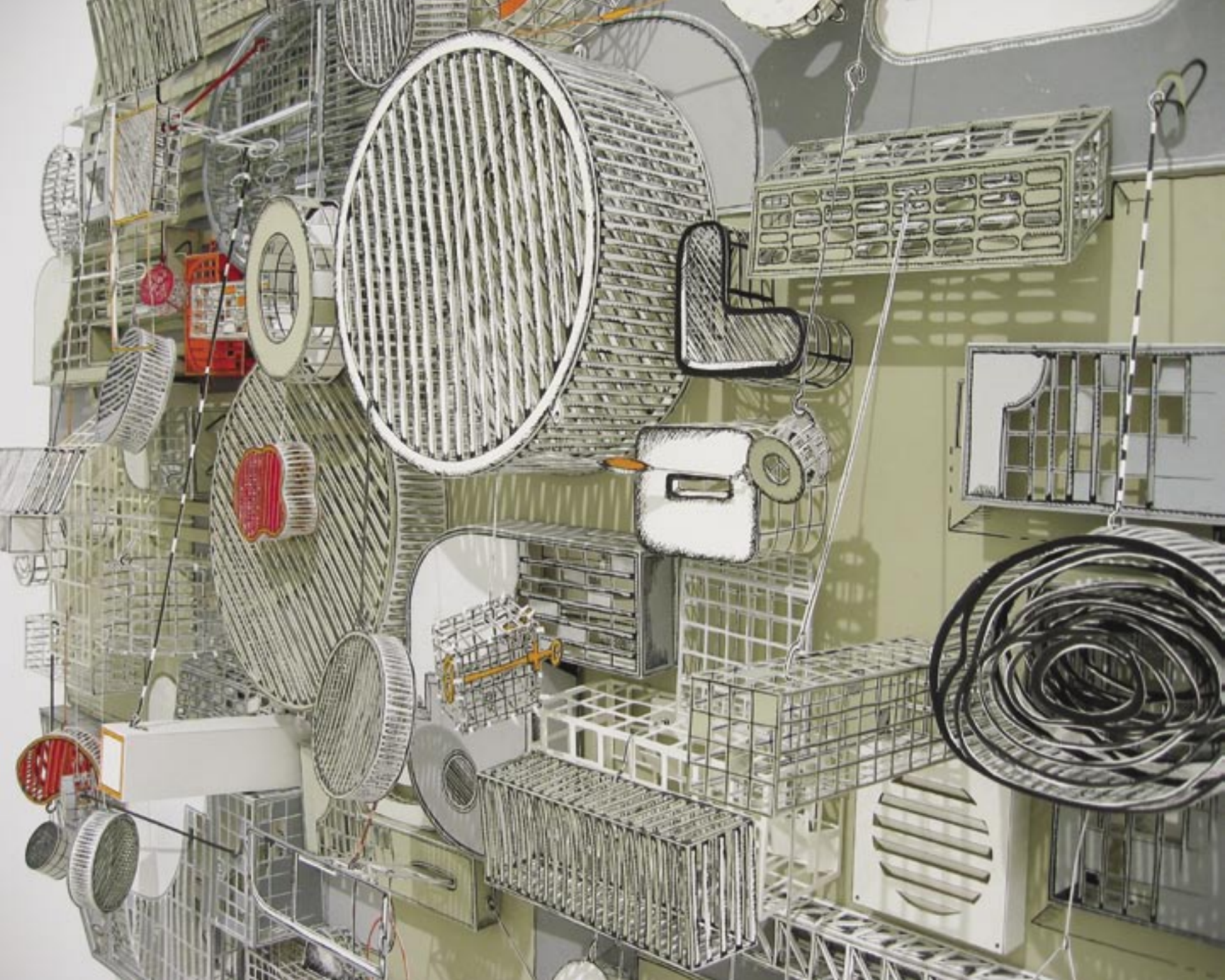


Untitled (Irregular Rectangle) 2005

42" x 59" x 10"

hand-cut and folded-paper; ink, acrylic and balsa wood
Collection of Nancy & Stanley Singer; New York, NY





SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

Solo Exhibitions

- 2006 Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY
Savannah College of Art & Design, Lacoste Campus, France
- 2005 Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, CA
- 2004 Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY
Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, CA
- 2003 *Boxed Painting*, Commissioned Installation, Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden, Germany
- 2002 *Working Drawing*, Commissioned Installation, MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA
- 2001 Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY

Group Exhibitions

- 2006 *Burgeoning Geometries: Constructed Abstractions*,
Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria, New York, NY
Technocraft, Wignall Museum/Gallery, Rancho Cucamonga, CA
- 2005 *Odd Lots*, White Columns, New York, NY
Drawing Narrative, College of Wooster Art Museum, Wooster, OH
Solitude & Focus, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT
Constructed Worlds, f a projects, London, UK
- 2004 *Drawn & Quartered*, SECCA, Winston Salem, NC
Exquisite Corpse, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME
- 2003 *Paper Chase*, Muller De Chiara Gallery, Berlin, Germany
Working it Through, Williams College Museum, Williamstown, MA
Knockabout, Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY
Perforations, McKenzie Fine Art, New York, NY
Bits 'n Pieces, Dumbo Arts Center, Brooklyn, NY
- 2002 *Art on Paper*, Weatherspoon Museum, Greensboro, NC
Sculpture, DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA
- 2001 *12 Views*, The Drawing Center, New York, NY
- 1999 *Escape Velocity*, Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City, NY

Untitled (Gray Circle) 2004, detail

60" diameter x 12"

hand-cut and folded-paper; ink, acrylic, and balsa wood

Collection of Beth Rudin DeWoody, New York, NY



SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The New York Times** • *Teaming with the Artists To Buoy the Bottom Line*, Carol Kino, March 29, 2006, Special Museums Section G, p.10
- Sculpture Magazine** • *Obsessed*, Kathleen Whitney, April 2006, vol. 25, No. 3, p.46-47
- Atmosphères** • *Femme de papier*, March 6, 2006, Pg. 2/2
- La Provence** • *Jane South expose au SCAD*, March 1, 2006
- Figaro Magazine** • *Art contemporain*, February 26, 2006
- WPSI** • *Material Culture, Edition #4: Fake Estates*, broadcast November 21, 2005
- Los Angeles Times** • Exhibition Review, Leah Ollman, September 16, 2005
- NY Arts Magazine** • *NY Arts at the Armory*, Lee Klein and Abraham Lubelski, May/June 2005, vol. 10, No. 5/6
- Los Angeles Times** • *The Arty Circuit*, Louise Roug, June 24, 2004
- Art in America** • Exhibition Review, Ed Leffingwell, September 2004
- ARTNews** • Exhibition Review, Meredith Mendelsohn, June 2004
- The New York Times** • Exhibition Review, Ken Johnson, March 5, 2004
- The Village Voice** • Exhibition Review, Kim Levin, February 25-March 2, 2004
- The New Yorker** • Exhibition Review, March 1, 2004
- Frieze** • Exhibition Review, Michael Wilson, issue 83, 2004
- New York Magazine** • *Paper Tiger*, Karen Rosenberg, February 23, 2004
- Art for Real** • Exhibition Review, R.B. Abrams, February 6, 2004
- New York Magazine** • *Talent*, Edith Newhall, July 28, 2003
- Time Out NY** • *Critics Pick*, March 22, 2003
- Tema Celeste** • Exhibition Review, Meredith Mendelsohn, March/April 2001
- The Village Voice** • *Voice Choices*, December 16, 2001
- The Boston Globe** • *Providence Feasts on Art al Fresco*, Ian Shapira, Saturday, June 12, 1999, Arts Section C

Untitled (Red Square) 2006

63" x 76" x 12"

hand-cut and folded-paper; ink, acrylic, graphite and balsa wood

© 2006

Spencer Brownstone Gallery

39 Wooster St.

New York, NY 10013

212.334.3455

info@spencerbrownstonegallery.com

www.spencerbrownstonegallery.com

Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects

5795 West Washington Blvd.

Culver City, CA 90232

323.933.2117

info@vielmetter.com

www.vielmetter.com

Jane South

www.janesouth.com

© 2006 Apsara DiQuinzio, essay

All rights reserved.

Images courtesy of the artist,

Spencer Brownstone Gallery & Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects

Photographs by the artist except pages

7, 21, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 34 & 35 by Gene Ogami

Printed by:

Die Keure, Bruges, Belgium

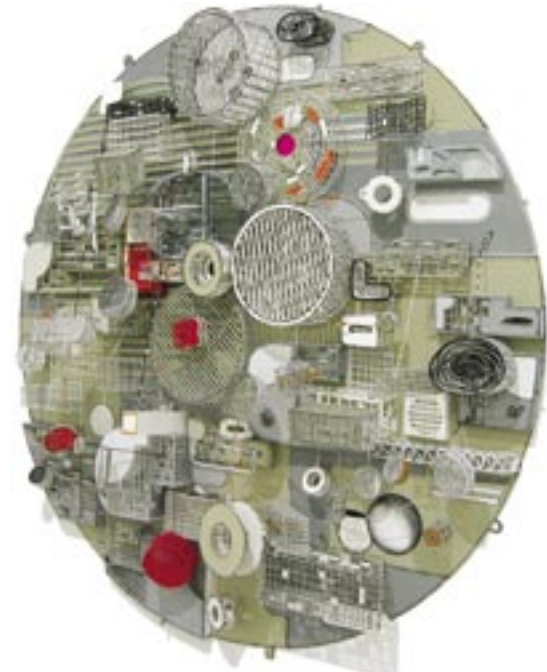
Cover:

Untitled (Red Square) 2006, detail

63" x 76" x 12"

hand-cut and folded-paper; ink, acrylic, graphite and balsa wood

ISBN 1-4243-1016-4



Untitled (Gray Circle) 2004

60" diameter x 12"

hand-cut and folded-paper; ink, acrylic, and balsa wood

Collection of Beth Rudin DeWoody, New York, NY