

PETER P. GOCHÉ

black contemporary

**WORLD ARTIST  
ARCHIVE**  
+  
**EXPERIMENTAL  
GALLERIES**

WORK PRODUCED AND CURATED  
BY PETER P. GOCHÉ

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | PETER P. GOCHÉ

As artist and curator, my efforts are focused on maintaining Black Contemporary as a type of atelier whereby expert architects, artists, curators, theorists and philosophers in the field of spatial phenomenology are invited to participate in the examination of ongoing research assemblies and present their work to the agrarian public through on-site workshops and field talks. To date the work has been enriched by the engagement and critique of Deborah Hauptmann (chair of the Department of Architecture, Iowa State University), Hesse McGraw (San Francisco Art Institute), David Leatherbarrow (University of Pennsylvania), Luis Rico-Gutierrez (dean, College of Design, Iowa State University), Gregory Palermo FAIA (Professor Emeritus, Department of Architecture, Iowa State University), Shannon Stratton (The School of the Art Institute of Chicago), Ben Heywood (The Soap Factory), Alberto Pérez-Gómez (School of Architecture, McGill University, Montreal, Canada), Steve Dumez (Eskew+Dumez+Ripple), Bruce Lindsey (dean, College of Architecture and Graduate School of Architecture & Urban Design, Washington University), Austin M. Stewart (artist/educator, Iowa State University), Heidi Sohn (interim chair of Architecture Theory at TU Delft), Samantha Krukowski (artist, author and educator, Kansas City Art Institute), Gilbert Vicario (The Selig Family Chief Curator, Phoenix Art Museum), Juhani Pallasmaa (architect/educator, former professor of architecture and dean at the Helsinki University of Technology), Alex Braidwood (artist/educator, Iowa State University), Adam Yarinsky (principal, Architecture Research Office, New York), Catie Newell (artist/educator, University of Michigan), Wiitch Tiit (musicians Lindsay Nissen, Beth Kemp, Tai Maag and Charlie Vestal), Mike Nesbit (fine artist, Los Angeles), Daniel T. Gaitor-Lomack (performance artist, Los Angeles), Perry Kulper (associate professor of architecture, University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning), Gretchen Wilkins (architect-in-residence and head of the Architecture Department, Cranbrook Academy), Jennifer Newsom (assistant professor, School of Architecture, University of Minnesota), Mark Stanley (assistant professor, College of Architecture and Design, University of Tennessee Knoxville), F. Jason Campbell (lecturer in architecture, University of California, Berkeley), David Gersten (architect, writer and educator, The Cooper Union), Yoshiharu Tsukamoto (co-founder, Atelier Bow-Wow), and most recently, Adrienne V. Gennett (assistant curator of collections and education, Iowa State University Museums).



# FOREWORD

CATIE NEWELL

This project is an enormous undertaking and an admirable practice model that is feeding Peter Goché's own critical research and creative practice and that of guest theorists, artists and architects as well as numerous students from Iowa State University. It is a force of its own, developed into what is truly a unique design practice and powerful learning environment.

With permission from the owners, Goché has embraced an opportunity to embed rigorous architectural thinking into the buildings and open spaces of the Black Heritage Seed Farm in Ames, Iowa. Numerous production buildings, remnants of mechanized agriculture and its large-scale machines and storage spaces create an architecturally dense setting with undeniable traces of time, spatial curiosities, and the promise of new types of work. Goché has taken deeply to working carefully and creatively within the farm as both site specific thinking and installations. The buildings both house and inspire rich works of his creative practice. Early efforts clung to these tantalizing spaces as literal studios and exhibition spaces for temporary installations that play with time, light, and the embedded history. This includes works made within the West Seed Dryer and experimental drawings scattered along the site. It is important to note, Black Contemporary does not merely house this work, but, as Goché has demonstrated, the work is in constant dialogue and collaboration with the space itself. This key distinction is best demonstrated in the work *InsideOute*, which is a wall constructed in the presence of a pile of timber abandoned after the controversial pipeline construction just miles away. *InsideOute* is a spatial response to the overwhelming stack of timber that forces its occupants into contemplation, even sorrow. The work, so refined, is a spatial conversation that involves careful attention to detail, and even more attention to the stories and histories of its context and contents. This balance is one that all architects should strive for in making meaningful work within settings and controversies.

Goché's project, an endeavor to be understood as an ongoing journey, encapsulates a powerful intention to recreate, and live a very contemporary practice within a setting that we have inherited, abandoned and can see anew. It requires an understanding of how things happen slowly, a term meant here to describe things unfolding over time and with great attention. This is a concept that many architects, stuck within our contemporary state of distraction, cannot process. We are more than fortunate that Goché has unselfishly incorporated this environment into his teaching and his dialogue with other theorists, artists and architects. In the arrival to this place, which is a removal from a norm, one is well aware that they have entered into a deep conversation, a rigorous practice, and a greater means to push what contemporary creative practices and education can, and should be, a commitment to making and perceiving in our present spaces.

chiaroscuro





# CHIAROSCURO: A THEORETICAL VALENCE

PETER P. GOCHÉ

**“When the world of clear and articulate objects is abolished, our perceptual being, cut off from its world, evolves a spatiality without images. This is what happens in the night. Night is not an object for me; it enwraps me and infiltrates through all my senses. I am no longer withdrawn into my perceptual look-out from which I watch the outlines of objects moving by at a distance. Night has no outlines; it is itself in contact with me...”<sup>1</sup>**

When thinking about theory, I am drawn to the logic of Merleau-Ponty and his central thesis, which he refers to as the “primacy of perception” whereby we perceive the world through our bodies; we are embodied subjects. While contemporary theory aligns itself with innovation and critical agency, it seems reliant (almost exclusively) on a means of thinking that privileges distancing oneself from the subject in an effort to be objective. I prefer to think of theory as a haptic practice that opposes the objective distance typically associated with classical research.

The content of this exploration was generated in response, and as an addition, to David Heymann's essay “Precise, Anonymous, Enigmatic” published in the 1990 winter issue of *Iowa Architect*. In that critically perceptive article, Heymann traces the evolution of the Midwestern landscape by examining farm buildings within rural Iowa. Central to the evolution that Heymann cites is the specific topography due to wind erosion. Heymann uses this dynamic to illustrate a perceived stability given the tectonic nature of farm building construction and associated spatial configurations. If the centerline of Heymann's thinking is that instability in land morphology (though difficult to optically register) has produced a tectonic perceptual stability, the conceit of this essay is that such stability no longer exists, and that a shift in the scales of economy has yielded an outwardly visible tectonic instability. Thus, to Heymann's transformation is added the inverse consequence and thereby directly linking the visual evidence of an unstable (derelict) building set to the intellectual evidence of an unstable ground plane. This relationship of figure to ground is the basis for staging a series of intensely modulated spatial reconstructions within an antiquated seed-drying facility that, like Iowa's farm buildings and land-use practices, is intrinsically grounded in the spatial and cognitive confines of its surround.

The space of Iowa has been reinvented in the 21st century as a reflection of the modern rationality of capital production. Communities in Iowa continuously adapt to changes in agricultural production processes. Since the start of industrialization of farming in the 19th century, this production process was lead by family farmers — a form of farming in which labor is supplied primarily by family members on small holdings. The family farm is an important social symbol for Iowans. This symbol represents several ideals the foremost of which are the importance of the family and the independence of the family unit. These ideals are greatly influenced by the Homestead Acts which defined rectilinear units of private property ownership creating social distance

whereby farmsteads are equally spread across the landscape leaving ample space between farming families. This sense of spatial and symbolic independence has largely defined the quality of life in Iowa. However, this spatial and federally advocated form of independence is associated with an economic dependence on market forces, food industries and federal policies.

Higher startup and maintenance costs associated with the mechanization of farming, coupled with the falling price of produce, required farmers to expand their holdings to maintain profitability, resulting in ‘successful’ farmers purchasing production ground from other less successful farmers. This made the family farmer's space unstable as it was constantly under pressure from market competition and turbulent federal policies. This economic condition produced spatial and communal instability because it caused frequent reconfigurations in the living space. For instance, some farmers rented their production grounds and continued to live on their farmsteads away from the public services and employment opportunities on which they depended. The impact of farming development was even more apparent, whereby vacant farm sites along the various roads became a common scene.<sup>2</sup>

Black's Seed Farm is one such dormant site in which a temporary body of work is being developed as part of an ongoing effort to examine the past character and future shape of Iowa's inherited landscape. In this manner, the seed drying facility serves as a field station focused on the study of spatial phenomena. In using the term here, I refer to a way of knowing that seeks to describe the essential qualities of human experience and the context in which that experience happens. Black Contemporary serves as an experiential laboratory for ongoing investigations intended to provoke a temporal-spatial encounter and reconciliation of the simultaneous and complex nature of cerebral and corporeal experience within the Midwestern realm of labor and its associated landscape. Based on a series of modulated experimental actions, each research assembly is driven by the nascent possibility of a persistent desire to intercourse with existing material surrounds pursuant to a philosophical position that leverages perceptual notions of chiaroscuro. First used in the 1680s by Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, this logic had to do with the disposition of light and dark in a picture, or literally “bright-dark,” from Italian *chiaro* “clear, bright” (from Latin *clarus* ‘clear’) + *ascuro* (from Latin *obscurus* ‘obscure’). By extension of this etymological dichotomy, I posit the conscious and unconscious, the seen and the unseen, focus and open awareness and the made re-made are factors in the realm of understanding and producing space. It is a full-scale, three-dimensional methodology that is followed by a pictorial representation, an inverse sequence from the traditions established in architectural process in the practice of generating and understanding a set of spatial valence (biology) within the material culture of a post-industrial seed-drying site.

This exercise began by reconsidering the nature of a set of internal spaces within the seed dryer formerly referred to as the

plenum. The abandonment of this mechanical process and our consequent human association leaves the, often naïve, visitor at a loss with respect to understanding its former utility due to the inherent austerity of its confines.

In the context of spatial assignment and cultural practices, Sigmund Freud explains his theory of the unconscious as follows:

**“Let us therefore compare the system of the unconscious to a large entrance hall, in which the mental impulses jostle one another like separate individuals. Adjoining this entrance hall there is a second, narrower, room — a kind of drawing room — in which consciousness too, resides. But on the threshold between these two rooms a watchman performs his function.”** SIGMUND FREUD 1917

This notion is the conceptual basis for the reoccupation of a dormant configuration within Iowa’s landscape, whereby a set of buildings and associated spaces (rooms) have been left vacant for decades. Freud knew that he only had to name the rooms and his comparison between real space and the space of the mind would be made clear.<sup>3</sup> The subsequent reference to these spaces, the entrance hall and the drawing room, conjure internal mental pictures of associated uses and social activities as a result of their new, albeit archaic, syntax. This intellectual linkage, coupled with the instability of the cultural context, enables us to more fully enter each room as a space of imagination rather than that which might vanish if made finite. Similarly, the goal of this effort is to examine, on the threshold between the two rooms and the broader agricultural context, the potential of a set of empty spaces whose original purpose is no longer served yet stands as a social symbol of labor’s leftover.

Materiality can be understood in a variety of forms that range from auditory systems to tactile systems to olfactory systems. For instance, the recognition of the material presence of sound as a form tends to be best comprehended when in relation to the equally material presence of silence. We need only look at the discipline of anthropology in effort to discern the magnitude of such an attenuated range of medium to appreciate the full weight of material cultures and vast corpus of different material realms, which we routinely occupy. That individual experiences vary with respect to their context is well known among those engaged with the conception and enactment of works based in human occupation. This variation in response to environment derives from our interpretation of the items of experience (phenomena) and their material arrangement. Cross-culturally, perceptual readings of context correlate with reflective and anticipatory processes of understanding.

Our experience as occupants of a particular setting begins with the impulse to instantaneously scrutinize everything. This impulse is sustained through an often precisely choreographed threshold. As architect and artist, my goal is to assist the occupant in maintaining his or her initial ontological wakefulness through staging often-temporary assemblies within a host space and thereby

extend the passage sequence. In the words of Alberto Pérez-Gómez from his published thoughts titled “Built upon Love”:

“The discovery of architectural order necessitates the same sort of critical de-structuring that is familiar to other arts, engaging dimensions of consciousness usually stifled by technical education. Yet for architecture this is not an intuitive operation or unreflective action, but rather the continuation of a practical philosophy and a meditative practice....Thus a work of architecture may engage the primary geometry of human bodily orientation as the base line of a significant melody aimed at revealing the enigma of depth, the dimension of space.”<sup>4</sup>

To this end, the act of reconstructing our engagement with forgotten space assists in cultivating theory as a practice of making and thinking. The resultant stagings yield, what Grant Wood depicts in his 1934 mural *When Tillage Begins Other Arts Follow*, the foundation for subsequent forms of human civilization specific to labor and an intensely modulated means of production. The cumulative effort might indicate the potential use of this facility, and all of Iowa’s derelict agricultural facilities, as a laboratory inasmuch as it provides a dormant environment conducive to conducting a series of sustained observations. It is a subconscious engagement whereby we become immersed in the world and do not succeed in distancing ourselves from it in order to achieve a consciousness of the world. It is an immersive act of experiential criticism supported by a set of site adjusted research assemblies with a relative capacity to unite or react or interact with the latent dimensions of the inherited landscape. It is an embodiment of chiaroscuro: a pictorial practice of arranging light (the conscious) and shadow (the subconscious) to reveal the smooth emptiness of fragmented time, and thereby, mine its capacity to summon the subconscious and reoccupy the inherited landscape as a dimension of life entwined with the present, a part of our ongoing perceptual experience. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 8–19 | PETER P. GOCHÉ

1 M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978). P. 283.  
2 Marwan Ghandour and Peter Goché, *Guidelines for Spatial Regeneration in Iowa*, (2007 AIA Board of Knowledge Committee).  
3 Georgina Downey, *Domestic Interiors: Representing Homes from the Victorians and Modernists*, (Bloomsbury Press, 013), xiii.  
4 Alberto Pérez-Gómez, “The Ethical Image of an Architecture” in *Built upon Love*, (MIT Press, 2008), p. 210–211.











# RESEARCH ASSEMBLY ONE

The dimensional nature of Iowa’s agricultural landscape is not immediately discernable. This can be attributed to the absence of an outline of objects seen against the line at which the sky and earth appear to meet in the case of its physical dimension. In the case of its cultural dimension, this might likely be attributed to the intrinsic relationship (both symbolically and ethically) between the family farm unit and the expansive ground plane in which it operates. It is an extent, both physically and culturally, that becomes present and knowable (only) through the first-person dimension; an experiential unit of measure commonly referred to as time.

It is this logic with which the first research assembly has been developed. It is situated within the ground floor plenum space of the seed dryer, the actual dimensions of the entrance hall are 8 feet by 60 feet in plan. Its height is 9 feet. Access is provided through a small vestibule at the south end of the entrance hall. With the door left ajar and ambient light emanating from an existing opening in the floor assembly above, the viewer is confronted with the installment of a series of like wood-like elements and tilted steel plate. The arrangement and extent of this componentry is undeterminable given gradient light levels due to the hyper extended condition of the plenum geometry. As the ocular effect of having moved almost instantaneously from daylight to dark slowly recalibrates, the remainder of the componentry, and ultimately the dimensional and material boundaries of the host space, become evident. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 22–23 | COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL DRAWING | PETER P. GOCHÉ







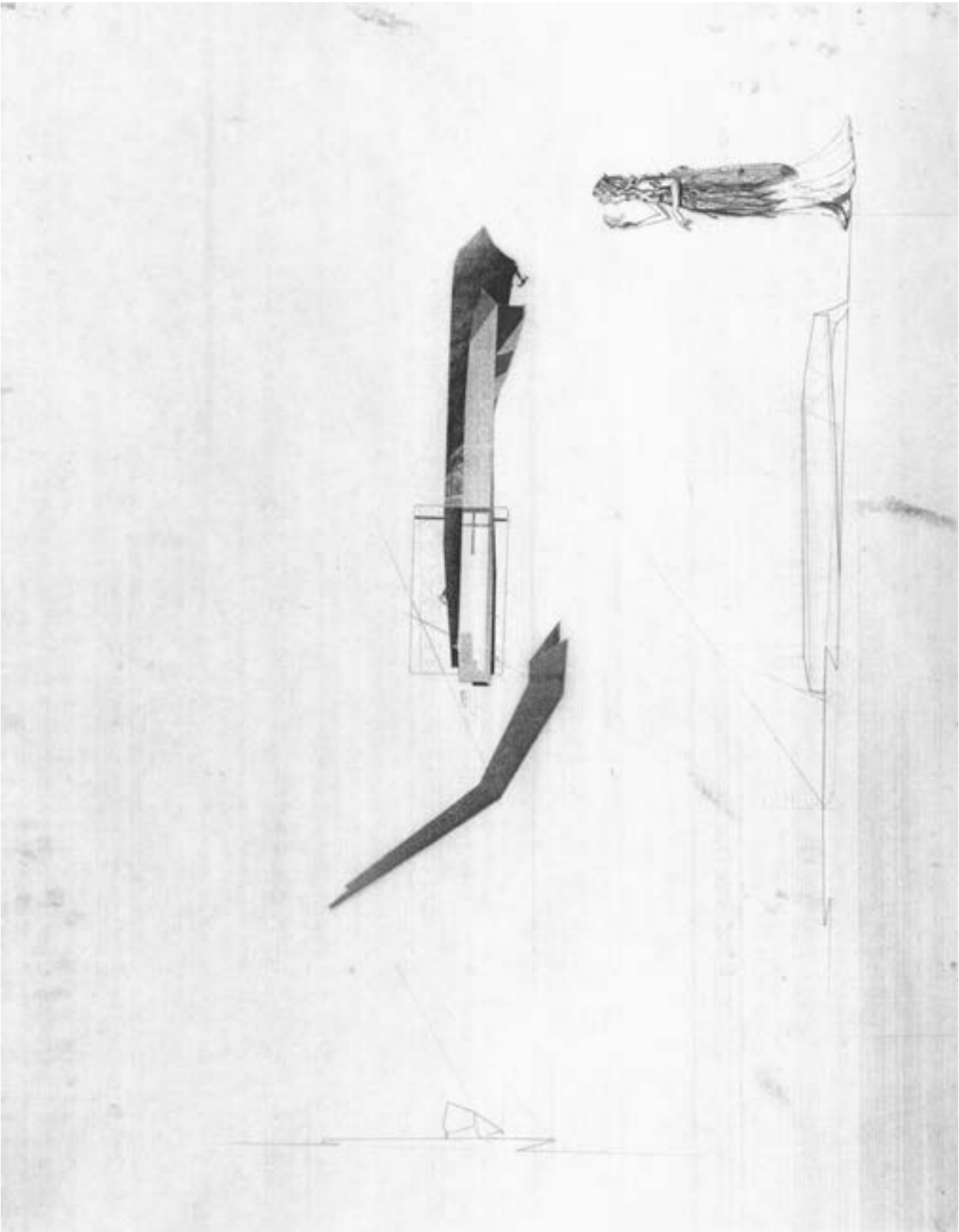


## RESEARCH ASSEMBLY TWO

For most of us, our comprehension of the inscribed landscape is the aggregate of various momentary engagements with rural America. Awareness is developed through finite experiences as a matter of passing through or attending a farm event. The rural configuration, thus, is the setting for an experience rather than the experience itself as practiced by the family farm unit as a matter of co-existence. The contemporary experience, unlike the traditional, is not solitary, is not contemplative, and is less concerned with awareness of the environment.<sup>1</sup> What eventually replaced the ethical perception of this landscape typology was the restricted vision of our global, rather than local, scale of exchange. However, there has recently been a conservationist revival as made most evident through community-supported agriculture, whereby the farmer is directly linked once again to the consumer. It is changes such as these — fragmentary and pragmatic — that have informed, and been illuminated by, the production of the second research assembly.

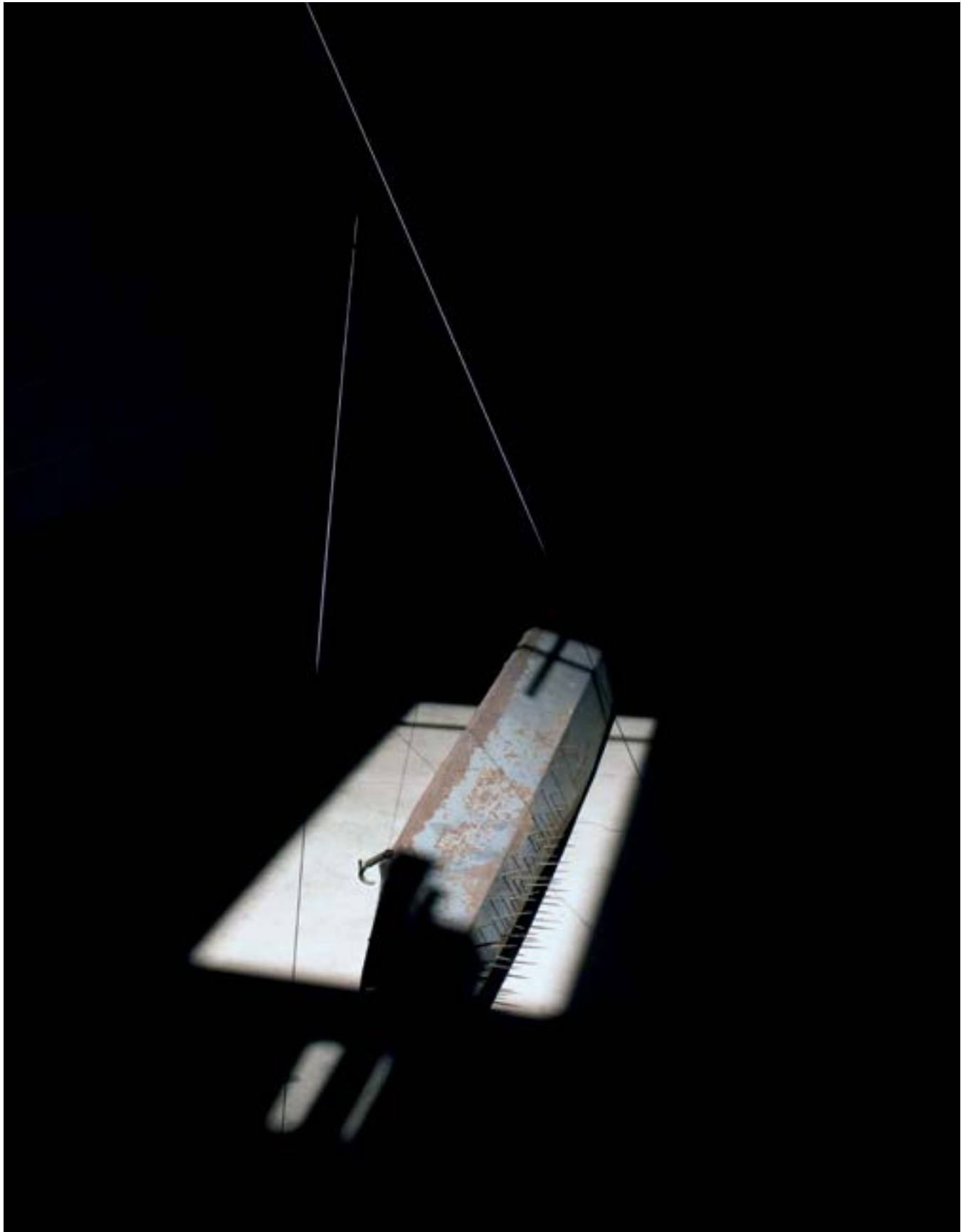
This assembly employs a derelict metal conveyor lid placed on the floor with respect to the tilted steel bent. The conveyor lid, worn and distorted by weather, is host to a series of thorns that have been attached to its leading edge. Incident light, emanating from the entrance door left ajar and the light source overhead, frames the resultant intercourse between each of the elements and their host space.

Under this new configuration, the assembly — or, more broadly, the ambient configuration — is not what occupies the entrance hall, but what is completely enveloped by the consequent pool of light and surrounding shadows. In other words, the restricted view of the associated componentry yields what David Leatherbarrow refers to as “a topographical inscription, a single cultural framework occupied by our collective imagination.” In this way, the perceptual experience of the work forges a return to the solitary contemplative experience, a provocation of self-awareness with respect to what is known, consciously and subconsciously, regarding farm culture and the inherited landscape. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 26–29 | COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL DRAWING | PETER P. GOCHÉ



<sup>1</sup> John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, (Yale University Press, 1984), p. 63.







# RESEARCH ASSEMBLY THREE

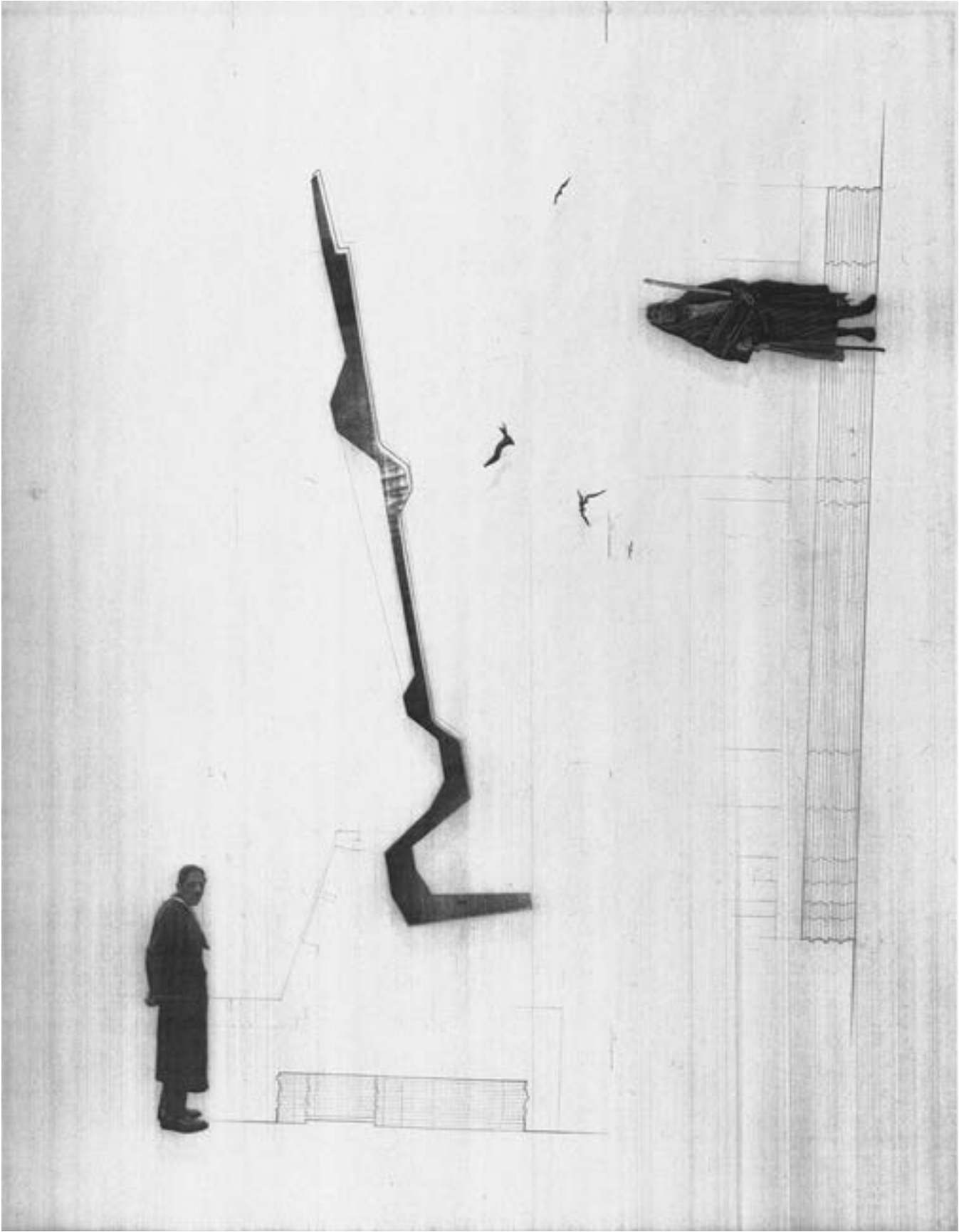
The third research assembly considers the generative role of site adjustment in a post-industrial landscape. Deceptive in its vacuum when addressed only superficially, Iowa consists of a broad range of diverse systems and approaches that have been rigorously modulated over decades and thus seem integral and thereby a space of absence. Developing an understanding of the rural site, or more anecdotally, “the interior,” necessitates the need for a point within from which one is allowed to perceive for an uncertain duration.

Located along the thrust of the entrance hall, the new set of parts serves as a measure by which people may situate themselves. Developed within a recessed mantel of this set of parts is the arrangement of rotary hoe replacement spoons on a building felt runner. The intrinsic qualities of the existing space are revealed through intercourse with the referent assembly yielding a monadic dimension as referred to in *The Fold: Leibniz and The Baroque* by Gilles Deleuze:

**“Chiaroscuro fills the monad according to a series which can be followed in both directions: at one end the dark background, at the other sealed light; the latter, when it lights up, produces white in the section set aside for it, but the light grows dimmer and dimmer, yields to darkness and deepening shadow as it spreads out towards the dark background throughout the monad.”**<sup>1</sup>

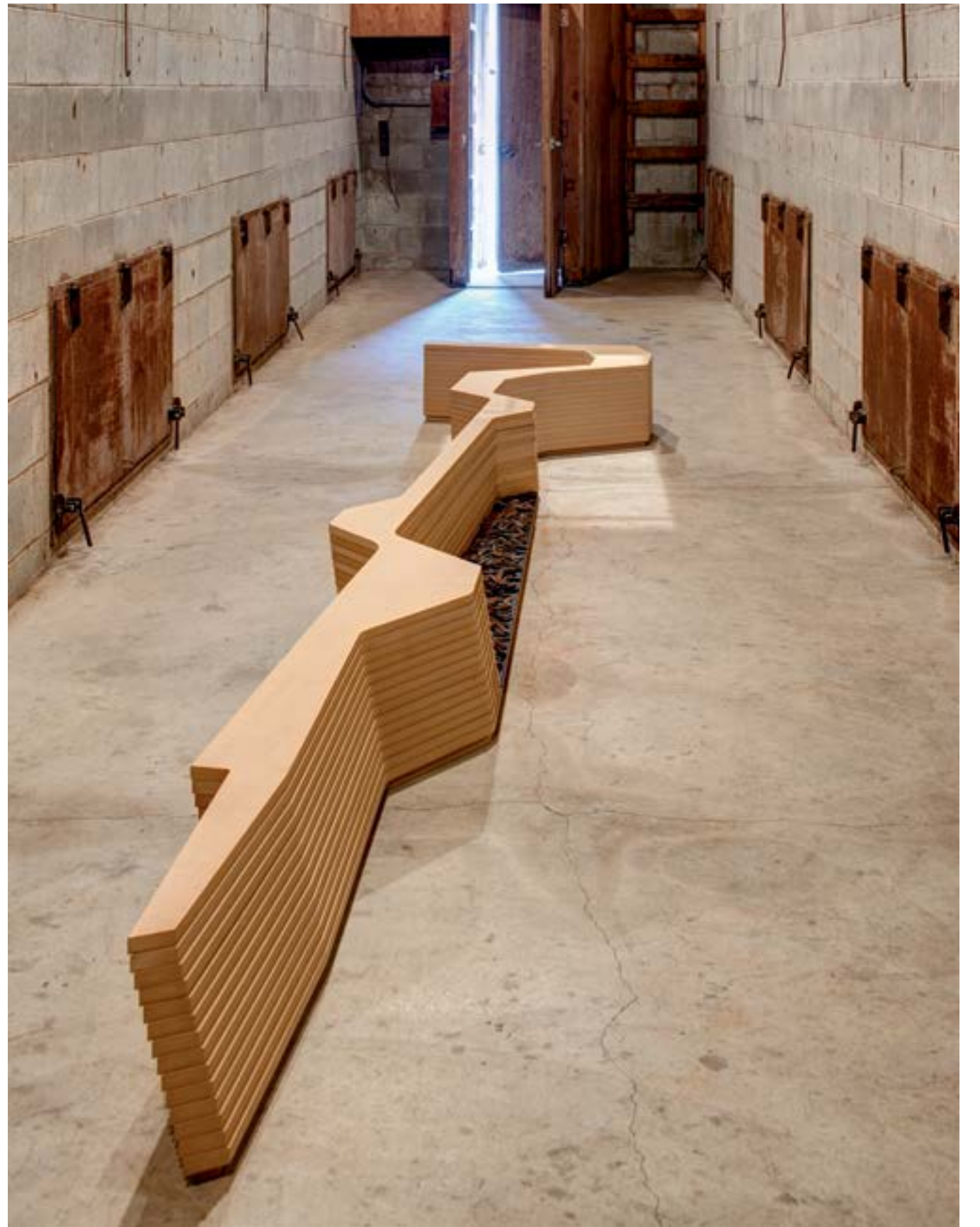
The occupant, by reciprocal examination, becomes aware of his/her personal presence and its coincidence with relation to the referent-material-and-attendant culture outside. Delueze says “the monad is the autonomy of the interior, an interior without exterior. I would argue that the culminating assembly results in a field of occupation that discloses (rather than delimits) the ethical relevance of the latent site that is knowable only by the accumulation of routine and diverse experiences of labor and reflection.

PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 32–35 | COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL    DRAWING | PETER P. GOCHÉ



<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and The Baroque* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006 [1988]), p. 5.











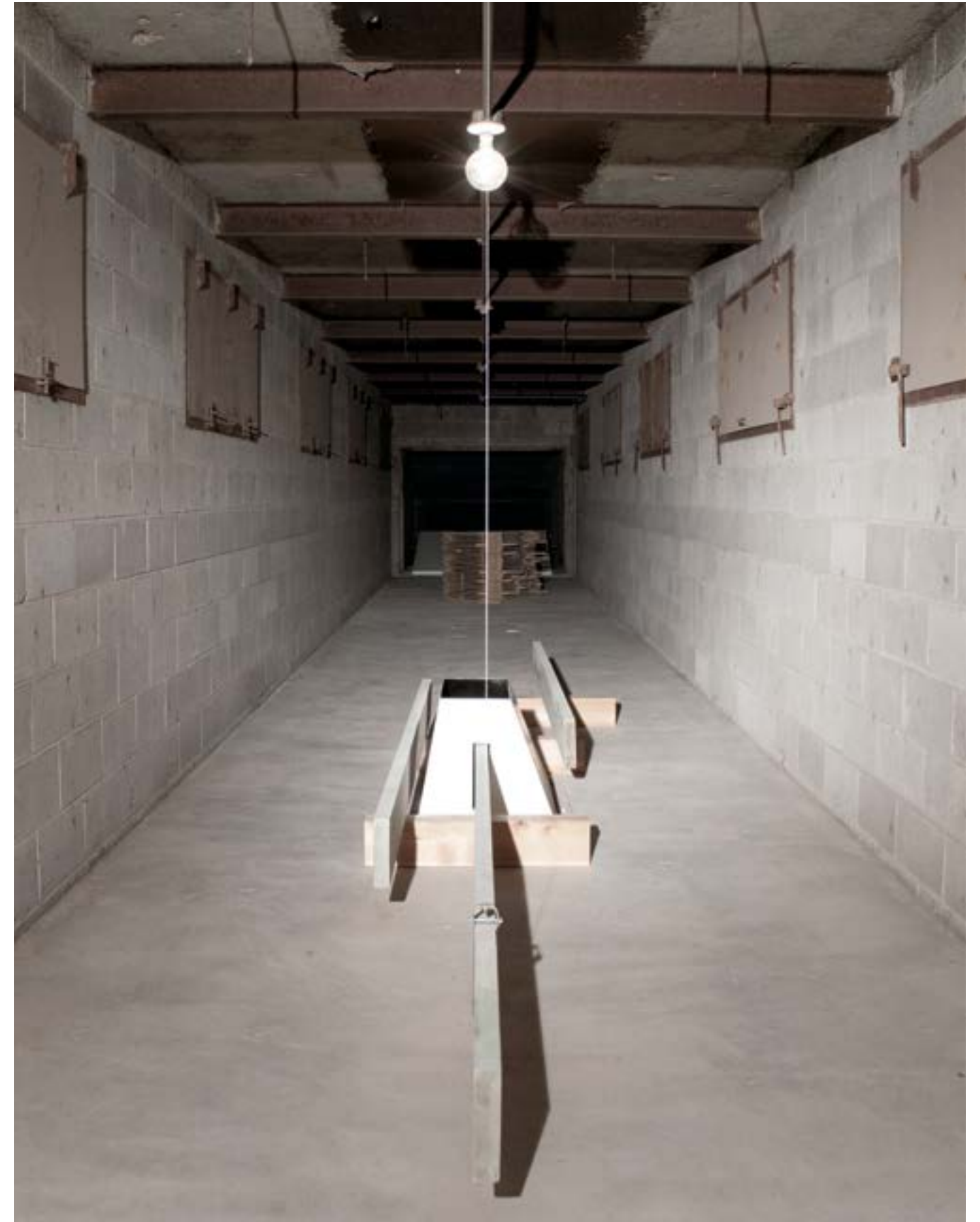
## THE DRAWING ROOM

Within the logic of landscape studies is an indoctrinated manner of observation. Contemporary culture comprehends and navigates geographical realms via maps, which tend to set up an aerial relationship between reader and subject. Consequent to this intellectual configuration is the necessity to study its other — the atmosphere and outer space. The upper story of the seed dryer operates as an instrument with which such readings can be performed — placing the viewer between heaven and earth, consciousness and the subconscious, certainty and uncertainty.

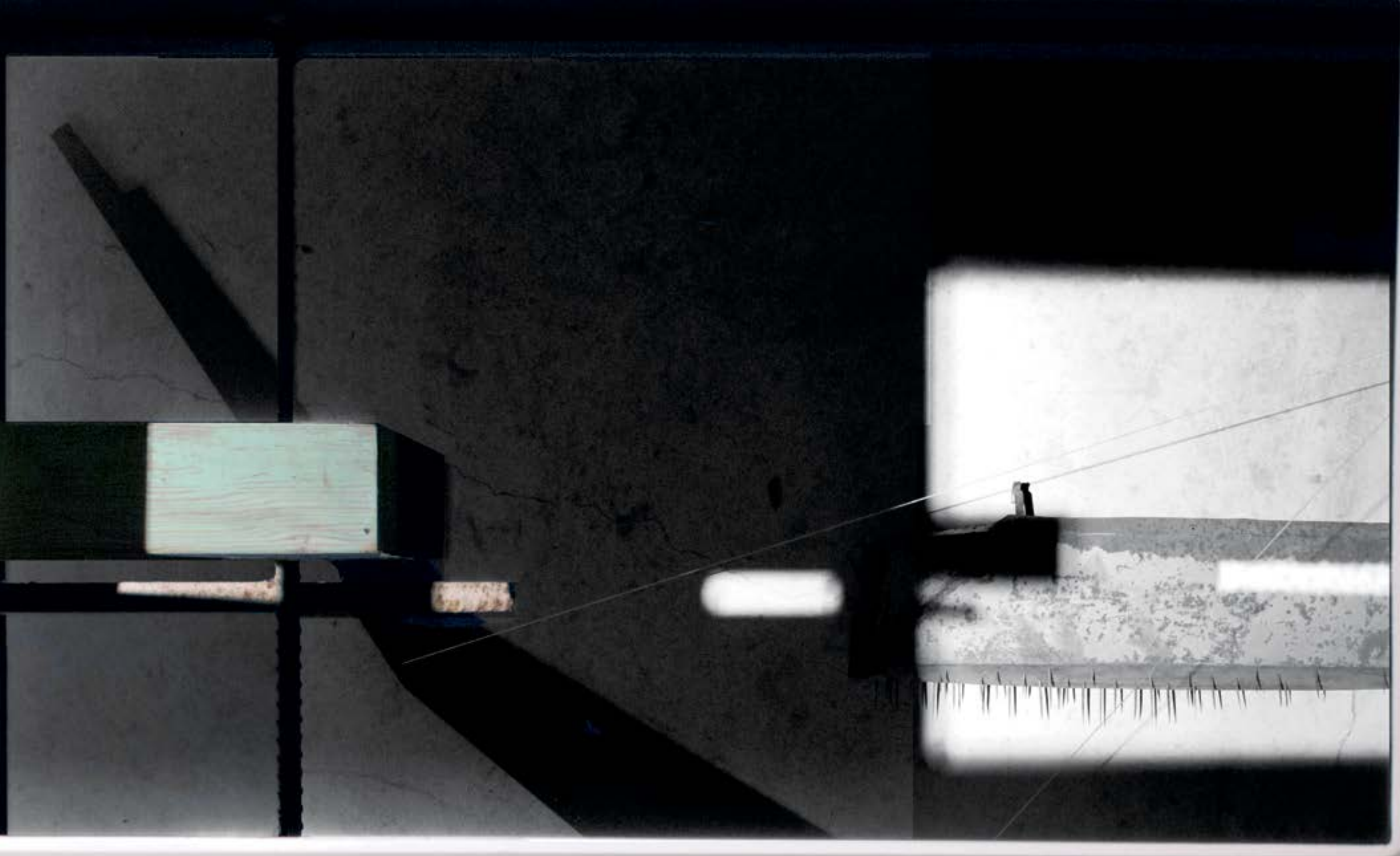
Located in the drawing room is an aerial viewing station and a ground-viewing station. The aerial viewing station consists of an offset viewing monitor made of 10-gauge steel and wood bracketing through which the world below is seen. The ground viewing station is located at the far end of the drawing room just in front of the duct opening. This work consists of a camera obscura and a stacked wood area of repose. The camera obscura consists of a set of three painted metal panels as picture plane and 2mm diameter hole in the top of the existing duct as aperture. Light from the external (celestial) scene passes through the hole and strikes the picture plane inside. As stated by Janathan Crary in his 1992 publication, *Techniques of the Observer*:

**“The camera obscure performs an operation of individuation; that is, it defines an observer as isolated, enclosed, and autonomous within its dark confines. It impels a kind of withdrawal from the world in order to regulate and purify one’s relation to the manifold contents of the now ‘exterior’ world.”<sup>1</sup>**

This world is precisely that thing from which we form our perceptions, not as personal beliefs or imperatives, but in so far as we are all governed by a universal source of light and its consequent shadows. This optic disclosure, the layering of light and shadows, absolves us of our flesh and bone and allows the body to enter time, deep time, and (as pointed out by Mircea Eliade) our collective transcendent reality — the inscribed spatial history of a particular setting developed between human beings and the environments they occupy. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 37–41 | COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL



<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, (MIT Press, 1992), p. 38-39.









surfacework



# SURFACEWORK

PETER P. GOCHÉ

Using experimental drawing and site-adjusted installations as my primary modes of practice, I deploy an integrated and focused approach to both theoretical and practical questions pertaining to the nature and impact of materiality specific to the re-occupation of post-industrial spaces. Oscillating between processes of the labour involved in working the land (ground) and the making of surfacework, I conduct a material practice that opposes the objective distance typically associated with research by producing a series of works with a relative capacity to unite or react or interact with the soft luster of the inherited landscape. My works provoke a temporal-spatial encounter that reconciles the simultaneous and complex nature of the rural configuration that often yields a duality of being “out there” and of being “in here.” Each inquiry utilizes my experience of growing up on a subsistence farm and employs a corresponding range of domains including art, architecture and anthropology as a means of exploring what material cultivations can be and do. Based on a series of experimental actions (material modalities), each assembly is driven by the nascent possibility of a persistent desire to intercourse with existing material surrounds and labour constructs. Each work begins the disposition of light and dark pursuant a philosophical position that leverages perceptual notions of chiaroscuro — a logic first used in the 1680s by Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. The literal meaning of chiaroscuro is “bright-dark” and stems from Italian *chiaro* (from Latin *clarus* ‘clear’) + *ascuro* (from Latin *obscurus* ‘obscure’). By extension, the conscious and unconscious, the seen and the unseen, focus and open awareness and the made re-made are factors in the realm of understanding and producing atmospheres. It is a full-scale, three-dimensional methodology, concurrent with exploratory drawing, photography and videography that seeks to express the affects (immaterial harmonics) found latent in our post-industrial landscape.

Black Contemporary, a field station located at Black’s Seed Farm (26107 530th Avenue) — two miles south of Ames, Iowa, serves as a laboratory for ongoing investigations intended to expand our experience of knowledge specific to the study of spatial phenomena. In using the term here, I am referring to a way of knowing that seeks to describe the underlying, essential qualities of human experience and the context in which that experience happens. Using perception as spatial conditioners, current studio projects focus on the act of making and curating the *Surfacework* series within a dormant seed-drying facility constructed in 1979. Each inquiry is part of a process by which the cultural history and perceptual nature of a particular setting is revealed. The resultant works yield, what Grant Wood depicts in his 1934 mural *When Tillage Begins, Other Arts Follow*, the foundation for subsequent forms of human civilization specific to labor and an intensely modulated means of production. The cumulative effort might indicate the potential use of this facility, and all of Iowa’s derelict agricultural facilities, as a laboratory inasmuch as it offers opportunities for a rigorous set of observations, practices and experimentation.

Within the facility is a set of windowless drying bins (silos) and corresponding plenum and associated hopper doors with which warm air was distributed and regulated. Each silo is a space that served as condenser whereby thousands of acres were compressed into several cubic metres. Iowa consists of a broad range of diverse systems and approaches that have been rigorously adjusted over decades and thus seem integral and thereby a space of absence. Developing an understanding of this particular rural configuration necessitates the need for a compressed point within, from which one is allowed to perceive the consequent world beyond for an uncertain duration. Each silo, emblematic of such a space of absence, serves as site for the following surfacework.

The first type of surfacework is a set of drawings I refer to as *Field Notes* — a material compilation of mental mutterings from which prolonged labor and longing speak. When anthropologists undertake a study of an unfamiliar culture, they typically write an ethnography. Ethnographic writing is a process referred to by Clifford Geertz as ‘writing culture.’<sup>1</sup> Its implementation depends on writing field notes; an essential occasion in which the researcher creates jottings (brief texts) based on firsthand (lived) experience while amongst the study group. *Field Notes* is an alternative approach to written jottings whereby the author uses methodologies related to drawing and casting to achieve a more subjective understanding of a people and their rituals regarding the labor of food production. The purpose of this work is to evoke a view of the world in which cultural alternatives can be measured against one another in the realm of our collective imagination. In short, it’s making an indication of something not yet apparent. These works, in part, are a biographical recall of ordinary occurrences surrounding the family farm unit. However, like that of Anselm Kiefer’s layers of multiple histories and media (*Exodus*, 1985)<sup>2</sup> or Gerhard Richter’s Elbe series (1957)<sup>3</sup> and its inherent knowing as a matter of making, *Field Notes* is neither planned nor conceived but is a speculative source of enlightenment achieved through making and re-making surface and substrate.

This emerging body of work, developed within the adjoining drying bins of a defunct seed drying facility, involves working petroleum ink across veneer plywood and assembling found farm detritus on top. Each work is evidence of the labor of working land, what is left behind, what is absorbed, and what is furrowed by gesture. It is part of a collection of socio-cultural observations that employs lithography ink and labor’s leftovers — wind worn debri (burlap sack, spent tire and galvanized metal ladder) on large (4 x 8 feet) sheets of maple veneer plywood and building felt. The subsequent surface becomes under tension from the imbalanced forces at the liquid-air interface and corresponding debri field. Thus, *Field Notes* is a 1:1 register of the ground out there, a reenactment or embodiment of the processes of mental and physical exertion involved in working the land (ground), and a fragment through which we might perceive both ground and labour. This series of works makes visible what time tends to obscure or obliterate.



**When the world of clear and articulate objects is abolished, our perceptual being, cut off from its world, evolves a spatiality without images. This is what happens in the night. Night is not an object for me; it enwraps me and infiltrates through all my senses. I am no longer withdrawn into my perceptual look-out from which I watch the outlines of objects moving by at a distance. Night has no outlines; it is itself in contact with me...**<sup>4</sup>

When thinking about labour and being, I am drawn to the logic of Merleau-Ponty and his central thesis in which he refers to as the “primacy of perception” whereby we perceive the world through our bodies; we are embodied subjects. In the field of design, where realization seems to employ decisions that derive from utility and rejoin obligations of the world of aesthetics, the act of making surfaceworks provides an intersession during which revelations particular to what constitutes being are formed. In this engagement, we enter into a dialogue with the humanity of place, an intercourse with time, deep time, and thus, we are immersed in the visual and perceptual challenges of the inherited landscape and its cultural educe. This second type of surfacework, commonly referred as ‘installation art’, began by reconsidering the nature of an internal space within the seed dryer formerly referred to as the plenum. Each inquiry is part of a process by which the perceptual experience of being “in here” while being “out there” is revealed.

Black Contemporary serves as an experiential laboratory for ongoing investigations intended to provoke a temporal-spatial encounter and reconciliation of the simultaneous and complex nature of cerebral and corporeal experience within the Midwestern realm of labor and its associated landscape. Based on a series of modulated experimental actions, each installation is driven by the nascent possibility of a persistent desire to intercourse with existing material surrounds pursuant a philosophical position that leverages perceptual notions of chiaroscuro in the practice of generating and understanding a set of spatial valence within the material culture of a post-industrial seed-drying site.

The dimensional nature of Iowa’s agricultural landscape is not immediately discernable. This can be attributed to the absence of an outline of objects seen against the line at which the sky and earth appear to meet in the case of its physical dimension. In the case of its cultural dimension, this is likely attributed to the intrinsic relationship (both symbolically and ethically) between the family farm unit and the expansive ground plane in which it operates. It is an extent, both physically and culturally, that becomes present and knowable (only) through the first-person dimension, an experiential unit of measure commonly referred to as time.

*The Map*, a site-adjusted installation, is an experimental terrain. It situates material from another post-industrial site to this one. It locates and relocates the viewer. It unfolds a history and the dimension of being within and outside of equally. It is

mistaken, misunderstood and misaligned. It makes architecture by conflating realities, geographies and topographies. It folds contingent constructs and agencies. It maps its guest to specific geographic, historical and personal conditions. It has to do with surveying realms that are yet to be understood. And this is what the assembly does: it, like a map, “constructs.”

**The map does not reproduce the real but constructs one, it connects, it is open, multiple and reworkable. The map, that is, is never a finished product but remains a multiple open work, which inevitably refers to something that is both internal and external to it — a referent that is not represented but produced.**<sup>5</sup>

Within is a new type of envelope that consists of sheet lead harvested from a 1924 printing warehouse in Des Moines, Iowa. Originally a shower liner, the heavy metal has been suspended within the entrance hall sharing proximity with the slab on grade. The varied deformation of its topographic surface is incident with the southern light, which creeps in over the course of the day. The work consists of two halves, bisected for the sake of removal from its original host space, that have been rejoined and overlapped. It no longer is a single continuum but rather a multi-layered terrain of otherness similar to the landscape ‘out there.’

Under this polyvalent methodology, the surfaceworks — or, more broadly, the ambient configurations — are not what occupies the silo, but what is completely enveloped by the limited source of daylight and surrounding darkness. In other words, the restricted view of the associated componentry yields what James Corner refers to as an eidetic operation, whereby the occupant forges their own unusually vivid image of a working community — a landscape as an occupied milieu, the effects and significance which accrue through use and engagement over time.<sup>6</sup> In this way, the perceptual experience of the work forges a return to the solitary, contemplative experience and induces an ontological awareness with respect to what is known, consciously and subconsciously, regarding farm culture and the inherited landscape.

To this end, the act of reconstructing our engagement with forgotten spaces assists in cultivating surfacework as a practice of making and thinking. It is a subconscious engagement whereby we become immersed in the world and do not succeed in distancing ourselves from it in order to achieve a consciousness of the world. It is an embodiment of chiaroscuro: a pictorial practice of arranging light (the conscious) and shadow (the subconscious) to reveal the smooth emptiness of fragmented time, and thereby, mine its capacity to summon the subconscious and reoccupy the land “out there” as a dimension of life entwined with being “in here,” a part of our ongoing perceptual experience. We, now embodied subjects, are confronted with the soft luster of an inactive landscape and its consequent expansive austerity.

Imbricated in the web of labor and survival, each surfacework implicates the occupant in a criterion of atmospheric

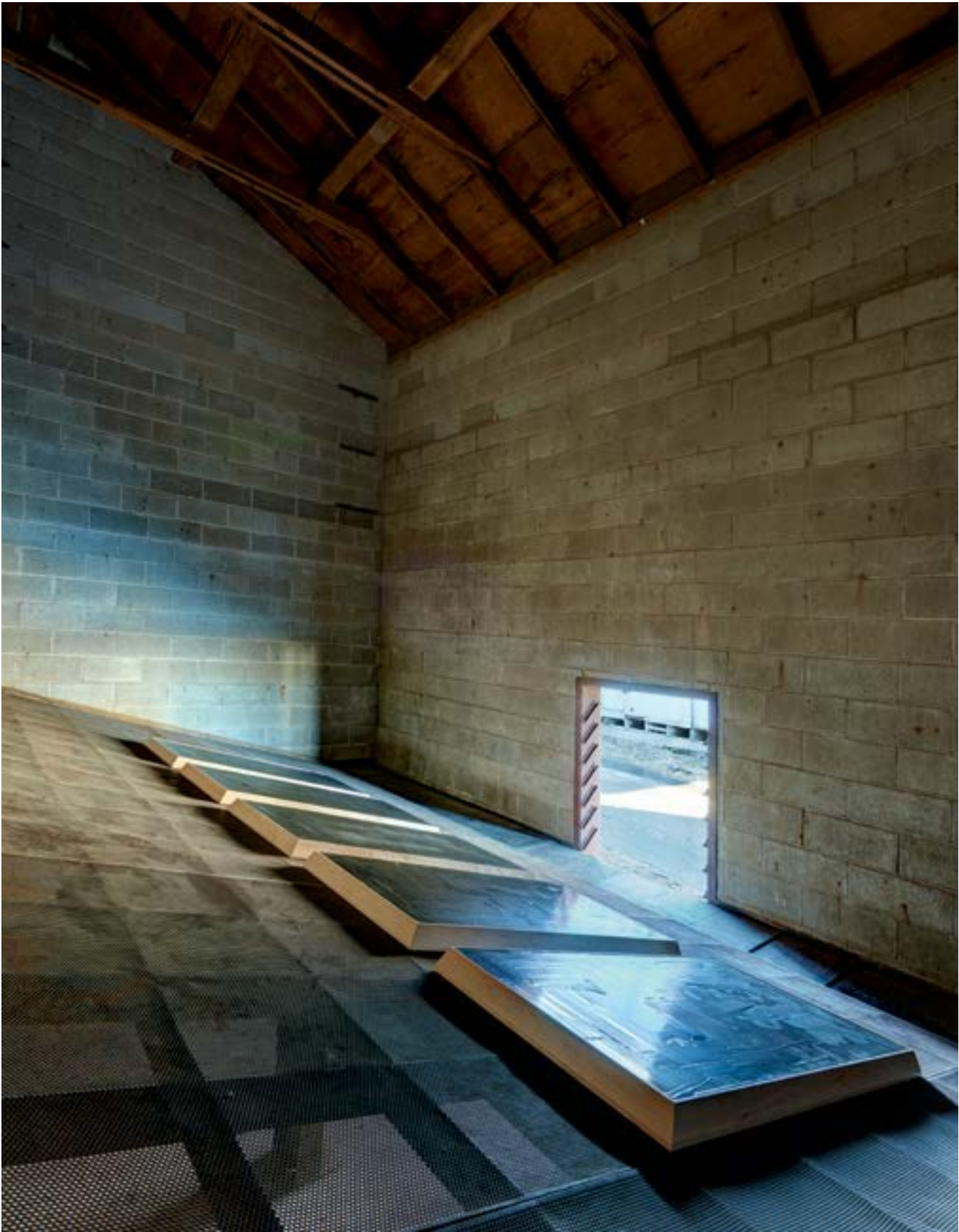
experience situated between host confine and guest subject. As our perceptual being sifts through the milieu of surface and componentry in the dimensionless distance between host and construct, we might recall the blue cup to which Gernot Böhme refers:

**This colour is something which the cup “has.” In addition to its blueness we can ask whether such a cup exists. Its existence is then determined through localization in space and time. The blueness of the cup, however, can be thought of in quite another way, namely as the way, or better, a way, in which the cup is then thought of not as something which is restricted in some way to the cup and adheres to it, but on the contrary as something which radiates out to the environment of the cup, colouring or “tincturing” in a certain way this environment, as Jakob Böhme would say. In this way, the thing is not thought of in terms of its difference from other things, its separation and unity, but in the ways in which it goes forth from itself...It should not cause difficulty to think of colours, smells, and how a thing is tuned as ecstasies.**<sup>7</sup>

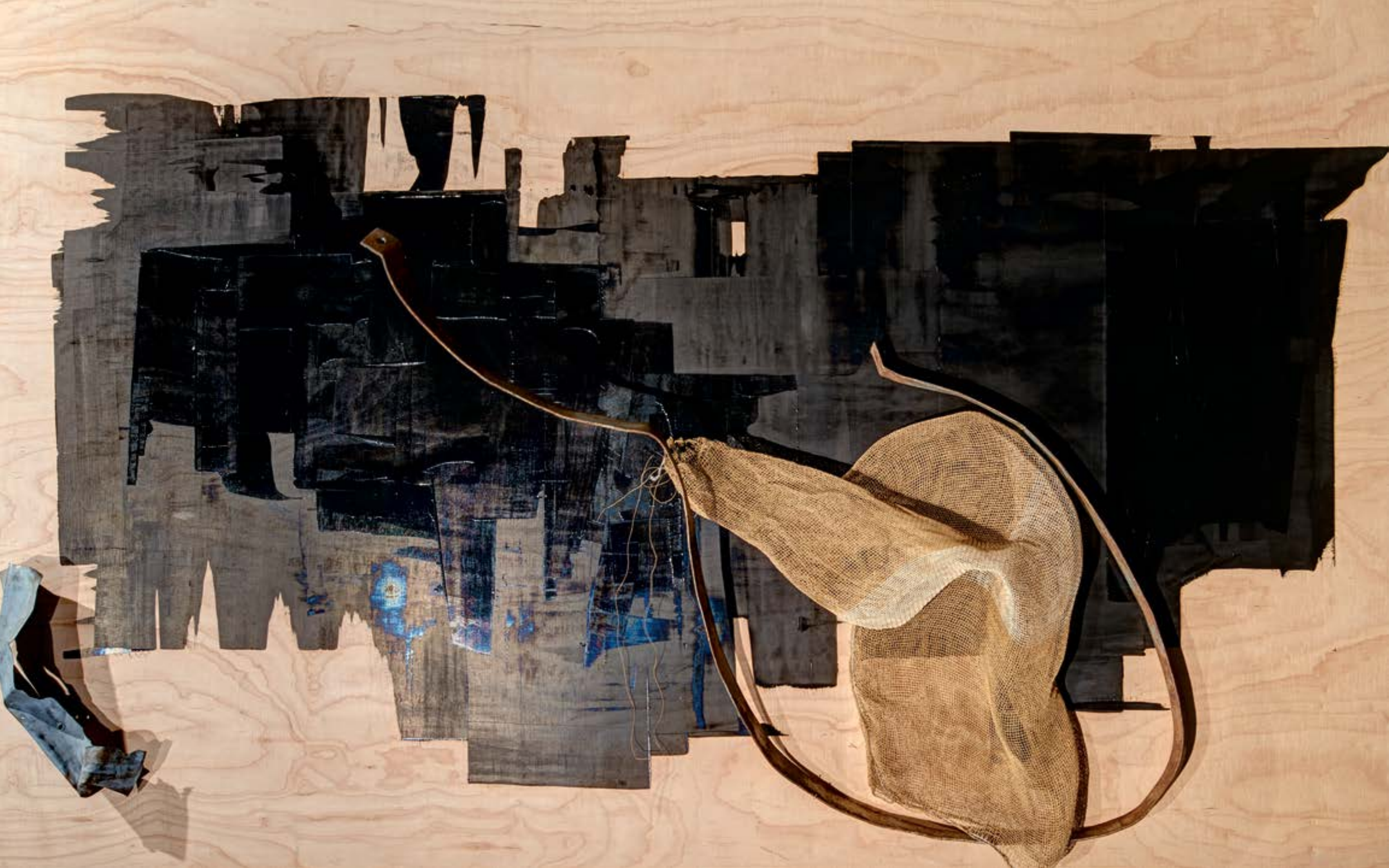
We submit — laying down our perceptual being before the oncoming blueness of the post-industrial freight train and are extinguished. An audible latency (out there) moves in (here).

Standing naked, we embody the cold, concrete darkness of the past with a relative capacity to unite or react or interact with the soft luster of the inherited landscape. A perpetual wind continues to sift and howl through the open ground surrounding Black Contemporary (geographical coordinates: 41°98', 93°64'). A constant banging reverberates throughout as the wind pries at the sloughing metal skin of its neighboring confines. The pain of hunger and longing grow distant. There is a heaviness to these sensations that drowns the flesh and bone in the physicality of its surround. With prolonged periods of such ordinary madness, the conscience drifts. The wind lulls and we are gone from our desire for reciprocal love and meaningful labor. Imagination and self-esteem give way and tumble along the earth's surface. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 60–65 | COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL

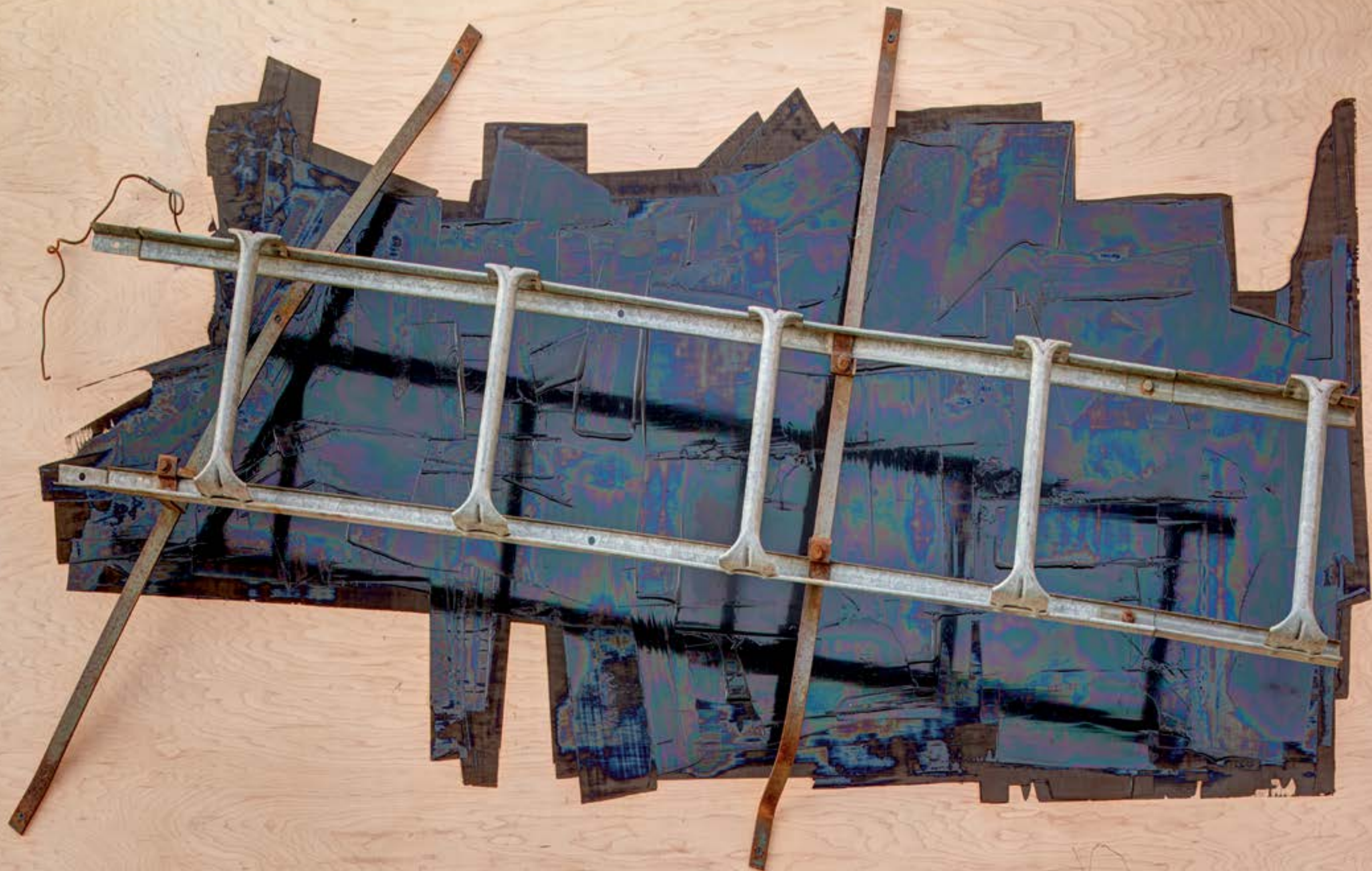
1 James Clifford and George E. Marcus (editors), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, (University of California Press, 1986), p. 73.  
2 Anselm Kiefer, *Exodus*, 1985 (lead and shellac on charred photographic paper on board), Des Moines Art Center.  
3 Elbe Series, 1957, (mono-prints), museum unknown.  
4 M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978). P. 283.  
5 Teresa Stoppani, *Mapping: the locus of the project*, (Angelaki Journal of Theoretical Humanities, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2004), p. 186.  
6 James Corner, *Operational Eidetics: Forging New Landscapes*, (Harvard Design Magazine, Fall 1998), p. 24.  
7 Gernot Böhme, *Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetic* (Thesis Eleven, No. 36, 1993), p. 121.

























shreen





# SHEEN

PETER P. GOCHÉ

Drawing is an emancipatory practice in which one is set free from legal, social or political restrictions; liberation. It is an immersive act, which I refer to as a sentient-based labor. Operating beyond the two-dimensional plane and sourcing derelict materials as medium, the consequent body of work yields an incomplete set of 1:1 drawing assemblies with the relative capacity to unite or react or interact with the latent dimesions of our collective inherited landscape. Utilizing a range of domains as a means of exploring not only the tangible but the intangible nature of such material cultivations, the work is based on a series of modulated experimental actions (material modalities). Each work is driven by the nascent possibility of a persistent desire to intercourse with existing material surrounds pursuant to a philosophical position that leverages perceptual notions of chiaroscuro — the disposition of light and dark. By extension, the conscious and unconscious, the seen and the unseen, focus and open awareness, and the made unmade as factors in the realm of understanding and producing space. It is a full-scale, three-dimensional methodology conducted parallel to meditative and photographic documentation as a means to explore its affects (immaterial harmonics). The drawing project, as a perceptual practice, facilitates this philosophical operation through a creative sequence that seeks to both reveal and erase. It is a monastic venture whereby the host cultural criterion, crippled by an insatiable desire to consume, is constrained or restricted.

PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 60–65 | COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL









# blue sacramental





# SACRAMENTAL BLUE

PETER P. GOCHÉ

“To see, to perceive, is more than to recognize. It does not identify something present in terms of a past disconnected from it. The past is carried into the present so as to expand and deepen the content of the latter.”

JOHN DEWEY, *ART AS EXPERIENCE*

Blue jeans have been a cultural symbol of American life for the last 140 years. Originally developed in 1871, denim jeans were patented by Jacob W. Davis and Levi Strauss as sturdy pants that could withstand hard work. The Levi Strauss brand, along with various knock-offs, continue to be worn as symbols of disobedience and ultimately as a fashion item.

In January 2018, I discovered and was given 750 lbs of denim pants patterns. The set of templates are the original production patterns for denim pants by Wrangler, Gap and Levi Strauss jeans. The body of work, hung amass in the bin of a dormant seed-drying facility, when put into motion (swinging within the bin) represents an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace. This set of heavy paper patterns were used as templates for the mass production of denim trousers. Within their new setting (1979 seed dryer), the relationship of the container and content is blurred as a matter of being joined in their respective chronological time frame.

Since space is typically understood as anterior to its alleged parts, we are confronted with a drawing mass that predates its new, albeit similarly dated, container. In such an experience, we are provided the ability to see their connection as stated by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in the following:

**Space is not the setting (real or logical) in which things are arranged, but the means whereby the position of things become possible. This means that instead of imagining it as a sort of ether in which all things float, or conceiving it abstractly as a characteristic that they have in common, we must think of it as the universal power enabling them to be connected.**

Thus, I argue that the body of work as described by Merleau-Ponty should not be confused with a particular material. It refers to the body-subject, which is intentionally connected to the world. The body-subject orients its occupant to the world and delineates the world to itself. It becomes a physical and material set of things relating to or affecting the human spirit. Looking in from a single steel door aperture, *Sacramental Blue* operates on our perception of being in the world as a suspended existence of subject and subjectivity that, as a set of drawings, implicates the human figure.

PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 63–71 | COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL









insideoute





# INSIDEOUTE: ERASURE, LINE AND ATMOSPHERE

PETER P. GOCHÉ

In the field of design, in which realization seems to employ decisions that derive from utility, and rejoin obligations of the world of aesthetics, the act of drawing provides an intersession during which revelations particular to ‘what constitutes the experience’ are formed. In this engagement we enter into a dialogue with the humanity of place, an intercourse with time, deep time, and thus, are immersed in the visual and perceptual challenges of the inherited items of experience and, consequently, its cultural educe. The ordinary quality of this type of material surround yields a deeply reflective engagement that assists in maintaining atmospheric wakefulness.

Black Contemporary is an experiential drawing laboratory whereby ongoing investigations are conducted in effort to expand our knowledge specific to the study of atmospheric logics and the Midwestern agricultural landscape. The laboratory is located two miles south of Ames, Iowa. Using experiential perceptions as spatial conditioners, current studio projects focus on the act of making and curating a series of drawing assemblies located within a dormant set of seed drying facilities and the consequent accumulated debris fields within and surrounding the farm court. Based on a series of modulated experimental actions, the foundational body of work provides a material/immaterial reflection on the contemporary social configuration of the post-industrial landscape of Iowa. This work might best be understood as a peculiar deposit of site-adjusted drawing assemblies that indicate the presence of, and makes clearly recognizable, its context as referent rather than source or setting.

Each inquiry is part of a process by which the cultural history and perceptual experience of a particular setting is revealed. The resultant drawings yield, what Grant Wood depicts in his mural *When Tillage Begins Other Arts Follow* (painted in 1934), the foundation for subsequent forms of human civilization specific to labor and an intensely modulated means of production. The cumulative effort cited here might indicate the potential use of this set of facilities, and all of Iowa’s derelict agricultural facilities, as laboratory inasmuch as it provides a controlled environment conducive to conducting a series of sustained observations.

One such drawing, *InsideOute*, is situated on this defunct seed farm against a wall of derelict lumber. As an archive, it defines a condensed space for sustained observation, seminar discussions and holdings specific to Iowa’s agricultural crisis. The experimental assembly seeks to explore the material and immaterial makeup of the leftover hardwood ground matt and steel ties recently salvaged from the Dakota Access (Bakken crude oil) Pipeline Project, which passes within one mile of the site. The accumulated fortress, and thereby attenuated voids within, serve as an archive for collected observations and fillings developed by the various students and scholars invited to the site.

Drawing is an innovative practice that provides architects an emancipated spatial apparatus freed from capitalistic pressures such as, deadline, utility and profitability. Through an immersive act, which I refer to as experiential criticism, this body of work

materializes a 1:1 drawing assembly with a relative capacity to unite or react or interact with the latent dimensions of the inherited landscape — the post-industrial remains of capitalism and Midwestern family farm legacies. Utilizing a range of domains as a means of exploring not only the tangible but the intangible nature of such material cultivations, the work is based on a series of modulated experimental actions (material modalities). *InsideOute* is driven by the nascent possibility of a persistent desire to intercourse with existing material surrounds pursuant to a philosophical position that leverages perceptual notions of chiaroscuro — the disposition of light and dark. By extension, the conscious and unconscious, the seen and the unseen, focus and open awareness on the made/unmade as factors in the realm of understanding and producing space. It is a full-scale, three-dimensional methodology conducted parallel to video projection and photographic documentation as a means to explore its affects (immaterial harmonics). The drawing project, as a perceptual practice, facilitates this philosophical operation through a sequential set of operations that seek to both reveal and erase. Like the lumber pile, it offers an attenuated set of voids — porosity — that serve as spiritual archive for collected experiences and observations developed by those willing to pause and contribute. It is a monastic venture whereby the host cultural criterion, crippled by an insatiable desire to consume (visually and politically), is in turn constrained or restricted.

Teresa Stoppani’s “Material and Critical Lines: Piranesi’s Erasures,” substantively underpins the otherwise delicate nature of our inherited landscape and the consequent production of line in this project. While most artists and architects commonly gravitate toward Stoppani’s earlier work, “Mapping: the locus of the project,” I find a deeper analysis in this recent text that argues erasure as the project. That destruction in fact opens up possibility; it enables the change that Piranesi had advocated as a generative force and defines a more incisive line of inquiry for the current political world in which we live.

**Piranesi’s graphic work goes beyond the documentation of the city past and present, beyond the invention of architectural typologies and the recombination of styles, to produce the visual manifesto of a crucial position in architecture, which challenges also the relationship between architecture and archeology. His lines — meticulously drawn, precisely incised, lightly traced, nervously moving, smudged or erased — transform the copper plate of the etchings into a dynamic critical space that reproduces not only views and fragments of the city in time, but also the changing nature of a never neutral surface. In this process the practice of erasure plays an important role in altering the image and repeatedly modifying its message, as it combines removal with addition, scraping with deposit, a mutable and ideologically invested materiality in which the architectural project is redefined as a process of both making and undoing. With the project of erasure then, what is left to posterity is not only a masterpiece of archeological research,**



**topographical documentation and visual interpretation and celebration of the magnificence of the Roman ruins, but also a polemical graphic statement on the condition of the architectural profession in Piranesi's time: erasure as professional and political manifesto.**<sup>1</sup>

Piranesi's *Imaginary Prisons* depicting scenes in and around Rome is a polyvalent set of revelations that provide a perceptual analysis of one of the oldest continuously occupied sites in Europe—an empire characterized by a government headed by emperors and large territorial holdings around the Mediterranean Sea in Europe, Africa and Asia whose ancient economic systems bear resemblance to North America's current capitalist machine. Using copper plate etching as his primary mechanical method, we are provided an indelible set of marks whose production and destruction yields an intensely illustrious perceptual projection. Such drawing practices seem even more critical in contemporary culture where, given digital means of fabrication and dissemination (social media), unedited proliferations seem the norm. The erasure authored by Piranesi, whose mastery lies in the use of technique and composition, constructs a particular eidetic argument immersed in the fantastical operation of conflating systems of line and erasure. In the case of *InsideOute*, erasure is employed as a means to draw attention to a now invisible, and thereby latent, line in the earth (the buried pipeline), configure a set of spaces absent the typical design intention to satisfy some programmatic utility (to perform a systematic erasure of patron or client), and to put forth a drawing assembly in such a way as to allow its material sheen to pale over time by exposure to sunlight and precipitation. As with Piranesi's work, *InsideOute* leaves a controversial graphic measure specific to the politics of ecologically sensitive lines drawn (such as the Dakota Access Pipeline) and the architectural discipline's professional claim to draw in-the-service-of.

**Atmospheres are not necessarily a consequence of conscious design intention; the pleasurable atmospheres of vernacular settings are usually unintentional consequences of specific traditional building practices. Even the multifarious and diffuse components of weather create distinct emotive states and moods at a glance. It is also evident that the experience of weather has a diffuse and peripheral character, instead of consisting of focused images with clear boundaries or gestalt.**<sup>2</sup>

Deploying CAD software to survey and document potential spatial configurations, the construction methodology of this archive is latently informed by the tectonic nature of its host farm building vernacular and associated spatial configurations. The platform assembly is constructed using a grade beam methodology whereby the 3/4-inch thick Douglas fir plywood flooring is set level on a series of 4x6-inch white oak grade beams, which have been cut into the earth and leveled with gravel and sand beneath.

The flooring and framing plates were shaped using a computer numerical control router to achieve a digital-to-spatial extrusion. The wall assembly stands 8-feet high throughout using 3/4 inch thick Douglas fir plywood on an open frame armature. The interiority of this new drawn line is a smooth continuous surface that meanders close to and away from the pile's voluminous broken edge.

The (in)tangible aspect of the line's materiality plays a crucial role with respect to the edge of the lumber pile due to weathering—sun bleach, moisture invasion and earth wicking. Such change in sheen implicates an incredibly subtle drama specific to the Midwestern post-industrial scene. Such deterioration yields a value shift that tends toward chromatic decline—a type of drawing deficiency, which David Leatherbarrow refers to as “that which shows what otherwise hides itself—the nature of time. Here, in maturation, the drawing neither refuses nor is driven by the context, but fashions its own revelation according to its reconciliatory labour.”<sup>3</sup> The contemporary methods of producing such a drawing assembly (digital files, CNC shapes and flat-pack construction techniques) are, by the passing of time and consequent vernacular patina, made not evident. The use of a digital means of fabrication assists in the development of the drawing assembly but is not a substitute for its innovation. Drawing innovation in architecture relies, not on new technologies alone, but on embodied practice centered on the individual and collective imagination though analogue practices and capable of synthesizing deployment of handed down traditions concurrent with new technological methods and non-traditional drawing methodologies at experimental scales with a variety of sensorial media.

**A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus, space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities.**<sup>4</sup>

The consequent series of spaces for this drawing assembly serve as venue for field talks authored by disparate agents and contributors. Collaboratively, we seek to assist each other in disseminating our domain of knowledge, and thereby collective realm of experience, through sincere engagement in the rural scene using applied technologies. By leveraging new digital languages and communication media as provocations within the traditional stead of the family farm unit, we hope to cultivate a discourse that deals head on with the complex intersection of materiality and immateriality as understood from the inside out.

The series of spaces (gallery, sky room and earth room) continue to serve as venue for seminars. Disparate agents and collaborators author the drawings occupancies—using the archive for unfettered, experimental practices and performances. We collaboratively assist each other, and the public at large, in expanding our domain of knowledge and thereby collective realm of



experience through sincere engagement in our local material culture. By leveraging our individual works as provocations within, we hope to cultivate a discourse that deals head on with the complex intersection of politics, atmospheres and humanity as understood from without.

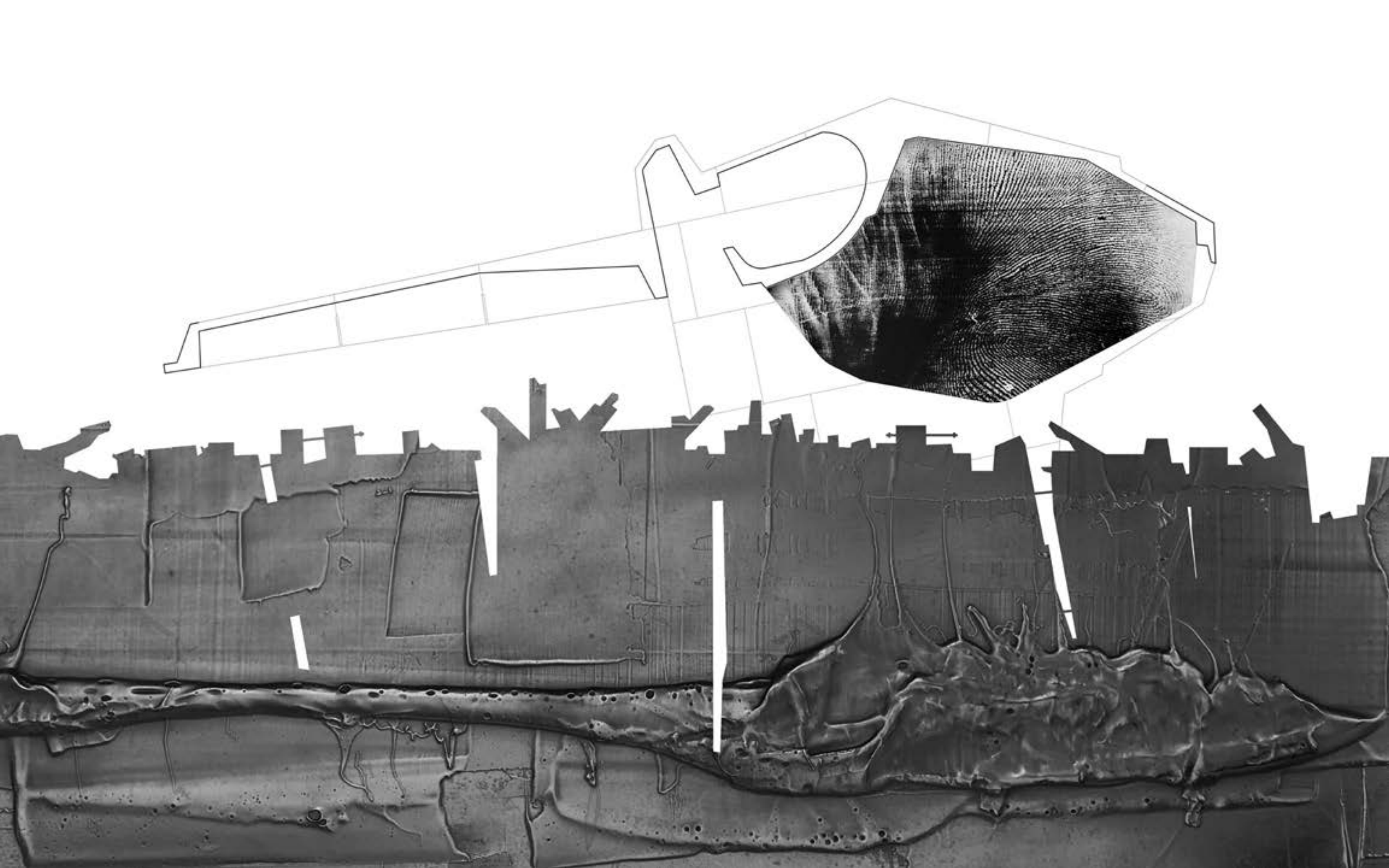
Erasure, line and atmosphere are fundamental aspects of drawing the tangible in an effort to bring about the intangible. The articulation of such elements yields an emancipated spatial apparatus, which I refer to as the drawing assembly. Such measured observations conducted from the inside out produce an acute consciousness of that which exists above, on or, in fact, buried below the earth's surface, not as pictorial analysis, but rather as inherent knowledge particular to the post-industrial territories. As identified by James Corner, in his 1998 essay "Operational Eidetics: Forging New Landscapes," drawings concerning the landscape should comprise a fuller, more synaesthetic range of knowledge, concentrated on how things work, how they go together, and how the project makes sense gives priority to the working of inhabited milieus rather than to the formalization of scenic landscapes.<sup>5</sup> The drawing assembly, then, must be understood as never complete or whole — the scale at which it is deployed not limited. It, as an embodied practice, represents a material excavation that, in truth, seeks to reveal the very intangible/immaterial contextual realm. Thus, the drawing assembly lies fallow — a continuously drafted line left uncultivated and incomplete. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 72–89 |

COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL    DRAWING | PETER P. GOCHÉ

1 Teresa Stoppani, "Material and Critical Lines: Piranesi's Erasures." *In Mobility of the Line*, edited by Ivana Wingham (Basel: Birkhauser Verlag GmbH, 2013), 236.  
2 Juhani Pallasmaa, "Atmosphere as Place." *The Intelligence of Place — Topographies and Poetics* edited by Jeff Malpas (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 4.  
3 David Leatherbarrow, "On Architectural Representation," *Harvard Design Magazine* (Fall 1998): 51.  
4 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117.  
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perforated  
horizon





# PERFORATED HORIZON

PETER P. GOCHÉ

Air occupies the dimension between the earth and sky. When considering the nature of our astrological domain, we might recall its make-up—the troposphere, the stratosphere, the mesosphere, the thermosphere and the exosphere. Within each of these regions of the atmosphere, there ceases to be properties of a continuous medium. It is this specific reductive aspect that prompts us, like our great ancestors, to imagine this as the arena for speculation and meaningful labor.

A still line where the earth meets the sky is present everywhere at the same time. This line contains a series of defunct farmsteads born out of utilitarian labor ethics. This set of weathered referents, and surrounding rural landscape, remains the cultural center of Iowa. It is a convergent condition of interiority whereby a rigorously systematic Jeffersonian grid facilitates a uniform distribution of space and boundary. Within, we find a specific volumetric condition of measure of capacity rather than form amidst an architectural set of containers (silos, cribs and bins) that serve as a condenser, where acres of harvested seed are dried and stored. Such conditions of cultivation and labor ethic have conspired in the development of an architectural typology that has no figure ground; it is a product of its environment and practices. This set of buildings has been engineered to resist or work with the wind and gravity within a precise spatial politic that, when developed, from 1910–1930, supported 217,044 farm units owned operated by the resident family. The consequent mise-en-scène has gone through an entire stage shift, whereby more successful farmers bought out less successful farms yielding an organization referred to today as corporate farming. This type of farming has resulted in the family farm unit and all its antiquated facilities vacant due to a shift in the scales of economy.

Built in 1929, the metal granary manufactured by The Martin Steel Products in Mansfield, Ohio, is located ¼ mile west of Napier, Iowa. Diffuse in structural order and array of apertures, the space is unpredictable in its sensorial effects. The climatic conditions of this service-less facility offered a potent site for the creation of atmospheres and affects. The goal here is to act on such circumstances with sincere sensitivity and in collaboration with the extant building’s past and material presence in effort to conceive of a new occupation by which we might intensify its environmental scale and complexity and thereby re-occupy and meticulously inter-connect it and ourselves with its contemporary cultural context.

The architectural intent is to preserve the historic building envelope and maintain the authenticity and atmospheric quality of this particular space by retaining its typological features—concrete auger trench and floors, mono-skin perforated corrugated galvanized steel walls, and exposed structural steel. Into this configuration was installed a tabernacle and ascent. The tabernacle is situated overhead the lower landing of the stair assembly and consists of a shaped cedar wood mantel, piano tuning pins and cast aluminum bladder in which to store grain. The ascent is a suspended 24-inch wide 7-gauge steel plate stair assembly aligned with the concrete

auger trench and the existing structural steel framing, which leads to a single aperture to obtain a discrete view of the moon and outer space. In addition to serving as an elevated observation platform by which to view the celestial scene, the ascent provides an elevated set of seats where one might be positioned in an effort to see the horizon through the perforated metal skin. Constructed in the same vain as the host building, the stair consists of a series of parts, which are self-structuring and suspended from the existing steel frame and truss system. The dimensional relationship of the body to the building skin changes as a matter of ascending or descending the precarious stair assembly.

The nature of this particular atmospheric condition shares logic with aspects of Gernot Böhme’s “Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetics” in that the condition of a particular space is contingent on that which emanates from that which has been added (tabernacle and ascent) and intercourses with the entire ingredient material ensemble. Time is, thus, made present through a calibrated fiddling with material and space in effort to bring about awareness of a potent envelope of densely arranged apertures that provoke an experience of mystic self-transcendence.

The work developed here is a conscious insertion intended to provide full access to the volumetric conditions of the granary. The metaphysical dimension of the space is embodied by the occupant and thus calibrated as a measure of light, air and acoustic dynamics made present by the perforated envelope and seasonal changes. With each subsequent visit the occupant enters the world anew as a meditative being. Through such perceptual observations was provided acute awareness of the buildings ethical, ecological and political context through a highly focused encounter with the associated atmospheric changes. In this momentary realization we are given cause to wonder about the earth, the sky and outer space. The commonplace aspects of the contemporary landscape can teach us a great deal not only about American history and American society but about ourselves and how we relate to the world. It is a matter of perception —learning how to see.

Despite its relative size and autonomy, the volumetric capacity of this granary exceeds the 80 acres of corn yield it initially contained. The geographic vastness to which this granary belongs might more directly be perceived as that which belongs to the granary. The project is an exploration of material and immaterial practices specific to preservation via installation and performance as fundamental means of knowing and occupying the post-industrial context of Iowa’s agricultural scene. Pursuant to this focus, a performance, *Guardian Spectacular: A Peaceable Kingdom*, was developed in situ by Daniel T. Gaitor-Lomack in collaboration with the author. The production featured Gaitor-Lomack performing in the interior and exterior spaces, while the author atones the tabernacle and ascent with the incessant ringing of a cow bell. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 90–95 | COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL | PAGES 96 –103 FARSHID ASSASSI





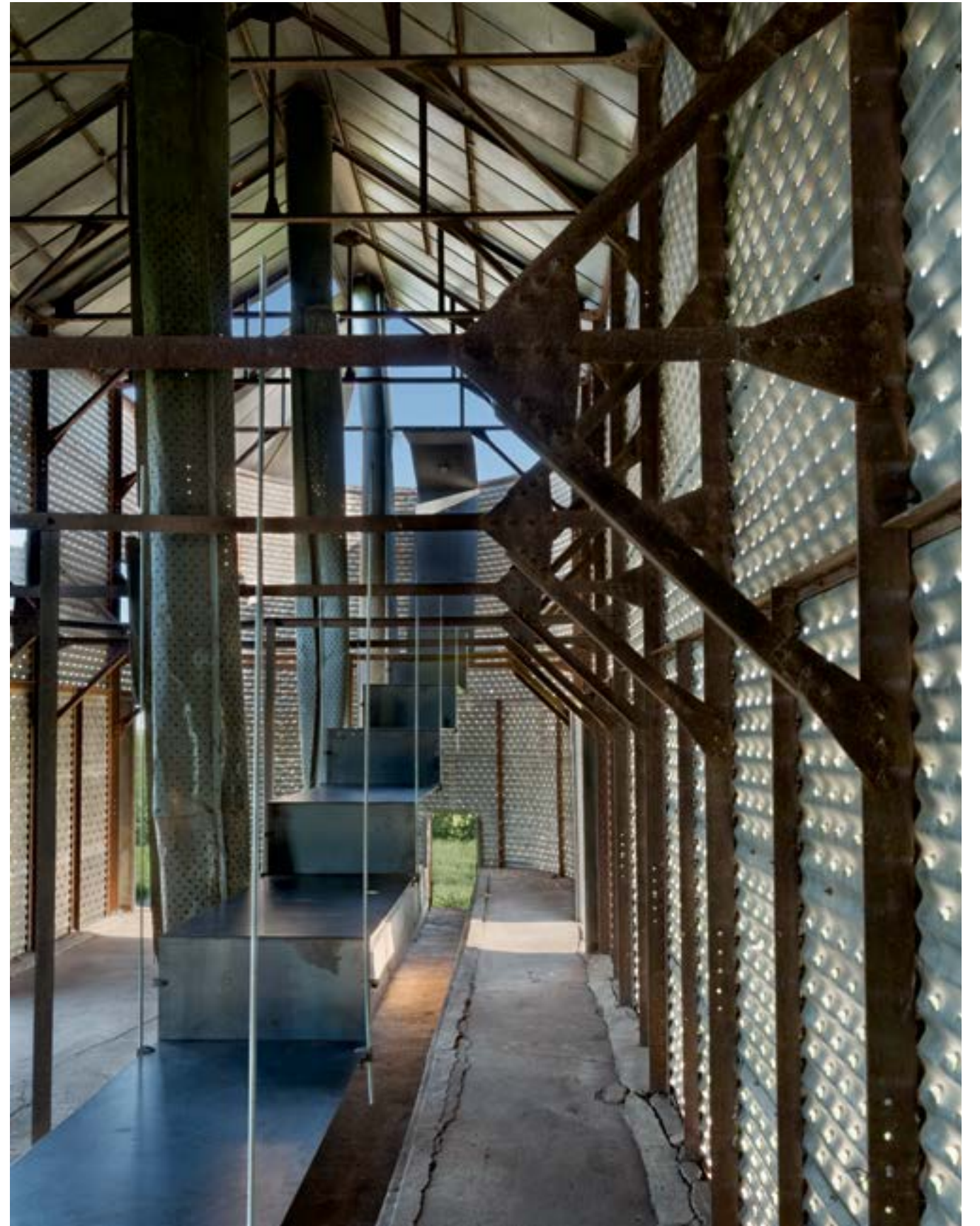




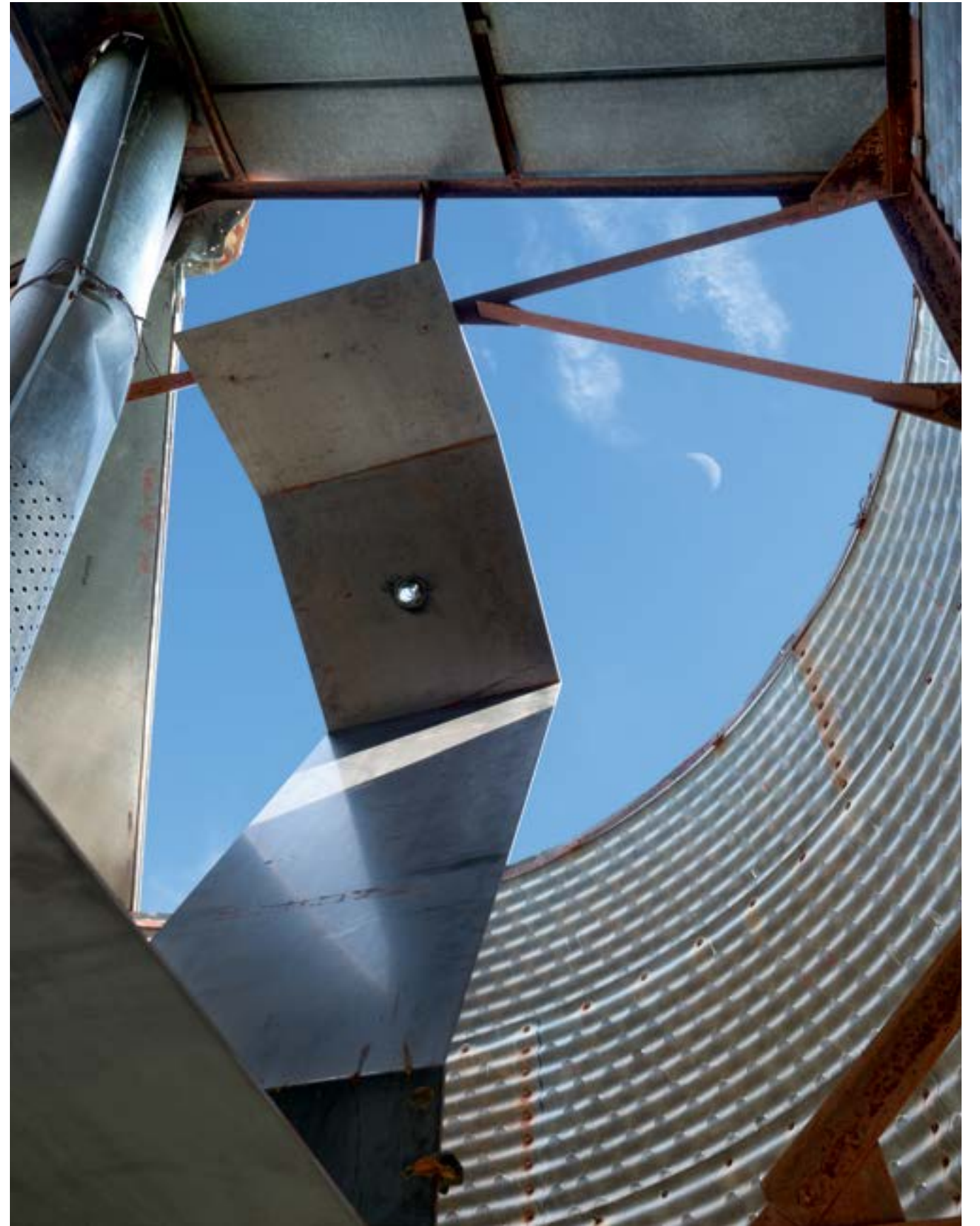
















scavi



# SCAVI: LE VOLUME DE CREVASSE

PETER P. GOCHÉ

*Scavi: le volume de crevasse*, a large-scale installation, was recently developed in the COVID-19 quarantine period. It addresses the makeup of the leftover hardwood ground mat salvaged from the Dakota Access Pipeline project, which passes inside a half mile of the project site. Addressing the environmental crisis and the covert way the petroleum line was installed, the work sought to inversely cope with such infrastructural aggression by producing a silver-gilded reflection chamber within a crevasse of the lumber pile. This was an effort to venerate the diverse geographies, biotic systems and cultures affected by such subterfuge deployed by the United State government. In this way, the work is developed as “a drawing” by constructing and embellishing a set of situational lines and marks intended to reveal the profound material and cultural nature of the spatial operations. It functions to point to something that matters but is not itself matter. The new set of lines envelops the in-between and aims to illuminate the world by giving it heat, vitality, sense, force, light, and growth, trying to fathom its territories and multiplicities.<sup>1</sup>

Articulated by a mass of heavy timber end cuts measuring roughly 3 feet wide and 24 feet long the crevasse has an irregular depth that rises 5 feet and falls 7 feet with respect to the entry rampart. Spanning the void overhead is a new galvanized steel rod assembly, consists of 1/2 inch diameter conduit pipe and a pair of 3 inch by 3 inch steel support angles. The axial dimension of the interior is aligned east-west. The timber end cuts define a broken line on the south edge and maintains a relatively vertical arrangement, while the opposite timber tapers off to the north as it rises to the top. The foil tape treatment addresses the north run embankment of timber.

The relationship between the material makeup and sensuous matter points to the volumetric conditions within the configuration. The foil dressing and galvanized steel rod assembly overhead acts as a mirror in that it renders the values of the celestial scene above — drawing an image of the sky into the darkened cavern. This set of reflections, broken by the constituent parts, magnifies the perceptual condition of the volumetric entirety. The image of the world beyond is contained by the mirror reflection. However, it can be thought of in a different, yet concurrent, way as something that radiates out to the environment of the assembly and mingles with the smell of moist humus emanating from the ground below. The interior space becomes a void charged with the accumulation of long-gathered energy.

To see and perceive the geometric depth of space in this case is reliant on the mirror as a gauge — an instrument for measuring the magnitude, amount and contents of the world of our experience. Correspondingly, the mirror quality of the additive components serves as harvester to gather the universe and depict an expansive image of the sky. Thus, *Scavi: le volume de crevasse* operates as a sort of dark viewing station from which a momentary recognition of the world beyond is prefigured. It is the optic culmination of a slow process of realization in time.

We often think of art and architecture as creative processes whereby things are made. We don’t typically think about them as acts of maintenance. The problem, as performance artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles (author of “Manifesto for Maintenance Art 1969”) notes, is that our culture values development, while maintenance “takes all the fucking time.” The only treatment for degeneration is maintenance — fixing deterioration once it becomes evident.

Preparation for *Scavi: le volume de crevasse* dealt, head on, with maintenance as a matter of design draftsmanship rather than as a post-production requirement. The pile of lumber sat dormant in its current location for four years through extreme seasonal shifts and exposure to intense sun and dust. Each timber, in order that the foil tape could be secured, required thorough hand cleaning using a wire brush, steel wool, and scrapers. The significantly deteriorated portions of timber were removed.

As preservation architect and artist, I see maintenance as a means to become familiar with the material and immaterial nature of a particular configuration. This is a critical sequence of the design process whereby the creative response is informed. Concurrent with the maintenance aspect of this project is the physical occupation of the constricted crevasse. Occupying of the void in order to perform the work necessary to complete the process of cleaning required a series of body contortions, which often meant holding a specific pose for long durations while preparing and masking any one of the particular timber ends. With such physicality, one is afforded new ways to see (perceive) the constituent spatial makeup of the crevasse. We learn to see not only using our sense of sight but equally the sense of touch and the ability to balance. It facilitates a physical, philosophical and spiritual approach to what is essentially a practical process of diagnosis and treatment towards a perceptual experience. We are caught up in the world and don’t succeed in extricating ourselves from it in order to achieve consciousness of the world. Thus the sense of being is fueled by wind and thermal dynamics as well as a sensorial engagement of the associated sounds, colors, sheens and arterial voids.

The embodiment of an interior provides awareness. As put forth by Juhani Pallasmaa in *Atmosphere as Place* (2014), the sense of insideness in space or place calls for unfocused, peripheral, enveloping, and enfolding perceptions and interactions of various sense experiences. “The atmosphere is a virtual, experiential and multi-sensory place, which usually has shapeless, undefinable and ephemeral boundaries and experiential qualities.”<sup>2</sup> The spatiality of one’s body, for those who enter the *Scavi*, results in a total awareness of posture in the midst of this alter-sensory state. Our dimensional nature of being conspires with the inherent measure of the compressed space; therefore, the experience is reciprocal being absorbed in the surrounding material *and* its affectual geometry is, too. Through the never-complete design process, the author and guests, are immersed in an ontological chamber of being, or more precisely, becoming.



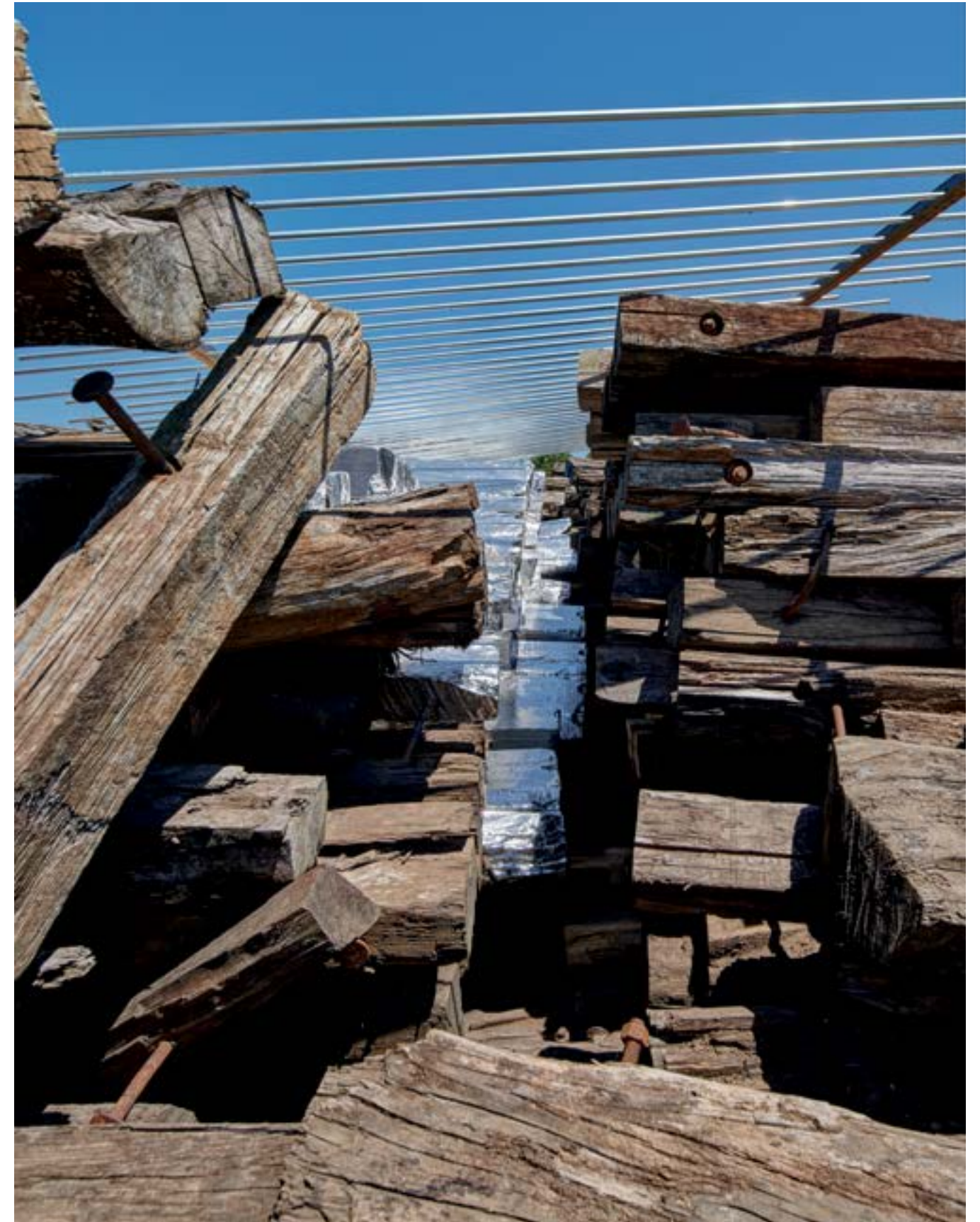
Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities.<sup>3</sup> As identified by James Corner, in his 1998 essay *Operational Eidetics: Forging New Landscapes*, drawings concerning the landscape should comprise a fuller, more synaesthetic, range of knowledge concentrated on how things work, how they go together, and how the project makes sense. It gives priority to the working of inhabited milieus rather than to the formalization of scenic landscapes. Thus, the drawing assembly (*Scavi*) lies fallow — a continuously drafted line left uncultivated and incomplete.

As noted by Andrej Radman in his forthcoming article *Architecture of Immanence*, architecture has mastered metric space — lengths, areas and volumes — all too well. The discipline has yet to come to grips with the notion of intensive space or spatium. The drawing assembly, *Scavi: le volume de crevasse*, is not posited as complete or whole, the scale at which it is deployed not limited. As an embodied practice, it represents a material excavation that seeks to reveal the intangible/immaterial contextual realm. We feel the environment; due to proximity, the environment feels us. We are held in suspense by the celestial world above and its corresponding reflection within. Off in the darkness, beneath the remnant ground mat, our gaze is condemned to wander amidst derelict populations of folks suffering from the novel coronavirus outbreak. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 104–119 | COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL

1 Ivana Wingham, *Mobility of the Line* (Birkhauser Verlag GmbH, Basel, 2013), 11.

2 Juhani Pallasmaa, *Atmosphere as Place* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 3.

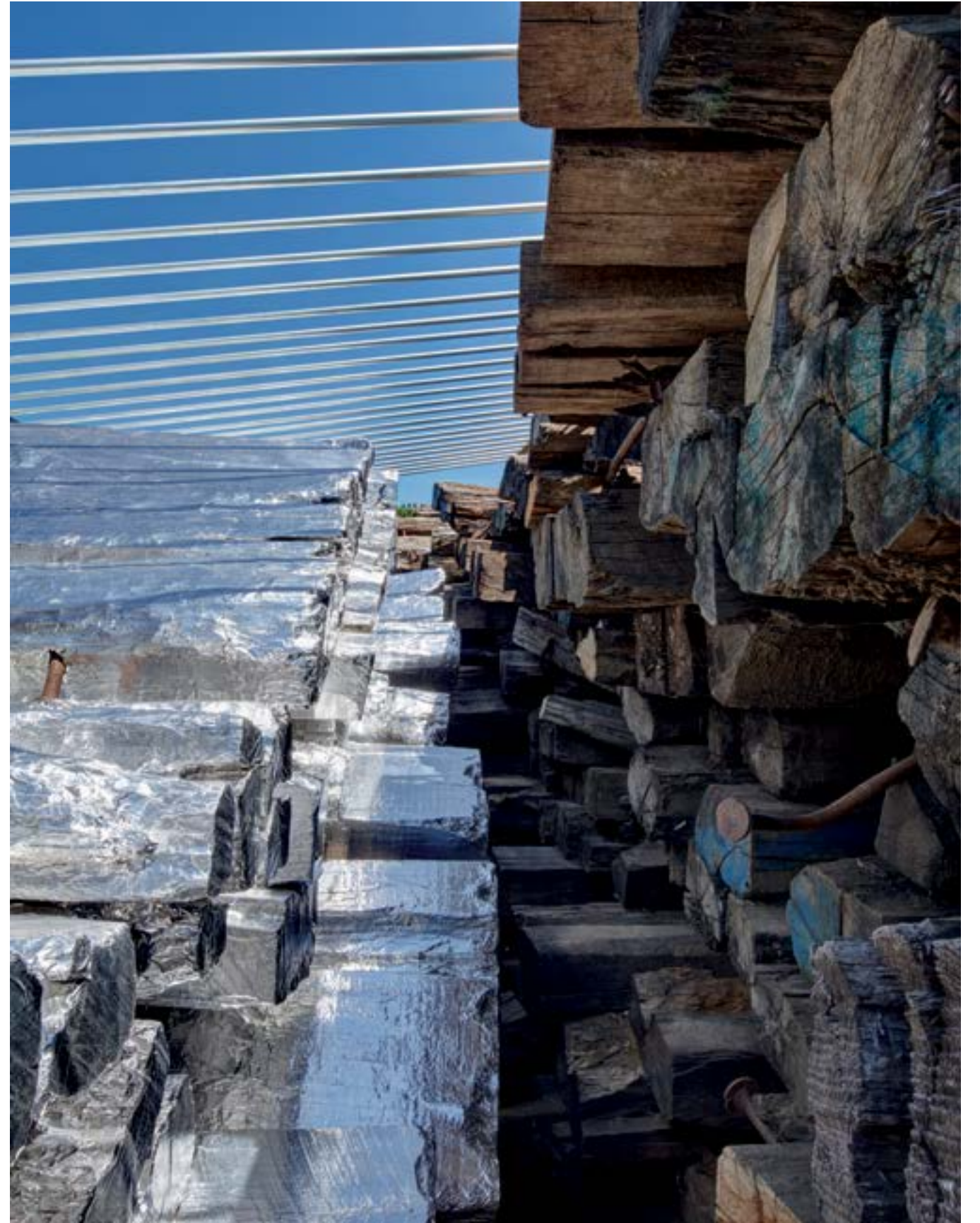
3 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117.



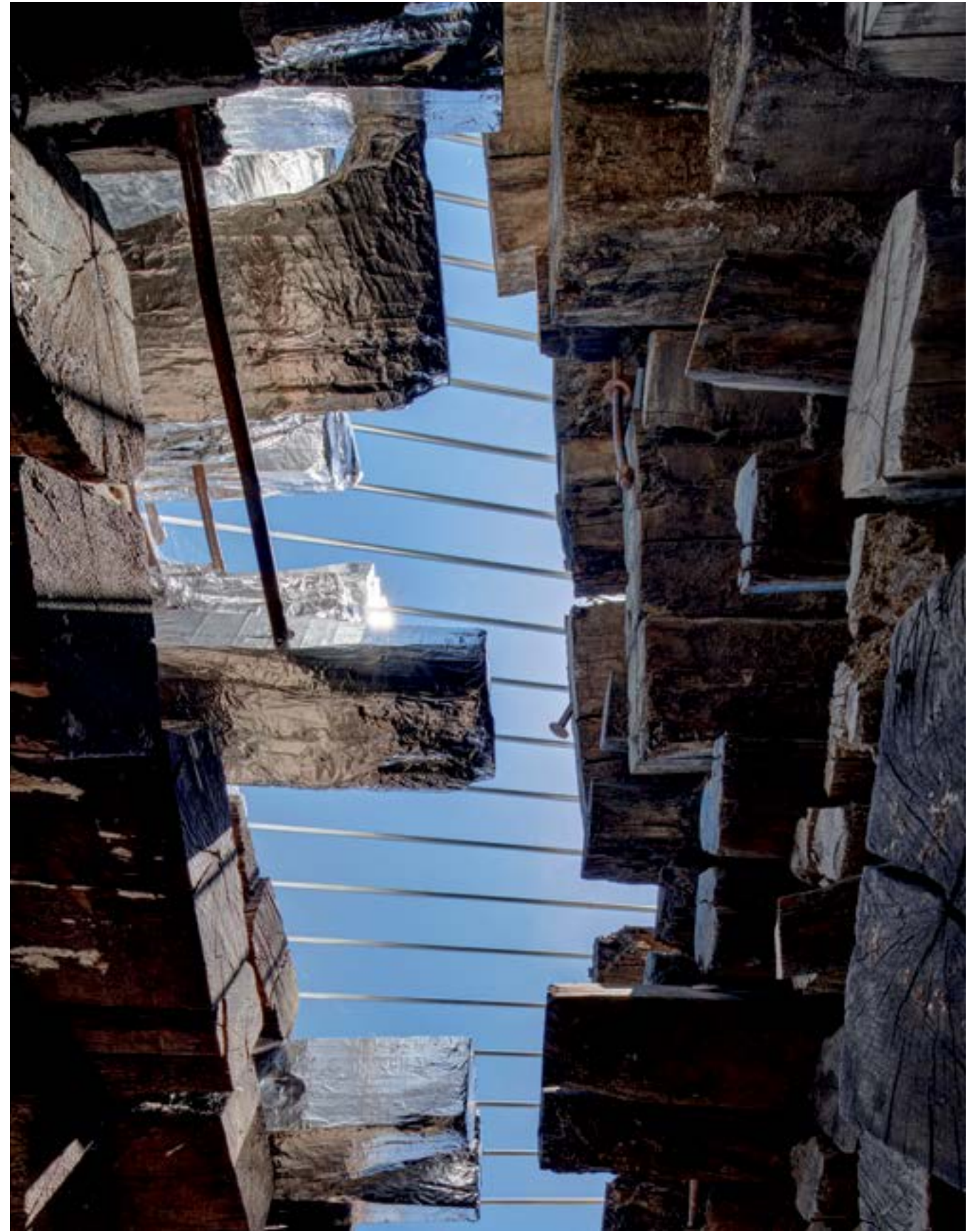






















# drawing atmosphere





# DRAWING ATMOSPHERE

PETER P. GOCHÉ

**Architectural conception and realization usually assume a one-to-one correspondence between the represented idea and the final buildings. Absolute control is essential in our technological world. Although drawings, prints, models, photographs, and computer graphics play diverse roles in the design process, they are regarded most often as necessary surrogate or automatic transcriptions of the built work. However, an invisible perspectival hinge is always at work between these common forms of representation and the world to which they refer.**<sup>1</sup>

In the field of design, where realization seems to employ decisions that derive from utility, and rejoin obligations of the world of aesthetics, the act of drawing provides an intersession during which revelations particular to ‘what constitutes an experience’ are formed. Black Contemporary: world artist archive + experimental galleries was founded in 2012 by Peter P. Goché. It is located just outside of Ames, Iowa, on a defunct seed drying farm and consists of various silos, bins and cribs. This set of rooms serves as incubators for examining provocative agendas within and beyond the discipline of architecture. Using experiential perceptions as spatial conditioners, current studio projects focus on the act of making and curating a series of drawing assemblies, within a dormant set of seed drying facilities and the consequent accumulated debris fields within and around the farm court.

Developed in situ, *Drawing Atmospheres* exhibition and workshop (directed and hosted by Black Contemporary) materialized a series of 1:1 drawing assemblies with a relative capacity to unite or react or interact with the latent dimensions of the inherited landscape—the post-industrial remains of capitalism and the Midwestern family farm legacies. Utilizing a range of domains as a means to explore the tangible and intangible nature of such material cultivations, the consequent creative output is a highly experimental set of drawing speculations based on a series of modulated actions by Catie Newell (Detroit-based architect/artist), Thomas Prinz (Omaha-based architect/artist), Mike Nesbit (Los Angeles-based architect/artist), Daniel Gaitor-Lomack (Los Angeles-based performance artist), and Cameron Campbell (Ames-based architect/photographer).

In all components of this workshop and exhibition, the participants see drawing as an operational assembly technique whereby the authors found/find themselves as occupants in their respective spatial configurations. Here, we might recall Perry Kulper’s notion on ‘relational synthesis’ in “A World Beyond” (*Drawing+Architecture* Volume 83 Issue 5, September/October 2013), an approach to modes of visualization that “create the possibility that ideas and visual registers can coexist, moving between what is known and what might be known.”<sup>2</sup> Deploying traditional modes of making as well as non-conventional experimental operations, the participants of *Drawing Atmospheres* have dispensed with the idea that drawing is merely two-dimensional. They seek to expand the field of drawing methodologies by re-occupying the vernacular landscape of Iowa. Using defunct post-industrial constructs

as the platform and armature from which such drawing expeditions can emanate. They engage in a new visual dialogue aimed at atmospheric agendas that permeate our contemporary culture.

Drawing is an observed set of actions. It is a means to conduct and apply environmental theories of perception and spatial phenomenon to the ordinary and extraordinary conditions of daily life, by thoughtfully considering the contributing aspects of a particular setting that increases the ambient experience of its occupant. Exploration of theories and practices center on drawing as a fundamental means of knowing.

It is our assertion that artists, architects and farmers play a critical role in the production of the seen and unseen —spaces made and re-made. Our team of participants embodies the latent principals and methods of the agricultural setting. As educators, architects and makers, we believe such performative platforms of labor and production play a crucial role in the reoccupation and reconfiguration of the Midwestern landscape. The premise of this program is not to provide answers, but rather position questions about dormant desires in contemporary art and architectural practices as they relate to agriculture on a global scale from an intensely local point of view. These practices—fertile with consciously performative agendas—serve as provocations as much as they are calls to action. They resonate on a public stage beyond traditional musings and find themselves implicated in the reconfiguration of space and time. Drawing on Iowa’s dormant interior, the following experimental assemblies were developed.

Additionally, each of the participants engaged in a four-hour workshop where architecture students from the local state university participated in the development of a single multi-dimensional rapid production drawing. Drawing has creative, expressive and educational value; it remains fundamental to translating and analyzing the world.<sup>3</sup> This process of inquiry is the manifestation of an interdisciplinary agenda that deals with drawing as a method of projection and perception through the assertion and embodiment of self, in an effort to authenticate the bodily essence of lived space. To this end, the act of making observations assists in cultivating place-based knowledge.

In all components of this series of workshops and exhibitions, the participants experience drawing as both an action and a construct, wherein the author(s) find themselves as occupants of the associated drawing assembly. The focus of each drawing assembly is to amplify experimentation in the production of atmosphere through diverse dimensions, practices and ethics. The exhibition culminated with a moderated field talk within the configuration of *Diurnal Rhythms* with 75 people in attendance.

This body of work might be understood as an atmospheric cartography. It is a collection of works that locates and relocates the viewer. It unfolds a history and the dimension of being within and outside of equally. It is mistaken, misunderstood and



misaligned. It makes architecture by conflating realities, geographies and topographies. It folds contingent constructs and agencies. It maps its guest to specific geographic, historical and personal conditions. It has to do with surveying realms that are yet to be understood. This is what the workshops and exhibitions do. They, like maps, construct a reality.

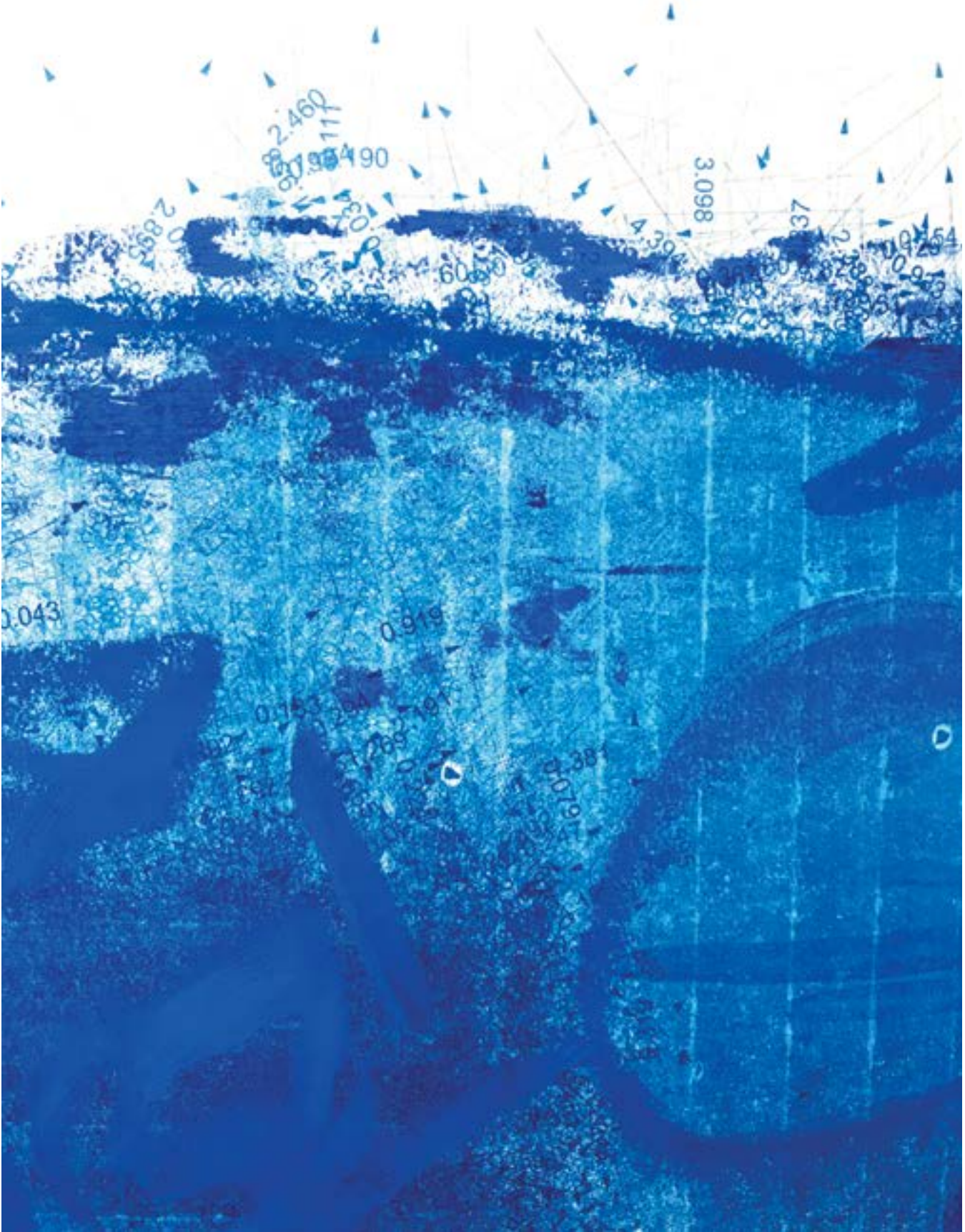
The map does not reproduce the real but constructs one. It connects, it is open, multiple and reworkable. The map is never a finished product but remains a multiple open work, which inevitably refers to something that is both internal and external to it — a referent that is not represented but produced.<sup>4</sup>

The varied practices engaged through this forum yielded a type of output that assisted the author and visitor in navigating the world in which it was developed. The practices, by nature of common host space, are joined and overlap. It no longer is a set of single drawings but rather a multi-layered, experimental terrain of otherness similar to the landscape just beyond.

While marking an intensification of being or embodying truth without objectifying it, architecture is “demanding” of the spectator or inhabitant. It requires from the architect and the inhabitant a different relationship with external reality.<sup>5</sup> Its perceptual promise granted the authors and their guests a capacity to perceive qualitative difference in the works through a type of perspectival hinge I refer to as Black Contemporary.

PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 120–121 | TAIYO WANTANABE DRAWING | MIKE NESBIT

1 Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Architectural Representation and the Perspectival Hinge* (MIT Press, 2000), 3.  
2 Perry Kulper, “A World Beyond,” *Drawing+Architecture* (Volume 83 Issue 5, September/October 2013), 59.  
3 Anita Taylor, “Why drawing needs to be a curriculum essential,” *The Guardian* (2017).  
4 Teresa Stoppani, “Mapping: the locus of the project,” *Angelaki Journal of Theoretical Humanities*, (Vol. 9, No. 2, 2004), 186.  
5 Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Architectural Representation and the Perspectival Hinge* (MIT Press, 2000), 391.





# SOFT ORNAMENTATION

CATIE NEWELL | PETER P. GOCHÉ

Catie Newell, in collaboration with Peter P. Goché, addressed the makeup of the leftover hardwood ground mat recently salvaged from the Dakota Access Pipeline project, which passes inside a half mile of the site. Addressing the environmental crisis and the covert way the petroleum line was installed, the work sought to inversely cope with such infrastructural aggression by producing a subtle silver gilding to the end cuts of the lumber. A soft ornamentation was achieved by tucking aluminum foil in the checks inherent to the ecology of the timber. This was an effort to produce a shrine in veneration of the diverse geographies, biotic systems and cultures affected by such subterfuge deployed by the United States government. In this way, the work is developed as drawing by constructing a set of situational lines and marks intended to reveal the profound material and cultural nature of such spatial operations. It functions to point to something that matters but is not itself matter. It is here that the new set of lines envelops the in-between, aiming to illuminate the world by giving it heat, vitality, sense, force, light, and growth, trying to fathom its territories and multiplicities.<sup>1</sup> PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 127–131 | DAN SCHWALM

<sup>1</sup> Ivana Wingham, *Mobility of the Line* (Birkhauser Verlag GmbH, Basel, 2013), 11.











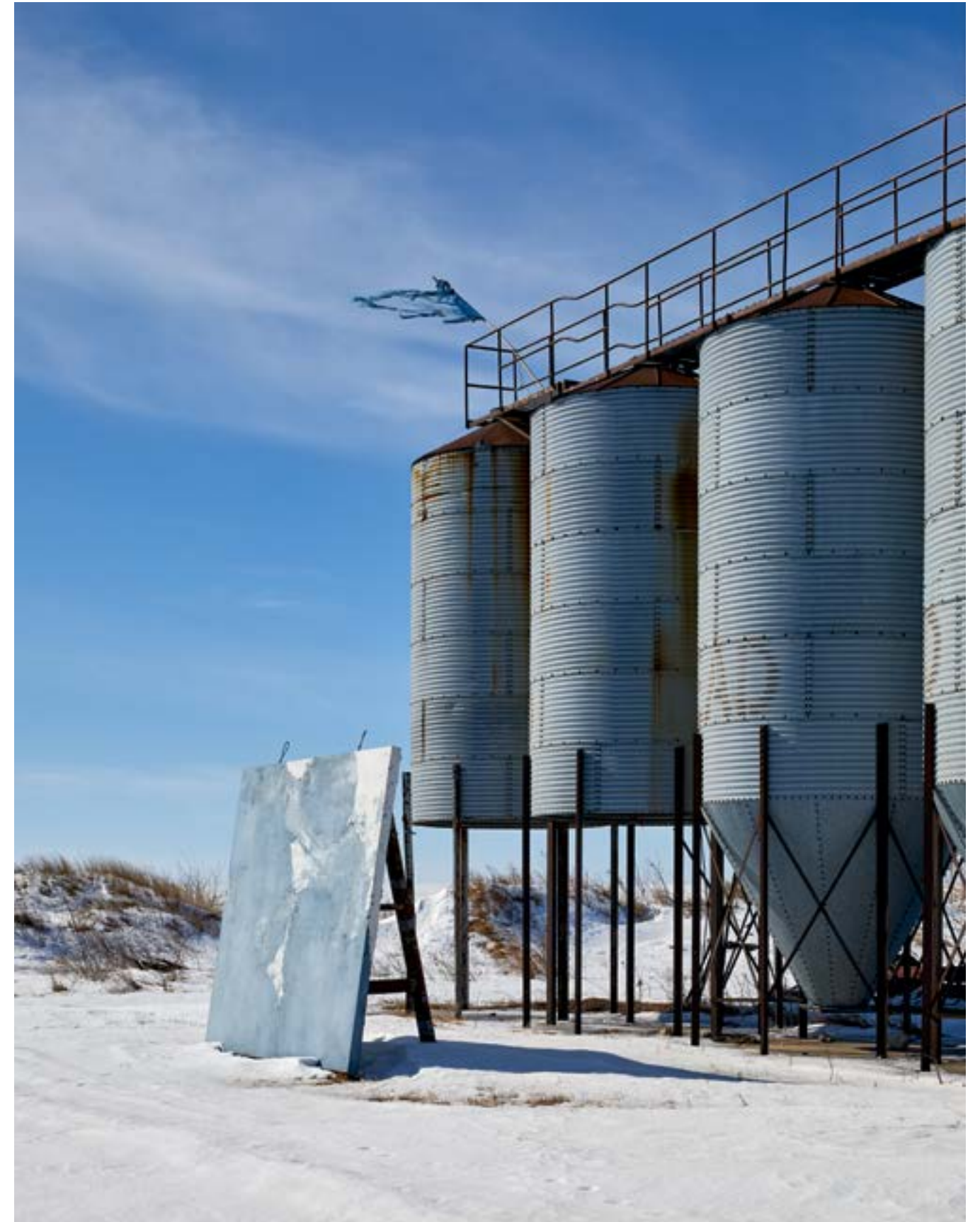


# THE BLUES

MIKE NESBIT

Mike Nesbit contributed a new series, *The Blues*. Taking a literal approach to representing the majestic cloud banks of the Midwest, Nesbit's work expanded his artistic techniques using pre-cast concrete and introducing color as a means to produce abstract work that contextually captures the sublime scale of the region's skies. By creating drawings at an architectural scale (1:1), this set of 9 feet by 12 feet drawings sought to produce an atmospheric referent to the universal envelopment of the farm operation amidst the now defunct farmstead. Consider the blue cup to which Gernot Böhme refers: This colour is something which the cup "has." In addition to its blueness we can ask whether such a cup exists. Its existence is then determined through localization in space and time. The blueness of the cup, however, can be thought of in quite another way, namely as the way, or better, a way, in which the cup is then thought of not as something which is restricted in some way to the cup and adheres to it, but on the contrary as something which radiates out to the environment of the cup, colouring or "tincturing" in a certain way this environment.<sup>1</sup> PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 132–139 | DAN SCHWALM

<sup>1</sup> Gernot Böhme, *Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetic* (Thesis Eleven, No. 36, 1993), p. 121.













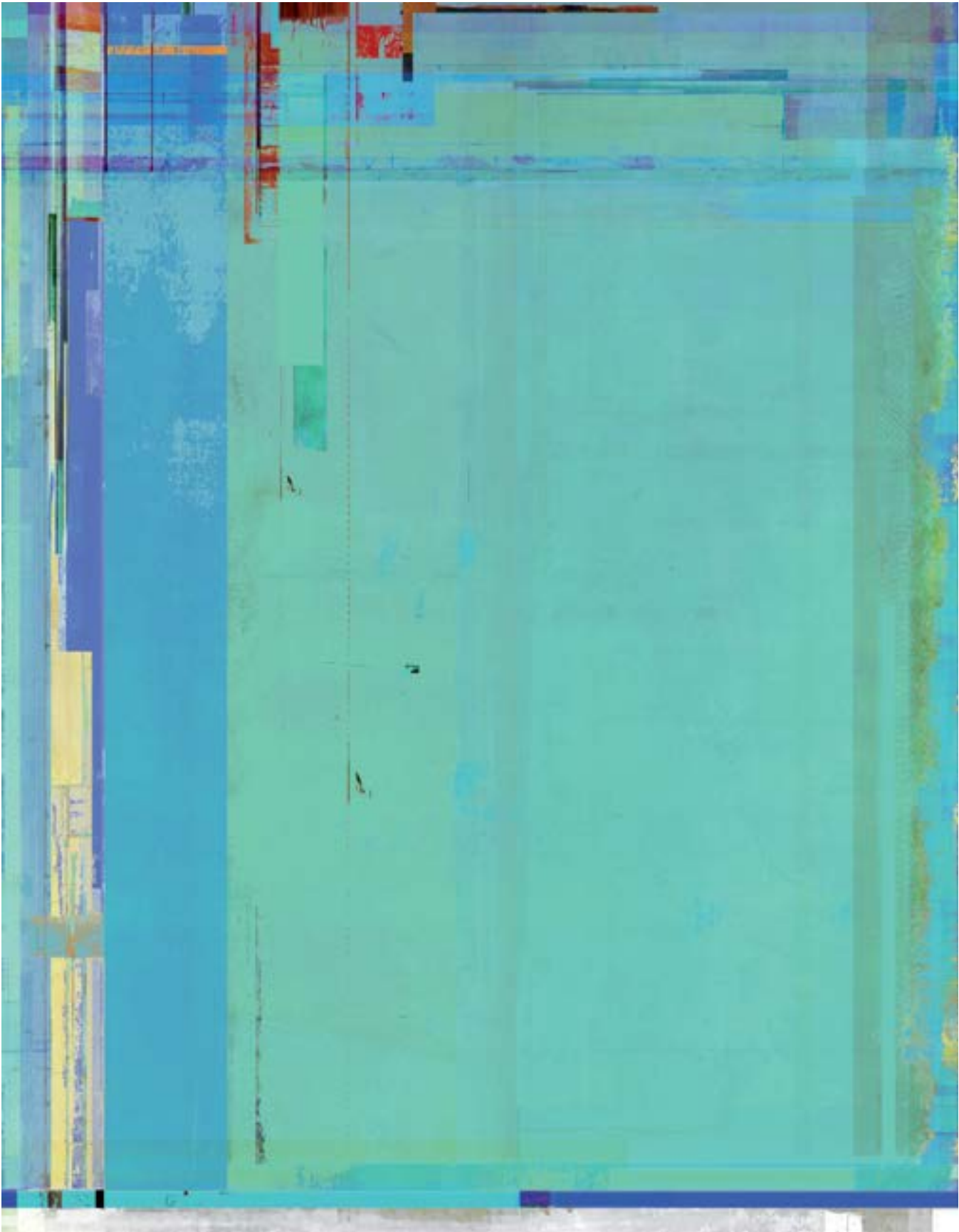




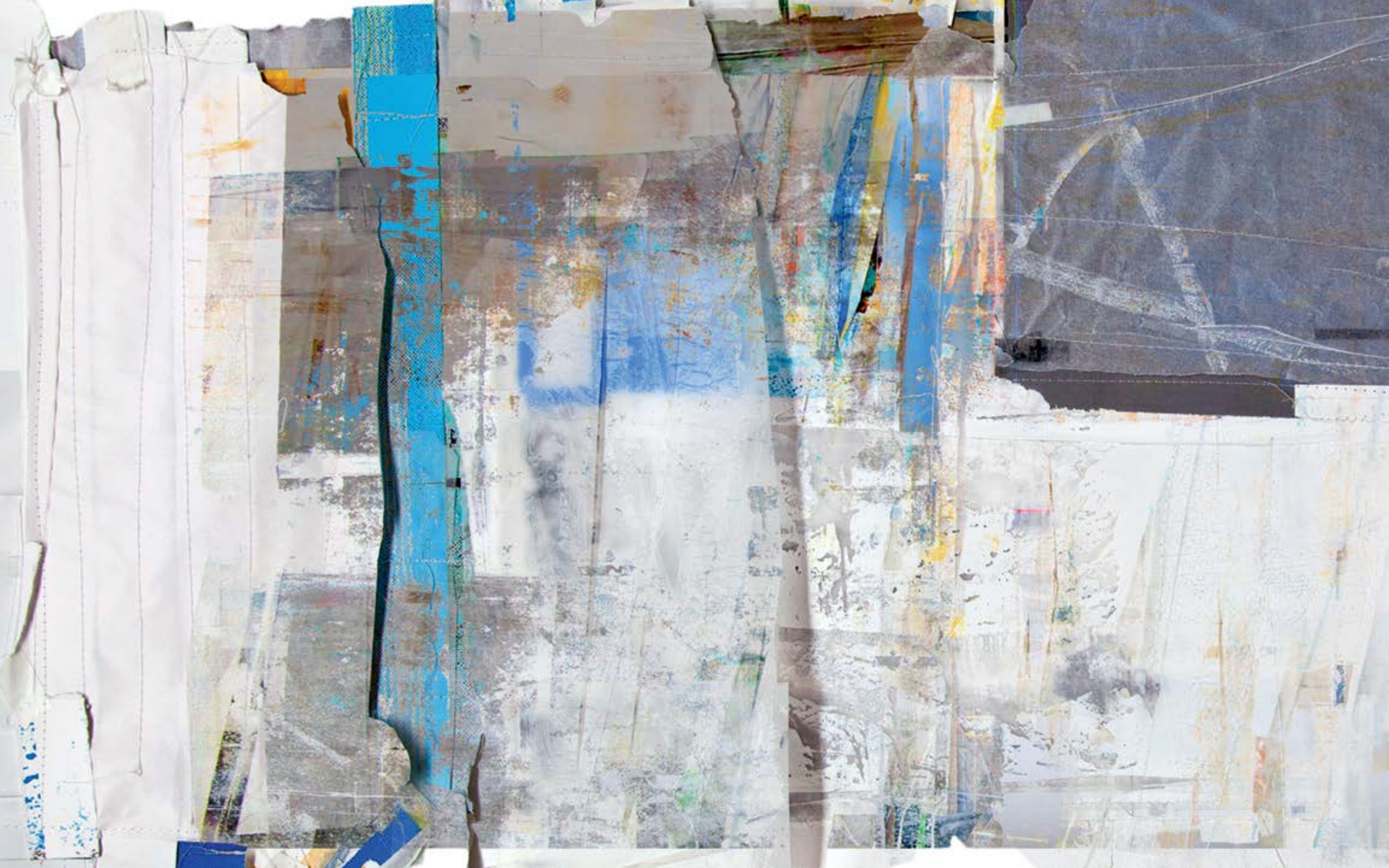
# STATIONS OF THE CROSS

THOMAS PRINZ

Thomas Prinz produced an experimental drawing series titled *Stations of the Cross*. Undertaking visual expression is a constant struggle for Prinz. Today's Modernity is about the imperfect as much as the perfect, discontinuity and continuity. The ambiguity of this or that reflects the nature of the world in which we live. Prinz' series of prints focuses on displacement and ambiguity in the context of establishing new relationships. Prinz has always been attracted to paintings which are open-ended, have doubt and imperfection, are unfinished and barely defined. This gives the viewer a greater participation in the creative act. Trained as an architect, Prinz feels predisposed to certain structural organizations and affinities. The work started with the basic idea of making marks on a surface — following the path between order and chaos. Each set of marks was moved around to generate new combinations and relationships. Each work was seen in the context of others. There is a sense of collage with the elements that constitutes the tentative boundaries, which have been established. The work has a formless tactile quality. Torn newsprint, remnants of paintings and digital prints are combined to form a hybrid expression. The harmonious synthesis of form brings together the rational and intuitive aspects of the human condition — the drawings are not about ideas but thoughts. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 141–145 | COURTESY TOM PRINZ













# DIURNAL RHYTHMS

CAMERON CAMPBELL | PETER P. GOCHÉ

Cameron Campbell, in collaboration with Peter P. Goché, developed a drawing titled *Diurnal Rhythms*. Animated by a single dynamic light source, this work builds on the critical nature of the daily path of the sun, the means by which labor is regulated in Iowa agriculture. It is a draftsmanship concerned with the production of a drawing as something perceived not by looking at it but rather by keeping careful watch. The experiential nature of this work has to do with linear perspective as much as optical theory. Perception arises out of a specific wakefulness that, over time, discloses a cultural horizon — a discourse on depth and distance fueled by an obsession to reconcile the space between the body (observer) and the world. Not unlike the artist motives in the early Renaissance who used painting, drawing and surveying as a means to measure the world’s physical and cultural features, this work is driven by a search for truth and a desire to reveal the measured reality of the world of experience.<sup>1</sup> *Diurnal Rhythms* was configured as a perspectival hinge in which the authors and the audience situate themselves and attain a perceptual revelation provoked by the passage of a single source of light. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 147–153 | COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL



1 Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspectival Hinge* (MIT Press, 2000), 20.















# GUARDIAN SPECTACULAR

DANIEL T. GAITOR-LOMACK | PETER P. GOCHÉ

Guest artist Daniel T. Gaitor-Lomack, in collaboration with Peter P. Goché, developed an experimental in situ art performance and livestream video broadcast titled *Perforated Horizon: Guardian Spectacular*. The production consisted of Gaitor-Lomack performing a bodily tracing of the gravel road leading to the site and, ultimately, a tridimensional drawing consisting of an assent, overhead tabernacle and a series of Indonesian puppets by Goché within a defunct 1929 granary while Goché incessantly atoned the space using a similar vintage cow bell. Animated by a milieu of social configuration, light penetrations and views to the horizon and celestial scene beyond, the assembly and performance afforded the audience a means by which to perceive the geometric dimensionality of experiential depth of the post-industrial context. Thus, the drawing apparatus and performance operated as an immense cosmic house facilitated by wind and sunlight. A house that is dynamic and allowed the poet to inhabit the universe. Or, to put it differently, the universe comes to inhabit the house. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 155–161 | COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL

















# HUMANITIES DRIP

MITCHELL SQUIRE | PETER P. GOCHÉ

Concurrent with our Arch 403 studio pedagogy, Mitchell Squire and Peter P. Goché co-curated a brief exhibition titled *tilt*. The work consists of a collaborative temporary installation (*Humanities Drip in the Absence of the Barn Swallow*), in addition to our students’ archival drawing recollections of Venice, Italy, at the Black Contemporary: world artist archive. The whole represents an assemblage of contemporary currents in architecture and art. The curatorial arrangement of material/immaterial instruments serves as the organizing transaction between each artist and their collective imagination. The Black Contemporary: world artist archive and experimental galleries site serves as context for the production and provocation of our lived experience. Each work conspires with the agricultural history of this place and its consequent leftover landscape. If students of architecture are to become relevant, they will need to seek out agency for their artistic imagination within a pictorial divisive world of separation between the various cultural platforms of humanity. Black Contemporary serves as a paradigmatic island that seeks common ground between humanistic and typological boundaries that tend to form mutually exclusive choices with polarizing syntactic agendas. This body of work puts Goché forth as an agent in the reconciliation of conflated territories. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 163–171 | COURTESY CAMERON CAMPBELL



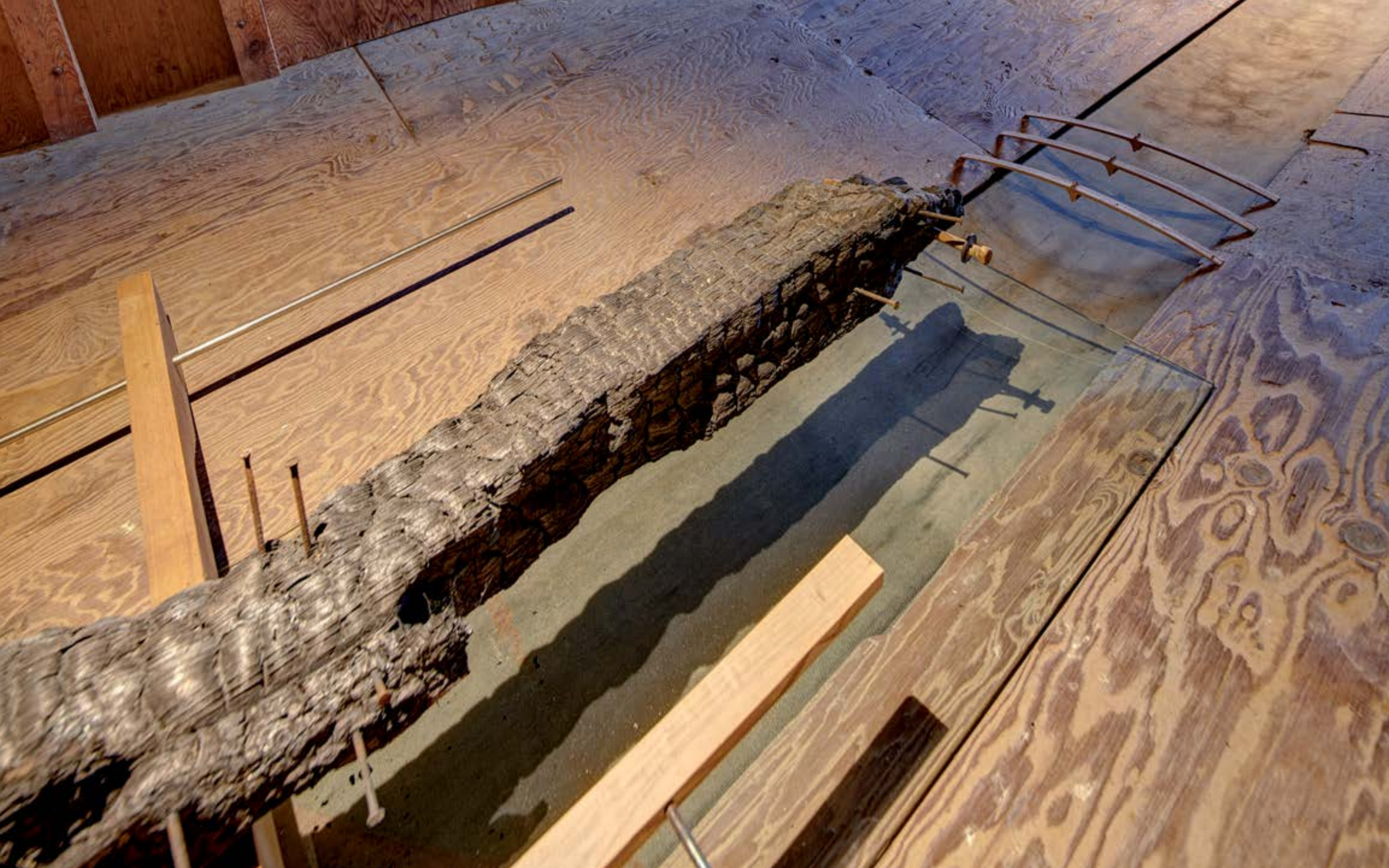


















imaginary





# IMAGINARY

PETER P. GOCHÉ

The pedagogical role of *Black Contemporary* serves as a field station dedicated to the study of spatial phenomena. In using the term here, I am referring to a way of knowing that seeks to describe the underlying, essential qualities of human experience and the context in which that experience happens. Using perceptual logic as spatial conditioner, current studio projects focus on the act of making and curating a series of research assemblies within a dormant seed-drying facility constructed in 1979. Each inquiry is part of a process by which the cultural history and future potential of an abandoned typology is revealed. It is a subconscious engagement whereby we become immersed in the world and do not succeed in distancing ourselves from it in order to achieve consciousness of the world.

With this intent, the site serves as laboratory for students who wish to conduct independent inquiry under my direction. Studio projects focus on the act of making and fabricating temporary assemblies within an existing host space using a variety of materials and methods. This course of study provides students the opportunity to make full-scale inquiries and, thereby, move beyond representational methodologies as the only procedural means of design development. On a deeper level, however, we want to cultivate a way of knowing that seeks to describe the underlying, essential qualities of human experience and the context in which that experience happens. The subsequent acts build on the role spatial phenomena has always had in architectural thinking and to assist the resurgence of experimental productions in design education and practice. As the process of architectural design delivery has become almost completely reliant on digital means, spatial experiments in real time with real people and real materials at full size are a crucial counterpoint.

The world is precisely that thing from which we form our perceptions, not as personal beliefs or imperatives, but in so far as we are all governed by a universal source of light and its consequent shadows. This optic disclosure, the layering of light and shadows, absolves us of our flesh and bone and allows the body to enter time, deep time, and thus rooted (as pointed out by Mircea Eliade) in our collective transcendent reality — the inscribed spatial history of a particular setting developed between human beings and the environments they occupy.

Our experience as occupants of a particular setting begins with the impulse to instantaneously scrutinize everything. This impulse is sustained through an often precisely choreographed threshold. As architect and artist, my goal is to assist the students and their guests in maintaining their initial ontological wakefulness through staging often-temporary assemblies within a host space and thereby extend the passage sequence.

Each inquiry is part of a process by which the cultural history and perceptual experience of a particular setting is revealed. The resultant staging yields, what Grant Wood depicts in his 1934 mural *When Tillage Begins Other Arts Follow*, the foundation for subsequent forms of human civilization specific to labor and an intensely modulated means of production. The cumulative effort might indicate the potential use of this facility, and all of Iowa's derelict agricultural facilities, as laboratory inasmuch as it offers opportunities for a rigorous set of observations, practices and experimentation.

To this end, the act of constructing a spatial phenomena field station within one of rural Iowa's derelict facilities assists in cultivating place-based knowledge through direct engagement with Iowa's farm community. It is a subconscious engagement whereby we become immersed in the world and do not succeed in distancing ourselves from it in order to achieve consciousness of the world. It employs chiaroscuro; a pictorial practice of arranging light (the conscious) and shadow (the sub-conscious) in the service of authenticating the cultural essence of lived space and thereby mine its capacity to summon the subconscious and reoccupy the inherited landscape as a dimension of life entwined with the present, a part of our ongoing perceptual experience.

The site serves as a laboratory for students who wish to conduct independent studies under my direction. On a practical level, I provide students with a framework for making full-scale inquiries, for getting beyond representation as a method of design and figuring out the potential of fabrication and assembly processes on their own. On a deeper level, however, we gain exposure to an intimate scale of production and confront the dichotomy between experiential and abstract notions of space. Students understand making as an investigative and a navigational situation, and reconcile the often-considerable gap between the representation of ideas and the construction of experiential things.

This ongoing course of study provides students the opportunity to make full-scale inquiries and move beyond representational methodologies and precedents as the only means of cultivating design thinking. We will employ at-grade knowledge as both an investigative and a navigational strategy, and reconcile the often-considerable gap between the representation of ideas and the construction of experiential space.



# CHAMBER MEMORIAM

JOHN J. KERNER | JUSTIN T. WANG

The inscriptions of labor are written all across the Iowa landscape. There are deep memories etched into field's and forests, cities and structures. South of Ames, there is a seed-drying chamber, unused for decades. Its surfaces are testament, texture, and time of a labor now lost. By constructing anew, we remember scale and intimacy, heat and air, darkness and gravity. We construct new worlds of memory and labor. PHOTO PAGE 177–181 | COURTESY JOHN J. KERNER AND JUSTIN T. WANG













# RESONANCE LANDSCAPE

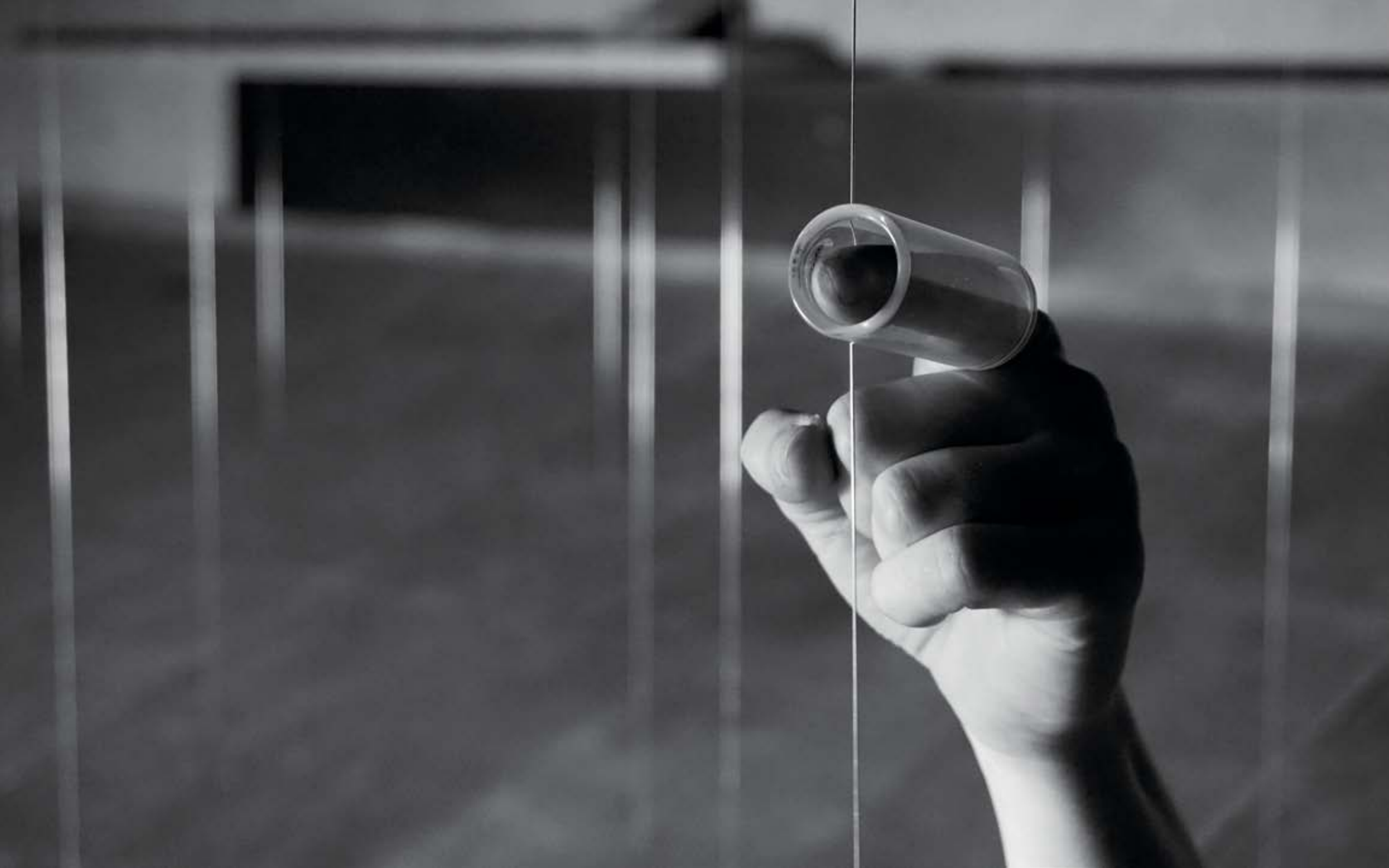
SABRINA JOHNSON | KENDRA KOCH | HEIDI REBURN

Our work focuses on the Iowa landscape and revelation through manipulation. This work captures space and material affect through the exploration of the response of light, or lack thereof, and interaction with the material. Embodied cognition emphasizes the formative role the environment plays in the cognitive process. The suspended wires in space create a spatial grid, a reflection of the Iowa landscape, that beg for manipulation. The inhabitation of the space heightens the senses due to the strong temperature shift from exterior to interior, the 17-degree sub floor, vibrations from the manipulation of strings, and light phenomenon on the material interaction. The lack of light calls for an emptiness in the landscape, but through the interplay of light and wire, the space is brought to a fuller dimension. Sound and music can expose forgotten places and narratives and, the installation presents a line work in space that acts as a poignant soundtrack to past utopias. A wrestle with the flow of time — the raw material of both music and history.

PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 183–187 | COURTESY KENDRA KOCH, SABARINA JOHNSON, HEIDI REBURN









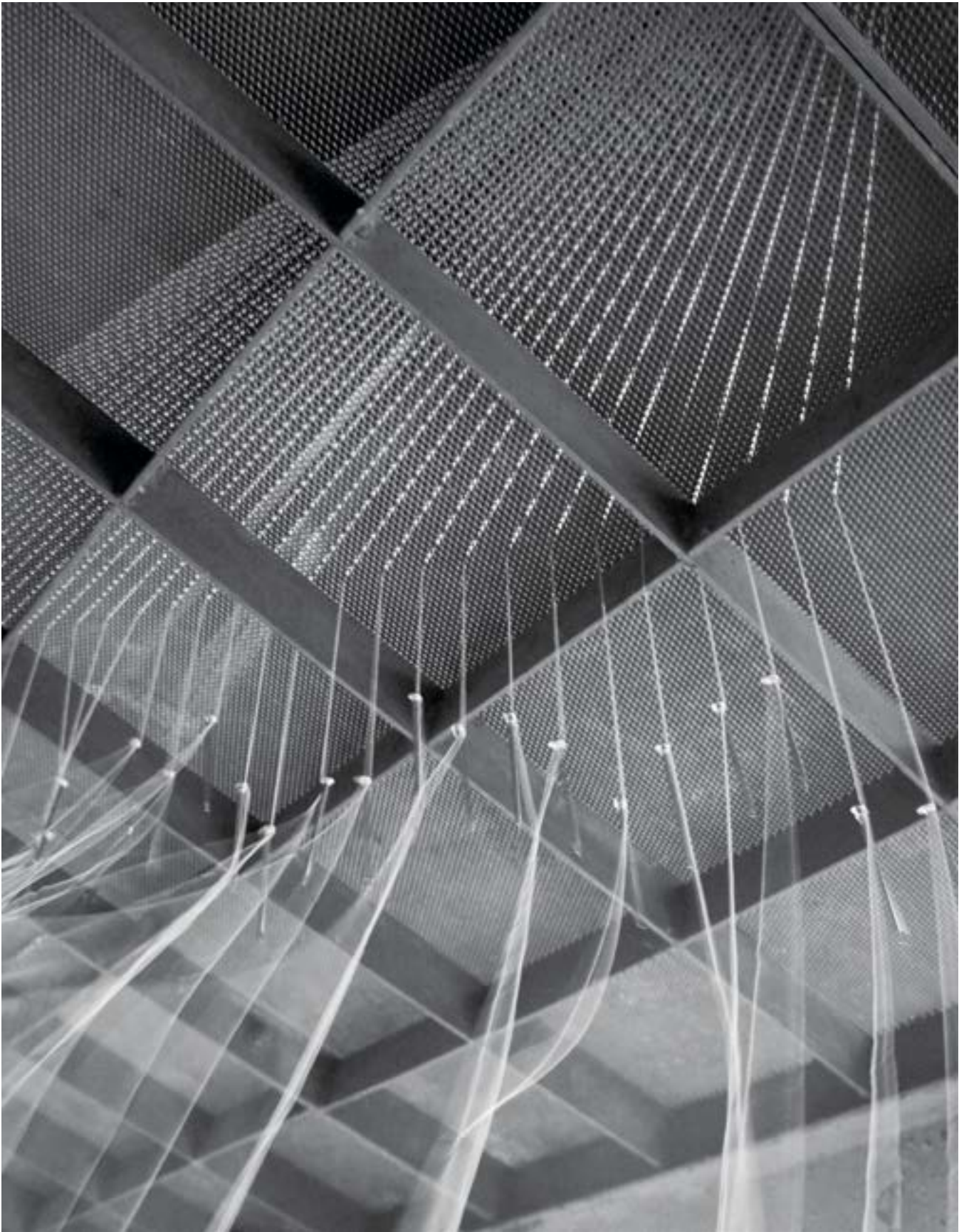




# SECOND IMPRESSION

ISHANI PANDYA | ZITONG FENG

After your eye adjusts to the darkness of the space, the subtleties of the installation start to reveal themselves over time, in contrast to what is first obvious to the naked eye. The layers of the installation create sub spaces as you move around and within the installation. The experience of being part of two places at once is created through the transparency of the material, different density of the layers and the gaps in between them. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 189–191 | COURTESY ISHANI PANDYA, ZITONG FENG





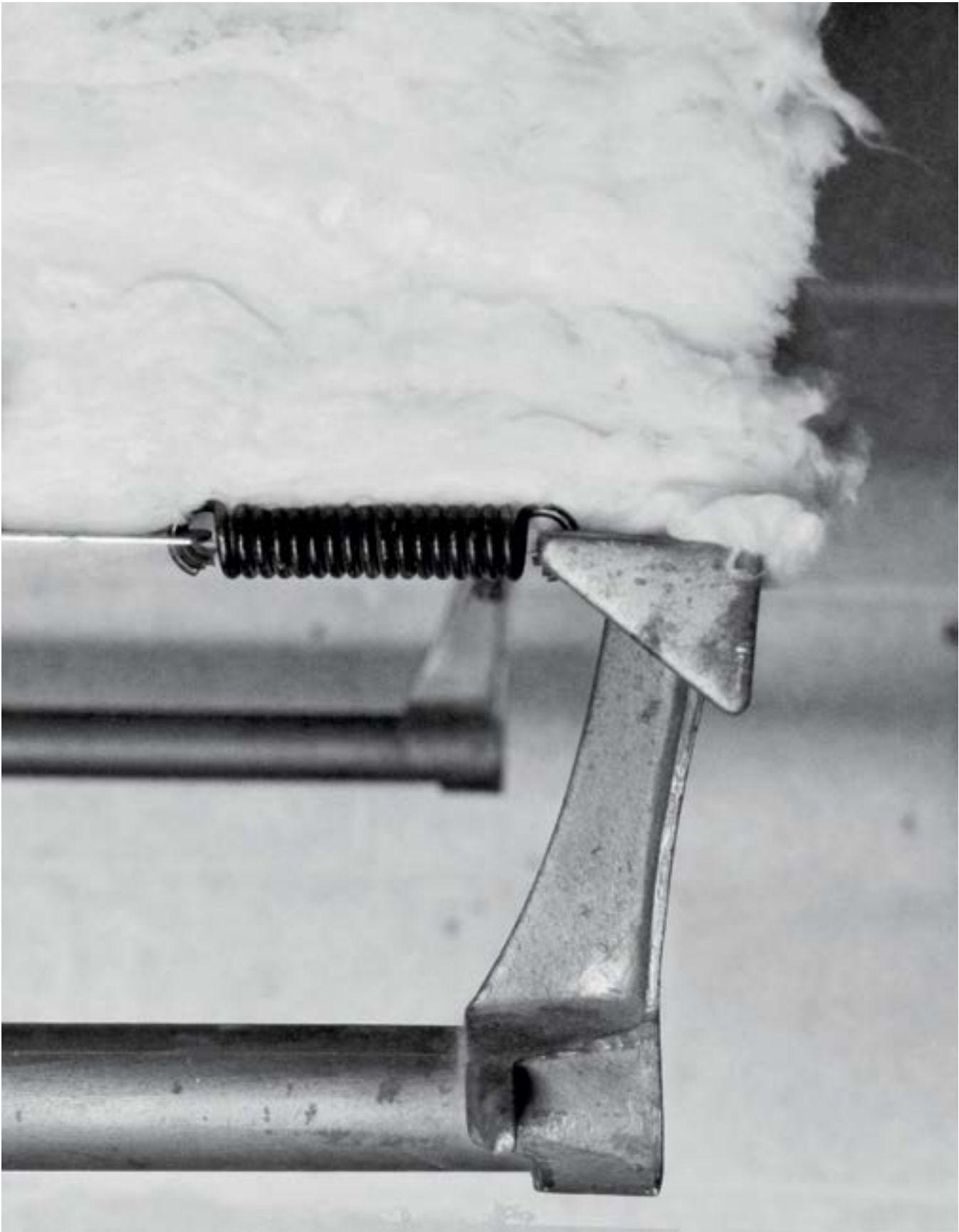




R19

RAHUL ATTRAYA | BETHANIE JONES | EVAN KAY

The ability of the bin to evoke a hyper-aware self is one point of experimentation in this work. The second point of experimentation stems from the materials intended to alter the given conditions of the bin. Insulation as a material exhibits strange phenomenon. Its presence sits heavy in the room. A strong representation of contradiction and juxtaposition. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 193–195 | COURTESY RAHUL ATTRAYA, BETHANIE JONES, EVAN KAY









# A PRECARIOUS PROCESSION

KANE HASSEBROCK | CHRISTOPHER PEREZ | JAKE SPANGLER

The procession is a means by which we can understand how bodies and other aspects of life move through space. This can be viewed as a ceremonial or sacred aspect of the inhabited space. The processional logic of any spatial construct is the product of how one is able to interpret the space, the way in which various elements are spatially organized begins to tell a larger story of the interrelationship of architecture, materials and the surrounding atmosphere. This installation presents an interpretation of a procession within the context of a grain bin situated in the agricultural landscape of Iowa.

It can be said that as bodies move through space and time, they enter a metaphysical relationship between the material and immaterial realms. The spatial logics and configurations that are a product of the built environment aid in the body’s ability to self-analyze as it struggles to find meaning in the occupied spaces. Atmosphere becomes the medium through which this negotiation takes place. The ephemeral effect that air, light, sound and other elemental aspects have on materials celebrates and showcases the lasting impression that time makes, both materially and spiritually.

In the context of this installation, the goal is to celebrate this weathered agriculture industry and its many steps and processes and showcase the effect that the materials in play have on the body as it moves through space. As the user moves through the bin, the air and the light pouring through the weathered cracks and damaged walls and ceiling, accentuate the details that would otherwise go unnoticed. As the body moves from one platform to the next, the procession draws out the ephemeral, elemental aspects of the bin.

The procession affords the user the ability to engage with the rawness of the bin, while precariously elevated on a series of steel platforms almost sixteen feet above the perforated metal grate. The installation investigates the uncertainty one might feel while ascending the hanging stairs and platforms. The apparatus evokes a relationship between the body and its surroundings, while celebrating that which weathers over time.

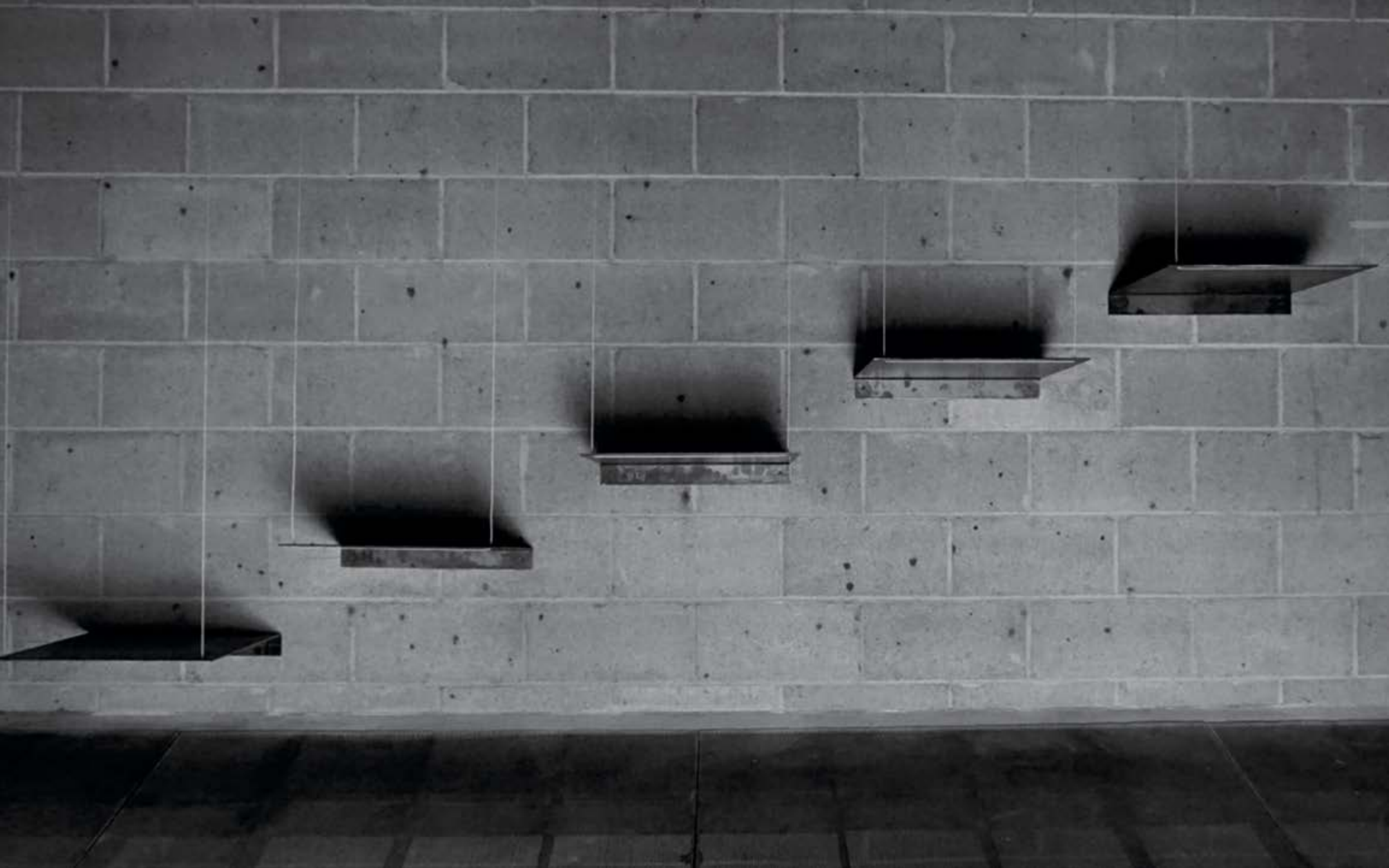
The atmosphere and ephemeral nature of the bin becomes a tool for the interior architecture to be a space to contemplate how weathering affects the built environment. The platforms conflated with the degradation of the bin is an accidental opportunity for contemplation on the beauty of the weathering process.

The steel platforms are suspended with thin aircraft cables, and this provides enough play to act as a mediator between the site, the body and the installation. The body is tested as it moves in the bin constantly questioning the structural limits of the platforms. The body is tested as it moves in the bin constantly questioning the structural limits of the platforms. The platforms are meant to weather and take on varying characteristics over time, allowing the atmosphere to draw its own lasting imprint upon the structures.

The context is an apparatus to further expound on notions of the body and suspense, as well as the relationship between the atmosphere and the built environment. The platforms and method of bridging is a spatial logic that puts the body in a state of suspense and acts as an operational landscape in the bin, that allows for entering a state of being that relates to affinity with materiality, weathering and time.

PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 197–199 | COURTESY KENDRA KOCH, SABARINA JOHNSON, HEIDI REBURN



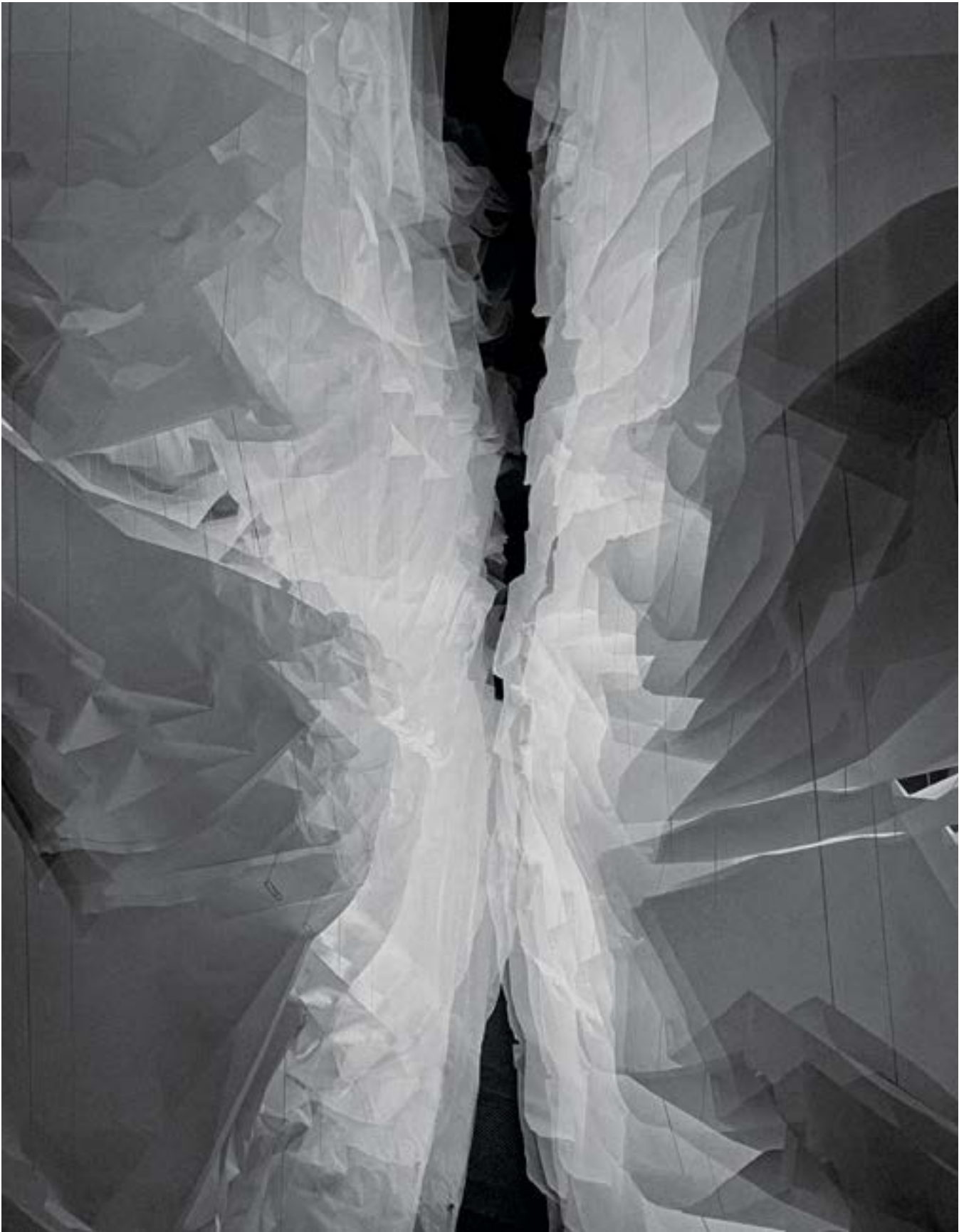




# OBSERVING AIR

MOHAMMED ALHAMOUDI | BRADEN COOPER | JACOB GASPER | MARY LEE

The observed flatness of Iowa’s farmland is purely visual. In all other aspects, this landscape is a constantly shifting mass sculpted by an ever-present volume of air. Rural architecture in this context does not exist as volumes of mass placed on the landscape but instead acknowledge and wrap the encompassing atmosphere. Functionally, this invited air is what makes these passive machines operate. *Observing Air: Erosion of Flatness*, seeks to expose the interaction between the existing corn crib and the constantly shifting atmosphere. Layers of translucency as physical representations of air and wind movement allow interaction and discovery within the space. Sculpting as an accumulation of the air’s carving on the landscape is transformed within the layers. Wind accesses the boundary space through the lower openings, rising up to enforce its presence between the layers by shifting its topography. The application of the string detains the layers of paper against the wind down to the slanted ground plane. This tilt disorients the user, especially when passing through the layers. Their relationship with a habitual ground is questioned and continuously shifted, reflecting the irregularity of the Iowa landscape and its changes over time. Users will come across varying viewpoints from which to experience the installation. The central passageway reveals a distorted perspective of the infinite landscape and bin. Throughout the experience, there is no clear horizon line, though one may be revealed at different times. PHOTOGRAPHY PAGES 201–203 | COURTESY MOHAMMED ALHAMOUDI, BRADEN COOPER, JACOB GASPER, MARY LEE



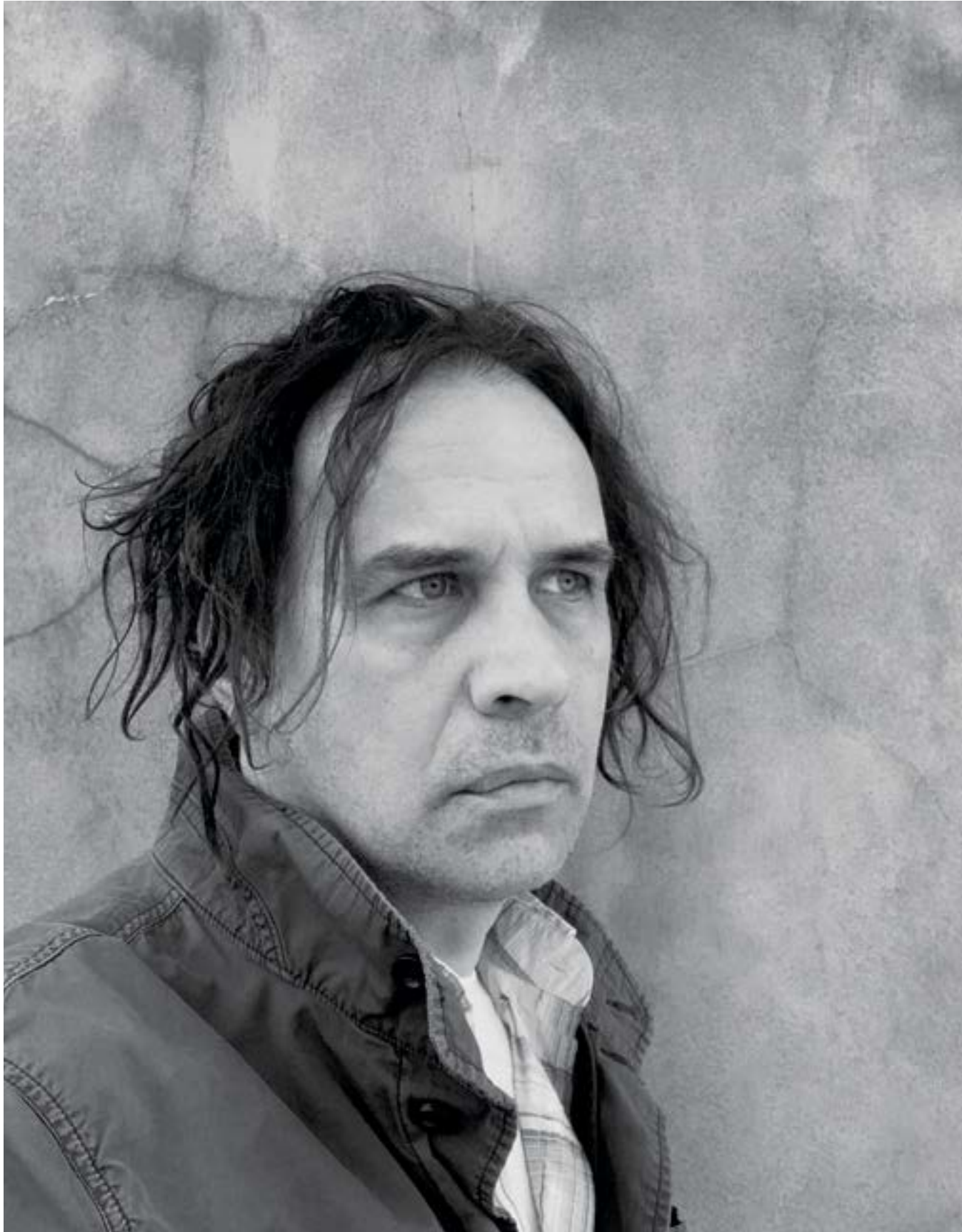












## FOUNDER'S STATEMENT

Peter Goché is an artist, architect and educator. Goché works with the nature of perception and spatial phenomenon in developing his experimental drawing practice. His works provoke a temporal-spatial encounter that understand the simultaneous and complex nature of cerebral and corporeal experience. He is the founder and director of Black Contemporary, a rural field station dedicated to the study of experimental drawing and perception. His research on material practices has been published in a number of edited books and journals, including *Architecture as a Performing Art* (Ashgate, 2013) and *Architecture and Culture* (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, vo. 4 issue 3 11/2016). He has staged exhibitions of his work at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri; Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, Nebraska; The Soap Factory, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, Iowa; University of Florida School of Architecture, Gainesville, Florida; and the Waldemar A. Schmidt Art Gallery and European Cultural Centre, Venice, Italy. He co-lead workshops at the 2014 and 2018 Venice Biennale. As educator in the Department of Architecture and foundational design at Iowa State University, Goché holds both B. Arch and M. Arch degrees in architectural studies from Iowa State University. He has presented papers and lectured on his creative practice and scholarship at many conferences and cultural institutions throughout North America and Western Europe. His understanding and sensibilities regarding spatial experience and ethno-specific design stem from an agrarian upbringing and ongoing research in art, architecture and anthropology at Iowa State University. Equally, his travels in North America, Europe and the Czech Republic have nurtured his interest in human beings, their practices and the ways they occupy and perceive space.



**black contemporary**

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WORK PRODUCED AND CURATED BY PETER P. GOCHÉ

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at Black Contemporary from 2010 to 2021

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