

LEON FERRARI

THE ARCHITECTURE OF MADNESS

From Robert Borlenghi's Collection



Pan American Art Projects
www.panamericanart.com
274 NE 67th Street, Miami, FL 33138
+1 (305) 751 2550

THE ARCHITECTURE OF MADNESS

Having left Buenos Aires for political exile in the great metropolis of Sao Paulo, Leon Ferrari was struck by the multitude of people, and their very similar lifestyles: he expressed this repetitiveness in a series of heliographs. Twenty seven designs, made between 1980 and 1986, were printed with the Letraset technique used by architects. He saw the heliographs as representing “the absurdity of contemporary society, that sort of madness necessary for everything to look normal”[L.F.]

There was one additional reference in the rigidity of repetitiveness: an association with the horror of regimentation imposed by the military dictatorship in Argentina, which had murdered his son in the family home and forced him to take the rest of the family to safety abroad. This association may explain why Ferrari conveyed with a sense of horror the way of life in super-urban civilizations.

From the viewer’s point of view, unaware of the artist’s intent and background, chaos and confusion seem to reign; but from the point of view of the inhabitants of these almost identical spaces, they seem to live a normal life in their urban labyrinthine nightmare.

We find a visual as well as philosophical correlation between Ferrari’s small figures of the heliographs and musical notes. Indeed, his first institutional exhibit in Sao Paulo included, along with drawings, both heliographs and musical sculptures.

Most of the heliographs are nothing more than the repetition of the same image, whether a human figure, or a door, or a bidet: a reiteration necessary to describe ‘normal’ human conditions. In other heliographs, there is total chaos, as where masses of people march in opposite or perpendicular directions, destined to crash, and they do. In still others, nonsensical doors open in succession into other spaces without a final exit, in an impossible architectural design; or highways go around in circles, again without exit. All types of heliographs represent extremes of life, being surrealistic and incomprehensible.

Robert Borlenghi

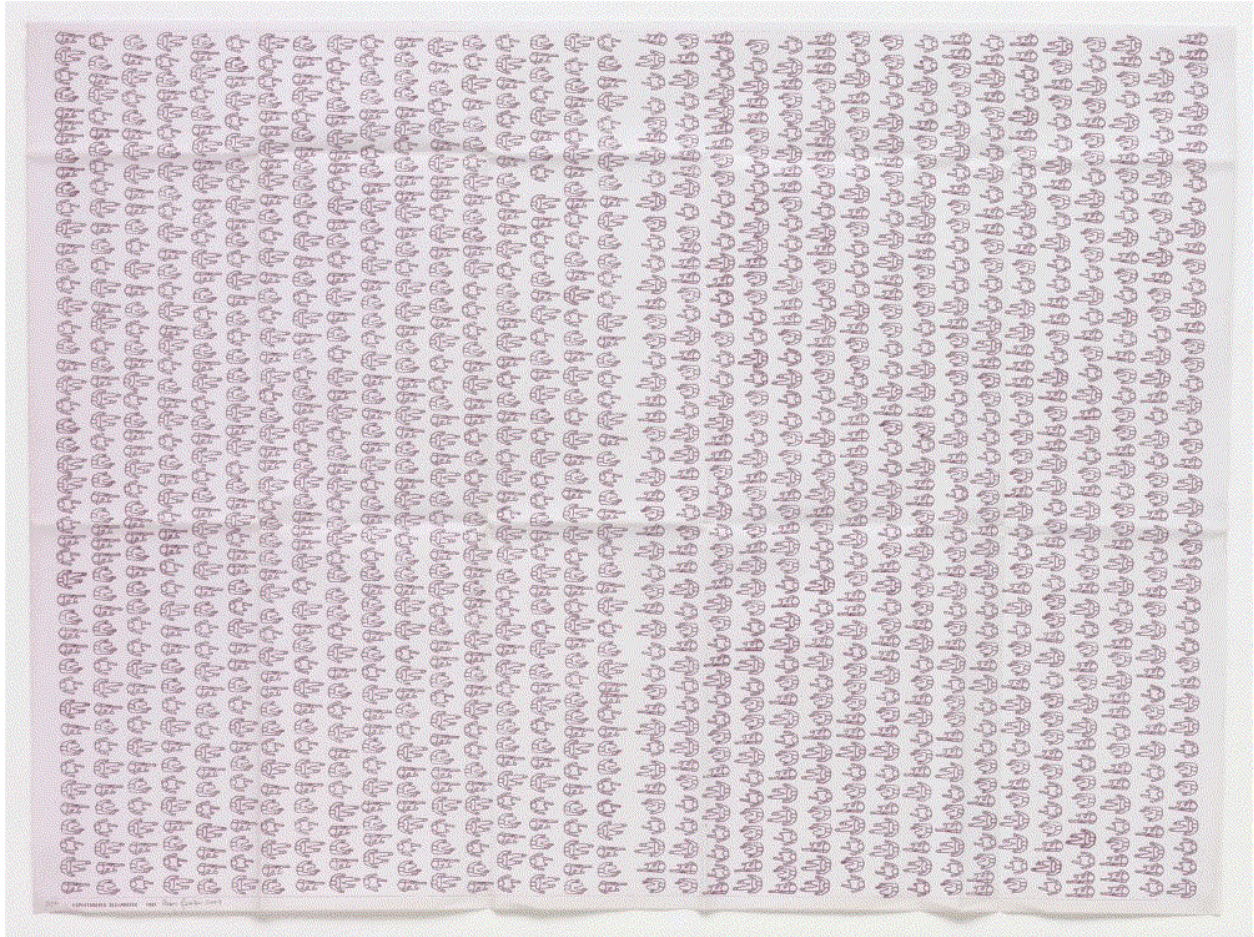
[In affectionate observance of ten years since Leon’s passing, in 2013]

INSTALLATION VIEWS



WORKS | SET OF 27

Espectadores reciprocos from *The Architecture of Madness* series, 1981



Signed recto lower
Heliograph
31 1/2 x 39 in
80 x 99.1 cm
(740-2266)

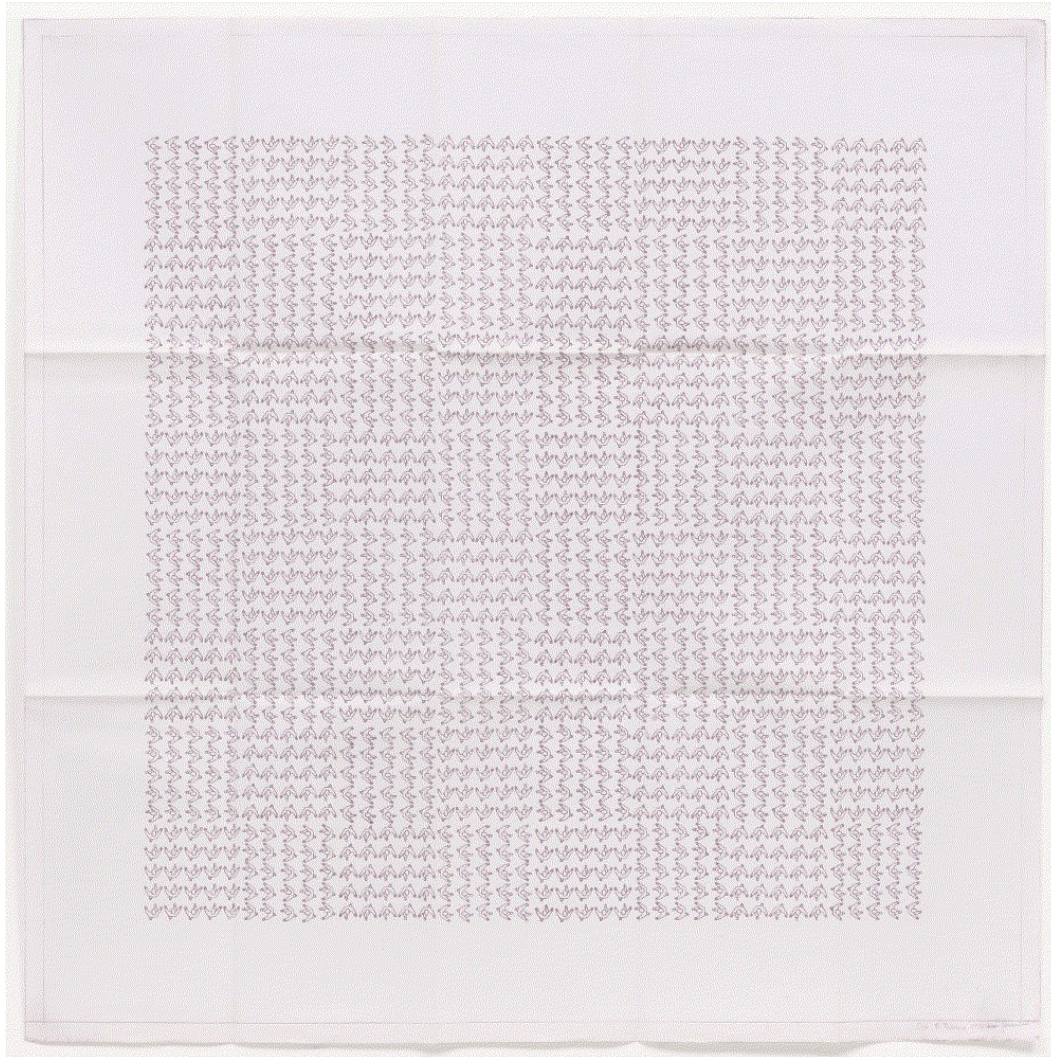
Description

The Architecture of Madness (27)
1980-1986-2007

Provenance

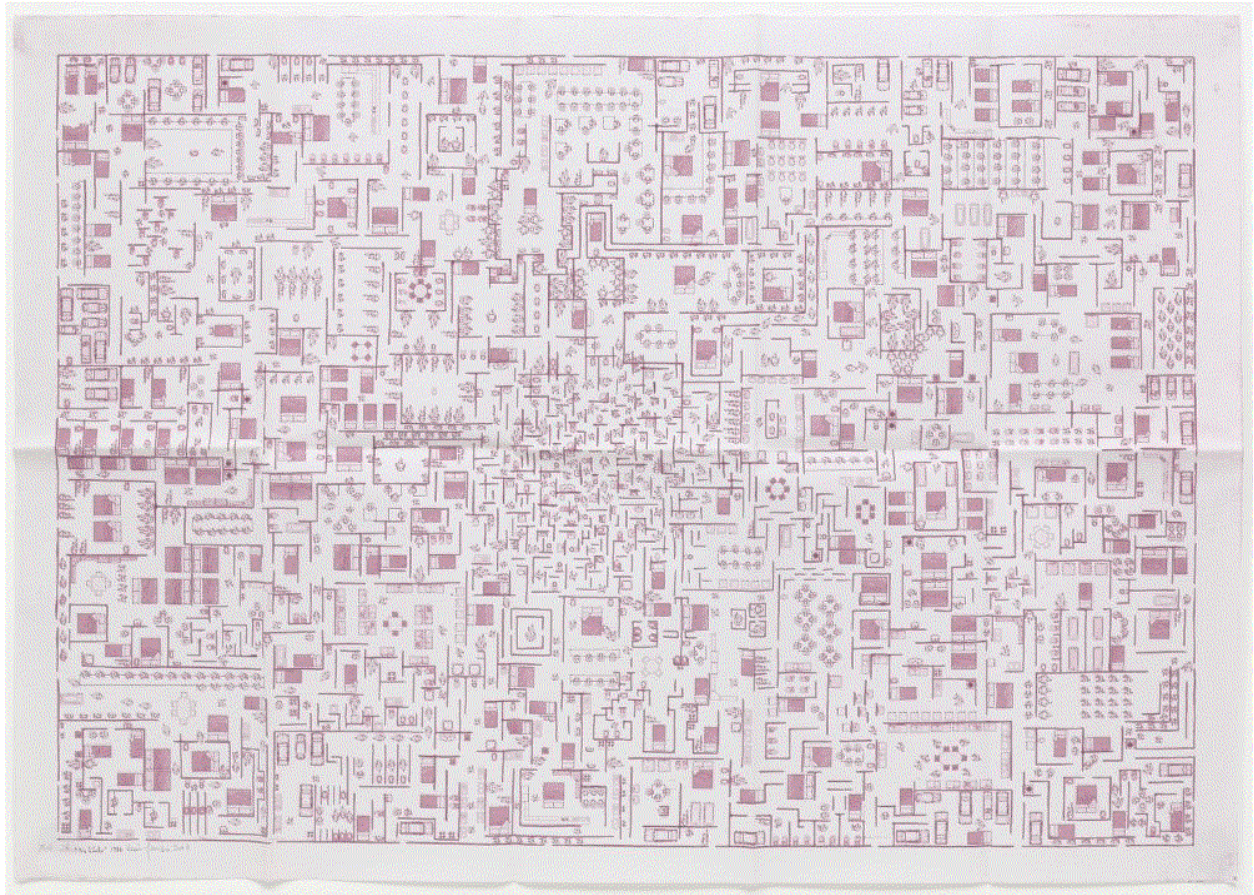
Ancienne Collection Helge Achen bach, Allemagne
Collection particuliere, Luxembourg

Tablero from The Architecture of Madness series , 1982



Signed recto lower
Heliograph
42 x 42 in
106.7 x 106.7 cm
(740-2265)

Sin Titulo from *The Architecture of Madness* series, 1986



Signed recto lower

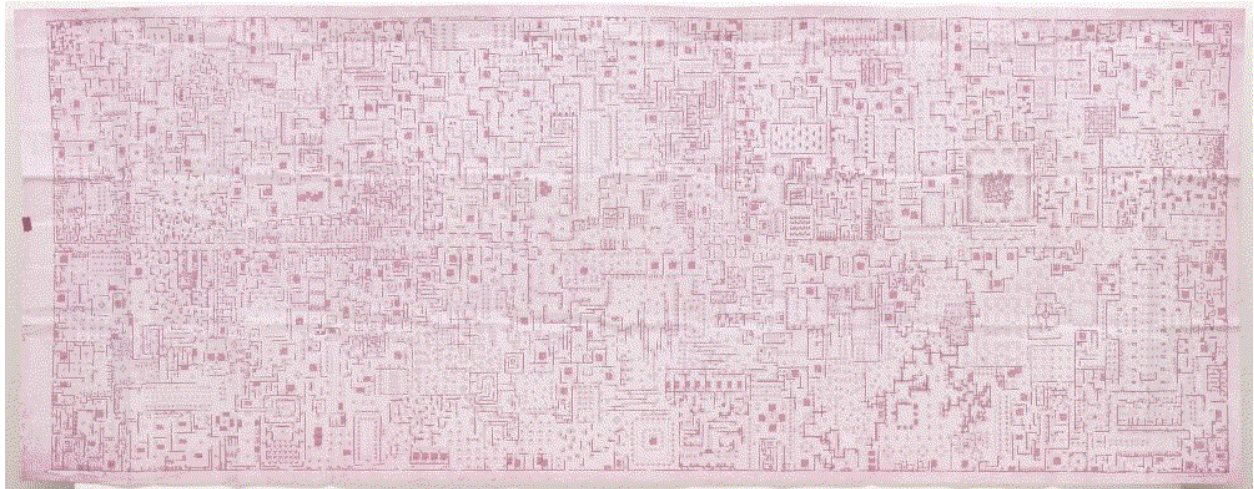
Heliograph

27 1/2 x 39 in

69.8 x 99.1 cm

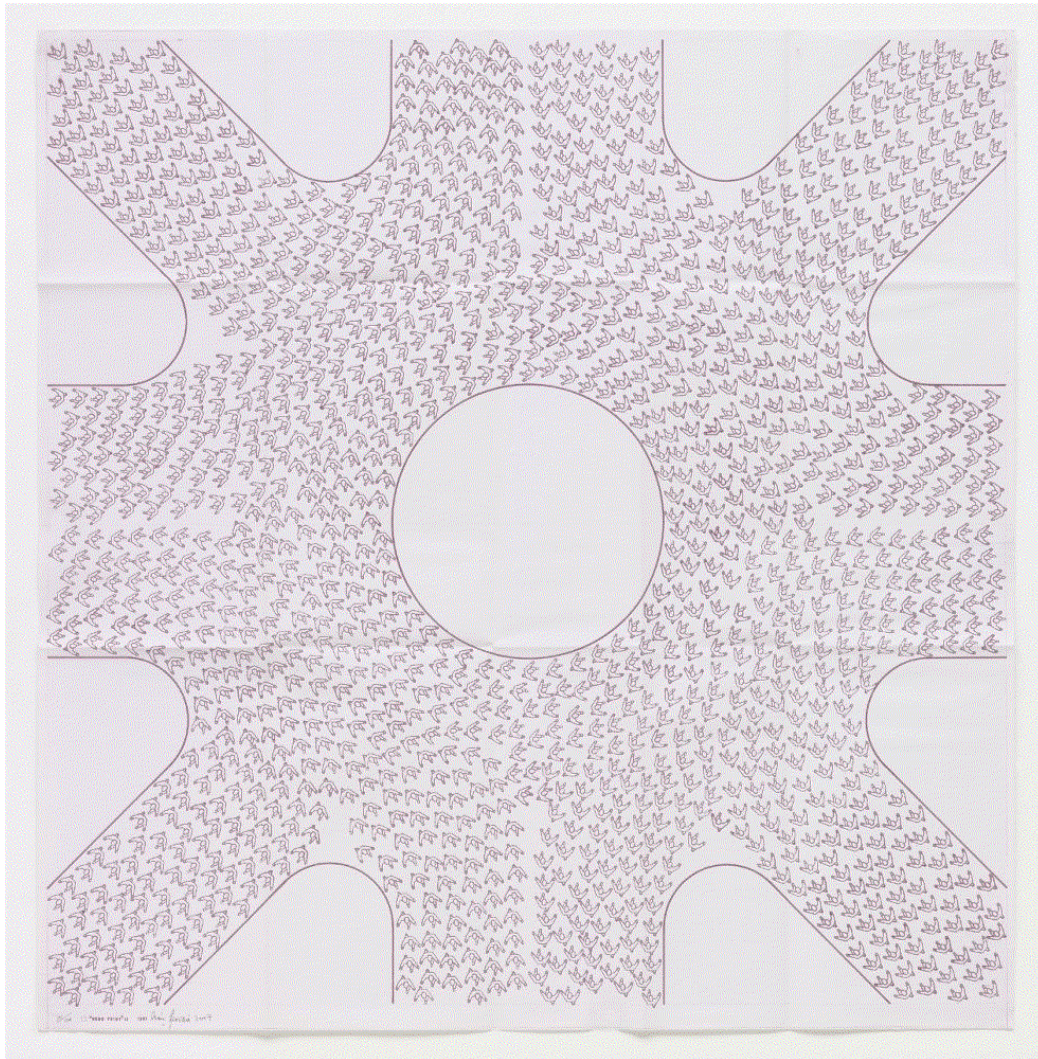
(740-2264)

Rua from *The Architecture of Madness* series, 1980



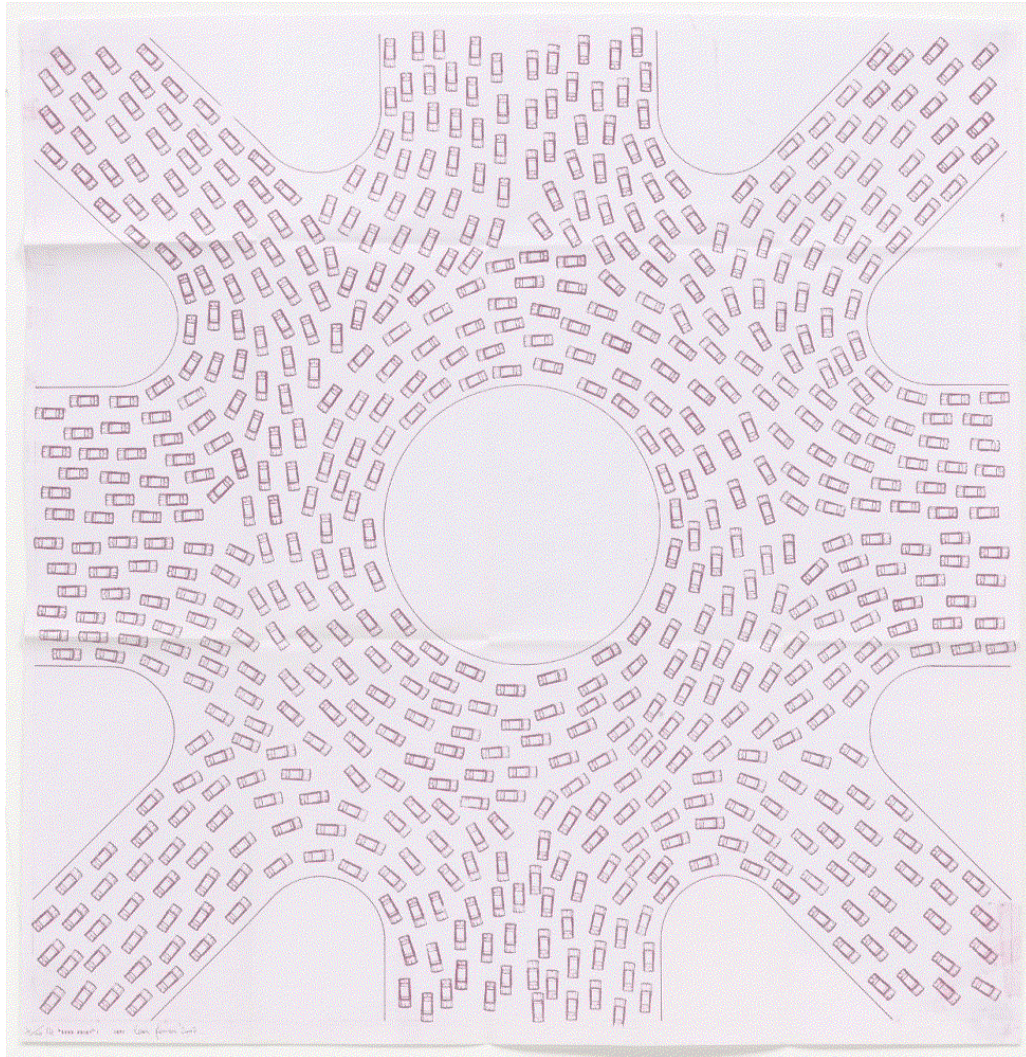
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
41 x 106 in
104.1 x 269.2 cm
(740-2263)

Rond Point II from *The Architecture of Madness* series, 1981



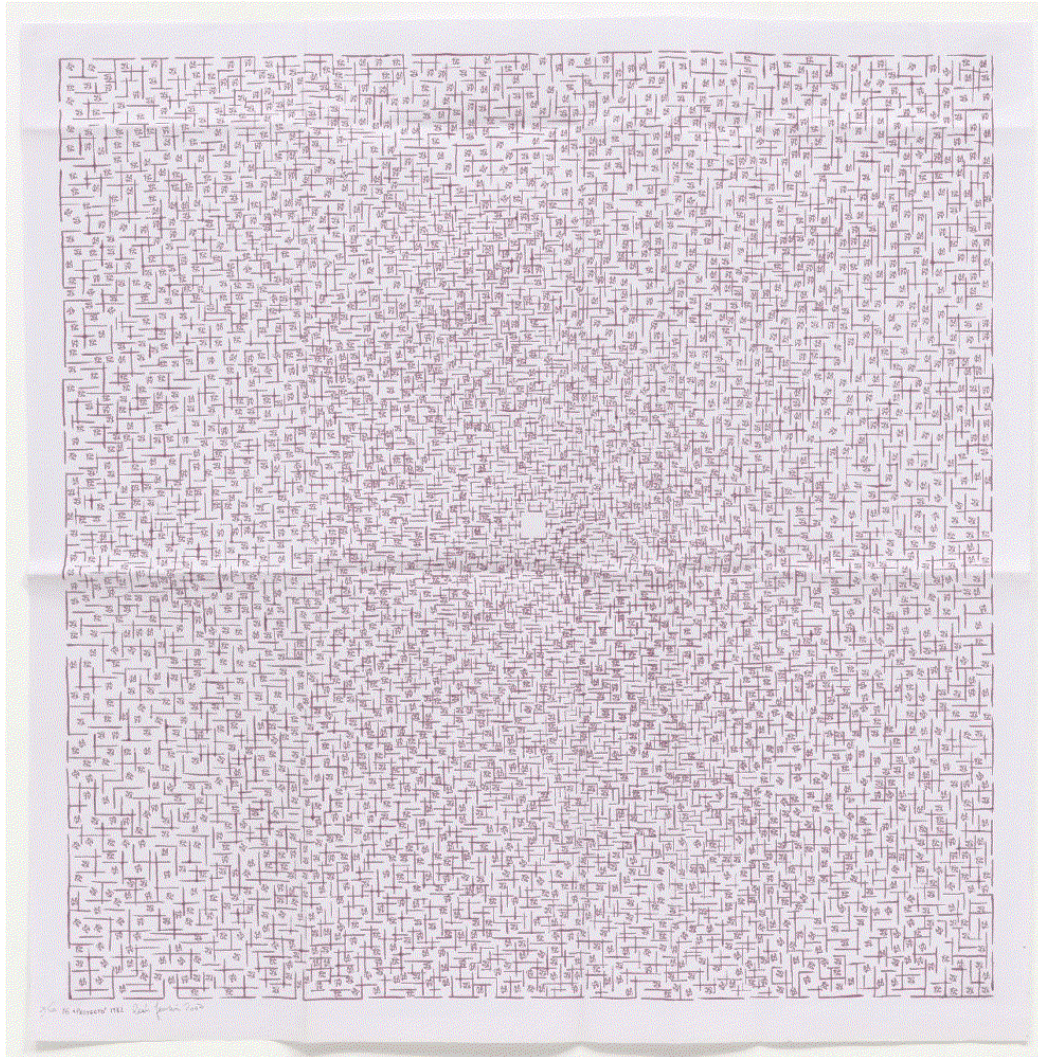
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
36 x 36 in
91.4 x 91.4 cm
(740-2262)

Rond Point I from The Architecture of Madness series, 1981



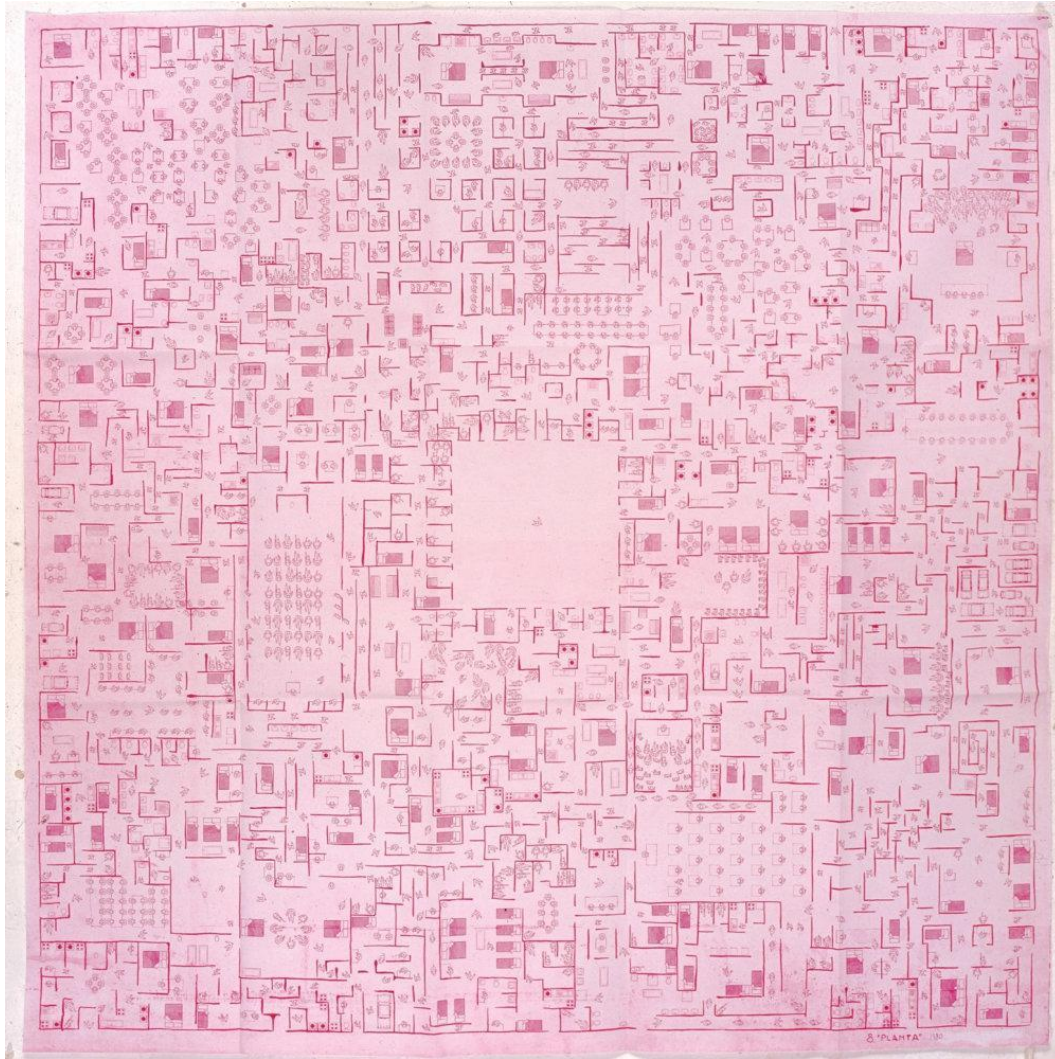
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
37 x 35 1/2 in
94 x 90.2 cm
(740-2261)

Projecto from The Architecture of Madness series, 1982



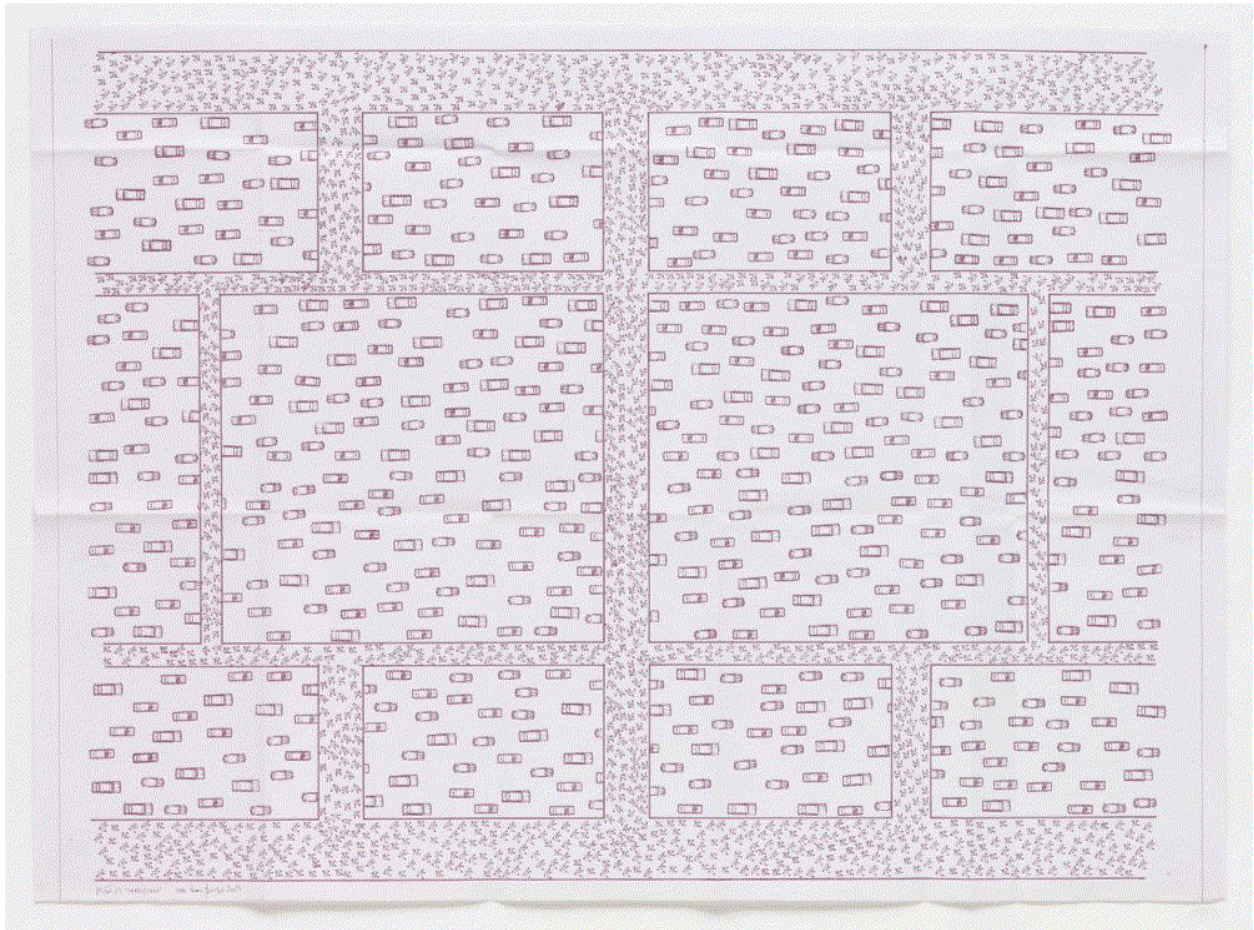
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
30 x 30 in
76.2 x 76.2 cm
(740-2260)

Planta from The Architecture of Madness series, 1980



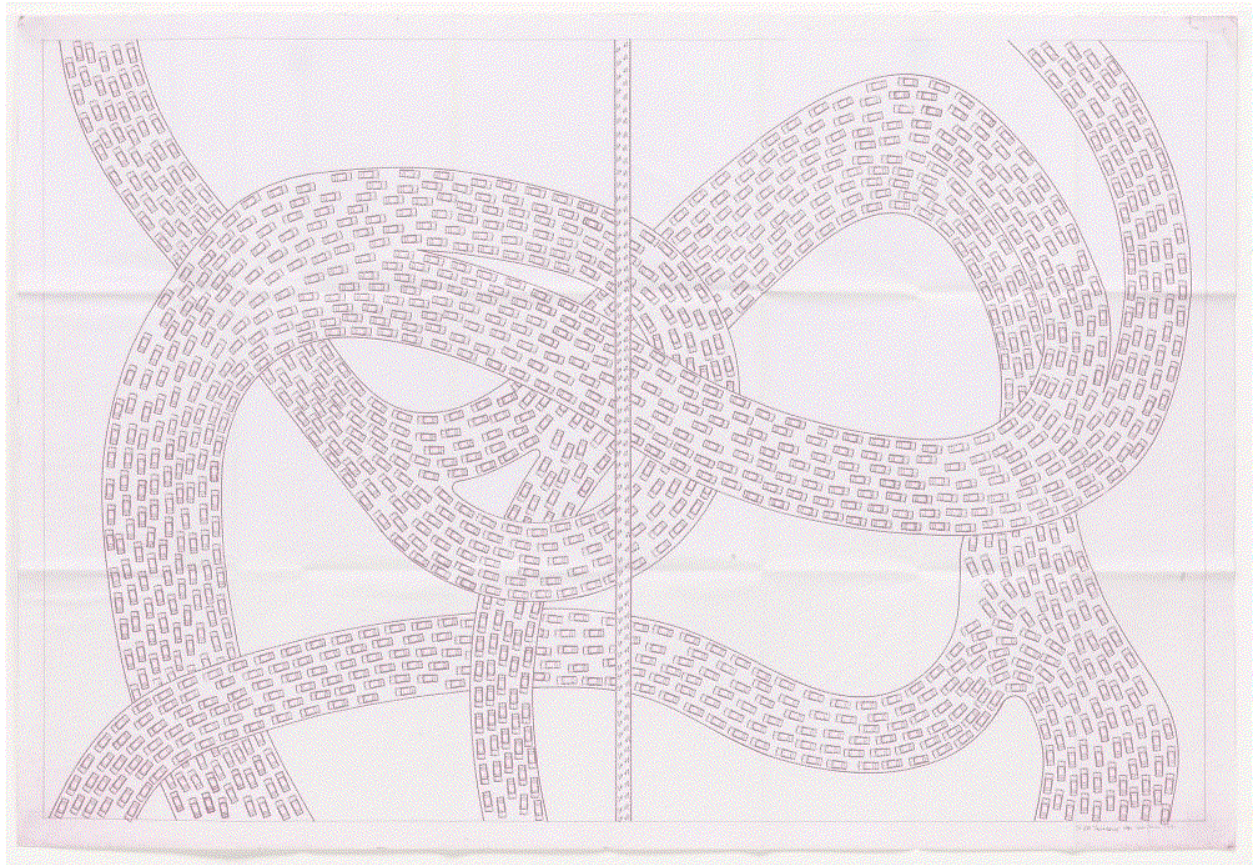
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
39 3/8 x 39 3/8 in
100 x 100 cm
(740-2259)

Pasarelas from The Architecture of Madness series, 1981



Signed recto lower
Heliograph
31 x 39 in
78.7 x 99.1 cm
(740-2258)

Pasarela from The Architecture of Madness series, 1981



Signed recto lower

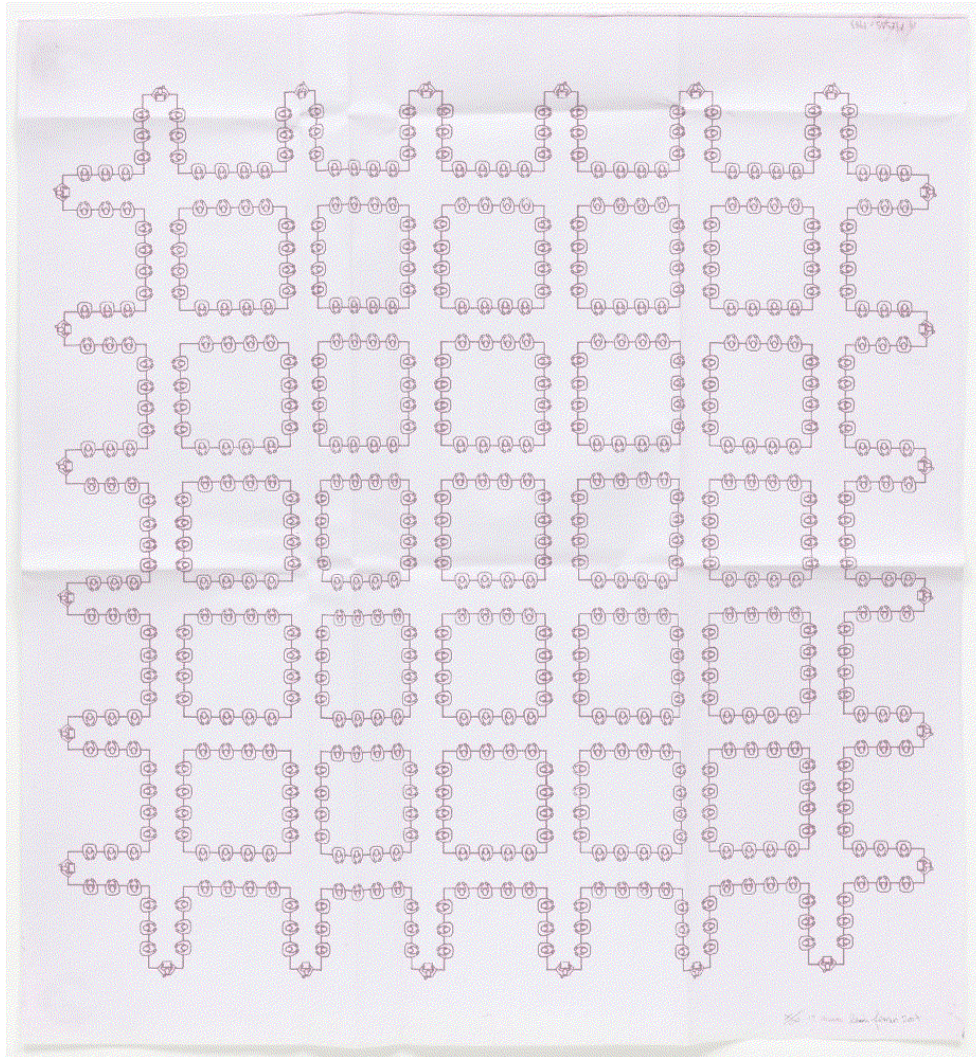
Heliograph

42 x 55 in

106.7 x 139.7 cm

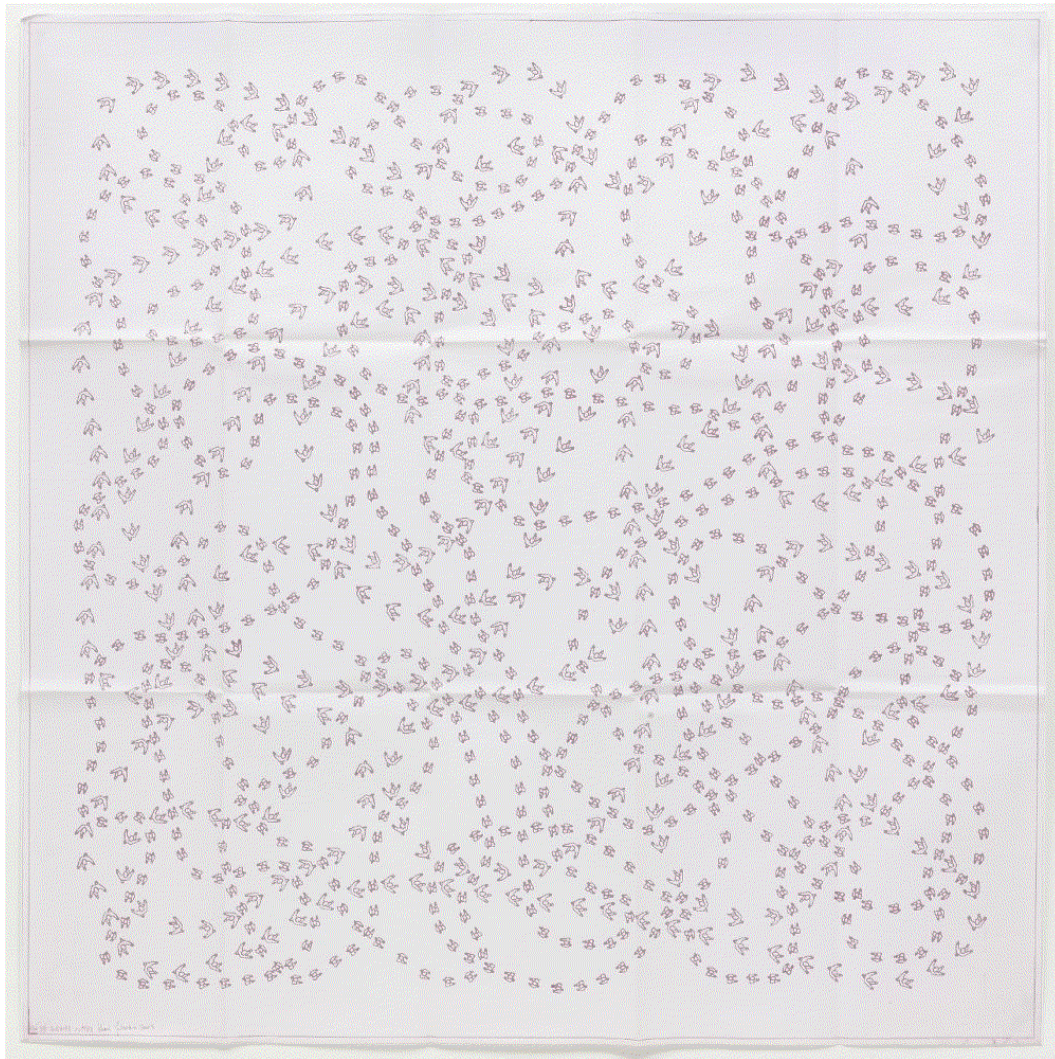
(740-2257)

Mesas from The Architecture of Madness series, 1983



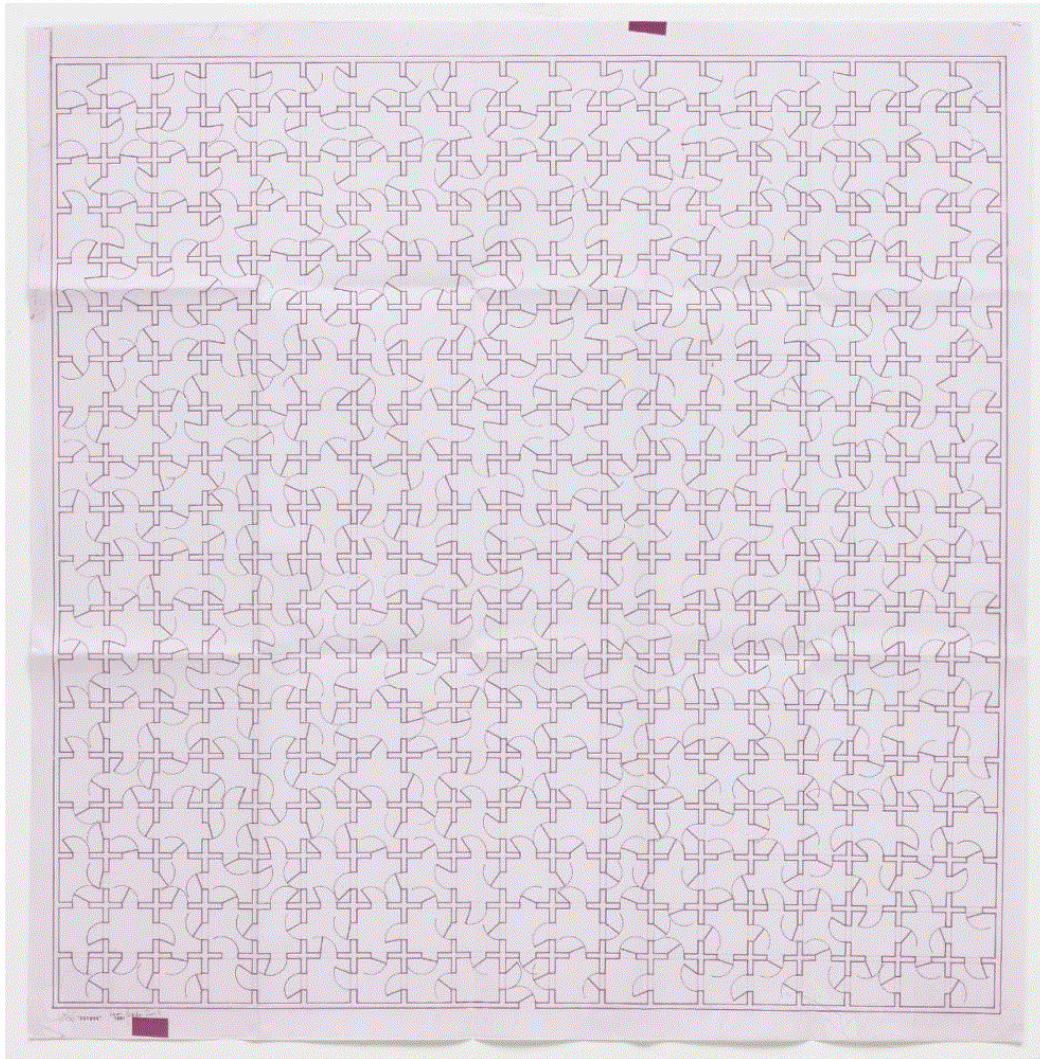
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
29 1/2 x 27 1/2 in
74.9 x 69.8 cm
(740-2256)

Gente from *The Architecture of Madness* series, 1983



Signed recto lower
Heliograph
40 1/2 x 40 1/2 in
102.9 x 102.9 cm
(740-2255)

Estudo from The Architecture of Madness series, 1981



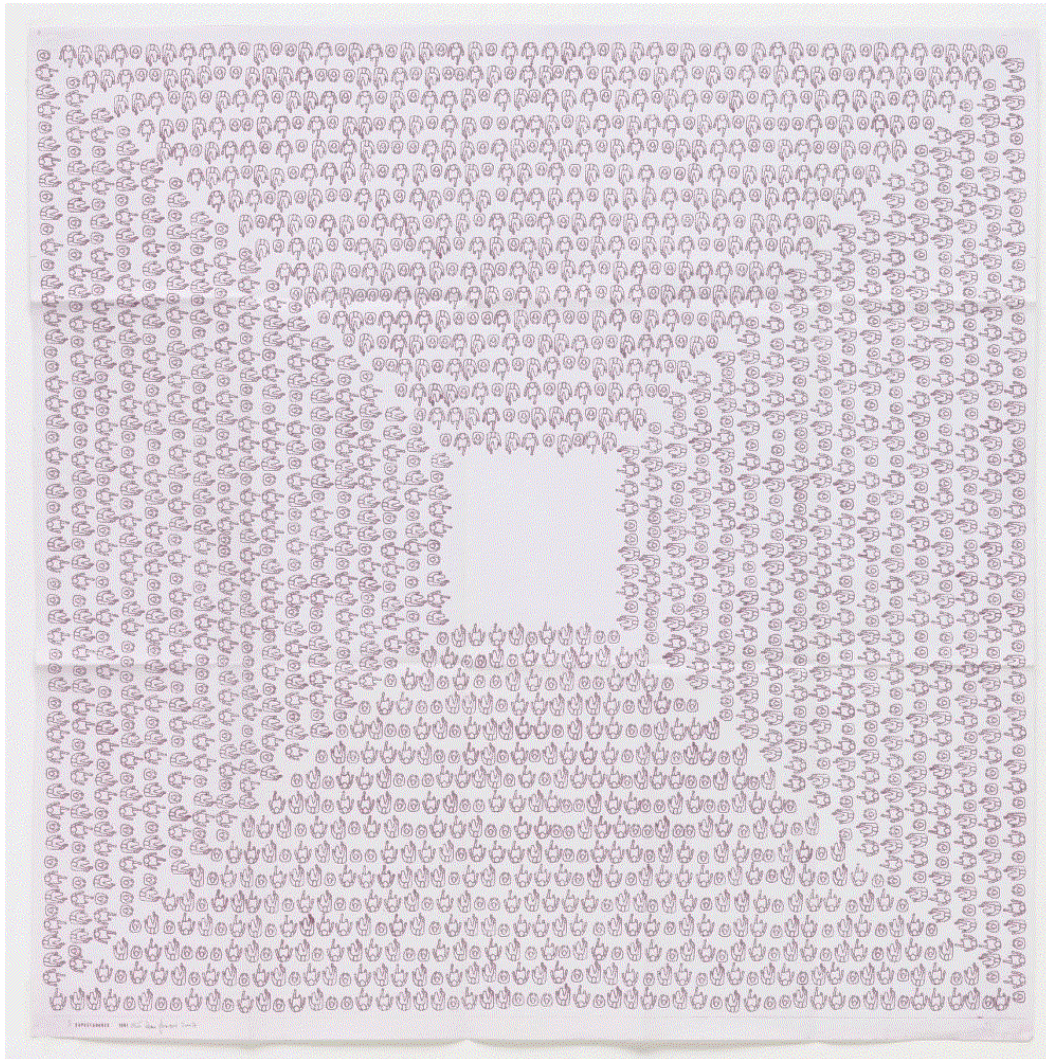
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
36 x 36 in
91.4 x 91.4 cm
(740-2254)

Espiral from The Architecture of Madness series, 1983



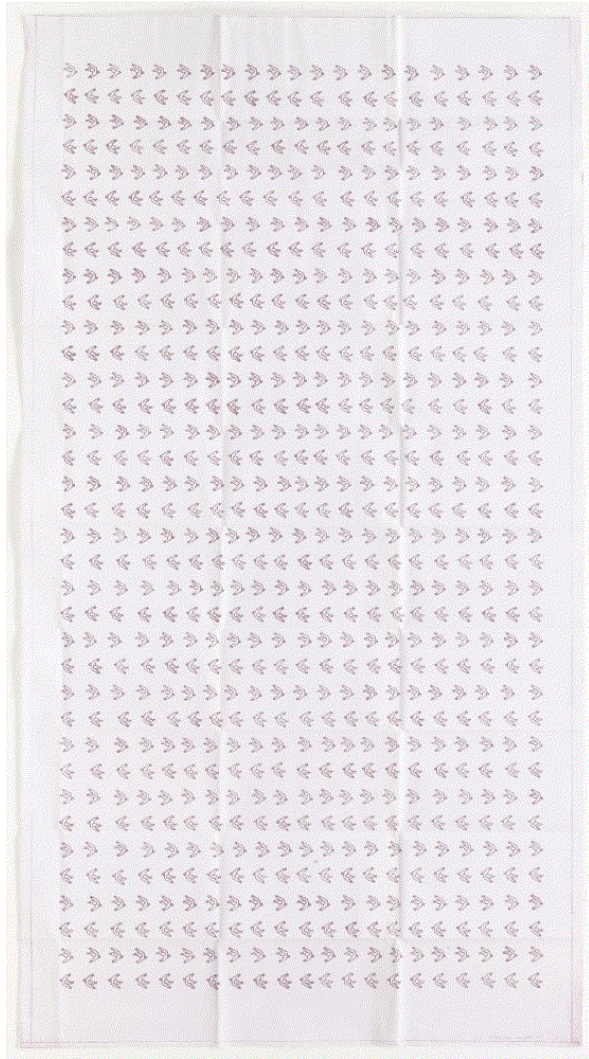
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
24 x 24 in
61 x 61 cm
(740-2253)

Espectadores from The Architecture of Madness series, 1981



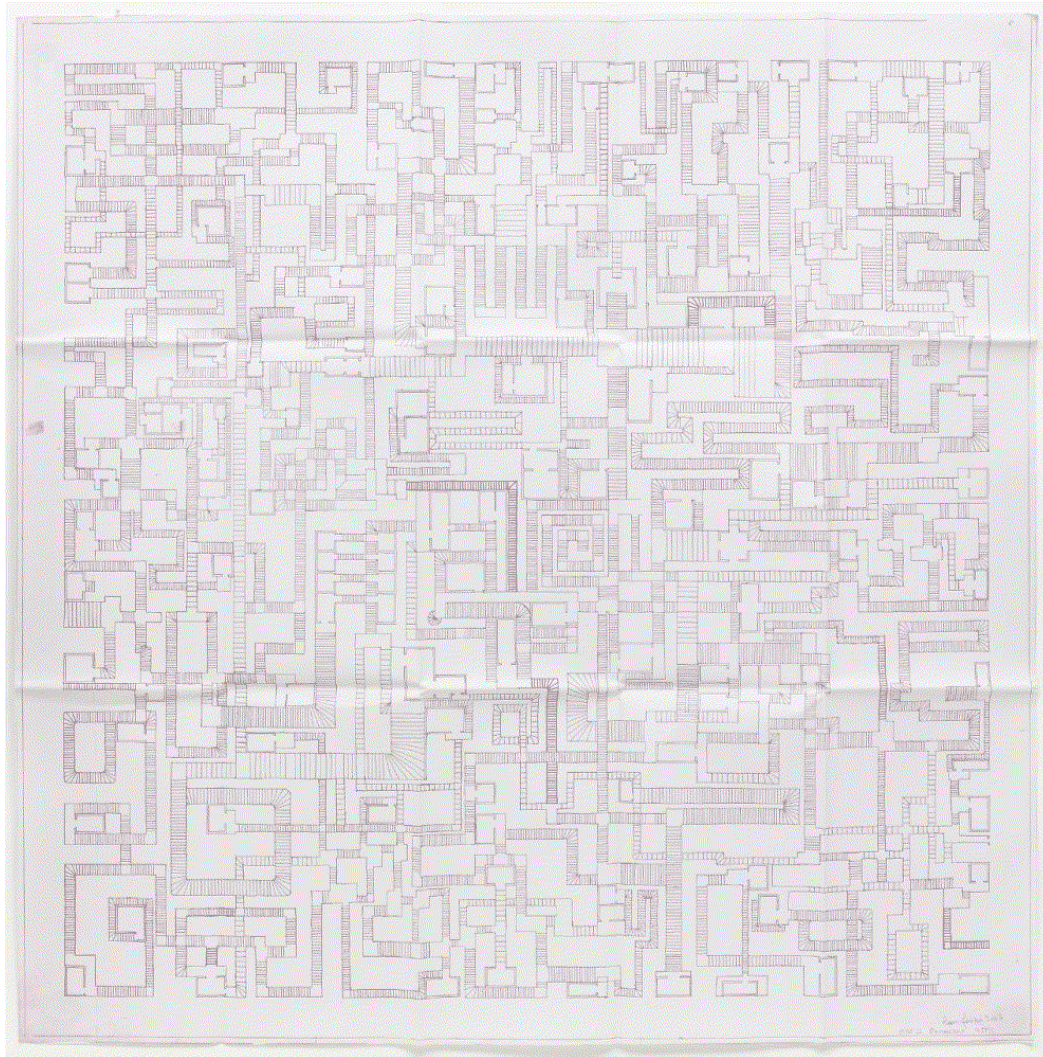
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
39 x 39 in
99.1 x 99.1 cm
(740-2252)

Escritura from The Architecture of Madness series, 1982



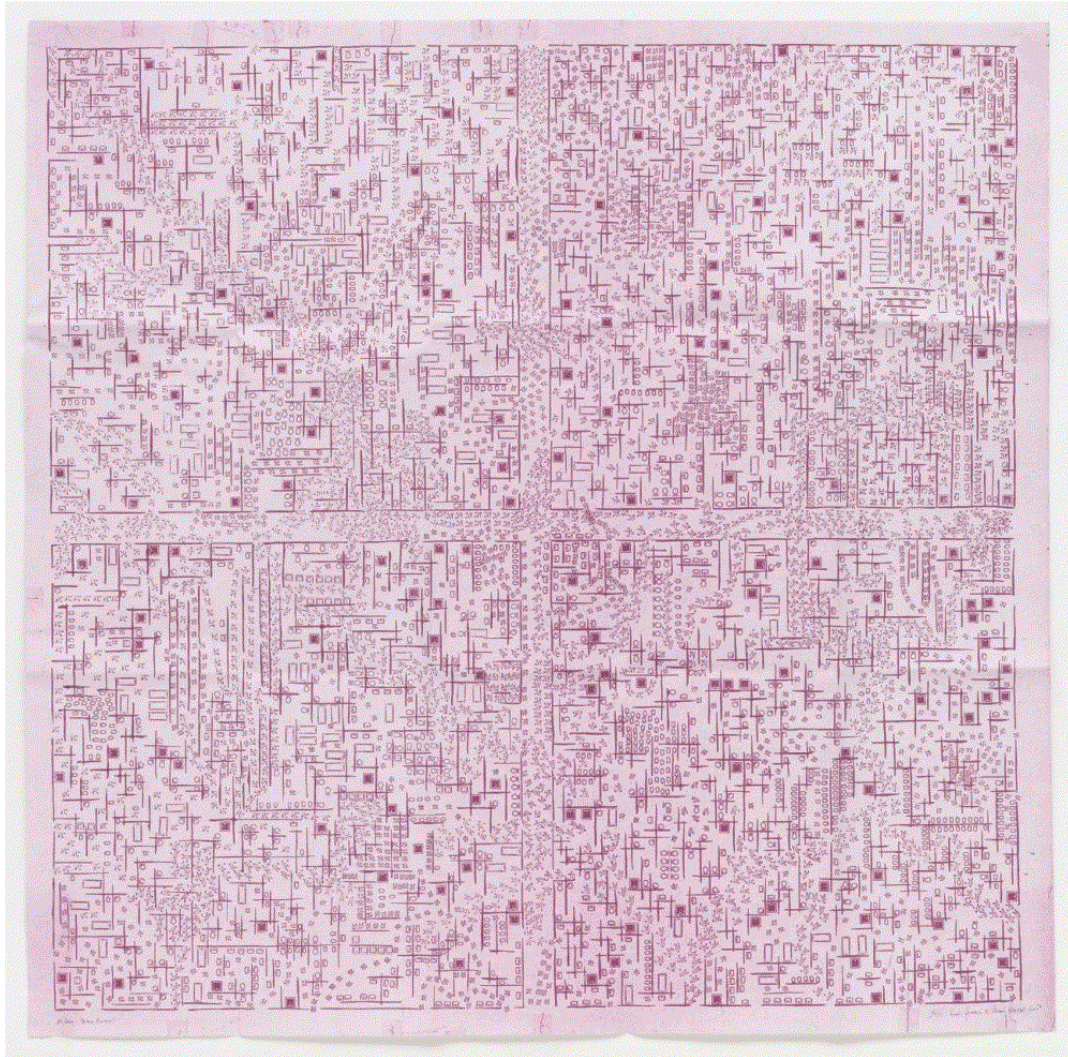
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
71 x 43 in
180.3 x 109.2 cm
(740-2251)

Escalera from The Architecture of Madness series, 1983



Signed recto lower
Heliograph
39 x 39 in
99.1 x 99.1 cm
(740-2250)

Dua Ruas from The Architecture of Madness series, 1981



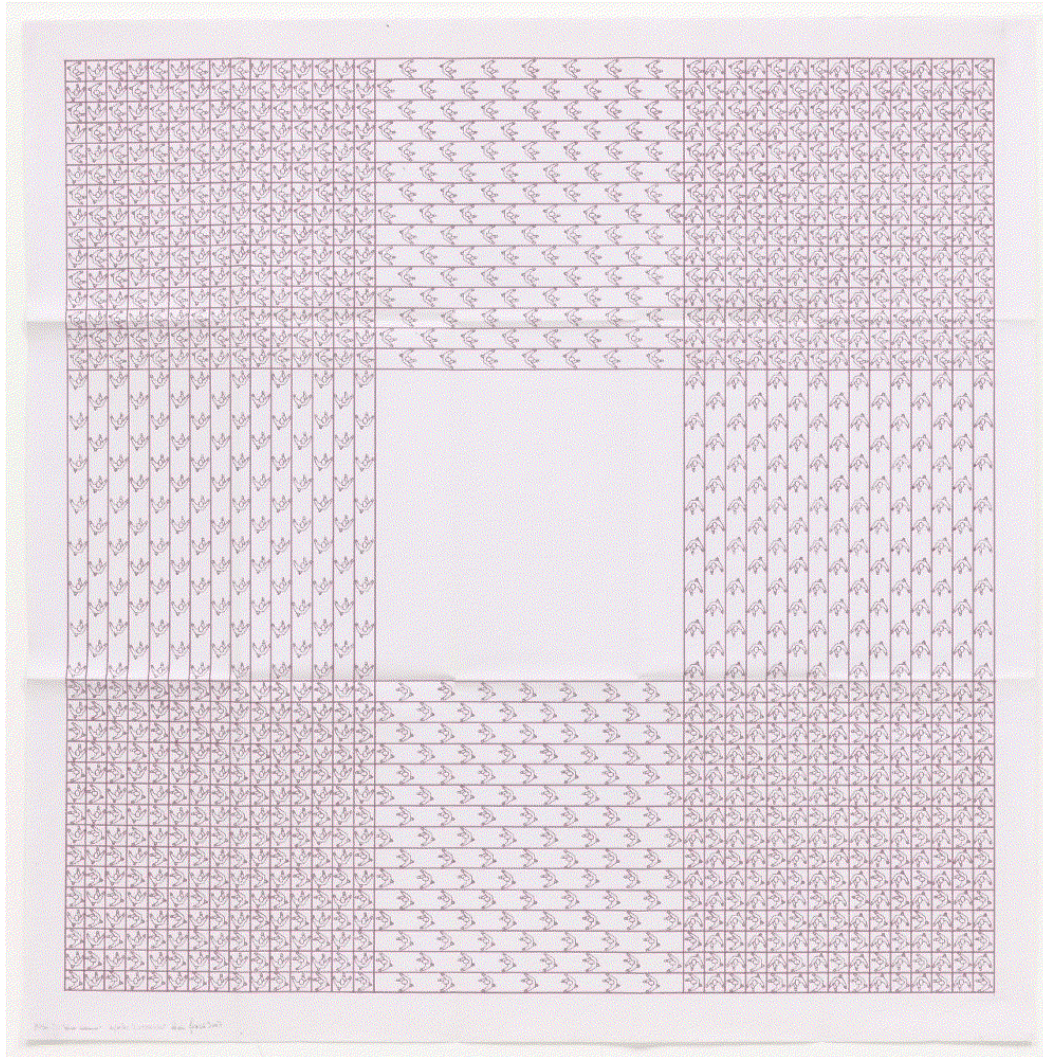
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
39 x 39 in
99.1 x 99.1 cm
(740-2249)

Destino from The Architecture of Madness series, 1982



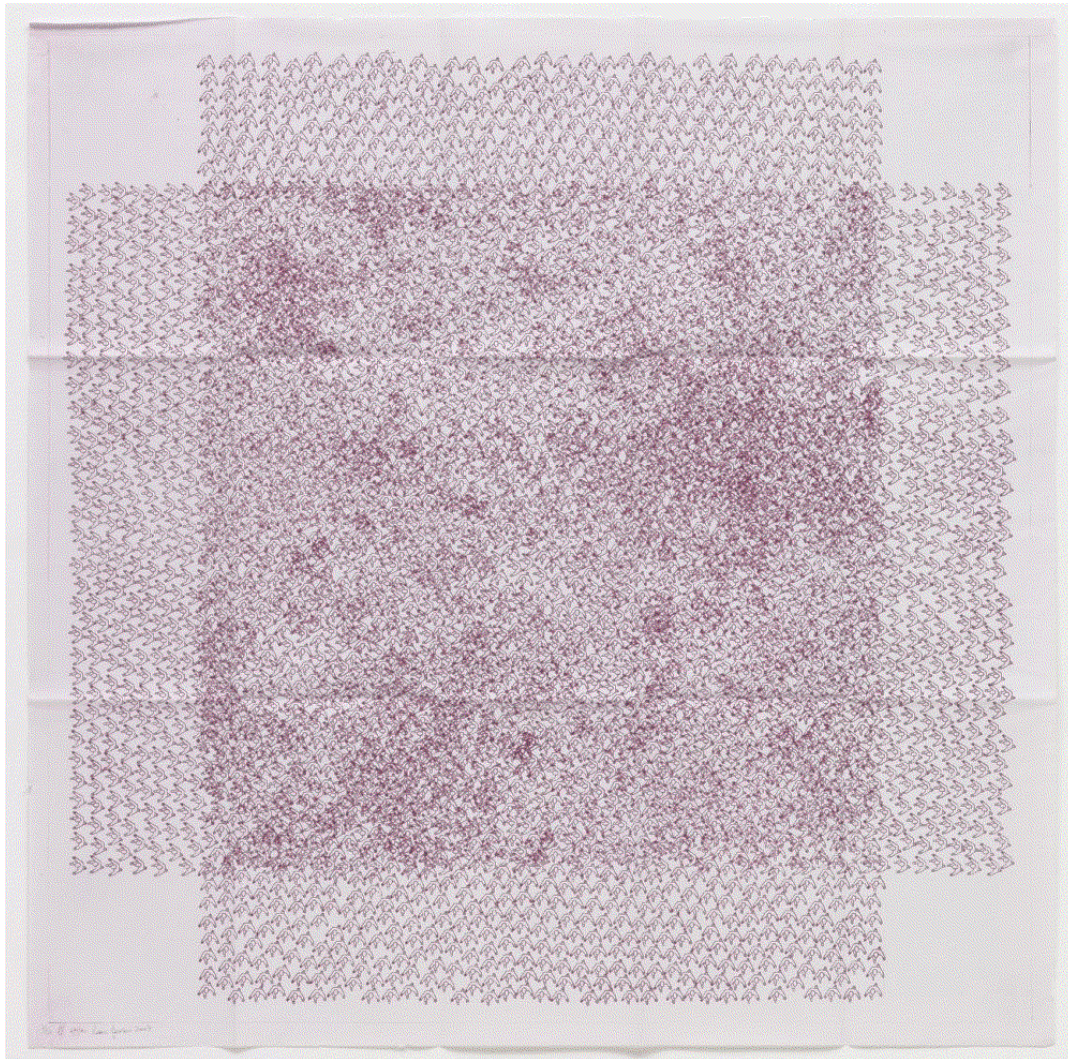
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
27 1/2 x 39 in
69.8 x 99.1 cm
(740-2248)

Cuadrado from The Architecture of Madness series, 1982



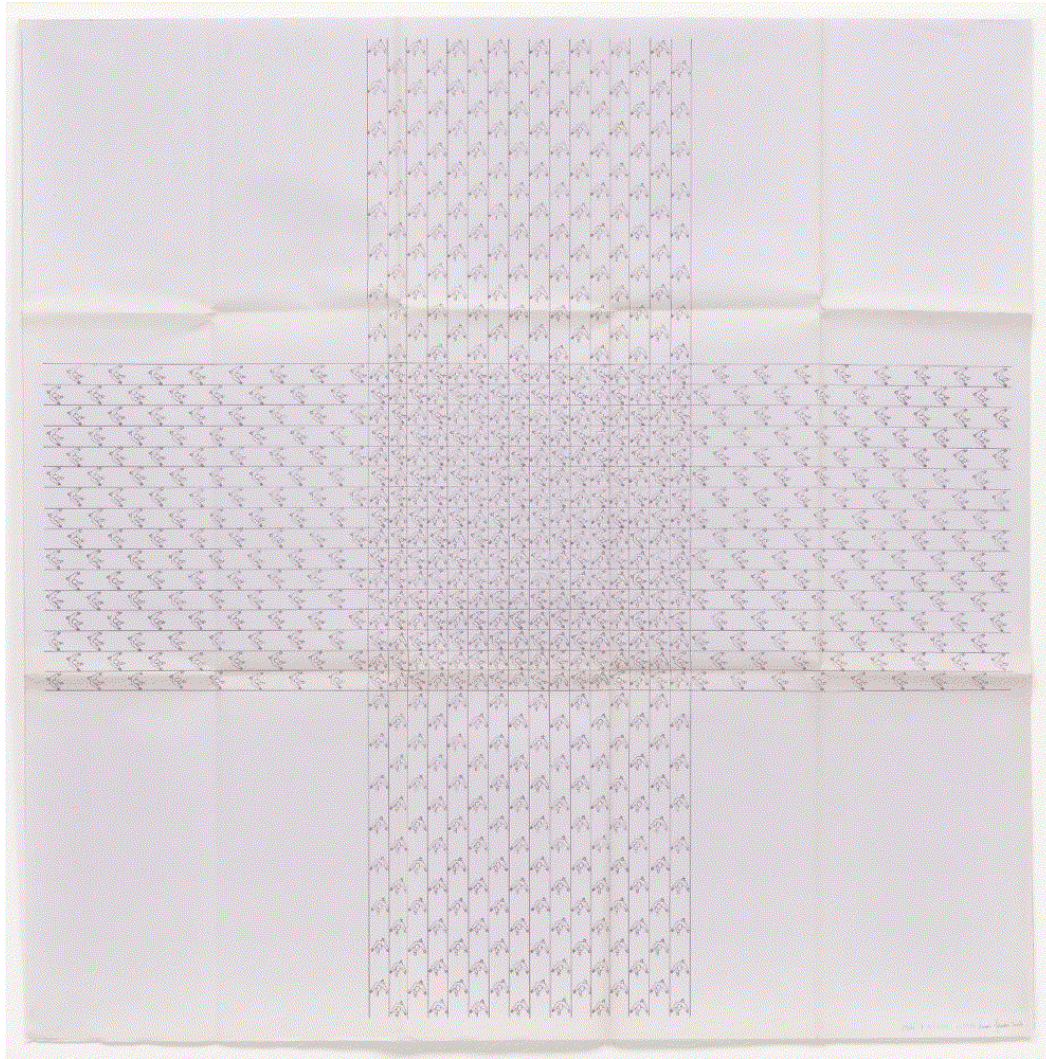
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
39 x 39 in
99.1 x 99.1 cm
(740-2247)

Cruzamento from The Architecture of Madness series, 1982



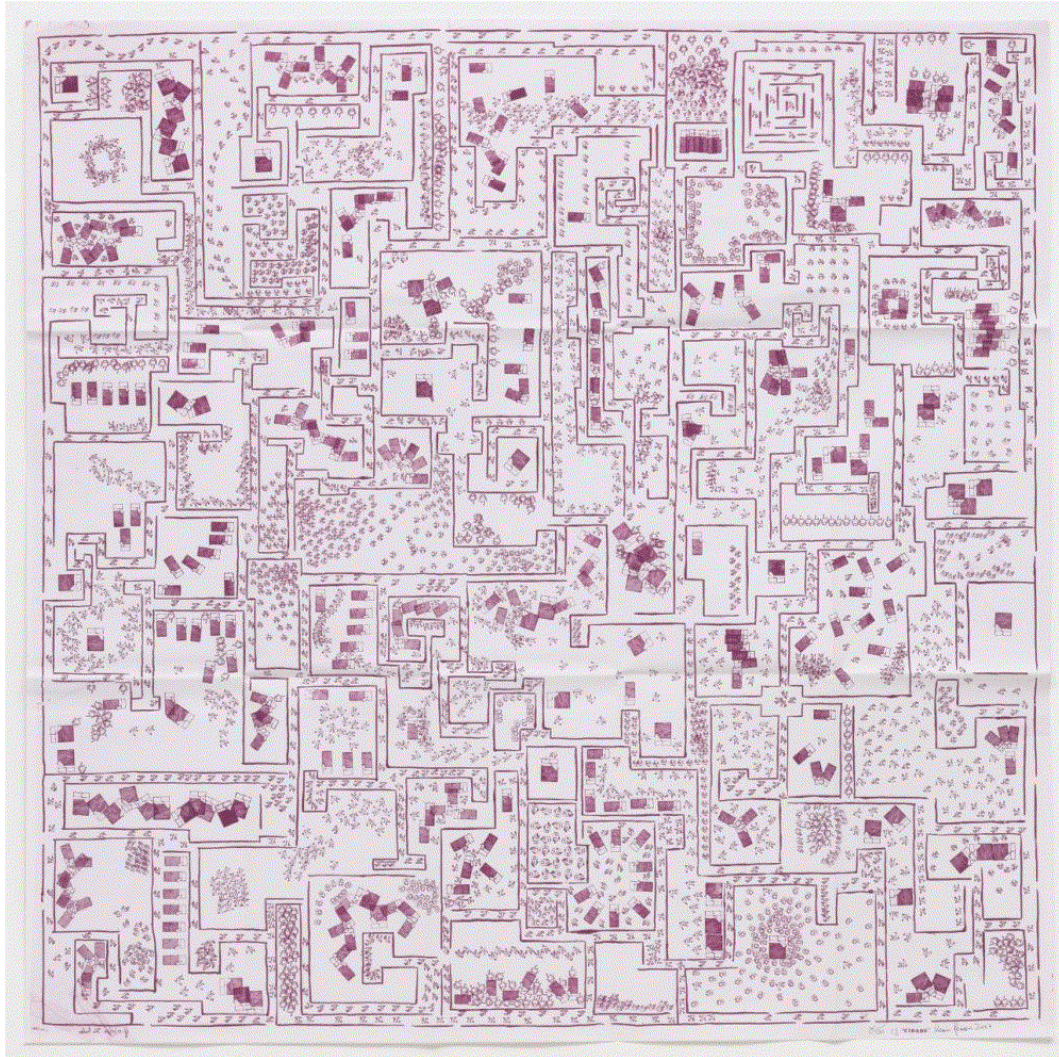
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
39 x 39 in
99.1 x 99.1 cm
(740-2246)

Cruce from The Architecture of Madness series, 1983



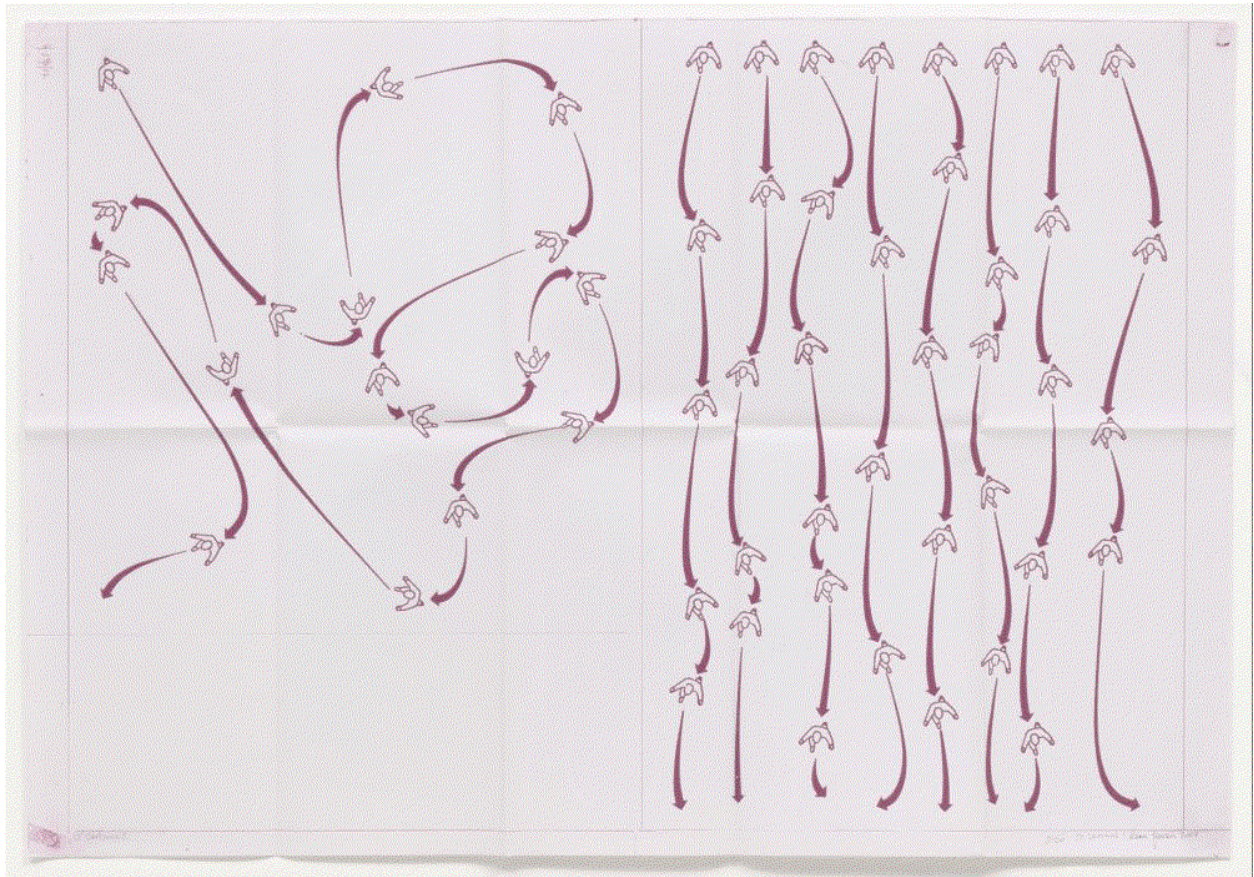
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
39 x 39 in
99.1 x 99.1 cm
(740-2245)

Cidade from The Architecture of Madness series, 1980



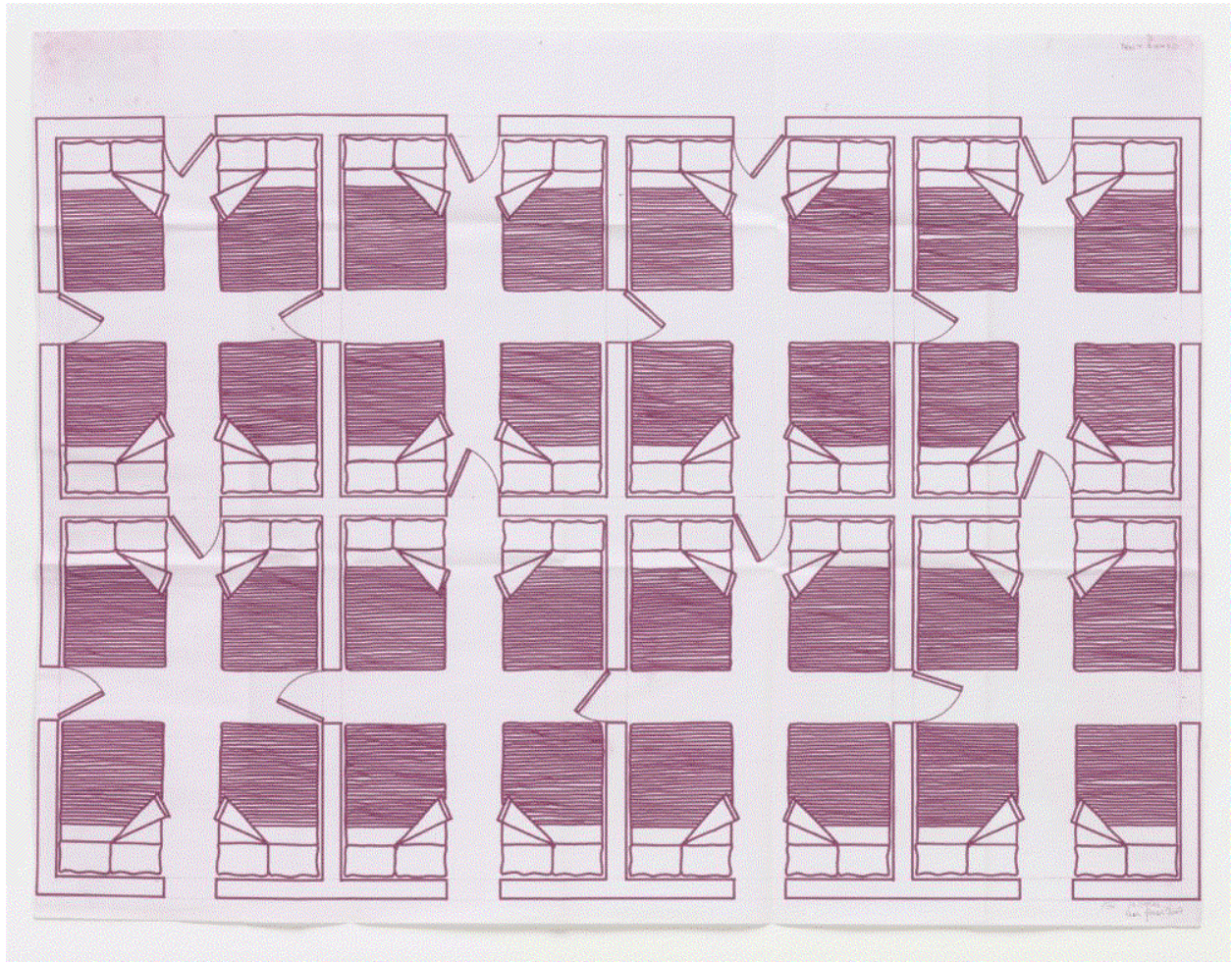
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
39 x 39 in
99.1 x 99.1 cm
(740-2244)

Caminos from The Architecture of Madness series, 1982



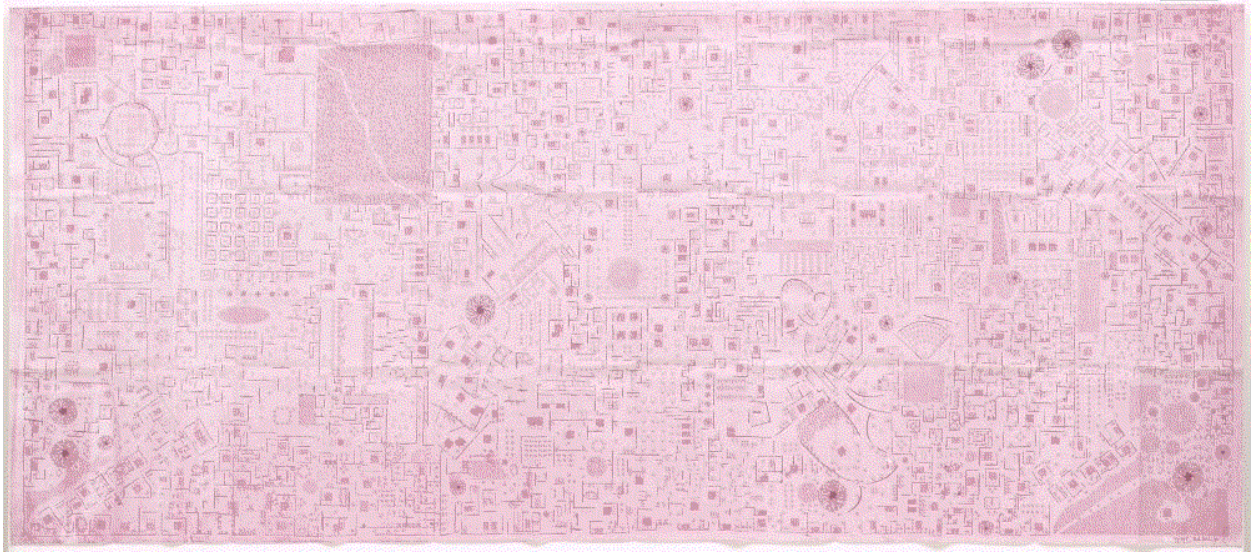
Signed recto lower
Heliograph
27 x 39 in
68.6 x 99.1 cm
(740-2243)

Camas from The Architecture of Madness series, 1982



Signed recto lower
Heliograph
37 x 43 in
94 x 109.2 cm
(740-2242)

Bairro from The Architecture of Madness series, 1980



Signed recto lower
Heliograph
43 x 95 in
109.2 x 241.3 cm
(740-2241)

Autopista del Sur from *The Architecture of Madness* series, 1982



Signed recto lower
Heliograph
39 x 39 in
99.1 x 99.1 cm
(740-2240)

ABOUT THE ARTIST

León Ferrari (1920-2013) was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina; and died in the same city. Trained to be an engineer, Ferrari was mostly an autodidact artist.

His work can be found in important public collections, amongst others: the Tate Modern, London; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston ; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Buenos Aires; Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires; Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil; and the Museo de Arte Moderno de México, Mexico City. In October of 2007 he was awarded the Gold Lion at the 52nd Venice Biennale. In 2010 The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York inaugurated 'Tangled Alphabets' a two-artist retrospective of León Ferrari and Mira Schendel. The exhibition in New York was followed by presentations at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid; and the Fundação Iberê Camargo in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

At the forefront of pre-conceptual art, Ferrari's career developed at a time when the question of language was particularly central to Western culture due to the role taken by post-structuralism, semiotics, and the philosophy of language. Ferrari worked in a wide range of art forms and mediums. He explored techniques such as sculpture, painting, drawing, and assemblage to film, collage, mail art, poetry, and sound. During his time in Italy in the 1950s, he produced ceramic sculptures stylistically connected to the European abstraction of the time. Upon returning to Argentina, he continued to create sculptural works of metal wires and rods before beginning what would become his most iconic works, a series on paper and, ultimately, installations, developing an organic style in which gestural forms appear both as abstractions and as explorations of the codes of writing.

Known for his antagonistic political stance and artistic ethics, Ferrari obtained international acclaim when his work was included in the 2000 survey exhibition 'Heterotopias' at the Centro Reina Sofia in Madrid. Four years later in 2004 a national scandal arose in his name at the Centro Cultural Recoleta in Buenos Aires, where the artist had his first major retrospective exhibition. During the forty days that the exhibition lasted, 70,000 visitors passed through the art center, 1,000 articles were printed, and countless manifestations arose both against and in defense of the artist and his work; this mass outpouring of attention solidified Ferrari as one of the most important artists of Latin America.

Pan American Art Projects

Pan American Art Projects
www.panamericanart.com
274 NE 67th Street, Miami, FL 33138
+1 (305) 751 2550

For inquiries, please contact miami@panamericanart.com