



Framework

by
Brian Smallwood

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Virginia Polytechnic
Institute and State University in final fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of:

Master of Architecture

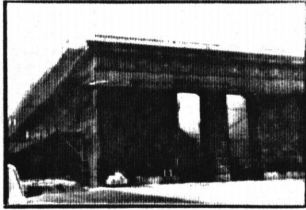
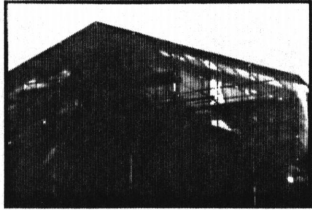
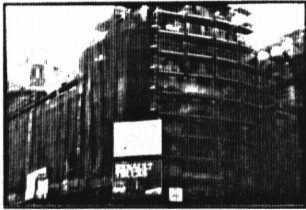
**August 1994
Blacksburg, Virginia**

Olivio Ferrari

Robert Siegle

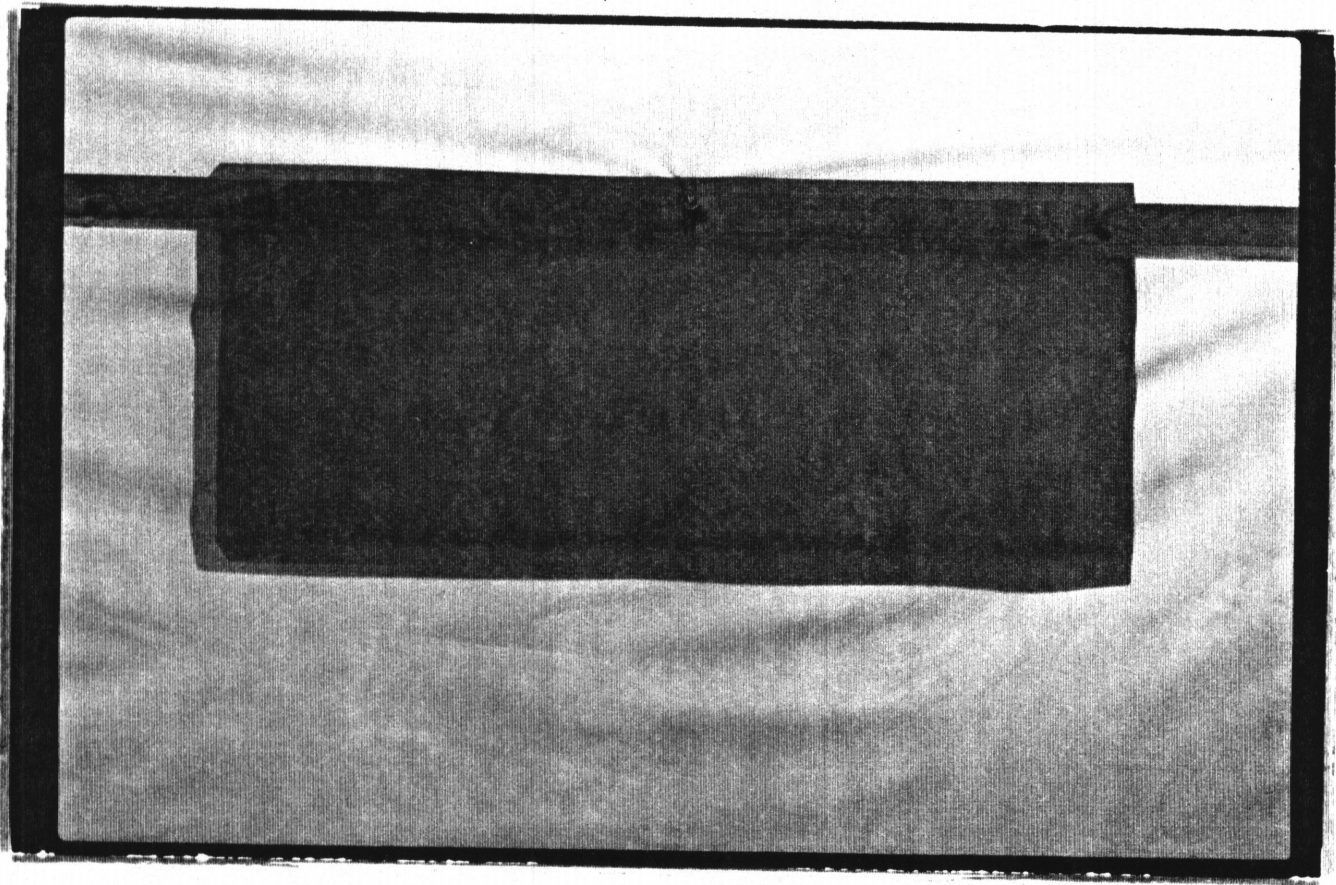
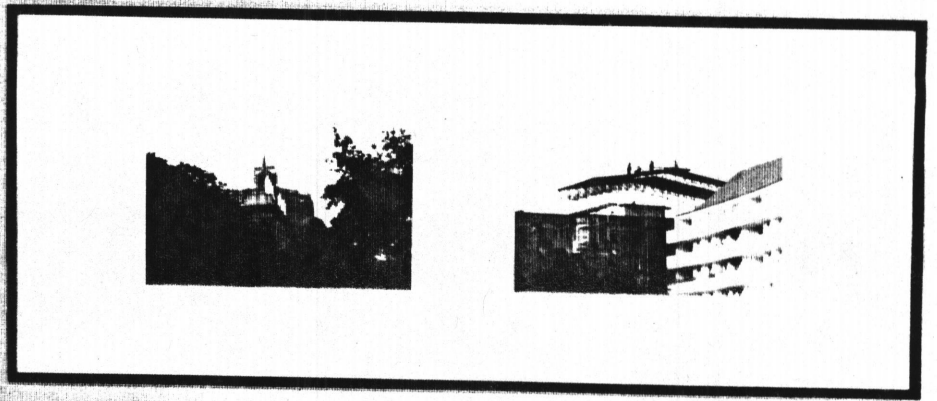
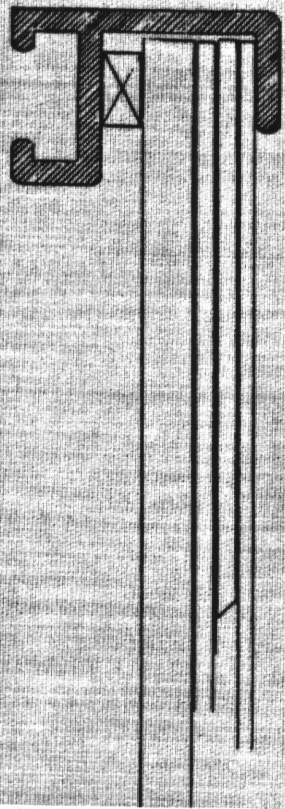
Sven Shockey

Frank Weiner

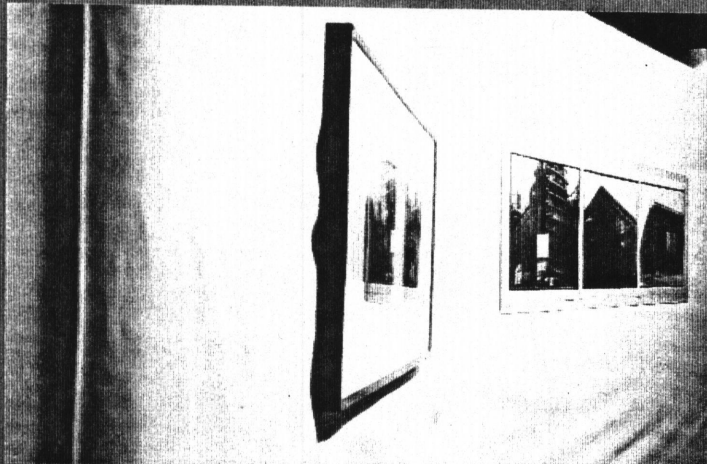


As Bergson says, we do not perceive the thing or the image in its entirety, we always perceive less of it, we perceive only what we are interested in perceiving, or rather what it is in our interest to perceive, by virtue of our economic interests, ideological beliefs, and psychological demands. We therefore normally perceive only clichés. But if our sensory-motor schemata jam or break then a different type of image can appear, because it no longer has to be "justified". -Gilles Deleuze, "Cinema and Time," in *The Deleuze Reader*, ed. C. Boudas (New York: Columbia University, 1993), p. 182.

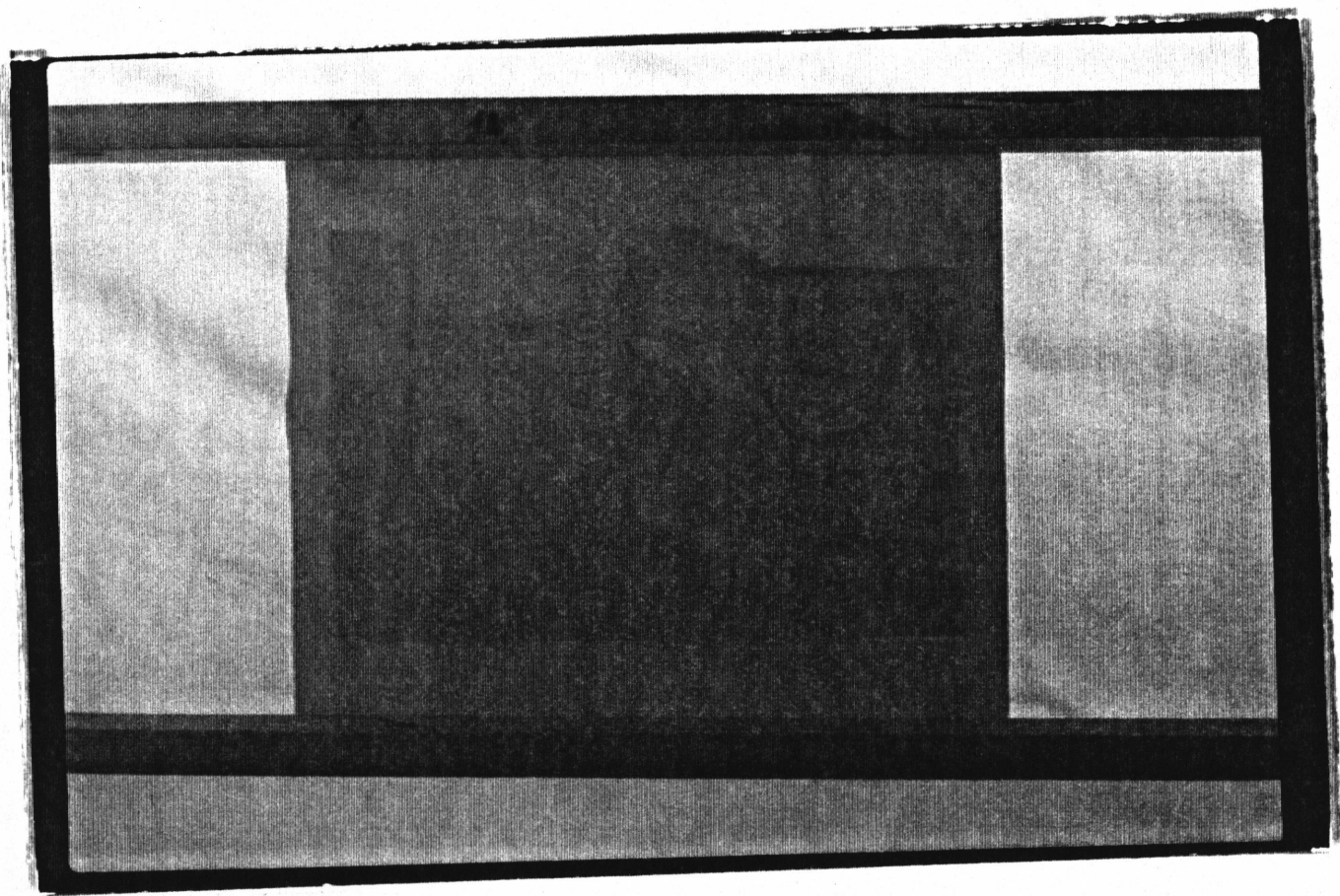
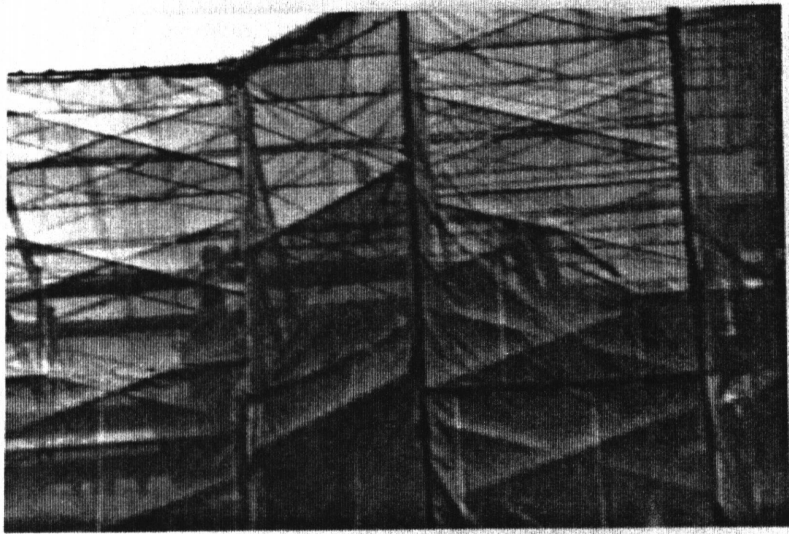
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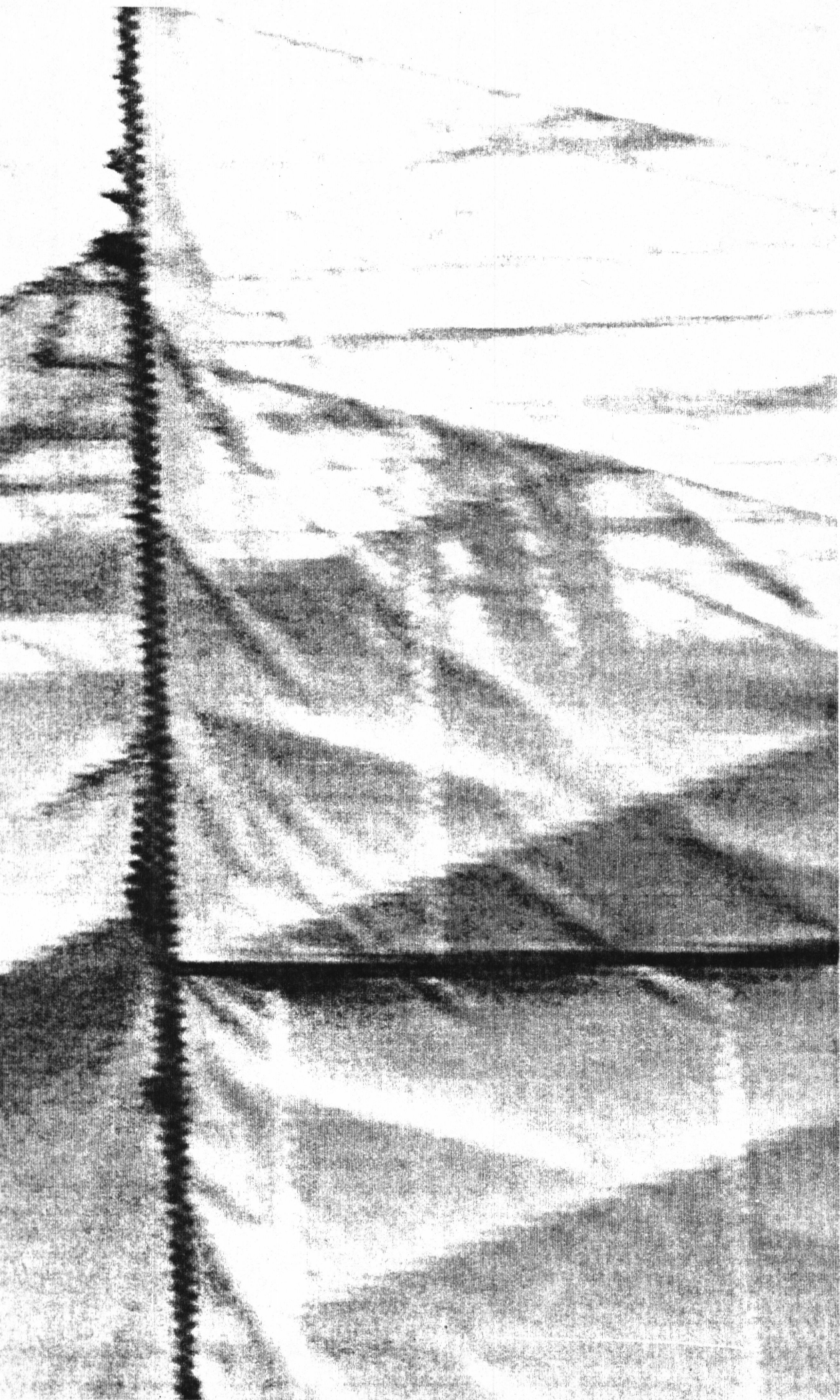
Architecture cannot be all object or all frame.

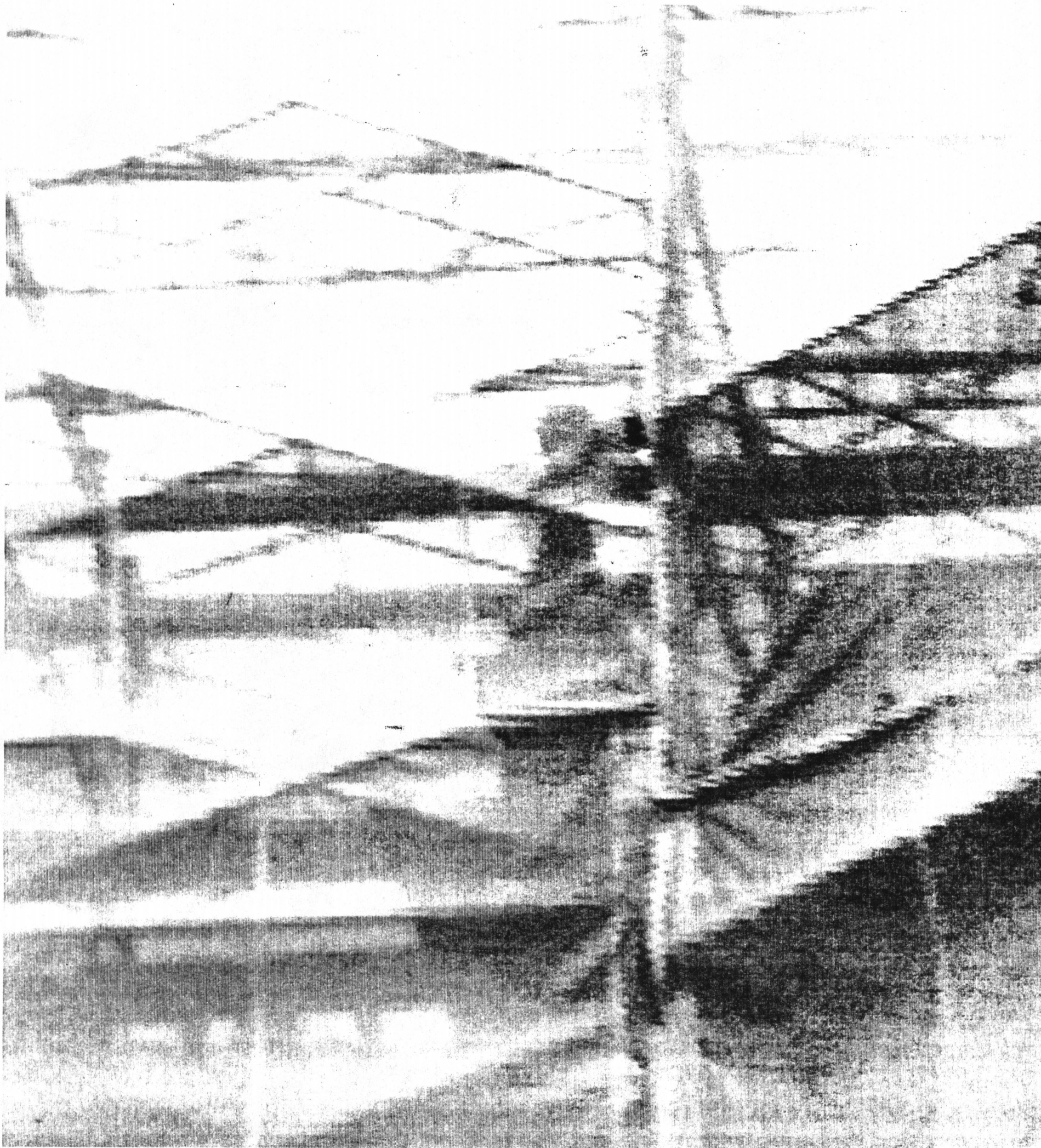


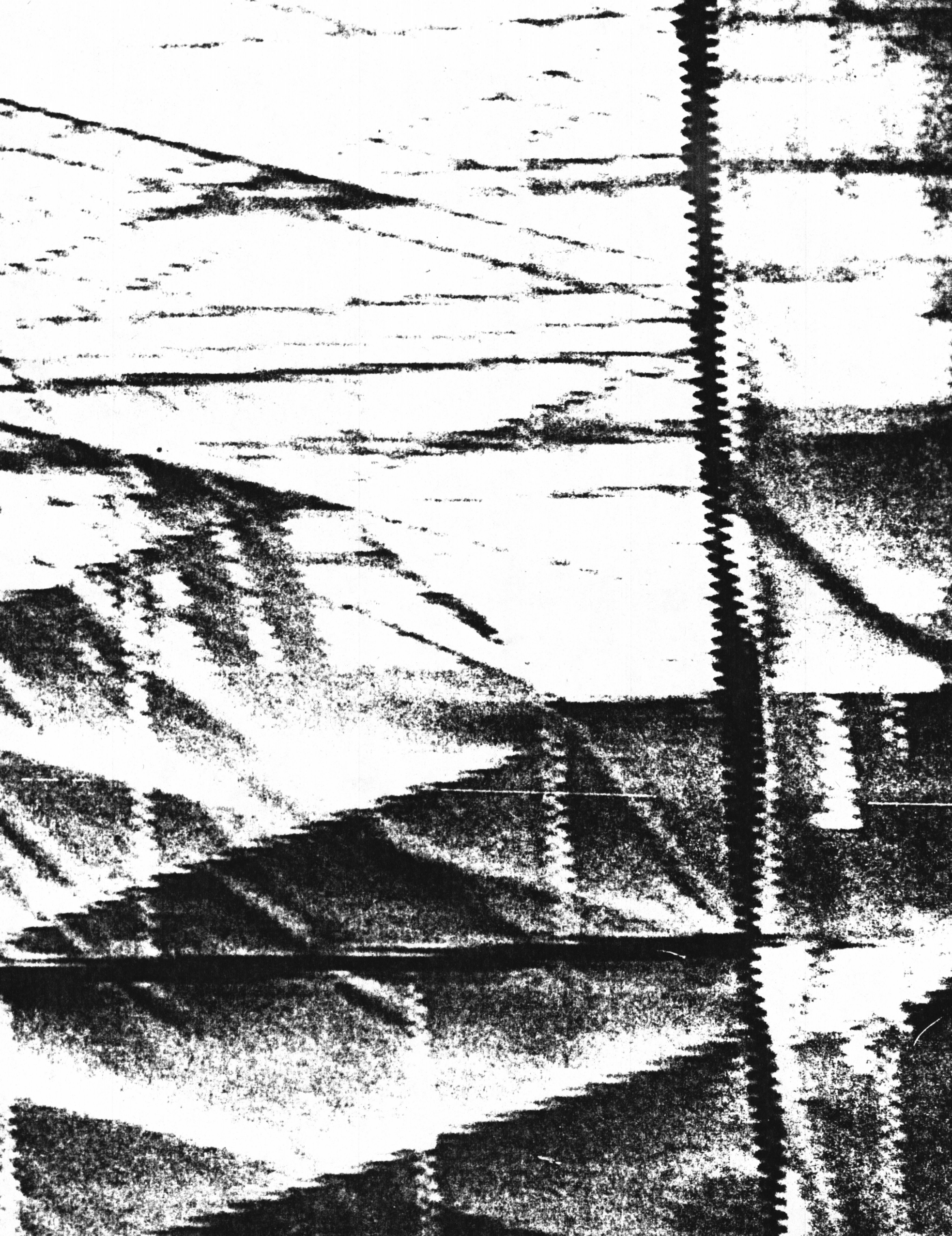
For the past hundred years, the history of art has been the history of that which can be photographed. -Andre Malraux, *The Museum Without Walls*, trans. Stuart Gilbert and Francis Price, (Garden City, Doubleday, 1967).



Yet architecture, as lived experience, is often conflated with its own representation. -David Bell, 'The Carpenter's Apprentice,' JAE, May, 1993, p. 219.











the ('benign') wall.

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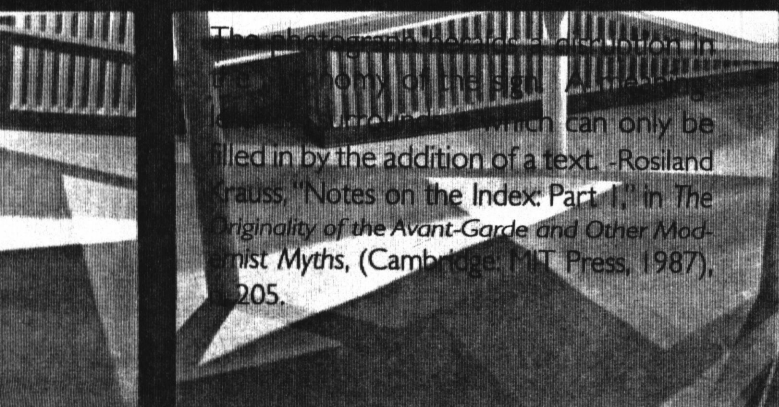
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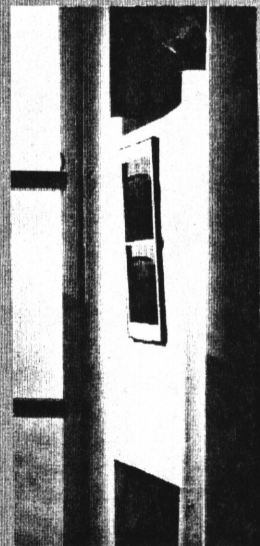
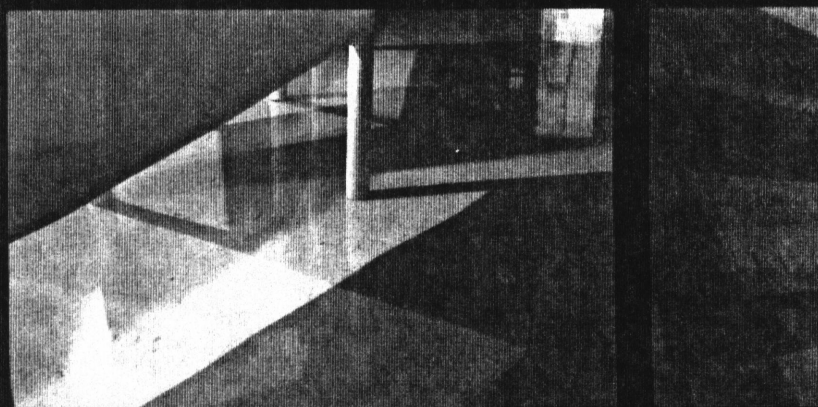
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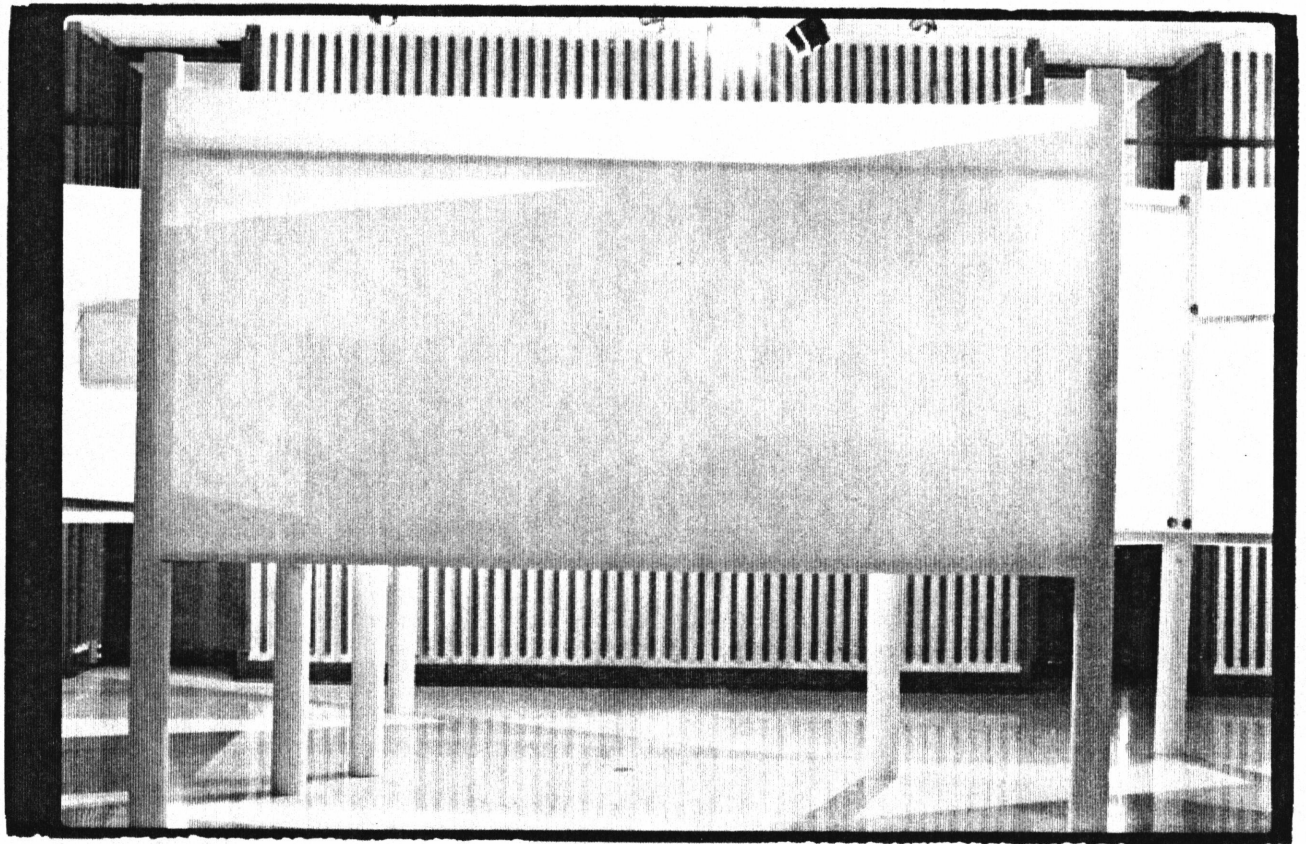
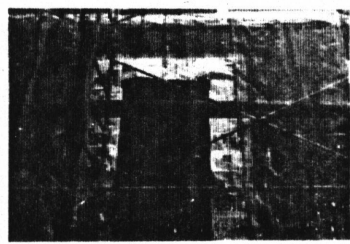
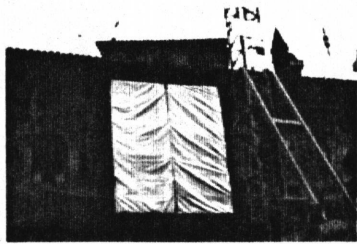
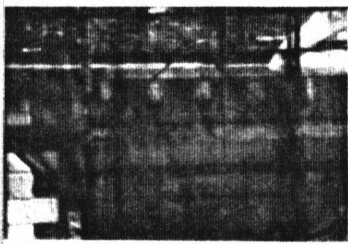
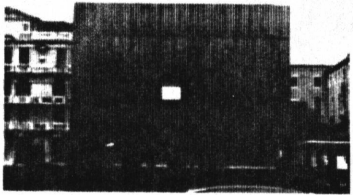
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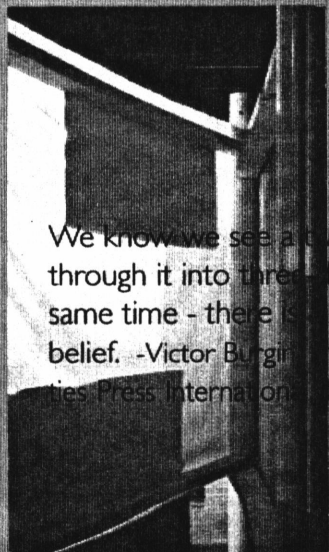


The photograph *Walls* also intervenes in the economy of the sign. At least, it does so through a "figure" which can only be filled in by the addition of a text. -Rosiland Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Part 1," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 205.





The premise of the photographic illusion is used to open up the architectural illusion



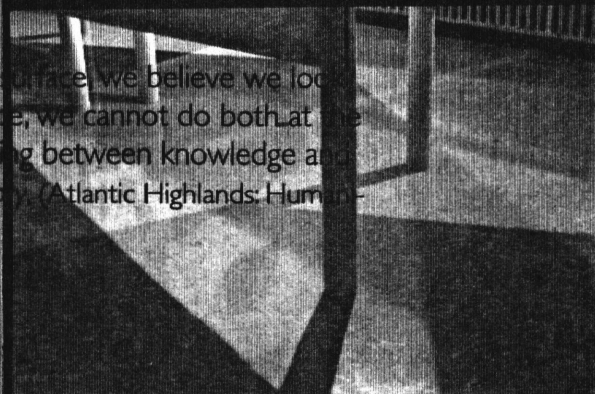
We know we see a two-dimensional surface, we believe we look through it into three-dimensional space, we cannot do both at the same time - there is coming-and-going between knowledge and belief. -Victor Burgin, *The End of Art Theory*, (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1987), p. 15.

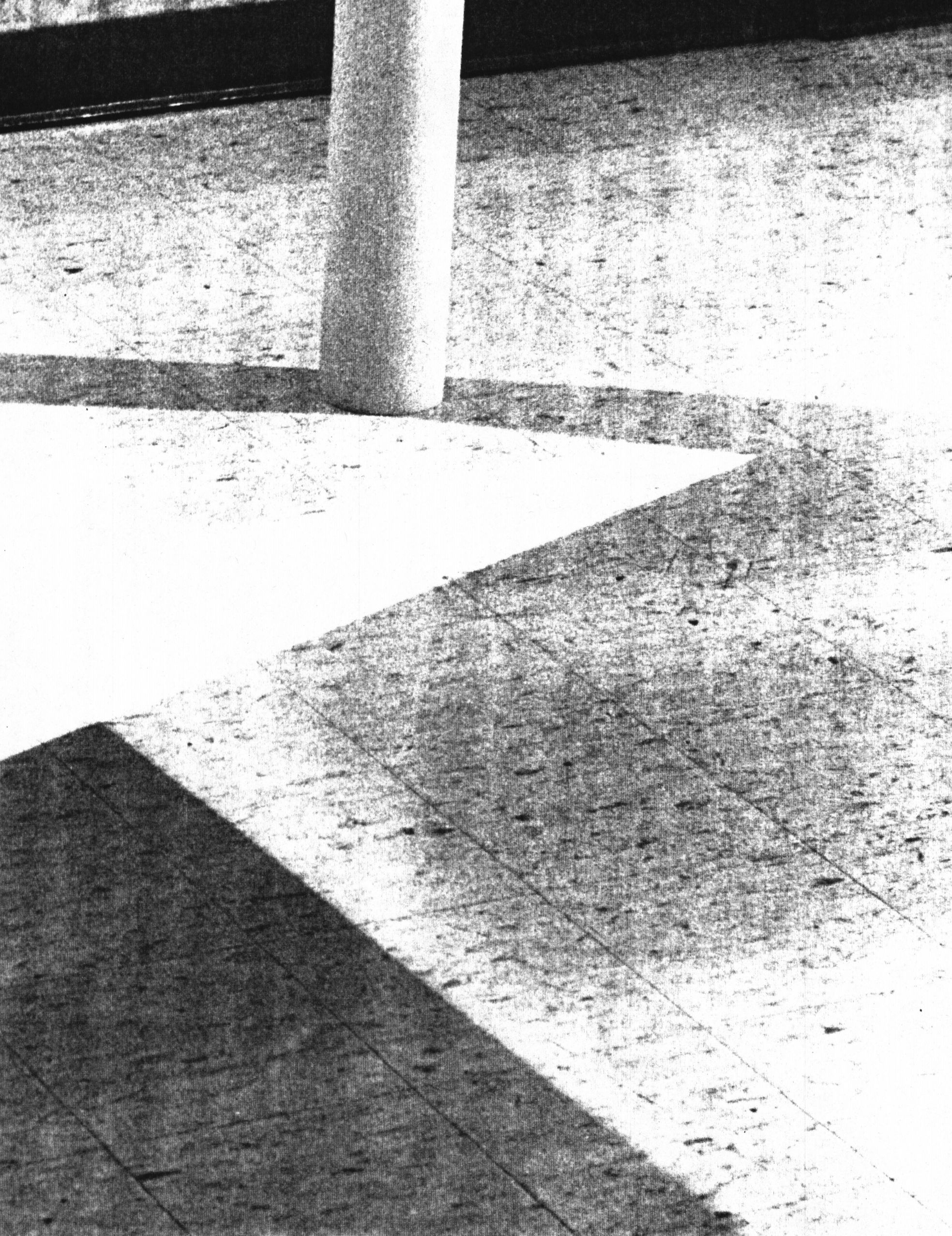
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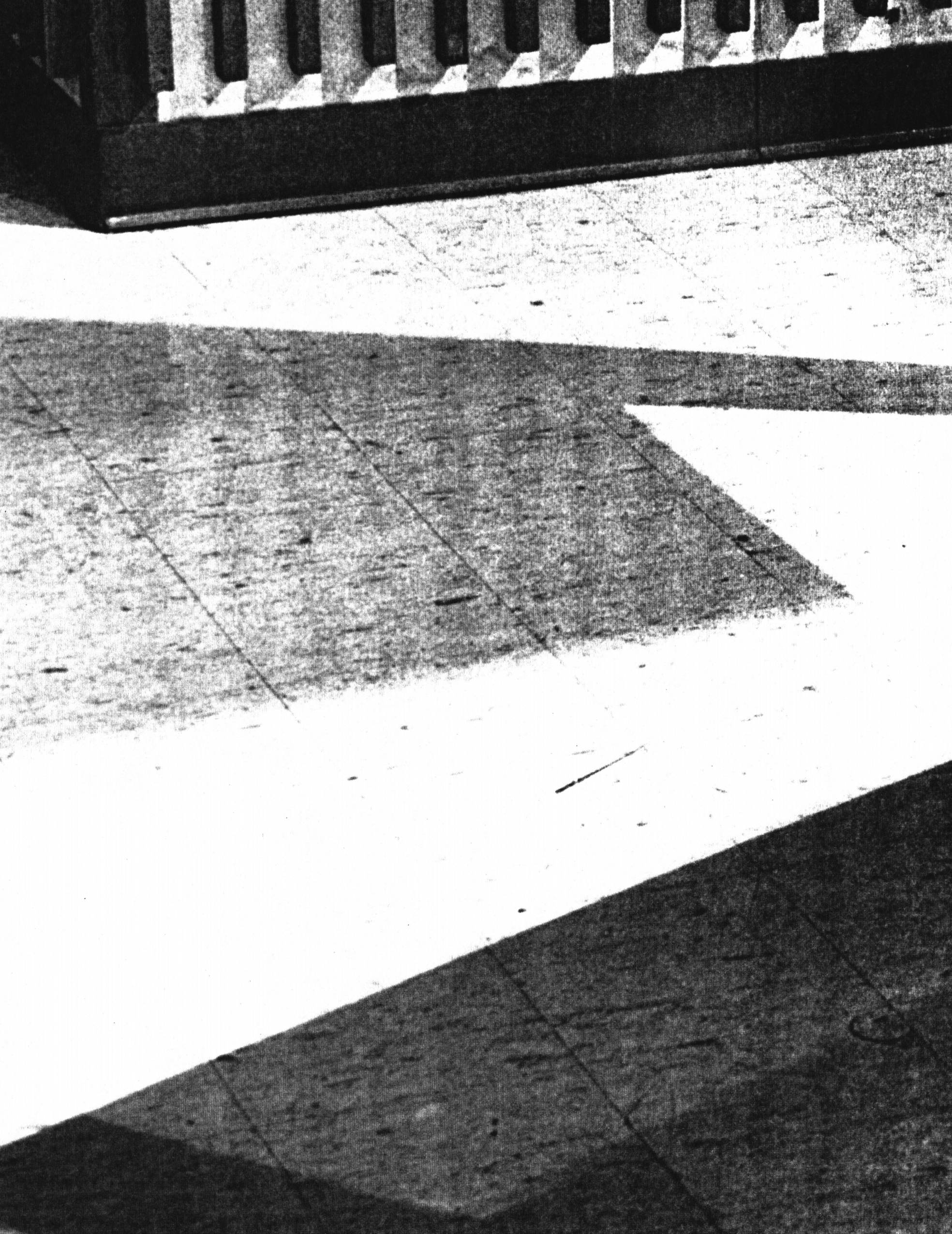
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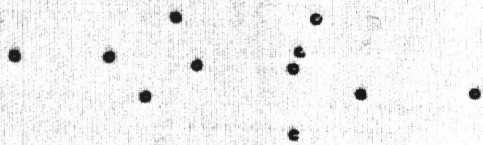
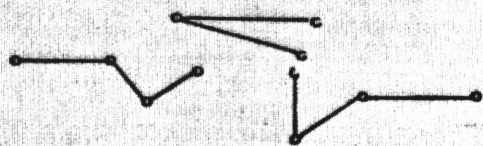
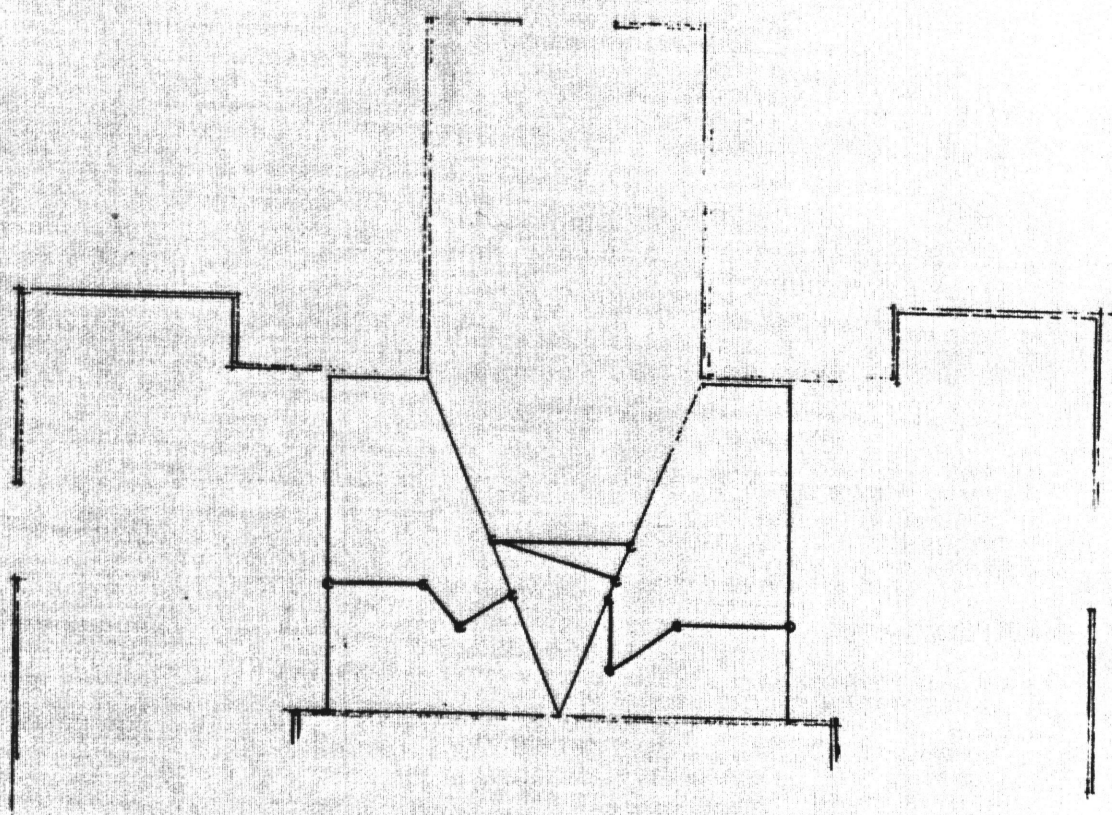
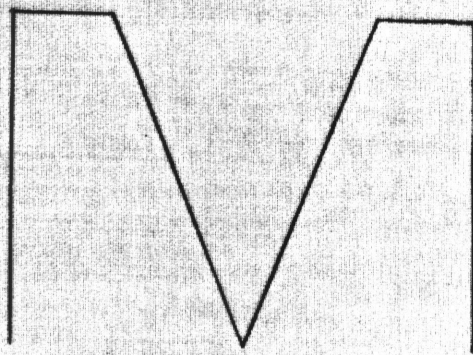
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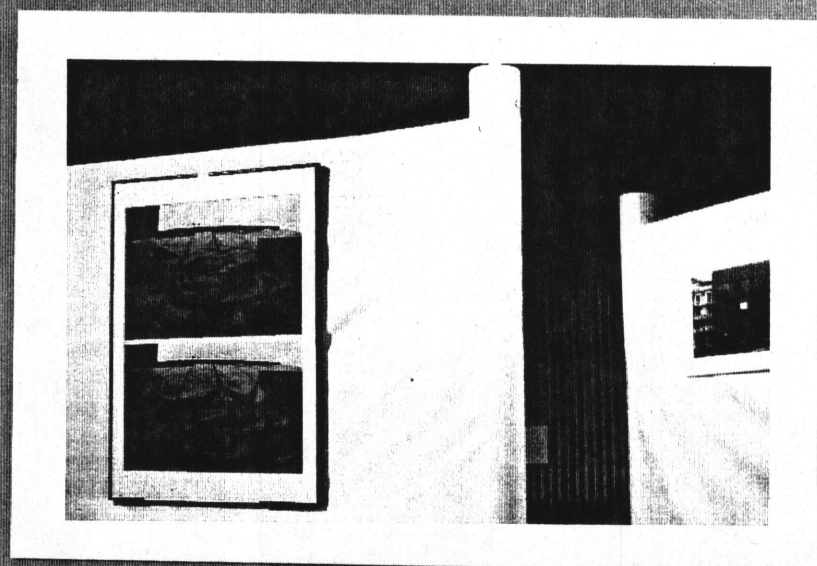


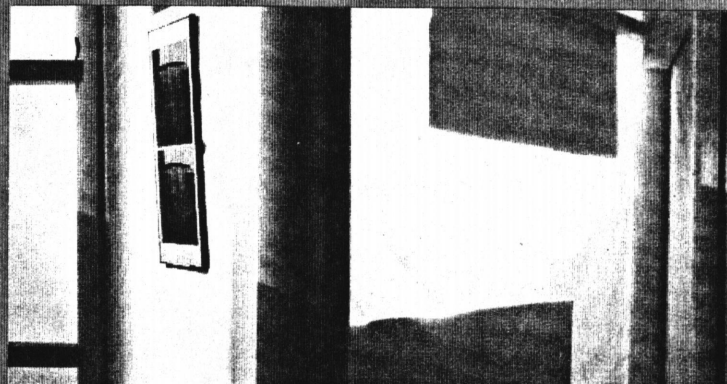
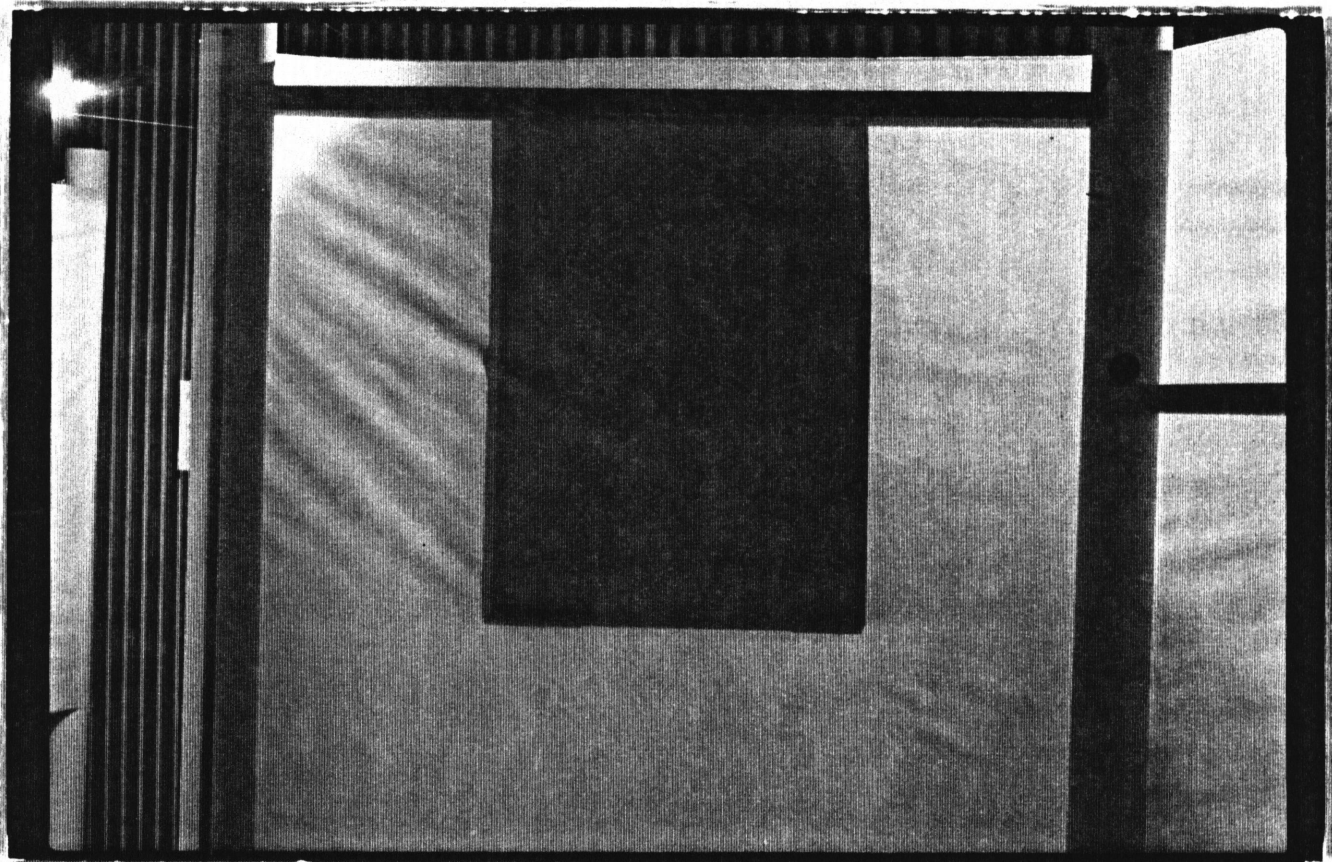
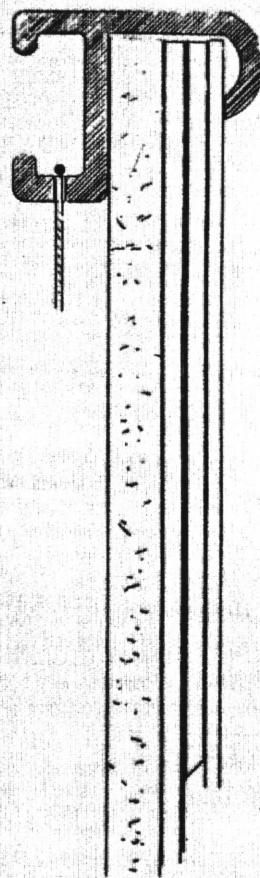
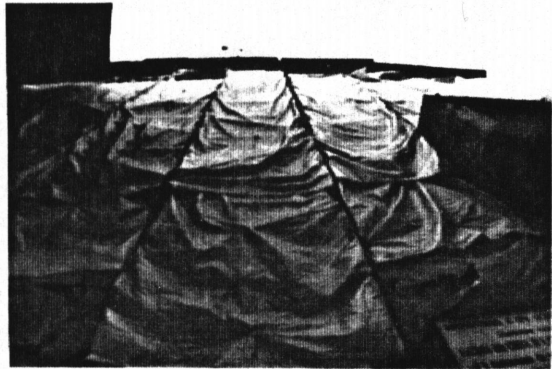
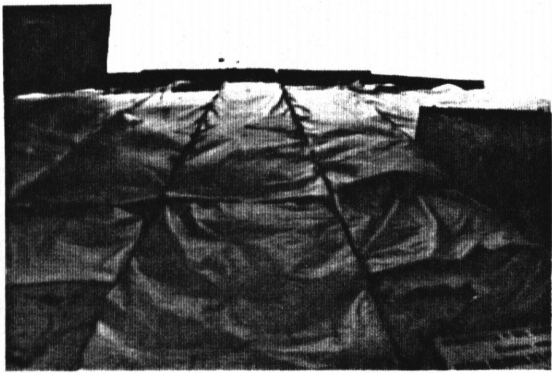




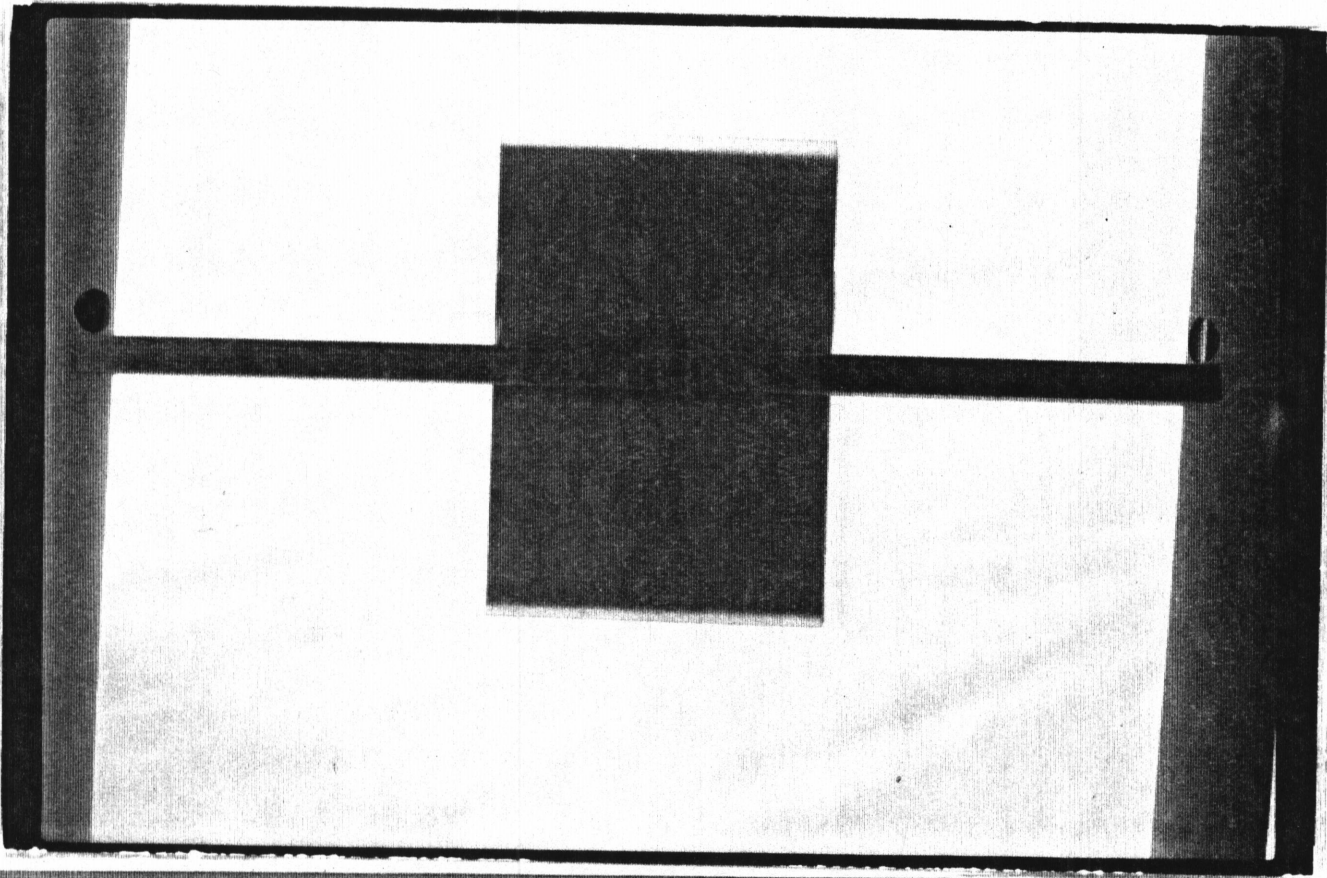
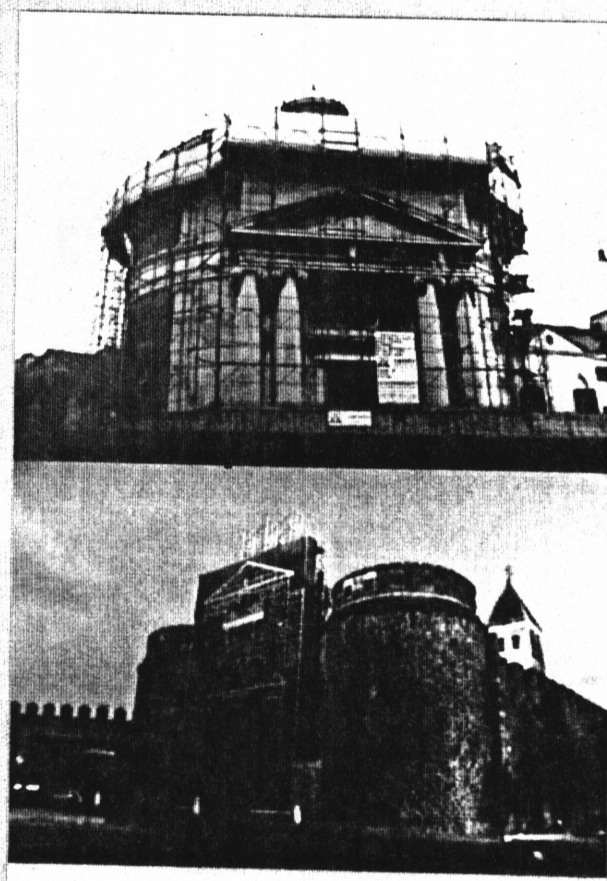
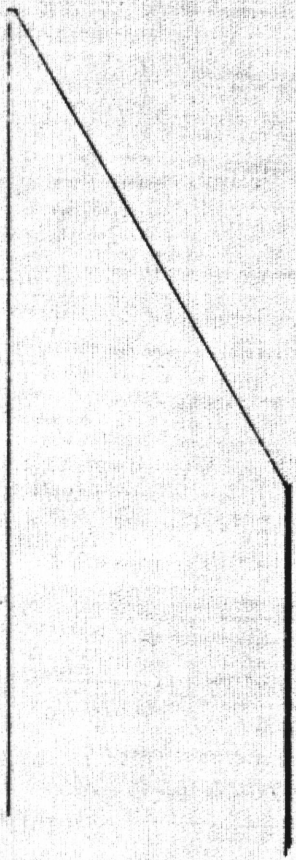


The complex collective representations of that quality called style - period style, personal style - are dependent upon the space of exhibition; one could say they are a function of it. Modern art history is in that sense a product of the most rigorously organized nineteenth-century space of exhibition: the museum. -Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), p. 141.



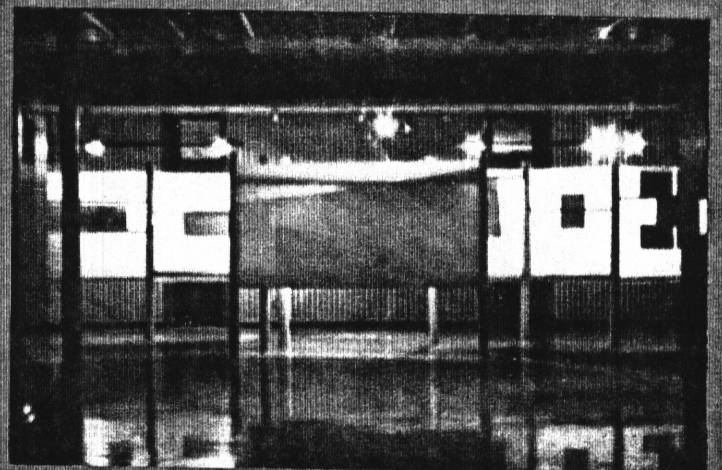


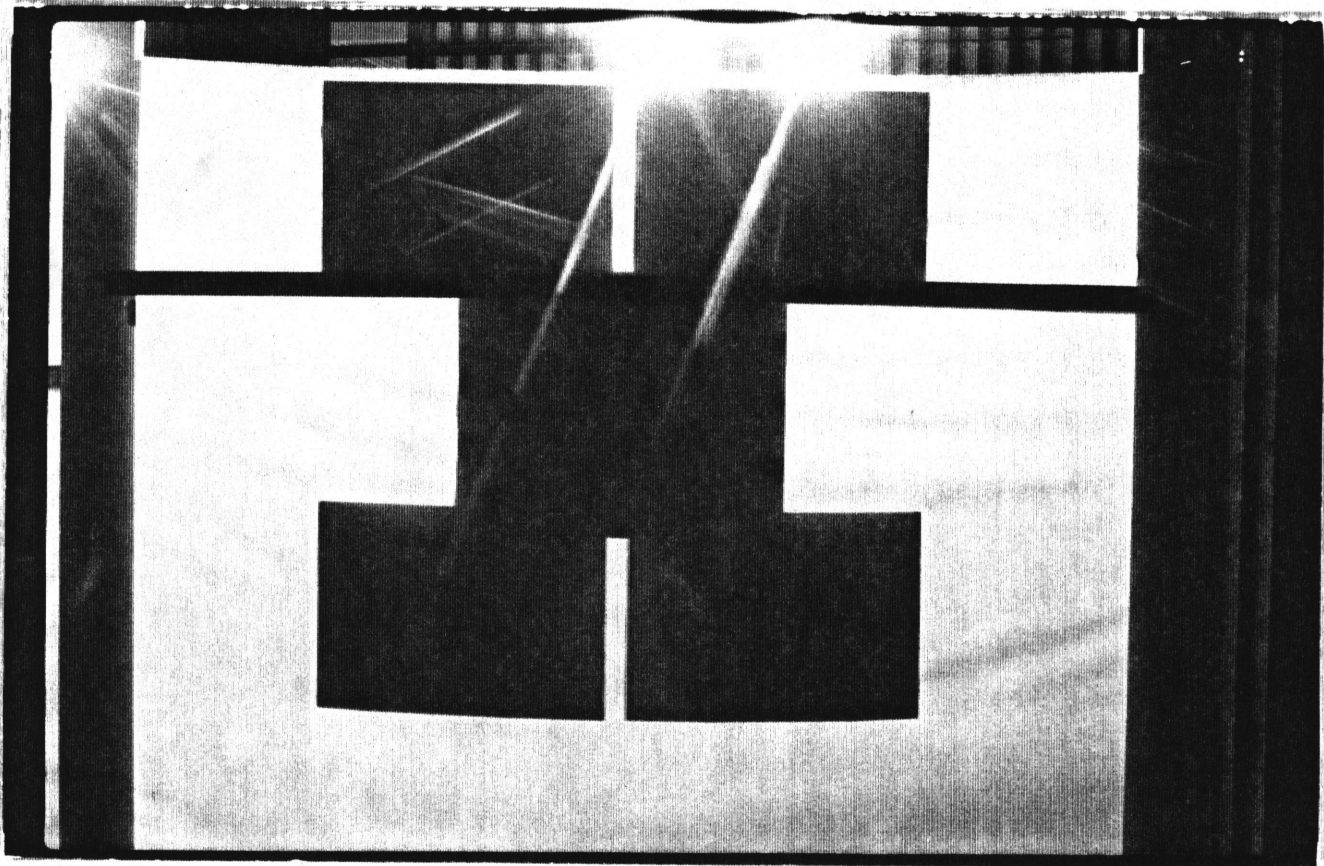
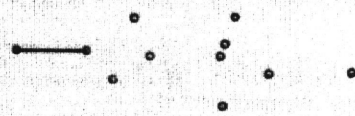
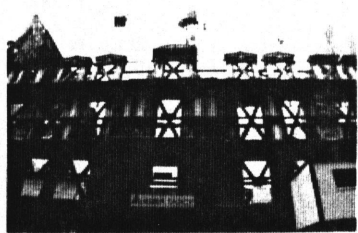
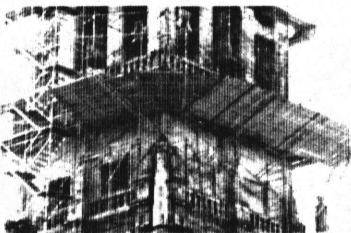
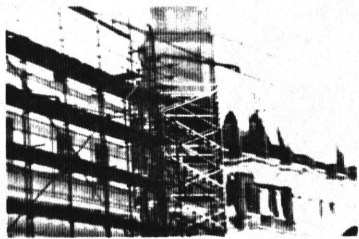
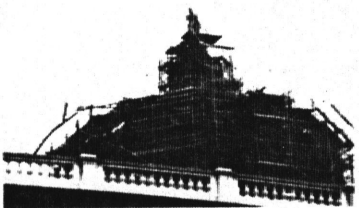
(Normally) an object is perceived as stopping at its physical boundary—it is an object in that it is discrete. The photograph at its edge, its return to undeveloped white, is such an object.



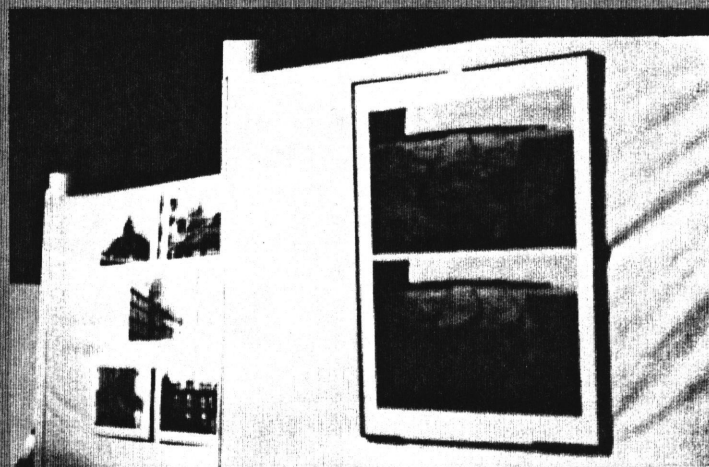
If we think here of the role of the 'critic' we can see that it has extensively been to put an end to doubt concerning a work's meaning, and therefore its worth - to offer the reassuring security of an *explanation* and an *evaluation*; in short, to return the reader from the uncomfortable and precarious position of producer to the easier position of *consumer*. -Victor Burgin, *The End of Art Theory*, (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1987), p. 33.

Media introduce fundamental ambiguities into how and what we see. Architecture has resisted this question because, since the importation and absorption of perspective by architectural space in the 15th century, architecture has been dominated by the mechanics of vision -Peter Eisenman, "Visions' Unfolding: Architecture in the Age of Electronic Media," *Domus*, January, 1992.





frames: frames are both the *framing device* - conform, regular; solid - and the *framed material*, that which constantly questions, distorts and displaces. Occasionally the framing device can itself become the object of distortions, while the framed material is conformist and orderly. -Bernard Tschumi, *Questions of Space*, (London: AA, 1990), p.102.

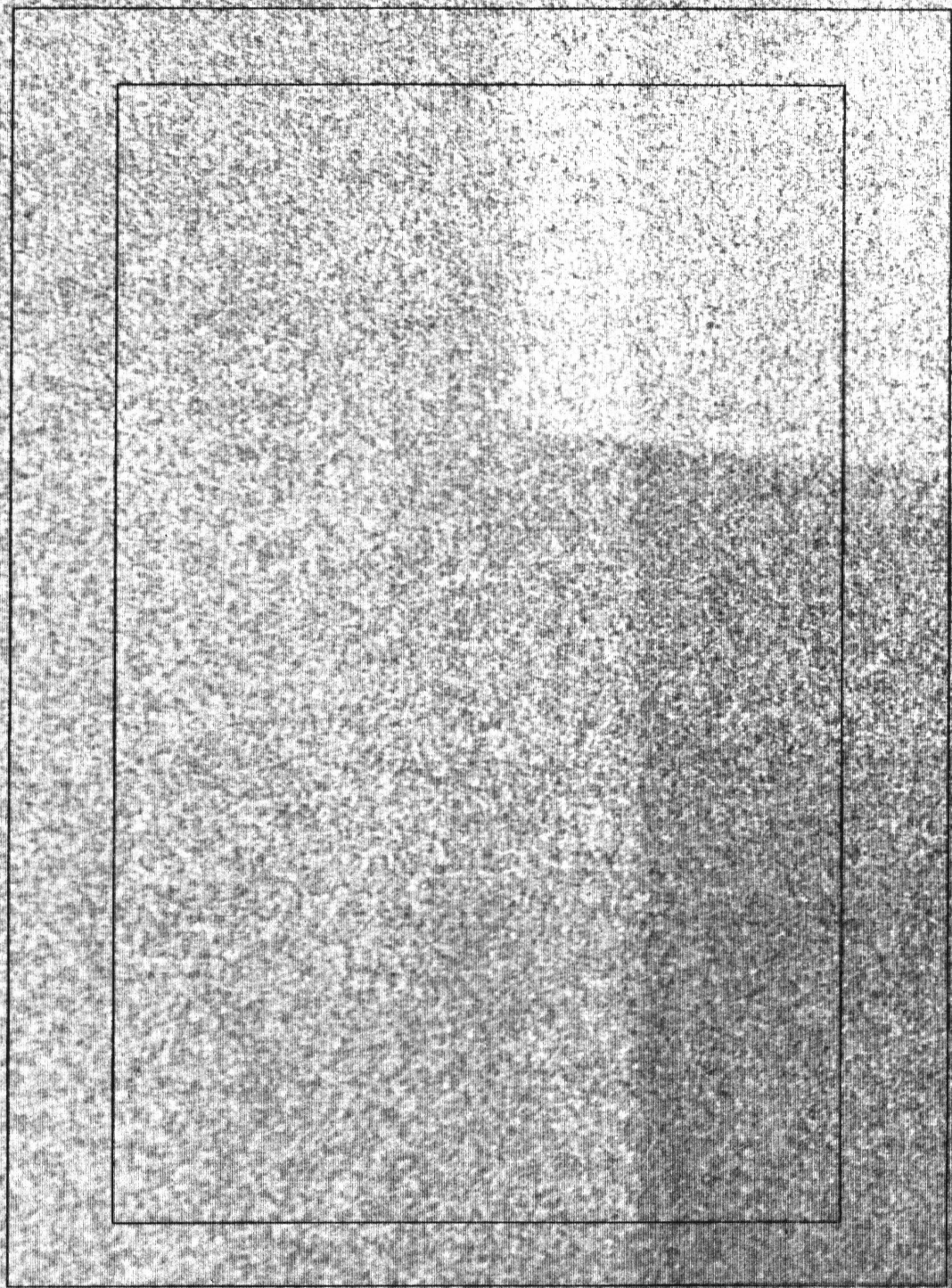


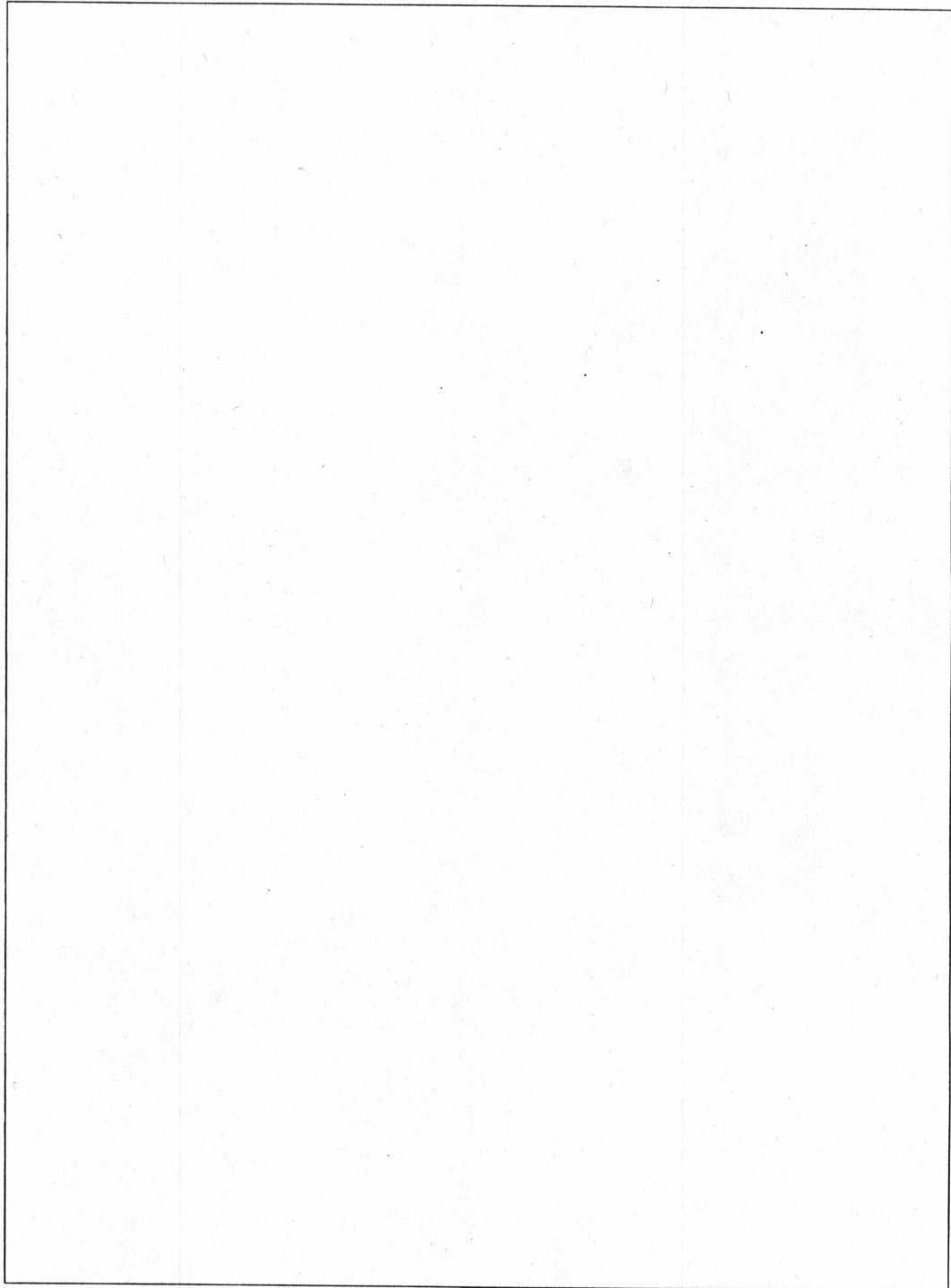
These images are color photographs of scaffolding around buildings in Europe. They began as video tape with stills taken from the video using a computer. These stills were then transferred to color negative film and the negatives used to make the final enlargements in the darkroom. The images hold a palimpsest of media. The video, computer, and film leave their traces. Their distortions form the image.

The 'wall' consists of slotted pvc columns with fabric stretched between and threaded through them. 2X4s serve as bracing and an element into which the photographs can be hung. The wall, as a system, is flexible, being able to be configured to a variety of spans with any angle of shift from one span to the next. The wall must serve two functions. It must be both background and foreground. A wall as white ubiquitous background for the photographic groupings to hang upon. A wall as foreground to resist the openness and sprawling qualities inherent in the lobby space it is placed in.

'...an installation as an exhibition of photographs'

The installation is neither the photographs, nor their frames, nor the wall. It is the orchestrated relationship of all three, an execution of the frame-object (Scorsese). The installation occurs by breaking the normal relationship of artist, curator, and critic. Traditionally these have been three distinct categories in the generation and propagation of art. Assuming this tradition the artist generates the objects, the curator spatially contexts them, and the critic further contexts them within a discursive field. The architect is in an interesting position here, even within traditional confines because, while s/he is often understood as making objects, s/he really makes objects that contain other objects: a frame. S/he can therefore be seen as already dealing with the frame-object from multiple points of view. Framework: Installation employs this 'architectural' point of view. This results in the traditional clarity and distinctness of the categories of artist, curator, and critic to fold into a continuous critical/generative position, one that does not separate and sequence these traditional categories, but rather understands them as different modes of the same impulse within culture - to make and understand objects.





Framework: Installation

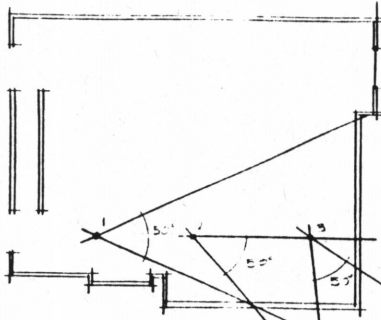
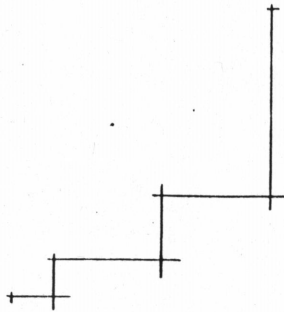
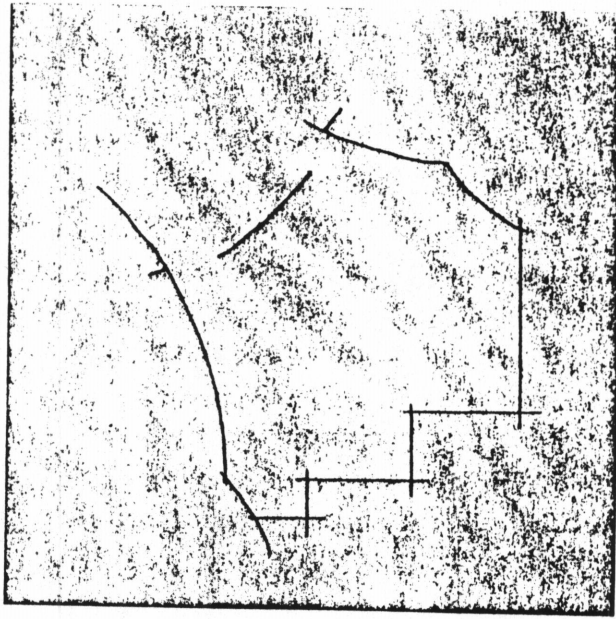
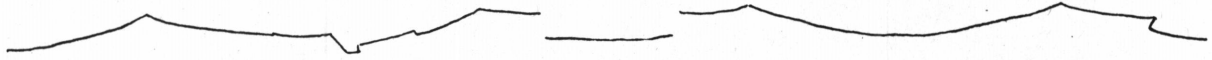
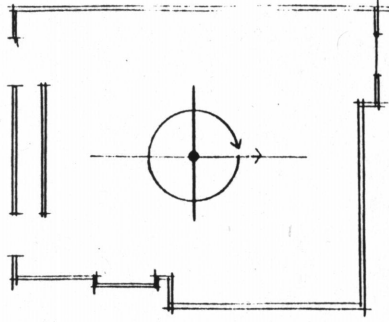


Photo Gallery

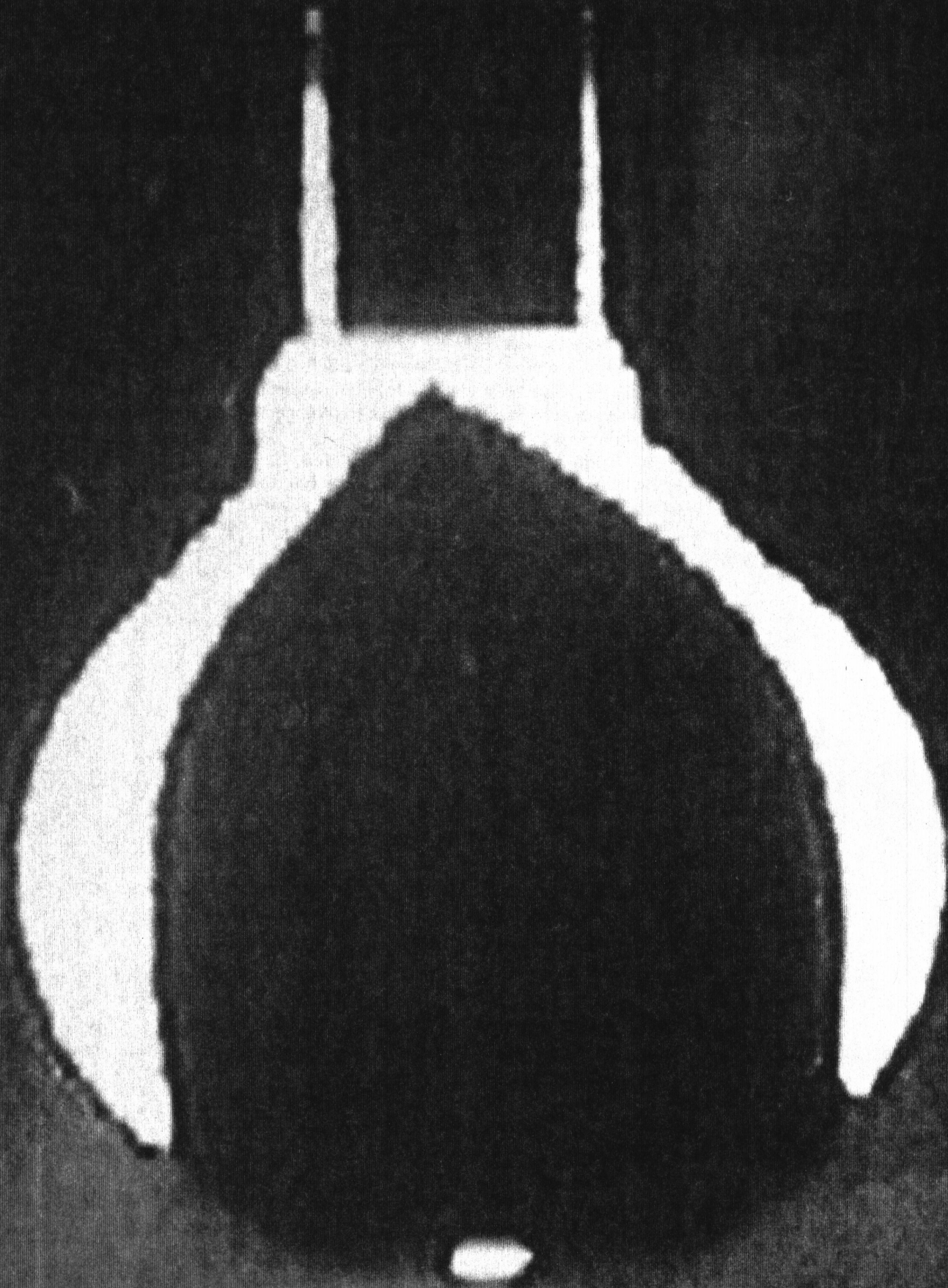
The lens itself, which had been carefully corrected for "distortions" and adjusted for "errors," is scarcely as objective as it seems. In its structure and in the ordered image of the world it achieves, it complies with an especially familiar though very old and dilapidated system of spatial construction, to which photography belatedly brought an unexpected revival of current interest.

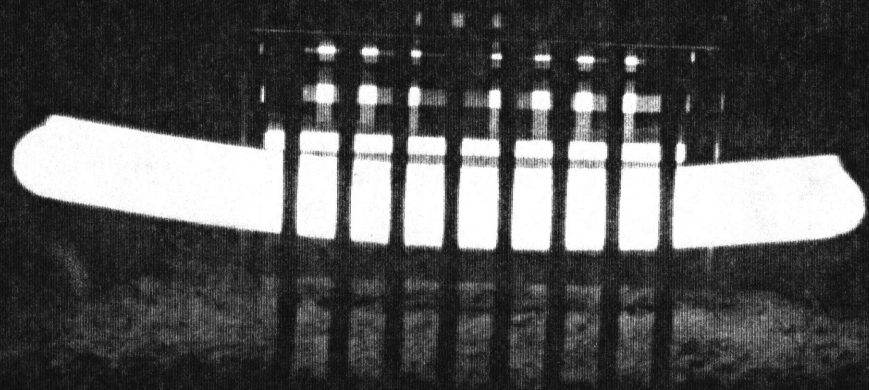
(Would the art, or rather the craft, of photography not consist partly in allowing us to forget that the black box is not "neutral" and that its structure is not impartial?) Hubert Damish, "five Notes for a Phenomenology of the Photographic Image", in *Classic Essays on Photography*, p.289.

Deformations inherent in a photographic image are used to generate an architectural space. An existing gallery space was photographed and these photos were then treated as actual representations, not discounting the distortions the photographic process made in translating three dimensions onto two.

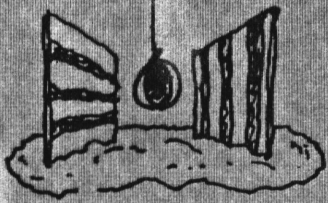
Two types of photograph were used, each contributing to half of the resultant plan. A superwide panoramic camera records 360° of space onto a single photographic image. These distortions are then translated into a plan view. Next a single area of the gallery is photographed from three distinct positions. Here the angle of the lens and the change in distance produce a multiple perspective space. By shifting the focus from 'objective' representation to a subjective/generative representation the medium becomes an active tool of design.

The diagram is a possibility of fact—it is not the fact itself. Gilles Deleuze, *The Deleuze Reader*, ed. C. Boundas (New York: Columbia University, 1993), p.199.







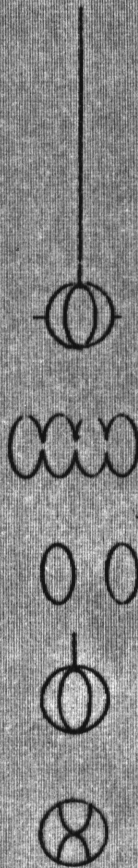


Blind Spot

This installation suggests that there is no absolute objective position from which to understand the world, there are only useful fictions. Every position acts as a projection which yields insight. The consequences of these insights are necessarily blind spots. This piece functions experientially and conceptually. It allows both affective and effective readings.

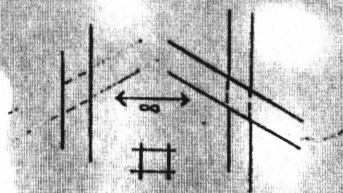
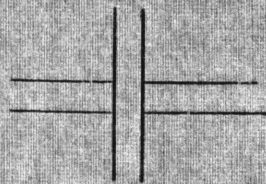
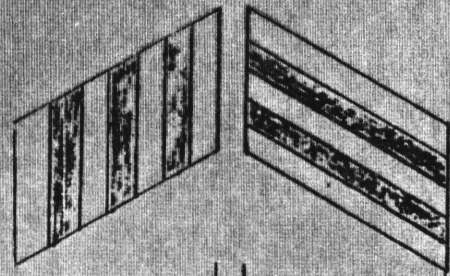
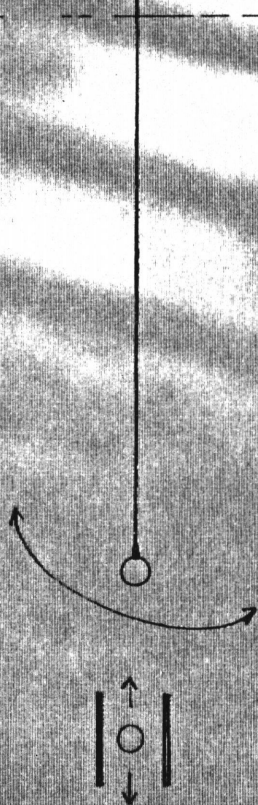
The horizontal and vertical components of the Cartesian grid are represented as strips of mirror on two pieces of glass facing each other in a field of ash. A light hangs in the middle and swings as a pendulum between the two panes of glass.

The components of a structure of interpreting the world (the verticals and horizontals of Cartesian Rationalism) are assembled in such a way that they yield unexpected insights. By preserving the structure of the system but changing the visibility of the elements and placing them in a new relation, the familiar is made strange. The shifting separations and compressions of the grid components, with their endless yet fragmented internal mirrorings, problematize the predictable regularities of the Cartesian grid. The dynamic reflectively has both an internal and an external component, one brought about by the viewer's movement within the room and another brought about by the periodic swing of the light-pendulum. Here, insights are found and in finding them the blind spots of habituated vision are desublimated.



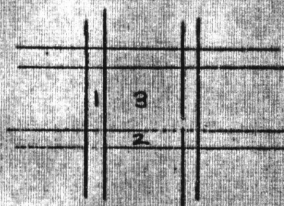
3D
PROJECTED
ONTO
2D
(A MAP)
THEN
MAPPED
BACK ONTO
2D

THE AXIS OF MOTION
IS BLINDNESS
INSIGHT
OCCURS ⊥ TO THE
MOTION

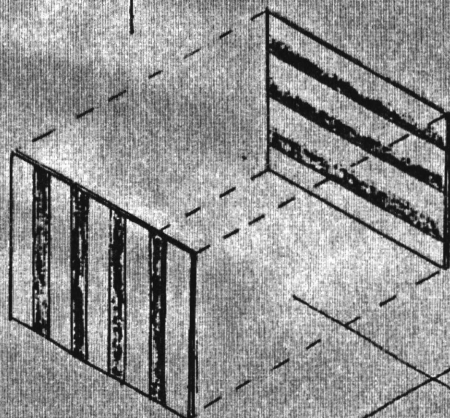
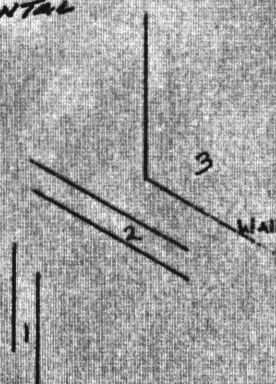


AT THE INTERSECTION
OF THE H & V
THERE IS PERFECT
REFLECTION.
∞

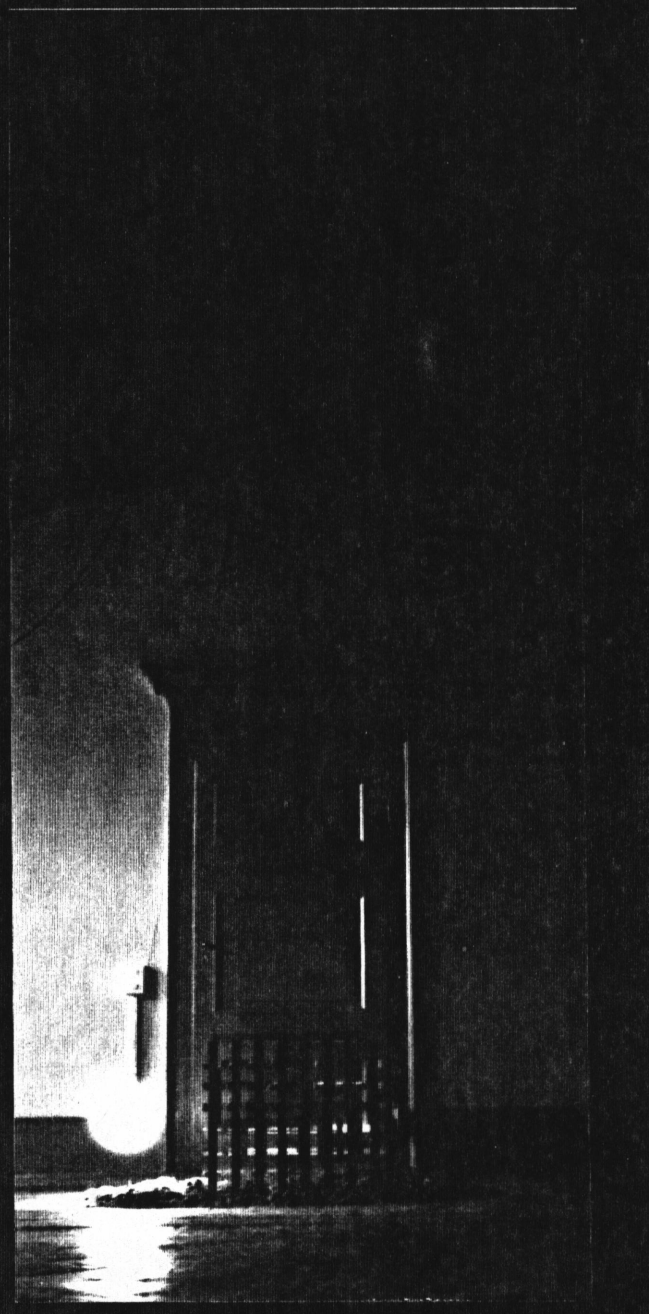
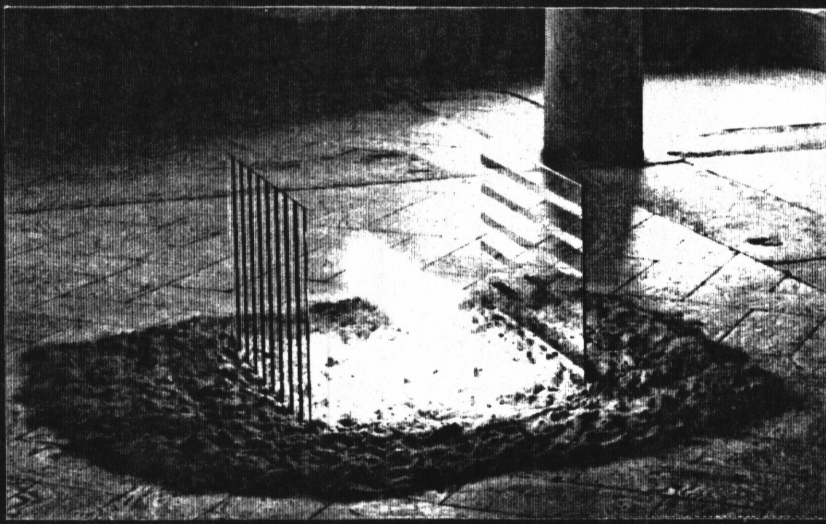
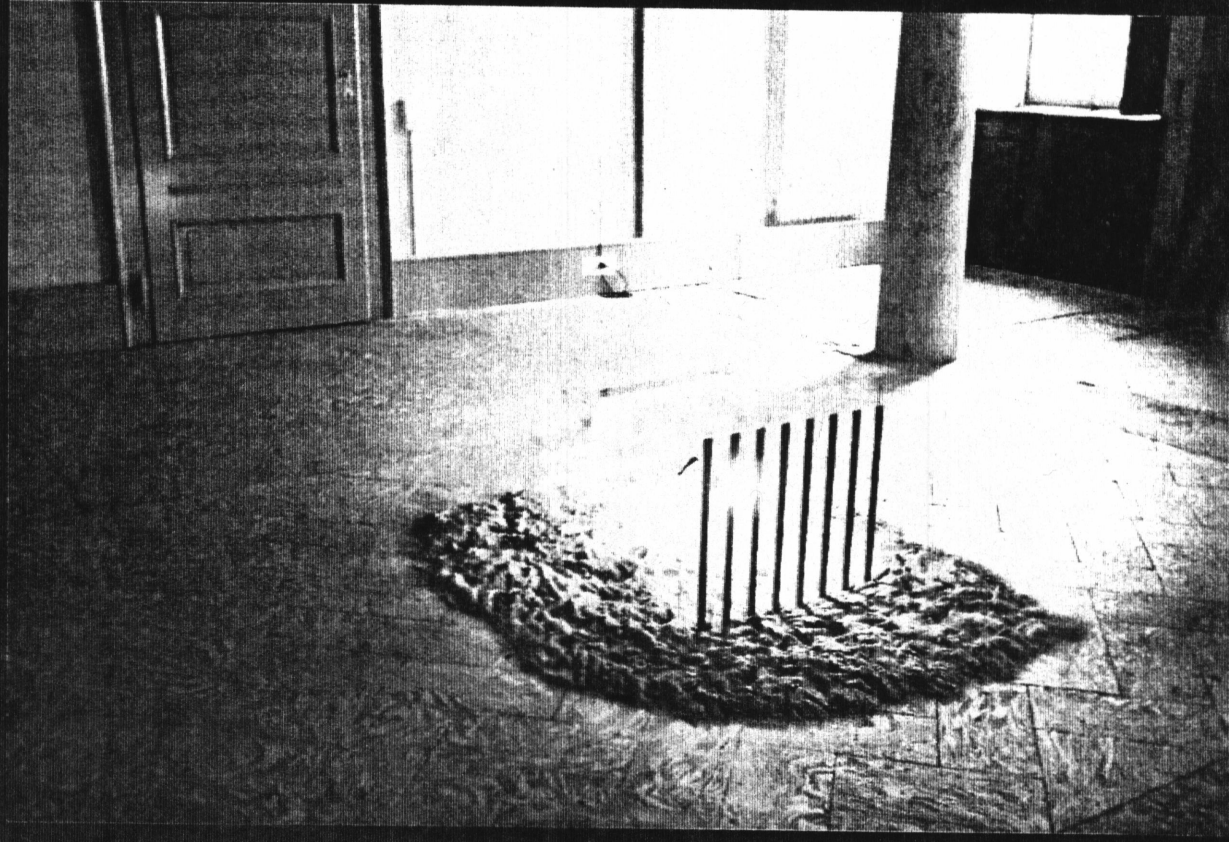
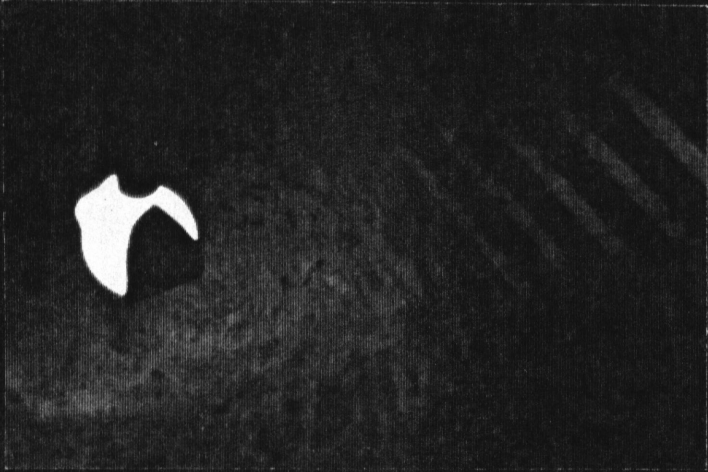
BEING AT THIS
POINT IS A
CONCEPTUAL
PLACE FOR THE
VIEWER, AND
PHYSICAL FOR
THE LIGHT.

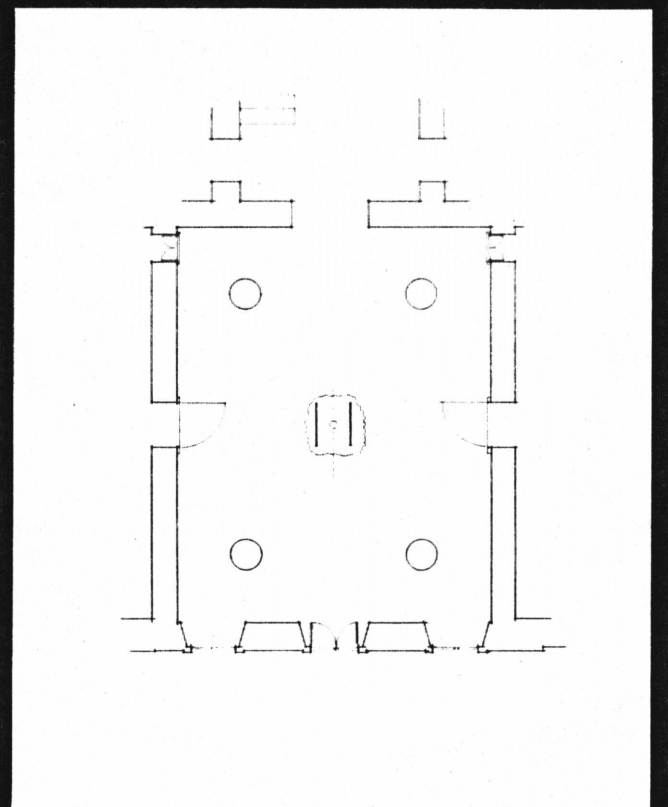
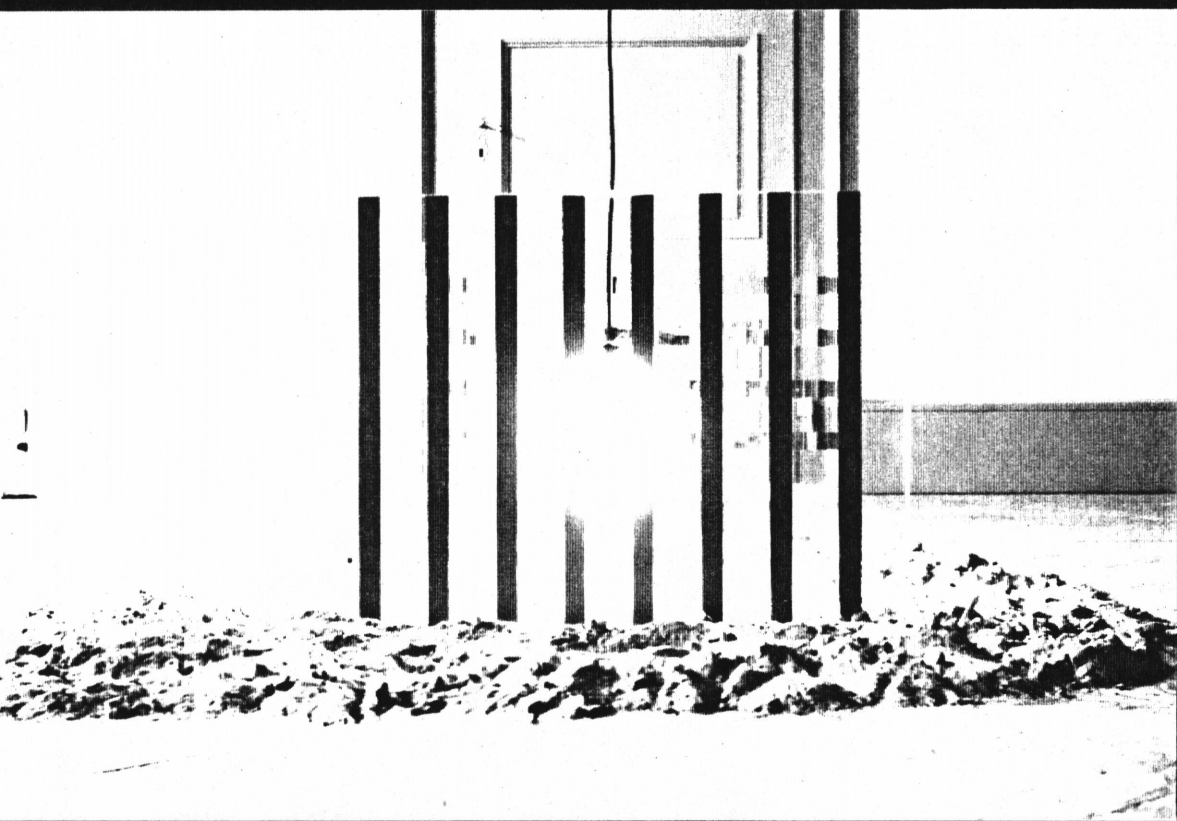
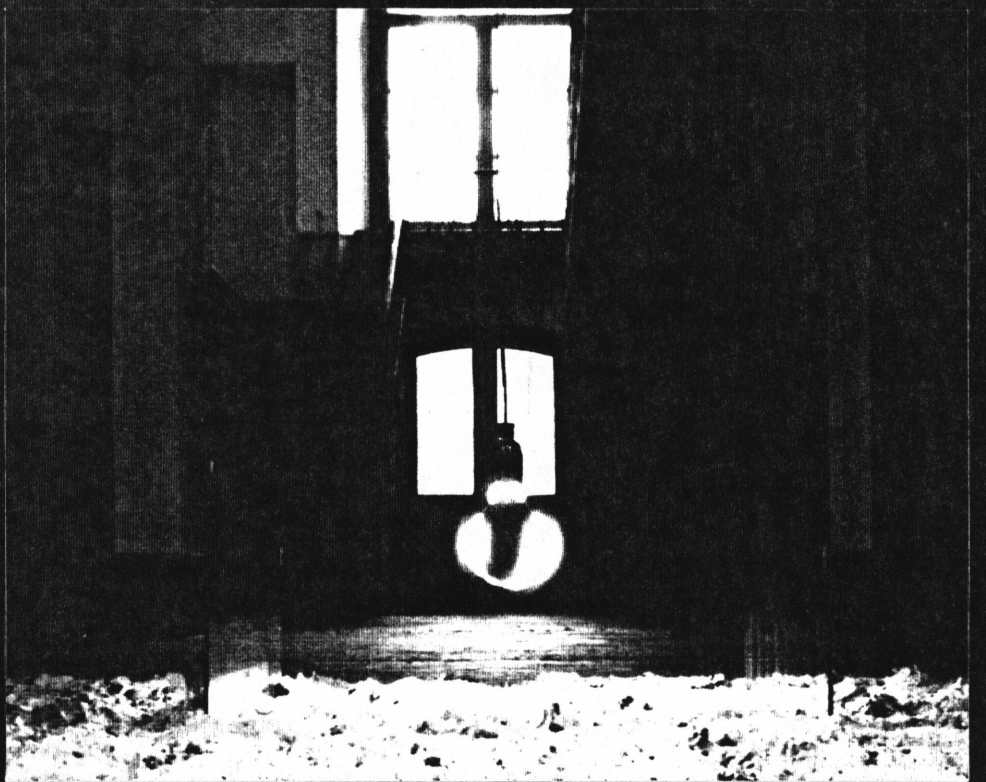
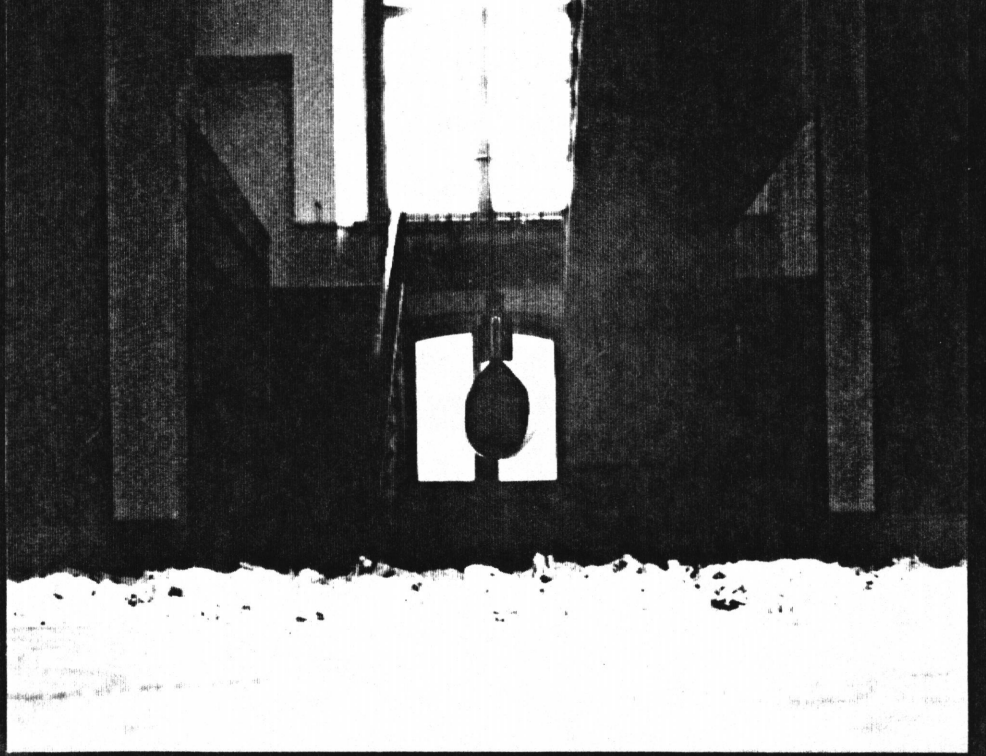


1. VERTICAL
2. HORIZONTAL
3. ROOF



MIRRORED STRIPS
FACE INWARD



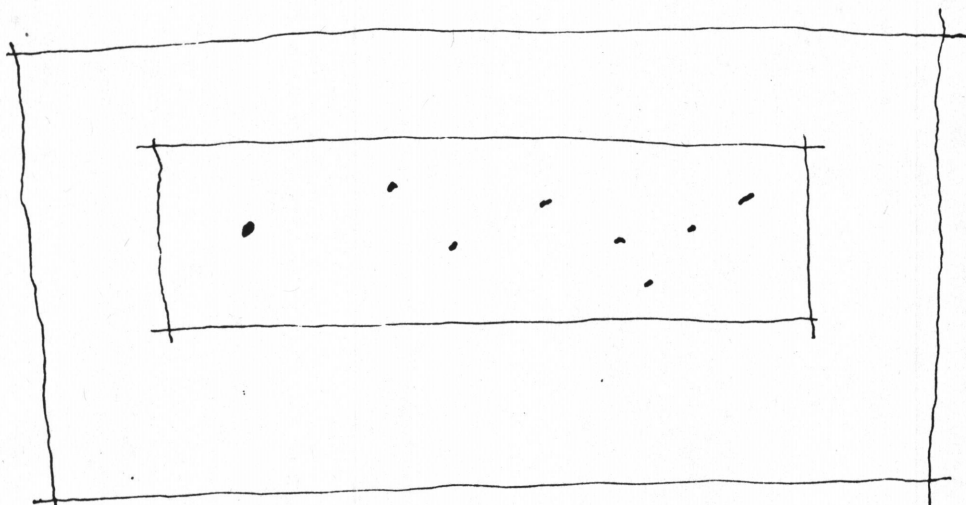
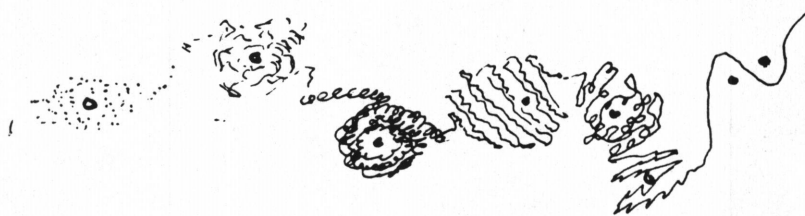
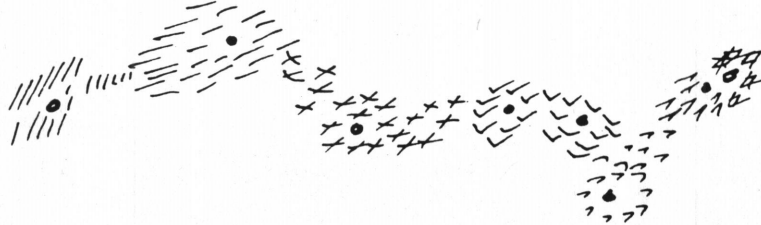


Blind Spot

By taking a purified idea, the frame of the Cartesian grid, and materializing it, thus making it strange, the idea explodes into visual and conceptual stratifications. These layers can be literally experienced by walking around the object which also produces multiple conceptual implications.

The Photo Gallery allows photography, normally a medium relegated solely to representation (in architecture), and therefore not conceived of as a frame, to instead be treated as the medium of generation (an explicit frame). This results in an architecture of photography and not a photograph of architecture.

Photo Gallery



Martin Scorsese's manipulation of the frame and the object is the most complex of these four examples because, rather than trying to use one element (the frame or object) to reach the other, he makes both the frame and the object. Scorsese's Cape Fear is a remake of a film made in 1961. In making this film again, in 1991, Scorsese produces an object (a film), which is both autonomous and critical. He is able to do this because he does not make the same film again, nor does he attempt to make another original. Scorsese takes the events – the structure – from the original. What he then changes is the context of these events. He does this both inside the film and outside the film. The fact that Sam Bowdin was responsible for sending Max Cady to prison is present in both films. In the first it is a context of unquestioned truth and justice being served. Scorsese destabilizes truth and justice by surrounding them with ambiguity and uncertainty, imbuing them with subjectivity. The event is the same while the context differs between these two films. This event is interpreted within the fiction of the film, that is within which the film can generate. Yet **Martin Scorsese** the suspension of disbelief this event also occurs outside that hermetic fiction in the area **Frame Object** which also knows the context of the first film and interprets this **Postmodern Frame** condition as a re-context. The fulcrum which supports the oscillation between the transparency and opacity of the filmic construct is the original film. In order to translate the self-conscious and critical qualities of his film Scorsese must have something else, parallel but outside his fiction which will periodically and momentarily shatter the filmic object into the filmic frame. Scorsese has taken a dialectical structure and formed not a synthesis but a multiplicity. The film forces oscillations within ways of seeing – ways of interpreting. By using the black and white clarity of the original – the good vs evil opposition rooted in objective truth – Scorsese can access a binary structure we are familiar with. Once accessed Scorsese exploits the blind spots of objective truth with the strategy of recontextualization. By forcing two differing filmic positions to share their structuring events he makes a film which is both a filmic object and an object which exploits the normally transparent filmic frame and brings it physically into the discussion. Scorsese makes the frame and the object.

A way to understand Carlo Scarpa's addition to the Castel Vecchio Museum is that his interventions are clear, distinct, and consistent in their relation to the existing building. These interventions form an architectural language which permeates the entire building while constituting only a portion of it. Scarpa's interventions resonate, like a bass chord, exciting sympathetic notes from the existing building. The grammar of these interventions is the plane. Yet Scarpa's planes are not just geometry, or thinness, or some platonic ideal. Instead he uses an idea of the plane directed by modernism and informed with the cultural, historical, and material traditions and sensibilities of Italy and Venice in particular. In of the building, such as the floor, veal, banding, and color, and juxtaposition of the wall, the qualities of element of the wall, the qualities of are made visible. This quality of ference more than similarity) is present both in the elements of the building and at the scale of the artwork exhibited within it, via their frames, easels, and pedestals. His easels take these pre- and proto-perspective paintings and lead us around them and reveals the difference of the plane's surface and the three dimensions of mass. Hence Scarpa's addition, the existing building, and the early Renaissance objects are drawn together in a relational nexus. Like Turrell, Scarpa is concerned with objects in the material world, but unlike Turrell, Scarpa's discussion is not internal to his objects. Scarpa's frame can be seen as between Turrell's and Beuys'. His object, the addition, is framed with Italian history, Venetian design styles and modernism's ideals of functionality and form.

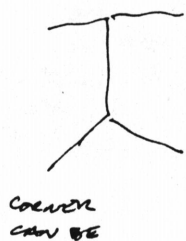
Carlo Scarpa
Frame Object
Modern Frame

MATERIAL



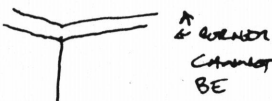
CULTURE

THERE IS A DIALOGUE BUT STRONGER IN ONE DIRECTION THAN ANOTHER

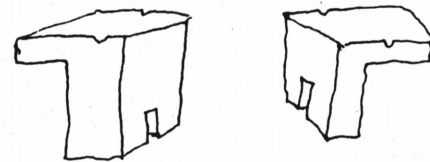


WALLS CAN BE MASS

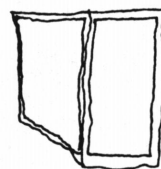
CEILING & FLOOR CANNOT BE PLANES



A STAND OR OBJECT WHICH IS MASS CAN BE NOTCHED OR REMOVED SO AS TO KEEP IT FROM BEING MASS, FROM HAVING CONNECTION TO WALL OR FLOOR

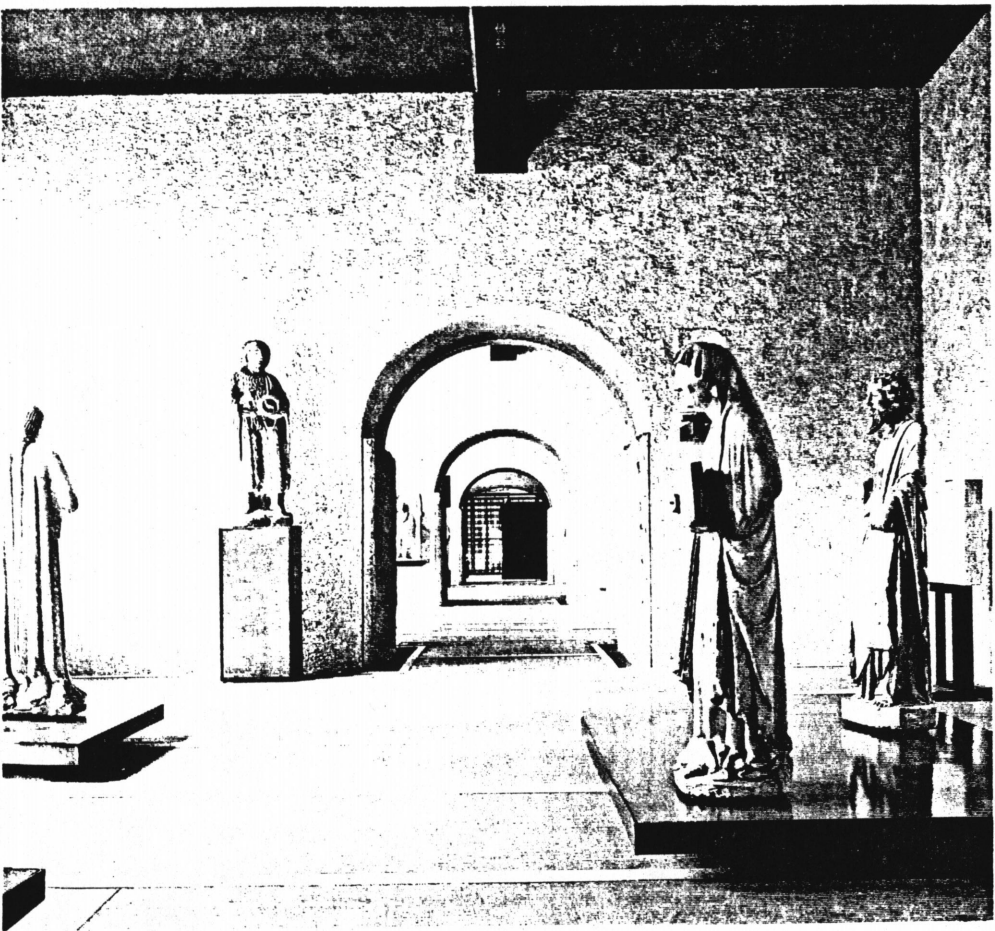


BUT AN OBJECT DERIVED OUT OF LINE & PLANE IS NOT BROKEN INTO.



THE LINE MAKES THE FRAME WHICH ALLOWS THE PLANE

IT TOO PERIES CONNECTION TO THE REAL PLANE



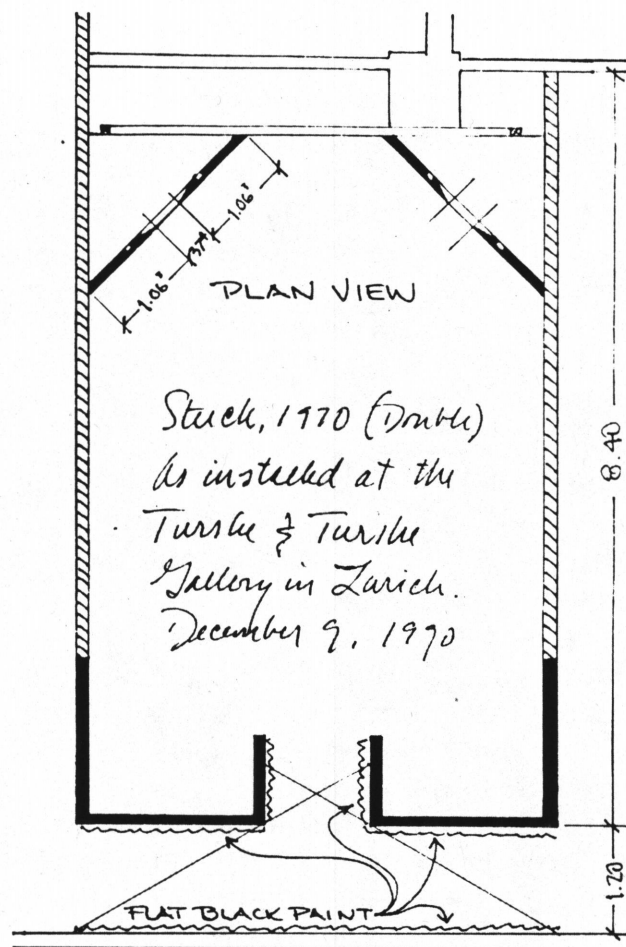
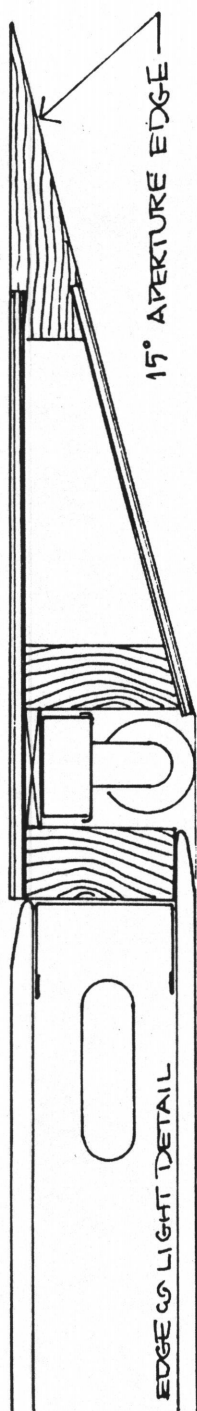
THIS IS COBU'S OR JUDD'S MODEL. THE CONCEPT IS MATERIAL. THE GAP IS OVERCOME.

(PLATONIC)

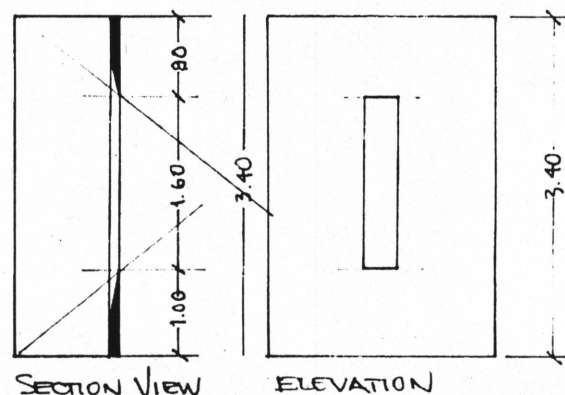


THIS IS SCARPA'S OR BEUYS' MODEL. THE CONCEPT OR IDEA IS DOMINANT BUT IT HAS DIALOGUE WITH

(ARISTOTLE)



This was done by constructing a partition wall at various distances in front of an end wall of a room, with cuts through the constructed wall. Florescent light behind these partitions flooded the opening behind the partition wall. In many ways, the actual space dealt with looked flat from a distance alluding to two dimensions with a sense of closure at the plane of the front of the partition wall.



James Turrell constructs rooms and controls light to allow "people to perceive their perception". He does this assuming perception is a physiological, not a cultural condition. This assumption is both the power and the limitation of his work. His light rooms affect the viewer from the inside out. They incite visceral responses as they trace a calculated line of ambiguity based on our habits of looking. We therefore misread his rooms, mistaking open spaces for solid wall. We are confounded to 'read' his space, and must instead try to make our way slowly, seeing with a new-found uncertainty. Our world has been made strange and we must "perceive our habits, to navigate this space. it is not complete. Turrell's epiphany but then recedes the moment of understand- perception", not our cultural This is a powerful condition, but work elicits a perceptual into aesthetic enjoyment. Once ing one's misreading is reached there is nowhere to go. Once through the space for the first time you 'understand' it and it looses its bewildering effect. Controlled and understood by the viewer it is enjoyed from a safe aesthetic distance. Turrell relies totally upon the object he has made to make explicit this physiological frame. His work brings forward, powerfully, the numbing, blinding process of habituated vision and up to that point it is excellent, but its inability to move beyond reveals the inability of his object to explicate the frame. Turrell's work shows the power of the physiological and remains silent on the importance of the cultural, or semiological component, in the makeup of the frame of perception.

James Turrell
Object Frame
 Art as Perceptual Frame

Joseph Beuys produced objects but did not do so for the sake of making objects. Rather Beuys made objects of potential: dialogue devices. The object was a tool – a way to access the frame. His frame uses our bourgeoisie / positivist / passive relationship to art (and the world). Beuys confronted this passivity by producing incomplete, enigmatic objects which do not speak of what they are. He attempted a dia-
Joseph Beuys
Frame Object
 Art as Cultural Frame
 sion of) the cultural frame. (spatial, rhetorical) as his make objects. The objects, beginning (of a dialogue). If Beuys' objects are contextualized in the typical art (museum) manner than they become merely dead. *How to Explain Art to a Dead Hare* is an example of Beuys' relationship to the object and the frame.

Beuys sat on a chair in one corner of the gallery, next to the entrance. He had poured honey over his head, to which he had then affixed fifty dollars worth of gold leaf. In his arms he cradled a dead hare, which he looked at steadfastly. Then he stood up, walked around the room holding the dead hare in his arms, and held it up to close to the pictures on the walls; he seemed to be talking to it.

What Beuys said is not important. He does not offer the viewer the answer. He does not give us the explanation. He shows us how. He leads by example. He reframes the object to be a question instead of an answer. The answer to this question is the art. This occurs within the viewer. *How to explain Art to a Dead Hare* ultimately is not an object which must be seen. The title alone serves a great deal of its function of provocation. Beuys resists the autonomy of the object.



My objects are to be seen as stimulants for the transformation of the idea of sculpture...or art in general. they should provoke thoughts about what can be and how the concept of sculpting can be extended to the invisible materials used by everyone.

THINKING FORMS —
 SPOKEN FORMS —

how we mold our thoughts or
 how we shape our thoughts into
 words or

SOCIAL SCULPTURE —

how we mold and shape the world
 in which we live: SCULPTURE AS AN
 EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS; EVERY-
 ONE AN ARTIST.

In our times, thinking has become so positivist that people only appreciate what can be controlled by reason, what can be used, what furthers our career. The need for questions that go beyond that has pretty much died out in our culture. Because most people think in materialistic terms they cannot understand my work. This is why I feel it's necessary to present something more than mere objects.

for me an exhibition is something that is already dead.

If I produce something, I transmit a message to someone else. The origin of the flow of information comes not from matter, but from the 'I,' from an idea.

To be a teacher is my greatest work of art. The rest is the waste product, a demonstration... Objects aren't very important for me anymore. I want to get to the origin of matter, to the thought behind it.

Yes, I am aware that my art cannot be understood primarily as thinking. My art touches people who are in tune with my mode of thinking. But it is clear that people cannot understand my art by intellectual processes alone, because no art can be experienced in this way. I say to experience, because this is not equivalent to thinking; it's a great deal more complex: it involves being moved subconsciously.

-Then you see the artist as a provocateur?
 --Provocateur – that's it exactly. To provoke means to evoke something. By making a sculpture with fat or a piece of clay I evoke something. I ignite a thought within me – a totally original, totally new thought that has never yet existed in history, even if I deal with a historical fact or with Leonardo or Rembrandt. I myself determine history – it is not history that determines me.

Four Frames

The work of two artists, an architect, and a film maker is explicated and critiqued to show the structure of their frame•object relations and to trace a line, not for the purpose of reducing the work to theory, but to allow the theory to become generative. The frame•object is then shown to be a way of looking and this looking a way of making.

Consciously or not we employ frames which allow us to interpret, judge, and produce the objects we encounter or the work we do. While it is possible to function solely within these frames, not questioning them, this is not my intent. My interest is in the relation between the frame and the object. By studying how a frame of reference affects an object, one can yield unique insights and strategies to produce subsequent objects. The way in which we frame an object, either on a wall or in our minds, has a profound effect on what we can see in that object. Depending on their orchestration the frame and object can produce discoveries or can become habit or routine and the object predetermined and banal. The frame and the object are architectural tools. Thus this thesis is not a single object but an investigation into generative relationships and strategies in the dialogue between a frame and an object.

Media in architecture are usually relegated to conveying images and information while the design occurs within an unproblematic conception of media. Yet architecture's media of representation are not transparent, their effects are not neutral. Drawings and other media for representing architecture have a discourse which is difficult for a student to both accept and manipulate while also presuming to use the media to refer directly to a built form: a building. Perhaps revealing a bias toward Empiricism it is unsettling to propose to build a building with drawings when one has yet to see what is lost (or gained) in the translation from drawing to building. This is especially true for the student rather than, for example, a professional, because the student has yet to accumulate the understanding of the built implications of drawings (or other media).

This book is in three sections: First, a discussion of several relationships involving the frame and the object using other artists as examples. Secondly, two of my projects (Blind Spot and Photo Gallery) show the execution of specific aspects of a frame-object relationship. Lastly, an installation (*Framework:Installation*) as an exhibition of photographs uses the differentiation of frame and object as a theoretically resonant design strategy at several scales of thought and execution.

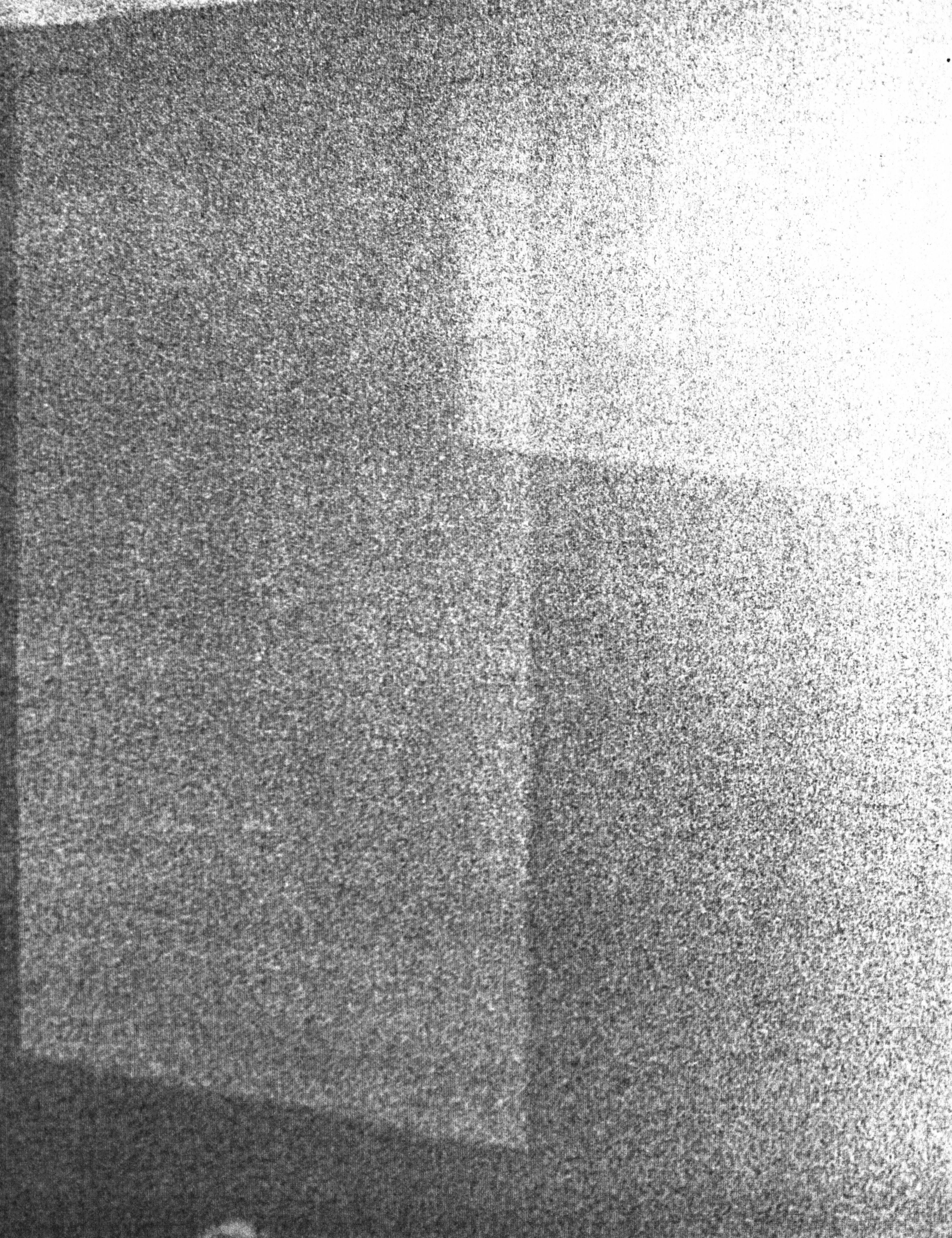
As Bergson says, we do not perceive the thing or the image of the thing in its entirety, we always perceive less of it, we perceive only what it is in our interest to perceive, by virtue of our economic interests, ideological beliefs, and psychological demands. We therefore normally perceive only clichés. But if our sensory-motor schemata jam or break, then a different type of image can appear...because it no longer has to be justified. Gilles Deleuze, "cinema and Time," in *The Deleuze Reader*, ed. C. Boundas (New York: Columbia University, 1993), p.182.

Media introduce fundamental ambiguities into how and what we see. Architecture has resisted this question because, since the importation and absorption of perspective by architectural space in the 15th century, architecture has been dominated by the mechanics of vision. Peter Eisenman, "Visions' Unfolding: Architecture in the Age of Electronic Media", *Domus*, January, 1992.

[Archaeology] is an attempt to reveal discursive practices in their complexity and density; to show that to speak is to do something—something other than to express what one thinks.

M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, (New York, Harper Row, 1976), pp.208-209.





FRAMEWORK

