ART & ARCHITECTURE:
A DUALISTIC APPROACH

PAPER ONE

MURRAY GIBBS

MFA PROGRAM 1994

ART and ARCHITECTURE - A DUALISTIC APPROACH

My current sculptural work stems from a fascination with exploring and drawing upon an architectural vocabulary. The focus is primarily on a small group of contemporary international architects, whose work reflects a sculptural solution to the built or drawn architectural form. Combined with these references is the proposed redefinition and presentation of the utilitarian role of furnititure.

The aim of my investigation has been primarily to question and explore, the visual boundaries between art and architecture. My sculptural forms are composed from derivations from furniture and architectural considerations.

Like many practitioners working in the arts today, my work draws its references and technical concerns from a broad spectrum of the artistic media, both from a practical and theoretical basis.

I will be arguing in this paper that in a contemporary situation the boundaries between architecture, sculpture, and furniture are becoming less defined. My central argument is that architecture can be considered as a sculptural form and that conversly, sculpture can be considered as an architecture form.

Practitioners of these mediums are no longer making clear
separations in the process of creating an object or
individual expression. Rather, they are drawing their
sources and technical skills openly from across the
medias, both for practical and theoretical perspective.

In looking at our aesthetic environment today, many
critics of the arts - including architecture - reveal a
new direction, in which there is much discussion of a
respective contamination of all the art categories. As a
consequence, we are witnessing an era in artistic history
where there are constant substitutions and a general
confusion of the genres. Most medias are clearly focused
on these issues. For many artists, this concern is
indicated often intentionally through rhetorical,
theoretical or practical means. Artists who consider
themselves to be on the cutting edge of artistic taste
and attitudes are using these concerns to their
advantage, as they draw closer to the end of this
century. It is a time in artistic terms of great
confusion and uncertainty.

The postmodern society is one which has developed and been shaped by dramatic transformations. Advances in the scientific, technological, sociological, communication and transport industries, have had a dramatic impact on how we work and live. In the arts, Postmodernism, which constitutes a general effacement of traditional categories of genre and discourses, has had the effect of overturning the Modernist position which tended to divide and separate intellectual work into autonomous divisions and disciplines - including the separation of the philosophical, scientific and aesthetic. This has also required all those involved with creative pursuits to change accordingly. This has involved the broadening of the scope of the professions, as well as their theoretical discussions. Most artistic professions have had to accommodate new and unexpected situations, some of an urgent nature. This has stimulated its practitioners to respond in equally new ways.

The questioning of the validity and effectiveness of the architectural profession, perhaps the most visible of the arts, is indicative of the dilemma facing visual artists today. The word 'architecture' refers to the art and science of constructing buildings. It also however, refers to a discipline within the fine arts, which in a

more general definition, refers to a social institution
that orders and regulates the nature of buildings and how
we think and experience them. I will be focusing my
discussion in the latter part of this paper on the
experience of an architectural 'place'.

Discourses in the architectural fields, reveal an
increasing uncertainty as the practice has undergone
internal questioning. This uncertainity has focused on
its role and function within a broader context of what it
does within the structures of society. Like other
disciplines also undergoing an evaluation of itself, new
concepts and terminologies have emerged within
architecture. Both artists and architects in a
contemporary situation have continued the role of social
advocates, decision makers and indicators of change. In
an earlier part of this century, the modernist architect
adopted an authoritarian view, to design and construction
of the city, believing they knew best how the masses
should live. Postmodernist achitects on the other hand,
operate from a more democratic position, recognizing that
in many instances, communication between themselves and
the public is the best approach to finding the solutions
to architectural problems.

The relationship between the disciplines of art and
architecture is a problematic one. In observing them
both in a contemporary situation it is obvious that
architecture is becoming more impregnated by art. Many
architects are increasingly exhibiting what can be viewed
as a more artistic expression in their designs. Others
are working clearly within other disciplines such as
furniture and industrial design or exhibiting conceptual
and realised two-dimensional representations within
galleries and museums. At the same time, visual and
plastic artists, who have traditionally been confined to
exhibiting in these spaces, are today using the
architecture of the museum as a major consideration.
This is often a crucial aspect in the conception and
construction of an installation work. Many have moved
beyond these locations and explored projects within
public and open spaces. In many cases, artists are
contributing directly to the design and execution of
projects that range from the layout of parks and public
buildings to major artistic imputs, in what clearly is
considered traditionally an architectural sphere.

Since the boundaries between these two areas can be
regarded as well entrenched, the result of this shift, is
more confusion in the way each regards the other. If one
looks at these practices in an historical context, one is

aware of a determined effort in the last half of this
century, to break out from the academic
compartmentalisation that has separated the various
artistic medias. (1)

Like other art practices, architectural criticism as a
discursive practice, ie. the reading or analysis of
particular works, plus the "marking off" or indicators of
historical periods; has in recent times, been transformed
by critical theories which originate and develop across
these practices. Critiques of architecture are clearly
aligned with critiques of the arts and sciences. (2)

History and critical theory are inevitably connected. It
is within the sphere of critical theory that boundaries
between art and architecture have broken down
dramatically. The contemporary artist and architect is
informed by no one theory, but several theories.
Concepts, ideas and influences are selected and ordered
from this information. This gives a discipline its sense
of perspective and continuity. Critical or theoretical
activity is an indispensable partner with human
production. This shift in sensibility, has therefore
dramatically changed our conceptions of the artistic
intervention.

There are obvious differences between these two
disciplines. Art, and the plastic arts in general,
address themselves specifically to the individual. To
measure or understand a work of art, one must give to it,
his or her attention in a personal subjective manner.
The intention of the art object is to engage the viewer
in a solitary fashion. Its message is often embedded
within the radical stance of its maker's concerns. It is
also often immediate and raw in that it generally has no
other function than to state, announce or even denounce a
particular perspective. The art object generally is the
product of an individual and aims at being absolute.

There are a number of sculptors who do handle ideas that
are of an architectural nature; drawing their references
from perhaps one particular aspect of the built form -
such as the spatial and functional concerns, construction
techniques or from isolated architectural details and
imagery.

Architecture generally addresses itself to a group or
specific audience. It is also still fairly functional in
its intentions. It doesn't command from this audience a
similar attentiveness or contemplative response as the
art object, image or idea does. Often it is the result
of a collective imput, involving specialist teams dealing
with specific aspects of the project.

Without doubt, the role of art in architecture or the acknowledgement of architecture as an art form is a major characteristic of the last two decades. This is due in part to the revival of applied ornament, the reintroduction of programmatic iconography and the integration of painting, sculpture and applied crafts into architectural structures. This mirrors to some degree, similar processes before the rise of the international style.

A central criterium for modernist architects was the subordination of aesthetic concerns to the functional requirements, which were the foremost concern for architects of this period. Form follow functions, was the "catch-cry" in this era of architectural design. Today, however, we once more are witnessing the reversal of aesthetic function to form, with architecture being treated in much the same manner as an art form, but on a larger scale. An obvious example is the current deconstructive vein within architecture. The priority today is focussed on expressing the aesthetic potentiality as opposed to the functional criteria espoused in modernism.

A dominant feature of architectural design in a
contemporary situation is one in which the reality or
illusion of reality is conferred. Much of recent design
in architecture appears to emphasise making visible to
the public eye what the mind is capable of seeing; in
other words, infusing its participants with the
enthusiasm of its ideas rather than issues regarding its
physical details. In this sense it aims to direct its
audience or users towards an intellectual understanding
through what is suggested by its visual vocabulary. This
therefore is an experience of the architectural form that
engages both our psychological and physical senses.

Certain contemporary architecture sets out to achieve
this by the employment of analogy or artistic devices.
The intention is to give the viewer the clues to the
essence of the idea behind the form, as well as
presenting an object for contemplation on both physical
and intellectual levels. Some of California's most
distinctive architecture in recent times is constructed
in such a manner, aiming to create the maximum amount of
impact within its immediate landscape. These futuristic
cafes, boutiques, office tower and animated structures,
often extremely sculptural in form, follow a tradition of
expressive buildings that were characteristic of pop
architecture of the 1960's.

With the advent of postmodernism, architectural drawings and models have become once more an important part of architectural practice. Many architects are recognising the gallery as being a suitable context in which to present this medium. In a society dominated by fashion trends, and advertising industries catering to a consumer market, these drawings and models have the same commercial currency as the work of traditionally based two and three-dimensional artists.

By placing the architectural product within this commercial environment, a broader audience is exposed to many unrealised architectural projects and conceptual ideas.

Many of the drawings and models exhibit an ambivalent viewpoint. This is different from what one would traditionlly see in a working drawing or model. Many display similarities with a current stream of artistic work that merge a variety of discourses such as: social, narrational, theatrical, architectural or ornamental concerns, with the imaginative and illusionistic sense of reality. This phenomenon deals with reality through the extremes of imagination; for example, the public through the private, the architectural through the pictorial or sculptural, the proximate through the illusion of distance. The architectural model lies on the border

between representation and actuality. It claims a
certain autonomous objecthood, although as Christian
Hubert writes... 'this condition is not a complete
one.'(3) The model in this context, is always a 'model'
of something much larger and substantial. Hubert goes on
to state that... 'The desire of the model is to act as a
simulaecrum for another object, as a surrogate which
allows for imaginative occupation.'(4) In this regard
the architectural model has to be considered within an
art context, rather than an architectural one.

The same considerations hold true for design disciplines
such as furniture, which have been infiltrated by
numerous architects including many well known
international architects such as Michael Graves, Aldo
Rossi, Frank O'Gehry, Oswald Ungers, Charles Jencks, John
Hejduk and Robert Venuri. This is due in part to the
rapidly dwindling respect for the demarcation lines
between disciplines. Today the poaching of design is not
so much the exception but the rule. Postmodernism has
contributed to this tendency because its very
philosophies reject on principle the credence of
importance between large and small scale projects.

Micro-architecture or what is better known in furniture
and object design as table-top objects or table
landscapes, show, that the design process for objects of

this nature can be understood as comparable in principle to architectural design, though on a different scale. The influence therefore of architecture is clearly obvious within the fields of furniture and sculptural objects, often giving these pieces a sense of respectability and importance.

On the other hand, the disciplines of art have had a dramatic influence on many architects. This is obvious especially in relation to the selection of materials and the predilection for sculptural forms in the design of buildings. An important factor, is how we as human beings experience a particular architectural place in physical and intellectual terms. The architecture of American, Frank O'Gehry, is a useful example here as his work reflects the return towards a more direct architecture, perhaps more closely aligned to advertising than academic rhetoric.

Artists of this century have intensified our sensitivities to the urban landscape, conferring an unsuspecting aesthetic upon the trivial. Collages and ready-mades were the signs which presaged this development. Pop Art and the minimalist artists its exponents. O'Gehry's close association with art and artists such as Claes Oldenburg, Coosie Van Bruggen, and Richard Serra amongst others, has influenced the

transferring of this sensibility into his own architectural practice. 'Poor' materials such as wire netting, plywood, copper and metal sheeting, are chosen for grain, textural and visual qualities as well as for economic characteristics. Many of these materials have been recycled with a deliberate intention of conferring a new visual status upon them. Subsequently, banal materials appear in his numerous buildings, including his own home in Sante Monica, California. Here, corrugated iron and fence netting are used to veil and cover fragments of the structure. (fig. 1) His work in the 1980's utilises a sculptural assemblage of strong abstract forms as seen in his *Winston Guest House* project. (fig. 2) This structure, which has to be considered as a sculptural solution to domestic architecture, may also be construed purely as a large outdoor sculpture, comprising a variation of pure forms all clad or constructed in different materials. This building suggests through the placement of these elements, a large three-dimensional still life, reminiscent, of the work of the metaphysical artist, Morandi. O'Gehry's concern for the arrangement of architectural volumes in a purely compositional manner can be seen culminating in this period with the Vitra Museum at Weil am Rhein, Germany. This building is suggestive of the power of architecture existing as an art form. It reflects a sculptural resolution, combining

movement, solidity, tension and precariousness to the
architectural form. (fig. 3)

The House of the Suicide and *House of the Mother of
Suicide* by architect John Hejduk, are examples of
architecture taken to sculptural extremes. Existing
nonfunctionally as a complete house, these forms operate
primarily as a sculpture. (fig. 4) Hejduk engages
predominately in what can be best described as
architectural research. Essentially he is considered a
paper architect. His many schemes and plans for projects
are visionary and utopian in essence. They exist as a
non-conformist type of architecture inspired like certain
sculpural works by narrative premises. For example, his
Devils Bridge conceptual piece is derived from a
Wissahickon folk tale.

There are however, many examples of contemporary
sculpture which suggest direct analogues to architecture
and can be considered as existing in an architectural
form. *Pavillion-in-the-Trees* by Martin Puryear reflect
this stream of work. (fig 5) Although created by a
sculptor who is informed by a different set of criteria
than an architect, this sculpture nevertheless crosses
established boundaries that have generally separated
sculpture and architecture; as well as considerations of
pure form and function. Puryear has created here a

public facility that draws its inspiration from
architectural structures and functional considerations.

In comparable efforts to architects who have sought to
permeate buildings and conceptual projects with an
artistic sensibility, numerous sculptors have borrowed
and explored the potentiality of architectural concerns
as the main theme in their work. If we look historically
at the minimalist artists, many dealt with architectural
concerns, as for example, the modularity, as in the
sculptures of Carl Andre. Sol le Witts' work draws its
inspiration from architectures ideas of structures in
space. Robert Smithson and Michael Heizer, draw their
influence from architecture's presence in the landscape.
Tony Smith, Barnett Newman, Richard Serra, amongst
others, rival an architect's use of scale. Others such
as Mary Miss, Alice Aycock and Siah Armajani have
explored architecture's constructional qualities, dealing
with explicity similar ideas of space and form.

These sculptures are often functional in terms of actual
physical occupation, many others allow for an imaginative
occupation, similar to that of the architectural model.
The notions of public sculpture and 'site-specific' works
gained currency in the period of minimalism, namely the
1960's and early 1970's. It was introduced by many
artists to suggest that the site or location of a

sculpture was integral to its meaning and form. For these sculptors, the experience of the work was considered to be inseparable from the place in which the work resided.

Architecture too can be argued as being bound to a site or place, its existence linked to the experience of a particular place. I view the general concept of 'place', in this context, as corresponding to the continuist conception that they are linked to something previously existing. This includes both the geography, ie. its specific site, as well as the histories of these disciplines. The idea of 'place' therefore, refers to the ideology that the architectural and sculptural object do not exist on their own, but relate to other objects either natural or man-made.

The first task in the process of building - either from an architecural or site-specific sculptural perspective, is to select a place in which to locate the work. Once this has been achieved, the site is transformed into a place where human intervention occurs. Altering the site articulates the bond between the object and the landscape, the land often shaping and determining the form of this construction. In the process of imposition on the site, the object is able to enter into a relationship where it connects with a place to establish

a metaphysical connection, a poetic link. Beyond meeting physical requirements for shelter and privacy, a building can also express personal and universal truths.

Architecture considered as a sculptural form and sculpture as an architectural form, both make a connection with site, qualities of light, materials, as well as the technologies of construction. The result when this occurs is that the poetic potential of a situation is realised. Connected to this situation is the potential for an emotional message and response.

In this context I feel that it is difficult to differentiate between an architectural form existing as a sculpture and a form derived from a sculptural premise which employs architectural analogues, ideas and forms.

Through my working process of combining furniture considerations, architectural forms and spatial concerns, with the predilection to work from a sculptural premise; I am continuing an established tradition of dualism that combines sculptural forms with an architectural expression.

I have suggested that architecture and sculpture - and I include furniture here, have an experiential quality, their effects extend beyond the physical to touch the emotional and the intellectual.

It is with these issues and concerns in mind, that my work has been informed, influenced and transformed. The body of work that I have produced is a personal exploration, expression and experimentation of these developing concepts and concerns.

The process of my investigations of the interfacing between architecture, sculpture and furniture, has served to both resolve and stimulate new directions in my work and style. A major developmental shift occurred, with the realisation that the emotions and the intellect were being directly lead, from the connection with the 'experience' of a place, to that of 'theatre' and all its constructs; and this, will form the basis of my second paper.
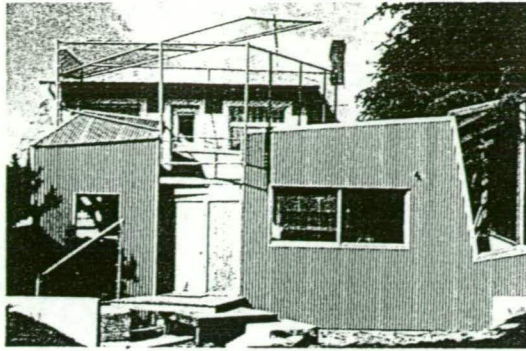
Fig 1.   Gehry House (1978)
          Santa Monica, California.   Side Entrance. 1978.
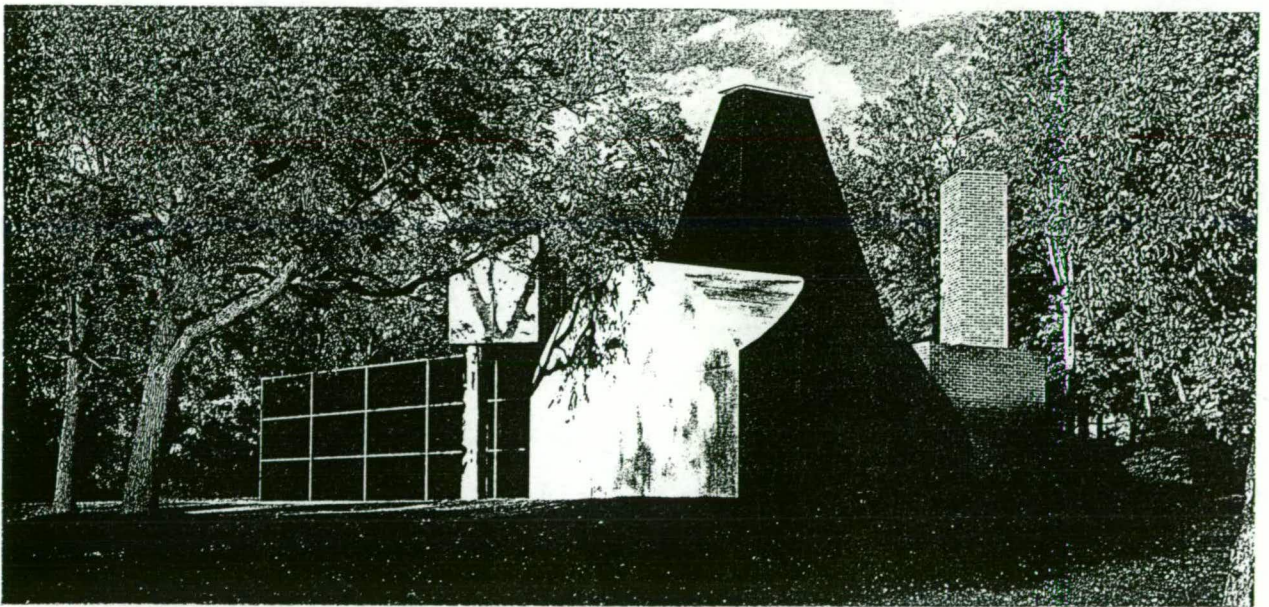
Fig 2.   Winston Guest House (1987)
          Frank Gehry, Minneapolis.
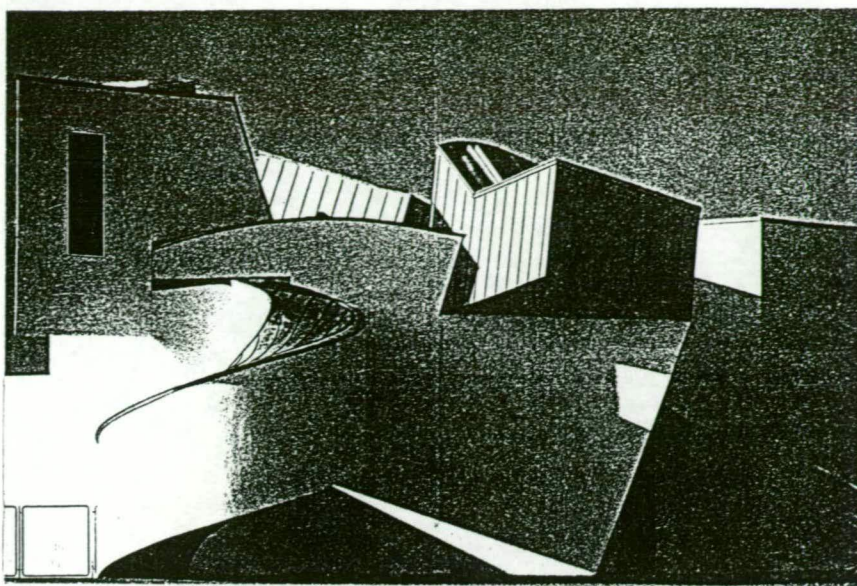
Fig 3.   Vitra Design Museum (1989)
          Frank Gehry, Weil Am Rhein, Germany.
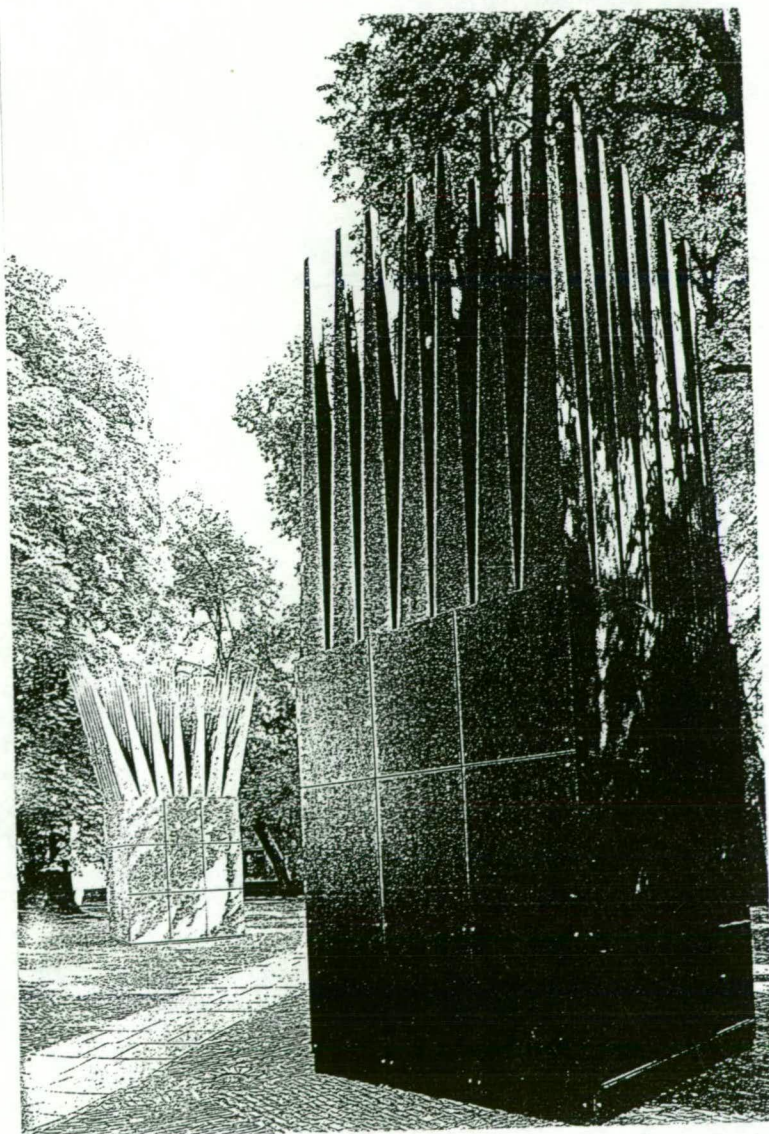
Fig 4.   The House of the Suicide & The House of the
          Mother of the Suicide (1991)
          John Hejduk, Prague Castle.
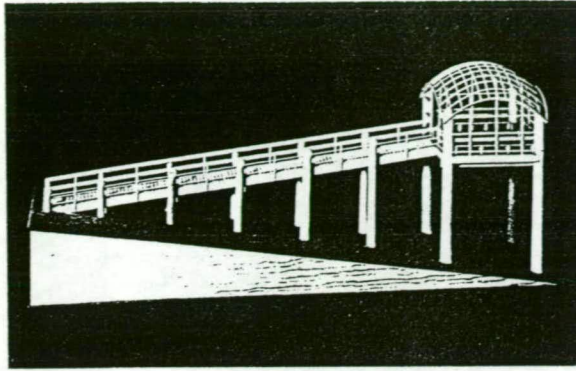
Fig 5.   **Pavillion in the Trees (1981)**
Martin Puryear, Philadelphia.

FOOTNOTES

1. There are examples in the first half of this century
    of a cross over between art and architecture. The
    constructivists also worked within a range of
    disicplines. The Bauhaus workshops also encouraged
    students to explore and develop ideas within the
    different art practices.

2. From a contemporary perspective, however,
    architecture stands between art and technique. It
    doesn't necessarily draw its power or opinions from
    any one artistic structure or pre-established ideas
    of technique and materials, but from what one can
    consider to be a more philosophical basis. In other
    words, architecture constructs philosophically
    endorsed ideas of home, city and place. Like the
    plastic arts, architecture can be seen as adopting
    theories that have originated and developed in other
    fields. The use of literary Deconstruction theory
    is such an example.

3. Hubert, C. 'The Ruins of Representation' in Idea As
    Model, Cat. 3, Rizzoli International Publications,
    New York. (1981: 17)

4. ibid.

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Boissiere, O. & Filler, M. *Frank Gehry - Vitra
       Design Musuem,* Thames & Hudson, London, (1990).

2. Colquhoun, A. *Modernity and the Classical
       Tradition,* MIT Press, London, (1991).

3. Davidson, C. (Ed.) *Anywhere,* Rizzoli International
       Publications, New York, (1992).

4. Diani, M. & Ingraham, C. *Restructuring
       Architectural Theory,* Northwestern University
       Press, Evanston, Illinois, (1988).

5. Fischer, V. *Design Now,Industry or Art,* Prestel
       Publishers, Munich, Germany.

6. Novever, P. (Ed.) *Architecture in Transition:
       Between Deconstruction and New Modernism,*
       Prestel Publishers, Munich, Germany, (1991).

7. Pincus-Witten, R. *Postminimalism into Maximalism:
       American Art 1966-1986,* Ann Arbor, Michigan
       U.M.I. Press, USA.

8. Polo, A.Z. '*Frank O. Gehry, Still Life'* in *EL CROQUIS*
       #45, Levene, R.C., (Ed.), Madrid, Spain,
       (1990).

DOMESTIC VOYERISM

A THEATRICAL APPROACH

PAPER TWO

MURRAY GIBBS

MFA PROGRAM 1994

DOMESTIC VOYERISM, A THEATRICAL APPROACH

This paper is an account of my work as it stands at the present time, and as it has evolved over the past 18 months. It is a follow on from the first paper entitled *Art and Architecture, a Dualistic Approach*, in which I set out the visual boundaries of my work.

In paper 1. I discussed the disintegration of the boundaries that had separated these two categories of art, my central argument being that sculpture can be viewed as an architectural form and that, conversely, architecture can exist as a sculptural form.

It is useful to discuss my work in the context of the theatrical, as in the work there are direct analogies with the concept of the theatre. My experience as a stage hand and amateur actor has influenced my work as has the history of stage and set design.

When we talk about theatre, we essentially talk about ambiguities, complexities and simulation. Part and parcel of these are questions regarding the creation of hyper-reality, illusion and duality. These issues and concepts have served as a basis in which my own work has developed and come to a personal resolve, both theoretically and in the physicality of the sculptures.

Central to this investigation is the integral role of the viewer. Whether the work is presented within the gallery context or the domestic environment, both locations are sought as a challenge to the viewer's response to my work in situations that are considered essentially passive.

In this sense I consider my work to be props, the objects themselves making up the on-stage cast. I am suggesting here, the concept that the objects be read as scripts - scripts that project an almost theatrical encounter with furniture. The script is therefore constructed primarily from a pictorial text rather than a written one. The audience is left to construct their own dialogue and to enact their own performance with the work.

In forming these 'stills' of images, or tableaux, I see both a silence - the work being austere, isolated and anchored to its site on the one hand, and a movement - the movement of a figure, almost shadow like, framed and captured within the work. This is highlighted by the intentional, ambiguous construction of the 'spectator as viewer', and 'spectator as viewed' in an arranged and manipulated situation. The urge behind this encounter with the sculptures, is, in my view, primarily pictorial. For example, it proceeds from visual images which I consider metaphorically as a still life. The work is conceptualised as being composed like a multi-layered still life - essentially a two-dimensional image comprising of the spatial quality determined by three-dimensional objects. In other words, I am suggesting that these three-dimensional objects are presented within a unified picture plane, likened to a stage set, where objects are viewed from a determined position which often creates an almost two-dimensional reading.

This concept plays on the voyeuristic character of the theatre and film performance, and our involvement and seduction into this realm. Voyeurism is of course a central component of the theatre. Whether we observe a live theatrical or cinematic production, essentially all we are doing is watching. We hear also, but what we listen to is that of a dialogue or series of sounds, determined by what we are observing.

Theatre is more than words alone. Theatre is not a reality that reaches us as pure words through our hearing alone. In the constructed performance of film and stage plays we see the characters move and gesture, the costumes, stage sets that mask the stage, the lighting and the visual landscapes that enhance or work independently with the dialogue and sounds of the actors.

When commenting or analysing a particular theatrical experience or movie, how often do we place more importance on the spoken aspect?. I would say generally our impressions are more determined by the visual experience - the scenery was amazing, great sets etc. The words we hear emanate from this visual spectacle. They are spoken with a particular gesture by an actor in a specific role in a specific situation. In the theatre words have a constitutive function, but it is a carefully specified one. The script is generally set or constructed in such a way that verbal improvisation is not considered.

Within the interior space of the movie set and live theatre there is a separation defined by the architecture or by the stage set - the areas allocated to stage/screen and the audience/actors. In this latter separation we have a duality represented by an intense hyperactivity - the actors, and the audience, characterized by a peculiar kind of passivity.

Ortega Y Gassett J. writes that :

> *"Apparently, theatre is a combination of hyperactive and hyperpassive people. As audience, we are hyperpassive because the little we do is the least one can imagine doing; we see, and that provisionally, is all we do... seeing, then is our primary and minimal task in the theatre." (1)*

The audience too, can be considered as being the viewed. I am seeing this from the eyes of a performer, looking out beyond the stage lighting or from the wings of a stage, to the depth of faces, whose eyes are intent and focused towards the action - themselves framed by the separation of stage and hall. The theatre can be considered therefore as an arrangement that serves two opposite, yet connected functions - seeing and being seen.

It is within this juxtaposition of players - that I find the basis for the figurative element in my work. I see this idea transferring also to the domestic stage - a generally passive environment - a stage in which we escape the turmoil of our working lives. It is place to be whomever we choose, to act out the domestic dramas, to watch, study and interact in our most voyeuristic moments - a place for the real, for the dreamer, and for the fantasizer.

In her essay *The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism*, Beatrux Colomina draws the reader's attention to voyeuristic devices employed by architect Adolf Loos.

The design of social spaces within Loos' house projects are laid out in such a way that raised sitting areas (which are likened to theatre boxes) allow its occupants

a comfort which is paradoxically produced by two seemingly opposing conditions, intimacy and control.
Colomina notes the psychological dimension of these small box-like spaces. For example in the Moller house, this raised sitting area provides the occupant with a vantage point that overlooks both interior and exterior views, allowing both a sense of intimacy and security.

This is achieved by the placement of its built-in furniture. It positions the person against the natural light, making it difficult to recognise the person in the box, from within the more open internal spaces of the room. Conversely, any intrusion would immediately be detected - just as an actor entering the stage is immediately seen by a spectator from the theatre box. (Fig 1)

She goes on to analyse the design of Loos' interiors:

> *"In Loos interiors the sense of security is not achieved by simply turnings one's back on the exterior and immersing oneself in a private universe - 'a box in the world theatre', to use (Walter) Benjamin's metaphor. It is no longer the house that is a theatre box; there is a theatre box inside the house, overlooking the internal social spaces. The inhabitants of Loos' houses are both actors in and spectators of the family scene - involved in, yet detached from, their own space. The classical distinctions between inside and outside, private and public, object and subject, becomes convoluted."*
> *(2)*

The very nature of this raised sitting area, can be considered as both a device that provides protection and draws attention to itself. From within the open spaces of the interior, the voyeur in his box also becomes the object of another gaze - caught in the act of seeing.

In framing a view, the theatre box - just as in public theatre, also frames the viewer within this space.

Object and subject therefore exchange places. In this case, architecture is not only a platform that accommodates the viewing subject - it is also a viewing mechanism that produces the subject. It precedes and frames its occupant. A house in this context can be seen as the stage for the theatre of its inhabitants. Whereas a work of art, a painting, or a sculpture for example, presents itself to critical attention as an object, the house is received more as an environment - as a stage.

One of the most seductive facets of theatre is the imaginary journey that entwines and leads the spectator. Theatre and film are the great exponents of the illusion of reality. They create a fictional reality into which the viewer is transported away from the reality of their surroundings and lives, into a montage of imagery and situations.

What we experience is achieved through a metamorphic process - a transformation from the real into the imaginary world. We see real objects, the sets, the actors but often we become contained by these images and are transported into another dimension, another time, and scenario. The visual metaphor of theatre becomes an ambiguous reality composed of two discrete ones: the reality of what we are seeing - the actor - sets etc and the reality of characters portrayed in the action. Each one constantly negates the other to produce pure fiction.

This process known as phantasmagoria, allows us to cross the frontier of two worlds: the reality of the theatre, and the imaginary, fictional phantasmagorical world of the stage and screen.

The stage provides the perfect convergence between actual and representational space. Scenography is one of the margins of architecture in which the bounds between pictures/images, and object are effaced. This conjunction is represented visually by the often exaggerated perspective of stage objects and props - or, in many instances, alluded to through the use of analogy to suggest a symbolic representation or function, by means of a two-dimensional image. Both techniques are often enhanced by the use of lighting to create a depth to the onstage characters or sets. This perspective representation literalizes a realm lying somewhere between actuality and illusion.

A street scene or architectural interior, to give an example, can be entered by the eye of a spectator, yet, because its recession is foreshortened or is a two-dimensional representation it is impossible to enter physically.

Phantasmagoria is not exclusive to the theatre though. It is characteristic of numerous visual art practices and objects which exist and operate outside of the theatrical sphere.

According to the now classic categories established by the linguist Charles Peirce, certain signs indicated by either analogy, correspondence (i.e shadows for people, maps for landscape etc), or ideas signified through association (sail = voyage), have a symbolic value. The model, in Pierce's terms therefore, is considered as an iconic sign, resembling its referent by sharing its characteristics.

The reduction of the architectural object to its geometric essence - to a sphere of reality, becomes in this context, an interesting repository of significance which allows the possibility for the transmigration of meanings and interpretations. In other words, by extracting different meanings, suggestions and interpretations from an object and conferring a symbolic association to it, one is able to present the object with a new reading.

The use of symbolic references is an obvious expression and intention of many stage and film set designers. By employing these methods they give the audience essentially the essence of objects rather than the exact representation; which in many instances would be logistically impossible.

The usage of partial and discontinuous sets, abstracted objects and images, allows the designer to convey through recreated forms crucial elements required for a particular drama.

They also allow the rhythm of the action and tension of the emotive characteristics of the play to unfold more powerfully through what is implied rather than what is stated explicitly.

In the following section of this paper I will be focussing on three areas of theatrical history that have been a valuable source of inspiration in the development of my own work.

Firstly, the German expressionist stage and film; followed by the Constructivist stage; and finally the contemporary work of American artist Robert Wilson - who has had the greatest impact upon my work.

Expressionism is generally considered not a style or even a set of rules but more an attitude of the mind and soul. Often it is summed up by two words - anguish and revolt.

Expressionism was first of all a literary movement, and then an artistic one. It was an attitude amongst artists of the time which led to an artistic movement, eventually permeating all the art disciplines, and was manifested in a variety of ways.

Lionel Richards in his book *Expressionism* writes;

> *"Born out of anguish and insecurity, expressionism is the manifestation of a revolt. For want of finding the equilibrium to which he aspired in the universe of immediate appearances, the material reality, and the society that surrounded him, man turned away from the external world and tried to dominate it by taking refuge in inner visions, thoughts and dreams. Naturalism, which only offered a reproduction of the external world that he attempted to escape from, was no longer able to satisfy him." (3)*

The expressionist theatre placed great importance on the role of the producer, affirming them the personal right to interpret and to be creative. The producer's main focus was to emphasize the idea behind the story, rather than the story of the drama. This conception of producing led to the significant use of symbolism and even to a certain abstraction in order to assure the maximum power of expression. Each scenic element expressed the core of the 'soul' or the idea. This involved the removal of all descriptive elements and realist imitation from the stage in order to express the essence of the drama - which was achieved through the antinaturalist acting technique, the symbolic use of the object, line and lighting.

The soul of expressionism was expressed through the body of the actors - who were considered to be the 'representatives of an idea, a feeling, a destiny'. (4)

Their jerky movements tended towards abstraction which conveyed the crucial points of the play. Often their movements were incomplete, the suggestion considered enough to give an indication of their meaning. Expressionist actors exteriorized emotions and psychic reactions in the most extreme of mannerisms. Gestures were exaggerated and distorted, facial expressions deformed by savage grimaces, body movements abrupt and incisive. The actor Fritz Kortner is considered by many critics as the actor who united all the qualities required. (Fig 2 & 3)

The expressionist distortion of gesture was the counterpoint to the distortion of objects of the stage set, which were generally dramatized, incorporating false perspectives, the substitution of oblique for vertical lines and a predilection for distortion. The stage set was therefore cleared of pictorial naturalism. The essential aim of the set was to dynamically underpin the plot of the drama.

German expressionist films, which I personally find intriguing in terms of their handling of the psychological stereotypes and expressionistic distortions illustrate phantasmagoria fantastically.

The complex usage of shadows and the manipulation of lighting sources are employed to create a strange illusionistic image. The interplay for example of figurative shadows and silhouettes with the reality of the visible characters not only fuses the decorative and ornamental use of shadows with the enigma of a particular scene but also illusion with reality.

In a scene from the 1923 film *Warning Shadows*, the interplay of shadows are used to illustrate the concept of human misunderstanding. Behind the curtains of a glass door the jealous husband spies upon shadowy hands approaching, then touching, the shadow of his wife. Another frame shows us the reverse of the situation; the vain young woman primping and preening herself, her admirers sketching the curves of her figure in the air with their hands. Later the husband bursts in upon what he believes to be two hands joining - when in fact they only touch as a result of the prolongation of the shadows. (Fig 4)

The ambiguity of the shadows in this film has according to the author of the book

The Haunted Screen Lotte H Eisner, a Freudian inspiration. She writes:

> *"The little illusionist, (the central character in the film) steals shadows and opens the flood-gates of the repressed unconscious desires of the other characters in the film, who suddenly start acting out their secret fantasies. In a momentous phantasmorgia shadows temporarily replace living beings, who become for a time passive spectators. " (5)*

These developments on the stage led to the historically important 1919 film *The Cabinet of Dr Caligary*. This film is about a madman telling a story to a mad woman. The sets create a disordered world which emphasizes the mental imbalance of the main characters. Deliberately distorted perspectives, narrow slanting street sets cutting across one another at unexpected angles - symbolically represent states of anxiety and terror. (fig 5) Evident also are a network of symbols, which are used to bring out the instinctive responses of the characters. These are often implied or suggested by the linear elements of the sets, or by the association of the characters. Cesare, who represents the symbol of subconscious aggressiveness, is associated with triangular forms. His victim, the young woman, is represented by vertical lines or slender curves.

The two characters, Cesare - the sleep-walkers, and the madman Dr Caligari, typify and conform to the expressionist conception. Lotte Eisner's analysis of these two characters is worth quoting here.

> *"Cesare ... detached from his everyday ambience, deprived of all individuality, an abstract creature, kills without motive or logic. And his master, the mysterious Dr Caligari, who lacks the merest shadow of human scruple, acts with the criminal insensibility and defiance of conventional morality which the Expressionists exacted. " (6)*

So how does this fit in with my own work?. I'm certainly not advocating the psychological responses of anxiety and terror from the viewers of my work. Rather, I am drawn to the expressionist concept of presenting the essence of the idea through the symbolic analogy of objects, which, reinforce and support the human intervention. I mentioned earlier my interest in the Expressionist use of distorted line. Much of the distortions within the film Dr. Caligari, lie in the basic graphic idea and can therefore be termed Expressionistic. The emphasis on vertical, horizontal and curved lines in my work stem partly from this interest.

For the Russian constructivist stage designers, the construction of a form was an important premise for aesthetic design. The stage was highly suited to their ideals. It gave them the opportunity to realize the artistic expression of creating an environment of participatory involvement which was denied in other art practices, such as the industrial arts and to a degree architecture. This was due in part to economic considerations as well as for practical reasons such as construction time. The theatre provided for a more instant result.

Theatre, which is based on physical activity was extremely receptive to the active character of constructivism. The visual aspects were merged with the theatrical obstacles and barriers of the sets, and brought to life by the action of the actors. The stage was treated as a three-dimensional space, sometimes divided up into differing levels and often totally dissolved into a machine of scaffolding for the actors.

Vservolod Meyerhold is considered one of the most influential of the Russian theatrical producers from this period. His 1920 stage production *Les Aubes* (The Dawns) with sets designed by Vladimir Dmitriev, is regarded as a turning point away from his previous productions which were characterized by rich decorativeness and painterly illusionistic sets. *Les Aubes* marked a move towards a more nonobjective and utilitarian set design. (Fig 6)

Livbov Popova's construction for his 1922 play *The Magnanimous Cuckold* is considered a significant break through in stage design. It was a construction that could function anywhere, not just on the stage. (Fig 7)

George Kovalenko writes that... *"Essentially it was a spatial formula whose components, as well as their interactions and correlations, were abstracted and reduced to a minimal level of expression..."* (7)

Kovalenko's observations of the actors' involvement with the construction has been of tremendous value from a personal perspective in reaching decisions as to how I see my work performing as voyeuristic props within the private, domestic theatre. He writes of the *Magnanimous Cuckold* set:

> *"It was through action that Popova's construction came to life. Energy seemed to pulse through all the crossbeams and planes, stimulating the performance of the actors. A reverse relationship also appeared to exist. The plastic movements of the actors exposed the energetic dynamic of the construction and made it possible to observe its singular graphic purity, the harmony of its linear rhythms. In performance, action and construction were inseparable."* (8)

In looking at the period of the constructivist theatre, I have also been drawn to the

work of the Weimar Bauhaus theatre workshop that operated under the direction of

Oscar Schlemmer. Schlemmer designed sets for traditional operas and ballets, as

seen in the watercolour drawing

for the 1921 drama *Morden, Hoffnung des Frauen* as well as working on a number

of more 'utopian and experimental productions.' (Fig 8)

His *Triadic Ballet* which premiered in Stuttgart in 1922 stems from his artistic

experience as a painter and sculptor. This unconventional ballet, or form of dance

constructivism, is not only a combination of costume, pantomime, music and dance,

but also signals a revolutionary approach to the use of the stage as a vehicle for

figurative expression. The plot of the ballet is achieved in the development of its

visual elements. Schlemmer therefore, challenged the conception of the figurative

movement within the space of the stage. He achieved through a sculptural solution,

the synthesis of man and marionette, and, of the natural and the artificial figure.

(Fig 9)

Oscar Schlemmer's innovations and contributions to the theatrical medium continues

to influence either directly or indirectly many visual artists working in this field

today. Along with others from the Bauhaus, Schlemmer attempted to integrate the

visual plane of painting with the spatial depth of the stage. For example, line,

colour, volume and lighting were used to activate the theatrical space, using the

human figures predominantly as either mechanical or anonymous components of the

overall visual design.

The Bauhaus theatre, the Russian constructivists, along with the Italian futurists, drew their sources and inspirations from man and his relation to the machine, abandoning traditional narratives and plots in the process. In its place they offered what could be termed a metaphysical vision of man, and his position in regards to society and the world. Schlemmer's approach to his artistic expression is summed up in the following quote - a philosophy that I have found to be enlightening in the anchoring of my work in a personal context:

> " *I struggle between two souls in my breast - one painting - oriented, or rather philosophical -artistic; the other theatrical; or to put it bluntly, an ethical soul and an aesthetic one.*"
> *(9)*

This philosophy also holds true when considering the practice of the contemporary and inspiring American artist Robert Wilson.

The work of Robert Wilson is in my view a synthesis of all the elements I have discussed in this paper. Discovering his work has been an absolute revelation - confirming my own approaches to the act of creating images and objects.

His work is best described as being a theatre of visions, an artist's theatre. Some critics have used the phrase 'metaphysical extravaganzas' after observing his productions. His theatrical output range from about ten major works of immense scale to numerous solo, duo, and trio performances. His major productions which he calls operas are often extremely long - anywhere up to 7 hours is common, to the extreme case of *Ka Mountain and Guardenia: a story about a family and some people changing* acted over a 7 day period.

His output is both controlled and intense. The powerful aspect of Wilsons' theatre is in his ability to exhibit the simplicity, of an idea, and to capture the essence and present to the viewer its image. His creative interests include painting, sculpture, theatre, architecture as well as the structure of dance and music. In my mind he is the consummate artist.

Robert Wilson emerged from the Polemical atmosphere of the 1960's New York visual art scene, in which controversy raged over the issues of theatricality in art. In keeping with the pluralist sensibility of the 1970's, in which he was part, Wilson's work has ranged diversely and ambitiously in many directions. Whether in design, the fine arts, or theatre, his work challenges the hierarchies that traditionally limit relationships between various art forms and means of expression.

Robert Stern in this catalogue essay of the exhibition *Robert Wilson: from a Theatre of Images* writes:

> " *Robert Wilson is about showing us things that exist. He shows us what people do. He does not tell us why they exist. As in dreams, shapes and actions present themselves, disappear and return in other forms. We as the dreamers may be delighted, surprised or terrified, but the dream is independent and can't be controlled. Awake we analyse, interpret and try to find meaning. But Wilson's art is as elusive as the stuff of dreams. His theatre is of images. He paints, constructs and architects the space of the stage and the time of our viewing with events, coincidence and objects which animate his personal and visionary landscapes.* " (10)

Wilson's theatre is well known for its subordination of text to design. He draws rather than scripts his plays, beginning not with verbal notation but with black and white atmospheric drawings which are then transported to the stage in the way of set and lighting designs. His opera, which came to the Melbourne Arts festival, the

1976 *Einstein on the Beach* is constructed in this manner. Consisting of 113 'cinematic stills', it depicts four basic motifs which are the structural divisions of the play. Each frame represents a continuity of the visual aspect of *Eienstein on the Beach*. (Fig 10) This method of developing a work can be compared to the process of editing a film. For Wilson, frames of thoughts, experiences, previous images, time, space and colour are suspended in memory. By cutting and splicing, a work emerges as the collected images are collated through the ordering of images. What the viewer sees as the final result is often a multilayered picture composed of both two and three-dimensional objects.

The action in Wilson's productions are therefore, integral to the backdrop, forming ultimately a united pictorial field. Scenes and characters move incredibly slowly so as not to disturb the integrity of any single picture and may last some time before dissolving into a new frame. The Russian productions of Vsevolod Meyerhold employed similar acting techniques, with the characters chanting their words slowly, their movements likened to the gravity of a church ritual. The intention for Wilson though is to allow the viewer time to absorb all the details and perceive its overall visual and aural patterns.

Trained as an architect, it is not surprising that Wilson regards the stage not only as a flat picture plane but also as a sculptural volume to be composed. His stage furniture is crucial to the plot of the performance, but often contradicts the supporting role that furniture generally plays. For example, the two beach chairs in *Death, Destruction and Detroit* offer tense repose for two figures who hide behind newspapers - which are really metal sun reflectors.

The polished surface and metal head-rests challenge the standard connotations of relaxation at the beach. Wilson is perhaps suggesting through their harsh forms a visionary insight into the possibility of a mechanised, industrial world and how we will behave in it, in our moments of leisure. (Fig 11)

Reinforcing our need to look at, and to perceive a syntax in his language of images, Wilson sometimes offers pairs of objects. They suggest the importance of relationships over the isolated and singular incident or object. Because his furniture is embodied with such a strong sense of meaning and aura, objects of both ritual and spectacle, they can be considered as pieces that evoke in the viewer, ones own imaginative dramatization. Wilson's furniture becomes props that allow one to create ones own play.

The two matching chairs used in his 1974 opera *A Letter to Queen Victoria*, are thronelike and animated in appearance. With inserted lights, they face each other. Each keeps the other covered in an adversary stand off, like stalemated chess kings. (Fig 12) In other productions, the furniture is used to reinforce the design of the stage set, as in the polished steel 'patio sofa' which reiterate the sharp rectangular planes of the set in the 1977, *I Was Sitting On My Patio This Guy Appeared I Thought I Was Hallucinating* . The steel sofa also reflects and catches the light which is a dominant feature of this play. (Fig 13)

Wilson's theatre balances between the imaginary and the real - between actual and symbolic representation. He insists that meaning depends on so many factors that it is pointless to ascribe a single interpretation - however obvious it might seem - to a given work of art. For Robert Wilson, things are perceived differently depending upon the time, space and frame or context in which they are presented.

The intention of any artist, is in my view, to stretch our awareness of these conditions. The message behind his opera *Deafmans Glance* is a useful analogy in this regard, and a suitable one with which I would like to leave the reader. In this opera, Wilson wants to teach us to listen with our whole bodies, as a deaf person must, and not only with our ears; and to see, with a similarly expanded sensibility.

Fig. 1 Adolf Loos, Moller House, Vienna, 1928.
The raised sitting area off the living room.

Fig. 2 & 3   Expessionist Gesture.
Fritz Kortner in 'Warning Shadows' 1923.

Fig. 4 Phantasmagoria.
'Warning Shadows' 1923.

Fig. 5 Expressionist stage architecture.
'The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari'   1919.

Fig. 6   Maquette
'Les Aubes' 1920.

Fig. 7 Maquette
'The Magnanimous Cuckold' 1922.

Fig. 8 Oscar Schlemmer
Watercolour drawing for
'Morden Hoffnung Des Frauen' 1921.

Fig. 9 Oscar Schlemmer
'Triadic Ballet' 1922.

Fig. 10   **Robert Wilson**
Part of 113 drawn images for
'Einstein On The Beach' 1976.

Fig. 11   Robert Wilson, Beach Chairs.
                 'Death, Destruction and Detroit' 1976.

Fig. 12   Robert Wilson, Queen Victoria Chairs.
                 'A Letter To Queen Victoria' 1974.

Fig. 13   Robert Wilson, Steel Sofa.
                 'I Was Sitting On My Patio This Guy Appeared I
                 Thought I Was Hallucinating' 1977.

NOTES

1. Ortega, Y. & Gassett, J. *'The Idea Of Theatre: an
    Abbreviated View'*, in *Phenomenology and
    Art*, W.W. Nerlon & Co., Paris. (1975: 173)

2. Colomina, B. *'The Split Wall:Domestic Voyeurism'*,in
    Sexuality & Space, Princeton Architectural
    Press, New York. (1992: 79-80)

3. Richards, L. *Expressionism*, Prestel Publishers,
    Munich. (: 187)

4. ibid.

5. Eisner, L.H. *The Haunted Screen - Expressionism in
    the German Cinema and the influence of Max
    Reinhardt*, University of California
    Press, California. (1973: 136)

6. ibid., p. 26.

7. Kovalenko, G. *Theatre In Revolution, Russian
    Avant-Garde Stage Design,1913-1935*, Van
    Norman Baer, N. (Ed.), Thames & Hudson,
    San Francisco. (: 143)

8. ibid.

9. Stein, R. *Robert Wilson, From A Theatre Of Images*
    The Contemporary Arts Centre, Cincinnati.
    (1980: 67)

10. ibid., p. 23.

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Droste, M. *Bauhaus - Bauhaus Archiv 1919-1933*,
    Bauhaus-Archiv Museum fur Gestaltung,
    Berlin. (1990)

2. Rischbieter, H. *Art and the Stage in the Twentieth
    Century: Painters and Sculptors for the
    Theatre*, New York Graphic Society,
    Greenwich, Conneticut.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1   Adolf Loos, Moller House, Vienna, 1928.
                The raised sitting area off the living
                room.

Fig. 2 & 3   Expessionist Gesture.
                Fritz Kortner in 'Warning Shadows' 1923.

Fig. 4   Phantasmagoria.
                'Warning Shadows' 1923.

Fig. 5   Expressionist stage architecture.
                'The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari' 1919.

Fig. 6   Maquette
                'Les Aubes' 1920.

Fig. 7   Maquette
                'The Magnanimous Cuckold' 1922.

Fig. 8   Oscar Schlemmer
                Watercolour drawing for
                'Morden Hoffnung Des Frauen' 1921.

Fig 9.   Oscar Schlemmer
                'Triadic Ballet' 1922.

Fig. 10   Robert Wilson
                Part of 113 drawn images for
                'Einstein On The Beach' 1976.

Fig. 11   Robert Wilson, Beach Chairs.
                'Death, Destruction and Detroit' 1976.

Fig. 12   Robert Wilson, Queen Victoria Chairs.
                'A Letter To Queen Victoria' 1974.

Fig. 13   Robert Wilson, Steel Sofa.
                'I Was Sitting On My Patio This Guy
                Appeared I

                Thought I Was Hallucinating' 1977.

M.F.A.   DOCUMENTATION

STUDY PROPOSAL
May 1992

The basis of my research will be an investigation of

a

synthesis between Architecture and furniture.

I am stimulated by the possibilities presented within
the interchangeable nature of these two mediums.
Their linear and conceptual similarities provide the
points upon which to create a new and personal
definition.

My study will draw upon the historical elements of
traditional Architectural and Furniture styles.
Further I will examine the theoretical concerns
exposed in the development and exploration of this
synthesis.

Initially I will be looking at presenting a level of
ambiguity to this syntax by creating 3-dimensional
'still lifes'. The compositional images are derived
from a broad spectrum of Architectural styles and
idioms together with the hemetics of the 'houses of
things', drawers, chests, cabinets etc.

The primary focus will be to juxtapose Architecture
with furniture, thereby creating a postmodern
language where spatial possibilities are re-examined.

The intention behind my study proposal is to
develop and extend upon the boundaries I
established in the Honours Programme. The new
collection of sculptural pieces will initially
draw upon references from this work, which, was
influenced through the readings of what Gaston
Bachelard, in his book 'Poetics of Space' referred
to as the 'Houses of things', ie cupboards,
drawers,   chests, etc.

The Honours programme recognizes a major shift in
direction from previous work and therefore serves as
a suitable basis in which I propose to find both a
practical and theoretical resolution in my Masters
research.

I confess to being largely influenced by images in
seeking inspiration and stimulation for my own work. The
two dimensional format of books, magazines, and
television and movie screens allow for an imaginative
mind to be constantly challenged and stimulated.

My sculptures therefore are derived from this data,
rather than from a written text. The analysis of my
working process through the format of the written word,
which is not my chosen medium, has to considered as
perhaps not as reliable as the work to speak for itself.

My words can only serve as a premise to the physical
work, which ultimately has to carry over when words
themselves cannot. For an artist who has a burning desire
to constantly question and recreate objects in a three-
dimensional expression, my words can only be viewed as
arrows that point in the right direction.
This documentation is a collection of personal thoughts,
both written and drawn, images and quotes, that when
taken together form a map of my artistic intentions for
this present collection of sculpture.

THE PHENOMENON OF DRAWN ARCHITECTURE

In deciding to limit my architectural references from two dimensional sources, I have being intrigued, not only by the large amount of drawn designs and photographs of the architectural model, but also the evidence of the disintegration between the boundaries of traditional art practices and architecture. The aim of this investigation was primarily to establish a starting point from which to construct a compositional form, seen in a personal context, as a three dimensional still life. What has evolved through this process, has been the introduction of a theoretical vein, a personal questioning of how and what journey my practical work will take.

Questions such as : What aspects of architecture am I drawn towards?, why are these forms so inspiring?, and what theoretical concerns have informed this particular architectural style?, have served as a premise for my investigation.

My initial fascination in the two dimensional references has being the obvious presentation of what could be termed the utopian nature of the drawn designs.

Two dimensional architecture flourished around the turn of the 20th century, where it also is regarded as being essentially utopian or futuristic in character.

Architecture at this time emerged out of scientific developments, the human control over nature, and also the shift in human consciousness which led to the disciplines such as sociology and aesthetic concerns.

Many architects at this time thought that architecture could contribute to the improvement of society. The Frenchman, Etienne-Louis Boule and English architect Jeremy Bentham are two examples that I have researched. Boule's imagination was influenced by the scientific discoveries of the time, such as those by sir Issac Newton. His designs were obviously not restricted by the limited construction knowledge to build such monumental structures, rather, the main emphasis is in the actual conception of the idea. Much of his work therefore are idealised landscape drawings in which the architecture becomes the most important aspect or player.

Bentham on the other hand was interested in the control over the human character. He was obsessed with a device he called the Panoptican. Through the application of basic geometry , Bentham devised a system of control and power over a mass of people. The invention, primarily intended as a prison, could for him, be adapted to a broader use, such as factories, hospitals and educational facilities. Bentham considered the panoptic design to be the solution in creating the perfect social and political

system.   (1)

Lauren Ewing , a contemporary American sculptor has drawn
her influence for an installation work directly from
Bentham's design. This sculpture is a condensed scale ,
architectual representation, that deals with the issues
of the control of power , from a central position, over
other situations. Ewings work, generally modelled after
large public buildings, focuses on the symbolic roles of
this type of architecture. Ewing intending them to be
metaphors for the mind.

Utopian architects in the early twentieth century also
formulated a huge array of designs for what they viewed
as the new world, a architecture of the mind and soul.
Most projects remain purely hypothetical, few had any
real chance of being realized due to the technical and
engineering constraints of the time. Beyond the practical
considerations, the forms of designs such as the
Futurist's towers and aerial architecture, reflected the
subliminal aspirations for a better world from the period
that had preceded it.
                                                     In a
contemporary context, two streams of drawn architecture
can be identified, both influencing the artistic approach
and direction of its followers.

Pierluigi Nicolin writes in the architectural publication
of 'Lotus International' that the phenomenon of drawn
architecture in the 1980's emerged out of the debates
that raged in the 60's over the purposes of architecture
and the role of the architect. This was a period in which
substantive doubt about the function of design from a
theoretical position dominated. According to Nicolin,
these discussions only ended up overburdening
architecture with duties and expectations, committing it
to objectives that were totally unattainable.

              *Drawn architecture started from highly
        ambiguous premises. It expressed a silence
              that followed the tumults of '68 while still
              bearing the echo of numerous ideological
              developments and contributing to their
              negation. The oxymoron, "I'm an architect,
              that's why I don't   build," a slogan
that was   common at one time, embodied a
certain   stubbornness that was both a
rejection and a   romantic appeal.* (2)

These two streams or souls are identified by Nicolin as
being theoretical in its concerns, and one that leans
towards a form of unconscious utopian ideal.

1. The theoretical soul was embodied in the aspiration to
produce a treatise of architecture , the study of a
specified textural characteristic of architecture as a
discipline. This approach reflected the desire for an in
depth study , a search for its inner rules. In this sense
it focuses on the metaphysical features of the material
nature of architecture - apart from the sociological or
political factors.

This search therefore aims to clarify the discipline of
architecture , by attempting to indicate its inner
structures. This soul contains certain ` structuralist '
premises which serve as a basis for the present `De-
constructionist' current of contemporary architecture.

2. The utopian soul has influenced what is currently
referred to as the ` Post Modern Classical 'style of
architectural design, supplying this form of
architectural expression with its references and images.

Another important issue that presents itself through the
drawn architectural image, is the pluralistic quality
evident in the designs of the forms. This I believe to
be reflective of a society that remains entangled in a
period that is dominated by the image.

(1)   Bentham, Jeremy, Panoptic. Works of Jeremy
                 Bentham
                       Russell and Russell, N.Y.1962
       Perouse de Montclos, Jean-Marie,
                       Etienne-Louis Boule,
                 Thamas and Hudson, London 1974

                                                    (2

)   Lotus International
       # 63
       ed. Pierlugi Nicolin
       `Other Acquisitions' p.5

A PLURALISTIC APPROACH

Reflecting on the past two years of my artistic
progression and maturity, I have come to recognise,
acknowledge and pursue a very pluralistic approach to the
conception and making of sculpture. My research has
therefore focused on two dimensional examples in the
visual arts, including its most visible form,
architecture, which reflect a similar approach to
artistic expression by the artists, designers and
architects, of the projects that I have looked at.

The visual arts in an age of Pluralism are fraught with
ambiguous references and interpretations. Responses to my
own work echo this characteristic and it is something
which has been intentional on my part in my personal
enquiry and progression of the present body of work.

My current work sits firmly within the boundaries of
issues pertaining to complexity and ambiguity. Often it
is difficult to decode any one single meaning or
intention from it, not only from the perspective of a
spectator viewing it for the first time but also even
from a personal investigation, different meanings and
readings are obtainable depending on the stage of its
evolution. I confess to it being largely embedded within
my own thoughts and ideas, with fragments of memories,
experiences and intuitive responses, converging into a
compositional image that eventually determines the
physical peices. `This process can be likened to the
'stills' of a constantly changing cinematic or theatrical
experience with certain images retaining a stronger
presence than others.

I wrote a paper in my Honours year on the writings of New
York art critic Robert Pincus Witten. The research of
this paper lead me to the work of the Minimalist and
Postminimalist sculptors prominent at this time. Many of
these artists, emerging out of the polemical atmosphere
current of this period, adopted a plurist sensibility in
their work, taking on board a wide range of issues and
ideas. Sculptors such as Richard Serra, Roberts' Smithson
and Morris, Sol le Witt, Marry Miss, and Alice Aycock,
amongst others, had a profound effect in a personal
context. The sculptures of this period have influenced
how I have come to look much more closely on
architectural qualities and concerns as a major source
for the Masters work.

My interest in architecture lies primarily with elements
such as spatial concerns, surface and constructional
details and how these issues can be alluded to through a
sculptural representation. Linked to this aspect is also
the intellectual questioning of how architectural forms
function from both a sculptural and architectural
premise, and how these objects behave within both an open
or enclosed space.

My interest in these issues , ie pluralistic sources and architectural references , have drawn me to the sculpture of contemporary American artist Martin Puryear. In an essay on Puryear ,Neal Benezra writes on the enormous variety of approaches evident in the sculptors work.

His experience and understanding of the art, craft and thought of numerous cultures on several continents has encouraged a pluralism of the creative spirit that is perhaps unparalleled in contemporary art ....Puryear has consistently avoided the temptation to narrow his outlook. By exploring and embracing , rather than excluding and refining, Puryear has been able to create a body of work that is rich with the possibilities of the unseen. (1)

Benezra begins this essay by quoting an extract from 'The Unknown Craftsman' , a series of essays written on Eastern craft aesthetics by Soetsu Yanagi. I have found this extract to be enlightening , confirming my own predilection of employing a wide range of interests and sources in determining a body of work. '

The title of Benezra's essay 'The Thing Shines, Not The Makers' is I believe the essence of the act of the artistic expression. The art object ultimately has to stand on its own, has to possess its own aura, which conveys to the viewer the efforts and intentions of its makers concerns or investigation. The role of the artist is to give life to the object , and in the process to accept its entity and move on to new challenges and ideas.

(1) Benezra, Neal   'The Thing Shines, Not The Maker'
     in *The Sculpture of Martin Puryear.*

ANCHORING

Anchoring in a personal context refers to my search for a
theoretical and practical solution for resolving the
final form and context of my master submission.

This has been very much a journey which began with the
proposal to create a compositional form from
architectural furniture and sculptural sources,
concluding with what I consider to be the appropriate
theatrical context in which the pieces have come to be
situated.

The three critique sessions indicate major shifts of this
journey, each one indicative of the evolution process.

In Crit. 1. I presented 4 maquettes, consisting of
isolated and grouped abstract forms. These maquettes I
considered to be 3 dimensional studies, drawing my
inspiration directly from architectural forms. My
fascination at this time was primarily on presenting the
architectural model within the context of a gallery
situation and how the viewer responds to them. From a
personal perspective, these models crossed established
traditional boundaries between the disciplines of art and
architecture, and as a result operate within a grey area.
My interest lay in the issues of representation and
objecthood of the model, which for me not only allowed an
imaginative occupation, but acted as models that I
planned to enlarge to a substantial life size scale. The
surface was treated in limewashes, or built up by hand
drawn layers of graphite, pastel, paint and wax.

Crit 2. saw one of these maquette realised in life size
and was presented as part of a three person sculpture
exhibition at the Fine Arts Gallery. This exhibition
allowed me to experiment in a larger scale. I considered
this piece to be a large still life, that I saw residing
within a large domestic space. I conceived this work as
not only dividing architectural space from a sculptural
perspective, but also functioning in an utilitarian
mode. The four forms - large sculptural containers -
consisted of shelves, cupboards and open interior spaces.

I felt a sense of disappointment with this piece
recognising that to conceive these pieces from a
furniture angle, I had compromised too much on the actual
relationship of forms. The positive side of this
critique was that I realised that the piece worked much
better in its 2 dimensional representation. This
information affirmed a more honest approach to the next
constructed pieces, treating the work as objects within a
unified picture plane of a stage.

The decision also came to move away from trying to
represent the utilitarian role of furniture in a
conventional manner ie containers, towards a more 2-
dimensional representation. This decision led to working
with the idea of the screen, an item of furniture popular
at an earlier part of this century.

Crit. 3. saw the introduction of a more focused and
resolved form. I had realised that I needed to eliminate
and hone in on specific architectural details such as the
curved wall, and the vertical aspects of architecture,
using steel to achieve a more austere surface. The
result of this crit has been a more serious move towards
the direction of theatrical props. Connected to this
decision has been the notions of the voyeristic character
of the human figure on both a domestic and public stage.

Alex Danko, a visiting Art Forum speaker, introduced me
to the work of Robert Wilson, seeing a strong connection
with my aims, ideas and intentions. To Alex Danko, I am
truly grateful for his interest, enthusiasm and time,
which affirmed and inspired the direction that my journey
was to eventually steer.

My other interest in 'Anchoring', came through my
research of architectural theories, and the strong
influence of site specific sculpture, especially of work
that called into question many architectural concerns.

Anchoring in relation to both these forms of artistic
expression, concerns what I propose to be the connection
of a building or site specific work to its site and how
the experiential quality of that site determines in what
shape and form a specific sculpture or build form will
take.

The first choice to be made when conceptualising a
project in this manner is to select the place in which
the construction will be built. By this process, the
site is chosen for human intervention. By altering this
site a bond between a building, or site specific
sculpture, and the geography is achieved. In this
context a building or sculpture is bound to a place, its
very existence linked to the experience of that place.
American architect, Steven Holl writes that:

"In the process of imposing itself on the site, a
building enters into a relationship where it connects
with a place to make a metaphysical connection." (1)

This connection is of similar nature in each of these
disciplines.

(1)   Steven Holl *Anchoring* Princeton Architectural Press
          New York. (1991: 9)

ARCHITECTURAL QUOTES

The following quotes and personal thoughts have been
selected from a wide range of architectural related
reading and personal notes. These quotes have been
influential in my process of finding a theoretical basis
and definition in which to locate my work.

"When we speak of ships,
others think of shipwreckage.
We, however, think of wind-inflated
white sails.

When we speak of eagles,
the others think of a bird.
We, however, are talking about the
wing span.

When we speak of black panthers,
the others think of predatory animals.
We, however, think of the untamed
dangerousness of architecture.

When we speak of leaping whales,
others think of saurians.
We, however, think of 30 tons of
flying weight.
We won't find architecture in an
encyclopedia.
Our architecture can be found where
thoughts move faster than hands to
grasp it."

Wolf D. Prix
Coop Himmelblau

Coop Himmelblau

Walter Benjamin noted that the:

"original form of any mode of dwelling is that of living,
not in a house, but in a shell. This bears the mark of
its inhabitant. The dwelling turns into a shell."
R. Tiedmann.

Architecture from a traditional perspective has primarily
been thought of as a shelter. It supported, enclosed and
provided privacy and protection from weather.

Peter Eisenman writes that:

"shelter can also exist in the mind as an idea. It can
be said to be the first idea or principal of
architecture, and as such, a basic part of the
metaphysics of architecture."

        Architecture has always been as much about the
event or experience that takes place in a space, as about
the space itself. Today we are observing the complete
interchangeability of form and function. In Post-
modernism, function does not follow form, form does not
follow function. They of course interact, often to
primarily produce an effect or provide a particular
intended experience. Architecture in this context is a
combination of spaces, experiences and movements - with
no longer any hierarchy or precedence amongst these
concepts.

"The first gesture of living is take possession of space.
Man and beast, trees and clouds, the fundamental
manifestation of equilibrium and permanence, the first
proof of existence is to occupy space."
Le Corbusier
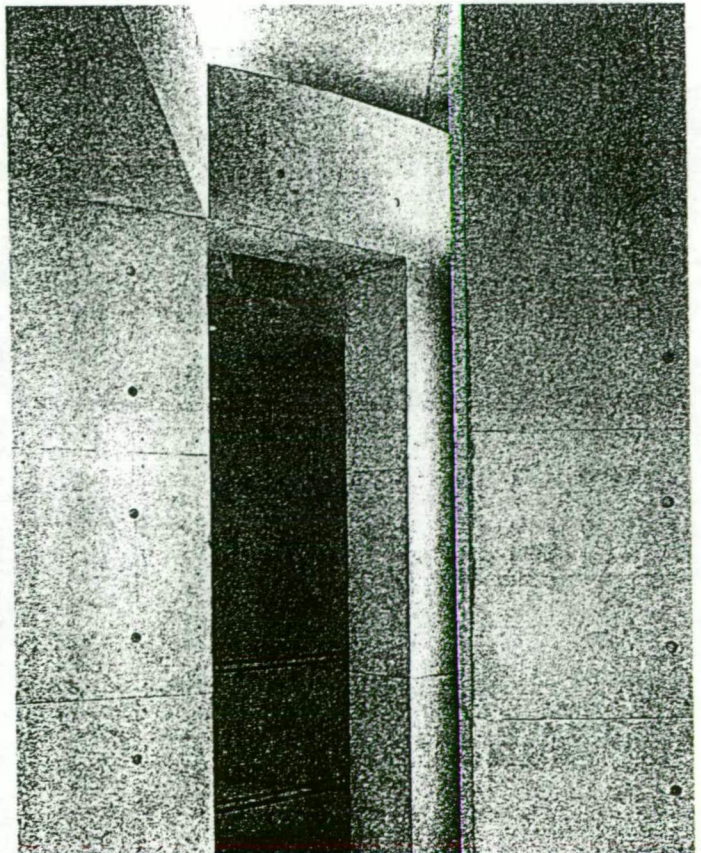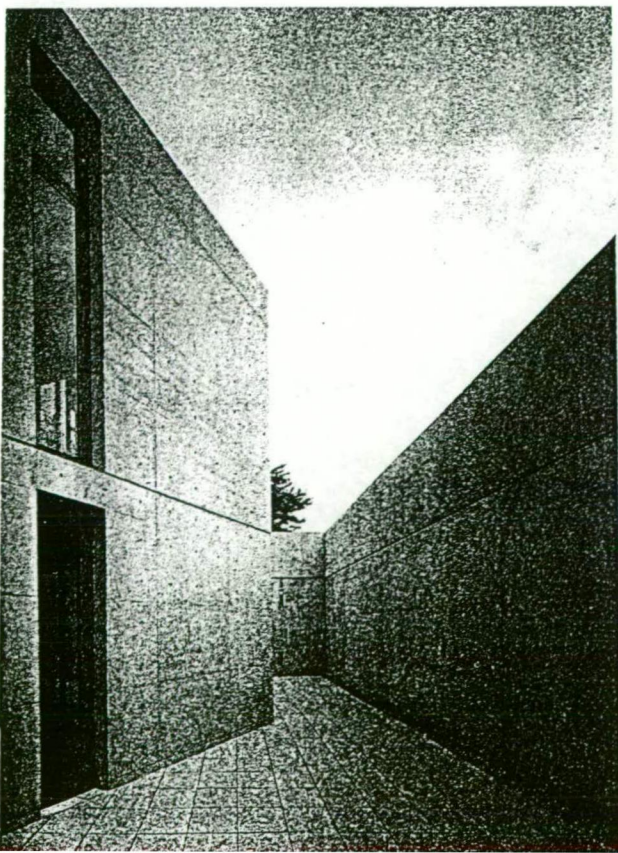
"The desire to build a house is essentially romantic. It
is an urge to stake out a corner of the world in which
take root and dream."
G. Bachelard
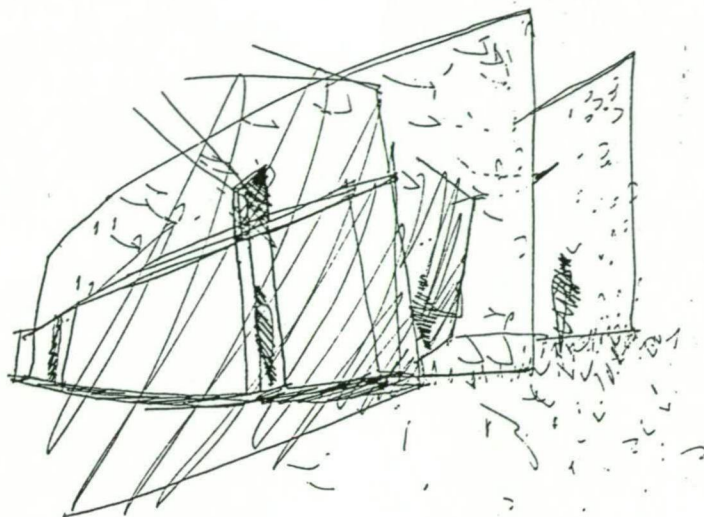
Just as the empty space awaits the performance, the
architecture of the city depends upon the participation
of its occupants to bring it to life. Architecture
serves as the necessary backdrop for the dramas of daily
life.
The architectural form, like all art objects allows for
the improvisation of imagination and memories.
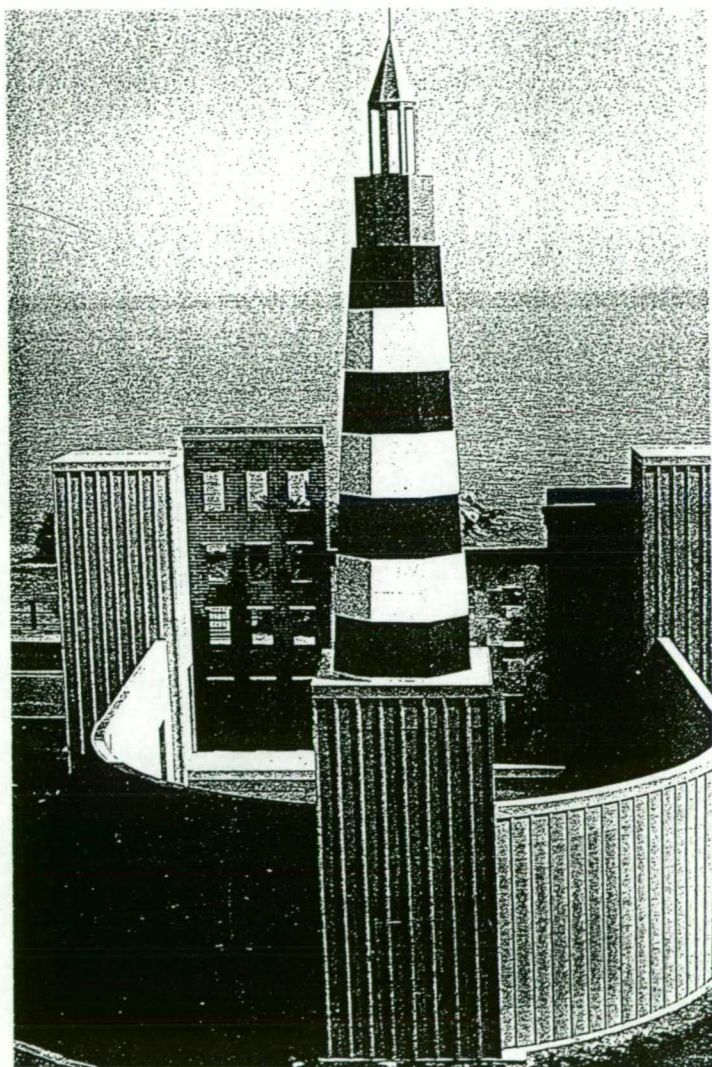
"... its too pretty, its not dealing with reality. I see
reality as harsher, people bite each other. My taste of
things comes from that point of view"
Frank Gehry
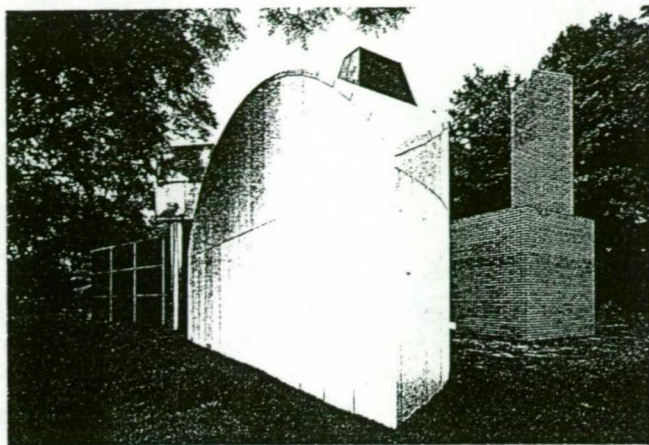
"When the artists and sculptors I know work, theres a
sort of free play idea. You try things, you experiment.
Its kind of naive and childish, its like kids in a play-
pen. Scientists work that way too - for example, genetic
scientists that I have been involved with (through a
genetic foundation that I work with) seem to work
similarly. Its kind of like throwing things out and then
following the ideas, rather than predicting where you're
going to go."
Frank Gehry.
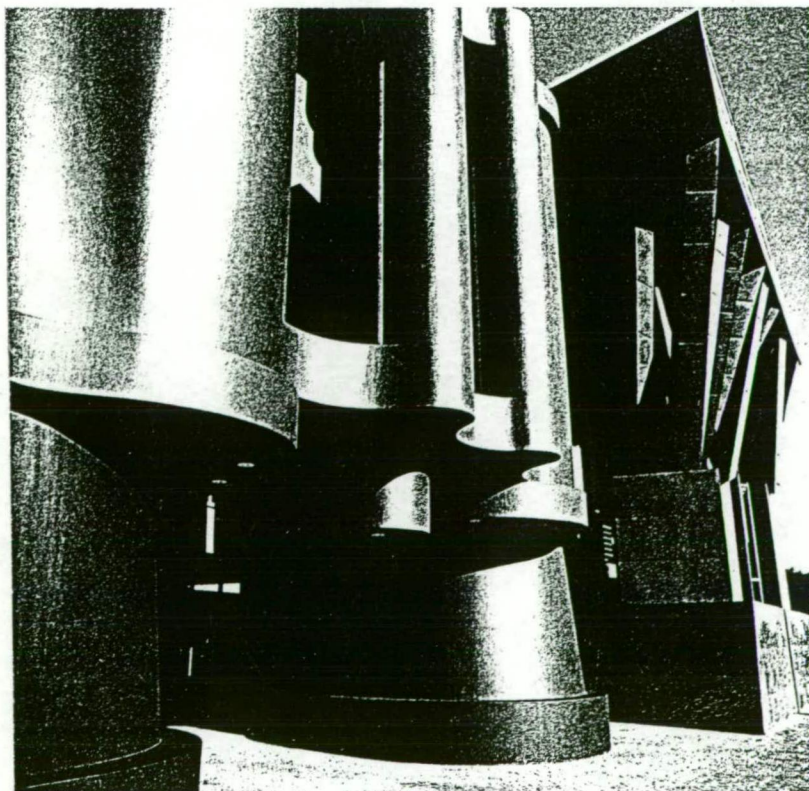
"The work of art aims at shattering man's comfortable
complacency. A house must serve one's comfort. The work
of art is revolutionary, the house conservative. The
work of art points man in the direction of new paths and
thinks to the future. The house thinks of the present.
Man loves everything that serves his comfort. He hates
everything that wants to tear him away from his secure
and safe position, and is burdensome. And so he loves
the house and hates art."
Adolf Loos.
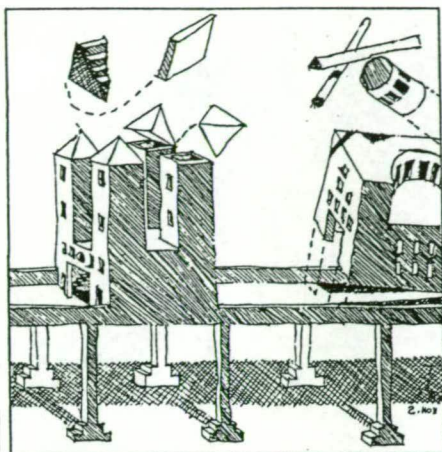
"Architecture is not an illustrative art; it does not illustrate theories (I do not believe you can design deconstruction). You cannot design a new definition of the city and its architecture. But you may be able to design the conditions that will make it possible for this non hierachical, non-traditional society to happen. By understanding the nature of our contemporary circumstances and the media processes that go with it, architects are in a position to construct conditions that will create a new city and new relationships between spaces and events."
Bernard Tschumi.
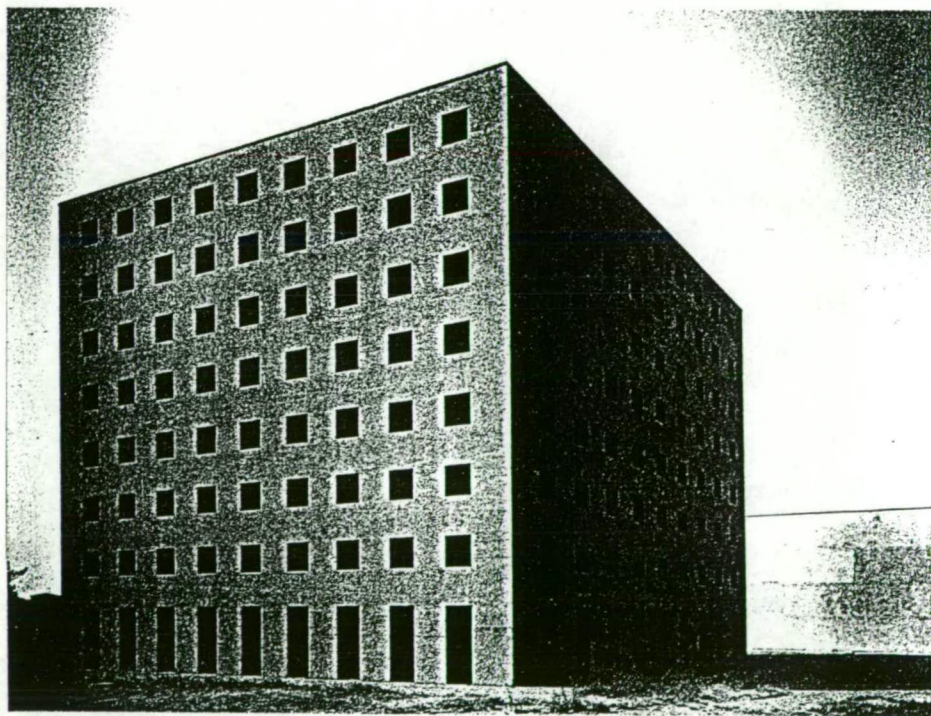
Aldo rossi

"We want architecture to have
more. Architecture that bleeds,
that exhausts, that whirls and
even breaks. Architecture that
lights up, that stings, that rips,
and under stress tears.
Architecture should be cavernous,
firey, smooth, hard, angular, brutal round, delicate,
colourful, obscene, voluptuous,
dreamy, alluring, repelling, wet,
dry and throbbing. Alive or
dead. Cold - then cold as a block of ice.
Hot - then hot as a blazing wing.
Architecture must blaze.
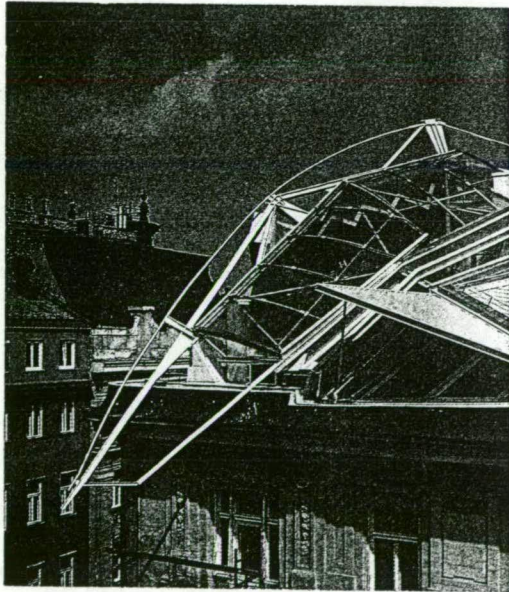
Coop Himmelblau

"The human subject is architecture's centre. This is
literally true, no metaphor. Architecture is not
designed around a recollection or an image, but to serve
a fact, two-legged and vertical, air-breathing and
susceptible to colds, happy and afraid, full of moods.
Nonhabitable architecture is a perfect oxymoron. This
means that all building (and outbuilding) is finally
prosthetic, about extension, about extra eyes and ears,
big new noses, long sinewy legs, vast foliate lungs. If
architecture provides not enhancement to experience, who
needs it. Otherwise let its tasks be taken up by other
arts...
The answer's to keep working, priming our pumps: more
will always be more. But I repeat: lets not spend too
much time in front of the mirror. Architecture wants to
be anthropomorphic in content but not always form - woman
is not the only measure, just the only reason.
          Michael Sorkin.
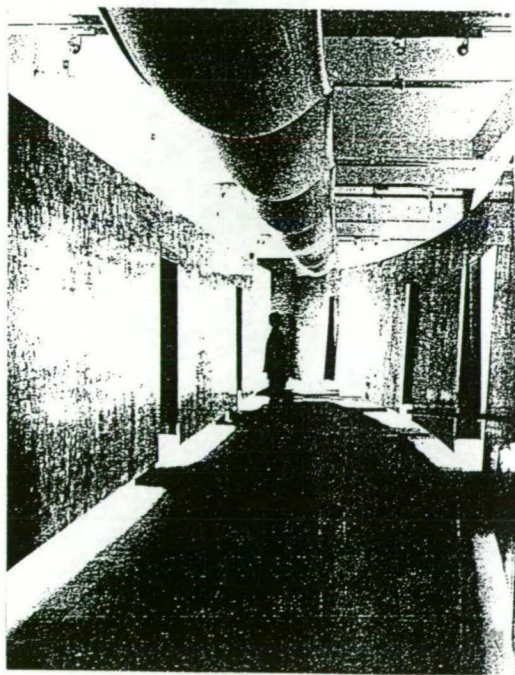
"Architecture is a stage to painting.
I use architectural signs as a way of developing
analogies between space and forms. I like to poeticise
the urban environment and I don't feel that my work
initiates objective reality. It is realistic enough to
create a mood and an atmosphere. And though these moods
such as sadness, emptiness and loneliness may be seen as
negative, with my painting I try to turn them into
something positive beautiful and seductive."

Zoe Zenghelis.

"The architect is at the heart of paradox. At the
beginning of a project, he is the only one to know
nothing; whereas at the end he is the one to know
everything. He is the synthesis, the only person who can
hold the thing together."

Phillip Gazean

I confess to being largely influenced by images in
seeking inspiration and stimulation for my own work. The
two dimensional format of books, magazines, and
television and movie screens allow for an imaginative
mind to be constantly challenged and stimulated.

My sculptures therefore are derived from this data,
rather than from a written text. The analysis of my
working process through the format of the written word,
which is not my chosen medium, has to considered as
perhaps not as reliable as the work to speak for itself.

My words can only serve as a premise to the physical
work, which ultimately has to carry over when words
themselves cannot. For an artist who has a burning desire
to constantly question and recreate objects in a three-
dimensional expression, my words can only be viewed as
arrows that point in the right direction.
This documentation is a collection of personal thoughts,
both written and drawn, images and quotes, that when
taken together form a map of my artistic intentions for
this present collection of sculpture.

A wall decorated with slit views

of facade ... for an view architectural
from views ... Sculptural form
in nature ...

The facade combined with the
...

...

dio al computer della geometria dell'edificio. 2 e 3. Pianc...
...to tra due volumi con il contrasto di materiale. 4. Pianta ...
...rettango are contiene uffici, locale tecnico e spazi ball color...
...contiene gli spazi espositivi. 5. Pianta piano primo con ...
...low. 5. Pianta piano terreno Pagina a destra, vedur̄ genera...
...none con lo spazio centrale di tensione.

Computer study of building's shape. 2 and 3. Details of the ...
...en the two volumes showing contrasting materials. 4. Ground ...
...ngular unit houses offices and plant, whereas the other con ...
...space. 5. First floor plan with exhibit space. 6. Ground floor plan ...
... view of the pavilion
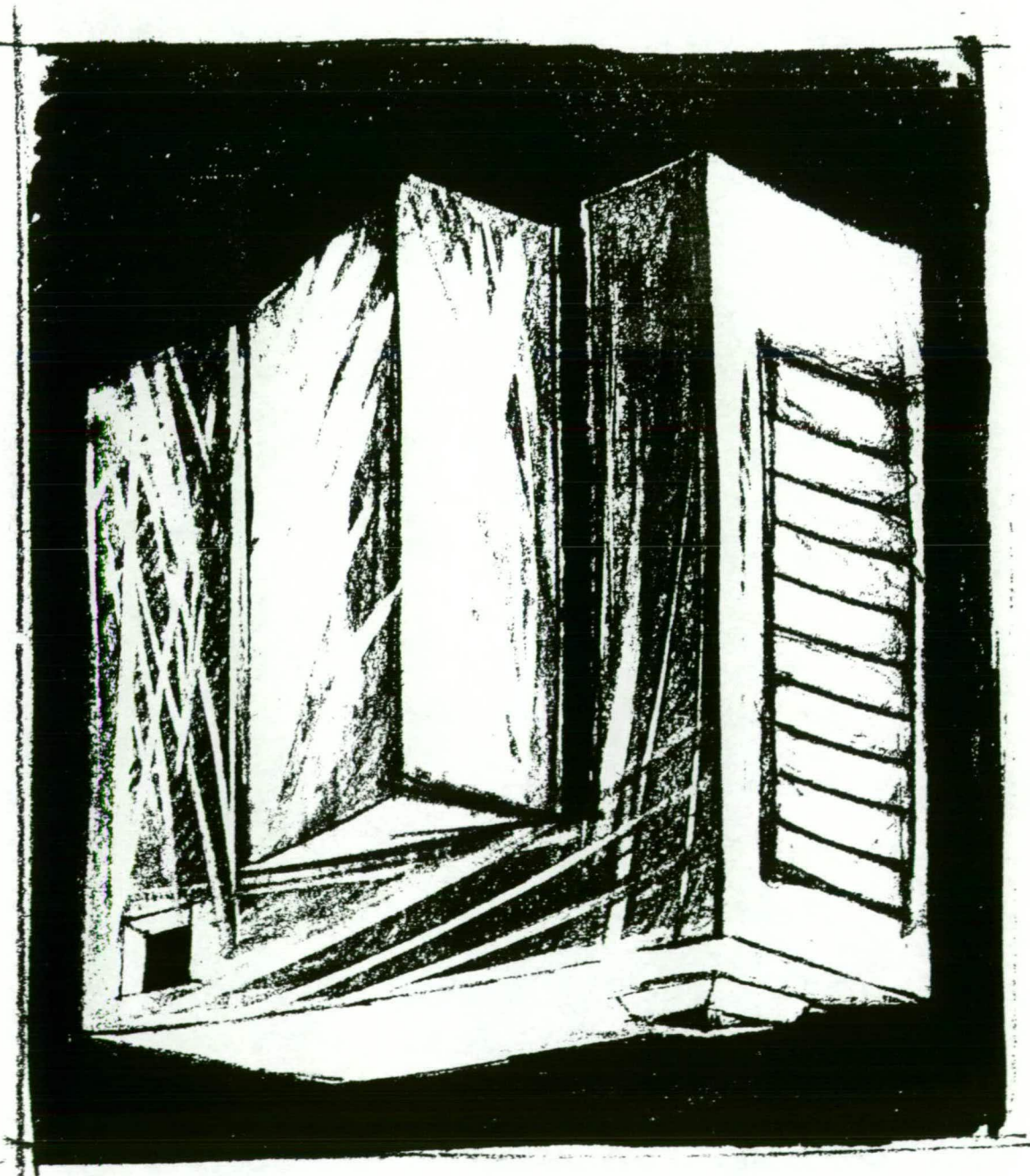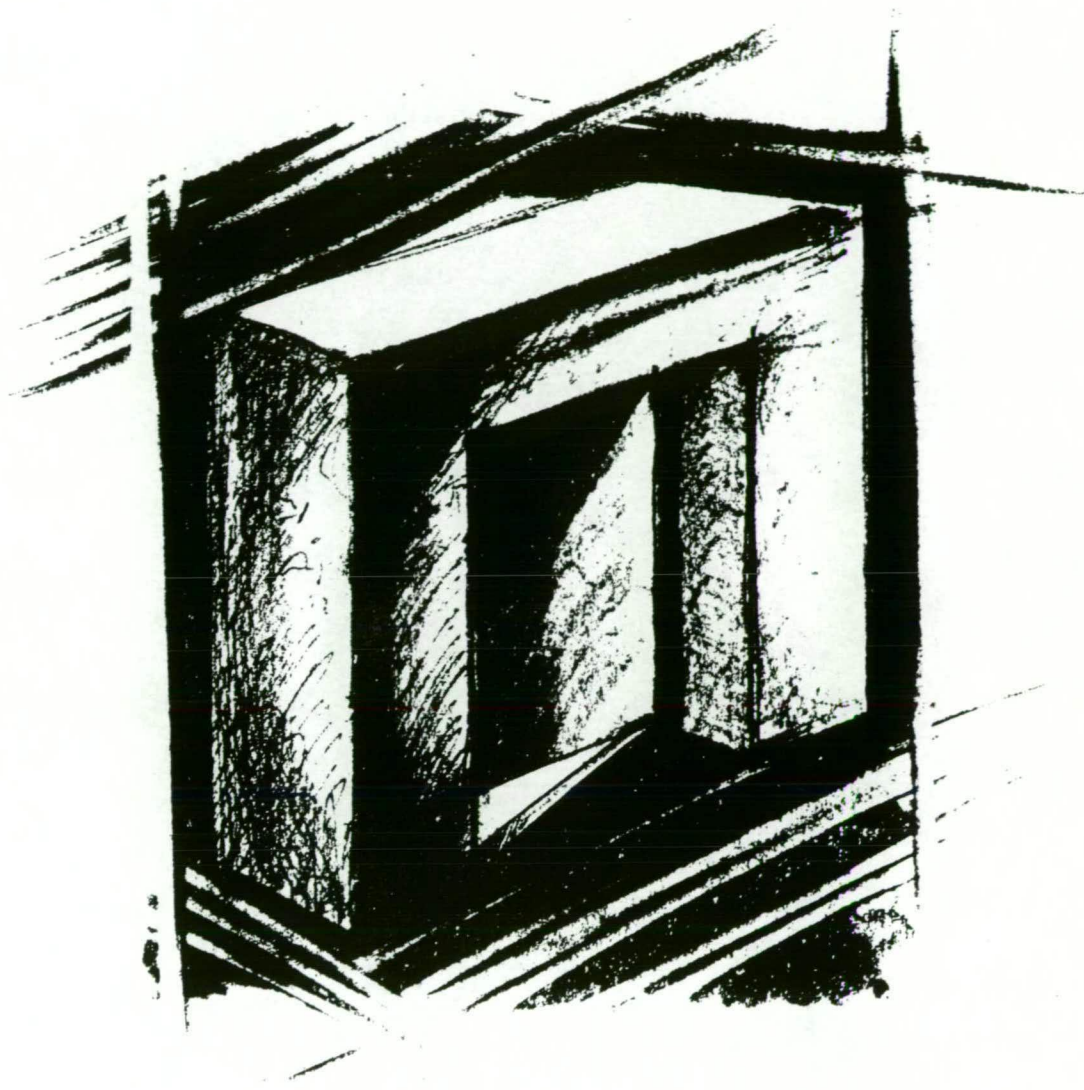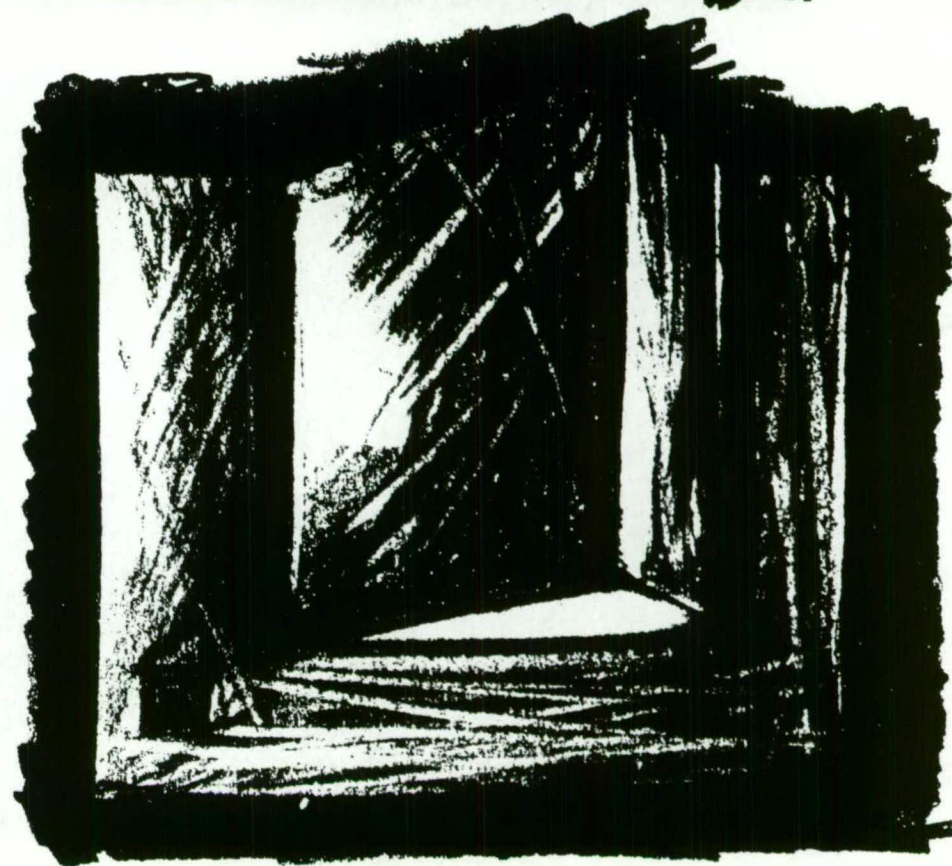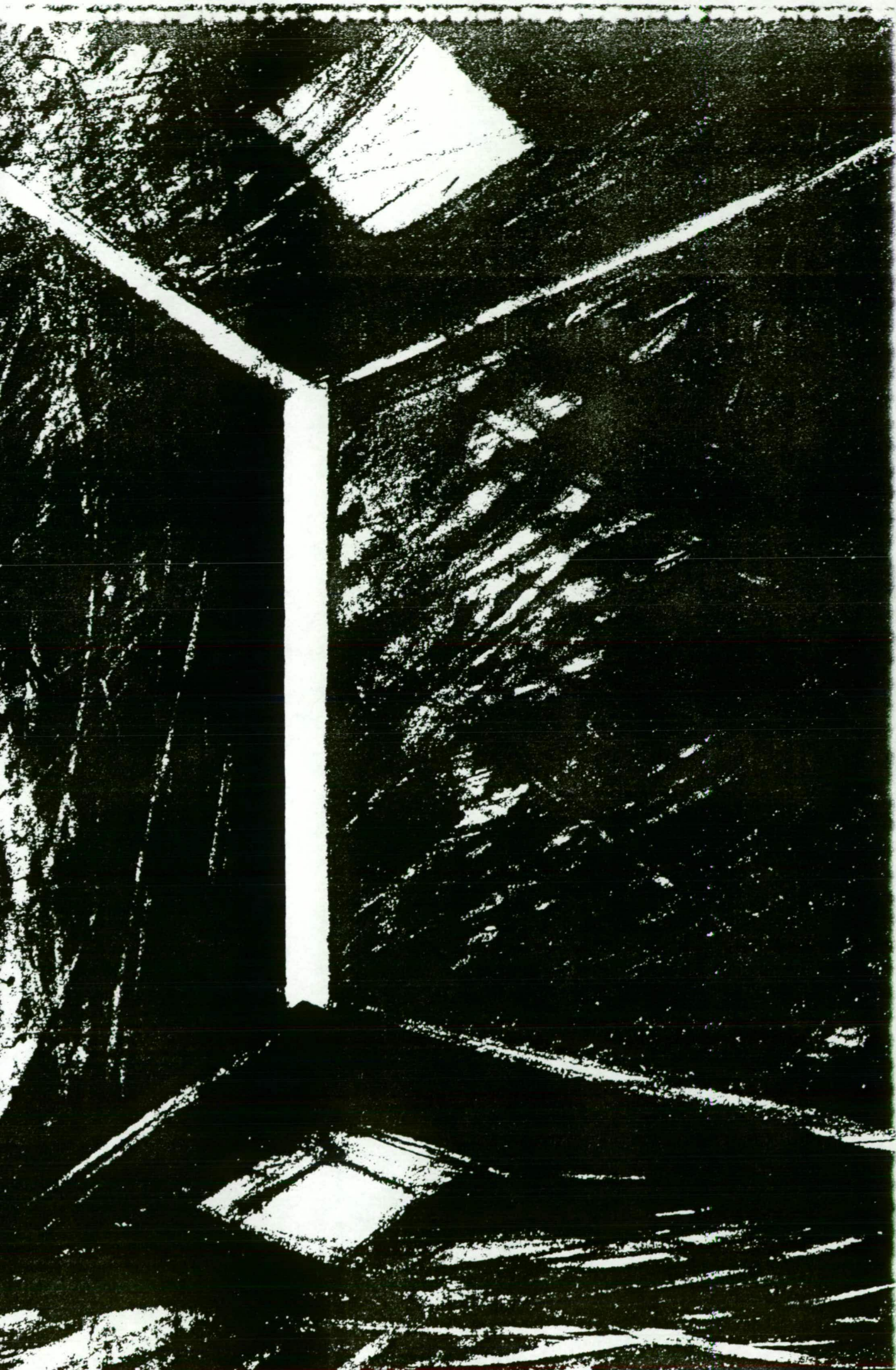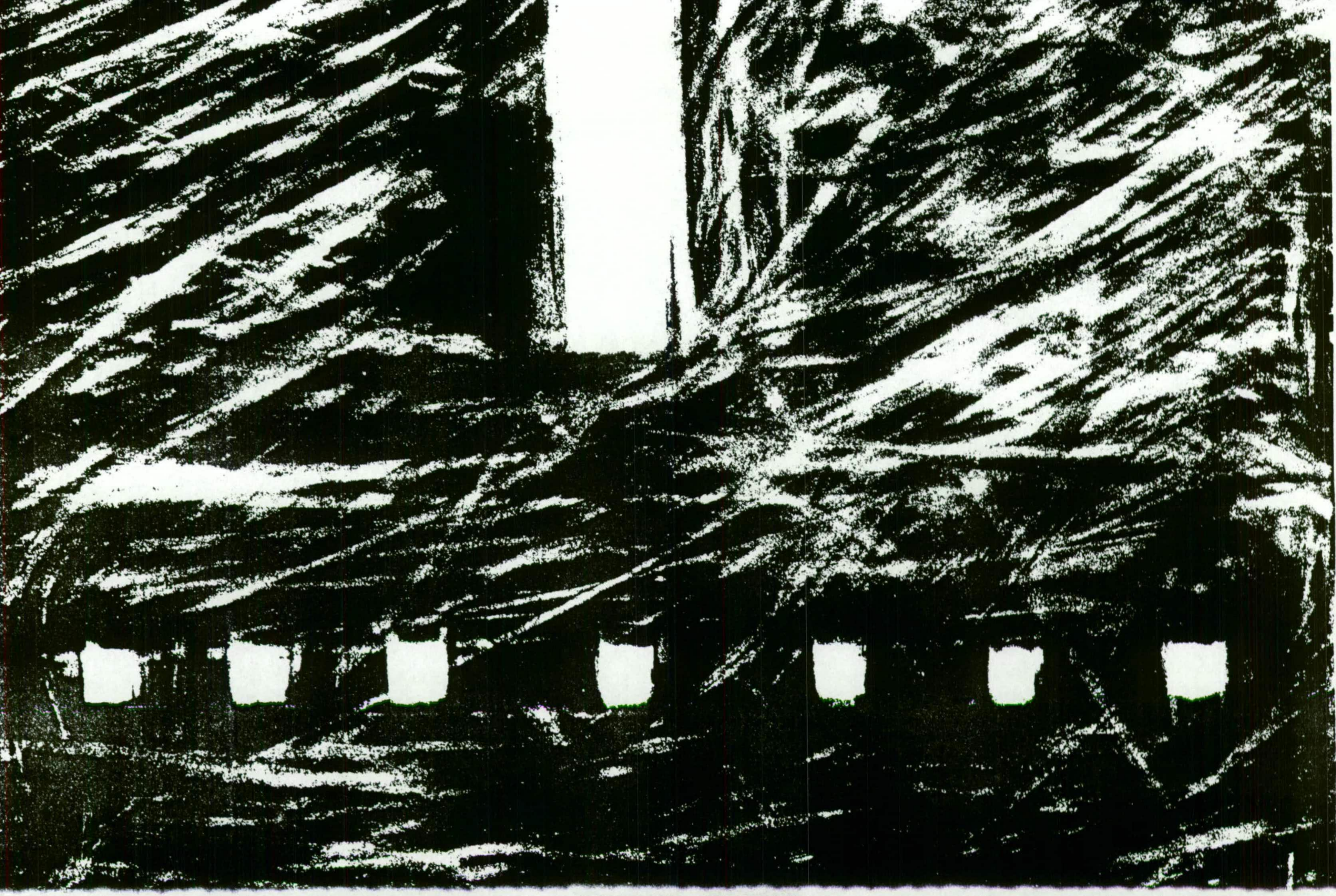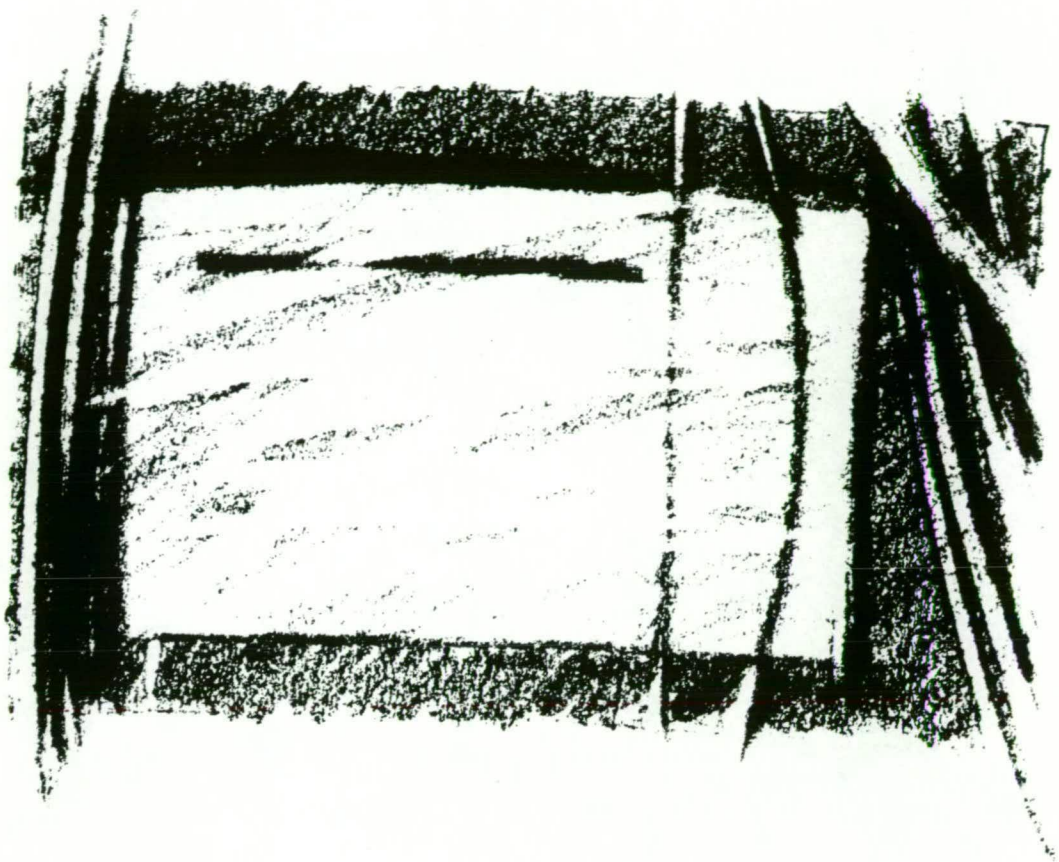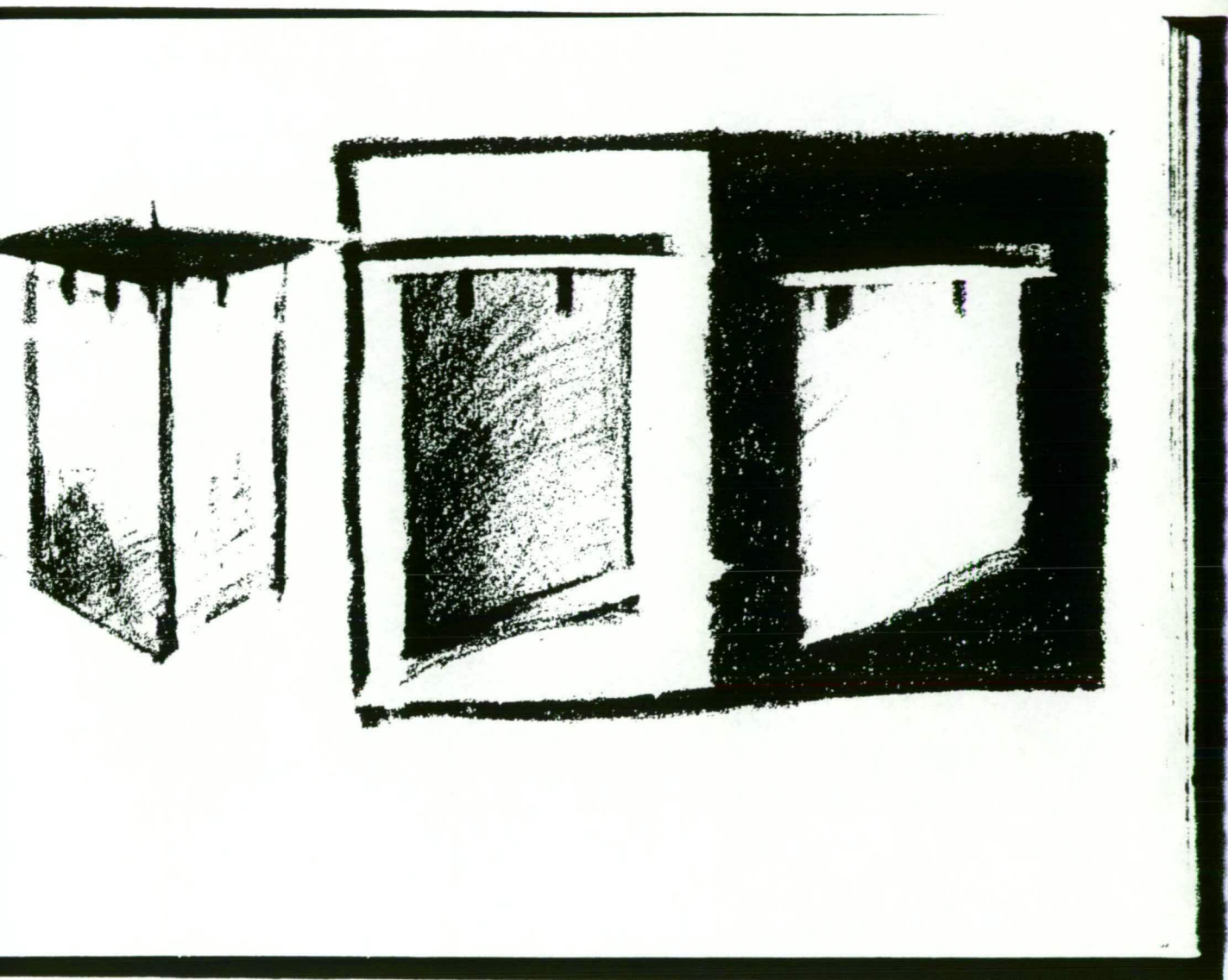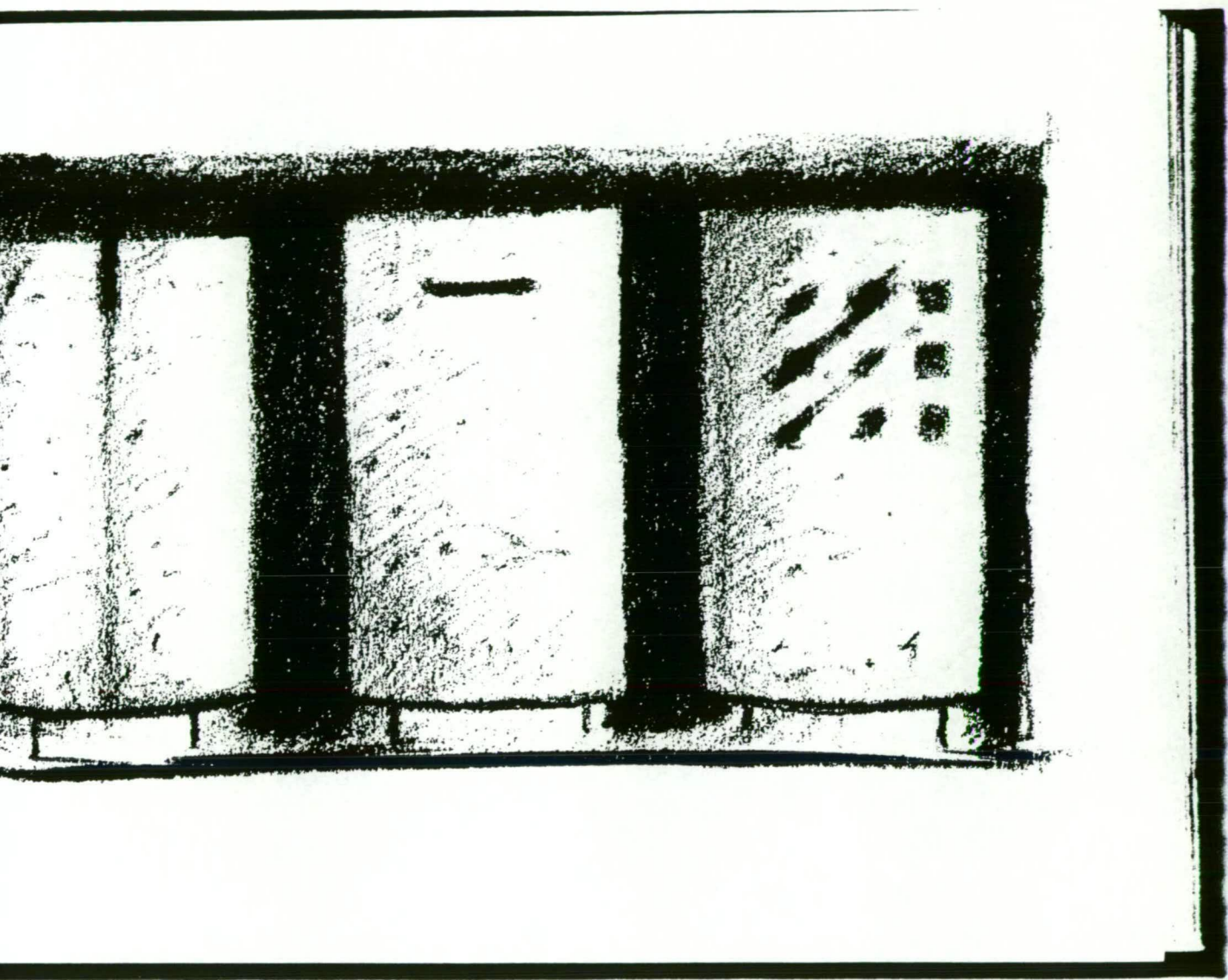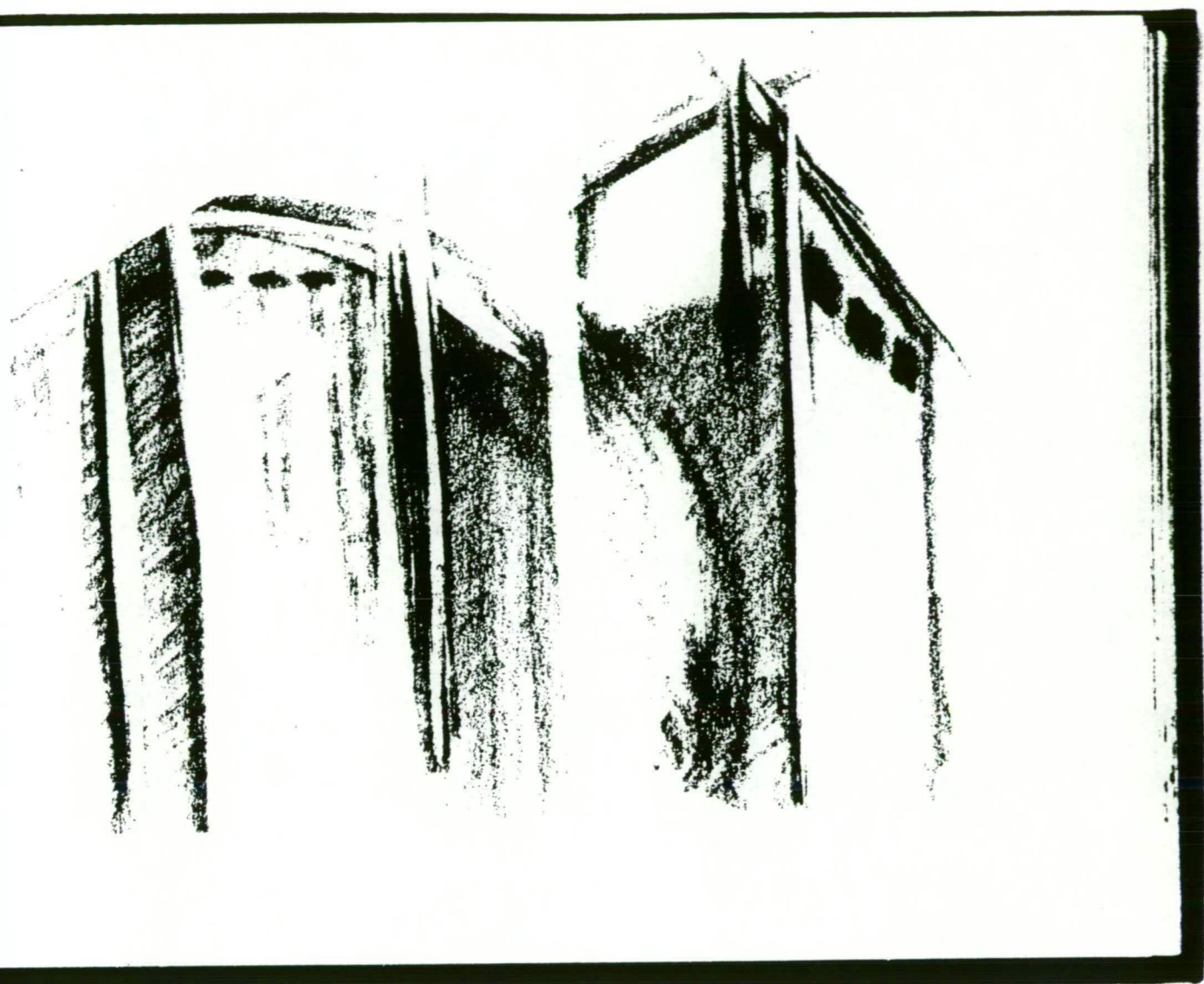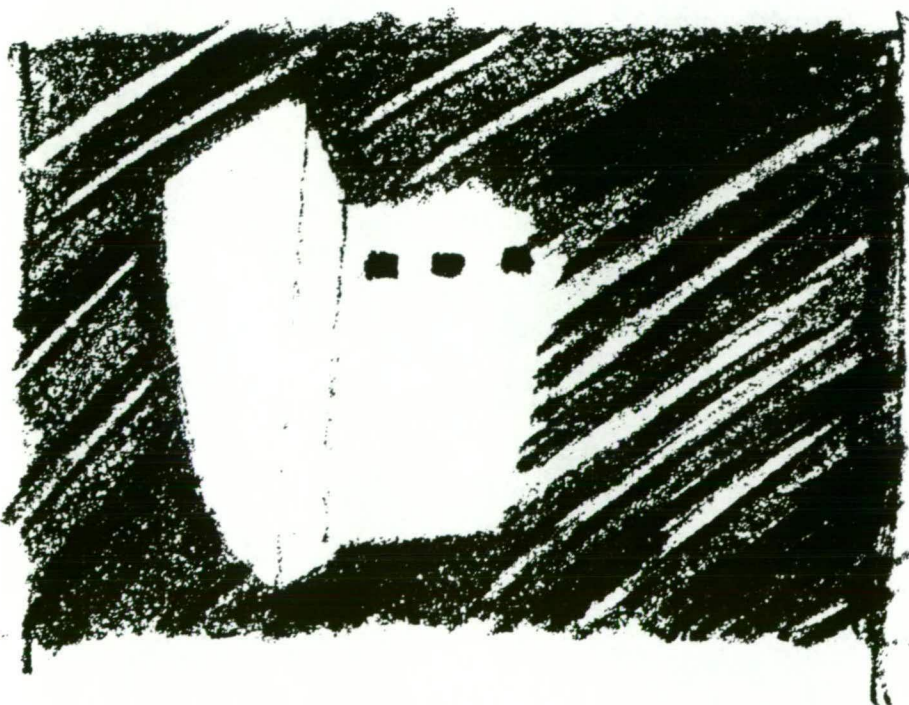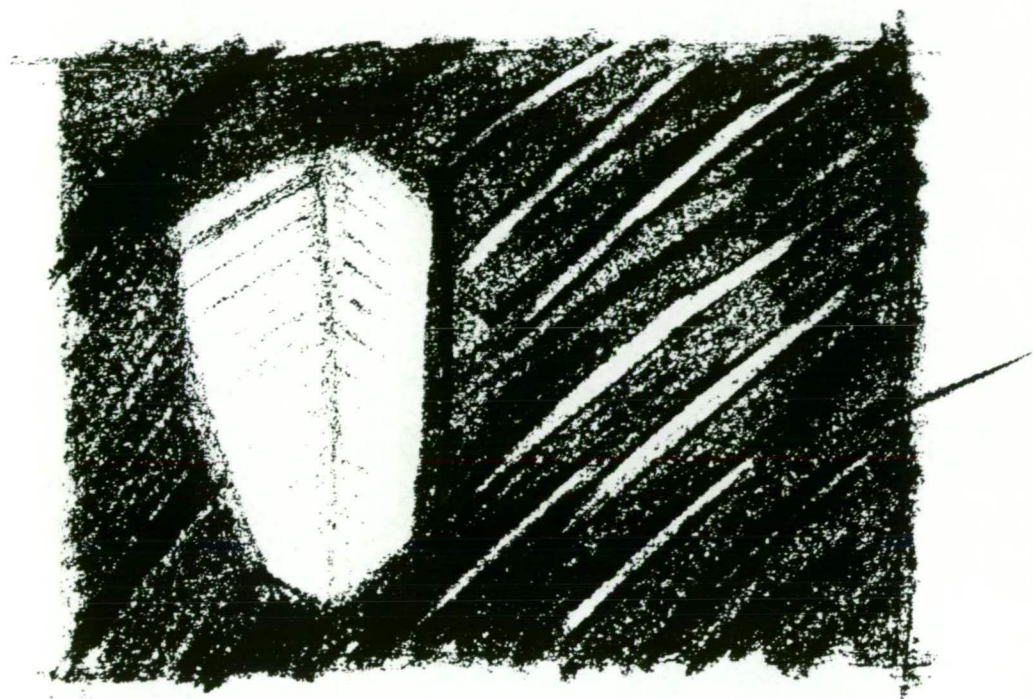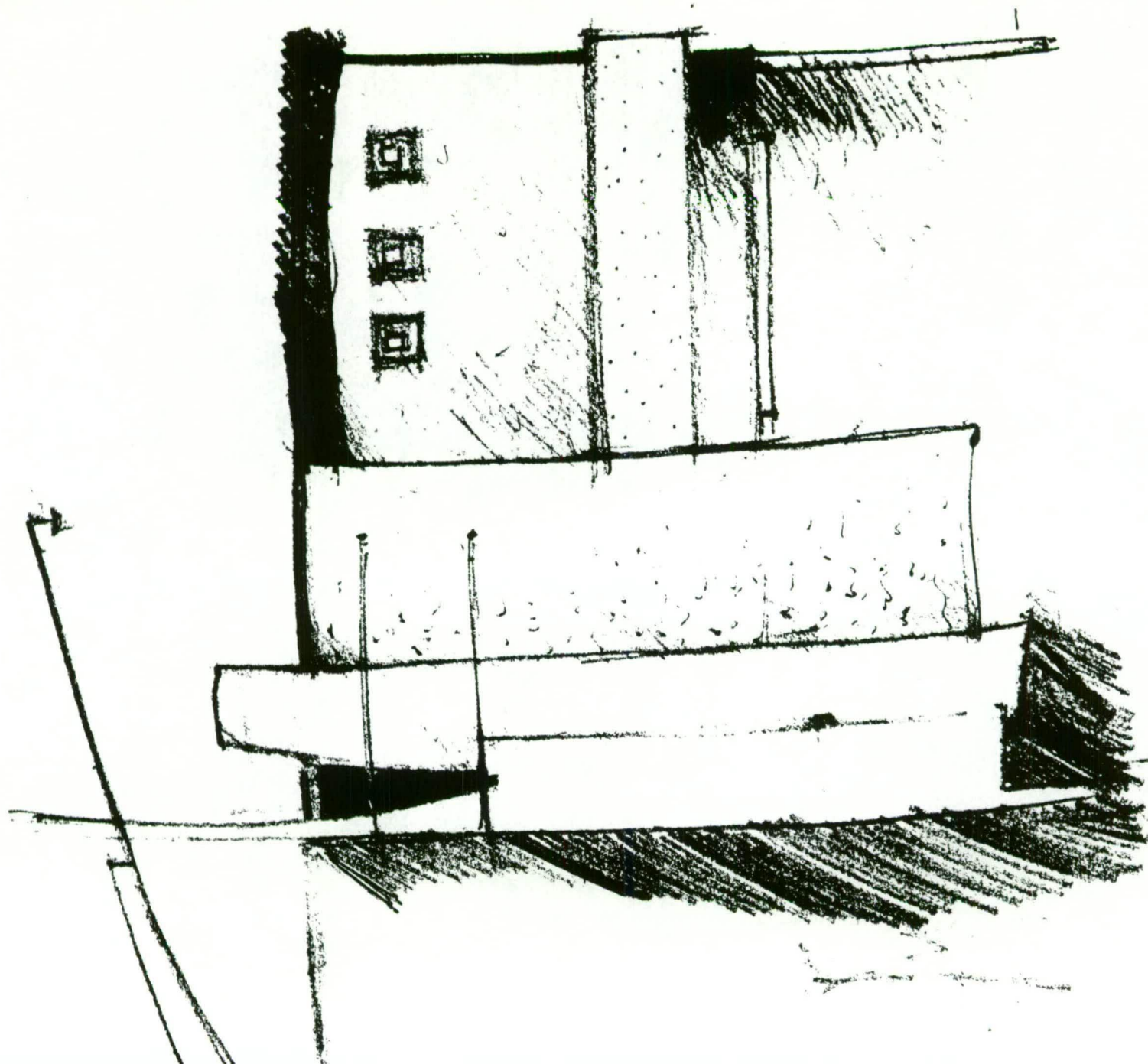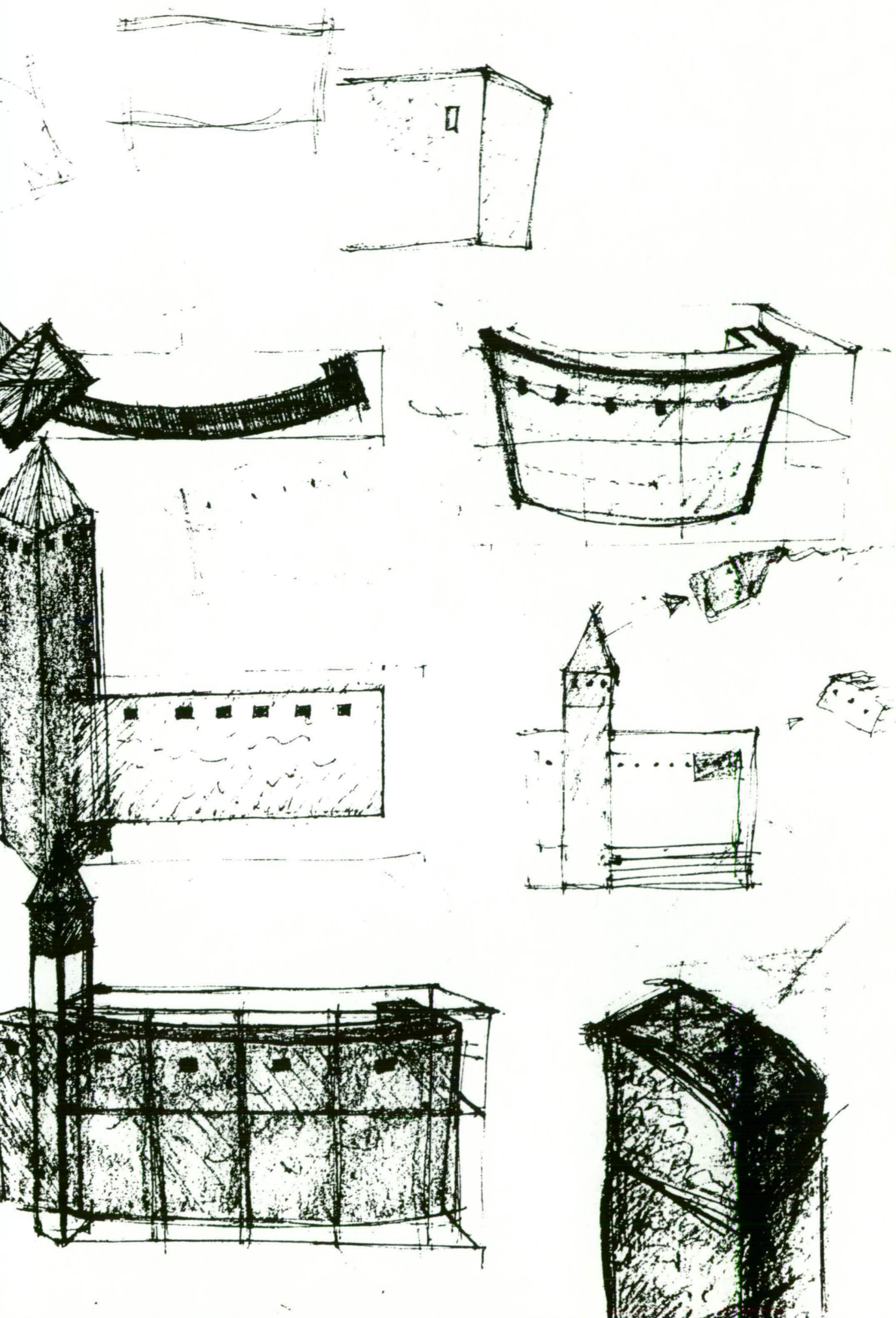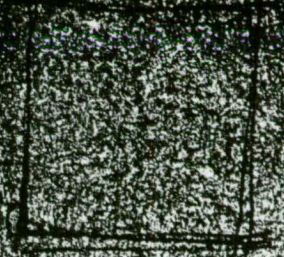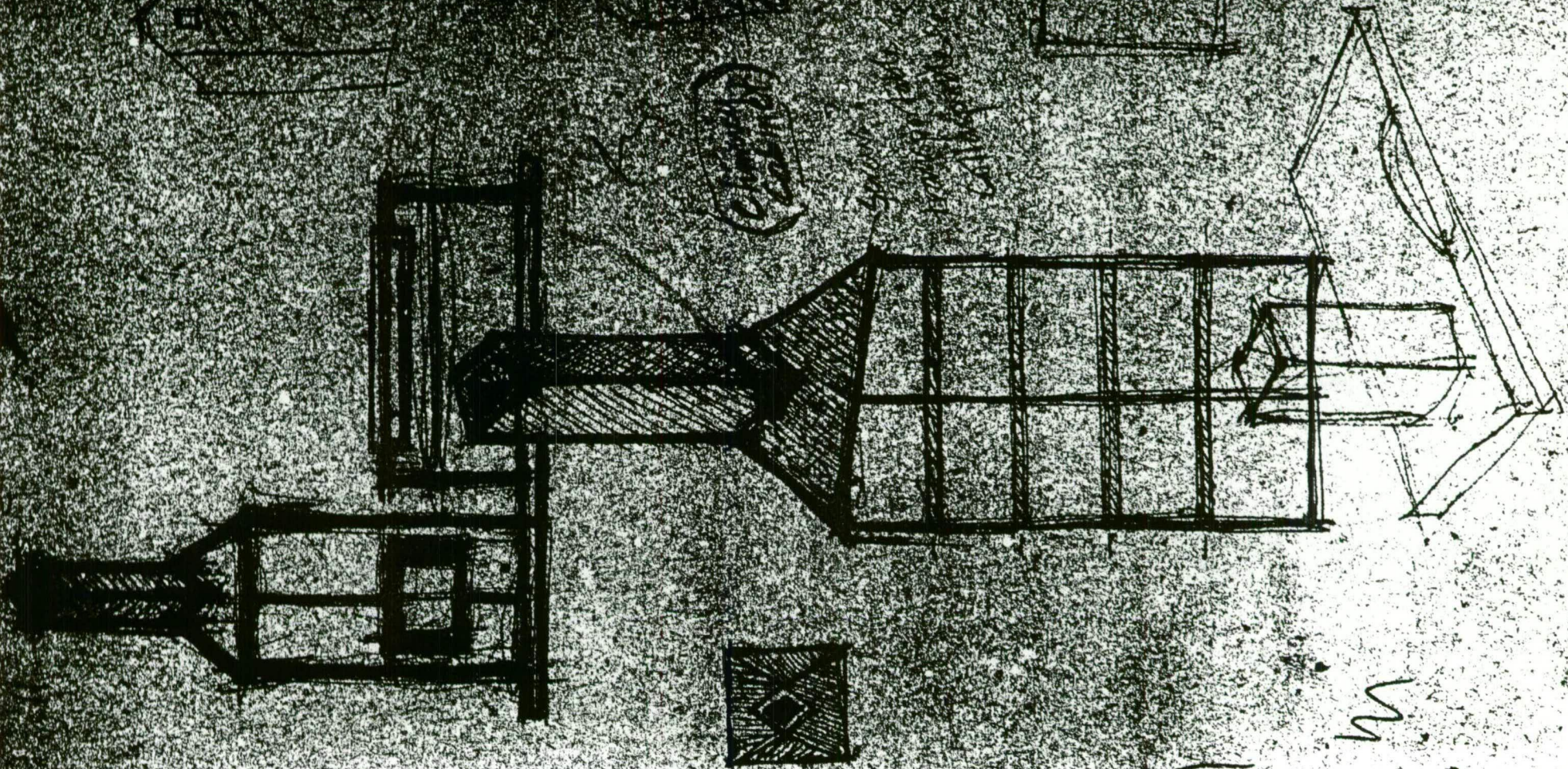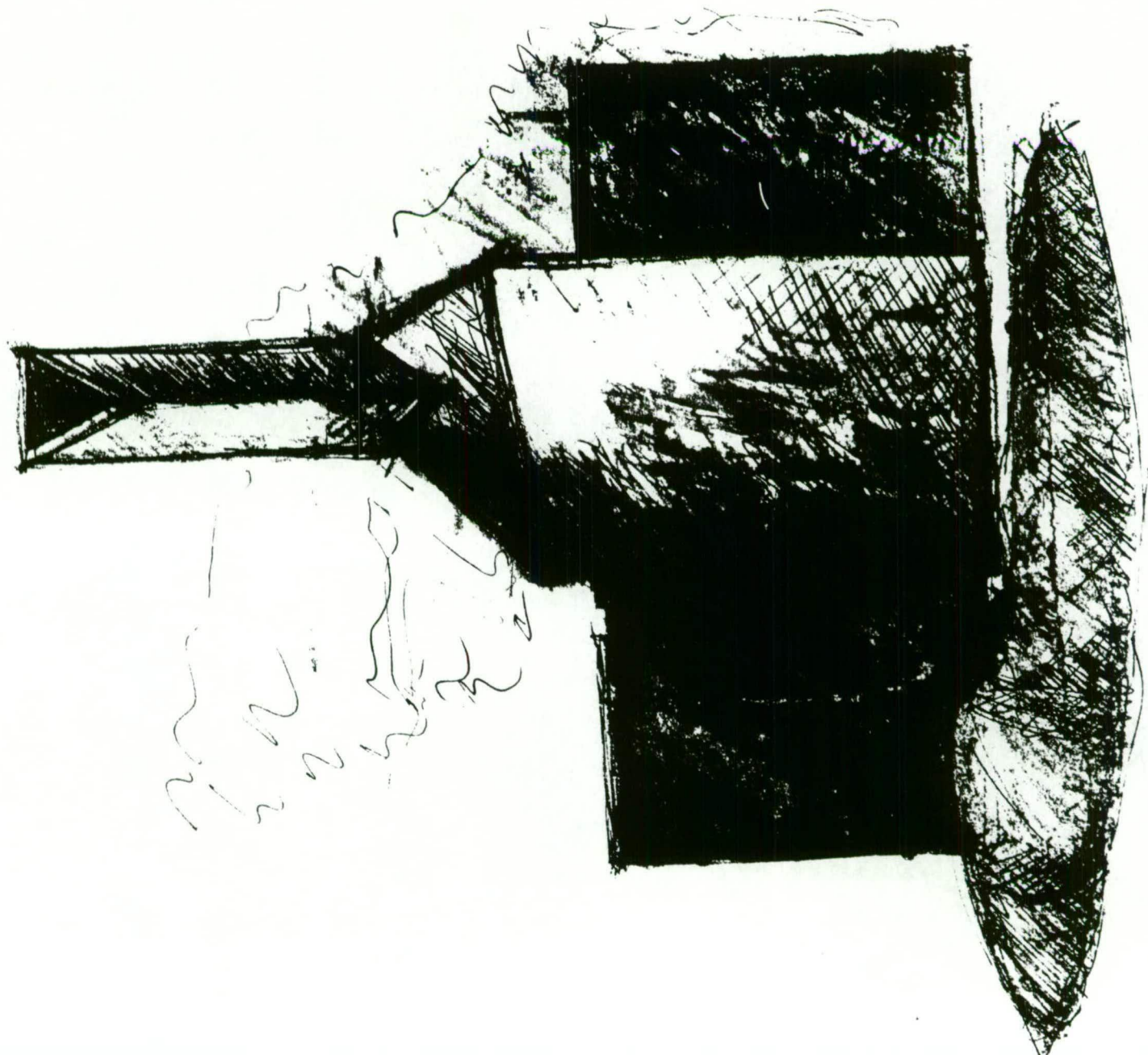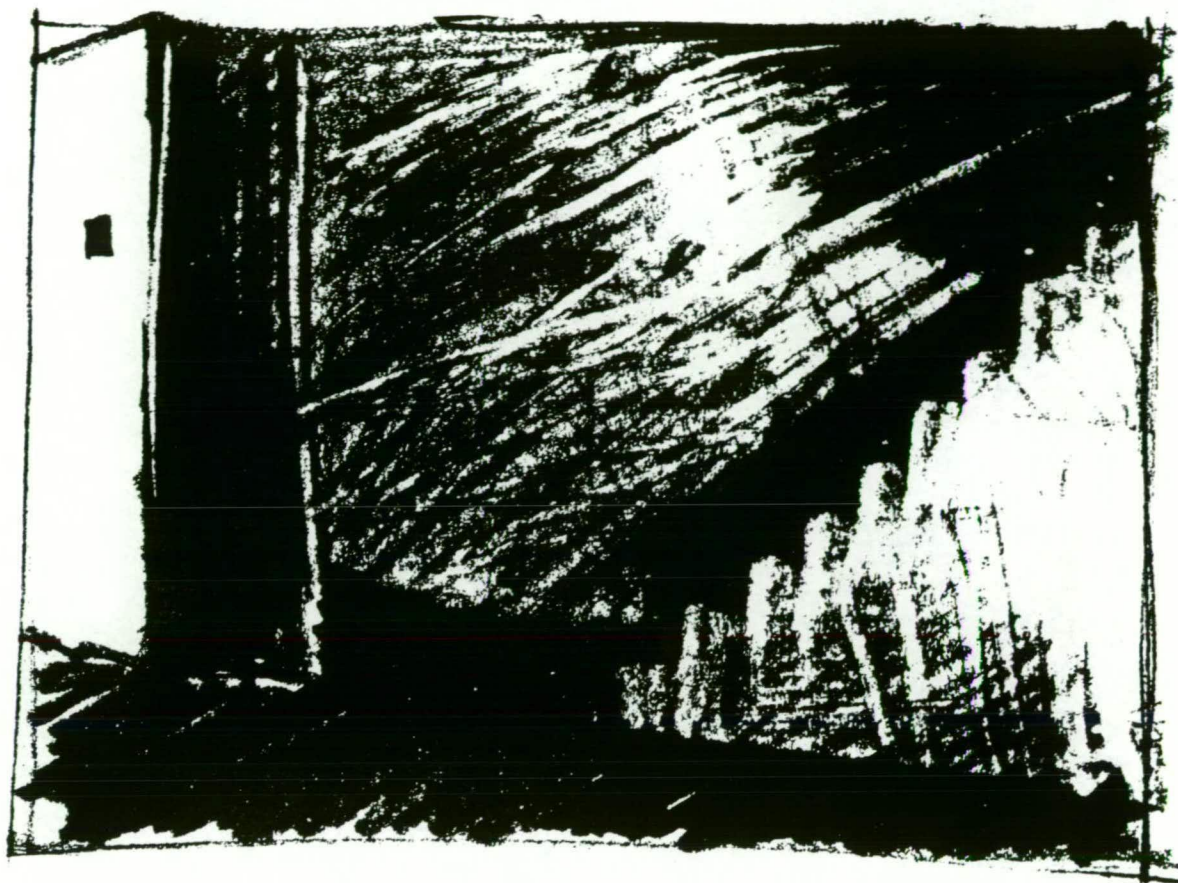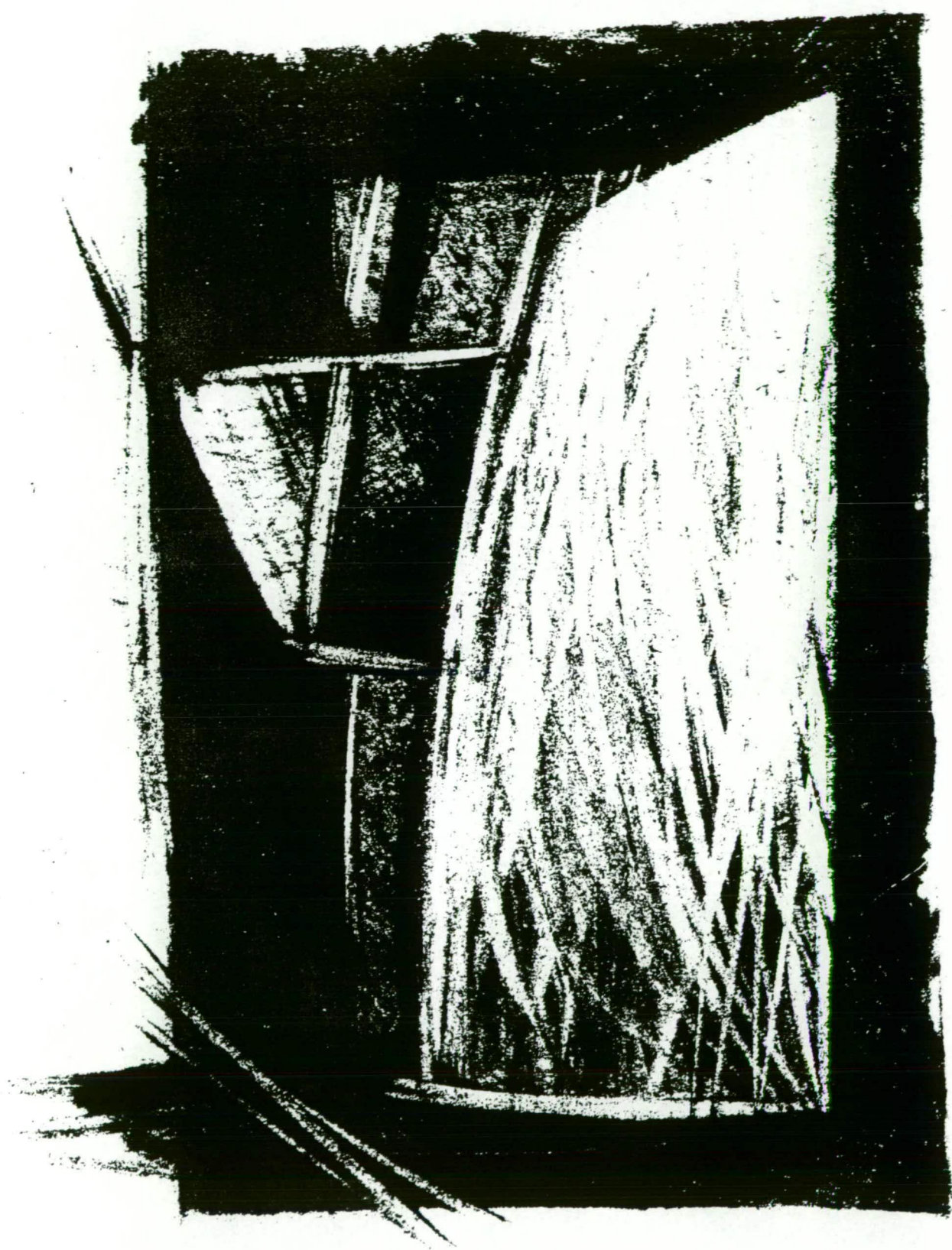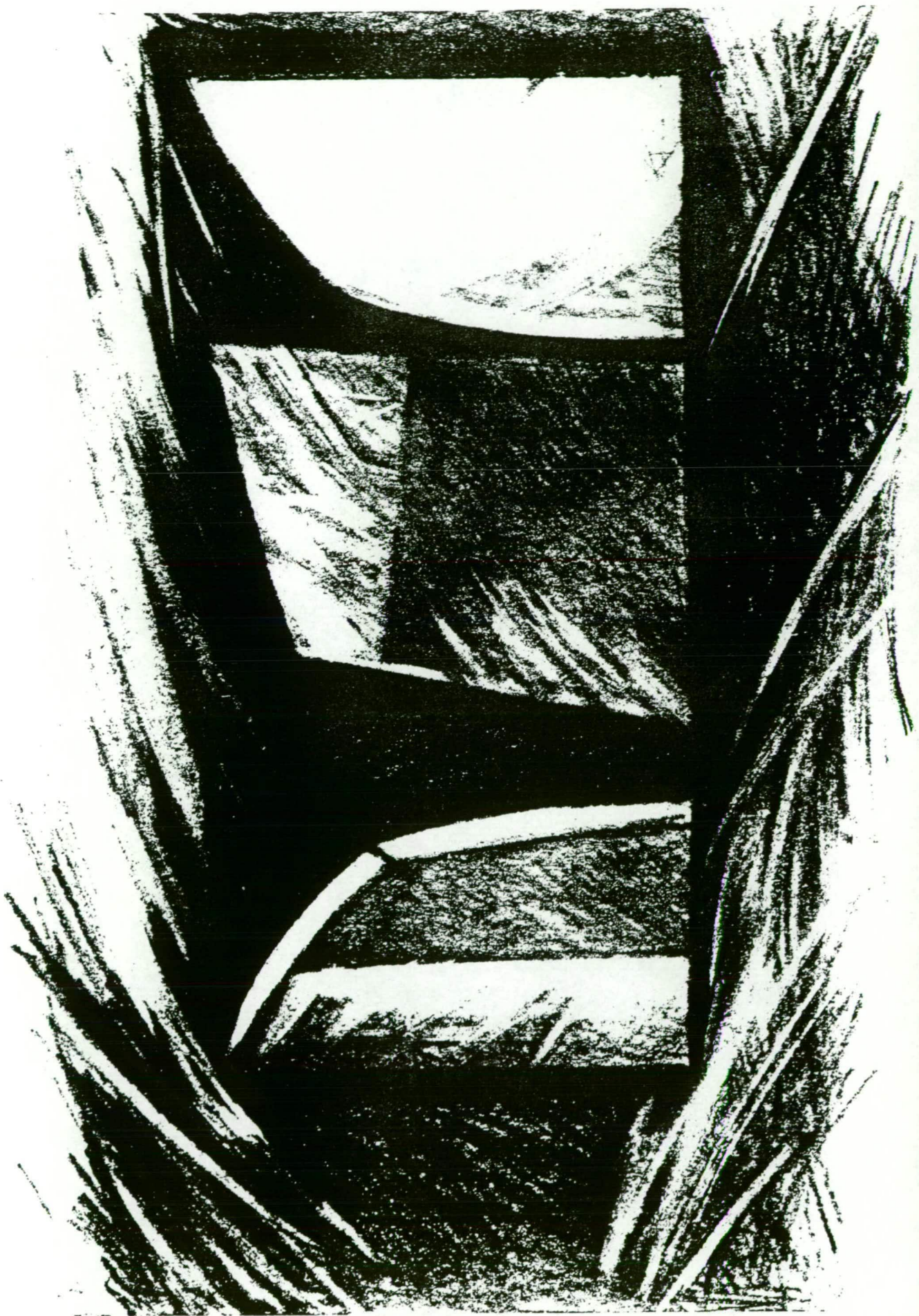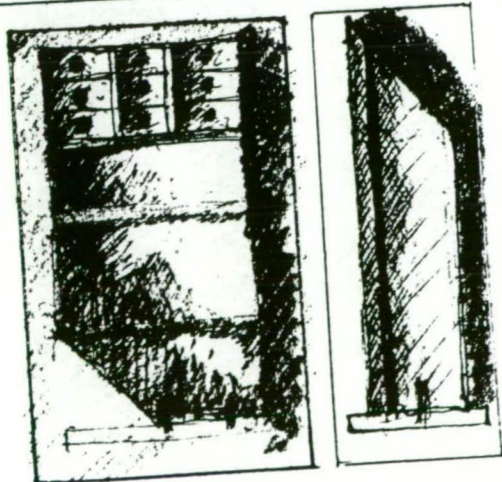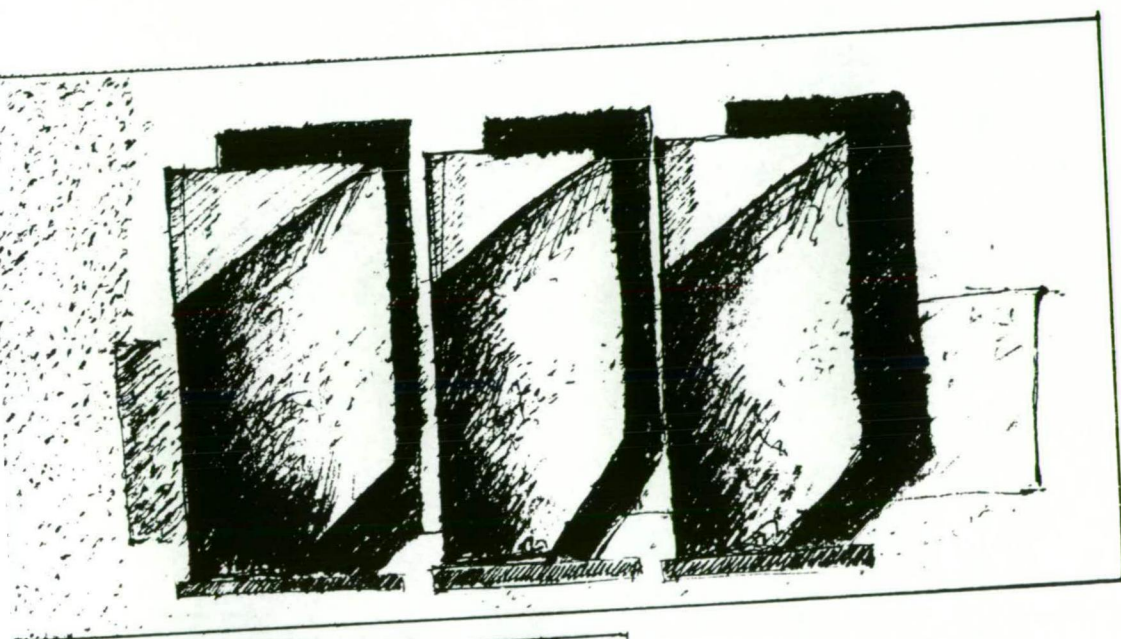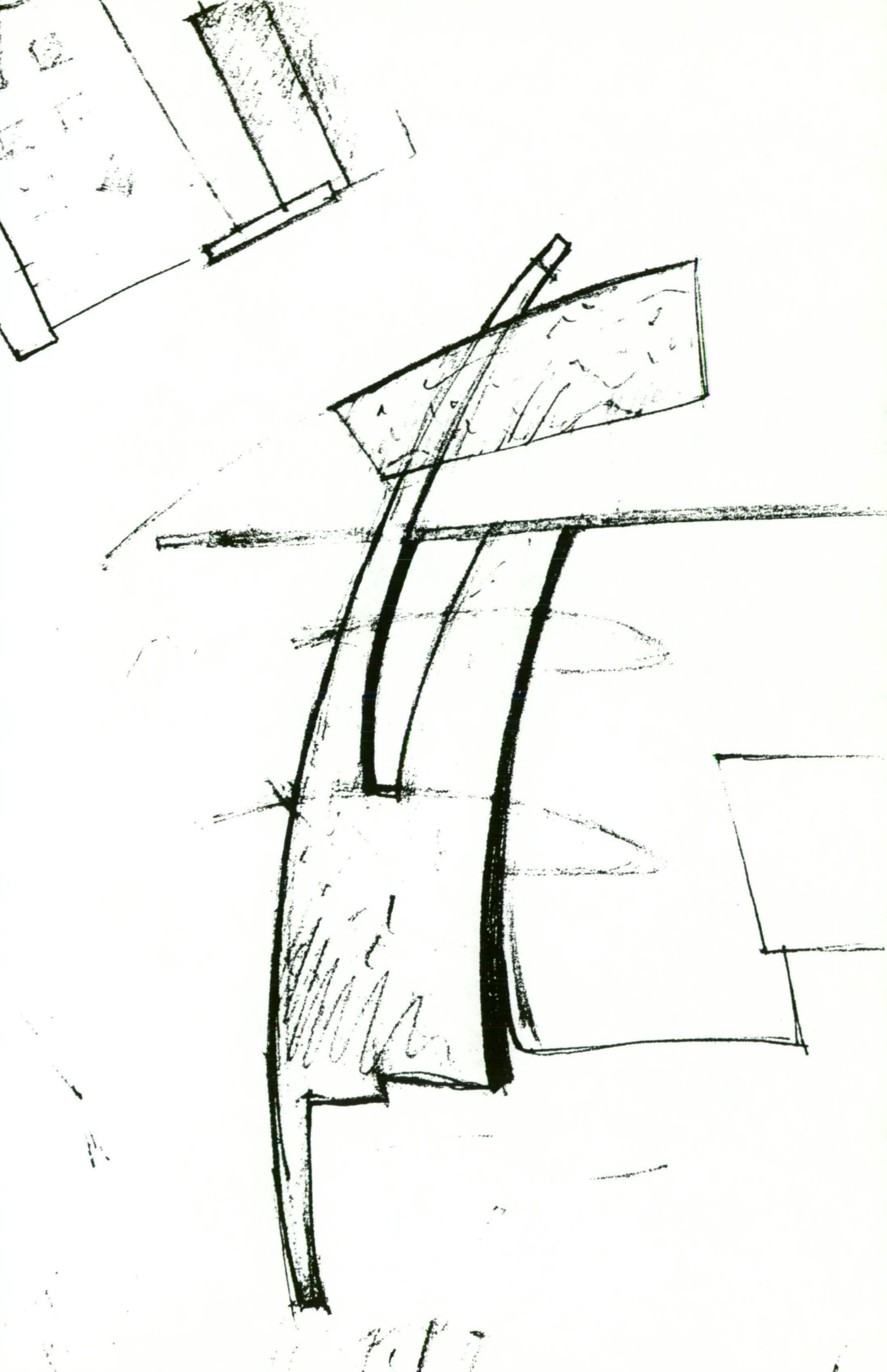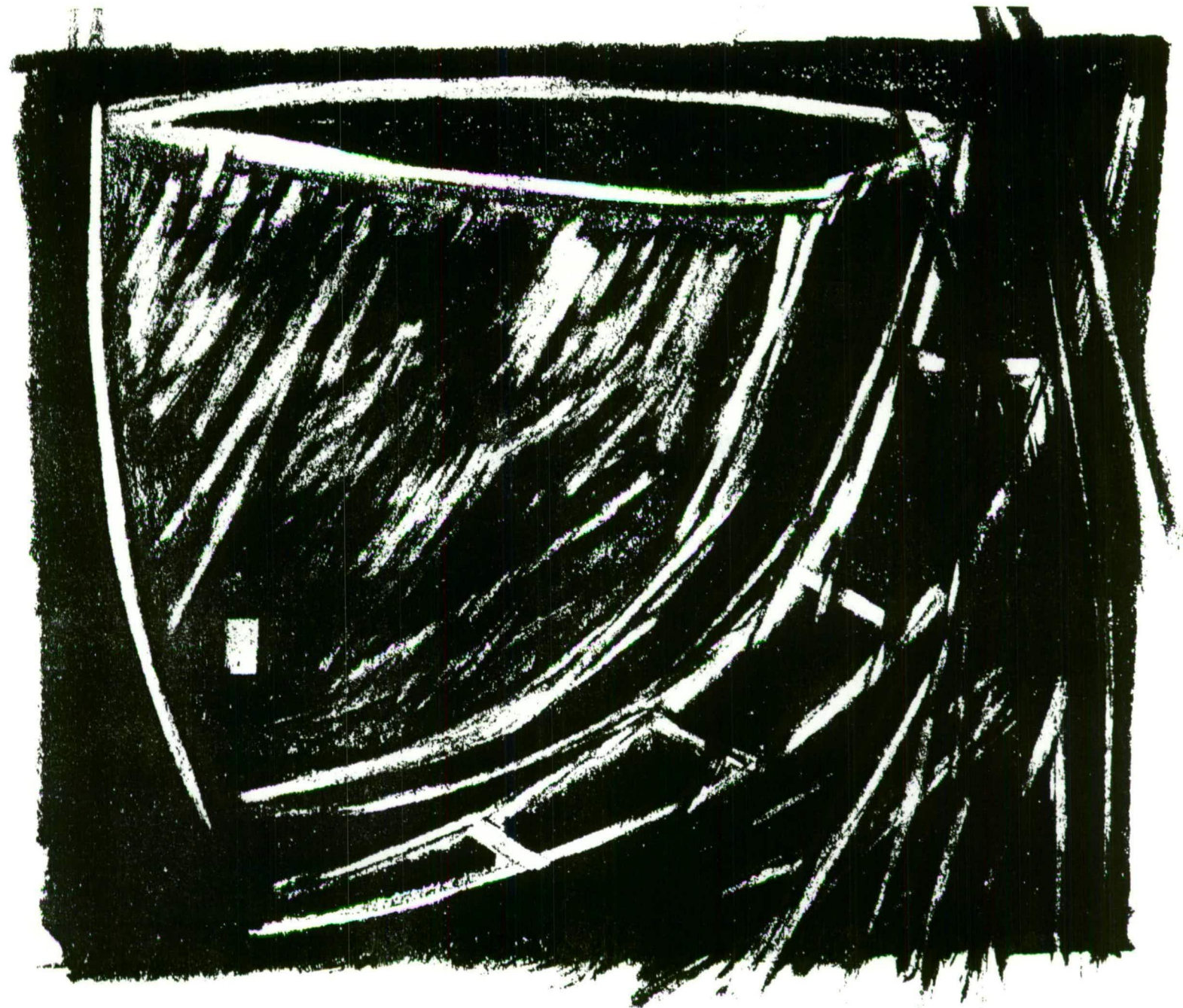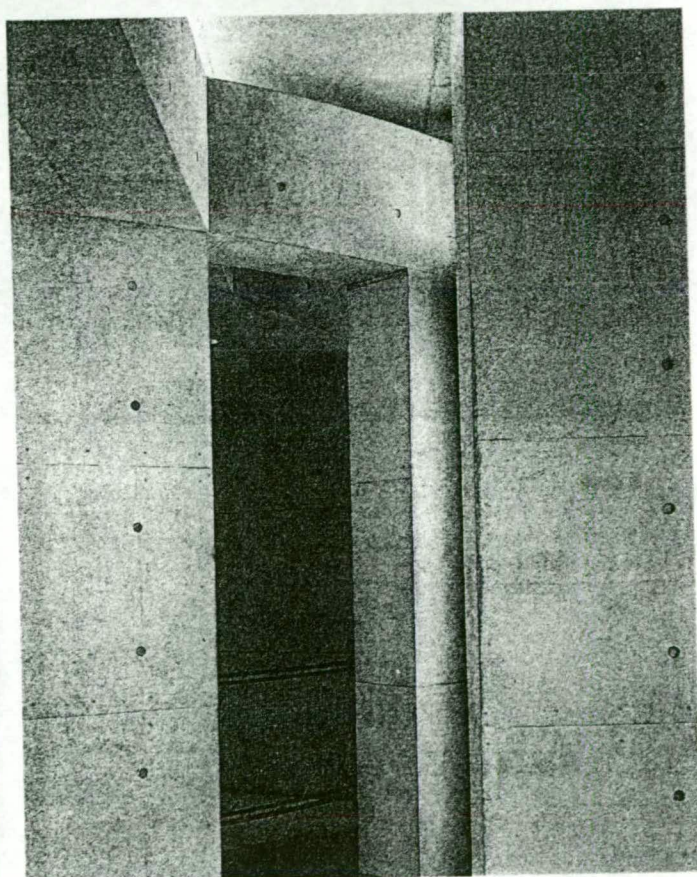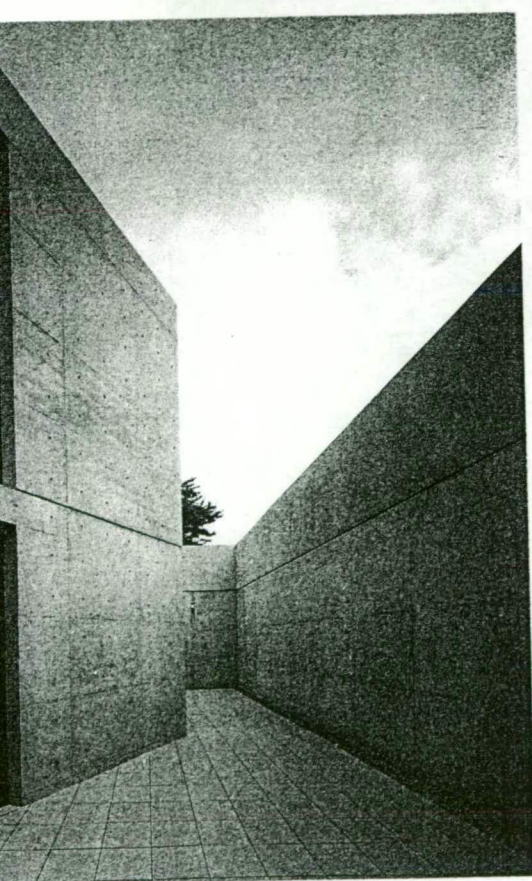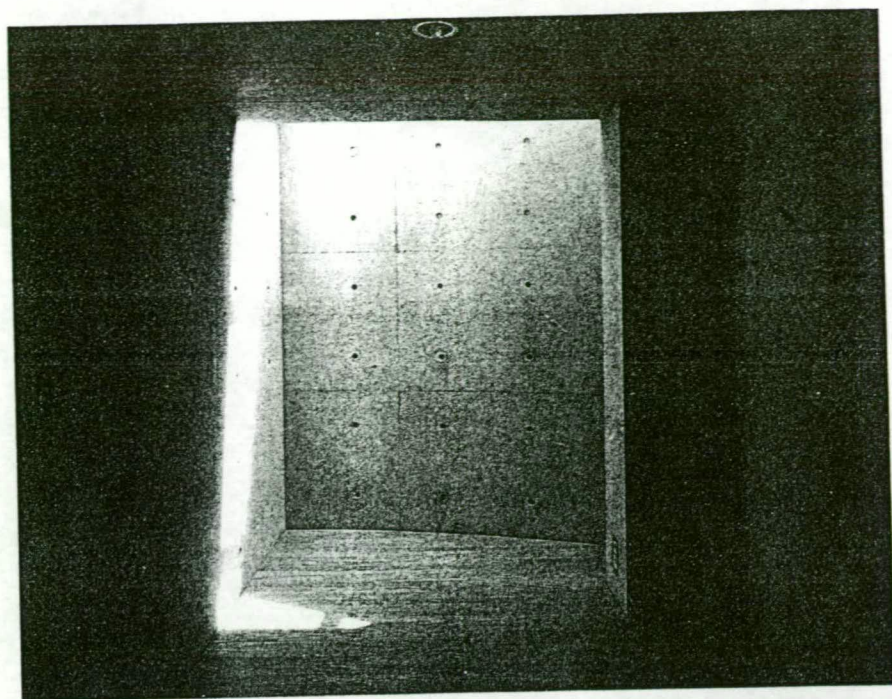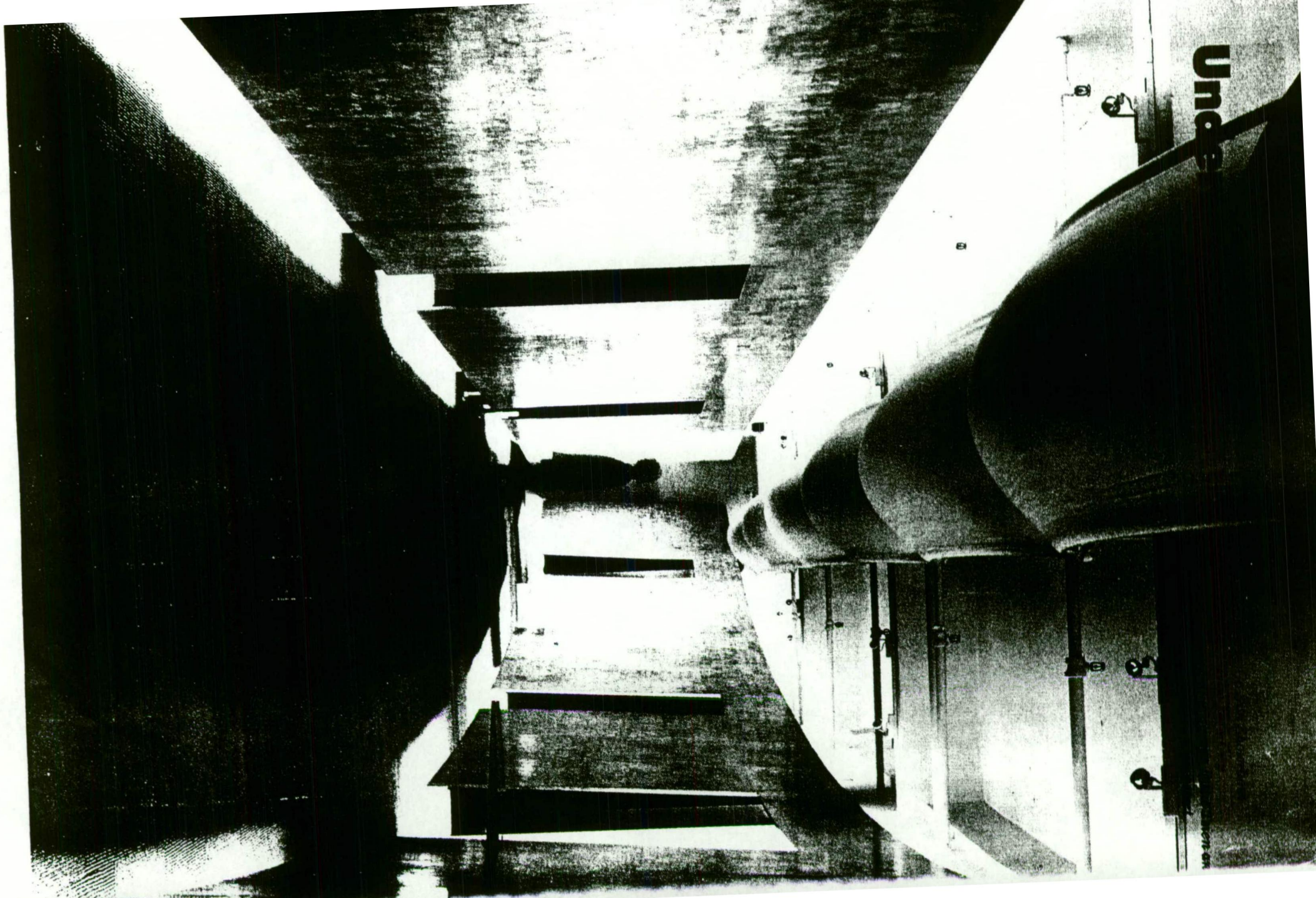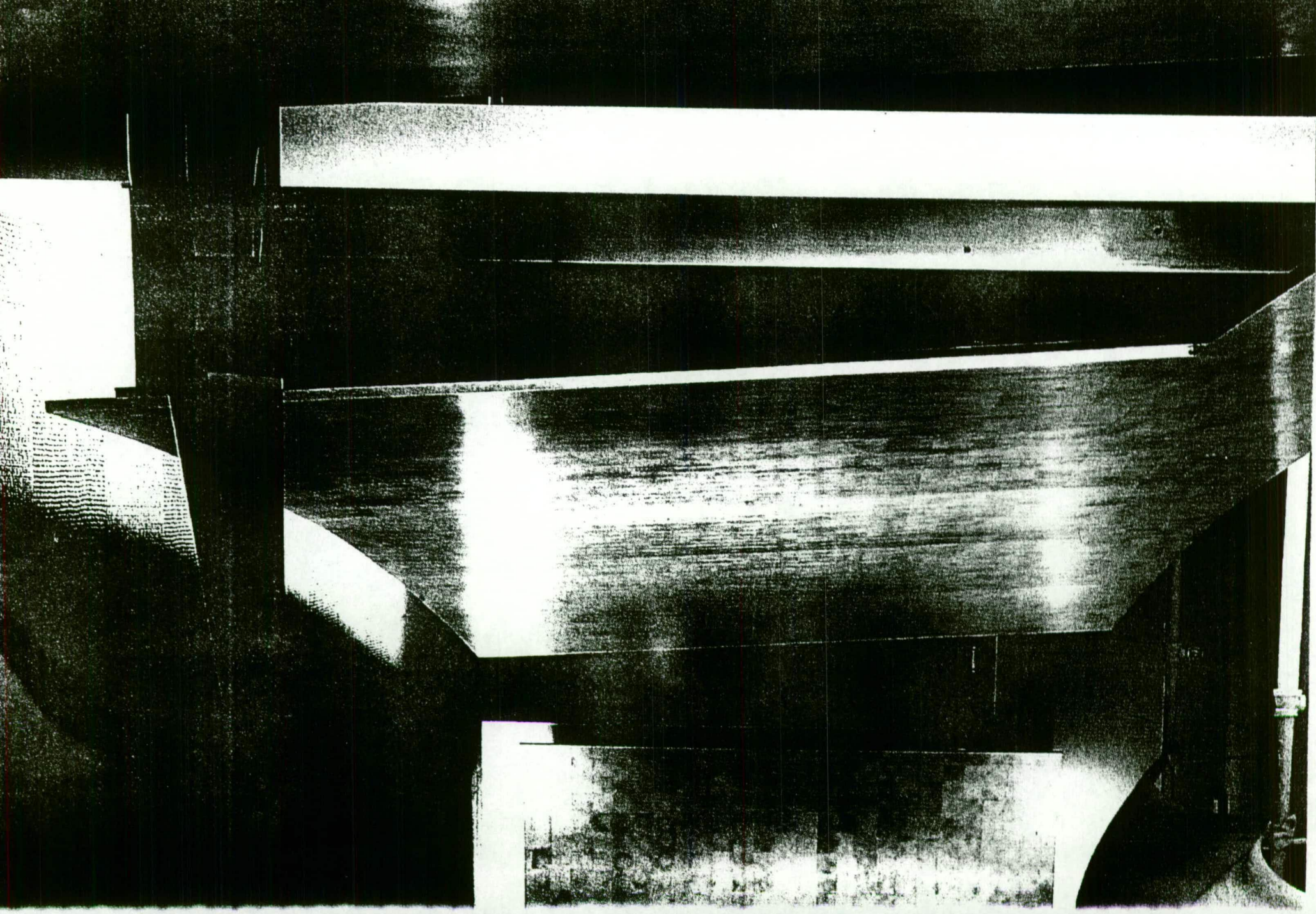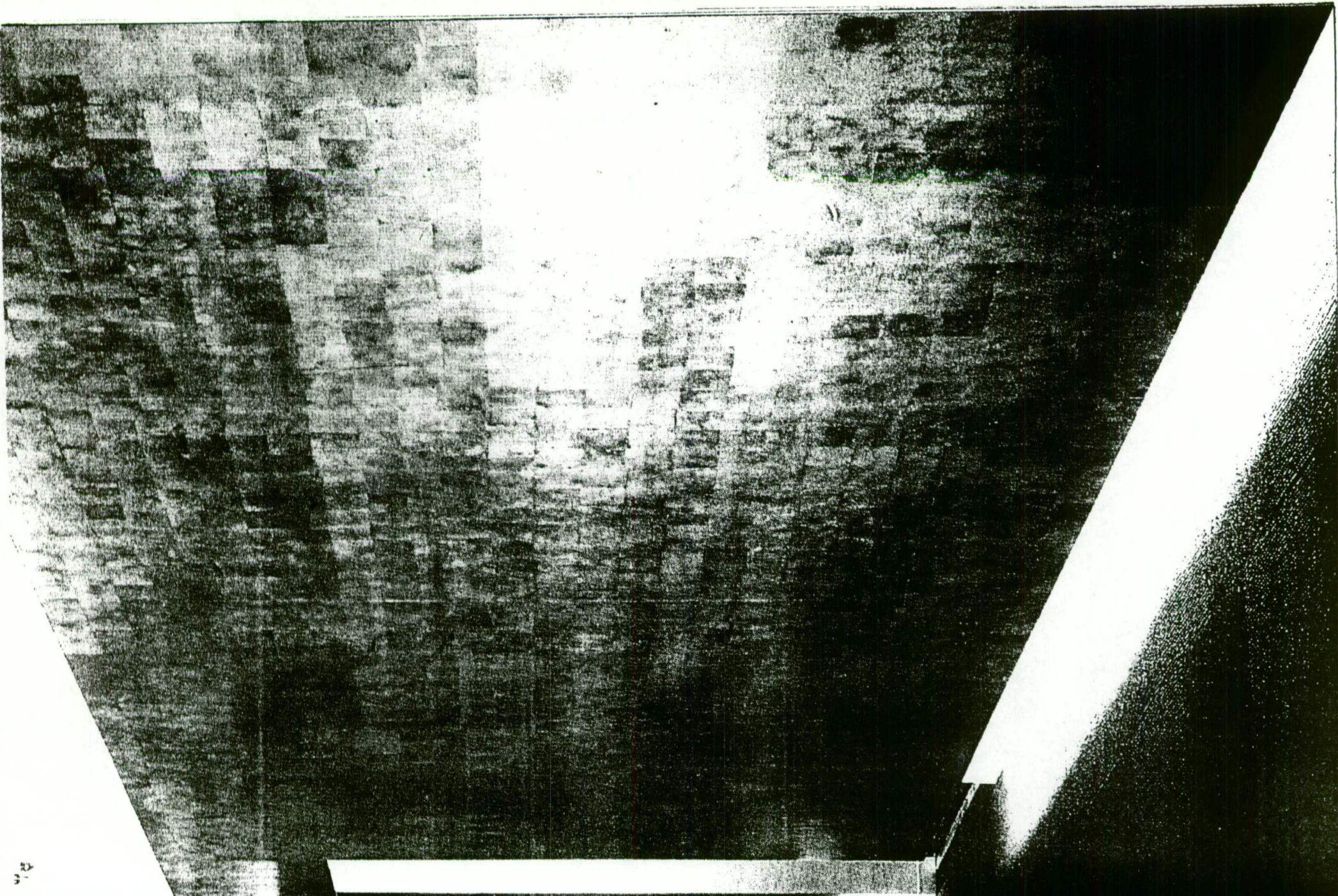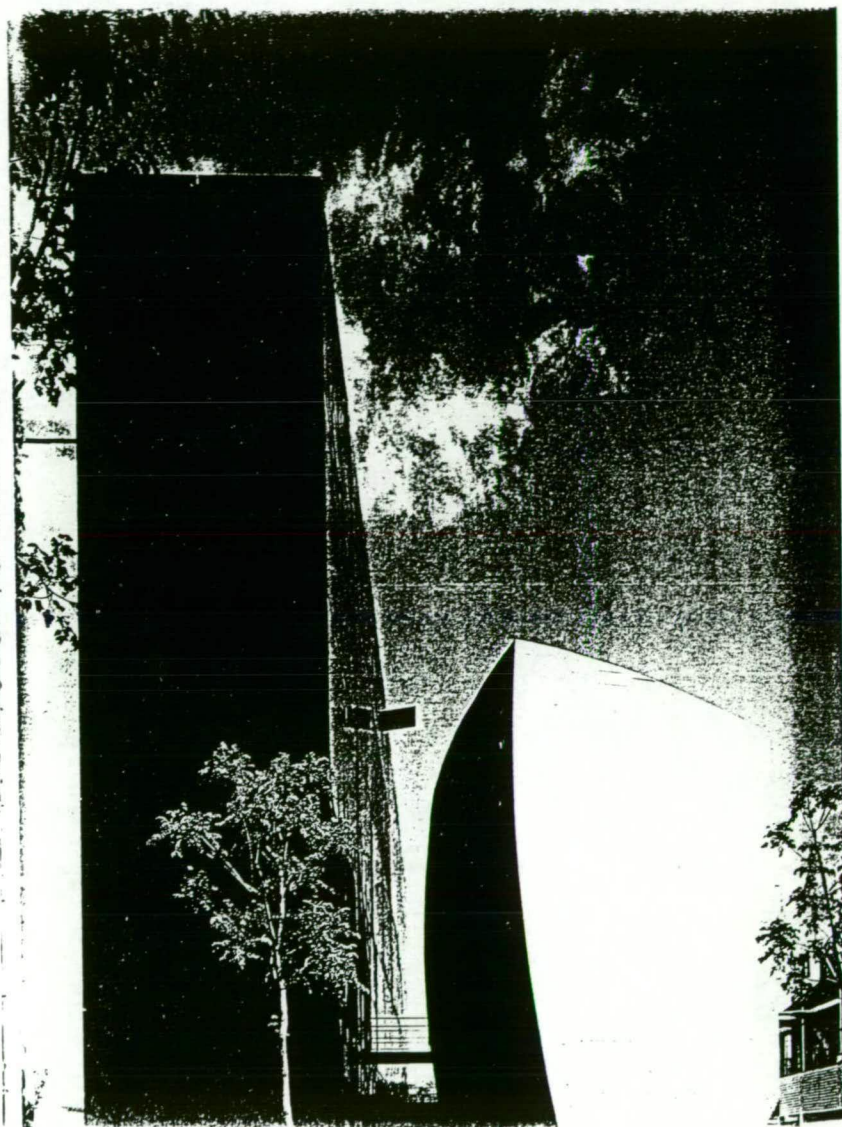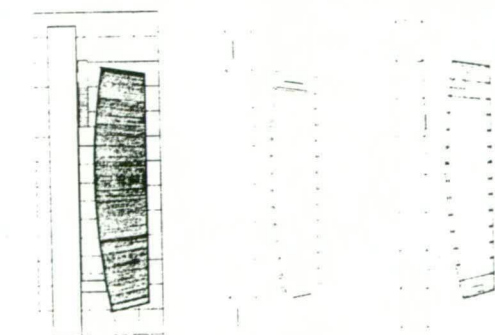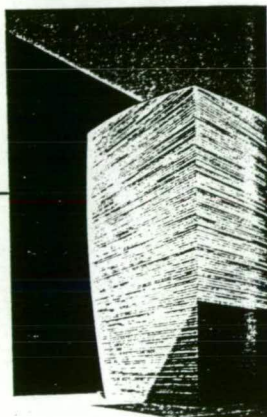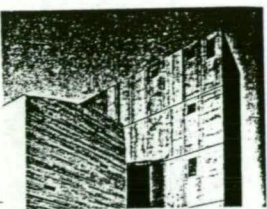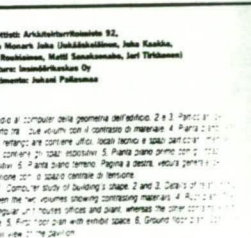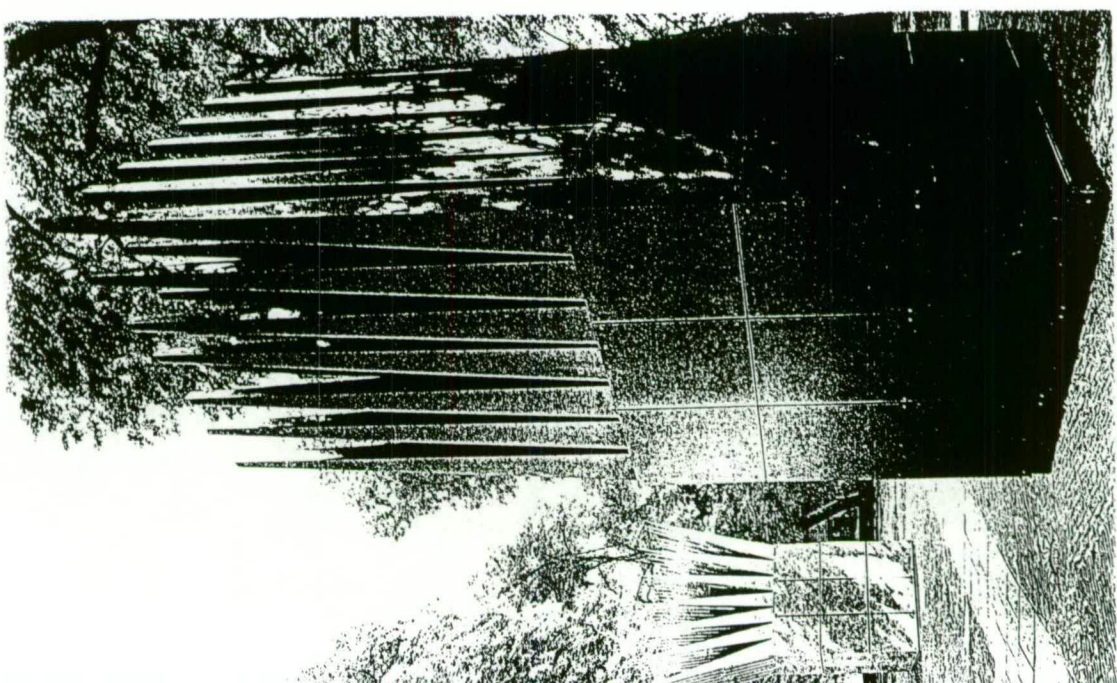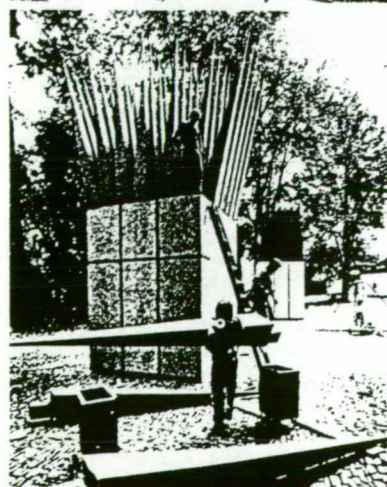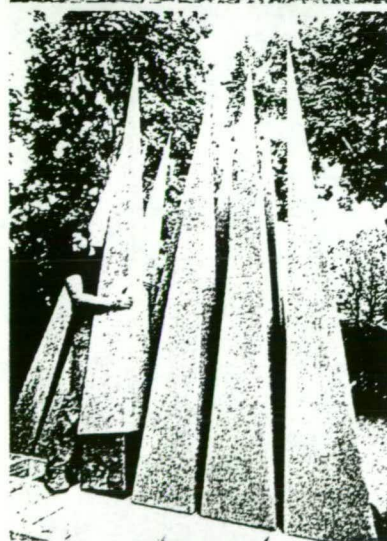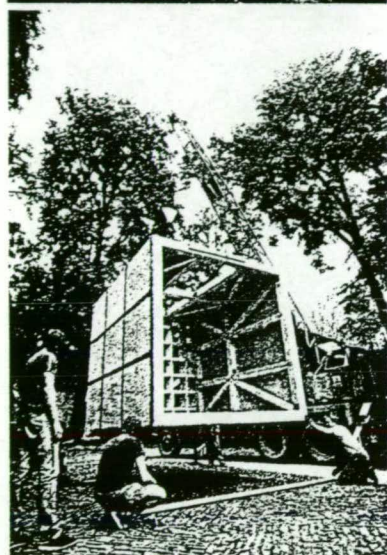
The Funeral of Jan Palach

When I entered the first meditation.
I escaped the gravity of the object.
I experienced the emptiness.
And I have been dead a long time.

When I had a voice you could call a voice.
My mother wept to me:
My son, my beloved son.
I never thought this possible.

I'll follow you on foot.
Halfway in mud and slush the microphones
                                        picked up.
It was raining on the houses:
It was snowing on the police-cars.

The astronauts were weeping.
Going neither up nor out.
And my own mother was brave enough she
                                        looked

And it was all right I was dead.
David Shapiro

1. Fasi del trasporto e del montaggio delle due «case» a Praga. 2. Un disegno costruttivo e schizzi preparatori della struttura in legno. 3. L'interno di una delle due «case». Pagina a destra, la due «case» nel giardino del Castello di Praga, settembre 1991.

■■ 1. The two «houses» are set up in the garden of the Prague Castle. 2, Working drawing and concept sketches of the wooden structure. 3, Interior of one of the two «houses». Opposite, the two «houses» facing each other in the garden of the Castle.
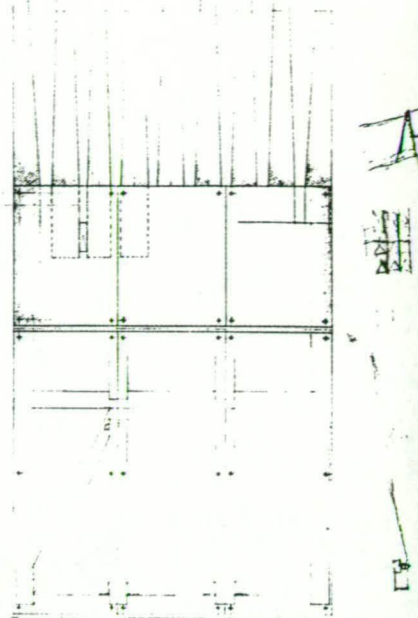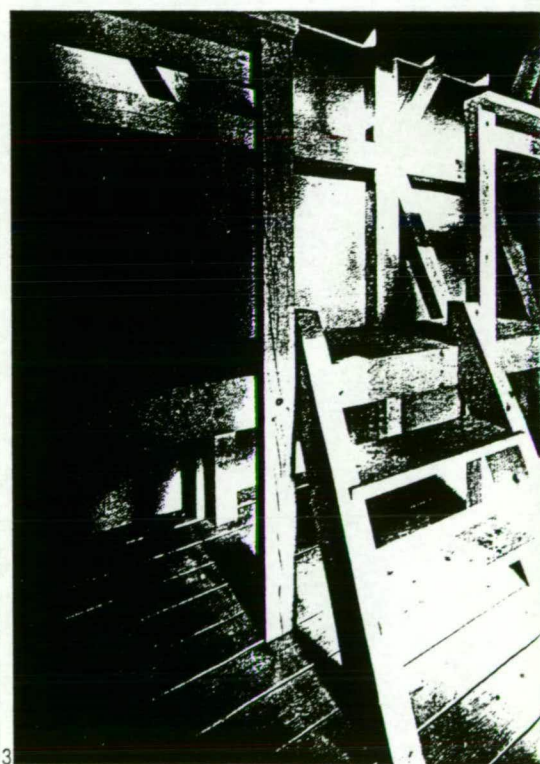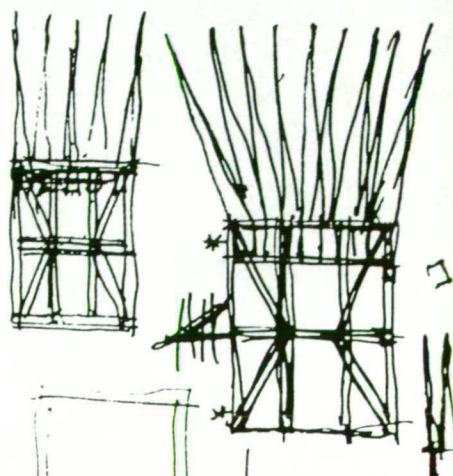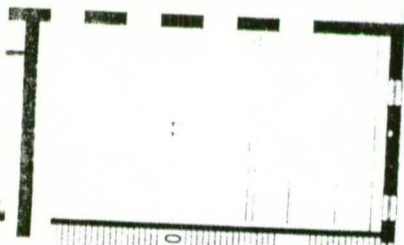
10. Scala principale Staircase
11. Camera padronale-galleria Gallery-master bedroom
12. Spogliatoio Dressing room
13. Bagno padronale Master bathroom
14. Distribuzione alla ospiti Guest wing corridor
15. I camera degli ospiti Guest 1
16. II camera degli ospiti Guest 2
17. Studio Study
18. Bagno degli ospiti Guest bathroom
19. III camera degli ospiti Guest 3
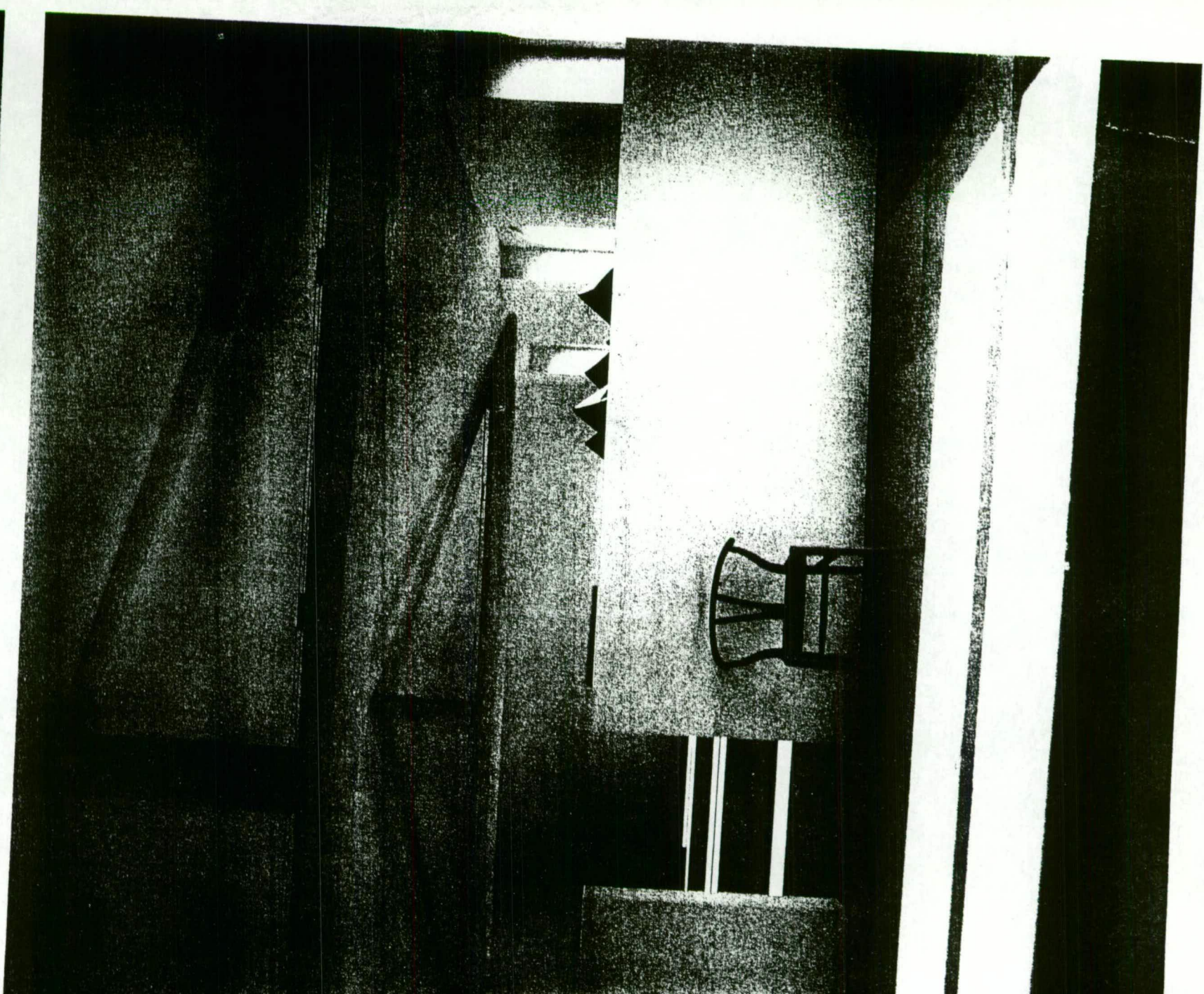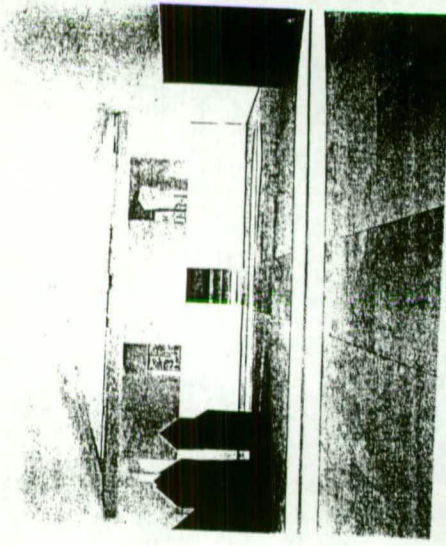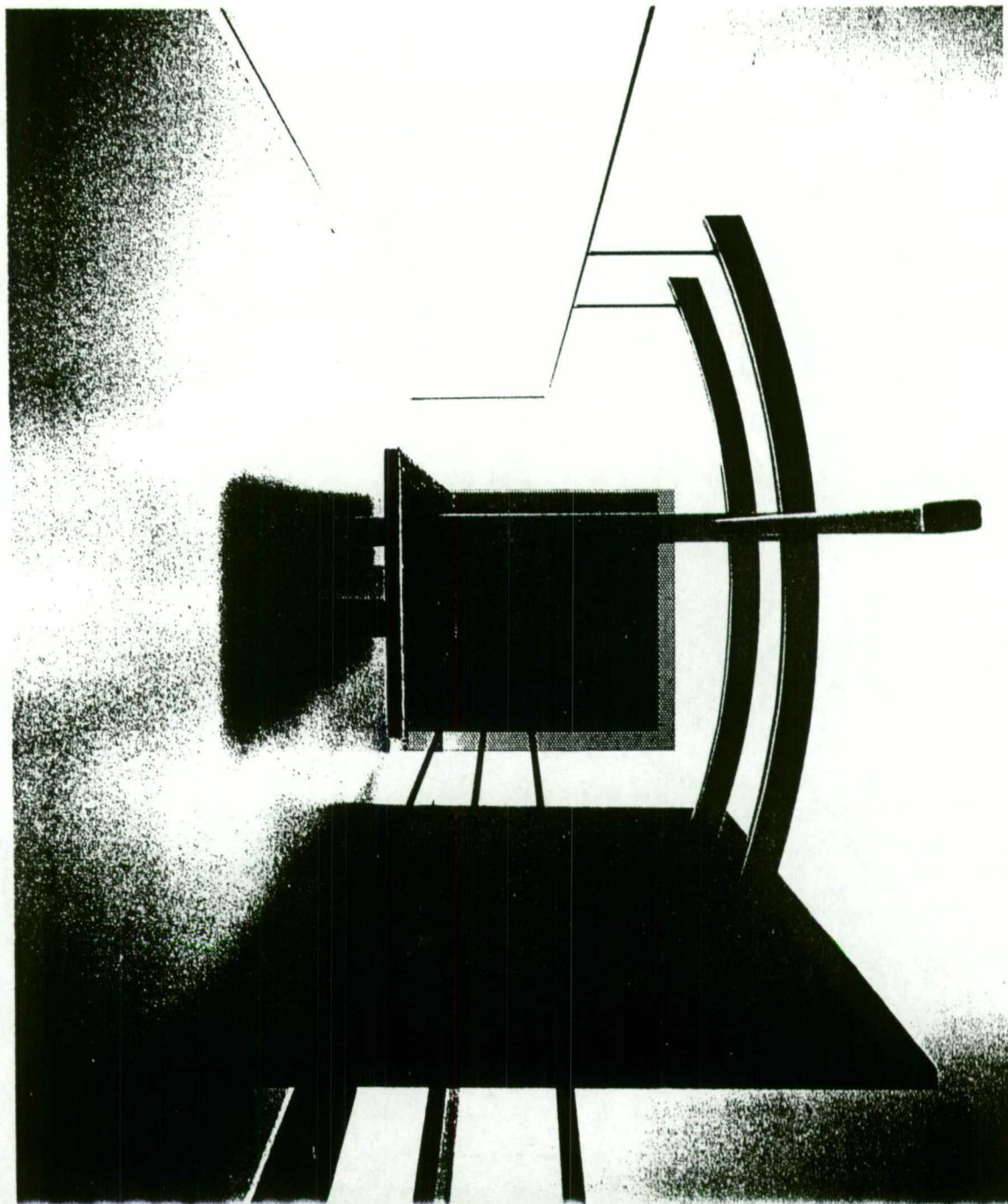
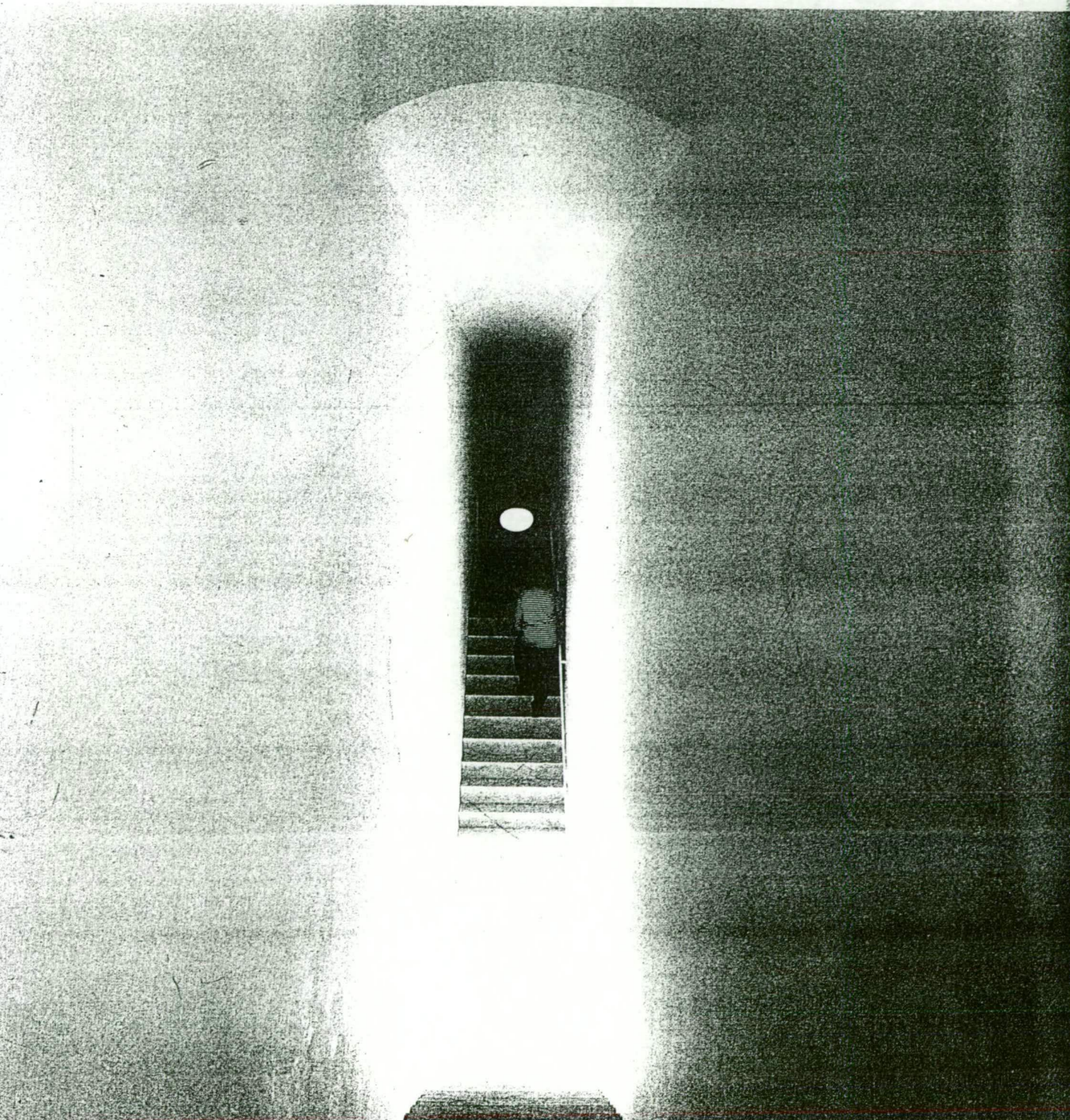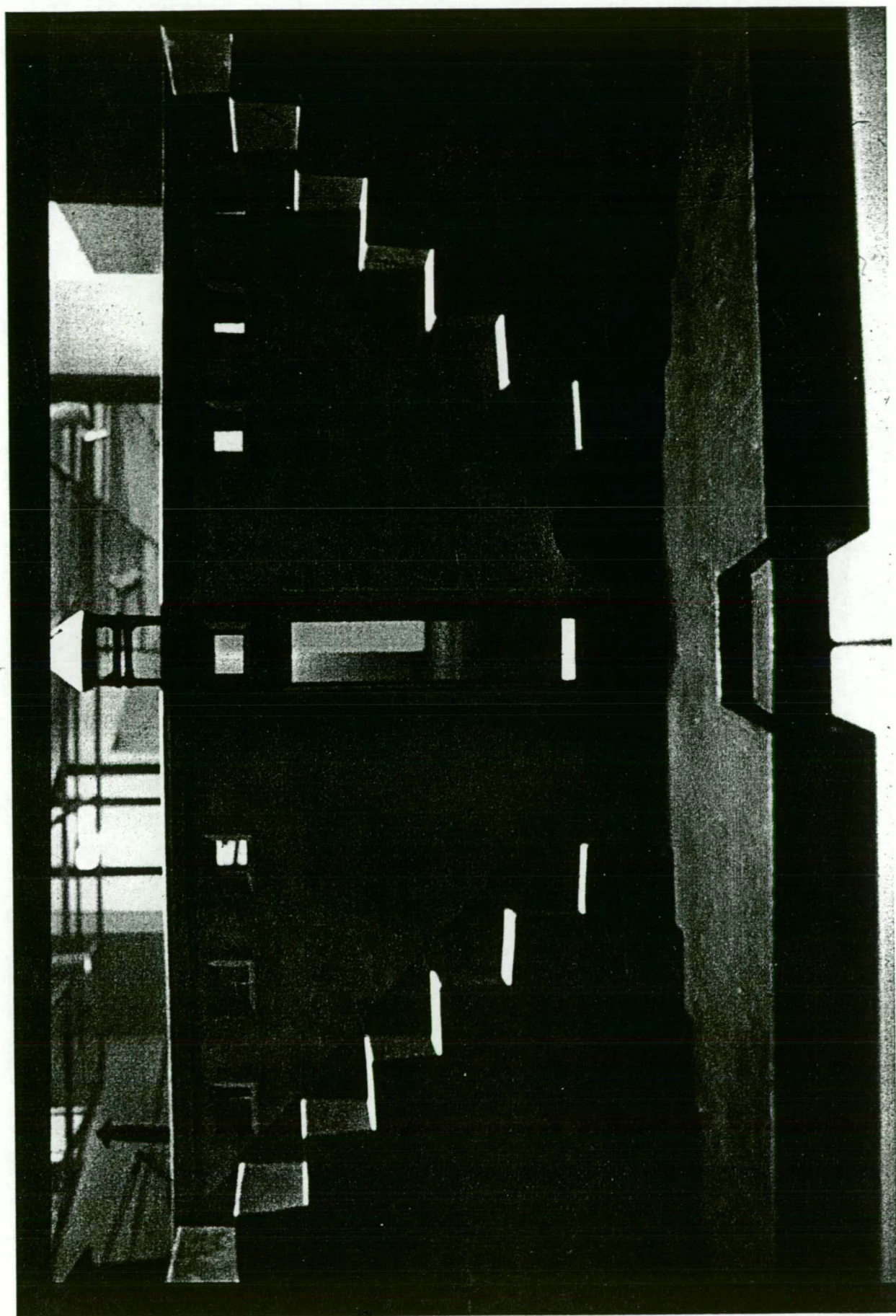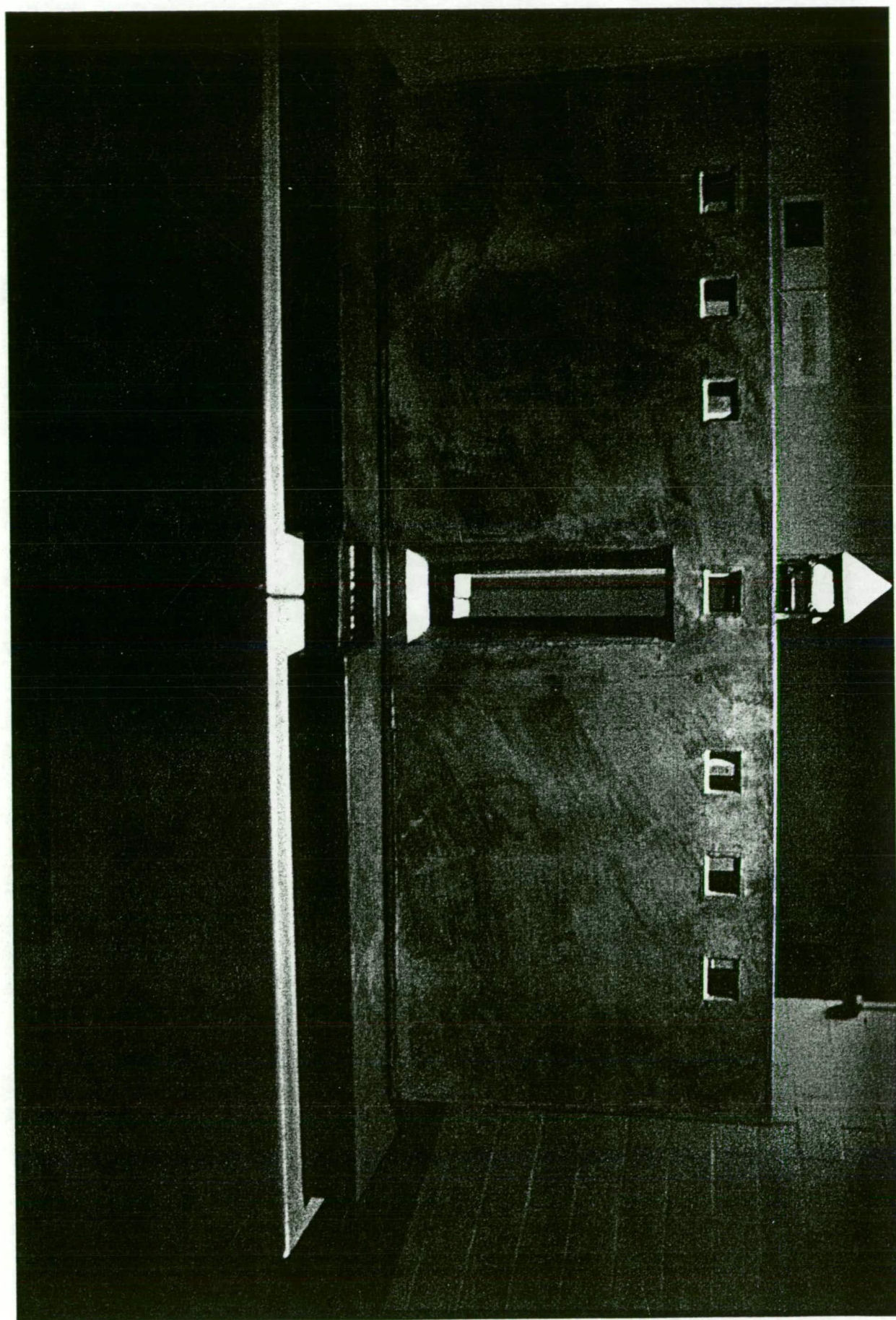cipale, racchiusa tra il muro maestro di
nuova parete, distribuisce da un lato la
dall'altro la camera padronale. Nelka
ra due immagini della camera padronale
come galleria d'arte.
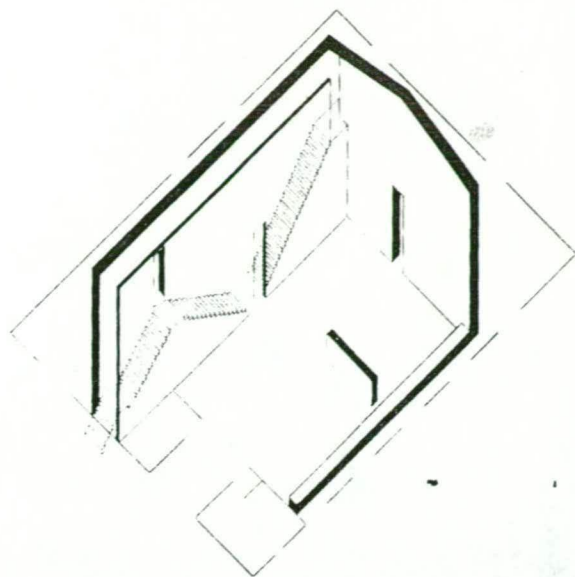
■■ The staircase between the old bearing wall a
wall. The guest wing is to one side, the master
is on the opposite one.
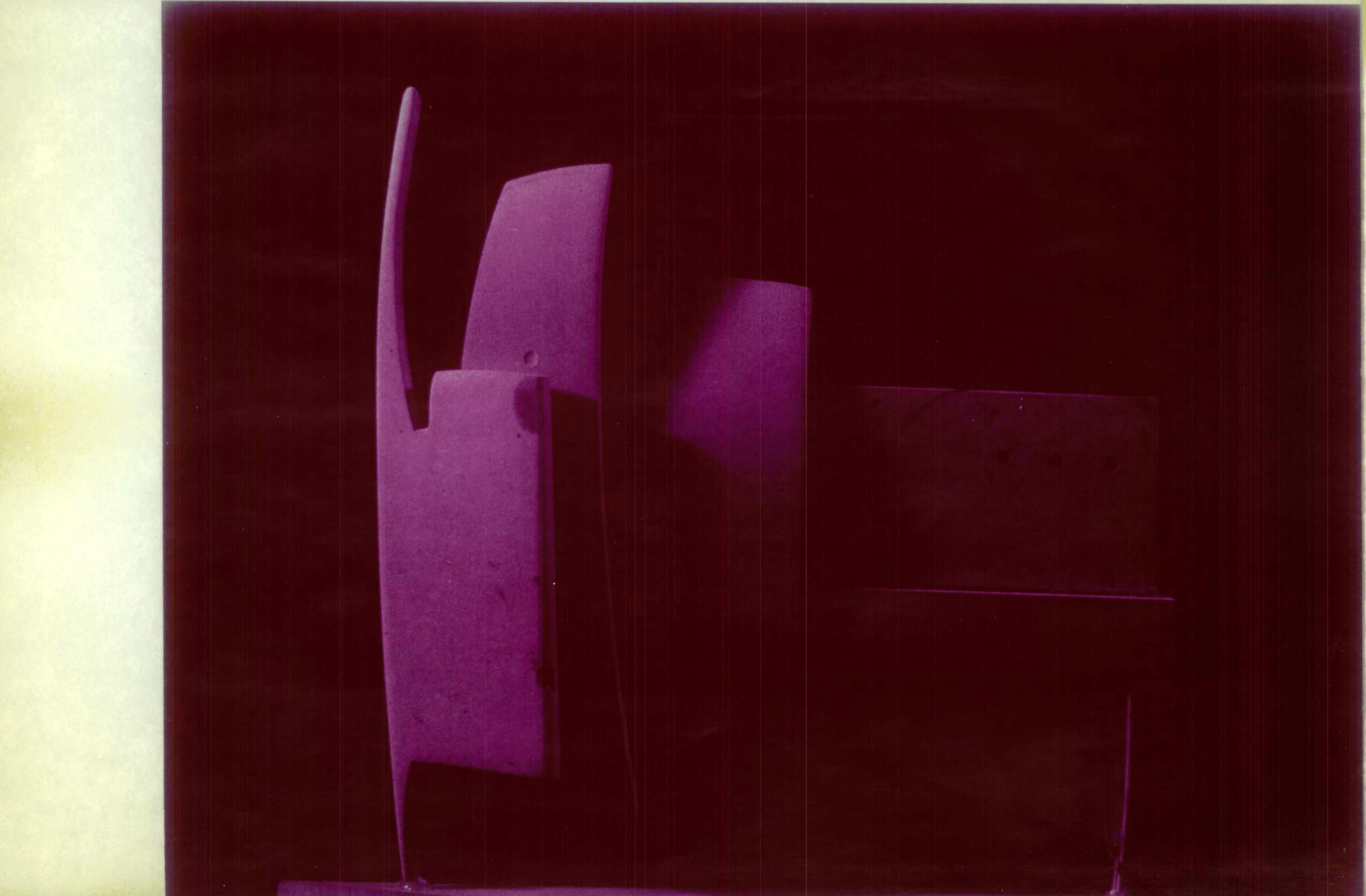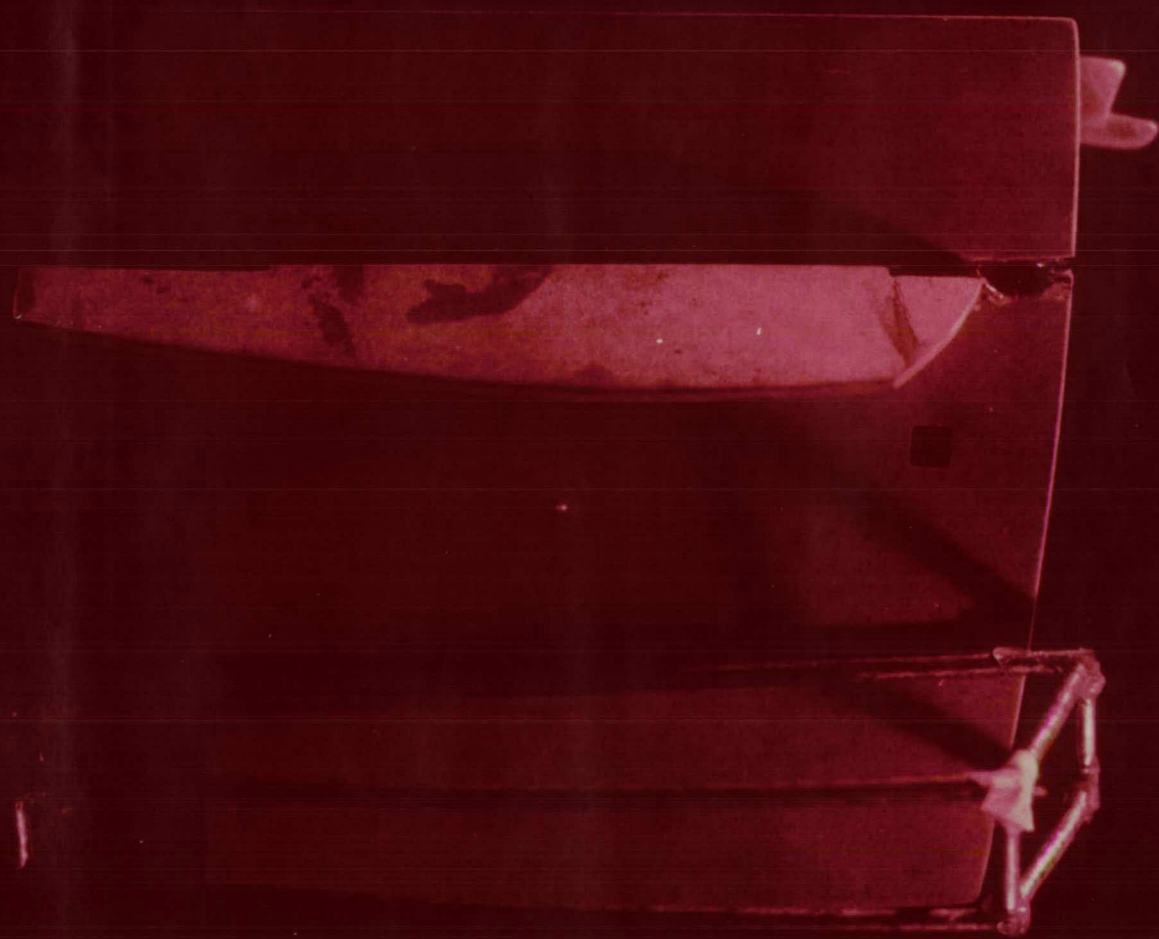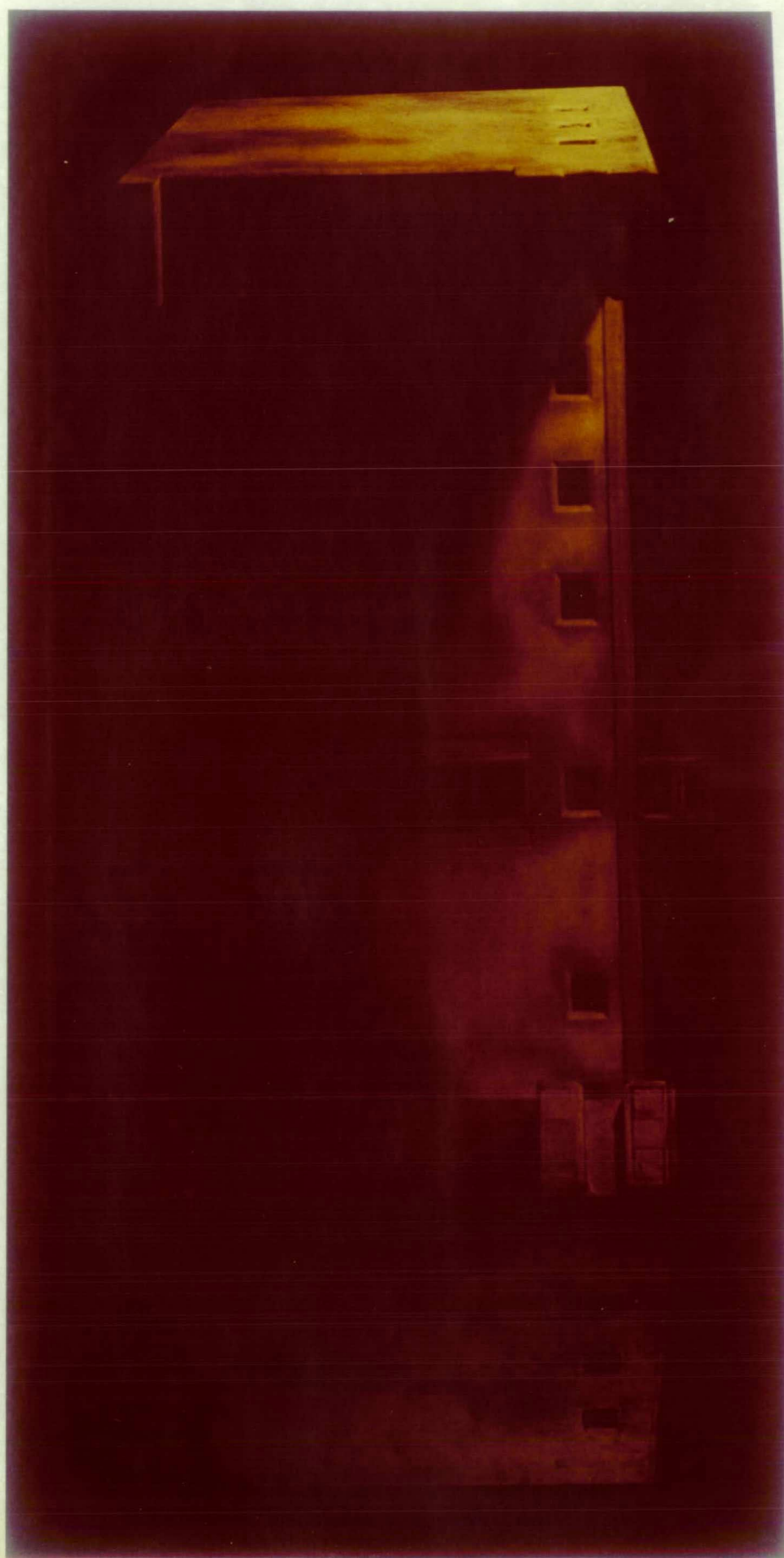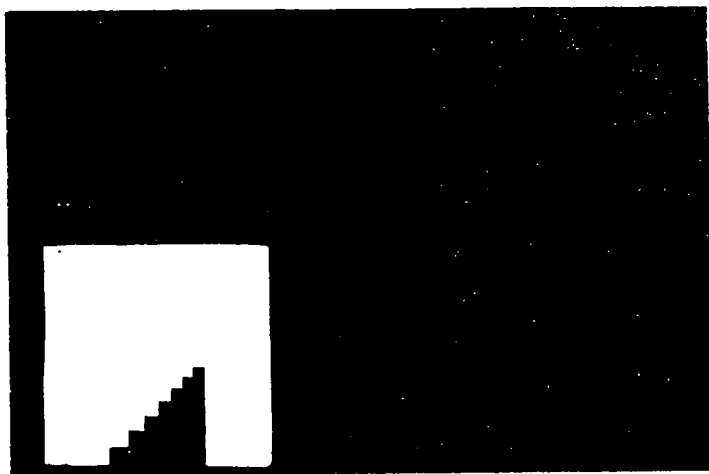Opposite, two images of the master bedroom wi
is used as an art gallery.

Robert Wilson
'Orlando'