



Winged Entranceway to the Architectural Exhibition—M. Scolari. (Photo. Chris Adams.)

L'ingresso alle Corderie dell'Arsenale

Massimo Scolari (translated by Helene Furjan)

We could explain this sculpture as an expression of that freedom which flying caused in each one of us, as a record of paper wings between school benches, or of enchantment before the giddy evolution of swallows and the majestic gliding of birds of prey. And perhaps we will only succeed in veiling the evidence reminding us of the aeroplanes that streak the sky every day, depicting modernity with the white trails mingled with the breath of the clouds, or the too luminous points of the satellites that deform the ancient perspective of the starry vault. In reality this object has for years flown over my landscapes, slowly crossing their representations. In the *Porta per citta di mare* (*Biennale, Venice, 1980*), it hovered among unravelled clouds above an architecture that protected a peaceful cove. After eleven years of motionless acrobatics that glider settled here, at the limit of architectural construction, already freed from the lament for a heroic utility. Nothing else has attracted me like the flight in a way as silent and enigmatic, and perhaps has imprisoned that primordial aspiration to the lightness that our freedom has not been able to concede to us. We are able to fall from the sky, but not to rise, we can float or dive, but we cannot hover in the air like the

most modest of winged creatures. The flights of Icarus or Simon Mago punctuate the history of this inhuman aspiration, they skirt technical impossibilities until they verge on the laughter of the gods. But we are nevertheless able to fly above our corporeality with fantasy. Others have invented machines to glide on gravity and wear wings, as had Otto Lilienthal for the first time, a hundred years ago, gliding from the Berlin hills of Derwitz.

This sculpture only wants to understand all those impossible shattered constructions; it doesn't want to represent but to record them, evaporated from every anthropomorphism and deprived of noisy rotations. Two identical architectonic elements stolen from the oblique architecture of the *Arca* (Triennale, Milano 1986) have here been reunited without changing their individual meaning. From their meeting has sprung this archaic glider set down in front of the navy yards of *La Serenissima*, in this labyrinthine place for excellence from whose belly swarmed the might of Venice, "*cite humide, sexe femelle de l'Europe*" (Apollinaire).

In a great exhibition of architecture this useless sculpture, not functional, not even to itself, finds in the pride of its futility the region of its existence. And in its exhibited exterior scale this sculpture immediately shows a rupture between what it is and what it would like to be in this place. Two ideas interpenetrate and incorporate each other without choice except uncertainty. One belongs to the weight of the wall, to the construction of the architecture; the other, born from the simple symmetrical doubling of the first, returns to the aerial lightness, to the flight. The absence of a compact connection between the two wings was built from the compositional principal of the renunciation, first of all of the renunciation of every peripheral solution: only in the truth of this limitation do the effects not exceed the causes.

The image of the glider rested silently among rendered walls appears like an intact catastrophe that redeems the accident beyond common sense. I could have wanted to imprint on it an impalpable smile and to restrain the cutting enigma of the artifice. But if none of all this

will manage to unite with the real, I would like at least to leave desire suspended on the beautiful verse of Melville: "Not vastness, not profusion, /but Form—Place; /not obstinate invention, /but respect for the archetype."

