Elvio Manganaro
Play and Assembly

Abstract
The following text is the abstract sent to the authors last July.
It was intended to illustrate the reasons for the magazine issue.
It seemed to the editors of some use to propose it at the opening also to the readers.

The desire for play, or the "play-drive", is halfway between sensitivity and intellect, said Schiller.
It is a primarily aesthetic space that joins matter and form.
Between matter and form there has always been the game-of-art, the game of architecture.
Children impetuously take apart and reassemble the games that adults give them. Thus, through play, we take possession of the outside world, but also its estrangement in the construction of a new world, where the pieces of yesterday are reconnected in new and unpredictable ways.
This is the transformative action which expresses itself through play.
Benjamin wrote of these things when speaking of toys.
Now there are different types of play. Physical, requiring skill, of chance, or representational.
Here play is of interest as a combinatorial process, as the capacity for assembly: taking a doll apart to reassemble it in a different way.
A little like a game of skill, a little like one of representation. Nor is chance irrelevant. In the sense of the randomness that fuels every kind of play, which precedes its structure in a set of shared rules.
Therefore, play and assembly share the same transformative tension.
Therefore, play and assembly are opposed to the real.
Taking apart reality to reassemble it in a different way. This is what cinema has always done.
In addition, play and assembly invite us to succeed with little: with the pieces left over, with the residue of the world of adults. With the architecture of yesterday or the day before yesterday. That which the spirit of time has left behind. Those whom we cannot leave, out of too much love.

Fig. 1
Visual comment by Gianfranco Baruchello to *Le ballate della signorina Richmond* by Nanni Balestrini (Rome 1977).
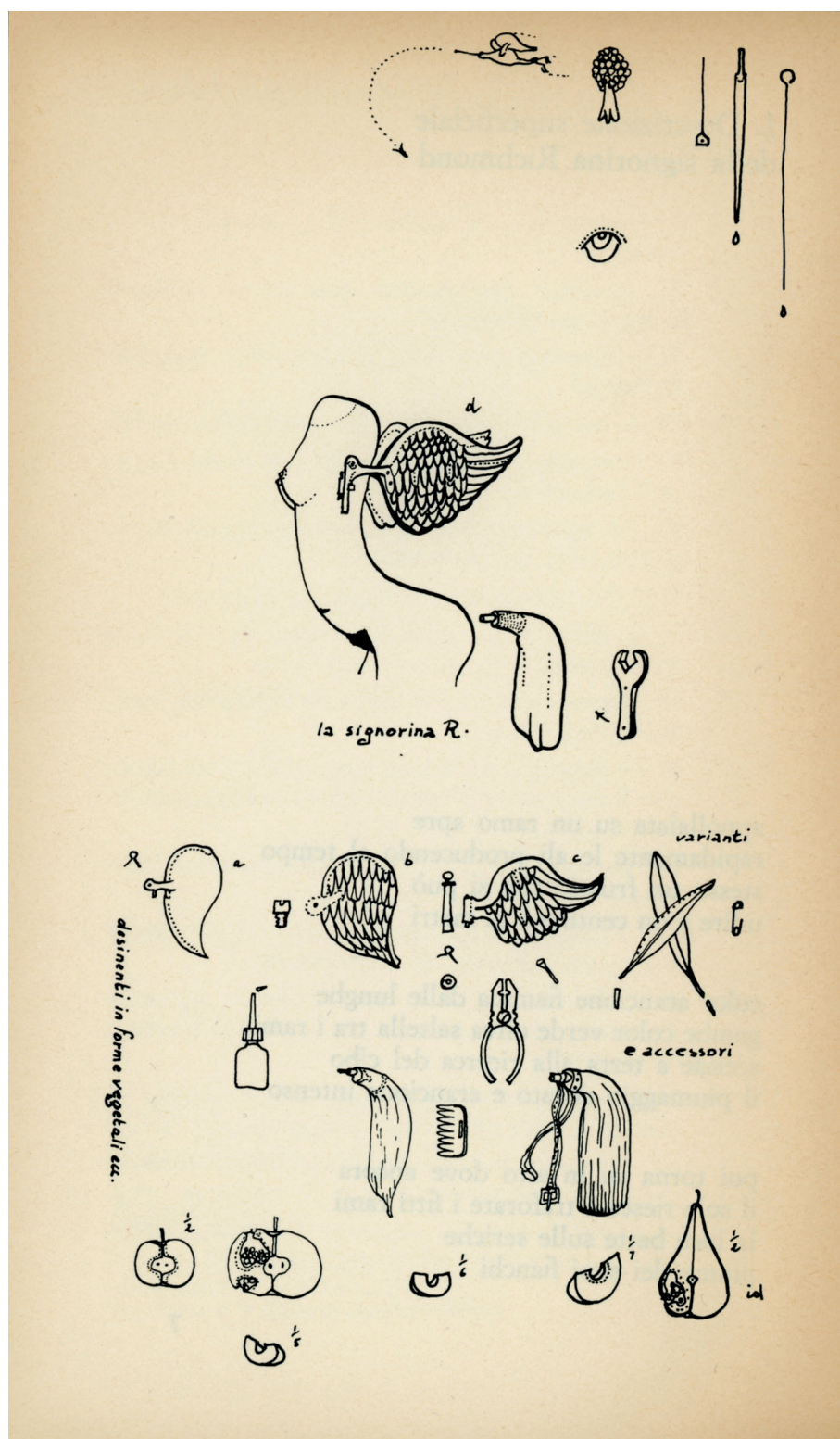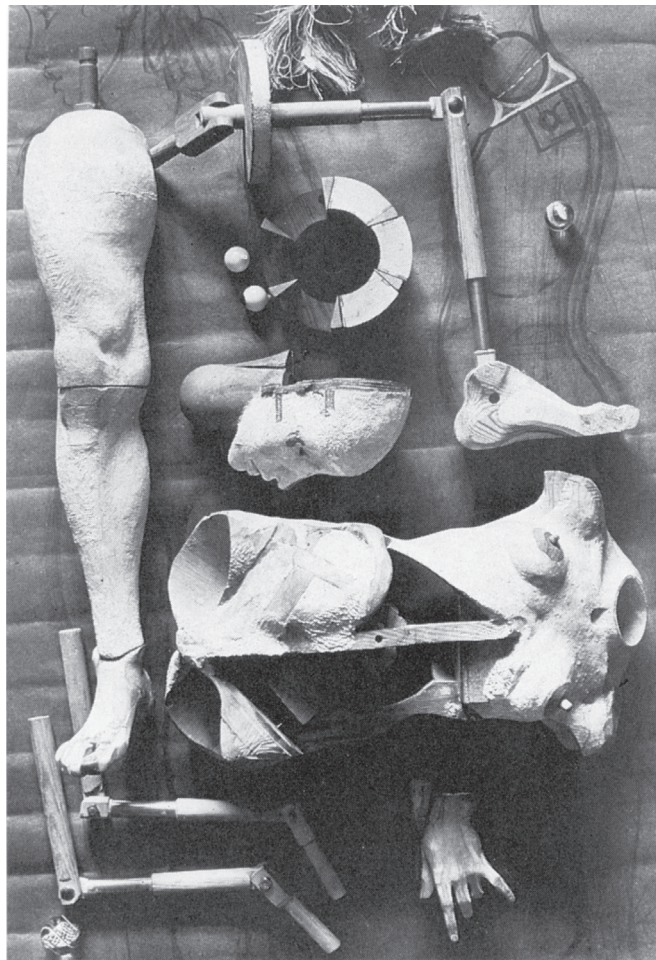
Fig. 2
Hans Bellmer, Poupée: *Variations sur le montage d'une mineure articulée*, from "Minotaure" 5, 1934.

Ultimately, this is a message of hope.
Shklovsky was not mistaken when he claimed that everything in life is the result of assembly.
If you want to understand what art is, start taking the doll apart.
It will be a story of errors, setbacks, and defeats. Attempts to reach the end of the maze of possibilities.
Only then will we have another doll.

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