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Storytelling

The Iconography of the Grid: Narrative and Architectural Storytelling in the Work of Superstudio — Sophia Banou

In the summer of 1969, the Italian avant-garde collective Superstudio developed their celebrated *Continuous Monument*, a speculative architectural project presenting an ironic critique of the struggle between the technological promise of the international style and the post-modern return to historicity (evident in works such as Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of the City*, which had been published three years earlier). Informed by Superstudio's fascination with popular comics and science fiction,[1] the project was originally conceived as a film, to be produced for the 1969 Trigon biennial exhibition in Graz, Austria, which, under the theme 'Architecture and Freedom' (*Architektur und Freiheit*), called for designs for a hypothetical city for the year 2000.[2] The *Continuous Monument* can be understood as a work of architectural fiction developed through literary and cinematic representational techniques that consolidated an expanded mode of architectural practice, to which storytelling was central. In this context, the present article explores the way the *Continuous Monument* – together with Superstudio's wider *oeuvre* – opened a particular deployment of the figure of the grid as a spatio-temporal organisational device that allowed diverse things to be perceived in relation to one another. Superstudio's serial drawing ensembles emerge as both an appropriation of existing forms of storytelling derived from other media and the result of a narrative capacity latent in the iterative process of the architectural project itself. The use of the grid as an instrument of speculative architectural fiction is negotiated in this work as both form and discourse – as an emblem of the 'architecture of reason' and the means by which this architecture is, through the multiplication of the grid across drawing and storyboard, reframed within an architectural narrative that challenges and subverts its rationality. The grid acts in Superstudio's work as an 'abstract mediator',[3] a great equaliser as much as a Trojan horse that smuggles into rationalism something alien, giving rise to new architectural narratives. At the same time, this mediating effect – the grid's reorganisation of both space and time – is always dissembled by a seemingly innocent neutrality.

From space to time

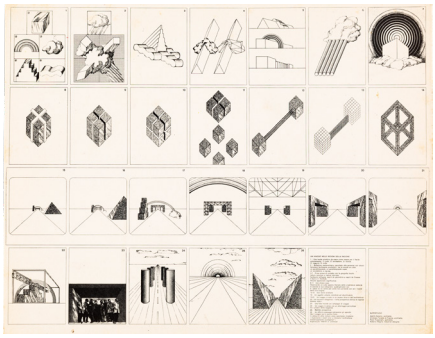
The sequential format of the storyboard, and the way it contains within its cells multiple representational modes, is consolidated in the *Continuous Monument*'s presentation as a distinct technique of architectural narrative. Fable-like narratives emerge again and again in Superstudio's work, from *A Journey into the Realms of Reason* (1967–69), to the *Continuous Monument*, the *Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas* (1971), and eventually the *Fundamental Acts* (*Atti Fondamentali*, 1972), prompting

diverse manifestations of the storyboard.[4] Yet, it is with the *Continuous Monument* that this technique became markedly autotelic as an architectural discourse, which both learned from and exceeded the media form that it appropriated. This is because the *Continuous Monument*, with its film unrealised, was instead presented at Trigon '69 through a series of large-scale collages, each depicting its presence adjacent to a venerable monument of civilisation as futuristic 'continuations of (architectural) history'.[5] These were displayed alongside a physical installation, *The Grazerzimmer* or *Una Stanza di Graz*[6] – in Adolfo Natalini's words: 'an environmental object, placed on mirror walls reflecting itself and people – a sort of big scale architectural model',[7] which could be considered a unique 1:1 manifestation of the speculative megastructure.[8] The extraction of frames from the sequence of the film and their development as spectacular chromatically saturated large-scale collages allowed them to pass into the future as isolated things available for re-arrangement and interpretation, detached from the mood of irony and absurdity that marked the original project.[9] At the same time, in the *Continuous Monument*'s form as a sequence there is a recursiveness between the gridded structure of the storyboard and the gridded architectural surfaces of the project that appear within it. The Superstudio storyboard is consequently a particular form of narrative device, whose equalising subdivisions – which have both spatial/formal and temporal/discursive capacities – cannot help but become entangled with architectural imaginings of the archetypal grid.

Besides the well-known projects already mentioned, the temporal grid of the storyboard persisted alongside its spatial-morphological counterpart in Adolfo Natalini's more individually driven explorations, such as *An Entire Life* (*Una Vita Intera*, 1972), all the way to more 'commercial' (Natalini's term) projects, such as *The Attack of Rationalism* (*L'Attacco di Razionalismo*, c.1975) or Studio Natalini Architetti's Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Florence (2009–15), where the grid's temporal-organisational function in the narration of an architectural history reappears. (The three-dimensional gridded structure of the *Continuous Monument* materialises in the main hall of the building, mirroring the reconstructed old façade of Santa Maria del Fiore as a physical large-scale architectural diagram, creating within the voids of its cells niches for the display of historic artefacts as well as visual framings of the façade.) Across these projects, the storyboard takes various forms, within which appear diverse relations of space and time and distinct configurations of narrative that range from linear sequences to more complex juxtapositions of synchronous events.

Fragmentation, sequence and non-linear iteration

The *Journey into the Realms of Reason* was the first Superstudio project to use a sequential mode of illustration (Fig.1). The project self-declaredly explored architecture as a 'means for changing the world' and, as such, architectural conceptualisation as the encounter between reason and imagination.[10] While its drawings were serial, they did not explicitly follow the form of a storyboard as the term is understood in animation and film. The term 'story board' – originally given as two separate words, as Steve Price and Chris Pallant note in their critical history of the form – originated in film-making and animation as a mounting board upon which the narrative structure of a film could be visually and spatially rearranged by positioning frames.[11] Seemingly used for the first time in Walt Disney's animated film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (1939), the technique has since become common practice. Much like a drawing for architectural construction, the storyboard is a working document rather than the end-product of its craft, even if, when used, it acts as a kind of allographic score for the final work, the film.[12] Hence, there are limited archives and resources available to support a thorough study of the format, especially so for non-Hollywood productions. Price and Pallant emphasise that the functionality of the

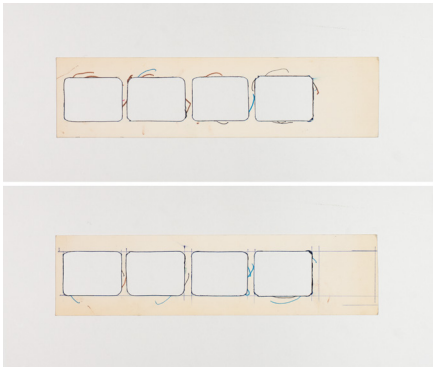


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Larger illustrations and captions on pp. 10–18

storyboard does not simply rely on its seriality, which advances the story temporally and spatially, but is also found in its modularity, which allows the rearrangement of the frames/fragments, thus conditioning and editing the storytelling. In cinema, this modularity became established through the uniformity of its geometric arrangement: a 16:9 grid (informed by the ratio of the CinemaScope screen format, which was popular in the 1950s) arranged across the page in rows or, as with the *Continuous Monument*, columns. The lateral extension of the grid offers a synoptic view that is not simultaneous but chronologically differentiated to allow the arrangement of the elements of the story.

The storyboard quickly came to mean not only the infrastructure that allowed the rearrangement of mounted frames but also the sequence of images itself, as well as sub-sequences within a larger narrative. The way these sub-sequences are developed within the history of cinema, and the eventual adoption of this paradigmatic tempo-visual rhythm as itself a kind of *ratio*, is clearly dependent on the spatial pacing and geometric order endowed by the unifying structure of the storyboard's grid. As an example of this, Price and Pallant cite the mathematical underpinnings of Saul Bass's storyboard for Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), which allows for 'pleasing subdivisions' within its 48-frame sequence, across equally 'pleasing' numerical sets of frames.



2—

Drawing Matter Collections holds a storyboard template, made by Adolfo Natalini and dating from 1972, which he used to produce sequences of frames in his sketchbooks (Figs 2, 3). Its characteristic rounded edges echo television screens of the period, camera viewfinders and car windshields. The motif first appears in the third tier of the image grid of the *Journey into the Realms of Reason*, when the representational mode shifts to perspective and we are, by implication, placed in a vehicle travelling along a road, the route punctuated by a series of structures that we pass in turn. (The drawn sequence is redolent of those in Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch and John R. Myer's book, *The View From the Road*, published three years earlier.[13]) The format is found again and again across his notebooks, clearly recognisable in works from the *Fundamental Acts* onwards and apparently becoming an indispensable support for his thinking.

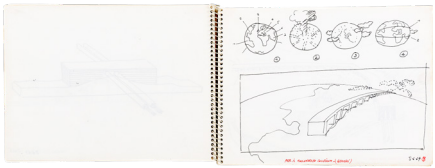


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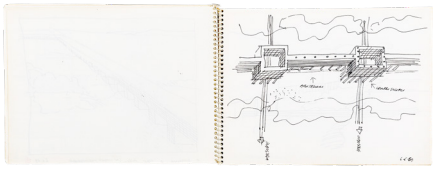
While, from the *Continuous Monument* onwards, we find the consolidation of a screen-based approach to storytelling, the earlier *Journey into the Realms of Reason*, halfway between architectural drawing and storyboard, had demonstrated a more hybrid engagement with serial visual narrative that echoed earlier instances such as the didactic media of medieval scriptural arts, in which visual narrative emerges as a spatio-temporal infrastructure bridging word and image.[14] In the *Journey into the Realms of Reason* image sequence we can observe four distinct kinds of presentation. The story begins with two cyclical 'polyscenic' frames[15] – the introduction of the key characters within the story (the cube, the rainbow, the cloud, the ziggurat and the wave) and a description of 'predictable meteorological phenomena' (the rainbow, the cloud and the wave as joyful pop cartoon-like renderings of natural phenomena that cross-contaminate the rigid morphology of the cube).[16] This is then followed by larger 'monoscenic' frames, such as those showing the 'first contact' between the cloud and the geometric form of the cube and its gradual metamorphosis after its 'liberation' from 'external restraints'. Each one of these 'events' is presented in an individual frame, isolating and emphasising the gravity of the figure. The story unites the iconography of architectural archetypes with pop imagery of natural phenomena in a way reminiscent of scriptural *emblemata*. The frontality and isolation of the individual scenes, suggestive of the transcendental formal austerity and framing of Byzantine icons, are broken with the landing of the cube within the 'local geography',

shown in frame no.7. Here, the cube is presented as the quintessential expression of architecture, complete with a kind of aura-like halo and a cosmogenic impact depicted by the rubble raised at its base. At the same time, we have shifted from the axonometric projection that has, up to now, bestowed even the softness of clouds and waves with a geometric contour, to a single-point perspective that positions the viewer lower, in order to amplify the sense of awe at the occurrence. In these frames, the origins and nature of architecture are presented through the metaphysical genesis and transformation of the cube, within a transcendent space of representation. Despite the caption's reference to the 'local topography', the visual framing is reminiscent of the groundless developmental sequences of another project, the *Histograms of Architecture* (1969). The visual narrative of the *Journey into the Realms of Reason* is here more akin to the formal seriality found in architectural design iterations, presented as idealised iconographic *parti* diagrams.

The *Journey into the Realms of Reason*'s diverse representations come together in the final sequences. The single-point perspective of the road sets up a cinematic tracking of the architectural narrative along its axis, resituating the story upon a common ground, which is described as a 'drive-in' architectural museum. In frames 15 to 21, the outline shifts for the first time in Superstudio's work through the introduction of the kind of rounded corners that we will later find in Natalini's template, although here related to a square frame. These screen-viewfinder-windshield frames are no longer orthographic, dispensing with the corner angles that, in an architectural grid, would allow the exact location of one cell in relation to another. This sort of precision is not relevant in the story of this sequence, nor is the awe that attends the geometric cube as an icon of transcendence seen earlier in the project, and its surrender allows a new temporal and narrative freedom. The final sequence (frames 22–26) combines diverse visual formats, holding together the architectural concept and the illusion of the optical experience. Assembling and compiling elements to build its own myth, it integrates and assumes the architects themselves in the sole instance of photomontage in this story. This reflects Natalini's obsession with lists, gathering things together and creating an order – of characters, of stages of iteration and transformation, and eventually, in the *Continuous Monument*, of sites, which co-exist across the pages of his sketchbooks as primitive forms of the storyboards that will permeate Superstudio's work from then onwards.



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We find an example of the latter in a drawing dated 5 June 1969 – the earliest recorded date of any work for the *Continuous Monument* – and labelled 'Per il Monumento Continuo – (Genesi)' that seemingly articulates a kind of stadial origin myth for the birth of the project (Fig.4). Forgoing the outline of the frame that would indicate the move from a conceptual formation to an optical experience, the serial elements of the Genesi sketch describe the arrival of the *Continuous Monument* upon the Earth in terms that suggest ideational diagrams rather than filmic visual 'stills' (although the large image showing the world-engirdling project curving with the globe is closer to this). The sketch defines from the outset the project's character as the singular, self-referential body of architecture: 'a form of architecture all equally emerging from a single continuous environment',[17] imagined as a futuristic extreme of rationalisation. As they would write of the project a few years later, in 1973: 'Architecture becomes a closed, immobile object that leads nowhere but to itself and to the use of reason.'[18] Its genesis occurs simultaneously around the world through a singular intervention, which is reminiscent of the transcendental instantiation of the cube in the *Journey in the Realms of Reason* as a fundamental act of 'ultima ratio'.[19] In the sketchbook, the sequential temporal panopticism of the narrative, made manifest in the collages and their preparatory

sketches, alternates with more familiar forms of architectural drawing, which even offer a rare glimpse of the monument in a quasi-orthographic view (Fig.5). This carries hints of architectural detail that would soon be sacrificed to the abstract power of the visionary project.

The grid: form and content

The *Continuous Monument* proposed:

> … a single architecture to be extended all over the Earth, an architecture able to shape all the Earth or just a small part of it, an architecture that one can recognize (even the extraterrestrials) as the product of a civilization. An architecture to occupy the optimal inhabitable areas and to let all the others free … an 'architectonic model of total urbanization' as the logic resulting from an 'oriented' history: a history of monuments, begun with Stonehenge that, via the Kaaba and the VAB [the NASA Vehicle Assembly Building], found its logical completion with the 'Continuous Monument'.[20]

The project not only displayed the uniform grid of the storyboard, together with the direct intent that this be manifested as a film, but also further integrated extra-architectural media such as the postcard, which was appropriated as a device for narrating the travels of the architectural project across the globe. Moreover, as already noted, in the absence of the intended film from the Trigon '69 exhibition, large individually framed collages were produced, with each developed as a singular charismatic work in itself.[21] Although they were based on storyboard frames, their detachment and graphic inflation separated them out as individuated architectural spectacles, dislocated from the practice of visual storytelling from which they were derived. The visual language of the collages draws from the idealised stylisation of tourist postcards, in some instances suggesting architecture's own role in the (visual) commodification of place, history and nature.



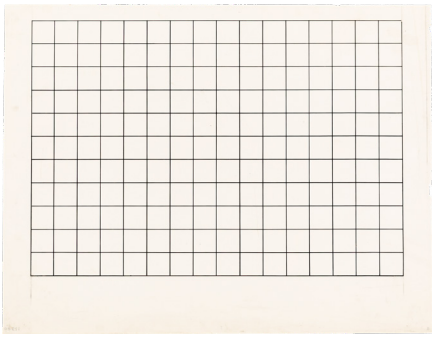
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In this hyper-real illusionism that puts an ironic pressure on distinctions between fiction and reality, positive proposition and forewarning, the critique appropriated a characteristic form – the smooth, saturated and libidinally invested advertising image – of the consumer culture that it targeted. On one hand, this vision of the end of architecture was perfectly rational, orthogonal and proper, its gridded form alluding to the structural domination of glass and steel as a metonym for modernity's fascination with technology. It was absolutely neutral and absolutely overpowering at the same time. On the other hand, the medium articulated a shift to visual consumption rather than more active forms of engagement. In the storyboard's laying bare of the episodic narrative, any hint of artistic innocence was upended by the meta-structure of the grid while the Technicolor-like saturation of the large-scale collages played upon a zone of imagery in which the cinematic image met with the advertisement (Fig.6). The crafted photorealism of the large images materialised them as, in Marshall McLuhan's terms, 'hot' media outputs[22] – seemingly non-iterative and not requiring interpretation, their hyper-reality acted to conceal the project, reorientating it toward the promise of a visually alluring product.

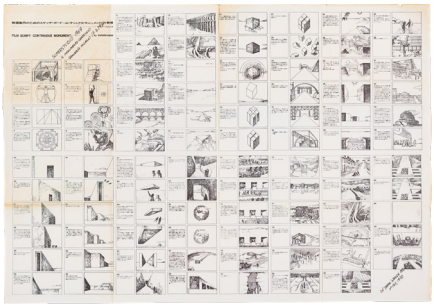
In the *Continuous Monument*, Superstudio's critique of architectural production at the threshold of postmodernity envisioned an architecture that was massive in scale and ideology – indeed, so much so that, devoid of emotion and any desire other than for its own proliferation, it crystallised in a totalising generic form that established architecture as an alternative nature and was dramatised in its encounters with emblematic monuments of civilisation or terrestrial landforms (Fig.7).



7—



8—



9—

This ironic assumption of grandeur slyly caricatured the presumptions of technocratic modernism while establishing a trajectory that moved from the *Continuous Monument* to the *Supersurface* of the *Fundamental Acts* and to Natalini's *An Entire Life*, in which architecture gradually expanded to the point of its own disappearance. All that remained was the grid, which endured as both the 'ultima ratio' and a narrative tool fusing form and content (Fig.8).

Underpinning the spatial structure of Renaissance representations of the ideal city and associated with the utopia of an ideal space, the grid persisted as a cipher of architectural reason within the iconography developed by Superstudio. As their work passed from the *Journey into the Realms of Reason* on to the consolidation of the hybrid format of the collage, combining minimal linear but always perspectival grids with photographic elements (as seen in the *Continuous Monument* and the *Fundamental Acts*, and most notably in the *Supersurface*), it reasserted the grid as a hinge between the real and the ideal. The grid is present as the form of the story (defining space and time), but also as an actor within that story as its protagonist and hero. As with Renaissance views of cities and architectural interiors with gridded ground surfaces, the spatial structure that organises the drawing becomes pictorially materialised in the image. And while we can locate the iconographic figure of the grid in such representations as the 'utopian sign' of an architectural ideal,[23] the specific way it operates remains dependent upon the more hidden presence of the grid as the thing that underlies and structures the story, allowing its episodes to come to visibility within the spatio-temporal matrix it establishes.

An aesthetics of disappearance

Perhaps the most ambitious of Superstudio's projects was the *Fundamental Acts*, celebrating the complete fusion of user and architecture. This took the form of a series of illustrated architectural 'fables' on acts of human existence – Life, Education, Ceremony, Love and Death – that explored Superstudio's 'interest for the real life'.[24] The most widely published component of this project is the film *Supersurface: An Alternative Model for Life on the Earth* (1972). Other than *Ceremony* (1973), *Supersurface* was the only part realised,[25] and it formed Superstudio's contribution to MoMA's exhibition *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape*.[26] In *Supersurface* the grid is no longer the dominant autonomous figure of architecture of the *Continuous Monument*, but an infrastructural interface between human users and the Earth's surface. Crisply drawn with geometric but perspectival linearity, pasted against colourful illustrations of landscapes, it is at once the ultimate and most minimal architecture, literally promising the world but, in its iconographic reticence, revealing very little. Thus, it can be interpreted in two ways at once: as the complete eradication and substitution of the physical ground (a lateral iconography of the domination of the real), and as the complete collapse of architecture itself.

In Adolfo Natalini's 'Quaderno Americano'[27] (his 1972 sketchbook developed in the year of the MoMA exhibition), among notes for lectures, preparatory sketches and ideas for exhibitions that retrospectively re-curate and redeploy Superstudio's work and story, we find a range of reflections on the *raison d'être* of architecture and of the architect. The spatiotemporal grid of the storyboard appears across a series of projects of an increasingly existential scale that come to a climax in the project *An Entire Life*, the continuous recording of a man's (and more specifically an architect's) life from birth to death as an architectural project. In *An Entire Life* the ultimate architecture (the reason and origin of architecture) is the human:

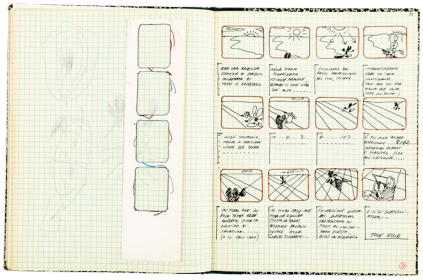
This self-portrait is my architecture.
this architecture is my self-portrait is this architecture is my self-portrait is this architecture is my self [sic]…[28]

In this project, which never materialises beyond the sketchbook's pages, architecture fuses with and collapses into the human mind. In a properly 'cinematic' manner the project's manifestation of architecture constructs and formulates not space but a consciousness.[29]

Amongst the existential narratives of the 'Quaderno Americano', the seriousness of the mood is softened and negotiated by the presence of an unexpected character, Mickey Mouse, who animates little episodes that unfold in the margins of *An Entire Life* and Natalini's American journey – an avatar and delegate of the architect who offers a way for him to confront his own making and storytelling. Natalini writes:

I have been doing a series of children's drawings with a little bit of architecture inside _
First I did a series with Mickey Mouse _ Now I am doing one with Winnie the Pooh…..
My only important readings have been Borges, Marcuse
And a little bit of science fiction…
All I have ever done is: reposition old stuff,
Drawing and writing stories for children: architects….

'Please not in front of the children!'
'Ci sono i bambini!' ('Maria, ci sono i bambini!').[30]


10—

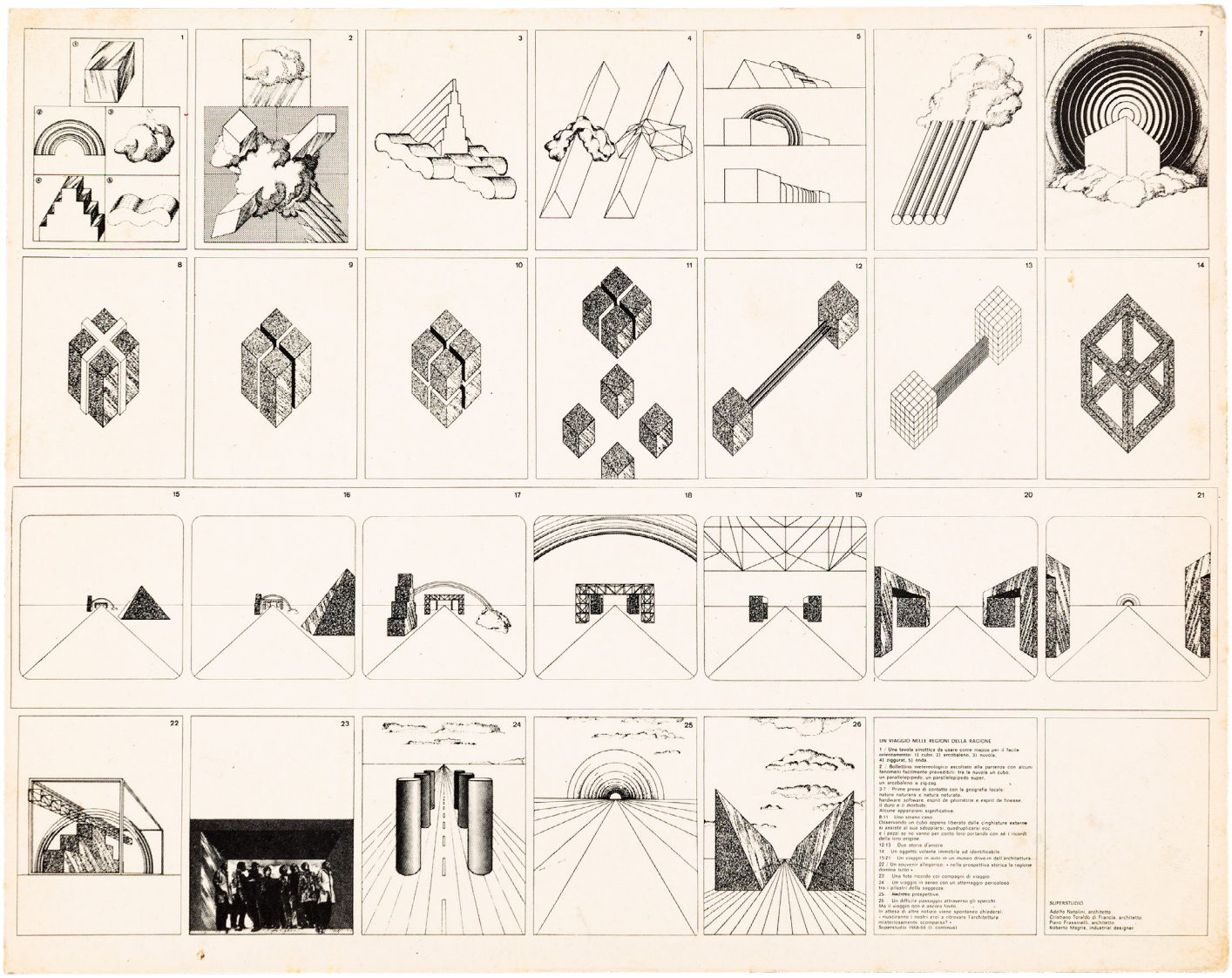
The most striking of Mickey's adventures in the 'Quaderno Americano' and Superstudio's fictional universe takes place in Salt Lake (presumably in Utah), a vast neutral surface that presents to the eyes of our mischievous hero a provocative *tabula rasa*. Restless and dumbfounded by the potential, under the searing sun an idea strikes Mickey, who begins to draw the lines of a large grid that will eventually replicate the supersurface (Fig.10). The captions below the frames, outlined by Natalini's stencil, read:

It was a radiant May morning accompanied by everything necessary
Mickey appeared in the quiet open when the sun was already high…
Struck by the darting sun rays, Mickey…
Suddenly had an illuminating idea…
(one time he had had such an idea under a bridge)
He started frantically tracing lines on the land
……
1… 2… 3…
……
4… 107…
……
And then in the other direction… 8142…
Running back and forth all the way to the horizon
In a way that soon he had covered all of the plain of Salamina (or Salt Lake)
In such a way that the whole plane (the whole land) became exactly the same as the Supersurface
That invention by Superstudio that had been presented in a film in MoMA.
Having done that he lifted a square
And there he buried himself –
Amen –
The end[31]

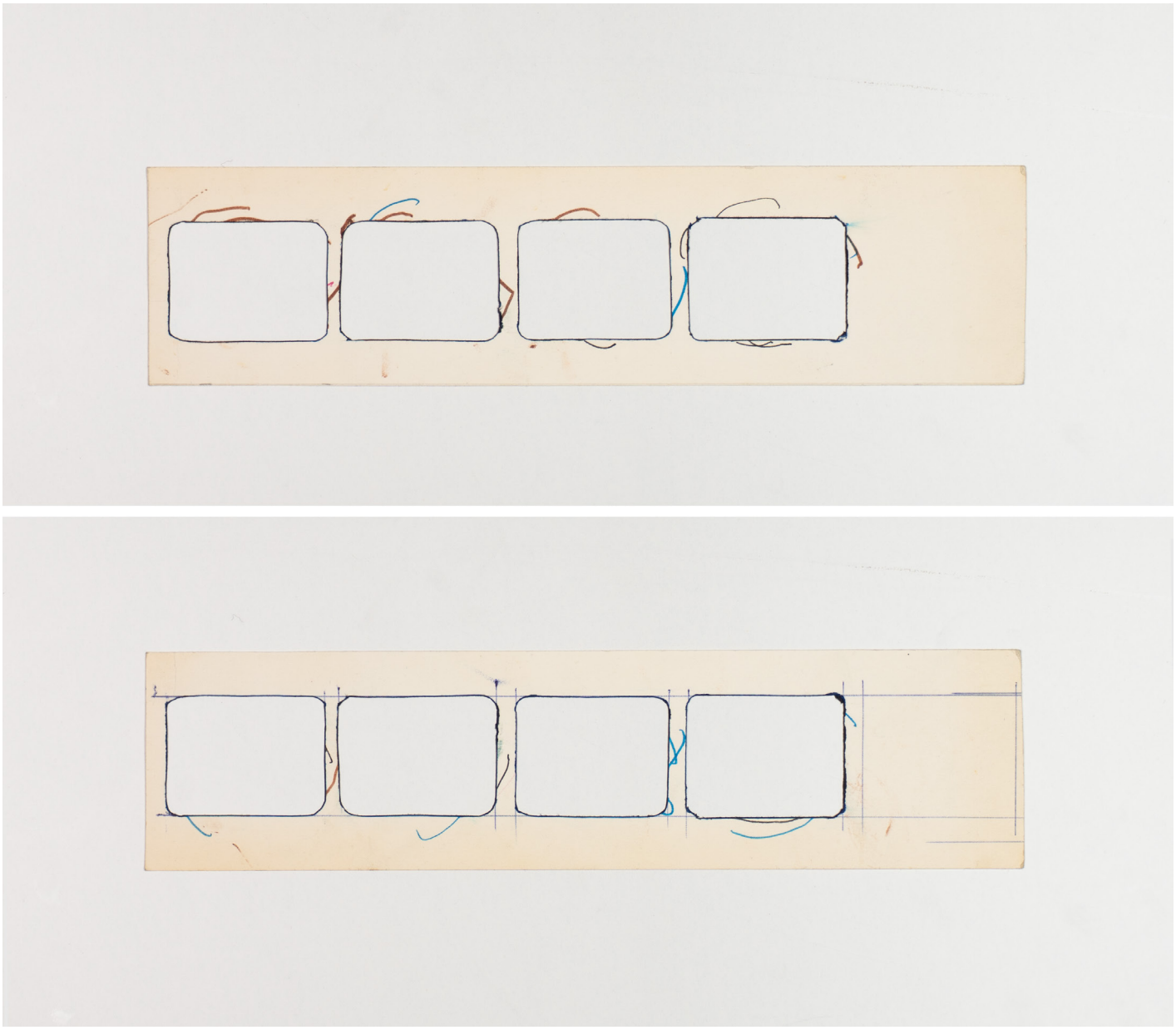
What is presented as a playful narrative, harmless enough to be appropriate ‘for children’, ends with the dissolution of the architect into the grid of his own making. This is no longer the perspectival grid upon which things will come into appearance, but rather the archi-trace of their evaporation, appropriately inscribed upon a dried-out lake-bed. It is the thing that allows the staging of architecture’s endgame and what is left behind upon its conclusion. If Superstudio’s entire *oeuvre* can be seen as a disappearing act, their grid – from its development as a technique for the conjunction and cross-pollination of architectural forms and narrative structures to its vestigial end state – is not a device for conquering or incorporating the world but of escape.

1 Interview with Adolfo Natalini by Sophia Banou, held at Natalini Architetti, Florence, Italy, 3 April 2017.
2 Paula Burleigh, 'Exhibitions against architecture: the Trigon biennale in 1967 and 1969', in *Exhibiting Architecture: A Paradox?*, eds Eeva Lisa Peikonen, Carson Chan and David Andrew Tasman (Newhaven: Yale University, 2013), 68.
3 Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1994), 190–200.
4 Superstudio specifically write of their work: 'Our story is just a parable of formalization'. Superstudio, 'Deserti naturali e artificiali', *Casabella* 358, November 1971.
5 As described alongside another mock-up of the storyboard in Natalini's Sketchbook 12 (1969), 64–65. DMC 2142, Drawing Matter Collections.
6 *Ibid*., 33–40.
7 *Ibid*., 34.
8 'I don't think it's possible to exhibit architecture, because architecture is the real thing. And in the architectural exhibition, you have only drawings, models and photographs. So, there is a difference between the exhibition and the real thing …. So sometimes in the exhibition, we are trying to make some little piece of architecture.' Thus Natalini described how Superstudio perceived and approached the installation components of their exhibits, such as the *Grazerzimmer* or *La Moglie di Lot* (Venice Art Biennale, 1978). Natalini and Banou, *op. cit.*
9 Natalini, 'On drawing', www.drawingmatter.org (2016): https://drawingmatter.org/adolfo-natalini-on-drawing/ [accessed 16 February 2026].
10 In the original Italian text: 'Dal 1965 al 1968 abbiamo lavorato con la convinzione che l'architettura fosse un mezzo per cambiare il mondo […] Un viaggio come "Pilgrim's Progress", o guida per giovani architetti, attraverso l'architettura dei monumenti, l'architettura delle immagini, l'architettura tecnomorfa, l'architettura della ragione…'. From the Introduction to *Un Viaggio nelle Regioni della Ragione* (1969). Variations of this affirmation appear in various forms and text but the precise wording is later reprinted in *Superstudio: Life Without Objects,* eds Peter Lang and William Menking (Milan: Skira, 2003).
11 Steven Price and Chris Pallant, *Storyboarding: A Critical History* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
12 Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1969).
13 Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch, John R. Myer, *The View From the Road* (Cambridge, MA: Joint Center for Urban Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, 1964).
14 Vicky A. Foskolou, 'Telling stories with pictures: narrative in middle and late Byzantine monumental painting', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 43 (2), 194–218.
15 Kurt Weitzmann, 'The origin of the threnos', in *De artibus opuscula XL. Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, I (New York, 1961), 476–90.
16 Prior to studying architecture Natalini was a prolific painter, clearly situating himself within the Pop Art movement.
17 Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Alessandro Magris, Roberto Magris, Piero Frassinelli and Adolfo Natalini, 'Superstudio on Mindscapes', *Design Quarterly*, 89 (1973), 28. Original Italian text, from Toraldo di Francia, Magris, Frassinelli and Natalini, 'Discorsi per immagini', *Domus*, 481 (December 1969), 44.
18 Toraldo di Francia, Magris, Frassinelli and Natalini, 'Superstudio on Mindscapes', *op. cit.*, 28.
19 The fundamental architectural act is described by Superstudio as the 'ultima ratio' of drawing 'a white line in the desert', possibly referencing Walter de Maria's contemporary project *Mile Long Drawing* (1968). See Superstudio, 'The Continuous Monument series. An architectural image for total urbanization', *Japan Interior Design* 140 (1970), 21–34.
20 'Una sola architettura da prolungare su tutta la terra, un'architettura capace di modellare tutta la terra o una sua piccola parte, un'architettura che si possa riconoscere (anche gli extraterrestri) come il prodotto di una civiltà. Un'architettura per occupare le zone ottimali abitabili e lasciare libere tutte le altre … un "modello architettonico di urbanizzazione totale" come logica risultante da una storia "orientata": una storia di monumenti, cominciata con Stonehenge che, passando per la Kaaba e il V.A.B., trova la sua logica conclusione nel "Monumento Continuo"'. Superstudio, 'Lettera da Graz/Trigon 69', *Domus*, 481 (1969), 49–54.
21 Natalini's Sketchbook 12 contains drafts of correspondence with the Trigon exhibition organisers that reveal the contemplation on various display methods, that would satisfy the demands of the exhibition as well as the intent of the architectural project and contextualise the final choice of media and format in relation to the display setting. See Natalini, Sketchbook 12, *op. cit*.., 33–47.
22 Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1964).
23 Damjan Jovanovic, 'Fictions: A Speculative Account of Design Mediums', in *Drawing Futures: Speculations in Contemporary Drawing for Art and Architecture*, eds Laura Allen and Luke Caspar Pearson (London: UCL Press), 28–23.
24 Natalini and Banou, *op. cit.*
25 The complete series was planned to comprise five films, one for each act: *Vita, Educazione, Cerimonia, Amore, Morte* ('Life, Education, Ceremony, Love, Death').
26 The exhibition was curated by Emilio Ambasz, and presented at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (26 May–11 September 1972).
27 Sketchbook 17 ('Quaderno Americano', 1972). DMC 2129, Drawing Matter Collections.
28 *Ibid*., 3.
29 The cinematic here refers to Jonathan Beller's concept of the Cinematic Mode of Production, whereby cinema and its derivative modes of cultural production are described as capable of constructing and conditioning consciousness. Jonathan Beller, 'KINO-I, KINO-WORLD: notes on the cinematic mode of production', in *The Visual Culture Reader:* 2nd rev. edn, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 60–85.
30 Natalini, Sketchbook 17, op. cit., 42–43.
31 *Ibid*., 87.

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Superstudio, *A Journey into the Realms of Reason*, print on card, 14 x 17.5 cm, 1967–69.
DMC 2152, Drawing Matter Collections.



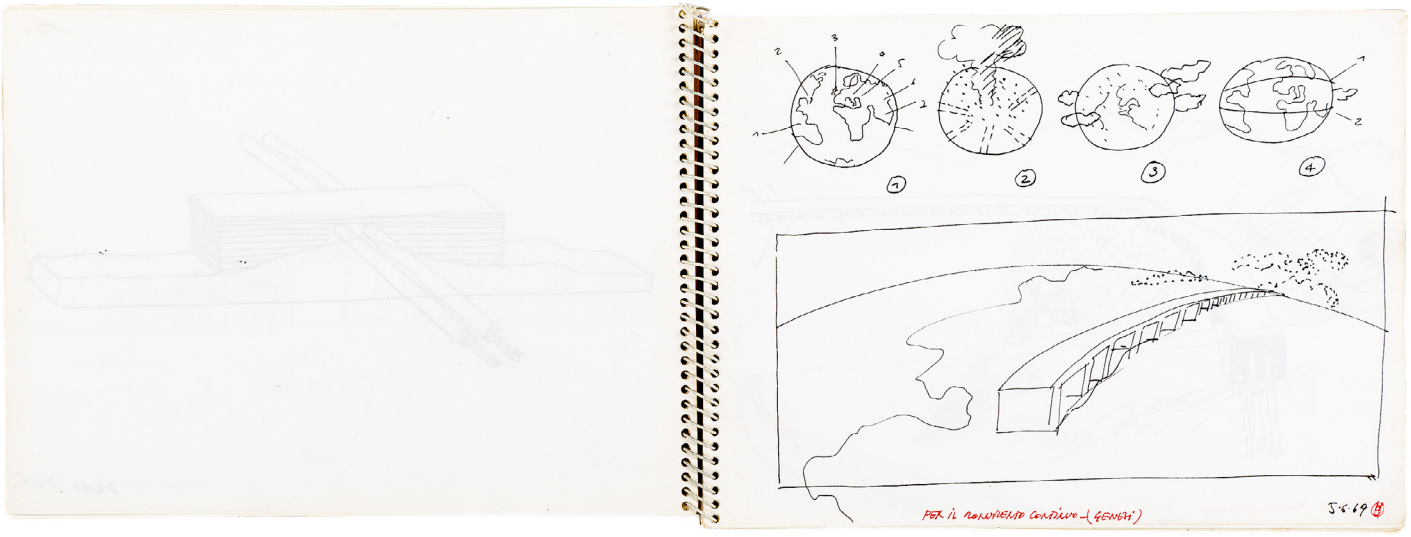
Adolfo Natalini, storyboard template stencil, *c.*1972, Card, Drawing Matter Collections.

3—

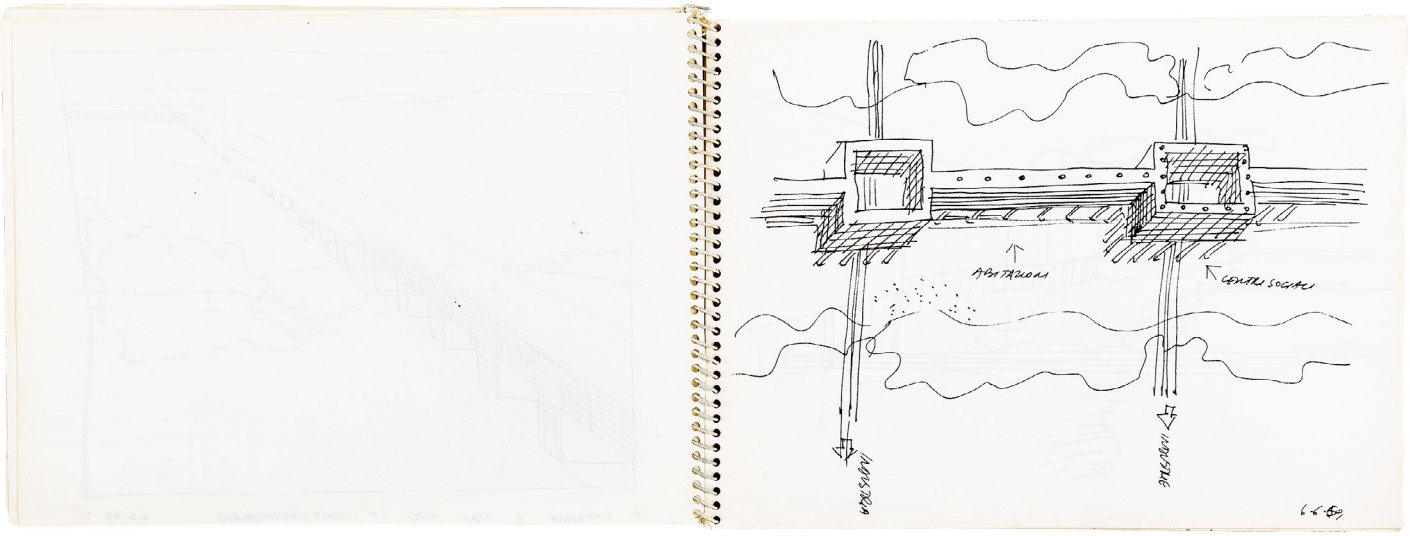


Adolfo Natalini, storyboard template stencil within Sketchbook 17 (‘Quaderno Americano’), 1972, 112–113. DMC 2129, Drawing Matter Collections.

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5—

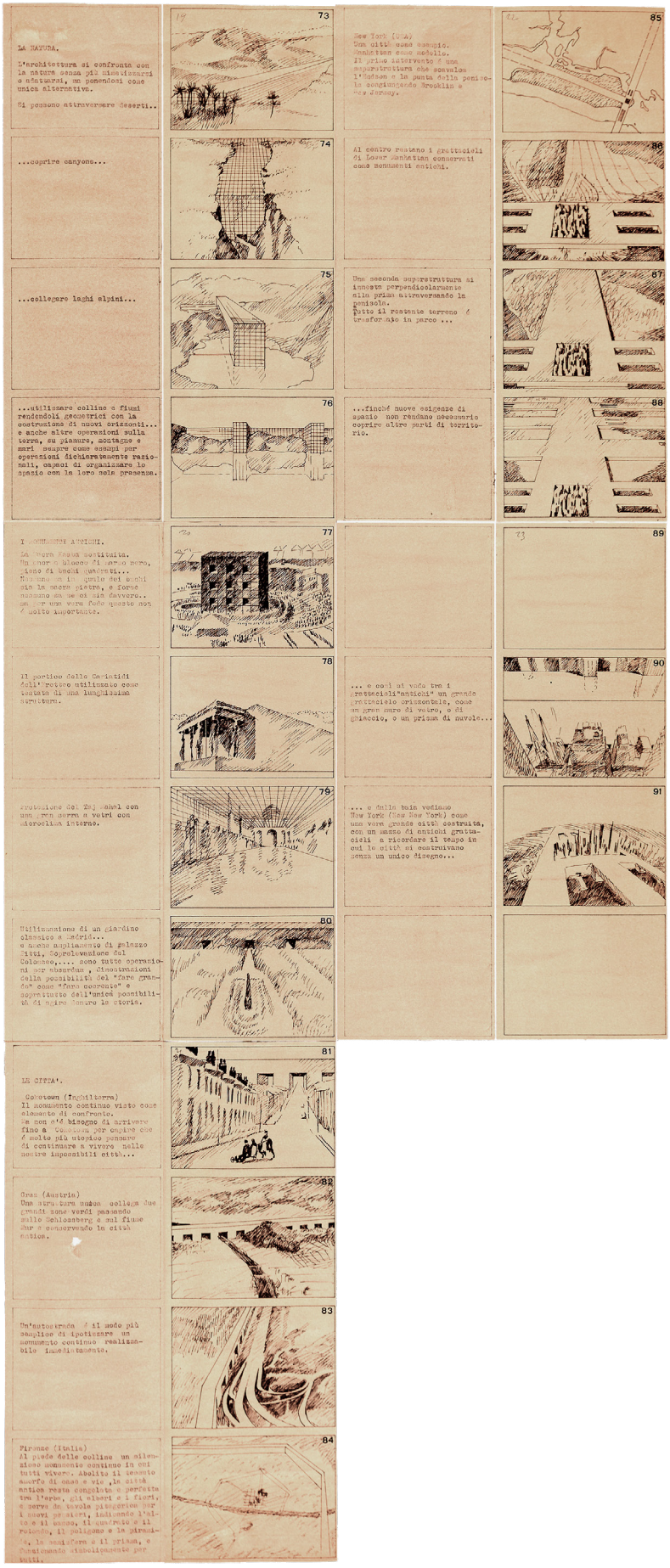


4— Adolfo Natalini, ‘Per il Monumento Continuo – (Genesi), 5.06.1969’, Sketchbook 11, 1969. DMC 2084, Drawing Matter Collections.

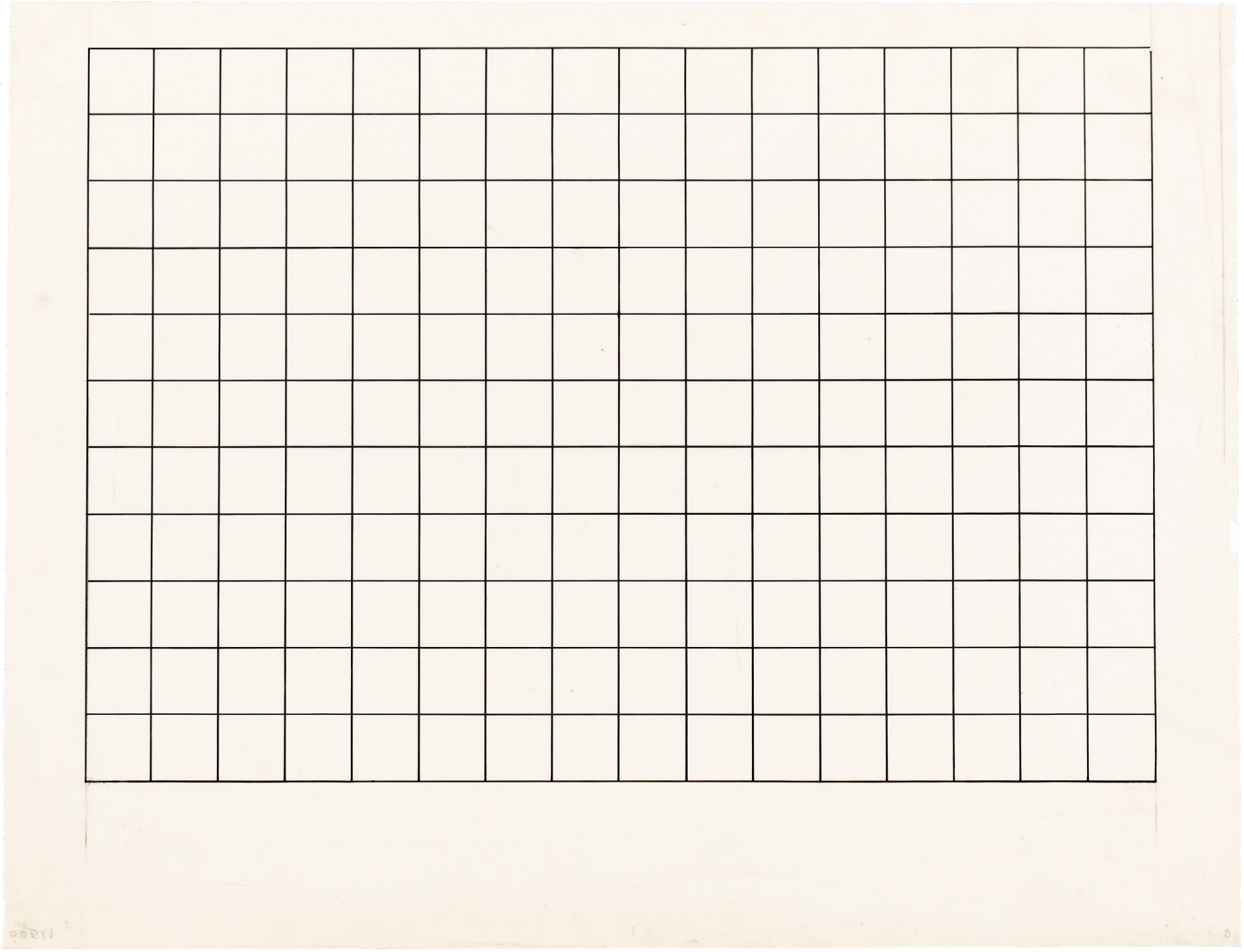
5— Adolfo Natalini, view of the Continuous Monument exploring the possibility specifying the programmatic distribution, Sketchbook 11, 1969. DMC 2084, Drawing Matter Collections.



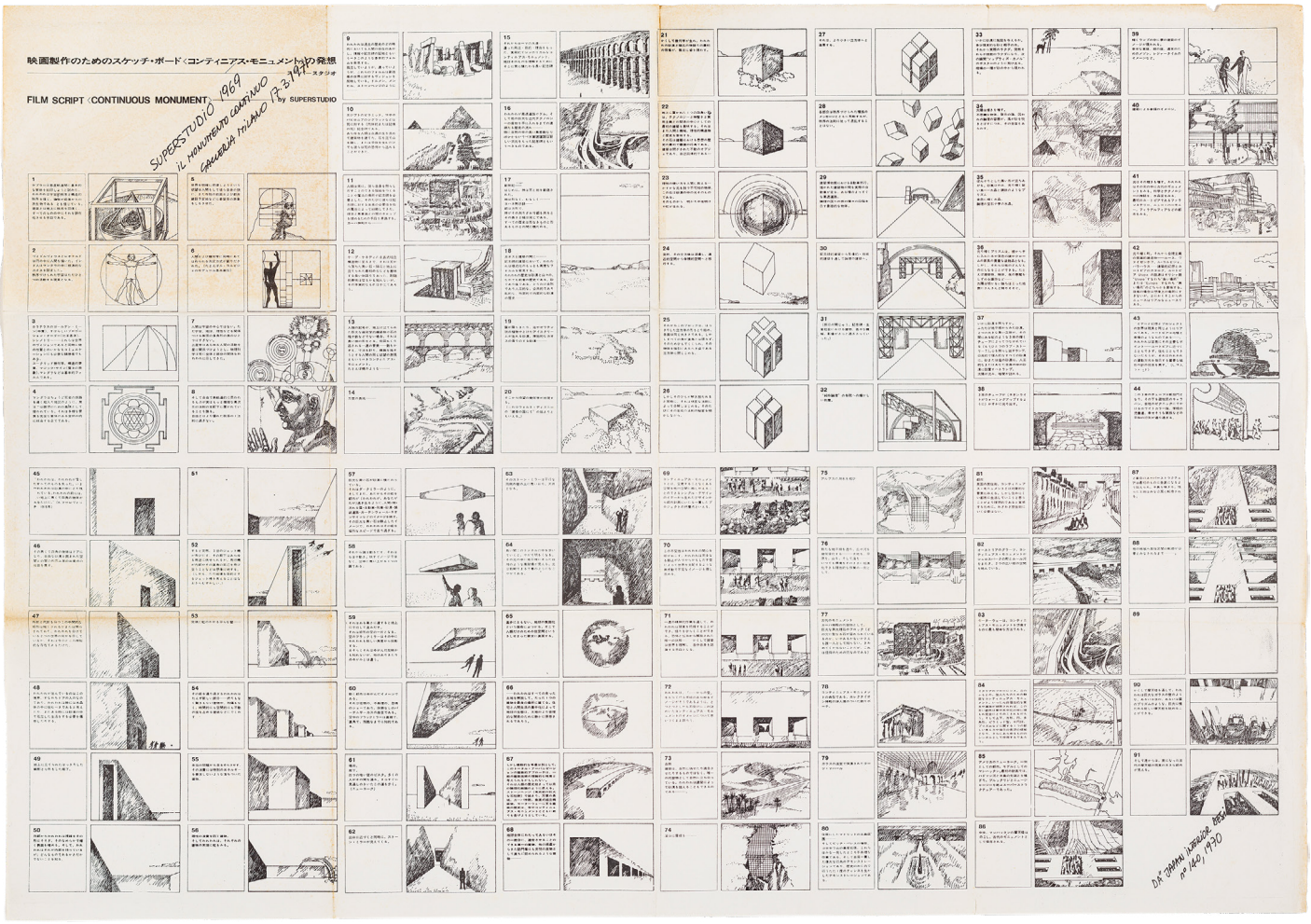
Superstudio, The *Continuous Monument* engages the Ponte Vecchio, Florence, in a field of maize. Framed photomontage combined with postcards of the structure adjacent to the Palazzo Pitti and crossing Florence, 68.5 x 88.5 cm, *c.*1971. DMC 2930, Drawing Matter Collections.



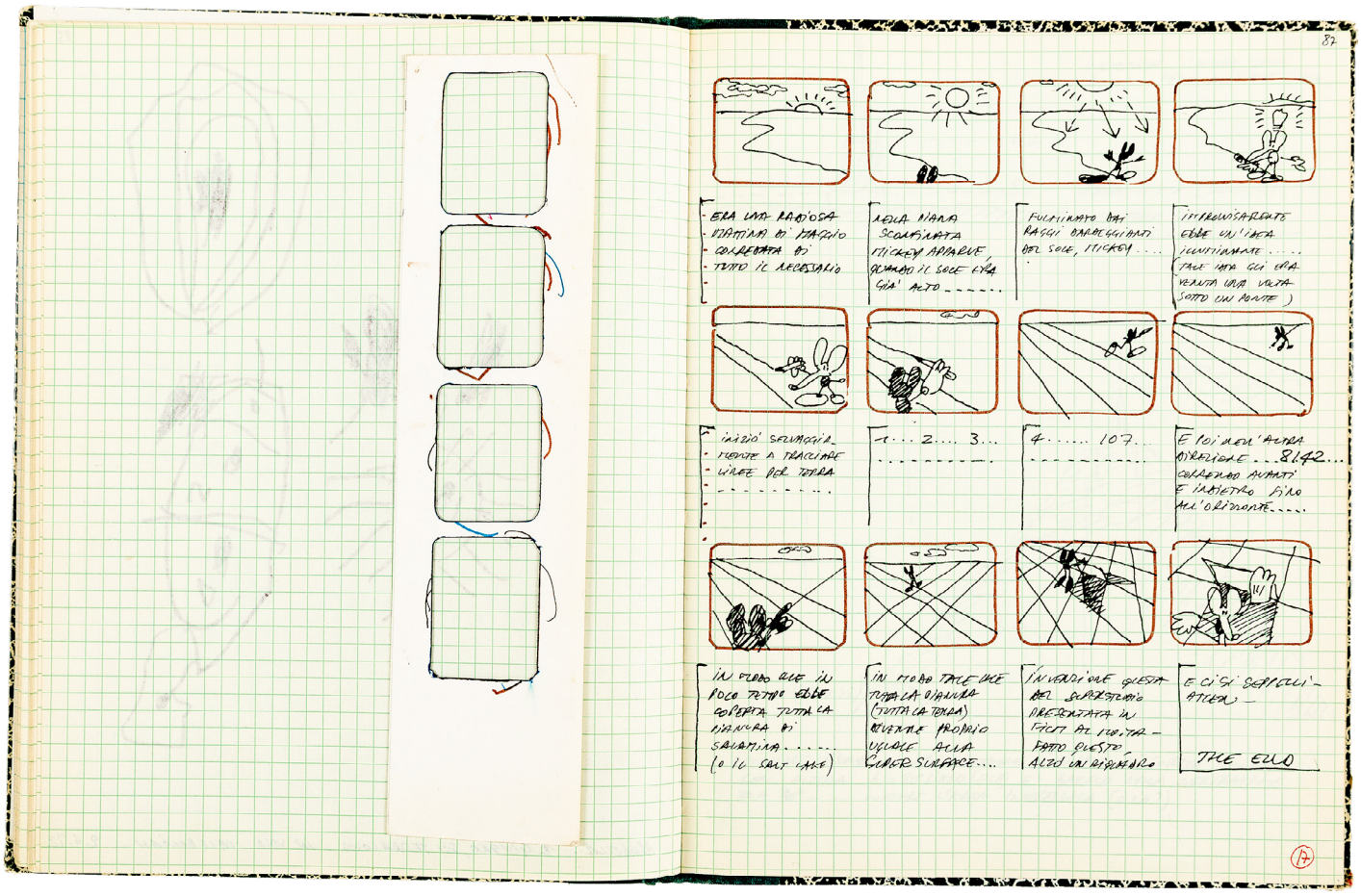
Superstudio, *Continuous Monument* storyboard for film, 100 x 69.7 cm, 1969. DMC 2079, Drawing Matter Collections. The script for Frame 1 reads: *LA NATURA/ L'architettura si confronta con la natura/ senza più mimetizzarsi/ o adattarsi, ma ponendosi come/ unica alternativa* ('NATURE/ Architecture confronts nature/ no longer having to mimic it/ or adapt to it, rather posing itself as/ the only alternative').



Superstudio, Grid, Indian ink on paper, 42.7 × 55.5 cm, 1968. DMC 2098, Drawing Matter Collections.



Superstudio, Film Script (Continuous Monument), exhibition poster with annotations ‘Superstudio 1969 / Il Monumento Continuo / Galleria Milano 17.3.1971 / Da “Japan Interior Design” / no 140, 1970’. 70 x 100 cm, 1969–70. DMC 3676, Drawing Matter Collections



Adolfo Natalini, storyboard from Sketchbook 17 (‘Quaderno Americano’), 1972, 87. DMC 2129. Drawing Matter Collections.