



PHOTO WORKS  
1981-2019

Roloff

PHOTO WORKS  
1981-2019

SELECTED: WORKS  
INSTALLATIONS/STUDIES

John Roloff

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Fractalerror Press, Oakland, CA  
Anglim Gilbert / Anglim/Trible Gallery  
San Francisco, CA

2024

v 1.2



Fig. 1. Study; Reef Facies (Beta State) I, detail, b&w photo, size variable, rural site, South Florida, 1999.

Selected Publications by or about John Roloff

*John Roloff: Matrix/Berkeley 110*

*Devonian Shale: Aquifer I*

*Organic Logic/New Observations*  
(with Mark Bartlett)

*The Sea Within the Land/Laramide*

*51 Million BTU's*

*The Rising Sea: Images and Constructions from South Florida  
and Other Selected Works*

*John Roloff: Displacements*

Project: *Oculus*

Project: *Metafossil*

Project: *Land Kilns*

*San Francisco Wharf Complex*

*Venice Substructure Complex*

*Photo Works 1981-2019*

*Rapson Group/Site Index*

IN PROGRESS  
(Working Titles)

*Synthetic Ecologies*

*Ancient Sunlight  
Ceramics Dialogues*

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Fig. 2. Fitting photographic panels of *Gradient (Biscayne Giant)*, studio, Oakland, CA, 1998.

## INTRODUCTION

*Photo Works 1981-2019 / Selected Works/Installations/Studies*, is a treatise, archive and documentation of photographic and conceptual artworks that comprise individual photographs, photographic series, architectural and site-based photo installations, process photo works as well as proposals and concepts for new works of photographic and extended media from 1981 to 2019. This volume is related to a series of "Project" documents and publications developed in consort with Anglim Gilbert Gallery and FractalTerror Press, using contributions from selected projects of my work to reflect, examine and evolve its philosophical, conceptual and interdisciplinary dimensions. The photographic and experimental work presented in this volume is conceptually and materially influenced by my background in science and the interpretation of that research in my environmental and sculptural practice. The definition of photographic media of the work and concepts presented herein, includes: traditional photographic film, darkroom printing, digital manipulation for both film and inkjet output, fired ceramic or glass photo-based processes, printed flags, illumination and mapping strategies as well as other experimental forms. Conceptual and poetic interpretations of chemical processes and light forms a foundation for direct, poetic and experimental projects in a range of media. I used school facilities in the mid-1990's, to produce the first larger, documentary photo-works. As the scale and nature of these projects grew, extending large-format images into interior earthwork and architectural installations, I constructed a mural darkroom in my Oakland, CA studio. The majority of the larger photo-based works until the early 2000's were produced in this darkroom. Site and research-based works over the past 30 or more years have opened up new processes, approaches and technologies as extended forms of photographic and environmental practice.

Geologic interpretation of terrestrial and oceanic realms plays a major role in my work. As a geology major in the late 1960's, I was exposed to many earth science concepts such as: sea floor spreading, accreted terranes and metamorphic facies. As an art student paralleling my science studies during those years inspired me to connect art and industrial materials and processes as functions of the landscape and geologic time. Philosophical questions about global metabolism, ecology and ontological relationships of humanity and nature were gestated by this conjunction of disciplines as well as exploring experimental strategies inherent to both science and art. The photographic and trans-photographic works presented in this treatise, were influenced thematically, conceptually, and physically by these scientific, artistic and philosophical explorations. In this document, the initial two sections, *Metabolisms* and *Tectonics*, use geologic analogues to conceptually frame thematic, poetic and research-based threads to examine realized photographic works and installations. The interrelated and complex nature of geologic process mirrors the cross-disciplinary use of the photographic medium across the spectrum of themes explored in all the works of this oeuvre many of which fit into more than one section/analogue. The final sections, *Studies/Proposals* and *Propagations/Antecedents*, present image and site studies/proposals of photographic works as well as trans-photographic, experimental projects using alternative materials and production methods and new technologies. Environmental and sculptural works in other media conceptually related to the photo projects complete these sections. Two gracious and perceptive exhibition catalog essays in the *Tectonics* section: *John Roloff's The Rising Sea*, by Robert C. Morgan, 1998 and *John Roloff: Displacements*, by Lisa Tamaris Becker, 1999, elucidate and give further context to many of the photo works of that period. The remaining text and essays were written by myself.

*Metabolisms* presents photographic works that document, study, physically express or conceptually extend metabolic and igneous processes engaged in ceramic and environmental kiln projects of the late 1970's to early 1990's such as: *Prairie Starfish/Glacial Epoch*, 1980 and *Wave Kiln II*, 1982, and process works such as *Rotting Flame*, 1994. The photographic process was also used to visualize and study sites for environmental works. After the final kiln project, *Metabolism and Mortality/O<sub>2</sub>*, 1992, photographic works were explored as a transition from the kiln

projects to experimental analogs and interior expressions for the processes of those environmental projects. Imagery was used to explore organic metaphors of the transformations of the kiln projects. Photo-process works such as: *Red Iron Sails*, 1992 and *Robe I & II*, 1995, become physical analogs of the kilns and extend the alchemical and cultural reference of the environmental works.

*Tectonics*, begins with *Art Park/Orchard Scan I-IV*, circa 1990, an aerial photographic study for a possible project site and *Draped Flames*, 1996, of metabolic/flame imagery, draped over canted walls, both are transitions to a more structural, tectonic vocabulary and new conceptual themes for the photographic works. The large-scale, site-generated, architectural installations such as: *Orchard (Slump) I*, 1997, *Gradient (Biscayne Giant)* and *Carbonate Falls (Marsh Lettuce)*, both 1998, began as large-format negatives taken in the Central Valley of California and Southern Florida for exhibitions in those terrains. These and related photo installations were considered interior “earth works,” organic/systemic imagery configured as geomorphologic structures, such as: slumps, anticlines or recumbent folds. *Landscape Projections (For an Unknown Window)* series, 1999-2001, invoke spiritual and philosophical themes between natural systems and architecture. Works such as *Manhattan/Franciscan Formation*, New York, NY, 1998, and the site-specific photo elements of *The Sea Within the Land/Laramide*, 2011, Denver, CO, 2011, examine the geologic nature and displacement of natural materials in architecture and the built environment.

*Studies/Proposals*, gives examples of studies, prototypes and proposals for realized as well as photo-related gallery, public and environment installations. A series of collaged sketches and studies for the exhibition, *The Rising Sea, Images and Constructions from South Florida and Other Selected Works*, 1998-99, gives an in-depth look at the conceptual and physical development and roll of photography in that exhibition.

*Propagations/Antecedents*, examines relevant, trans-photographic works in a range of media and contexts that extrapolate and are inspirational to, or informed by, many of the photographic installations. Site investigations such as, *Drone/Video/Lidar/Anthropocene Bathymetric Mapping Project: Scan Pattern Study/Triassic Hawkberry/Ashfield Strata, Depositional Flow Structure/Sydney College of Art Site*, 2016, explores bathymetric mapping and lidar scanning systems. *Protogaea Civica (Franciscan Formation)*, 2005 and the in-progress, *Venice Substructure Complex*, 2020-21, employ digitally printed flags to engage site geology. These and architectural installations such as: *Holocene Passage*, 2002, are conceptually related to many of the site-related photographic works.

The artist, Anglim Gilbert/Anglim/Trimble Gallery and FractalTerror Press, wish to thank those who have contributed to this volume in many different ways: directly, historically, covertly, emotionally and inspirationally. Those contributors include but are not by any means limited to: William T. Wiley, Connie Lewallen, Dennis Oppenheim, Grant Thorpe, Charles Ray, Helene Fried, Jim Peele, Robert C. Morgan, Lance Fung, John Talley, Emily Harvey, Ann Wettrich, Mark Bartlett, Mark Thompson, Lewis deSoto, Neil Forrest, Kath Fries, Jack McGrath, Paula Levine, Patricia Watts, Leonard Hunter, Lisa Tamaris Becker, Jerry Spagnoli, Don Farnsworth/Magnolia Editions, SFAI, all the students, construction crews and staff of the supporting organizations who assisted in the projects, national, local and institutional granting programs, among many others.

The geologists and oceanographers: Eldridge M. Moores, William Beebe, Bruce C. Heezen, Marie Tharp, Robert Dietz, H. H. Hess, H. W. Menard, John Wakabayashi, and their many colleagues, also need to be mentioned for the scientific/poetic inspiration their work has given me.

John Roloff, 2020

Fig. 3 (opposite page). *Image Map: Stratigraphic Columns III (San Andreas/East)*, dimensions variable, inkjet print. Digitally compressed (lithified) images of geologic strata and San Francisco 1906 earthquake destruction from the east side of the San Andreas fault. Originally shown with similar images of the west side of the San Andreas fault, on two 13 ft. architectural columns, *Force of Nature: 1906 Earthquake Centennial Exhibition*, curated by Patricia Watts, Sonoma Art Museum, Santa Rosa, CA, 2006, (see pg. 78 and 133).



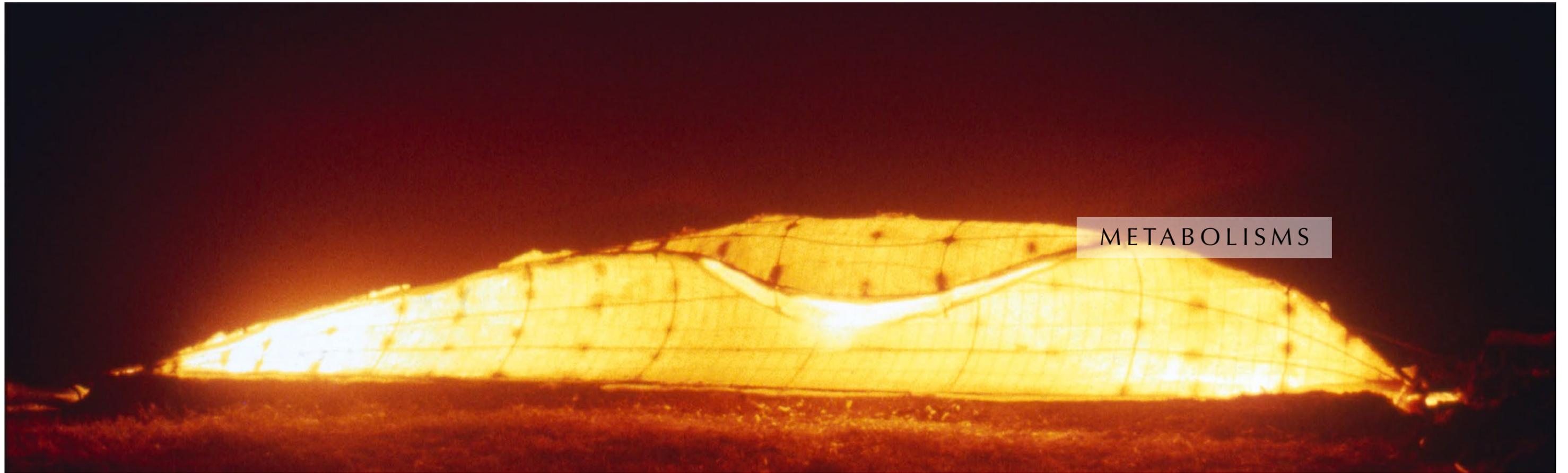


Fig. 4. *Wave Kiln II* (fire state), 8 ft. w., ceramic fiber blanket, steel, propane, brick, Mills College, 1981.

## Kiln Projects

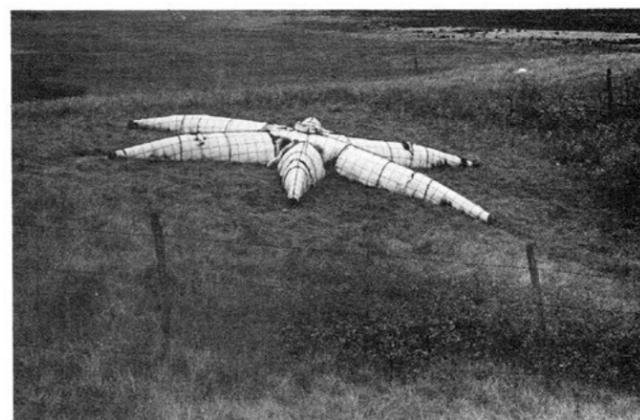
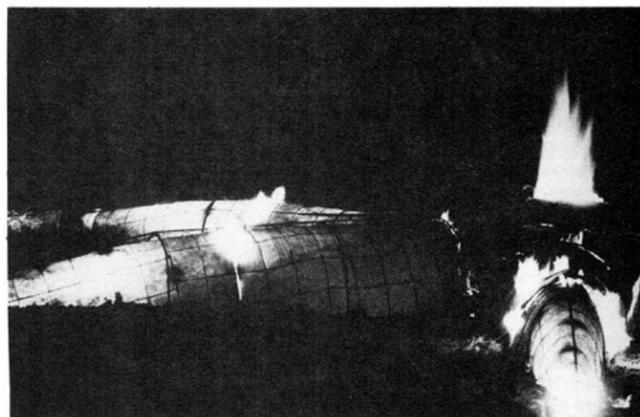
by John Roloff

Since 1979 a series of experimental kiln projects have been completed in various sites in both America and Canada. These projects attempt to present the kiln, an instrument of change, as having its own quality as an associative object or force, as well as an investigative tool for exploring the process of change and products generated by that process.

The kilns are constructed as specific images out of a high temperature insulating blanket made of clay fibers suspended inside a metal armature. Heat is produced from propane-powered burners that generate temperatures of over 2000°F. The firings occur at night when the kiln can become a glowing effigy as light from the heat inside is transmitted through its surface.

Most of the kilns are bottomless, beneath which a surface is often prepared with glaze materials that melt to form other imagery of fused materials revealed when the kiln is removed either at the peak of the firing (as in *Land Monitor/Fired Volcanic Boulder*) to show the molten state, or upon cooling (as in *Prairie Starfish/Glacial Epoch*) to show a solid, glass-like state. This image is related to the kiln itself by form alone but also through the materials being subjected to the dynamics of heat movement and intensity, causing chance mutations, flows, and blendings. In the *Wave Kilns #1 and #2*, the kiln bottom is sealed so that the glowing image, a "mold of heat," is the result. In *Mountain Kiln/Black Orchid*, a central "throat" or opening in the bottom of the fused "Orchid" serves as part of the image as well as part of a draft system for the burners connected underground to a remote flue.

The kilns are designed from a knowledge of principles about heat flow, from conceptual ideas, and



John Roloff: *Prairie Starfish/Glacial Epoch*, 1980, steel, ceramic fiber blanket, borax, and propane, 20' diameter, Craven, Saskatchewan, Canada. Kiln (top) and detail of night firing (bottom).

from an intuitive point of view. The kiln's operation and results are only partially predictable and are allowed a "mind of their own." When successful, a firing can approach an irrational point, the verge of losing control, and a metaphor is suggested of the unconscious in a primitive or vul-

nerable state where time becomes emotion, chemistry spirit, and matter theater.

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## METABOLISMS

The idea of metabolism as an analogy of change and transformation, has geochemical, ecological and aesthetic implications. Metabolism of an organism is the interdependent processes of cellular decay and reconstruction. The kiln and related environmental works are metabolic in their use of ancient sunlight in the form of fossil fuels to transform inorganic materiality and site, using energy, imagery and metaphor to evoke geochemical, ecological and aesthetic narratives. These stories explore themes of global metabolism: organic/alchemical/planetary systems interconnected within vitalist and metamorphic paradigms.

Initial investigations into my use of photography were documentation of early environmental, process-based kiln works that were in part transitory and ephemeral, such as: *Land Monitor/Fired Volcanic Boulder* and *Prairie Starfish (Glacial Epoch)*, both 1980. These were documented and produced at large scale to give some idea of the process and context of the actual works. The next phase of photographic work engaging ephemeral projects included: *Wave Kiln I, II, and III*, 1981-2. Photographic images of *Wave Kiln I and II* were used to create a photographic simaculum of a wave-shape kiln firing. Large images of these kilns were installed in gallery exhibitions of the larger *Wave Kiln III*, a structure too large to fire using the burners and resources available at that time. The printed images became a bridge of scale and imagination, animating the larger kiln firing - a virtual or conceptual transformation of the kiln and firing process. Aligned to this strategy was the use of photographic imagery to create conceptual studies, proposals or visualize structural and site relationships for commissioned kiln and other site-related projects. *Obsidian Terrace (Seabird Caves)/Shell Mound (White Forest)*, 1984-85, *Orchard of the Sun V*, 1989, *Study: Oculus: Dead Sea/Oil Field*, 1989, and *Study mit Max Taut: Wissinger Family Tomb Furnace (Underground)/Orchard*, 1991, among those seen in the following pages, are examples of this use of photographic media.

With *Red Iron Sails*, 1992, processes related to the kilns and metabolic change directly engage the photographic surface in the form of chemical reactions. The oxidation caused by the reaction of water and iron powder deposited directly on the sail images link the process of oxidation with that of transport, wind and climate, as well as the role of iron in metabolic processes of the blood and at an oceanic scale in the artificial seeding of algae blooms to enhance marine respiration. In the *Photo/Process Works*, 1995-97, chemical change in the form of slices of orange inserted into photographic images decay, transforming the images, analogous to the kiln and larger metabolic and cultural processes.

The photographic series, *Orders of Entropy*, 2005, conceptualize chemical change in a historical context. Images of Civil War ironclads and WW II warships that are now rusting at the bottom of rivers and oceans, returning geochemically and para-metabolically to a primal materiality and diffused form, somewhat analogous to the generative ecosystem of a whale fall on the sea floor.

Fig. 5. Kiln Projects, Artery Magazine, February/March, 1983, pg. 6.

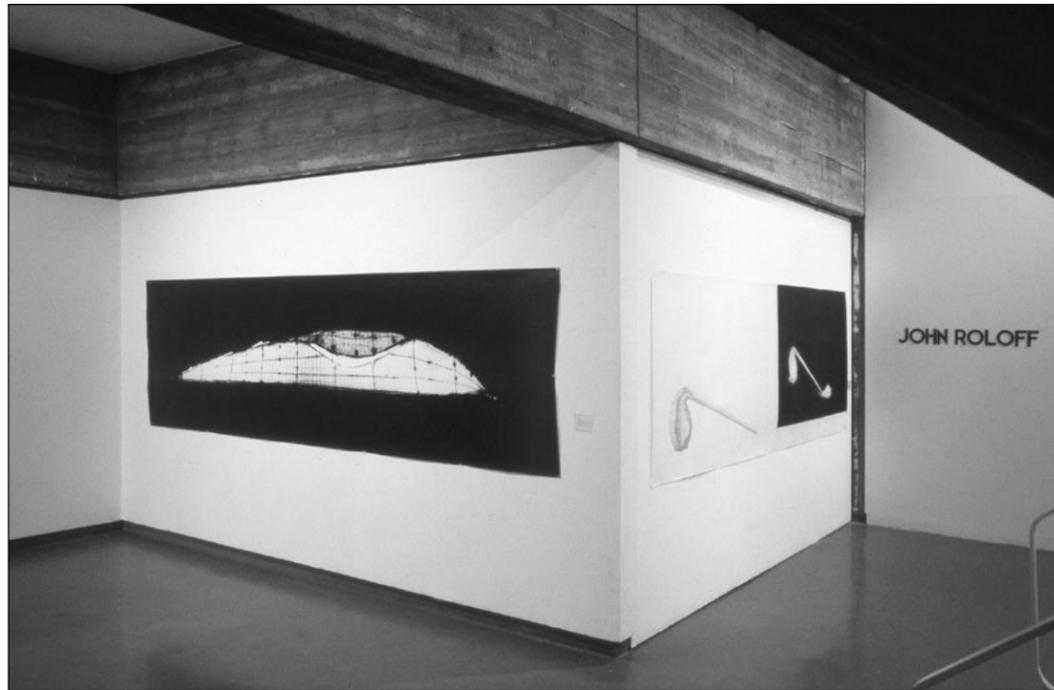


Fig. 6. Left: Wave Kiln II, b&w photo, 40 in. x 144 in., right: Retort Kiln, Pencil, pastel of paper, 48 in x 120 in., *Kiln Projects: Works in Progress*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA. 1982. Photo, collection: UC Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA.

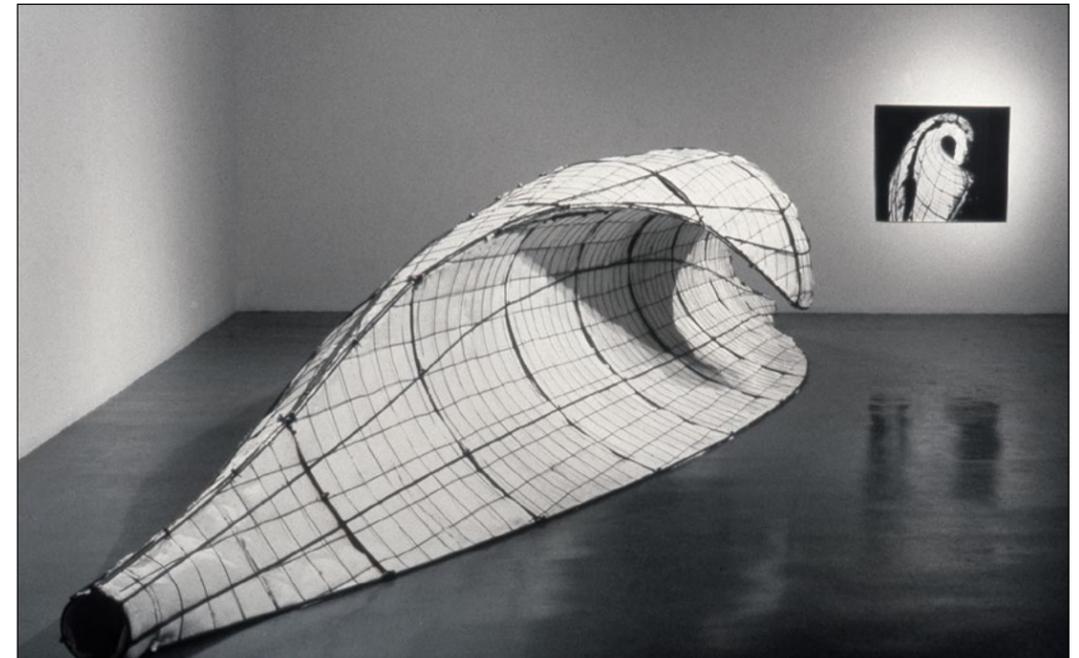


Fig. 8. Foreground: Wave Kiln III, installation, 40 ft. long, steel, ceramic fiber blanket, back wall: Wave Kiln I, b&w photograph, 40 in. w. *Kiln Projects: Works in Progress*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA. 1982. Photo, collection: UC Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA..



Fig. 7. *Prairie Starfish/Glacial Epoch*, b&w mural photo documentation, *Kiln Projects: Works in Progress*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA. 1982. Collection: UC Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA.



Fig. 9. *Land Monitor/Fired Volcanic Boulder*, b&w mural photo documentation, *Kiln Projects: Works in Progress*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA. 1982. Collection: UC Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA.



Fig. 10. *Obsidian Terrace (Seabird Caves)/Shell Mound (White Forest)*, proposal for Double Rock, Candlestick Park, San Francisco Bay, pencil, ink and acrylic on b&w photo, 40 in. x 72 in., circa 1984-85. Collection: UC Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA.



Fig. 11. *Orchard of the Sun V*, conceptual proposal, b&w photograph, ink, acrylic paint, 40 in. x 30 in. Concept to re-fruit with coal and insulation with refractory cement the dead portion of a tree at Donna Billick's farm, Central Valley, CA, 1989. Collection: Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA.

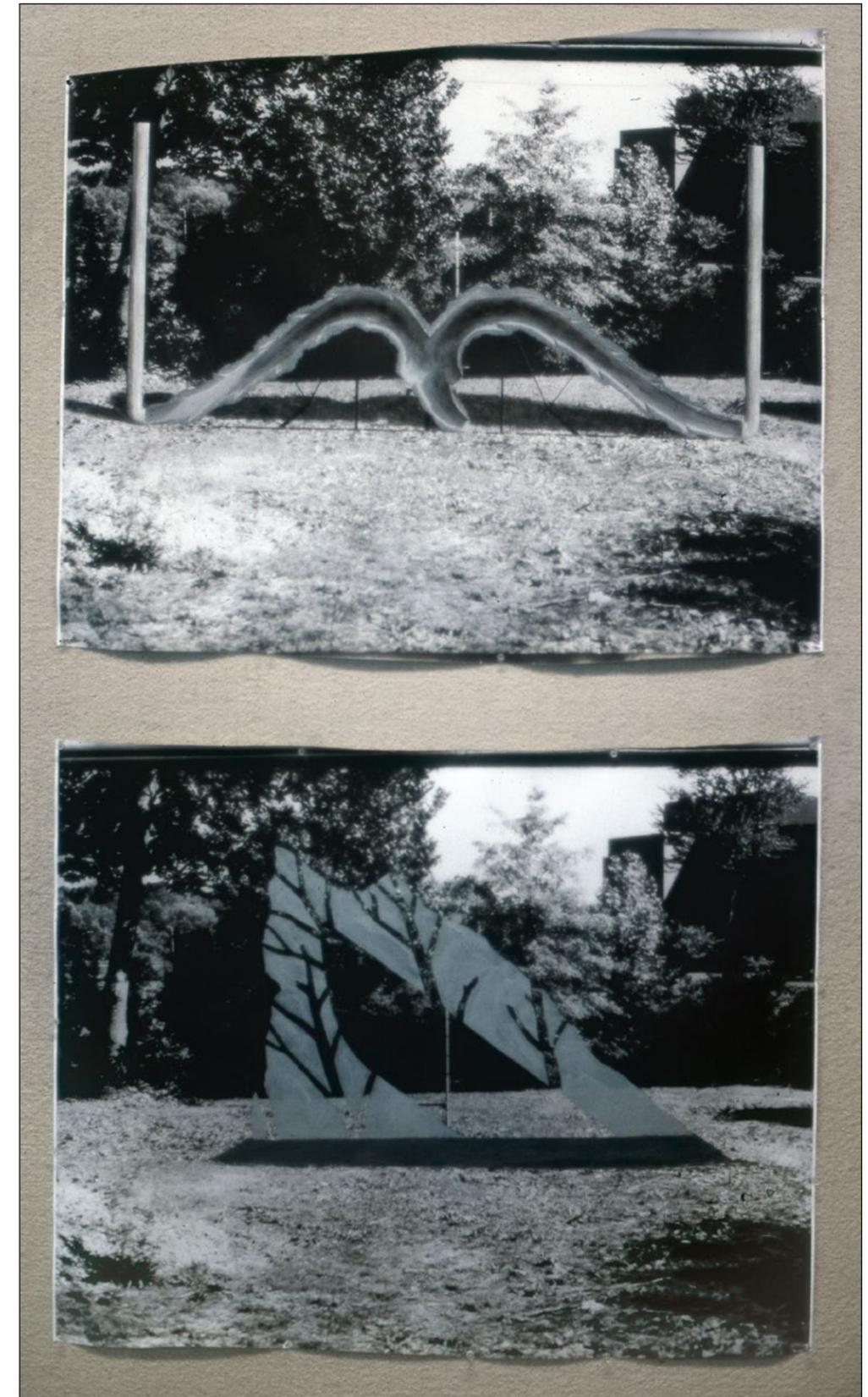


Fig. 12. *Preliminary Kiln Studies*, top: Hartford, CT, bottom: Arcata, CA, oil, pencil on b&w photo, 40 in. x 36 in., each, John Roloff, *Kiln Projects*, solo exhibition, Hartford School of Art, Hartford, CT, 1988.

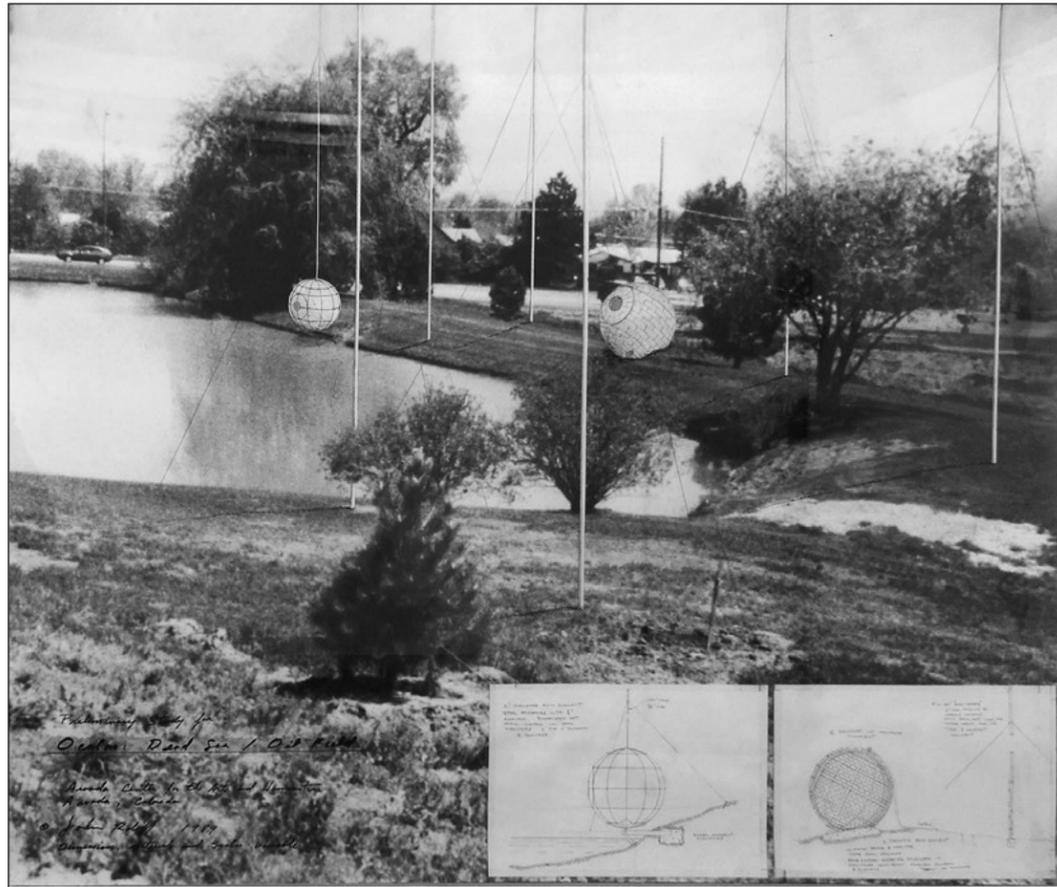


Fig. 13. Study: *Oculus: Dead Sea/Oil Field*, pencil, pen and collage on b&w photo, 40 in x 44 in., 1989. Collection, UC Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA.



Fig. 14. *Oculus/Beebe (Abyss Kiln)*, pencil, acrylic paint, pastel on b&w photo, 80 in, x 40 in, circa 1988, revised, 2019.

*Study: Orchid Eclipse (Spherical Furnace with Slowly Closing Refractory Petals)*

Kiln/furnace proposal: pastel, refractory cement on b&w photo, 1990

As in other works employing a spherical/oculus form, *Study: Orchid Eclipse (Spherical Furnace with Slowly Closing Refractory Petals)*, extrapolates the oculus into a cosmological image, examining foundational issues of ecology, ontology and transcendence. *Orchid Eclipse..*, suggests a distended model for photosynthesis, here a spherical 'solar' furnace is slowly closed in upon and 'eclipsed' by mechanically operated refractory petals surrounding the structure. In a perverse adaptation of the Buddhist instruction and koan to "kill the Buddha," to gain enlightenment, symbolic, refractory petals attempt to extinguish the parent fires of their atmospheric and chemical origin by suffocating and denying oxygen to the flames of the solar surrogate.



Fig. 15. *Study: Orchid Eclipse (Spherical Furnace with Slowly Closing Refractory Petals)*, 84" x 117", collage, refractory cement, pastel on B&W photograph, Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, CA, 1992.

*Study mit Grünwald: Falling Knight Furnace/Forest*  
*Study mit Max Taut: Wissinger Tomb Furnace (Underground)/Orchard,*

Performative kiln/furnace proposals: pencil and pastel on b&w photo collage, 1990

*Study mit Grünwald: Falling Knight Furnace/Forest*, 1990, shown to the right, is one of several conceptual proposals for environmental kiln/furnace art works related to my Germanic heritage. This work is a study for a kiln/furnace project based on an image of a falling knight in the right, middle-ground of the resurrection panel of the Isenheim Altarpiece, 1512-1516, by the painter Matthias Grünwald. The background is an image of a forest collaged into the scene. The falling knight image was also used in *Metabolism Study (Falling Knight)*, 1995, one of a series of "Photo Process Works," relating the chemical and visual transformation, caused by the insertion of orange slices against the photo's emulsion, of the image to fire and metabolism.

*Study mit Max Taut: Wissinger Tomb Furnace (Underground)/Orchard*, 1990, shown on subsequent pages, is a second work related to my German heritage and one of a series of conceptual proposals for environmental kiln/furnace art works. This work explores spiritual issues and personal history, in particular family history as the great-grandson of German immigrant farmers who settled in the Pacific Northwest. The image of the Wissinger tomb comes from the crypt of a German family in a graveyard in Stahndsdorf, Germany, visited in 1992 with friends, Alf Löhr and Betty Beaumont. This tomb, a complex crystalline structure that emphasizes spiritual values of inorganic form, was designed by Max Taut, a noted German Expressionist architect of the 1920's. In the proposal, the tomb, now underground, is transformed into a kiln by flues extending upwards, hypothetically through a fruit orchard, symbolic of the crops grown by my family in both Europe and North America.

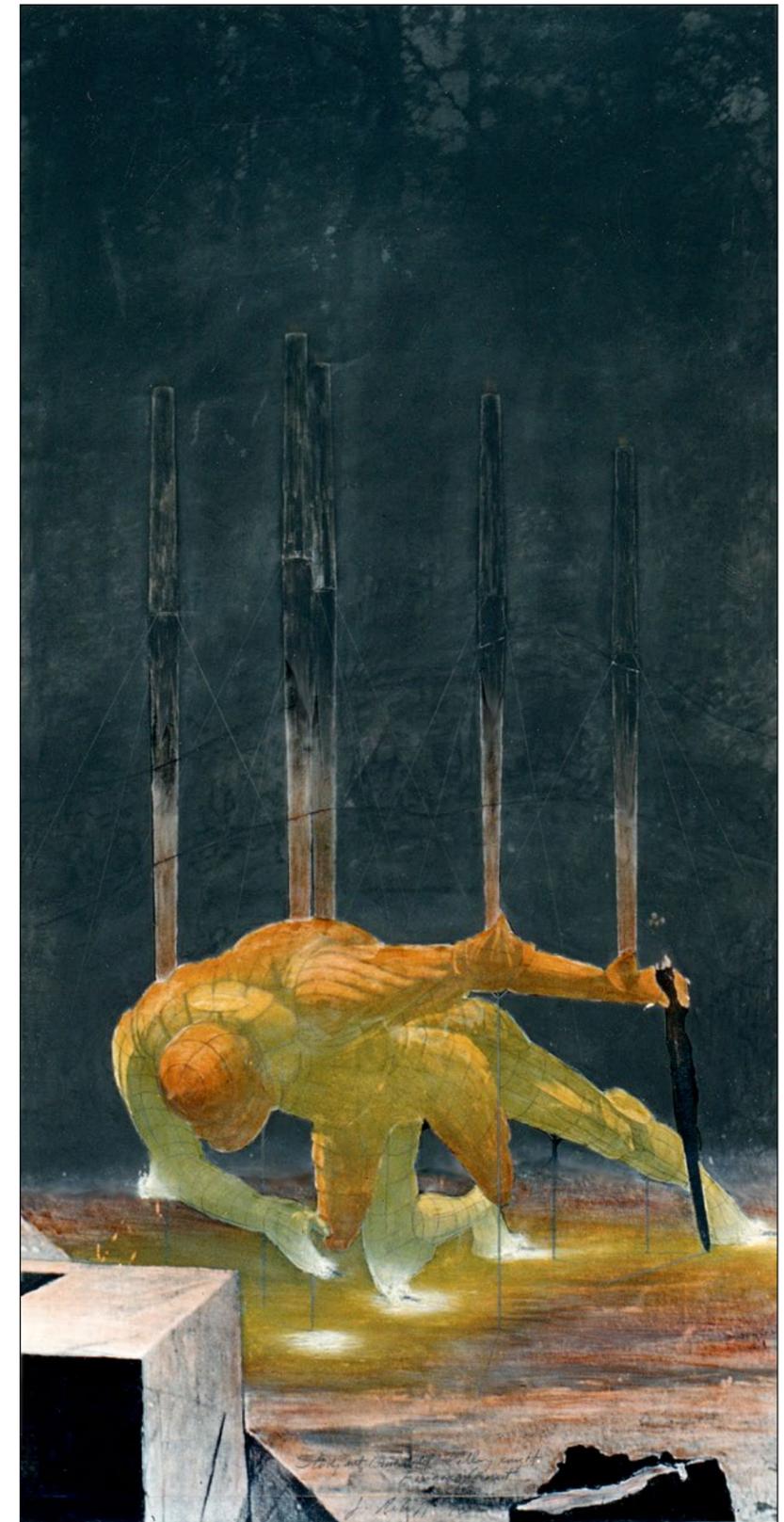


Fig. 16. *Study mit Grünwald: Falling Knight Furnace/Forest*, proposal for a kiln project, 64 in. x 32 in., pastel, gauche and pencil on b&w photo collage, 1990. Private collection.



Fig. 17. Study mit Max Taut: Wissinger Family Tomb Furnace (Underground)/Orchard, proposal for a kiln project, 64 in. x 32 in., pastel, gauche, acrylic and pencil on b&w photo collage, 1990.



Fig. 18. Red Iron Sails, (detail, middle sail/mast of 3 iron encrusted sails/masts), 72 in. x 40 in., water oxidized iron oxide, acrylic on b&w photo, 1992.



Fig. 19. *Rotting Flame I*, installation view, 400+ oranges on steel armature, 6 ft... h. . x 12 ft... l., "Color in the Shadows, Bay Area Cyber Art," CCAC, Oakland, CA, 1994.

### Photo/Process Works

The photo/process series is a group of related photographic works done from 1995 to 2004. Physically, these works are photographic images with thinly sliced sections of orange placed on selected areas of the pictures. This arrangement is permanently sealed and kept under compression by the glazing and frame of the work. The orange slices are allowed to interact over time with the surface chemistry of the photograph consuming and altering portions of the image.

The interaction of orange slices with these images investigate a complex array of symbols representing change including: metabolism as an energy system and as aesthetic or psychological ferment; the historic transformation and catalysis of the west by medieval Asiatic invaders, conquerors from the land where the orange originated; corrosion and entropy as represented as a form of the sublime, anthropomorphized and expressed through images of warfare and spirituality.



Fig. 20. *Yamishiro/Metabolism Study*, 40 in. X 96 in., b&w photograph, orange slices, acrylic sheet, metal frame, silicone, intermediate stage of orange reaction with image, 1995.

The photo/orange slice works are preceded by *Rotting Flame I*, 1994, a work that examined fire as a form of decay. These photo process works are conceptually related to Project: *Land Kilns*, a series of landscape furnace/kiln sculptures of the 1980's and early 1990's, such as *Wave Ship (of Fire)*, 1994, *Untitled (Earth Orchid)*, 1989 and *Metabolism and Mortality/O<sub>2</sub>*, 1992. Through the use of fire as a process of nature, generated and contained by industrial technology, these pieces activated images associated with landscape, seascape, metabolic cycles, photosynthesis and fossil fuels in geologic and contemporary time. The sealed photo/orange slice pieces may be seen as an interiorization and exploration of systemic/psychic sites in human time paralleling the earlier environmental sculptures. The oranges from which the slices were taken may be seen as analogs to elemental, incandescent, carbon ions released by the combustion of fossil fuels in the burners of the *Land Kiln* projects, illuminating and animating their forms.

John Roloff 1995, 1999 (revised 2019)



Fig. 21. *Metabolism Study (Falling Knight)*, b&w photograph, orange slices, tempered glass, aluminum, two panels combined, 84 in. h. x 84 in. w. Studio, Oakland, CA, 1995-6.



Fig. 22. *Metabolism Study (Falling Knight)*, b&w photograph, orange slices, tempered glass, aluminum, two panels combined, 84 in. h. x 84 in. w. Tom Marioni-John Roloff, Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, CA, 1996.



Fig. 23. *Thyroid Portrait/Knights I-VI*, 32 in. X 32 in., each, b&w photograph, orange slices, acrylic sheet, metal frame, silicone, early stages of orange reaction with image. 1995.



Fig. 24. Orange Placement Mock-up: *Endocrine Portrait/Knights VII-XI*, 64 in. x 40 in., b&w photograph, colored paper (to be replaced by orange slices at the time of activation), 1996.



Fig. 25. *Séance I (entropic) & Séance II (entropic)*, b&w photograph, orange slices, acrylic, aluminum, 40 in. h. x 72 in. w., each. Tom Marioni-John Roloff, Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, CA, 1996.



Fig. 26. *Robe I & II*, 93 in. x 93 in., ea., b&w photograph, orange slices, glass, powder coated aluminum, silicone, *The Sea Within the Land*, solo exhibition, Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco, CA, 2019.

### *Orders of Entropy*

A series of sculptures and photographs relating to the monitor as exemplified by the Civil War *Monitor* ironclad and related vessels, was enhanced by research done at the National Archives and US Naval Historical Center in Washington, DC in the late 1970's on a range of historical ships. The monitor represented a historical and radical transition in material, form and concept about a ship. The use of iron as a building material took the ship from the organic wooden realm into the inorganic, in the form of iron ore, volcanically transformed and essentialized into a metallic state. The whole life of an iron ship if viewed in a larger process of extraction, distillation, construction, oxidation (in the form of rust) and recombination, a condition of entropy and an analog with metabolism (anabolic and catabolic) become apparent. The characteristically low freeboard and waterline has allusions to landscape in it's horizontality. In the history of ships the monitor was a critical, evolutionary hybrid of both form and application.

Included in the exhibition, *Thermodynamics of Silence*, Gallery Paule Anglim, 2005, were four digital prints of the aforementioned American Civil War monitors as well as four images of WWII ships from public sources. The eight photographs were exhibited in consort with three "wig" sculptures of sulfur, plaster and iron. The titles of all the photos in the exhibition begin with "Orders of Entropy," followed by the name and location of the ship, and the accession number of the image. The title suggests that the ships are thermo/chemical or natural/anthropocene structures, simultaneously elegant and gross constructs in different 'states' of extraction, transformation and dissolution within nature. An extrapolation of the use of iron oxide of the early 1980's sculptures, and *Red Iron Sails*, 1992, these images also begin to bring into view the immense tonnage of steel, iron, other materials formed by human agency into the ships and related structures, ultimately engaged in cataclysmic, corrosive and entropic transformations through warfare and natural processes.



Fig 27. Wall: *Orders of Entropy: Graf Spee/Montevideo/National Archives - 306NT1290B7*, inkjet print on paper, 44 in x 75 in.  
Foreground: *Organic Logic (Alpine Orogeny)*, cast/powdered gypsum, 77 in. h. x 41 in. w. x 33 in d. *Thermodynamics of Silence*, Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, CA, 2005.

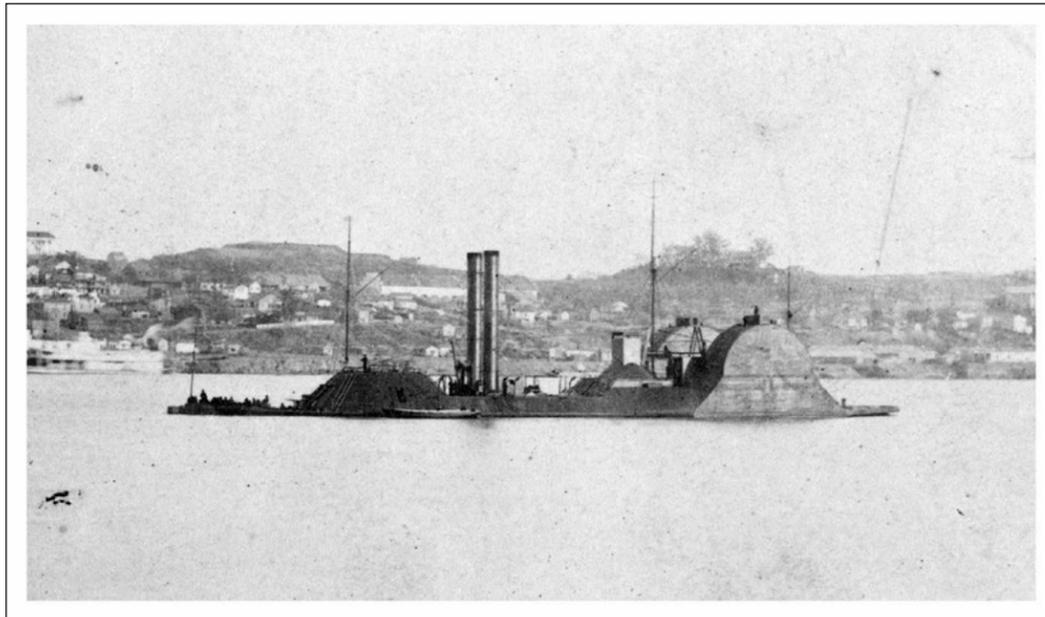


Fig. 28. *Orders of Entropy: Choctaw I/off Vicksburg/US Naval Historical Center - NH55219*, inkjet print on paper, 44 in x 75 in., 2005.

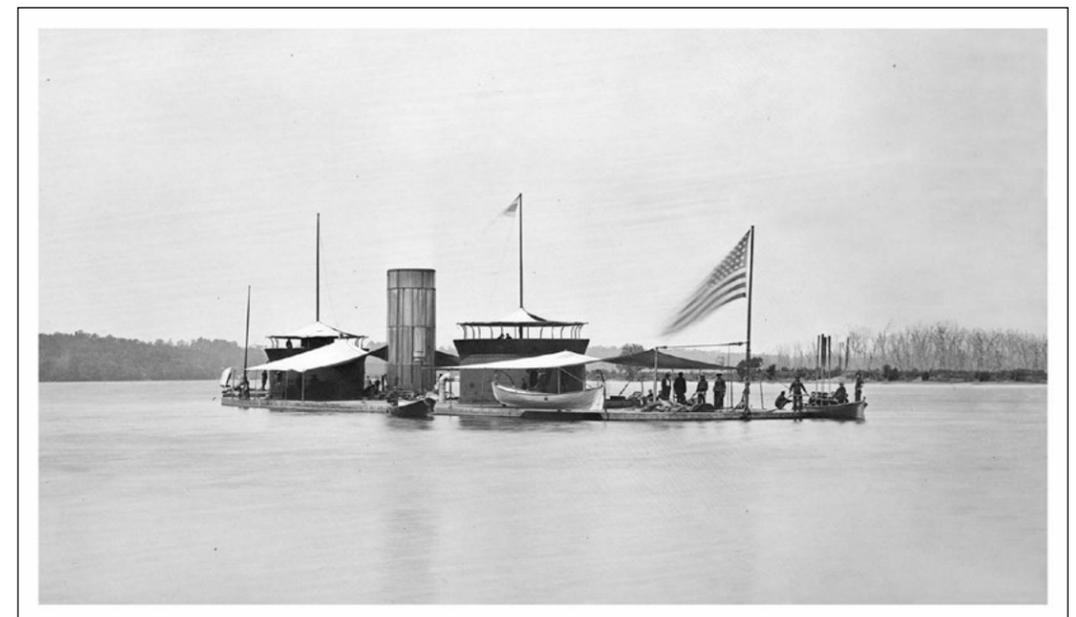


Fig. 30. *Orders of Entropy: Onondaga II/James River/Brady Collection/National Archives - B40*, inkjet print on paper, 44 in x 75 in., 2005.

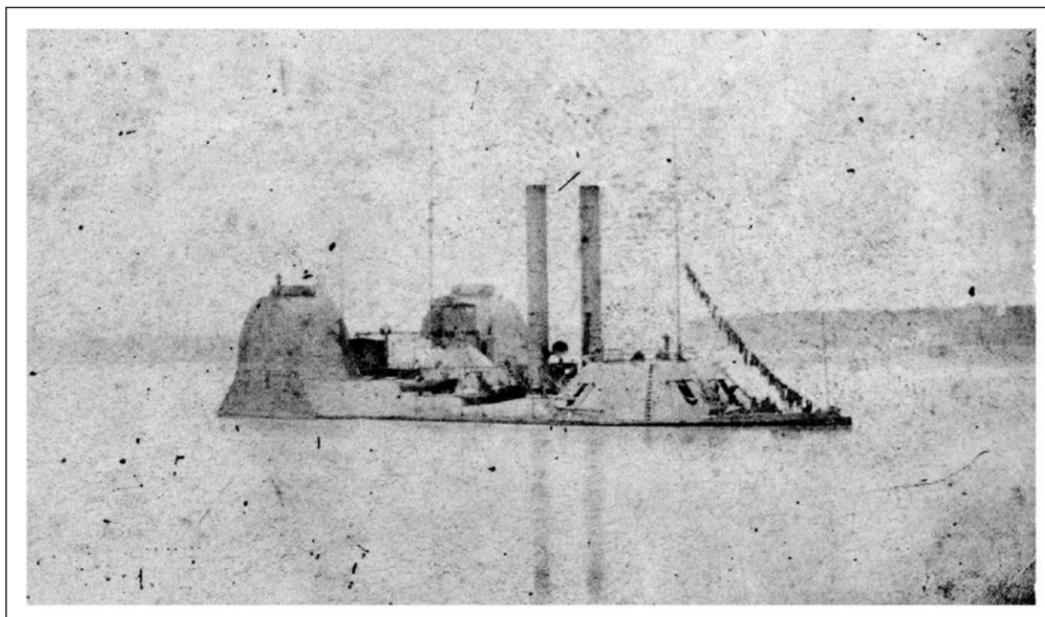


Fig. 29. *Orders of Entropy: Choctaw II/US Naval Historical Center - NH55215*, inkjet print on paper, 44 in x 75 in., 2005.



Fig. 31. *Orders of Entropy: Onondaga I/James River/Brady Collection/National Archives - B6245*, inkjet print on paper, 44 in x 75 in., 2005.

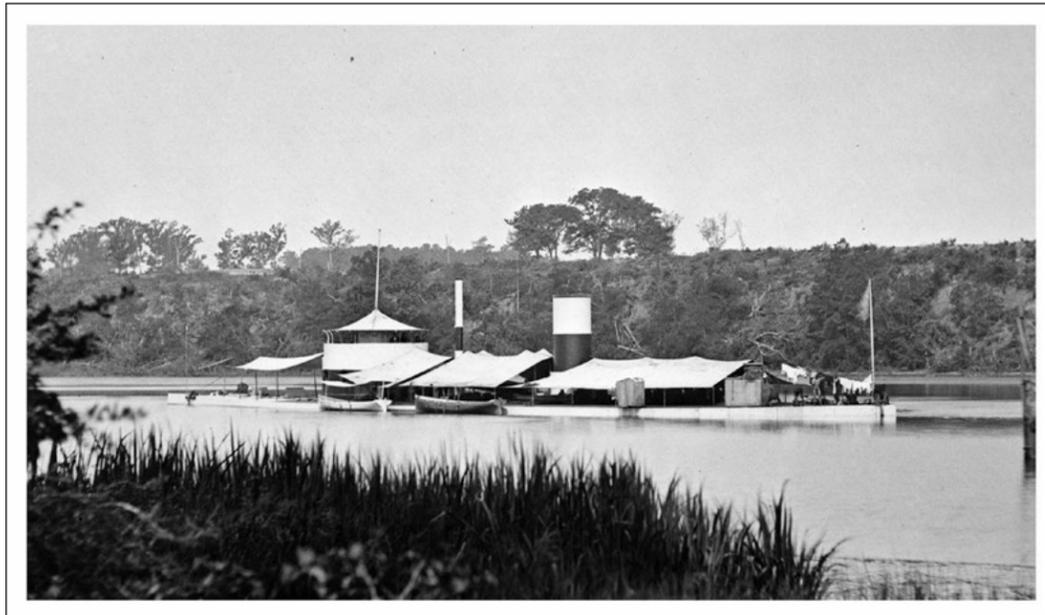


Fig. 32. *Orders of Entropy: Saugus/James River/Brady Collection/National Archives - B203*, inkjet print on paper, 44 in x 75 in., 2005.

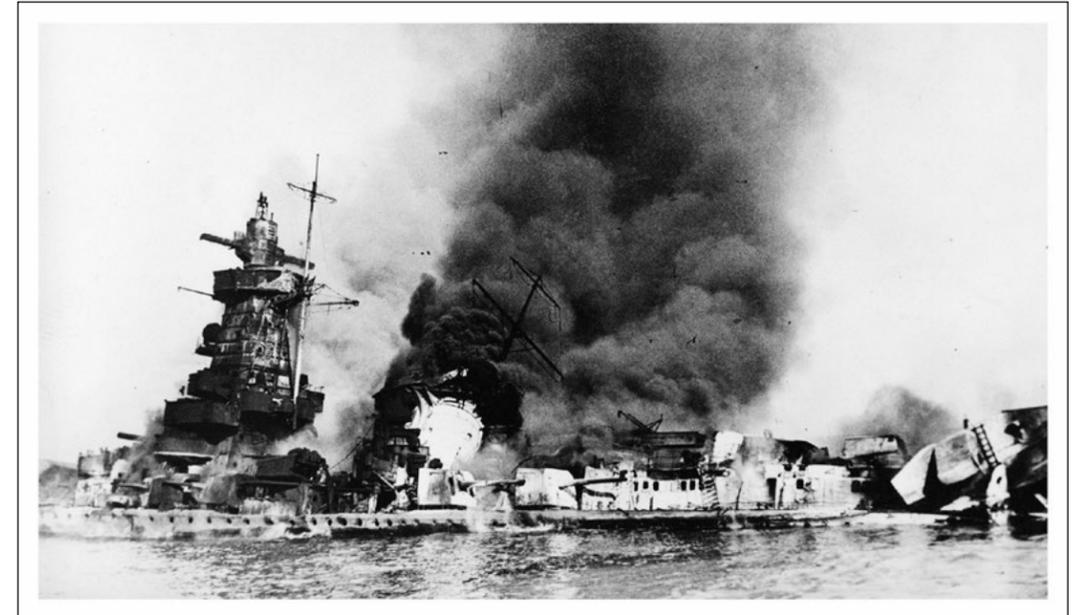


Fig. 34. *Orders of Entropy: Graf Spee/Montevideo/National Archives - 306NT1290B7*, inkjet print on paper, 44 in x 75 in., 2005.



Fig. 33. *Orders of Entropy: Santour/off Chesapeake/National Archives - 80G063470*, inkjet print on paper, 44 in x 75 in., 2005.

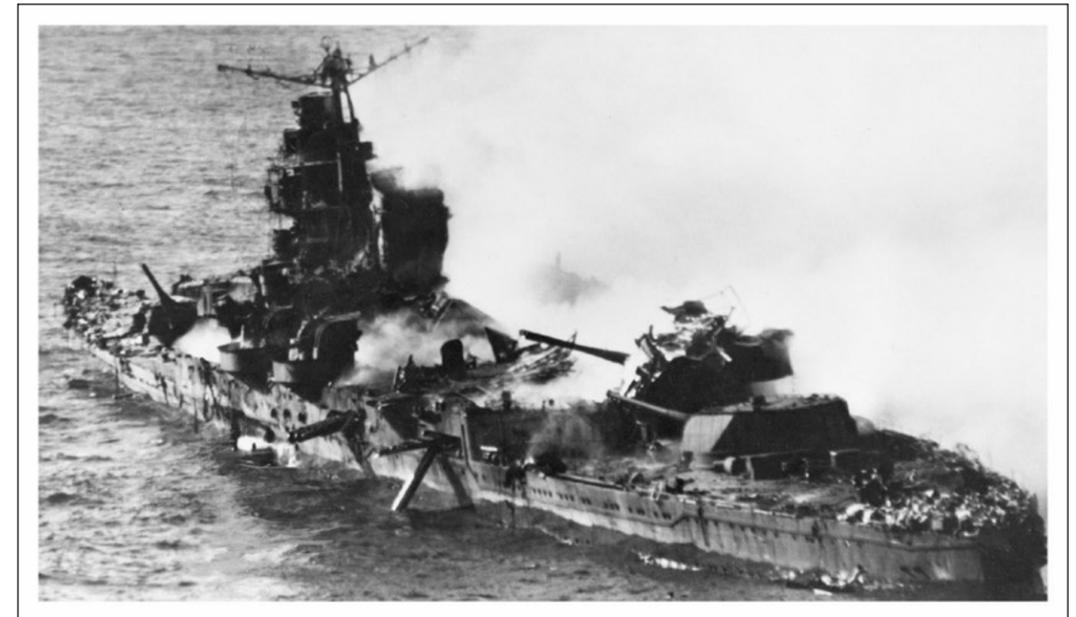


Fig. 35. *Orders of Entropy: Mikuma/Midway/National Archives - 80G414422*, inkjet print on paper, 44 in x 75 in., 2005.



Fig. 36. *Holocene Terrace*, solo exhibition, *Morphology of Change*, Lance Fung Gallery, New York, NY, 1999.



Fig. 37. Jerry Spagnoli, project photographer, northern California and Florida projects, 1996-1998. Tennessee Valley, Marin County, CA, shooting Franciscan Complex sediments, in part used for *Franciscan/Manhattan Formation*, *Landscape Projections (for an Unknown Window)* series and related works.

## TECTONICS

Tectonics is the study of structural systems in a geologic context, it also implies philosophical, aesthetic and systemic constructs as well. Displacement, shear, accumulation, denudation, convergence, divergence, compression, deformation and extension and are among the geologic themes related to tectonics. The photo works in this section engage with tectonic forces and structures to amplify and extend their content as sculptural, installation and architectonic forms. This combination of image and structure conjured poetic references and hidden aspects of site and process - an image from the landscape taking a geomorphologic form.

*Draped Flames*, 1996, solo exhibition, Manchester Craftsman's Guild, Pittsburgh, PA, 1996, brings together metabolic (flame images) and tectonic (angled, draped, architectural structure) concepts in one work. This work is at the beginning of a transition from the environmental *Land Kilns* to other media. The integration of organic and structural elements is a long-held theme from earlier works, including many of the ceramic land/sea ship pieces, 1970's-present, to sculptural installations such as *Vanishing Ship (Greenhouse for Lake Lahontan)*, 1987, where the angled form eludes to the dynamics of subsidence, deposition and compressive forces.

An early, site-related photo series for a potential environmental project at Art Park, NY, *Art Park/Orchard Scan I-IV*, circa 1990, has parallels with the conceptual kiln proposal: *Study mit Max Taut: Wissinger Family Tomb Furnace (Underground)/Orchard*, 1990. Here the orchard symbolism is connected to personal Germanic roots and family history of orchard farming. The brief essay, *Unknown Architectures*, reprinted from *Project: Oculus*, 2009, articulates certain structural/organic relationships in orchards and forests that have resonance with global metabolism, architectural systems and, similar to the *Land Kilns*, works that operate as conceptual and perceptual instruments. The translation of architectonic interpretations of certain orchards and forests into photographic form began with *Orchard (Slump) I*, solo exhibition: *Agricola: Four Works*, 1994-97, Hartnell College, Salinas, CA, 1998 and the installation of *Orchard (Slump) II* and *Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window) No. 1, Dialogues with Nature*, Lance Fung Gallery, New York, NY, 1998. This solo exhibition also explored concepts of New York City as a geologic formation, with the photographic work, *Franciscan/Manhattan Formation (Urban Geology Series)*.

The opportunity provided by the exhibition, *The Rising Sea, Images and Constructions from South Florida and Other Selected Works*, Lake Worth Museum of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, FL, 1998, enabled extensive site-research process of the south Florida landscape with curator Jim Peele and photographer Jerry Spagnoli (who accompanied me on earlier expeditions to shoot large format negatives of the Franciscan Complex and a Sacramento Valley almond orchard) in search of imagery. For this exhibition, the large photographic works, *Gradient (Biscayne Giant)*, and *Carbonate Falls (Marsh Lettuce)*, digitally stretched images of a giant kapok tree and an hummock island marsh-scape as analogs to the dynamic hydrologic systems infusing coral and limestone strata of the Florida landscape, which is largely flat and hidden. These works were considered as interior "earth works," echoing geomorphological landscape forms such as slump structures, anticlines or recumbent folds.

Conceptual photo works such as: the *Landscape Projections (For an Unknown Window)* series, 1999-2001, and the site specific photo elements of *The Sea Within the Land/Laramide*, 2011 (that engaged the architecture of the Denver Art Museum and the geologic history of central Colorado), have parallels in works such as: *Protogaea Civica (Franciscan Formation)*, 2005 and *Rapson Group/Geology Text Panels*, 2013, shown in the final, *Propagations/Antecedents*, section of this volume. Conceptual mapping of tectonic and geochemical processes such as lithification have analogs in the stretching, compression and layering of imagery as in the *Stratigraphic Column* works, also eluding to the structures and material narratives of the architecture they are installed within.

The idea of metabolism as an analogy of change and transformation, has geochemical, ecological and aesthetic implications. Metabolism of an organism is the interdependent processes of cellular decay and reconstruction. The kiln and related environmental works are metabolic in their use of ancient sunlight in the form of fossil fuels to transform "inorganic" materiality and site, using, energy, imagery and metaphor to evoke geochemical, ecological and aesthetic narratives. These works explore themes of global metabolism: organic/alchemical/planetary systems interconnected within vitalist and metamorphic paradigms.



Fig. 38. *Art Park/Orchard Scan I-IV*, b&w photographs, steel frame, 30 in x 40 in., aerial and ground photographs of abandoned orchards, some shot from a helicopter for an unrealized project at Art, Park, Lewiston, NY. Richmond Art Center, Richmond, CA, circa 1990.



Fig. 39. *Draped Flames I & II*, front installation view, 8 ft.. h., b&w photo, angled walls, solo exhibition, Manchester Craftsman's Guild, Pittsburgh, PA, 1996.



Fig. 40. *Draped Flames I & II*, rear installation view, 8 ft.. h., b&w photo, angled walls, solo exhibition, Manchester Craftsman's Guild, Pittsburgh, PA, 1996.

## Unknown Architectures

Two arboreal systems, a forest of redwood trees in Humboldt County, CA and a Sacramento Valley almond orchard, are core influences of the *Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window)* series. The redwood grove was first experienced in the early 1970's and reminiscent of a darkly enigmatic park of giant fir trees the artist frequented while growing up in the 1950's in northwestern Oregon. The almond orchard is prominent in a long list of orchard experiences also dating back to childhood. Each light-streamed, organic, architectural system: natural big-tree forest and formal planted orchard, have elements of baroque sensibility which as Alan Weiss suggests in *Mirrors of Infinity* (pg. 21): "can be defined in different orders by the word 'motion,' who's metaphysical implications can be expressed by a lexical declension of this term: movement, time, change, modification..., of motility and becoming." Within these structures, this organic dynamism can be found at different scales and dimensions: Fibonacci growth, respiration,



Fig. 41. Almond orchard, Central Valley, near Willits, CA, image for *Orchard (Slump) I & II*, 1997, 1998.



Fig. 42. Redwood forest, near Arcata, CA, image for *Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window), No. 1*, 1998.

photosynthesis, transmutation of minerals into organic chemicals, vertical, horizontal, aerial as well as subterranean hydrologies and systems. The orchard's planting order and deep-time rooting of the forest's massive tree-trunks provide contrasting structures to active biologic, atmospheric and generative forces. Further by analogy, bridging baroque and sublime: one may experience the redwoods as on the floor of a fecund primordial ocean and the almond orchards a dappled, equatorial, carbonate sea. Likewise, traversing architectural spaces when animate with their interdependent electrical, HVAC, plumbing, light and programmatic systems, may conjure analogs of circulation, consciousness and ecology. Spatially, as characterized by Greg Lynn (*Animate Form*, pg. 15), in relating architecture and epigenetic landscapes as dynamic systems to the integral calculus and metaphysics of Leibniz, that: "in such an abstract active space, the statistics of fixed points in neutral space is replaced by the stability of vectors that balance one another in phase space."

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Fig. 43. Left: *Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window, No 2 & 4)*, right: *Propped Anticline (Orchard) I*.  
*Terrain into Architecture: Projection and Displacement*, solo exhibition,  
Maryland Institute College of Art, 1999.

*Landscape Projections (For An Unknown Window)*

The works from in series are digitally altered photographic images derived from the contemporary natural and meta-natural landscapes. The original photographic image is compressed to fit into each of four sides of a 'frame' surrounding an open void in the center of the work. This central negative space is physically absent. The proportions of the void are similar to that of a generic window.

The *Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window)* No 1, derived from images of a redwood grove in northwestern California, was first exhibited in the solo exhibition, "Dialogues with Nature," at the Lance Fung Gallery, New York, NY in 1998. No's 2-5 of the series were developed using images of the Florida landscape for the solo exhibition *The Rising Sea, Images and Constructions from South Florida and Other Selected Works*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, FL., 1998-99. The *Landscape Projections..*, extend conceptual issues of nature in dialogue with architectural structure considered by other photographic works of the same time period, including: *Spruce*, 1998, *Manhattan/Franciscan Formation*, 1998, *Slump (Orchard) II*, 1998 and *Gradient (Biscayne Giant)*, 1998. This formative group of installations use their scale, image and configuration as abstract interior 'earth works' that formally engage architectural space to create tension and dialogue with the space within which they are installed. The *Landscape Projections* physically and conceptually engage the architecture of their installation, ostensibly constructed of the land (and by extension the sea, as understood in geologic time). A theoretical dimension is suggested, an 'unknown' window in a conceptual building of the land/sea. The "window's" structure is at once a metaphysical one, a void in the center, and an organic rheologically compressed and lithologically distorted photographic image framing the void. This altered organic structure refers to a vitalist interpretation of architecture as an extension of nature, geologic building materials as remnants of a living earth: lava flows, recumbent folding, fossiliferous assemblages, metamorphic laminations and intrusions, permeable strata, glacial/fluvial systems, estuarine, pelagic and abyssal analogues.

A parallel, historical inspiration for this group of photographic works can be found in the Baroque era and its interest in the unification of natural structures, systems and images with the formal concerns of architecture. The "Landscape Projections," with their reiterative, rectilinear structure and central void have a particular relationship to the Enlightenment's preoccupation with optics and perception and the subsequent interpretation of these sciences in formal landscape gardens such as at Versailles and Vaux-le-vicomte as discussed by Allen Weiss in *Mirrors of Infinity* with the sense that both natural and construction landscapes, framed and delimited, are a rigorous and complex form of an extended architecture. Conversely, architecture as referred to above, both as a geographic and geologic formation, may also be seen as a form of landscape, anticipating a series of later works engaging issues of anthroturbation<sup>1</sup>.

Other works of this period, such as *Holocene Terrace*, and *Holocene Passage*, installed in the exhibitions, "Morphology of Change," at the Lance Fung Gallery in 1999 and "Intervening the Space: Revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark and *Holocene Passage* by John Roloff," at the Archivio Emily Harvey, Venice, Italy in 2002, respectively, have resonance with ideas initiated in the *Landscape Projections (for an Unknown Window)* series. No's. 6-10 of the *Landscape Projection..* series, were developed and shown as part of the solo exhibition, *Original Depositional Environment*, Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, CA, 2002. More recent iterations of this series were developed as a site-specific, mixed-media work, *Land Within the Sea/Laramide*, Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO, 2011.

<sup>1</sup> Anthroturbation, or "human disturbance," a term developed in conversation with the geophysicist, Paul Spudich.

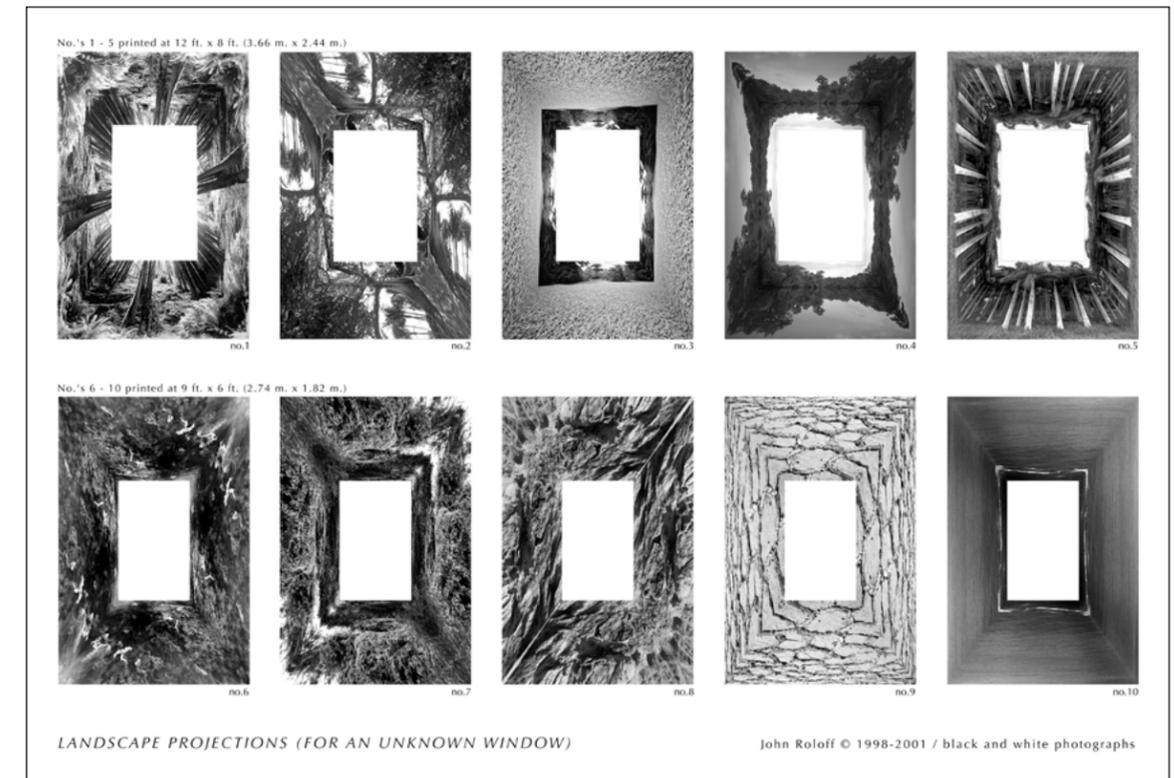


Fig. 44. *Landscape Projections (for an Unknown Window)*, No. 1-10, 1998-2001.

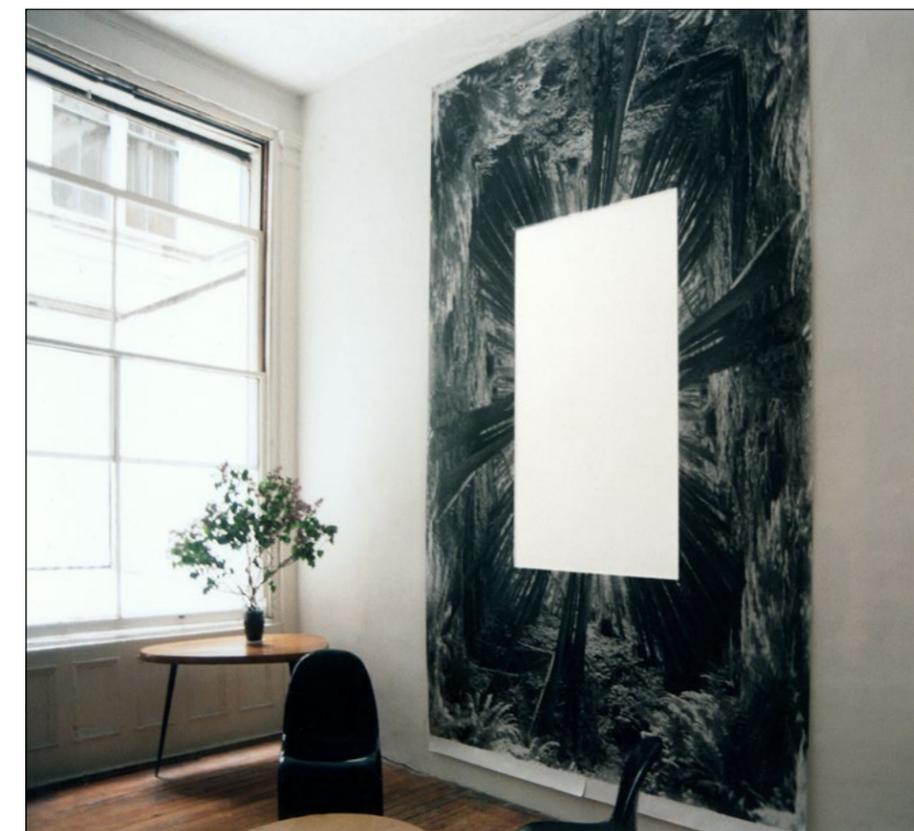


Fig. 45. *Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window)*, No. 1. *Dialogues with Nature*, solo exhibition, Lance Fung Gallery, New York, NY, 1998.

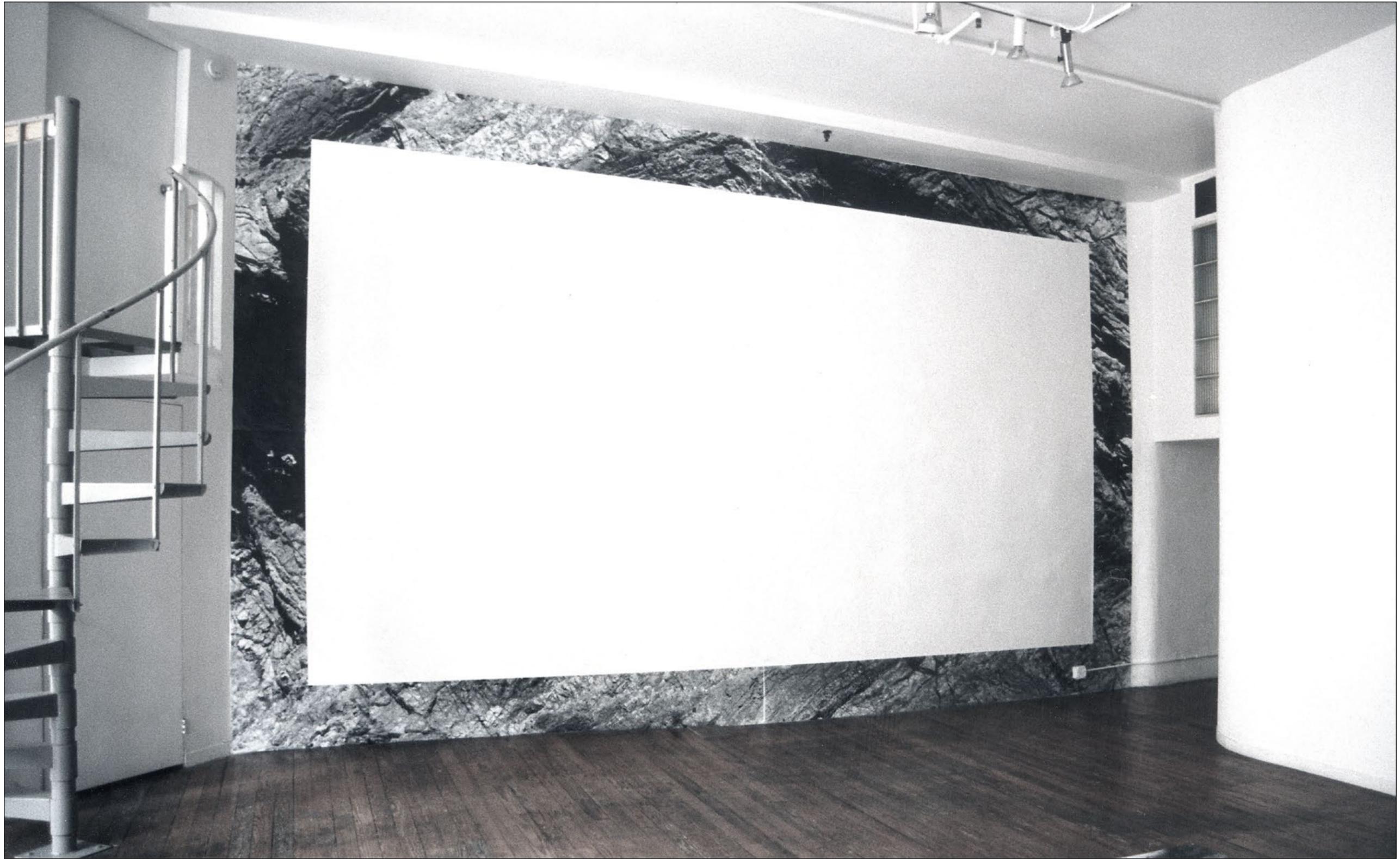


Fig. 46. *Franciscan/Manhattan Formation, (Urban Geology Series)*, b&w photograph, 14 ft.. h. x 22 ft.. w. *Dialogues with Nature*, solo exhibition, Lance Fung Gallery, New York, NY, 1998.



Fig. 47. *Propped Anticline (Orchard) I*, b&w photograph, wood armature, 23 ft.. h. x 11 ft.. w x 16 ft.. d., *Terrain into Architecture: Projection and Displacement*, solo exhibition, Maryland Institute College of Art, 1999. A re-configuration of the photo panels of *Slump (Orchard I)*, Fig. 48., and Fig. 87 for alternate configurations considered for the MICA exhibition.



Fig. 48. *Slump (Orchard) I*, b&w photograph, wood ,glass, 8 ft.. h. x 24 ft.. w x 9 ft.. d., 1997. The first of several investigations of the image of an orchard altered by a geologic process in an architectural context. *Agricola: Four Works, 1994-97*, solo exhibition, Hartnell College, Salinas, CA, 1998.



Fig. 49. Foreground: *Reef/Field I*, oranges, glass, coral, glass 6 ft. x 6 ft., background: *Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window)*, No. 3 & 4, b&w photograph, 12 ft. w. x 8 ft. h.. *The Rising Sea: Images and Constructions from South Florida and Other Selected Works*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, FL, 1998.



Fig. 50. *Slump (Orchard) II*, b&w photograph, wood, 14 ft. h. x 24 ft. w. x 18 ft. d. *Dialogues with Nature*, solo exhibition, Lance Fung Gallery, New York, NY, 1998. Collection, Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA.



Fig. 51. *Spruce*, b&w photograph, 12 ft. w x 31 in. d x 8 ft. h. *Dialogues with Nature*, preliminary installation, later moved to a second site, solo exhibition, Lance Fung Gallery, New York, NY, 1998.

### John Roloff's *The Rising Sea*

Catalog essay for *The Rising Sea, Images and Constructions from South Florida and Other Selected Works*, Lake Worth Museum of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, FL, 1998

By Robert C. Morgan

In spite of the densely sophisticated research that goes into the work of California artist John Roloff, there is always the poetic and intuitive side that gives his art a special kind of grace and alacrity. To listen to the artist speak about this work is a pleasure. There is an ineluctable assurance about his vocabulary and a quick readiness to come to terms with the complexity of issues that enter into his research. Like many artists of his generation, Roloff is not easy to identify in terms of a particular medium. He has been called a sculptor and environmental artist, but he is much more than that. He functions on a conceptual level, meaning that he foregrounds the ideas that he is seeking to clarify through his art. By foregrounding the ideas, the medium or media becomes secondary to the extent that he uses what is necessary in order to express the idea.

Over the years Roloff has focused on nature and the problematic of natural phenomena. He is interested in those unseen realities that constitute the environment in which we live. We tend to see man-made things—the artifacts and signs of culture—but we ignore the natural infrastructure that ultimately supports our cultural framework, the planet on which we live. This relationship between nature and culture is structuralist anthropology as it was appropriated by artists—particularly conceptualists and earth artists—in the late sixties and early seventies. As the orientation toward a specific medium began to diminish, more attention was paid to the artist's ideas; that is, what the artist was trying to say through photographs, natural objects, found objects, arrangements, site-specific installations. One might call John Roloff an earth artist with a strong conceptual leaning, yet this should not dissuade the viewer from the brilliance of his poetic insight and visual acuity as he explores structuralist paradigms.

There is, of course, a comment, even an ecological critique, in the environmental work of John Roloff, and this exhibition is no exception. His general comment is a site-specific inventory of the ecosystems that are currently extant in the state of Florida. According to Roloff, the topology of Florida exists in an extremely mutable state, meaning that the groundwater is pervasively active. One of the highest continental shelves in the Northern Hemisphere extends nearly two hundred miles off the West Coast of Florida. There are limestone and karst formations that are constantly eroding under the surface. As a result the sea is in a perpetual state of rinsing and falling.

Given the artist's research, Roloff has decided to construct a series of installations at the Museum of Contemporary Art that could be viewed as an "analog of transmutation"—thereby suggesting the transitory nature of the Florida landscape with its abundant natural springs. In *Reef/Field I*, for example, the artist has constructed a bed of coral topped by a sheet of glass with oranges scattered on the surface.

Another, two-part installation consists of a dead orange tree, trimmed and wedged into a negative space in the corner of the gallery called *Novum Organum III (Topiary)*, and a living orange tree covered in a shroud with grow lights, entitled *Novum Organum II (Two Suns)*. The title is taken from the famous sixteenth-century British scientist Sir Francis Bacon who first brought empiricism into western science.

Another version of Roloff's important work, entitled *Oculus: Emerson/Beebe (de Leon/Osceola)*, originally from 1988, re-worked in 1996, and now given its current version in Lake Worth, again relates to the hydrologic/historical terrain of South Florida. *Oculus*, in its present manifestation, involves three

aquaria – one filled with water and cypress chips, a second with limestone and oranges, and a third with pure “black water” (tannic and humic acids). All elements are, of course, indigenous to the area and carry nutrients that substantially impact the soil and water supply. The “black water” aquarium is connected by plastic tubing to the *Oculus*, into which its contents are pumped. Inside the *Oculus* the water is dispersed by a misting system, before draining back into the aquarium. The artist interprets this device as a “site reference” whereby nature operates as “its own critique of current conditions, man-made or else.” The names in the subtitle refer to poets, explorers, or other personalities that are symbolically important to Roloff in his topological/ecological investigations. In this case, Ponce de Leon and the Seminole chief, Osceola, are both legendary figures with heroic stature associated with the terrain of Florida.

In addition to these installations, Roloff has again deployed photography not so much in terms of its documentary status but as a means to capture the landscape on a pictorial/metaphorical level. His new *Landscape Projections (for an Unknown Window)*, nos. 2-5 are digitally manipulated landscapes that have been compressed to the periphery of the paper’s edge, thus creating “Baroque frames” around an aperture. Roloff sees these frames as symbolizing the Baroque era in western civilization from the perspective of both science and art. In science, he is interested in the period from the late Sixteenth Century, beginning with the empirical investigations of Sir Francis Bacon, and ending with Sir Isaac Newton in the late Seventeenth/early Eighteenth Century. Spanning this era was a concern for a philosophy of nature that did not exempt the presence of a divine equivalent. This led to the era of such poets and philosophers as Leibniz, with his “monad” theory of the universe, the marine verse of Coleridge, and the Romantic explorations of Goethe, including his color theories. In general, Roloff sees the Baroque period as a compression of organic and crystalline concerns, the natural and the geometric measurements of natural phenomena, striking a kind of balance and uniformity.

In another digitized photo-installation, called *Carbonate Falls (Marsh Lettuce)*, the image has been “stretched” vertically so as to suggest a falling cascade, situated in relation to the interior architecture of the exhibition space. Again, Roloff is searching for an “analog of transmutation” where gravity and compression operate in relation to the gradient of nature. He is searching for an order that transcends the order of science — an idea that has its basis in the transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson. In *Gradient (Biscayne Giant)*, a large tree with sprawling roots is again stretched vertically through the deployment of digital processing. Here Roloff is interested in the effect of the groundwater, the Biscayne aquifer, that travels from Palm Beach to the southern tip of Florida. The installation of this huge three-part photograph suggests the slope of the gradient moving from a vertical to a lateral position. It becomes a hydrologic analog of nature’s reality hidden from view but essential to the environmental make-up of the terrain.

The larger point for Roloff in these site-specific installations is that nature is bigger than our understanding of it. The order of nature is more than any order we can impose upon it, and that it is a resilient force. The complex relationships within nature are greater than we can surmise. It is a time-based phenomena, a series of chain-reactions, that will continually surprise and nourish us. There are, of course, limits to what we can impose upon these natural systems. It is within this context that Roloff offers us a poetic view of what is, what can be, and what we need to understand about the territory we occupy. In the tradition of the philosopher Nietzsche, Roloff is a “yea-sayer” in the sense that he accepts the conditions that nature provides us and, at the same time, observes with great curiosity and amazement nature’s relationship to everything else.

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Fig. 52. *Draped Images*, each image 24 in wide x 6 ft. high, b&w photographs, aluminum. *The Rising Sea, Images and Constructions from South Florida and Other Selected Works*, solo exhibition, Museum of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, Florida, 1998.



Fig. 53. Foreground: *Gradient (Biscayne Giant)*, b&w photograph, wood, 21' h. x 20' w x 32' d; background: *Carbonate Falls (Marsh Lettuce)*, b&w photograph, wood, sheetrock, 20' h. x 14' w x 8' d. *The Rising Sea: Images and Constructions from South Florida and Other Selected Works*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, FL, 1998.



Fig. 54. *Carbonate Falls (Marsh Lettuce)*, b&w photograph, wood, sheetrock, 20' h. x 14' w x 8' d. *The Rising Sea: Images and Constructions from South Florida and Other Selected Works*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, FL. 1998.

*John Roloff: Displacements*  
*Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)*

By Lisa Tamaris Becker

*"I take SPACE to be the central fact to man born in America, from Folsom cave to now. I spell it large because it comes large here. Large, and without mercy.*

*It is geography at bottom, a hell of wide land from the beginning. That made the first American story (Parkman's): exploration.*

*Something else than a stretch of earth – seas on both sides, no barriers to contain as restless a thing as Western man was becoming in Columbus' day. That made Melville's story (part of it).*

*PLUS harshness we still perpetuate, a sun like a tomahawk, small earthquakes but big tornadoes and hurricanes, a river north and south in the middle of the land running out the blood. " 1*

The sublime space of animate and inanimate material presence<sup>3</sup>the dominion where science, art, nature and culture intersect this is the locus in which John Roloff constructs his finely tuned visual investigations. It is the same sublime space referenced by the influential American poet and literary critic Charles Olson in the passage above, where SPACE is characterized as the engine that drives American identity.<sup>2</sup> *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)*, Roloff's installation in the exhibition, JOHN ROLOFF: DISPLACEMENTS, seeks to extend the ongoing discourses of spatiality, minimalism and conceptualism beyond their previous limits, reinvigorating investigations of the sublime. Consisting of arrangements of three seemingly disparate displaced elements, *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)* probes at the boundaries between the scientific and alchemical, industrial and natural, digital and analog, transmuting conventional spatial and material relationships. At the core of this poetic examination of both nature and science lies a vast photograph of an indigenous Floridian tree, spanning more than 40 feet, which Roloff has transported via digital and conventional photographic processes to Wisconsin. Both altered and stretched before printing and inverted by placement, the photographic construct begins on a tilted plane emanating from the gallery wall. From this plane it flows out gracefully like a river delta into the space of the gallery to create an encompassing yet fluid field. The immense central trunk of the tree branches into a system of limbs and arteries, while the silvery tree canopy spills out across the floor as if it were a pool of liquid matter capturing a reflected image. Unlike the more conventional art-viewing experience in which the photograph is seen frontally, here the viewer is invited to walk around the periphery of the photograph, and is drawn into a very different relationship with the primeval tree image.

Flanking this huge arboreal expanse are two stacked conglomerates. One stack is comprised of glass vitrines containing striated cubes of living moss gathered from Massachusetts and California. The other is stacked slag and sprues, discards from the iron-casting process of Wisconsin industry. Both the moss, which is one of the oldest plant forms on earth, and the iron, with its reference to the earth's molten central core, evoke the primeval and address Roloff's interest in transforming the gallery into an experimental space hovering between the worlds of the scientific laboratory and the forest.

For more than 20 years, Roloff has been deeply engaged with a broad metaphysical and macrocosmic perspective in which the alterations of nature by human culture through industrial processes, agriculture, architecture, and urbanization are not readily distinguished from natural cycles if seen with more geologic distance. Throughout his works, Roloff investigates the poetics of geologic awareness through site-specific installations, performative kiln-firing projects, photographic manipulations, and more recently conglomerate installations which address geologic and evolutionary memory. Jennifer Crohn writes of Roloff's work, "Instead of anthropomorphizing nature, Roloff allows it some distance from human importance, placing human industry, life, and death in the same category as the evolution of species of flora or bodies of water and land."<sup>3</sup>

## Nomadism

Also crucial to understanding the methods and meanings of Roloff's work is the notion of "the nomadic." Theorized in the seminal text *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* by French Psychoanalytic philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "the deterritorialized nomadic" has come to the fore of linguistic, anthropological and ecological theory to challenge linear and even circular concepts used to describe systems of change, influence and movement.<sup>4</sup> Roloff's installations embody this notion of "the nomadic" as they join site-specific elements with components collected and used in several locations. *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)* includes moss collected in both Massachusetts and California and previously incorporated *Holocene Terrace* installed in New York City. The moss in *Holocene Terrace* was presented as a living surface covering an 18 x 6' plane contained within a huge vitrine. After its dismantling, this moss was carefully cut, stacked and packed into boxes and stored for a future purpose.

For *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)* the moss was presented in a cube configuration, layered much-like geologic strata accumulated over thousand's of years. The cubes were placed in a stack of three aquarium tanks previously used for a Florida project titled *The Rising Sea*. For *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)*, Roloff insisted that they remain uncleansed, leaving the residue of their previous contents as nomadic/aesthetic memories of another time and place. Thus, *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)* references the continual movement of ideas, people, industrial products, and minerals across great expanses and also fuses the image of a "Floridian tree," with industrial iron remnants from Wisconsin.

In an interview with the artist about his interest in geologic dislocation, Roloff described the truism that any point A on the surface of the earth can be linked with any point B if seen with enough geologic distance.<sup>5</sup> For example, plate tectonics, continental drift, and sea-floor spreading represent forms of nomadism on a global and geologic scale, paralleling the movement of materials associated with industry. The horizontal structure of the tree photograph and slag unit in *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)* echo the idea of horizontal geologic movement, as these units resemble "terrane" (separate units of land formed elsewhere and brought together by plate tectonics and the process of accretion).

## The Deterritorialized Moss

Roloff's juxtaposition of "the tree image" with that of moss, is in itself profound in its multiple meanings. While "the tree" is classically linked with the Kabbalistic "Tree of Life," the moss conveys a "deterritorialized" alternatively generative system, able to exist dormant under great periods of stress and reproduce through both branching and fragmentation. Mosses reproduce by regeneration from tiny pieces of leaves or stems, and by the production of spores. The spore, under favorable conditions, germinates and grows into a branching, green thread (protonema). [i] Like the orchid or the "rhizome" also theorized by Deleuze and Guattari as an archetype of the nomadic, the moss symbolizes an indestructible, persistent, nomadic identity which can endure rupture, fragmentation, and dislocation by utilizing a system of reproduction far more ancient than even that of a tree, in fact, moss is known to have been in existence since the Permian period (286 to 245 million years ago). It is often thought to be co-dependant upon a tree, appearing in shady wooded areas, its survival strategies, which include periods of dormancy, make it a persistent and indestructible species despite its seemingly small size. The cubes of moss on view in, *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)* though still largely an emerald green color, were stored in boxes for many months, without moisture or light, before being exposed for viewing.

## The Digital and Analog Presence of the Tree

Unlike Deleuze and Guattari, Roloff does not position the image of the tree in opposition with the image of moss. In fact, Roloff's tree also becomes linked with ideas of the Nomadic as its is transported via digital and analogic photographic processes across space and time from its original site in Florida to the white-walled liminal space of galleries across the North America. In fact, the centrality of the tree image within his recent body of photographic works links Roloff's project to the lineage of "The American Sublime Landscape" of the 18th and 19th century, including the luminist paintings of Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Cole, and Martin Johnson Heade. In these paintings "the tree" took on a religious "father figure" presence and the implied destruction of the virginal forest and its trees became a symbol of patricide. In contrast with these depictions of patricide Roloff chooses to focus on the persistence of the tree as a geologic reality and as a symbol of enduring presence in the human psyche which connects humanity to its ancient past. Roloff does not position technology as a destructive threat to the tree, but rather capitalizes on the power of both analog and digital processes to amplify what he describes as "the geologic" presence of the tree. Using traditional or analogic photography including wide angle lenses, to transfer an image of

the tree first to a transparency, he then scans his tree image to magnify, amplify, stretch and exaggerate, "the hidden strata" within the tree bark and branches. The branches are morphed just enough to resemble systems of sedimentary flow, implying both liquid and solid movement. Its exaggerated bark also takes on a resemblance to the drooping and wrinkled surface of ancient skins, such as those of an elephant or rhinoceros, linking us to our evolutionary memory of ancient mammals.

In a series of related works, known as *Landscape Projection (for an unknown window) #1 - #5*, Roloff digitally manipulates images of palm trees and redwoods even further to construct baroque frame-like compositions that surround white voids. These elegant photographic compositions address the classical dialectic of presence/absence and liken the baroque presence of the trees with that of the architecture in which the framed voids are positioned.

## The Holocene Epoch

The title of the project *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)* points to several other references of crucial importance within Roloff's complex visual lexicon. Not only does the title link his project with previous projects in New York and Florida, such as *Holocene Terrace* and *The Rising Sea*, but "Holocene," a term from geology refers to "the recent epoch" or "the younger of the two epochs that comprise the Quaternary Period, and the latest interval of the Earth's geologic history. The Holocene Epoch follows the Pleistocene Epoch, and it constitutes the last 10,000 years to the present." [ii] Evoking the present as embedded within a vast expanse of time, Roloff's installation focuses the viewer on a much vaster time frame than that of the day-to-day. The incremental flow and movement of time across the huge expanse of "the Holocene" focuses the viewer on the fact that all of life as we currently know it, is part of a much larger, 10,000 year post-glacial stage, characterized by relatively warm climatic conditions.

## All That is Solid Melts into Air

Though the above quote "all that is solid melts into air" is among the most famous lines from Carl Marx's great manifesto, it is derived from a language of the alchemical, long used in both Western and Non-Western paradigms to explain forces of change and flow. Written at the cusp of the Industrial Age, Marx used the term to describe the great processes of historical and cultural transformation which he both witnessed and facilitated in his description of a Feudal agrarian society transforming into an urban/industrial society. Roloff similarly uses metaphors of the alchemical to address both geologic and cultural transformation. Alchemical images abound in both *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)* and in Roloff's previous body of works, which have included a long series of ship images and projects centered around material transformation. The slag and cast-iron sprues of *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)* with their references to the great crucibles/blast-furnaces of the iron factory embody the very concept of alchemy in which minerals are transformed through forces such as heat into new materials with distinctly different attributes. Some of the slag used in *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)* appear like immense chunks of black diamond, created alchemically from mere iron, reflecting dark light and emanating a jewel-like iridescence across their surface. Other softer lava-like chunks of slag take on a resemblance to volcanic flow evoking the great forces within the earth's surface. The notion of the alchemical is also ever-present in the photographic processes which Roloff harnesses, where "salts" are literally bathed in light and alchemically altered to reveal a previously non-existent image.

Roloff's fascination with alchemy runs throughout the thirty year history of his artworks and is perhaps most evident in his preceding and related body of kiln sculptures which harnessed the forces of great heat and vitrification as an alchemical process that could be witnessed by an audience.

Having spent his early childhood on the coast of Oregon and his later teenage years in the Great Sacramento Central Valley of California, through which flow the Sacramento and American rivers, Roloff was influenced early on by the presence of oceans and waterways and the industries they support. He began his college education at The University of California, Davis with the intent of pursuing a degree in Marine geology. Realizing, however, that his interest in the sea, and the immensity of geologic time, went beyond the merely scientific and that through explorations in the field of art, he could pursue both an emotional, alchemical and scientific interests in Oceanic and geologic phenomena, he pursued an education in the arts. At UC Davis, Roloff found that working with ceramics allowed him to bring together his Romantic visions of earth and ships with scientific investigations into the nature of materials and their transformations, manipulating minerals such as kaolin, dolomite, feldspar that are used to make clay and glazes. The kiln used to fire ceramic wares also became a metaphor for both the alchemical crucible and for geologic



Fig. 55. *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)*, moss, sediment, scum, vitrine/aquariums, 6 ft.. h.; b&w photo, wood, 28 ft.. l; iron slag, iron, wood, 12 ft.. l. *John Roloff: Displacements*, J. M. Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, WI, 2000.

processes such as volcanic activity. The omnipresence of agriculture as an immense earth-altering industry central to the economy of California and to the curriculum of UC Davis, also asserted itself early as a lasting influence on Roloff's vision. The ceramic works for which Roloff gained early notoriety focused on ship images made of wave and lava-like molten minerals, allowing the potential of the 2000 degrees Fahrenheit forces within the kiln to reveal "transcendentalist" images of the sea, the earth.

In the 1980's and early 1990's Roloff's work shifted and he became widely known for his visionary kiln and greenhouse sculptures. The kiln projects including *Untitled (Earth Orchid)*, *Humboldt Ship*, and *Metabolism and Mortality/O<sub>2</sub>* fused images of sinking ships, greenhouses, and volcanic waves with process and spectacle. These projects consisted of immense kiln structures filled with refractory cement that Roloff would fire up on-site before an audience. The twelve to 30 feet sculptures, ignited with combustible gas, would reach great temperatures and would transform the sculptures into huge glowing forms emanating with white heat and light. Vent structures such as the plumes of *Humboldt Ship* and the orifices of *Metabolism and Mortality/O<sub>2</sub>*, would function not only scientifically to allow the right mixture of gas and oxygen to enter and exit the kiln system but would also achieve formal/aesthetic elegance. Once cooled, the steel structure of each kiln would be dismantled to reveal a vitrified cement core, geologically transformed by the heat into rock-like solidity to remain as public sculpture on its site.

Green house projects such as *Vanishing Ship (Greenhouse for Lake Lahontan)*, installed at the Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, combined Roloff's obsession with the mythic ship image with his probing of the mysterious interconnection between biological and geological processes. This project incorporated sediment collected from Pyramid Lake, Nevada into a ship form made of steel and glass. As a self-contained greenhouse system, in which water would condense on the walls of the greenhouse and run down its sides, *Vanishing Ship (Greenhouse for Lake Lahontan)*, supported the micro-flora and fauna abundant within the sediment sample indefinitely. The sample, collected from Pyramid Lake, Nevada, a shrinking remain of the once immense Lake Lahontan that once covered more than 8,000 square miles of what is now Nevada, assumed the potential for indefinite growth, for evolutionary transformation, for alchemical change, yielding biologic activity as tragic or heroic as the great ship out on the waves.

#### Black Water

Roloff's interest in the link between industry, geology, and waterways also remains central in *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)*. The title "Black Water" references a particular in-land fresh water system comprised of humic and tannic acids, ecologically linked with trees such as the Ficus and Banyon (the type of tree revealed in Roloff's photograph). But *Black Water Group* also reverberates with references to a Wisconsin river system, "The Black River" which flows across the state through Black River Falls, Wisconsin, the site of the infamous Wisconsin Death Trip. Roloff's embedded reference to The Wisconsin Death Trip an episode of unprecedented greed, violence, and primal maliciousness in the early years of the towns settlement exemplifies two geo-cultural concepts that Roloff terms Anthroturbation (human alteration at a geologic level to the landscape through warfare and/or industrial processes) and Hypermateriality (the radical transformation and psychology of industrial processes or warfare seen as an extension of our metabolic/fuel-based and entropic condition). For Roloff's complex investigations of geologic transformation, link the influence of human activity to unseen geologic forces.

The subject matter of *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)* spans across social, cultural, geologic, and material concerns, not only linking the ancient tree image with issues of the digital, the photographic, the displaced, and the geologic, but addressing ideas of cultural transformation and the interconnections between industry and geology. Above all, Roloff's highly cerebral yet poignantly visceral projects challenge viewers with charged visual experiences which like the excerpt sited at the beginning of this essay, are highly "American" in their vast poetics of movement and flow across horizontal expanses of space and history. Providing the investigative viewer a poetic realm for research and reflection, Roloff's displacements also pull awareness away from ordinary quotidian time, reorienting viewers within the sublime world of the meta-geological.

1 Charles Olson, *Call Me Ishmael: a Study of Melville* (New York: Grove Press Inc, 1974), p. 11.

2 *Ibid*, p. 11

3 Jennifer R. Crohn, exhibition review, "John Roloff," *Arts Magazine*, April 1992, p. 79

4 Diles Deluze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans, Brian Massumi (Minneapolis University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

5 Interview between Lisa Tamaris Becker and John Roloff, May 2000.

6 Encyclopedia Britannica, on-line edition ([www.britannica.com/search/query=moss](http://www.britannica.com/search/query=moss), Nov. 2000).

7 Deluze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 3-25

8 Letter from John Roloff to Lisa Tamaris Becker, October 2000.

9 Barbara Novak, "On Diverse Themes from Nature in Natural Paradise: Painting in America 1800-1950" (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1976) p. 89-90.

10 Encyclopedia Britannica, on-line edition ([www.britannica.com/search/query=holocene](http://www.britannica.com/search/query=holocene), Nov. 2000).

11 Interview between Lisa Tamaris Becker and John Roloff, August 2000.

[i] [www.britannica.com/bcom/eb/article/7/0,5716,55277+1+53920,00.html?kw=moss](http://www.britannica.com/bcom/eb/article/7/0,5716,55277+1+53920,00.html?kw=moss)

[ii] Encyclopedia Britannica On-line [www.britannica.com/bcom/eb/article/8/0,5716,41718+1+40822,00.html?query=Holocene](http://www.britannica.com/bcom/eb/article/8/0,5716,41718+1+40822,00.html?query=Holocene)

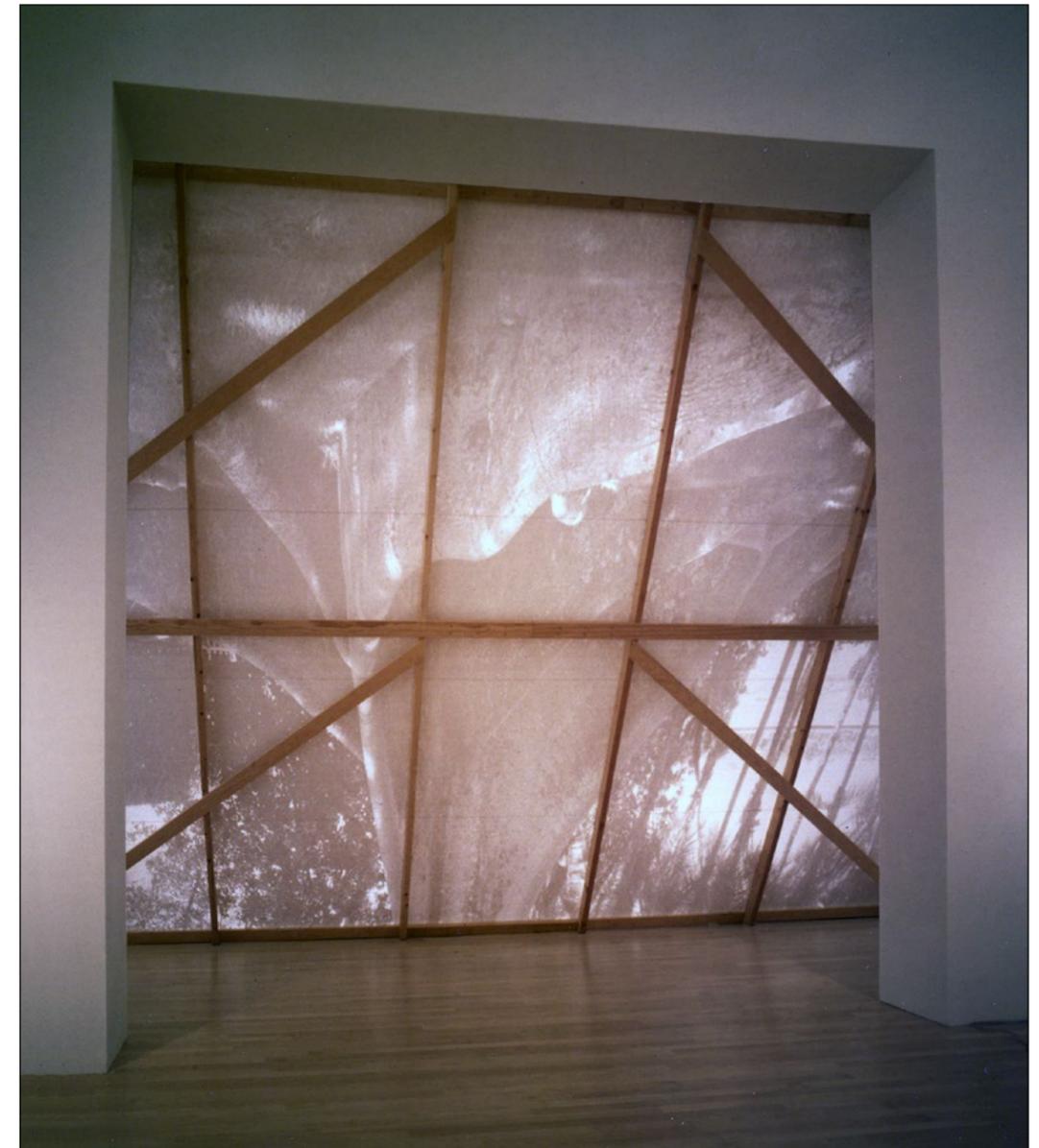


Fig. 56. *Holocene Fragments (Black Water Group)*, rear entrance to the exhibition, back of *Biscayne Giant* image, John Roloff: *Displacements*, J. M. Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, WI, 2000



Fig. 57. *Original Depositional Environment*, 18 ft.. x 8 ft.., algae, water, wood, acrylic, central gallery skylight.  
Wall left to right: *Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window) No. 10*, 6 and 7, 9 ft.. x 6 ft.. ea., b&w  
photograph, ultra white paint. Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, CA, 2002.



Fig 58. *Stratigraphic Column 1*, inkjet print on paper on existing column, 24 ft. h., walls left to right: *Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window)*, No. 7, 9, 8 and 1. Richard Barnes, John Roloff, Kim Kuros, 101 California Street, San Francisco, CA, 2002.

### *Stratigraphic Column I*

*Stratigraphic Column I* is a structure composed of a digitally generated inkjet print installed around a 24 ft. high granite column at 101 California Street, San Francisco, CA. Completing this installation are 5 large photographic works from the *Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window)* series, 1998-2001. The project is part of a larger exhibition that includes 2 other artists in a different part of the building, September 16 to November 19, 2002. Curated and commissioned by Artsource, Inc., San Francisco, CA. *Stratigraphic Column I*, is composed of alternating images taken of Cambrian and Ordovician Era carbonate marine sediments from the Panamint Mountains in Death Valley, California and contemporary buildings (Holocene era) in the process of being deconstructed or having undergone conflagration in northern California. The images have been digitally stretched to form strata-like structures that recombine the column into a sequence of nonconformity and displacement in geologic time and distance. This meta-order examines an intermingling of Holocene and Paleozoic structures over 300 million years and 500 miles (800 kilometers) apart. The geographic displacement from Death Valley to Oakland is on the scale of plate tectonics or large strike/slip or transform fault systems such as the San Andreas Fault in western California. The practice of architecture often brings together materials from even greater distances and time frames for aesthetic, design or structural reasons.

*Stratigraphic Column (Fragment A)*, a section of the digital print from the original column placed over a wood and sheetrock frame with circling mirrors at ceiling and floor, optically extending the fragment into the architecture, was installed for *Monument Recall*, San Francisco Camerawork, San Francisco, CA, 2004.

### *Stratigraphic Columns II*

Commissioned for the exhibition: *Technological Sublime*, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, 2005, curated by Lisa Tamaris Becker. A site-generated piece composed of alternating images taken primarily of Paleozoic sandstone strata of the Flat Iron Formation, eastern Colorado, Sierra Nevada mountains in California and contemporary buildings (Holocene era) in the process of being deconstructed or having undergone conflagration in Boulder, CO and Oakland, CA. The images have been digitally stretched to form strata-like structures that are contiguous between the columns and can be correlated horizontally. This assemblage refers to the relationship of human and natural processes and structures

### *Stratigraphic Columns III (San Andreas)*

Commissioned by the Sonoma County Museum, Santa Rosa, CA, for *Force of Nature - 1906 Earthquake Centennial Exhibition*. April-June, 2006, curated by Patricia Watts. The "east" and "west" columns of *Stratigraphic Columns III (San Andreas)*, each have digitally compressed geologic images from the east and west sides of the San Andreas fault respectively. Continuing the theme of "anthroturbation" examined in other projects, digitally compressed architectural images from the destruction by the 1906 earthquake of San Francisco are included as strata in the columns. The architectural images are shown as positives in the east column and inverted negatives in the west column. Also commissioned for this show, *Protogaea Civica III (Santa Rosa)*, a geology flag work describing the geology beneath Santa Rosa.



Fig. 59. *Stratigraphic Column (Fragment A)*, inkjet print on paper, wood, sheetrock, mirrors, 12 ft. h., *Monument Recall*, San Francisco Camerawork, San Francisco, CA, 2004.



Fig. 60. *Stratigraphic Columns II*, detail, inkjet print on paper on existing column, 14 ft. h..Commissioned for, *Technological Sublime*, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, 2005.



Fig. 61. *Stratigraphic Columns II*, inkjet print on paper on existing column, 14 ft. h. Commissioned for *Technological Sublime*. Collection: University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, 2005.



Fig. 62. *Stratigraphic Columns III (San Andreas)*, inkjet print on paper on existing columns, 12 ft.. h.. *Force of Nature* - 1906 Earthquake Centennial Exhibition, Sonoma County Museum, Santa Rosa, CA, 2006.



Fig. 63. *Organic Corner No. 3*, b&w photograph, 3 ft.. (.9 m). *Open House: Art on Site I*, San Francisco, CA, 2000.

*The Sea Within the Land/Laramide*

*Overthrown: Clay Without Limits*, Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO, 2011

This project examines the interchangeable and analogous nature of sea and land as a poetic/scientific theme by focusing on paleo-dynamic and anthropogenic relationships within the central Colorado landscape. Two image systems are employed: the ship as a land-and-sea metaphor and conceptual land/sea-scape meta-windows. The ship as depositional reservoir in the form of a mold and its cast form of a geo-chronological layering of sediment become a sea/land analog to the epicontinental sea that covered much of the late Cretaceous Colorado landscape and subsequent deposition of sediments that now make up much of the region's terrain.

Paired, architecturally sited photographic images of the Pacific Ocean and in-situ exposures of the ship's sediments as part of the larger Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window) series evoke a theoretical dimension and sea/land dialectic, further echoing the Cretaceous inland sea and the influence of the Mesozoic/Cenozoic West Coast Farallon oceanic-plate subduction episode on the Laramide Orogeny and uplift of the Rocky Mountains.



Fig. 64. Wall, left to right: *Landscape Projection: Pacific Ocean (Laramide Orogeny) I*. Image: Pacific Ocean, *Landscape Projection: Marine Sediments (Laramide Orogeny) I*. Image: I-70 road cut of Jurassic and Cretaceous sediments. Each image, 12 ft. x 8 ft., inkjet print on vinyl, ultra white paint, halogen light.

*Platform:*  
*Seascape Structure: Marine Depositional Basin*, 66 in. x 44 in., wood, steel, sediment residue. *Landscape Structure: Marine Sediments*, 60 in x 40 in., chronologically sequential/unconformable Cretaceous Western Interior Seaway associated sediments, steel, amendments. *Sea Within the Land/Laramide*, 2011. Collection: Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO.



Fig. 65. *Landscape Projection: Pacific Ocean (Laramide Orogeny) II*. Image: contemporary Pacific Ocean invertebrates, Monterey Aquarium, Monterey, CA. 12 ft. x 8 ft., inkjet print on vinyl, ultra white paint, halogen light. *Sea Within the Land/Laramide*, 2011. Collection: Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO.



Fig. 66. *Landscape Projection: Marine Sediments (Laramide Orogeny) II*. Image: probable Dakota formation sandstone structure, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Denver, CO. 12 ft. x 8 ft., inkjet print on vinyl, ultra white paint, halogen light. *Sea Within the Land/Laramide*, 2011. Collection: Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO.



Fig. 67. *Landscape Projection: Pacific Ocean (Laramide Orogeny) III*. Image: Pacific Ocean. 11 ft.-1 in x 5 ft.-4.5 in., inkjet print on vinyl, window, Rocky Mts. *Sea Within the Land/Laramide*, 2011. Collection: Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO.

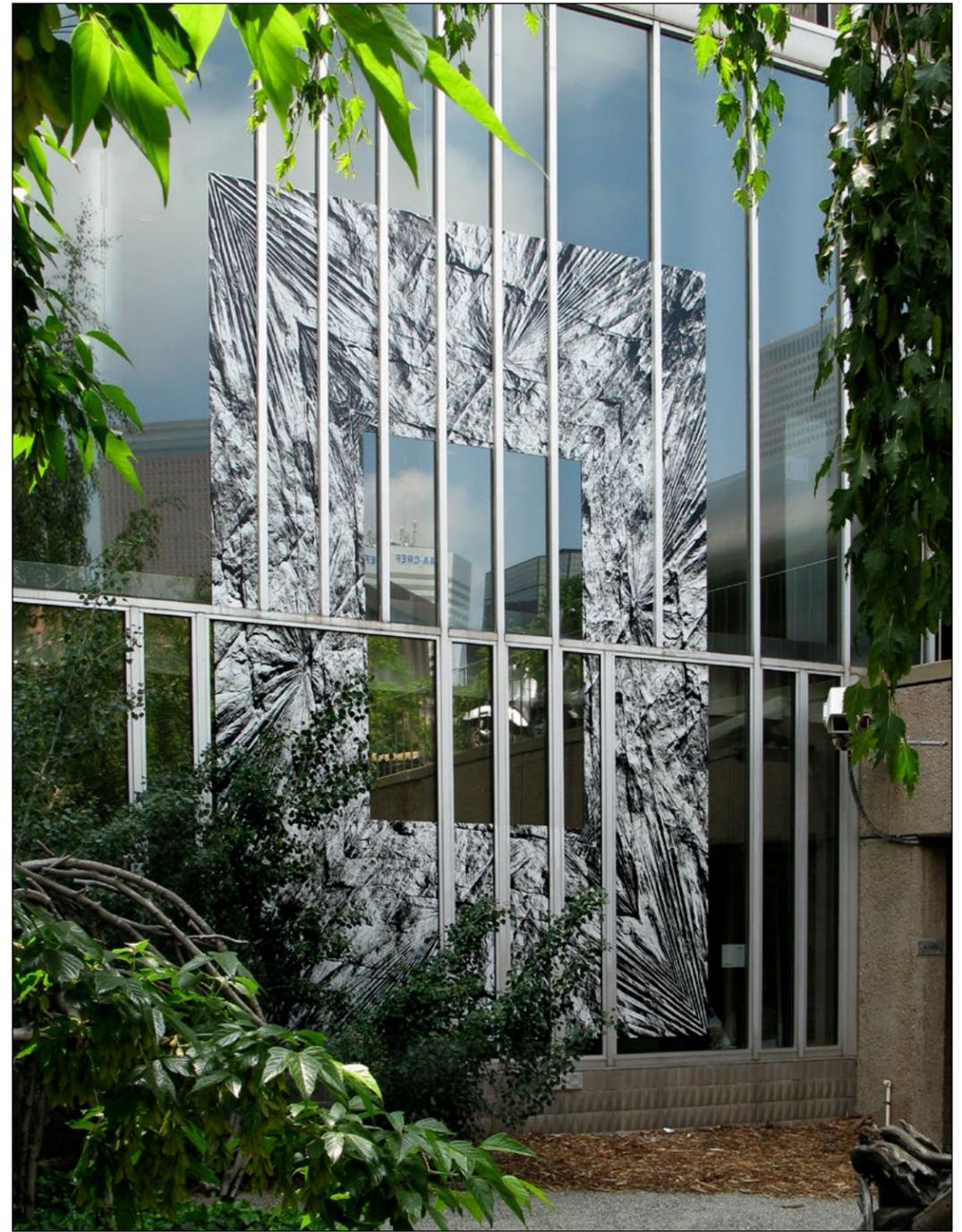


Fig. 68. *Landscape Projection: Marine Sediments (Laramide Orogeny) III*. Image: Laramie formation sediments with fossil palm impressions. 17 ft.-7.5 in x 11 ft.-9 in., inkjet print on vinyl, glass curtain wall. *Sea Within the Land/Laramide*, 2011. Collection: Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO.



Fig 69. Left panel: *Landscapes Projection: The Sea within the Land (Salinian/Franciscan)*. 88" h.. x 48 in. w. x 6 3/4 in., digital print on acrylic, stainless steel. Private collection, Carmel, CA, 2015.



Fig. 70. *Landscapes Projection: The Sea within the Land (Salinian/Franciscan)*. Two panels, 88" h.. x 48 in. w. x 6 3/4 in. each, digital print on acrylic, stainless steel. Private collection, Carmel, CA, 2015.

*Landscape Projection: The Sea within the Land (Salinian/Franciscan)*

The two panels of *Landscape Projection: The Sea within the Land (Salinian/Franciscan)*, 2015, are homologous to the similar-scale, *Landscape Projection (For an Unknown Window)*, series, 1998-2011, printed on photographic paper. See full discussion of this series on page 12.

*Landscapes Projection: The Sea within the Land (Salinian/Franciscan)* evokes a theoretical dimension and sea/land dialectic, that considers the Carmel site as a function of larger sea/land dynamics: the local area's Salinian, marine sedimentary structures transported by plate tectonics and an analogous Franciscan complex of earlier accretion episodes further inland, are subsets of marine depositional systems and oceanic-plate subduction dynamics of the North American Western Cordillera. This dialog suggests the complex, inter-related and fluid conversations of the sea and the land in the manifestation of our environment. The left panel's image is abstracted from jellyfish of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the right panel's image is derived from that of Franciscan complex assemblages of the Marin County, CA shoreline, a stratigraphic 'ship' may be seen embedded in its structure.

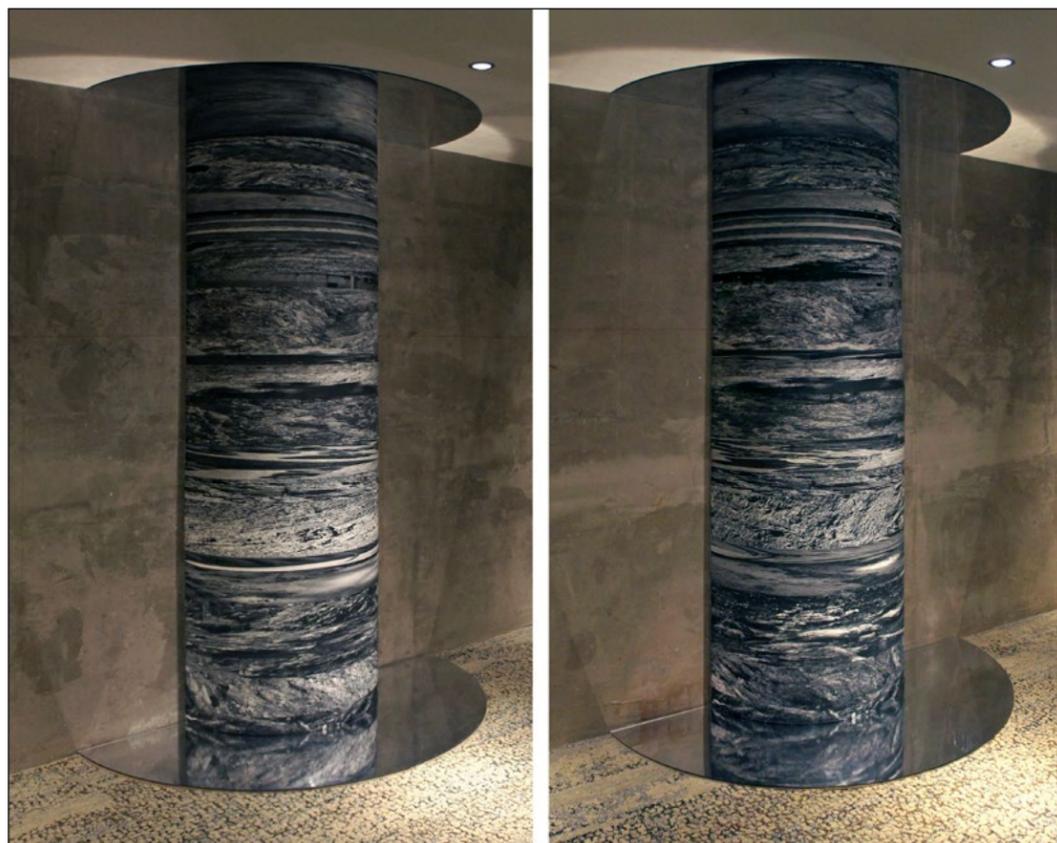


Fig. 71. *Stratigraphic Columns/Salinia*, 8 ft.. h., black and white digitally altered photograph on polyester, mirrored acrylic, wood, fiber-board. Detail of columns from site A and B, indicating continuity of strata, 2017. Collection: 1440 Multiversity, Scotts Valley, CA.



Fig. 72. *Stratigraphic Columns/Salinia*, site B, 8 ft.. h., black and white digitally altered photograph on polyester, mirrored acrylic, wood, fiber-board. 2017. Collection: 1440 Multiversity, Scotts Valley, CA.

### *Stratigraphic Columns/Salinia*

1440 Multiversity, Scotts Valley, CA, 2017

*Stratigraphic Columns/Salinia* is the latest in a series of photographic installations by John Roloff that investigate the material and chronological relationship of geology and architecture. The installation for 1440 Multiversity utilizes two subterranean niches along the main corridor of the Sayanta building and examines the building in context within the Salinian Block, the geologic bedrock of the Santa Cruz region. Photographic images from the 1440 Multiversity campus and the Santa Cruz area are digitally compressed and layered to form a strata-like sequence of non-conformities and displacements in geologic and human

time. The digital compression is analogous to the processes of lithification, the creation of rock from sediment from which much of 1440 is constructed. Mirrors installed on ceiling and floor, extend the geologic and architectural illusion into a near infinite ascending and descending visual system interweaving narratives of human and natural time. This sense of simultaneity and scale from individual sites to landscape allows the viewers to see the micro while experiencing the macro and consider the expanses and limitations of our time on earth.



Fig. 73. Left: *Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window), No. 8*, 9 ft. x 6 ft., b&w photograph, 2001, collection, Berkeley Art Museum. Right: *Slump (Orchard) I*, b&w photograph, wood, glass, 8 ft. h. x 24 ft. w x 9 ft. d., 1997. John Roloff, *The Sea Within the Land* 1980-2019, Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco, CA, 2019.



STUDIES / PROPOSALS

Fig. 74. Study: Reef Facies (Gamma State), detail, Oakland, CA, circa 2000.

## SELECTED STUDIES / PROPOSALS

*Selected/Studies/Proposals*, gives examples of developmental aspects of various projects, prototypes and proposals related to the photographic medium, relevant, investigations in a range of media and a selection of installations concurrent and inspirational to many of the photographic installations.

Following the environmental kiln works and related documentary photographs and orange-process photo works, described in the 'Metabolism' section of this document, the 1990's were a time of experimentation with photography both as works in themselves and visualization or proposals for installations. *Study: Landscape Projection I*, 1994, a proposal for an animated photographic image of the landscape, which like the orange/decay process photos of the same time period, utilizes time and change extending the global metabolism investigations of the earlier environmental work. Here the wall-sized, pleated photograph of a marsh in western New York state "breathes" during the course of a whole day, mechanically opening and closing over 24 hours. The kiln project, *Metabolism and Morality/O<sub>2</sub>*, 1992 and the process sculpture, *Metafossil (Pinus: ponderosa, radiata, balfouriana)*, 1992, are examples of conceptually parallel, environmental and sculptural works.

*Untitled (Seattle Center Coliseum/Art Work)*, 1994, *Study: Uptown-Evergreen/Downtown-Deciduous*, and *Study: Spruce II*, both 1997, are examples of site-specific, public art concepts for photographic works based upon site research and images developed in a gallery or museum context. Further explorations for sculptural photographic works, such as: *Site Study: Poplar Rotation*, 1996-97, *Prototype: Orchard Building*, 1997 and *Study: Lithologic Structure I and II*, 1999, anticipate or reconfigure realized works as in *Slump (Orchard) I*, 1997, and the photographic negatives of radiolarian chert later used for *Franciscan/Manhattan Formation, (Urban Geology Series)*, 1998 and *Landscape Projection (for an Unknown Window)*, No. 8, 2001. *Study: Organic Corners*, 1999 and *Prototype: Landscape with Flues I*, 1998, are examples of studio explorations using photographs to conceptually physically and sculpturally explore architectural, landscape metabolic/systemic dynamics. *Three Oaks*, circa 1999, examines physical and imagistic negative space, shadows and perception.

*Studies I - V*, are conceptual, site and developmental studies using architectural renderings, drawing and site images to conceptualize and create a plan of action for the solo exhibition, *The Rising Sea: Images and Constructions from South Florida and Other Selected Works*, Lake Worth Museum of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, FL, 1998. This exhibition was a major survey of work to date and, thanks to Jim Peele, the Museum director, the support and opportunity to respond to the landscape of south Florida and the museum at a large scale with new photographic installations. *Studies: Biscayne Giant*, *Studies: Landscape Projection (For an Unknown Window)* and *Study: Florida Floor*, 1999, are typical of many extensions of this project examining alternative site and image relationships.

The series of image maps for: *Stratigraphic Columns III (San Andreas)*, *Stratigraphic Column I and II*, 2019, are the unwrapped images of the columnar works, scaled to work visually in their own right as 2d pieces, yet echoing the larger 3d projects. *Image Map: Stratigraphic Columns III (San Andreas)*, 2019 are studies for relief works that are in conversation with octagonal columns of various materials integrated into larger ship/landscape sculptures of the same cross-section as selected piers from the San Francisco Wharf. as par of the site work: *San Francisco Wharf Complex*, 2012-present, that considers the built elements of the entire wharf as a geologic formation. *Study: Orchid Sea Mount II*, *Study: Flame/Petal Transect*, and *Study: Flame/Flower Folds I*, all 2019, are studies for glass and mixed media armatures that spatially articulate photo-generated images into works about energy and metaphoric orogenic processes.

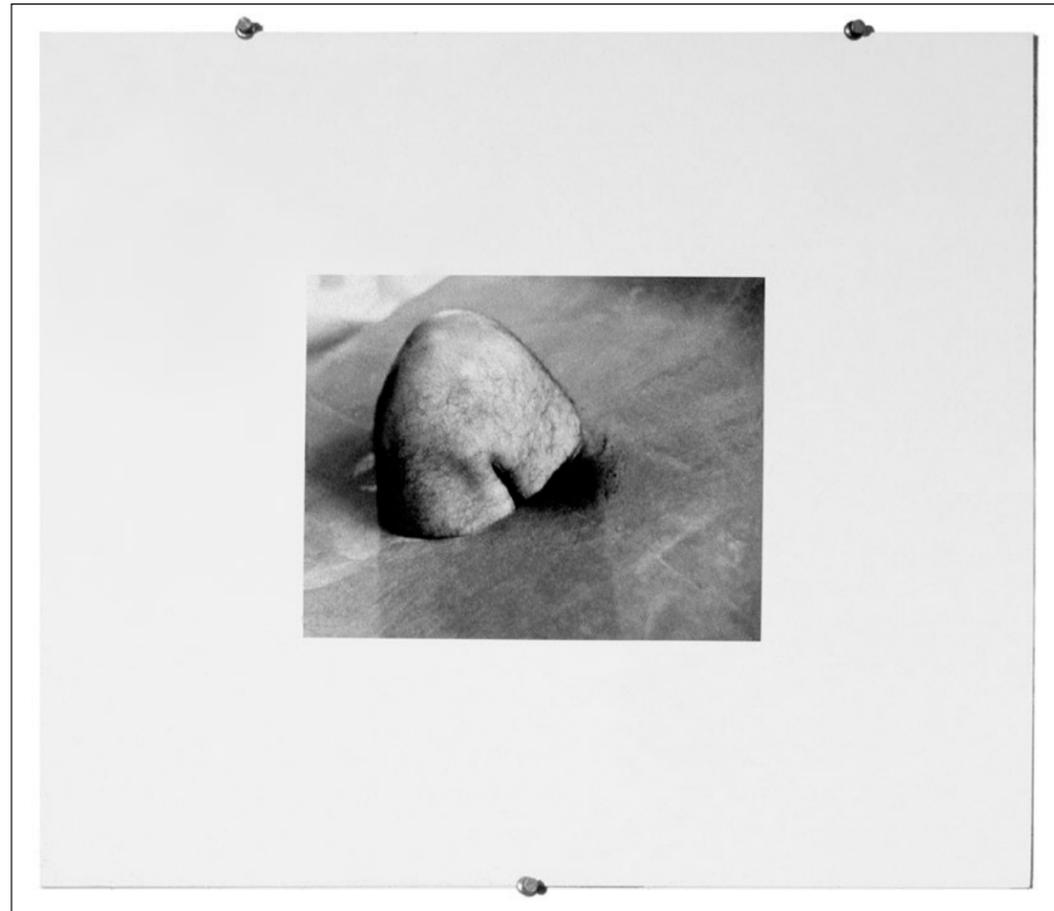


Fig. 75. *Knee Mountain*, undergraduate project, UC Davis, Davis, CA, photographer, Grant Thorpe, circa 1969.



STUDY: LANDSCAPE PROJECTION I / PROJECT FOR A HORIZONTAL WALL / AN ANIMATED IMAGE THAT TAKES 12 HRS TO OPEN, 12 HOURS TO CLOSE - IMITATING THE CYCLE/BREATH OF A DAY / SIZE VARIABLE / PHOTO CURTAIN, MOTORIZED SYSTEM, PROGRAMMABLE TIMER.

CONCEPTUAL STUDY: LARGE-SCALE PHOTOGRAPHIC INSTALLATION FOR EXHIBITION/PUBLIC OR SPECIALIZED SITE / 1994-2012

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510.261.9196 | jr@johnroloff.com | www.johnroloff.com

Fig. 76. Study: Landscape Projection I, size variable, photo/curtain, motorized system, timer, 24 hour open/close cycle, 1994-2012.

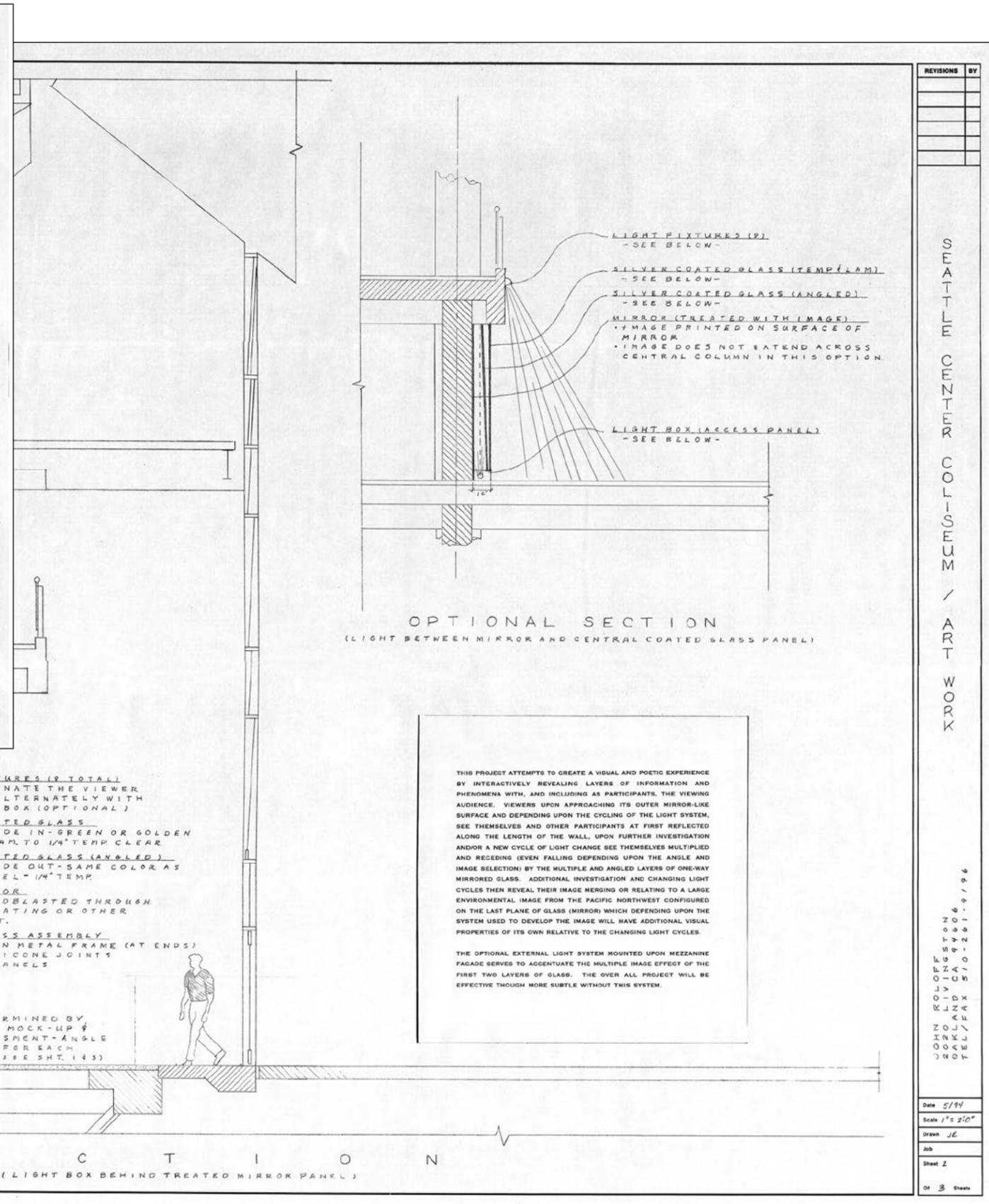
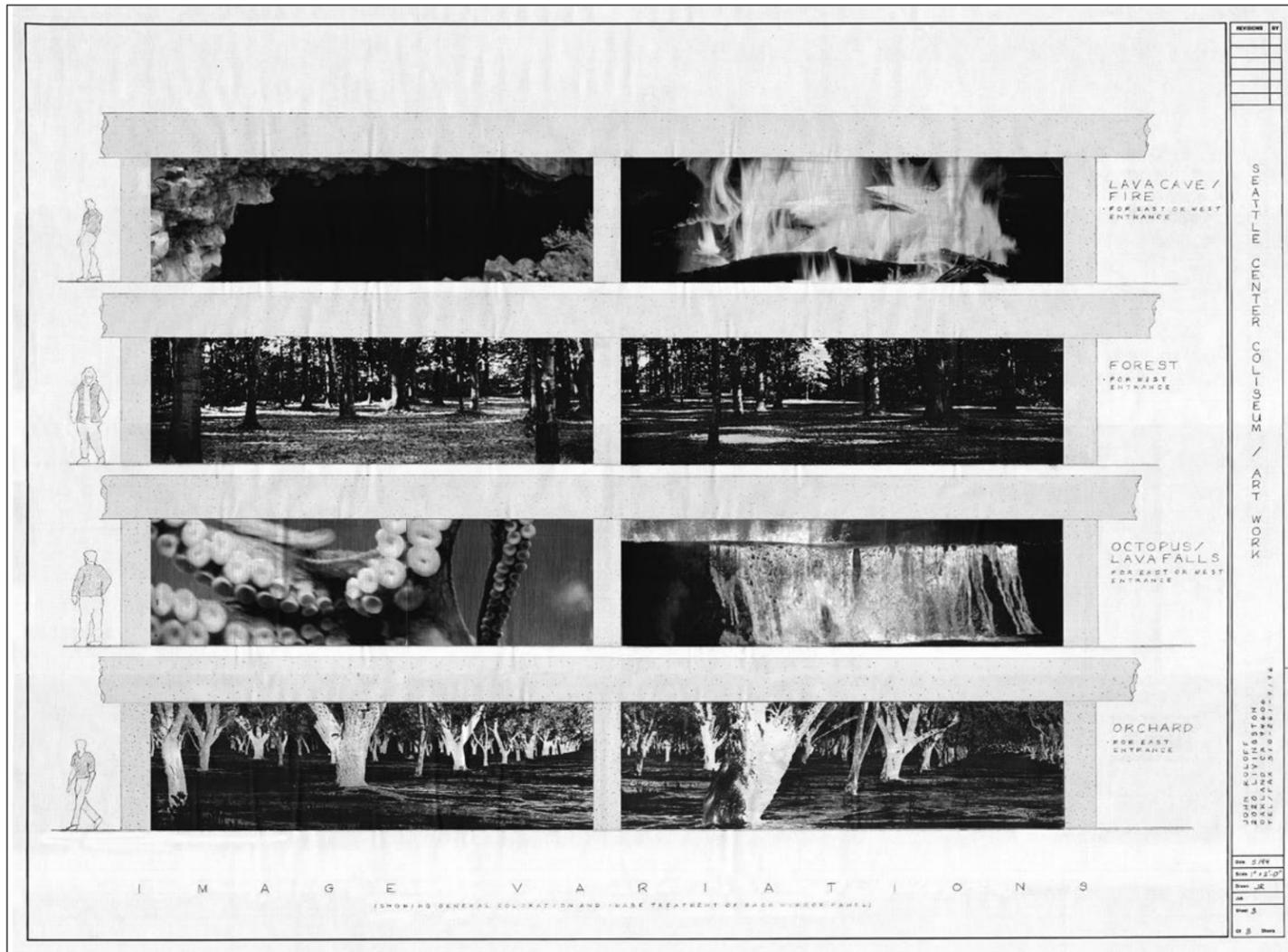
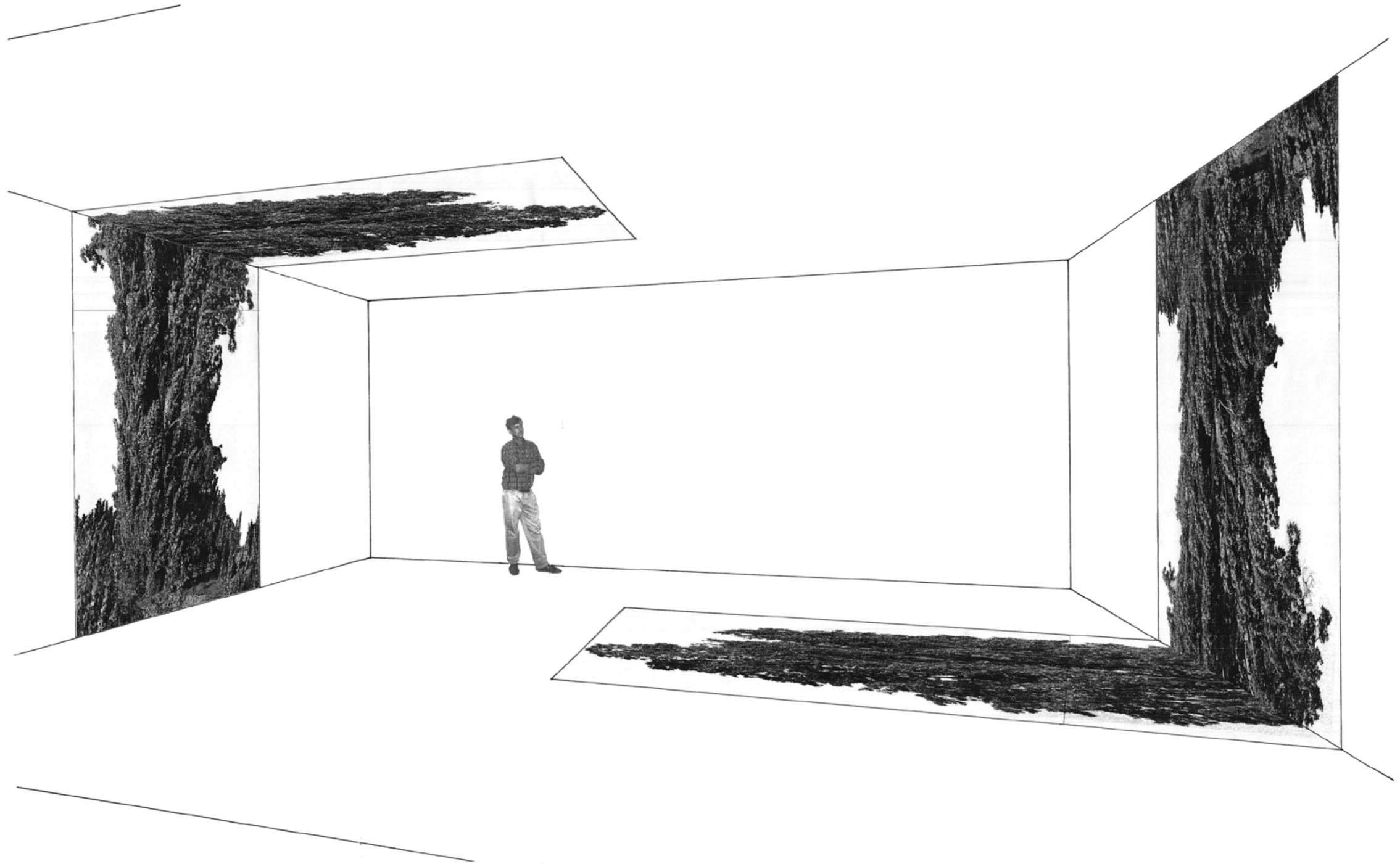


Fig. 77 A/B. Untitled (Seattle Center Coliseum/Art Work), sheets 2 and 3, 30 in. x 42 in., pencil and collage on lined vellum. Variations for a mixed media, phenomenological public artwork proposal, Seattle, WA, 1994.



S I T E   S T U D Y :   P O P L A R   R O T A T I O N

ART WORK CONCEPT FOR ENCLOSED SPACE,  
DIGITALLY ALTERED B&W PHOTOGRAPHS, GLASS; END OF EACH IMAGE ALIGNED WITH THE CENTER OF THE SPACE,  
SCALE VARIABLE WITH SITE; 1996-97

Fig. 78. *Site Study: Poplar Rotation*, 36 in. x 24 in., ink on paper, industrial print, study for photo installation, 1996-97.

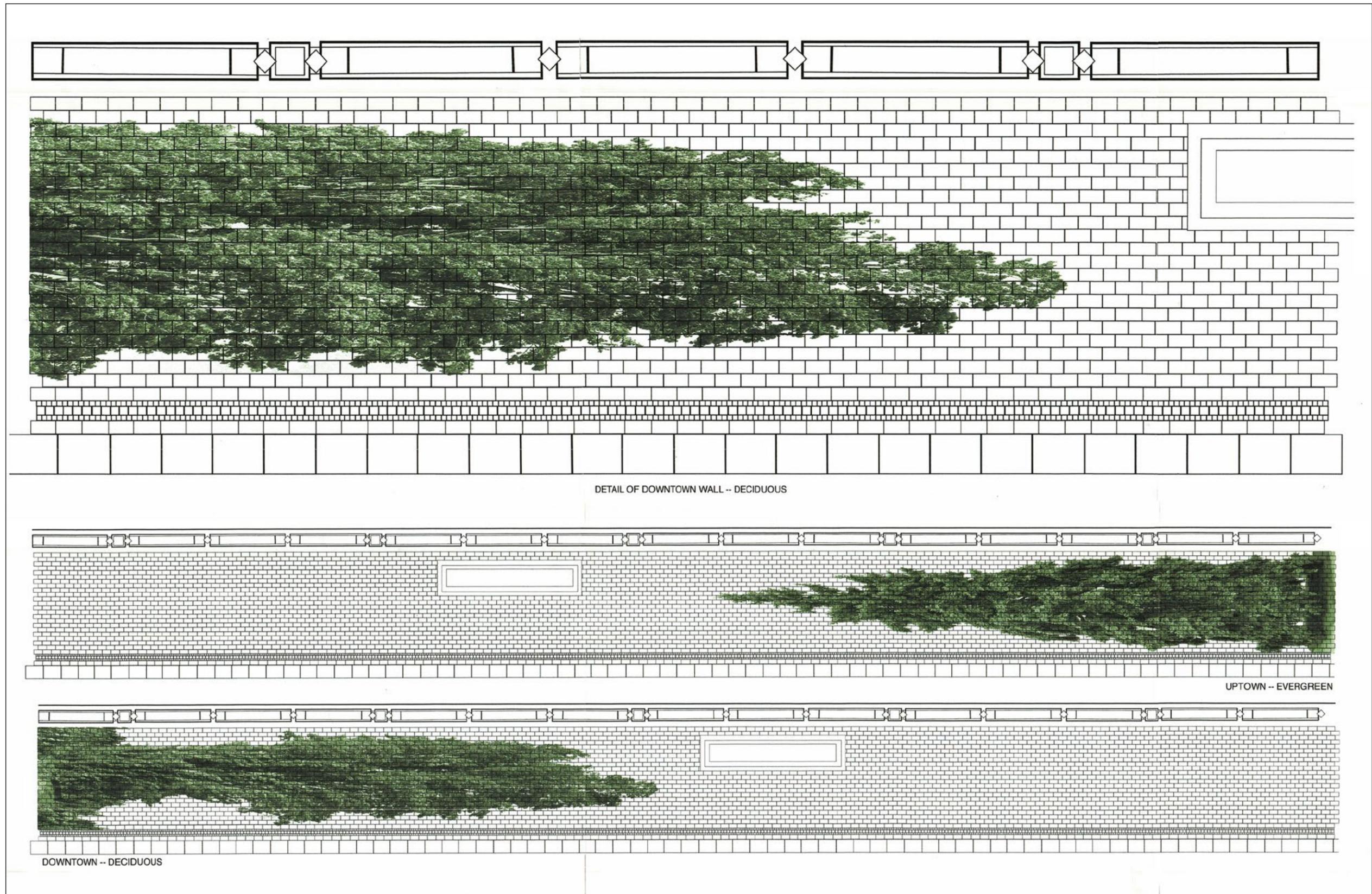


Fig. 79. Study: Uptown-Evergreen/Downtown-Deciduous, concept for a NYC subway station, photo decal on ceramic tile, size variable with station, circa 1997.

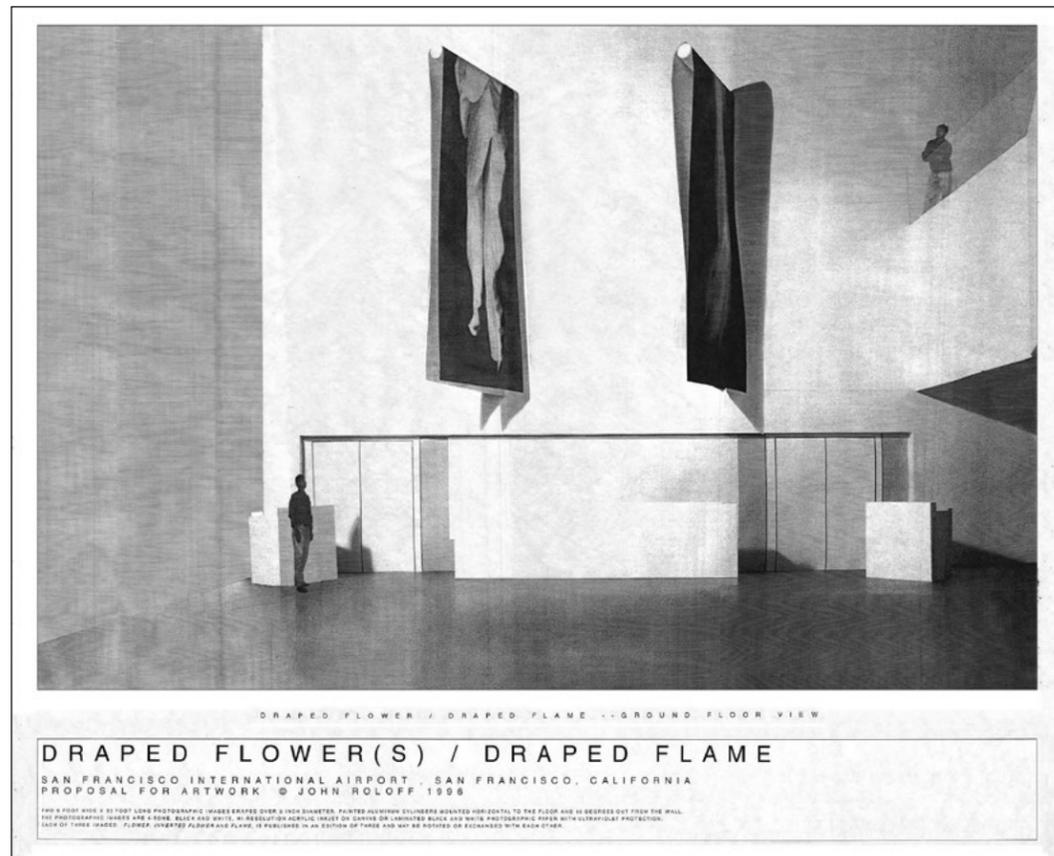


Fig. 80. *Draped Flower(s)/Draped Flame*, proposal concept from model, industrial print, 24 in. x 30 in., San Francisco International Airport, San Francisco, CA, 1996.

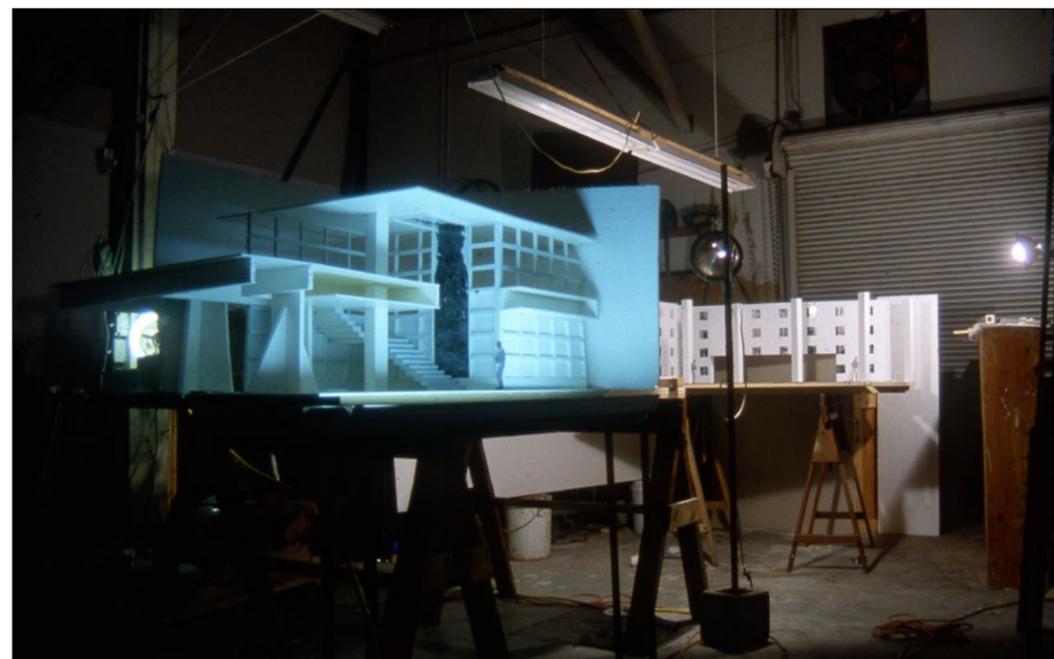


Fig. 81. *Models: Fitterman Hall Project*, foam-core, inkjet on paper, proposal models/studies for photo-based installations. Fitterman Hall, New York, NY, 1997.

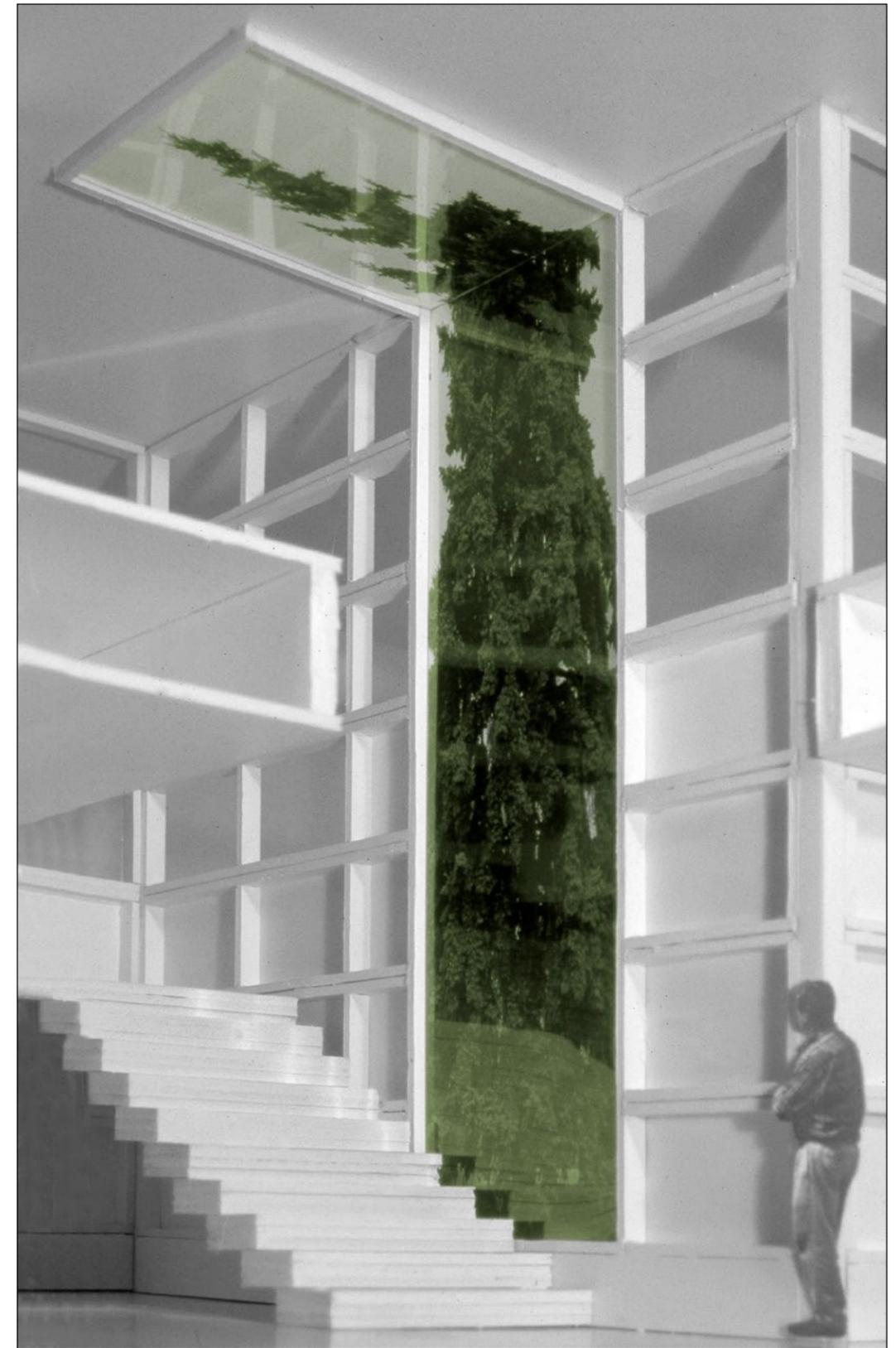
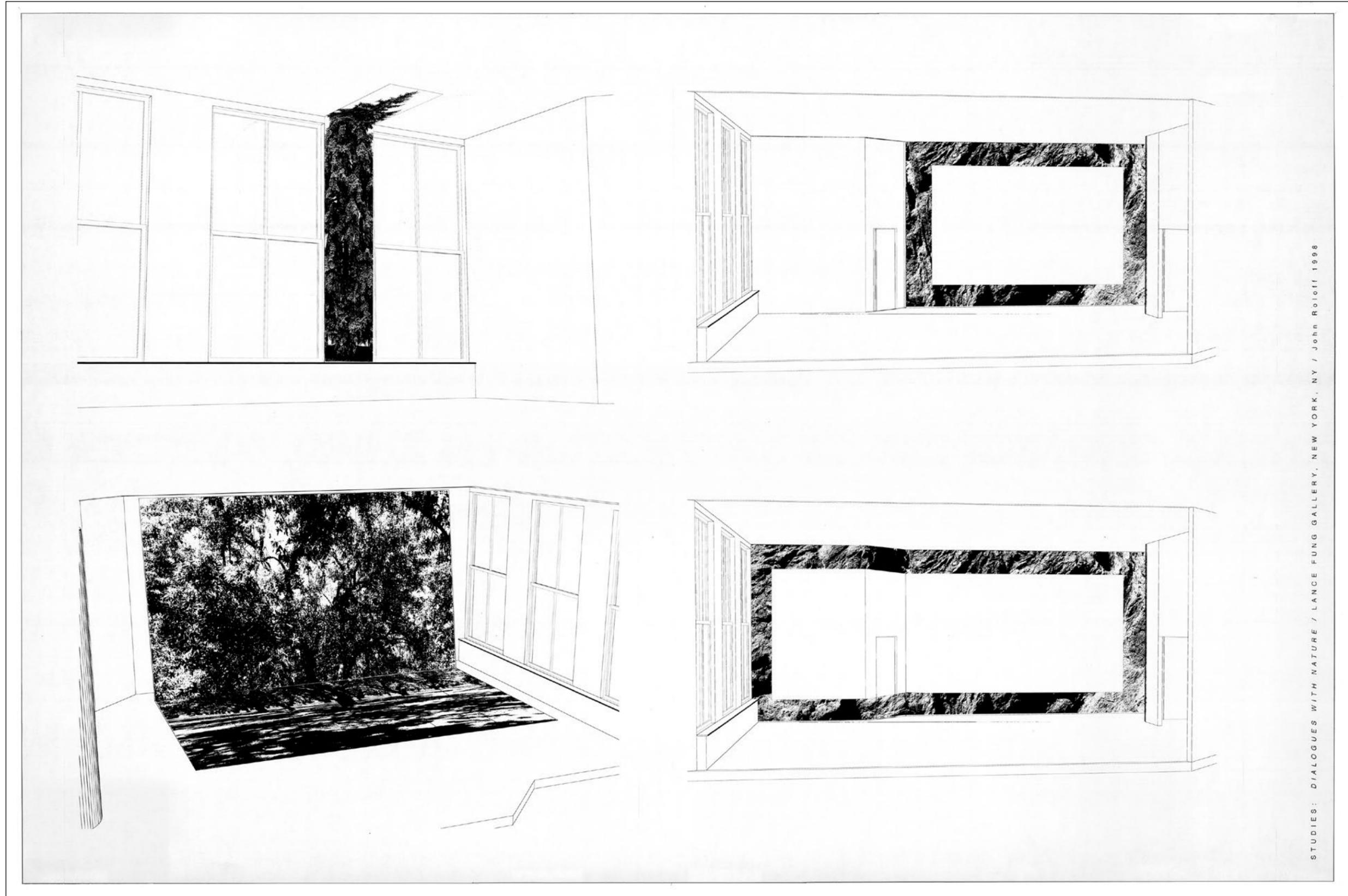


Fig. 82. *Study: Spruce II*, proposal model detail, intended size 20 ft. x 4 ft. x 8 ft., photograph, steel, glass, Fitterman Hall, New York, NY, 1997.



STUDIES: DIALOGUES WITH NATURE / LANCE FUNG GALLERY, NEW YORK, NY / JOHN ROLOFF 1998

Fig. 83. Studies: Dialogs with Nature/Lance Fung Gallery, New York, NY/John Roloff/1998, 36 in. x 54 in., industrial print, ink on vellum, 1998. Collection UC Berkeley Art Museum.

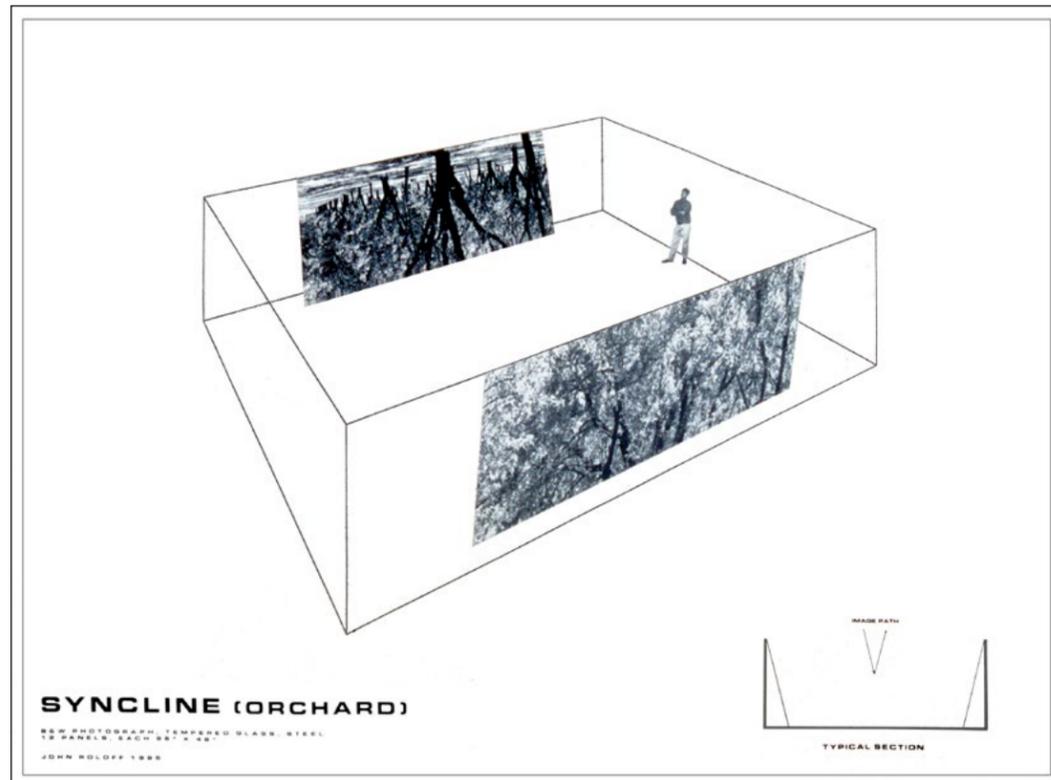


Fig. 84. *Syncline (Orchard)*, 30 in x 40 in. collage, ink on paper, one of several studies for morphological photo installations, 1995.

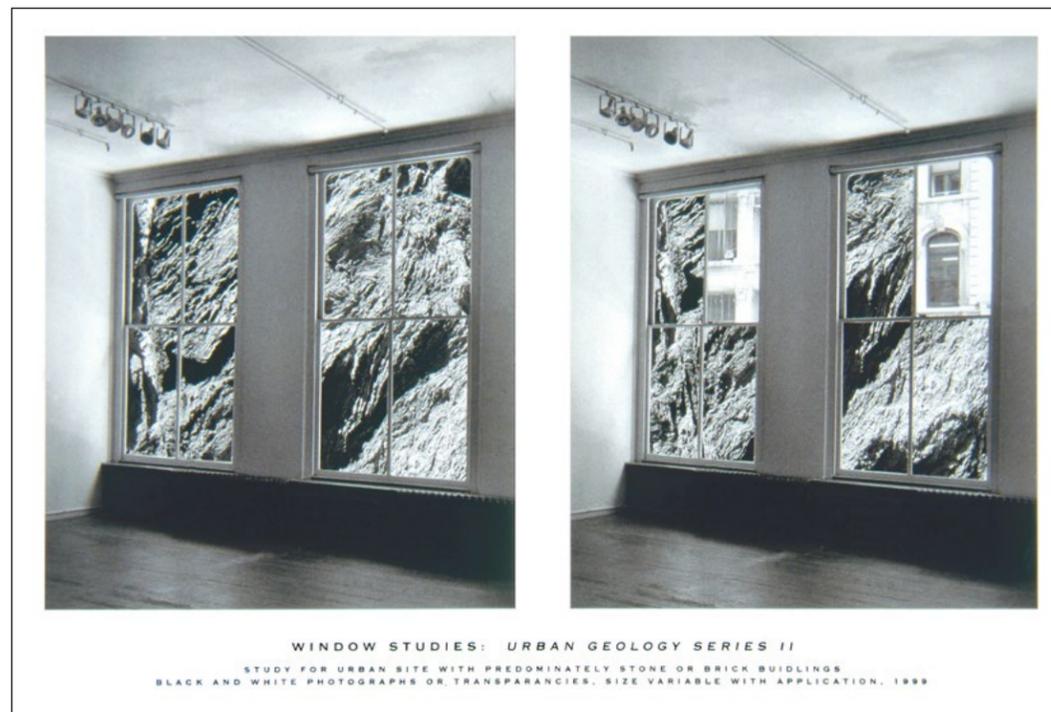
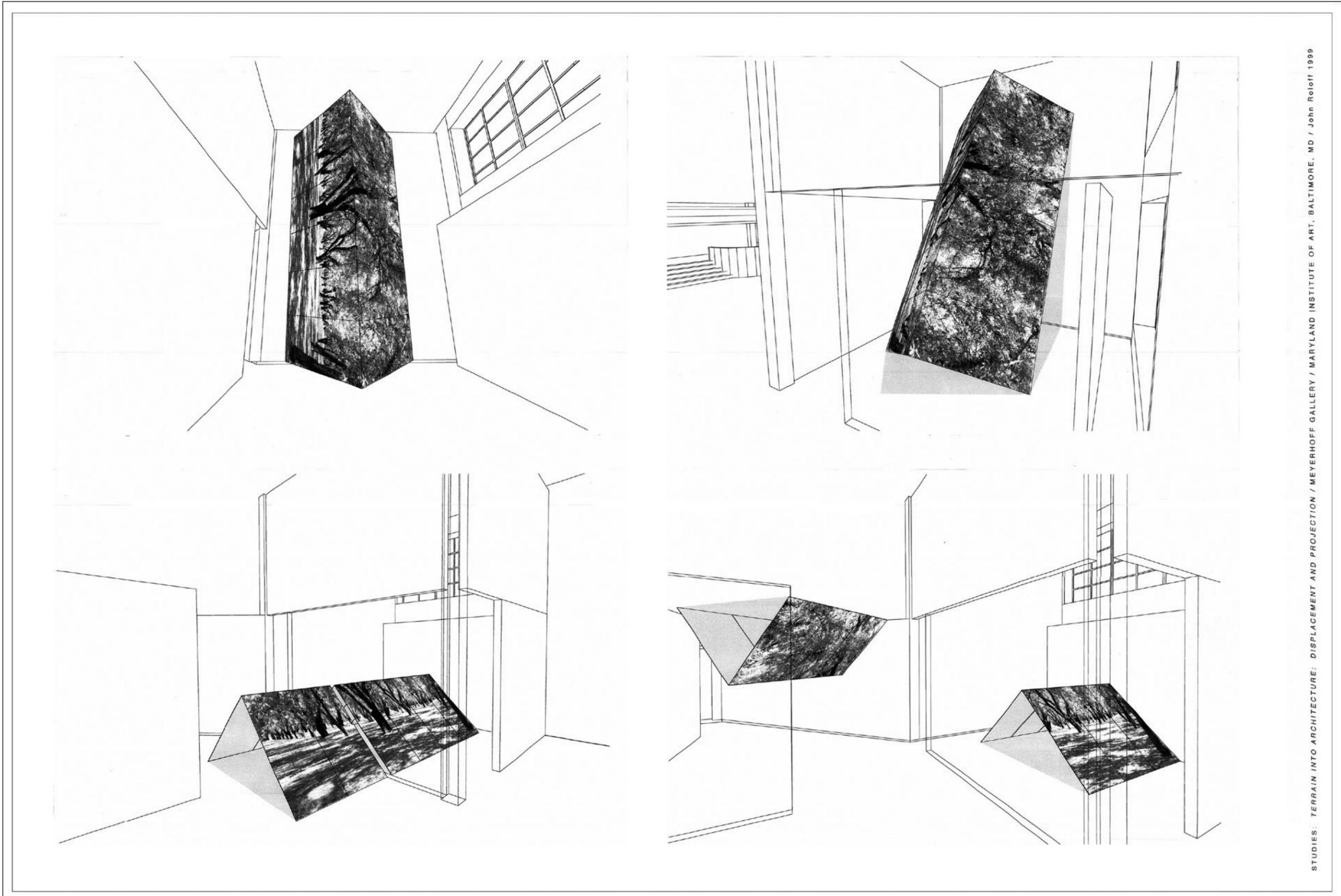


Fig. 85. *Window Studies: Urban Geology Series II*, size variable, inkjet print, concept for a site-specific geologic/architectural installation, 1999.



Fig. 86. *Study: Thin-section Wall (Urban Geology Series I)*, detail, size variable, inkjet print, concept for a site-specific geologic/architectural installation, 1999.



STUDIES: TERRAIN INTO ARCHITECTURE: DISPLACEMENT AND PROJECTION / MEYERHOFF GALLERY / MARYLAND INSTITUTE OF ART, BALTIMORE, MD / JOHN ROLOFF 1999

Fig. 87. Studies: Terrain into Architecture: Displacement and Projection/Meyerhoff Gallery/Maryland Institute of Art, Baltimore, MD/John Roloff 1998, 36 in. x 54 in., CAD drawing collage, industrial print, ink on vellum, 1999.



Fig. 88. Prototype: Orchard Building, mock-up, 6 ft.. h.. x 8 ft.. w. x 4 ft.. d., for photograph, concrete board, cast concrete columns for an alternate form of the individual panels of *Slump (Orchard) I* as an architectural structure, the image of the orchard distributed across each floor, sequentially, top to bottom. Oakland, CA studio, 1998.

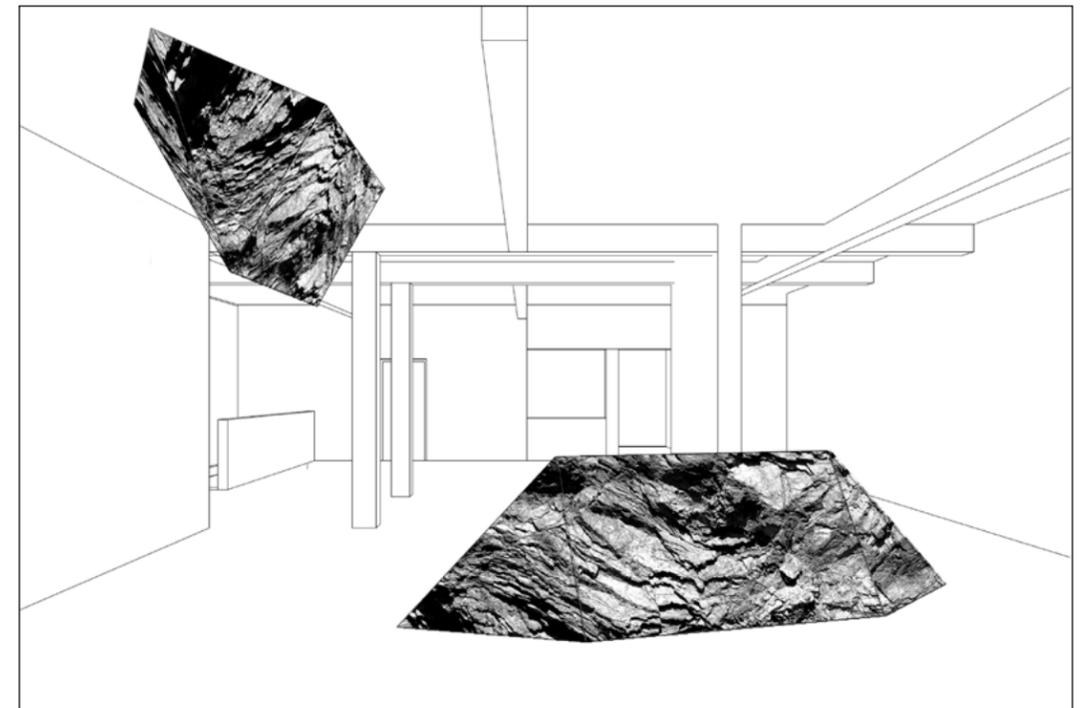


Fig. 89. Study: *Lithologic Structure I*, armature, digital images, size/installation variable. Depicted at Gallery Paule Anglim space, San Francisco, CA, 1999.

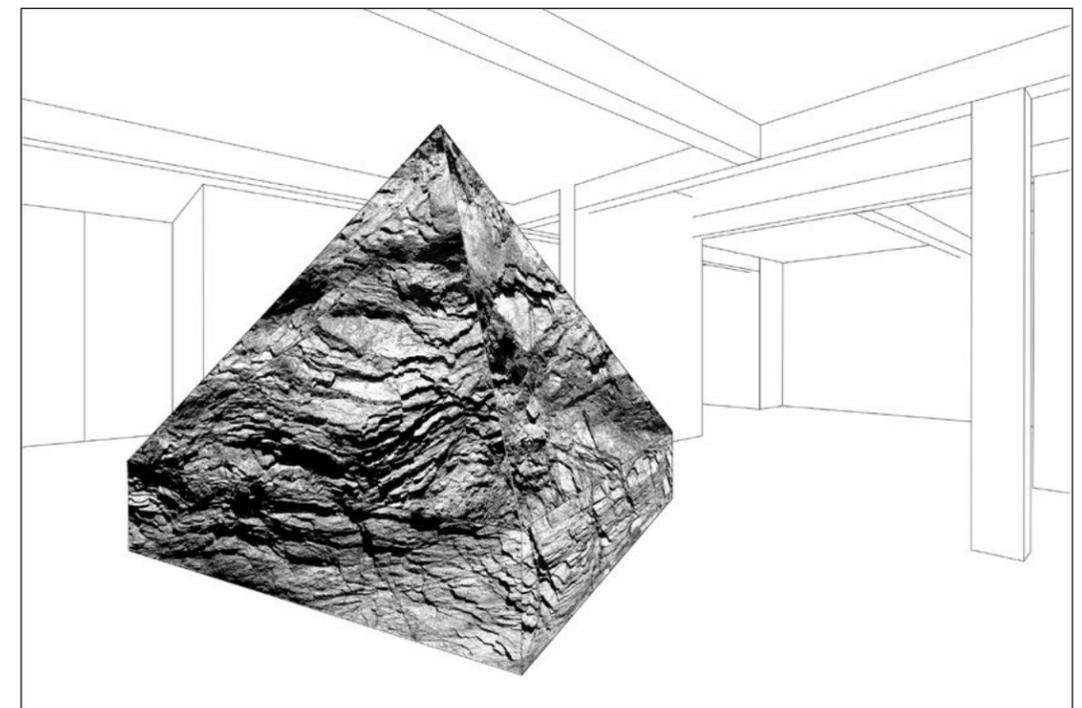


Fig. 90. Study: *Lithologic Structure II*, armature, digital images, size/installation variable. Depicted at Gallery Paule Anglim space, San Francisco, CA, 1999.



Fig. 91. Study: *Organic Corners*, b&w photo, 3 ft on a side, each. Studio, Oakland, CA, 1999.



Fig. 92. Prototype: *Landscape with Flues I*, b&w photograph, glass, wood, steel, cord. Studio, Oakland, CA, 1998.



Fig. 93. *Carbonate Falls (Marsh Lettuce)*, bottom panels, b&w photograph, 14 ft. w x 12 ft. d. Studio, Oakland, CA, 1998.



Fig. 94. *Three Oaks*, hand cut photographs, tempered glass, each panel, 92 in. x 46 in., in progress, Oakland studio, Oakland CA, circa 1999.

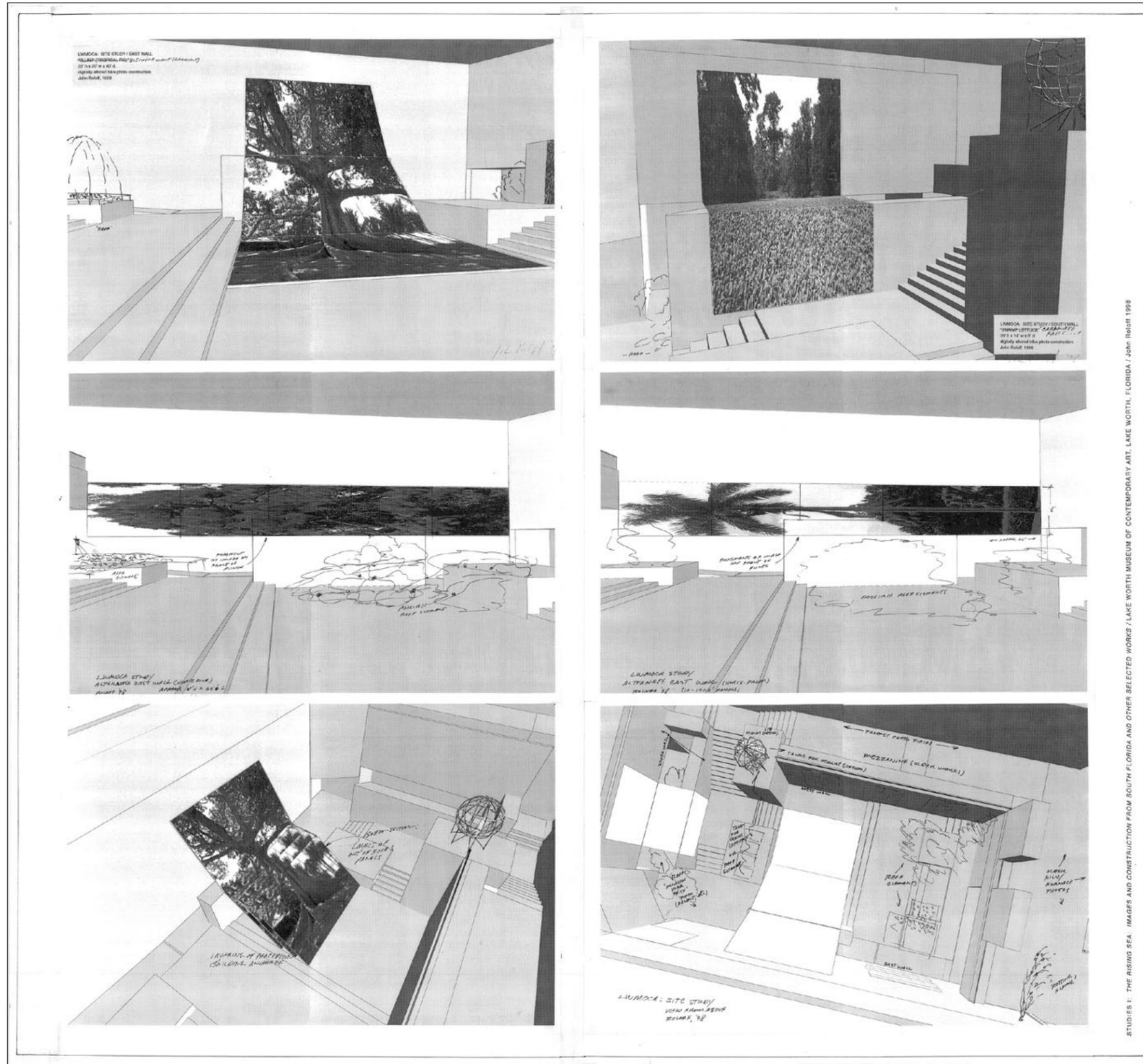
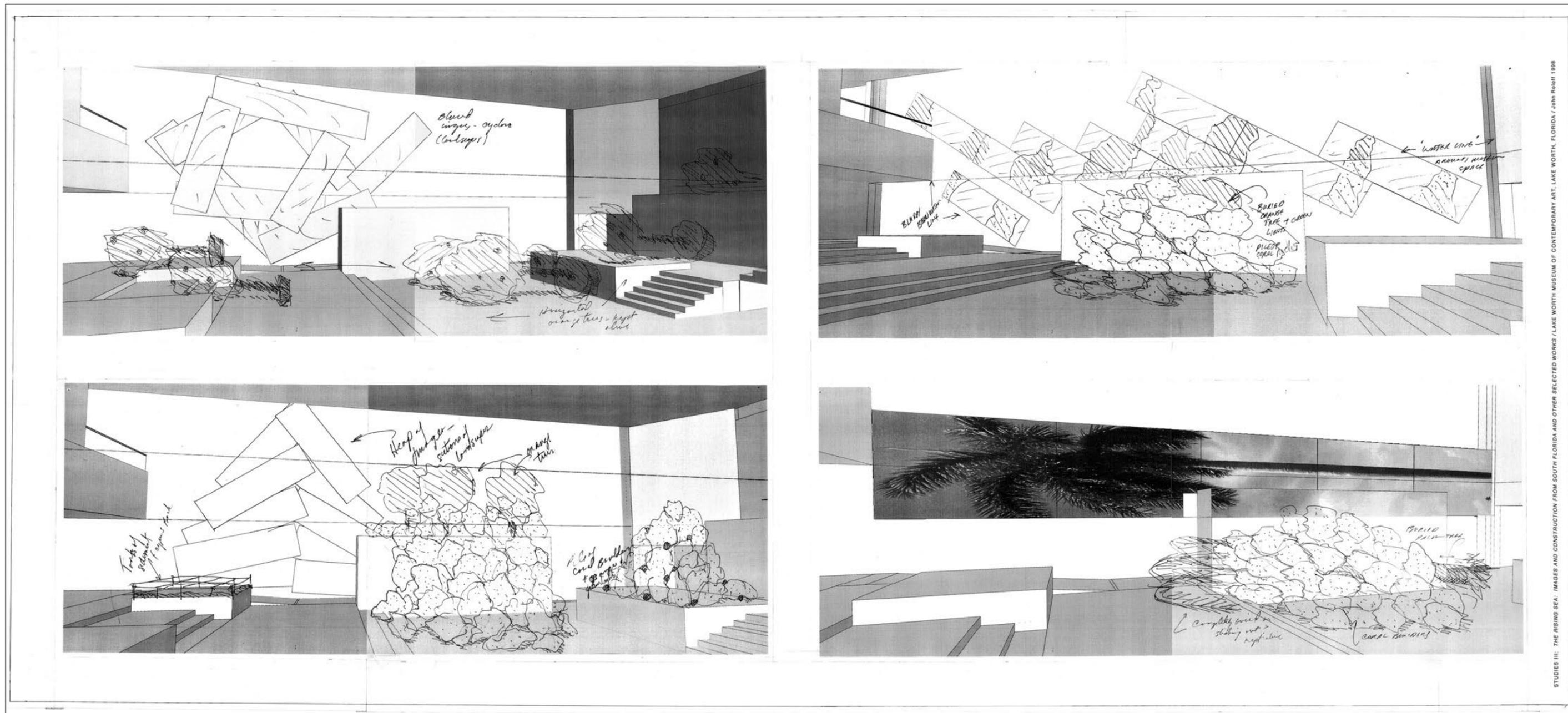


Fig. 95. Studies I, installation studies: photographic works, *Oculus* and *Rotting Flame* sculptures, coral, palm and orange tree elements from the south Florida landscape. *The Rising Sea: Images and Constructions from South Florida and Other Selected Works*, Lake Worth Museum of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, FL, 1998.





STUDIES III: THE RISING SEA: IMAGES AND CONSTRUCTION FROM SOUTH FLORIDA AND OTHER SELECTED WORKS / LAKE WORTH MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LAKE WORTH, FLORIDA / JANN ROSS 1998

Fig. 97. Studies III, installation studies: photographic works, coral, palm and orange tree elements from the south Florida landscape. *The Rising Sea: Images and Constructions from South Florida and Other Selected Works*, Lake Worth Museum of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, FL, 1998.

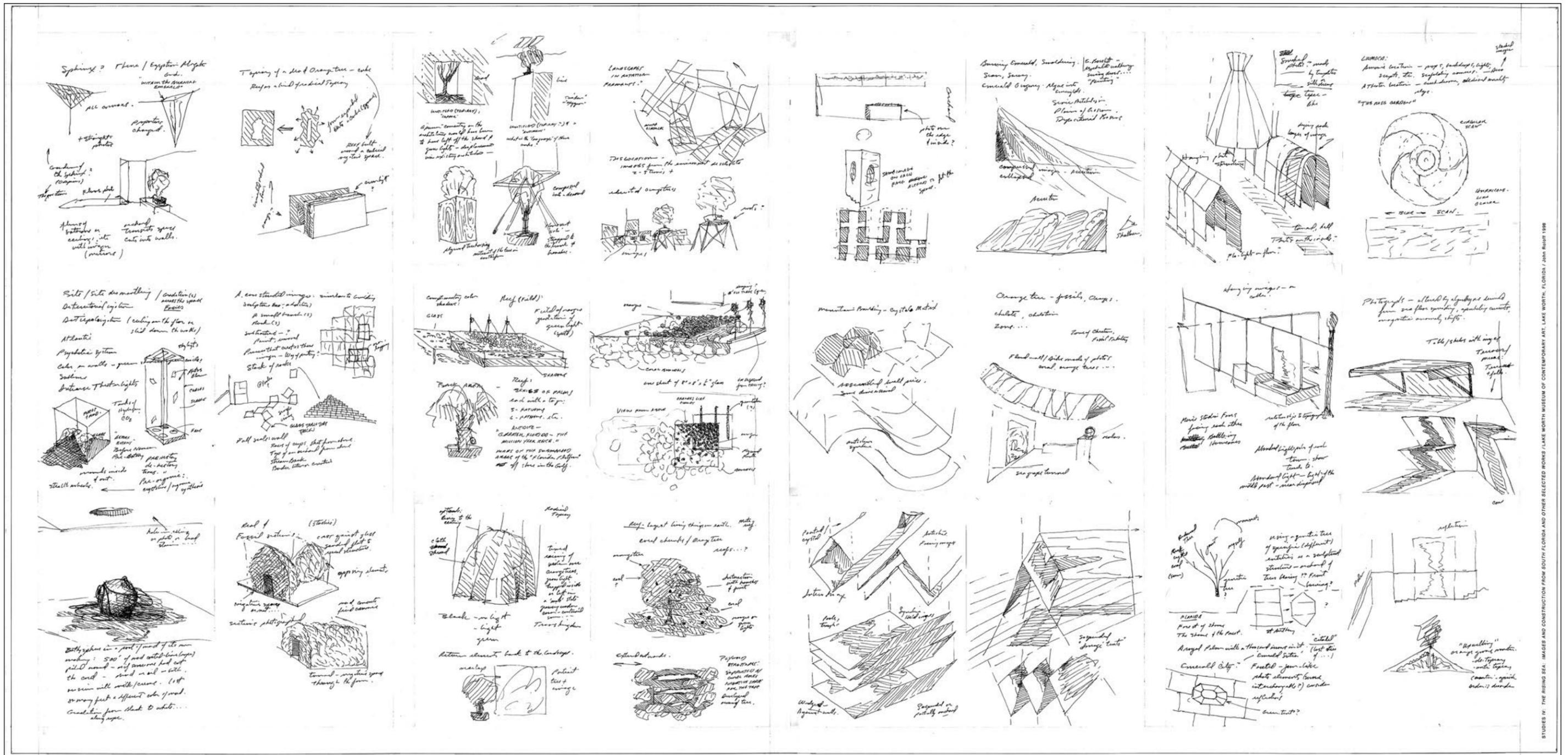


Fig. 98. Studies IV, installation studies and conceptual strategies: photographic works, *Oculus* and related sculptures, coral, palm and orange tree elements from the south Florida landscape. *The Rising Sea: Images and Constructions from South Florida and Other Selected Works*, Lake Worth Museum of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, FL, 1998.



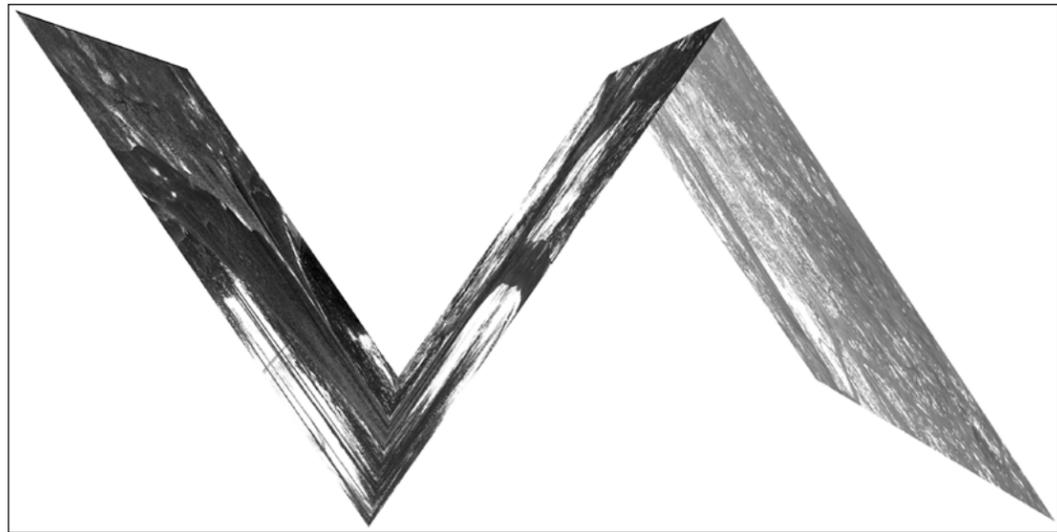
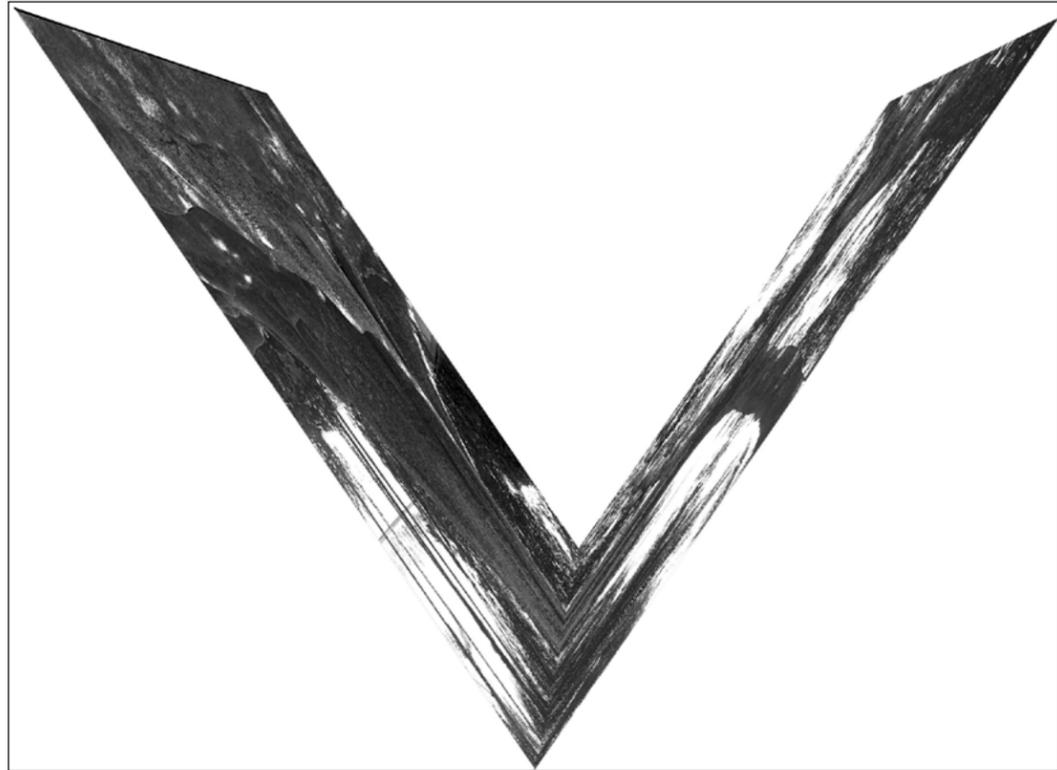


Fig. 100-101. Studies: Biscayne Giant, photographic image, spatial /installations configurations, 1999.

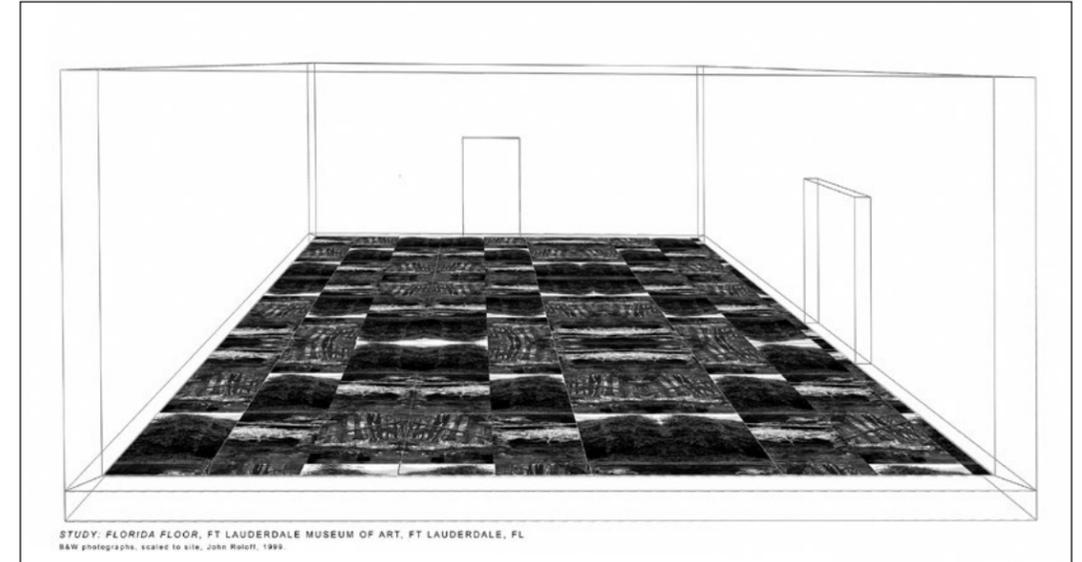


Fig. 102. Study: Florida Floor, size variable with site, Ft. Lauderdale Museum of Art, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, 1999.

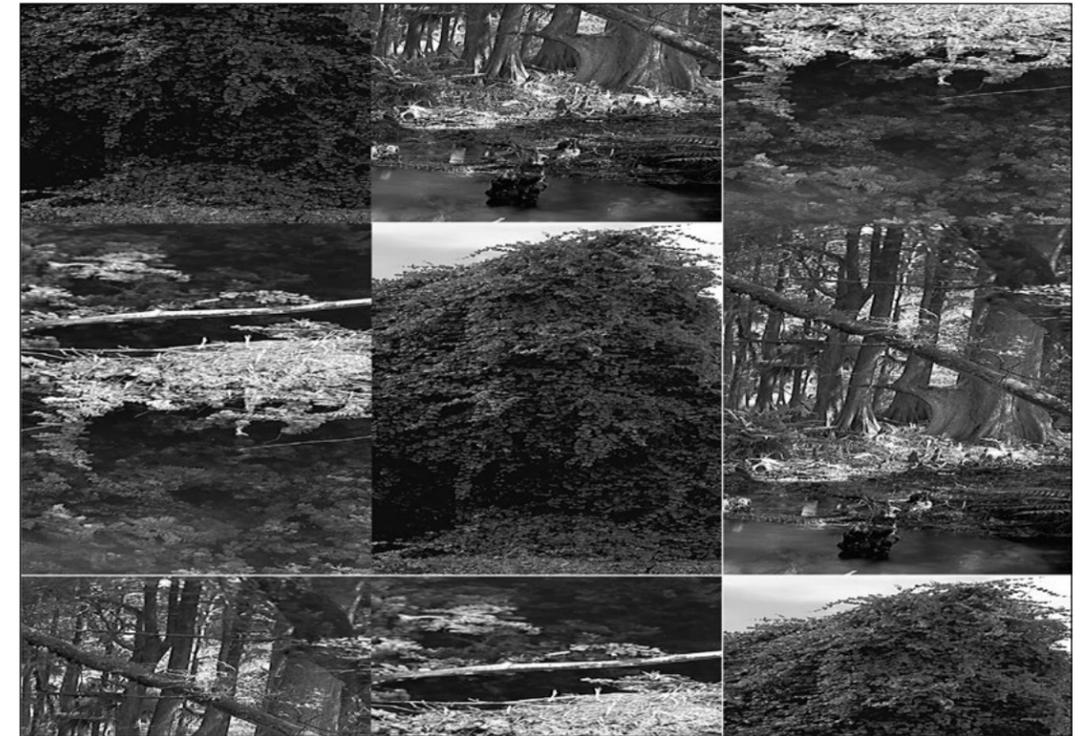


Fig. 103. Detail Study: Florida Floor, size variable with site, Ft. Lauderdale Museum of Art, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, 1999.

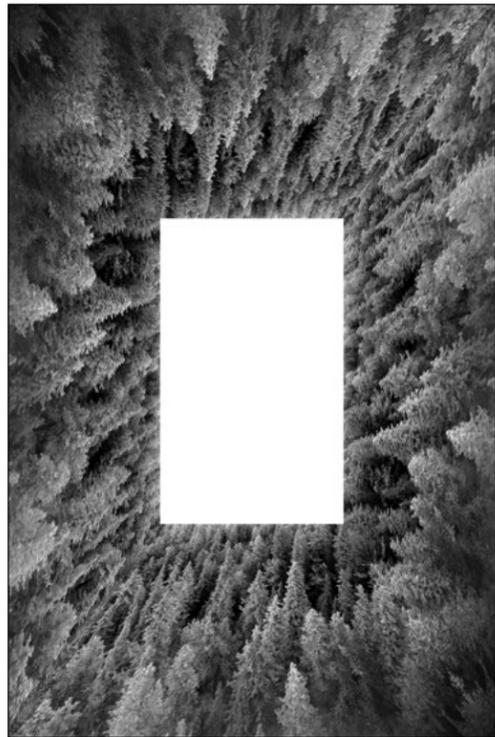


Fig. 104-105. Studies: Landscape Projections (for an Unknown Window) series, digitally processed images, size and materials variable, left, Canadian forest, right, Mono Lake, 2006.

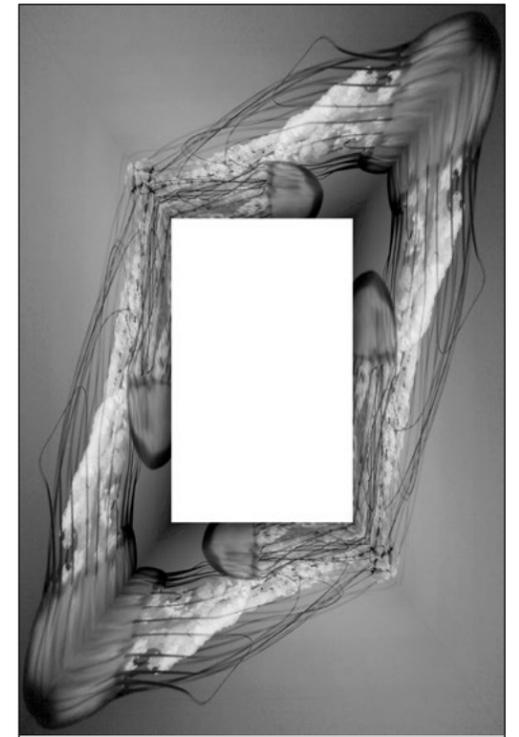
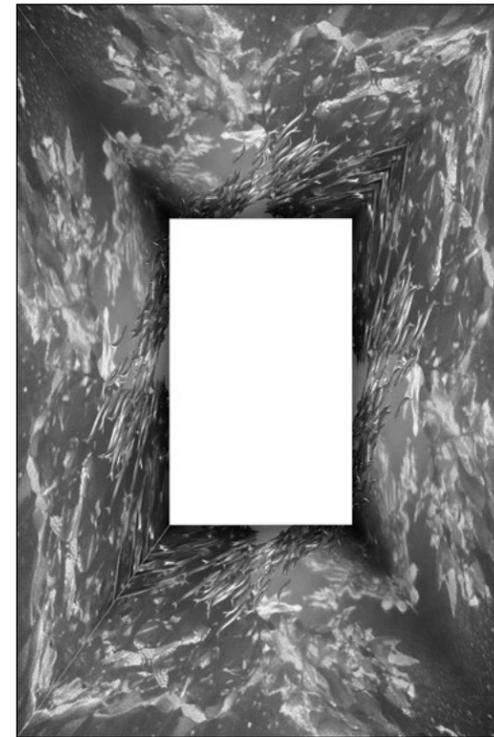


Fig. 106-107. Studies: Landscape Projections (for an Unknown Window) series, digitally processed images, size and materials variable, both images, Monterey aquarium, 2006.

Fig. 108. Left - *Image Map: Stratigraphic Columns III (San Andreas/East/West)*, (original columns 13 ft. h., Sonoma Art Museum, Santa Rosa, CA, 2006), double panel, inkjet print in proportion to map, shown as 6 ft. h., wall mounted panels.

Center - *Image Map: Stratigraphic Column I*, (original column 24 ft. h., 101 California St., San Francisco, CA, 2001), single panel inkjet print in proportion to map, shown as 8 ft. h., leaning panel.

Right - *Image Map: Stratigraphic Columns II*, (original columns 14 ft. h., University of CO, Boulder, CO, 2005), double panel inkjet print in proportion to map, shown as 10 ft. h., wall mounted panels.

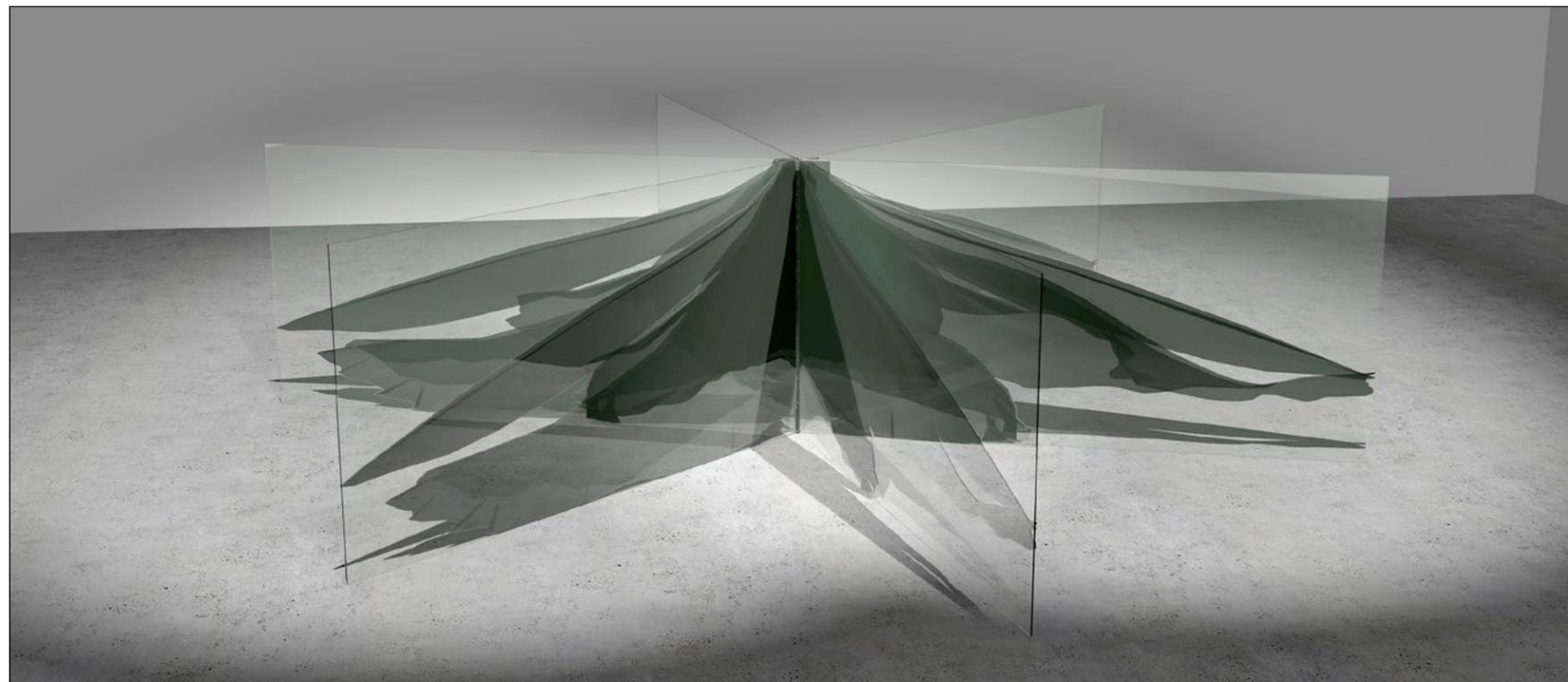


Fig 109. *Study: Orchid Sea Mount II*, under development, tempered glass, printed transparent laminate, steel, silicone, size variable, size as shown, each of 6 panels, 46 in x 92 in., 2018.

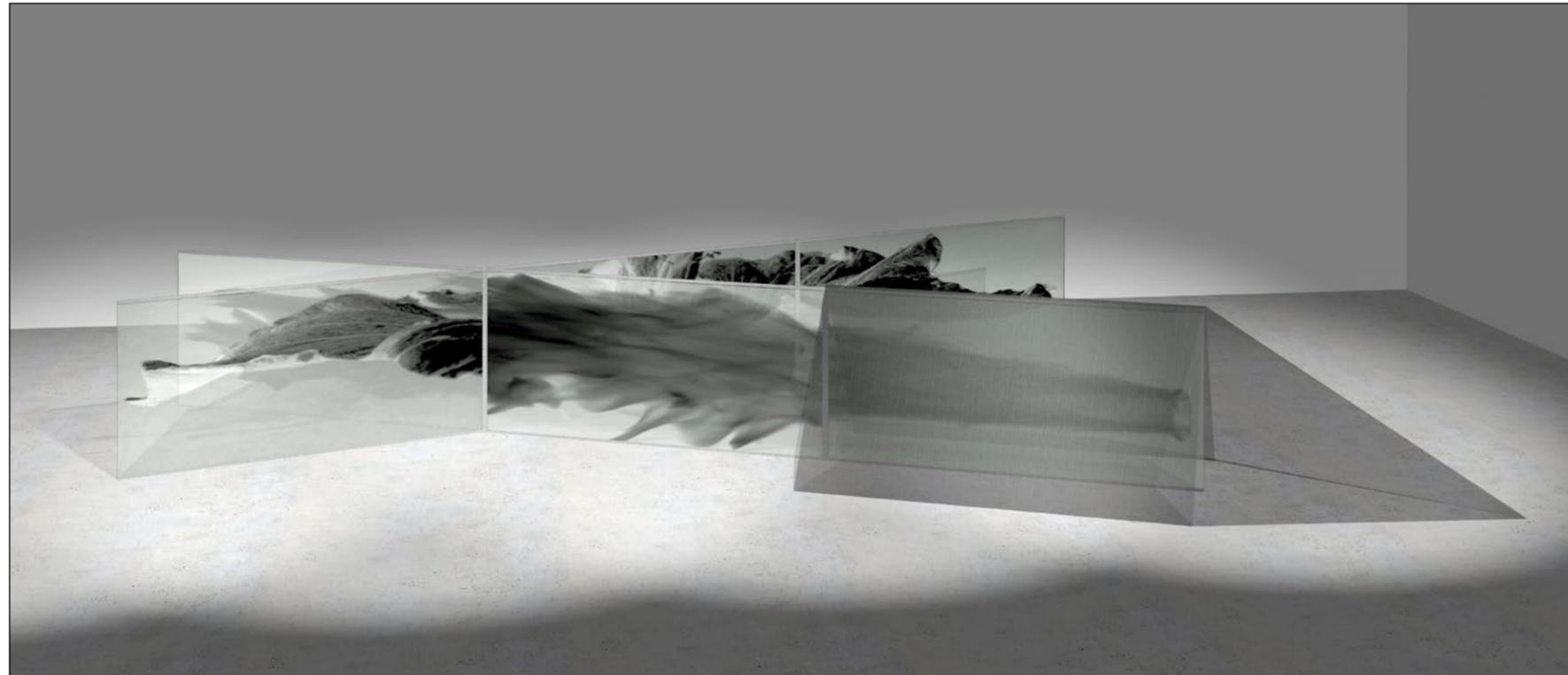


Fig. 110. Study: *Flame/Petal Transect*, under development, tempered glass, printed transparent laminate, steel, shade cloth, size variable - as shown: 46 in. x 28 ft., 2018.

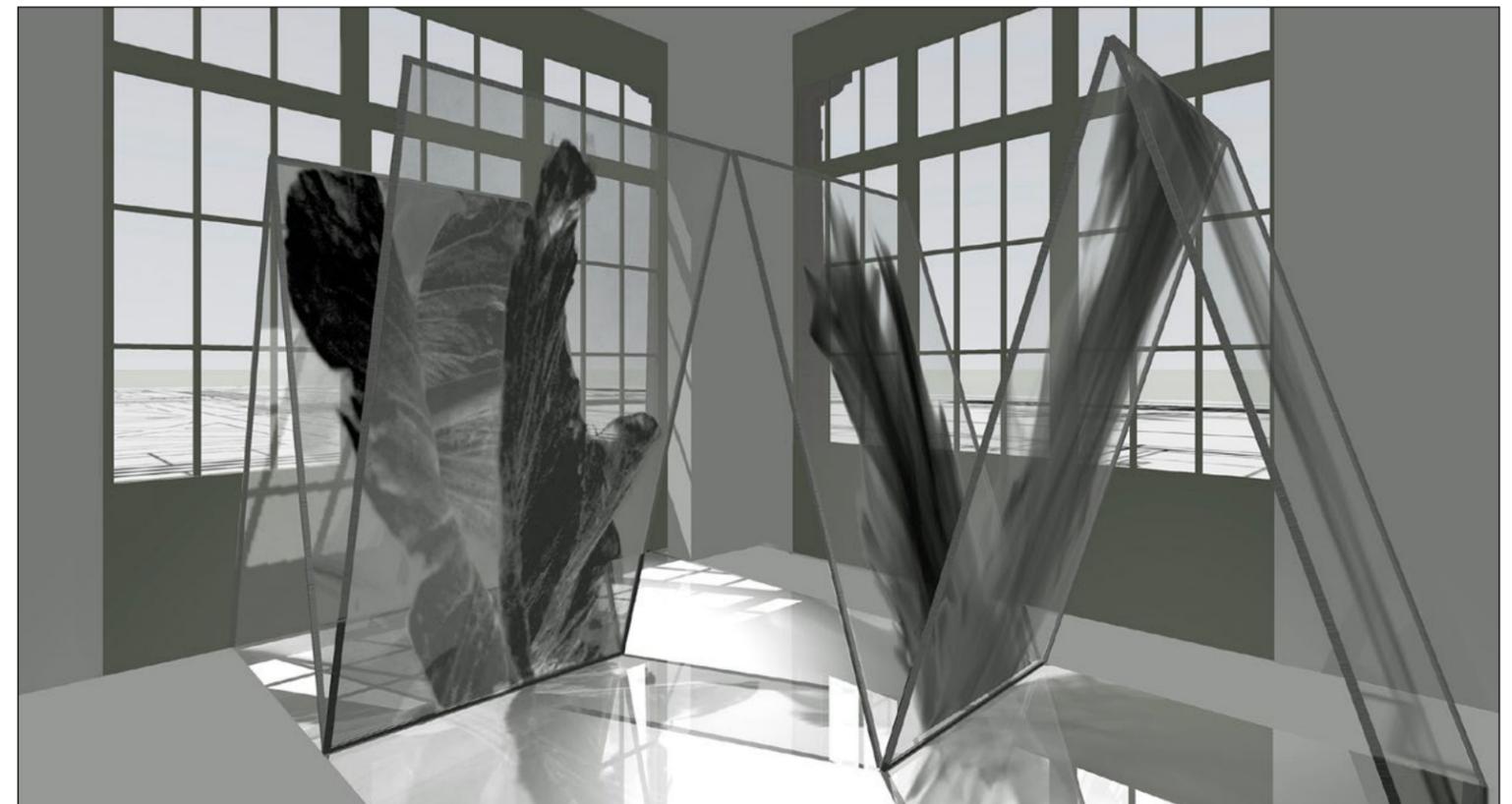


Fig. 111. Study: *Flame/Flower Folds I*, 8 ft.. h..., digital prints on film, steel, glass, aluminum, silicone. Concept for Art Kiosk, Redwood City, CA, 2019.

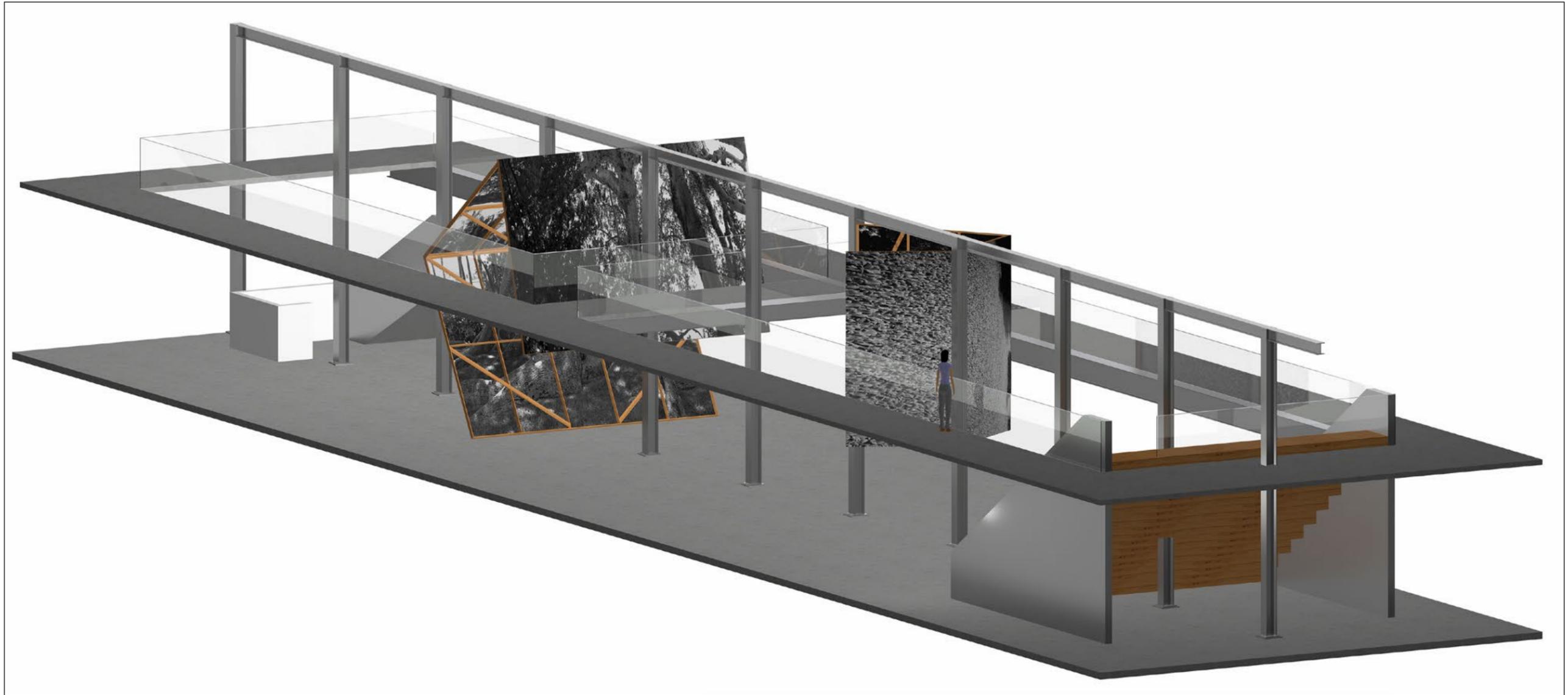


Fig. 112. Study: Gradient (Biscayne Giant)/Carbonate Falls (Marsh Lettuce), b&w photo, wood, cable, hardware, 1275 Minnesota St., San Francisco, CA



Fig. 113. Study: Gradient (Biscayne Giant)/Carbonate Falls (Marsh Lettuce), mezzanine view, b&w photo, wood, cable, hardware, 1275 Minnesota St., San Francisco, CA

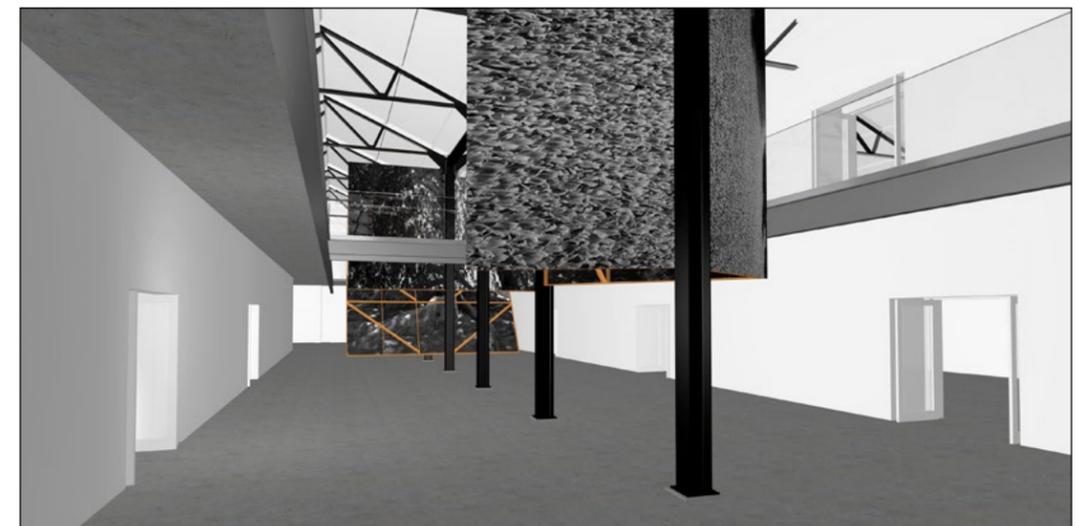


Fig. 114. Study: Gradient (Biscayne Giant)/Carbonate Falls (Marsh Lettuce), ground floor view, b&w photo, wood, cable, hardware, 1275 Minnesota St., San Francisco, CA



Fig. 115. Study: *Eighty Meter Sea Level/Sydney*, detail, composite video still from drone footage of terrain and harbor, Sydney, Australia, 2016.

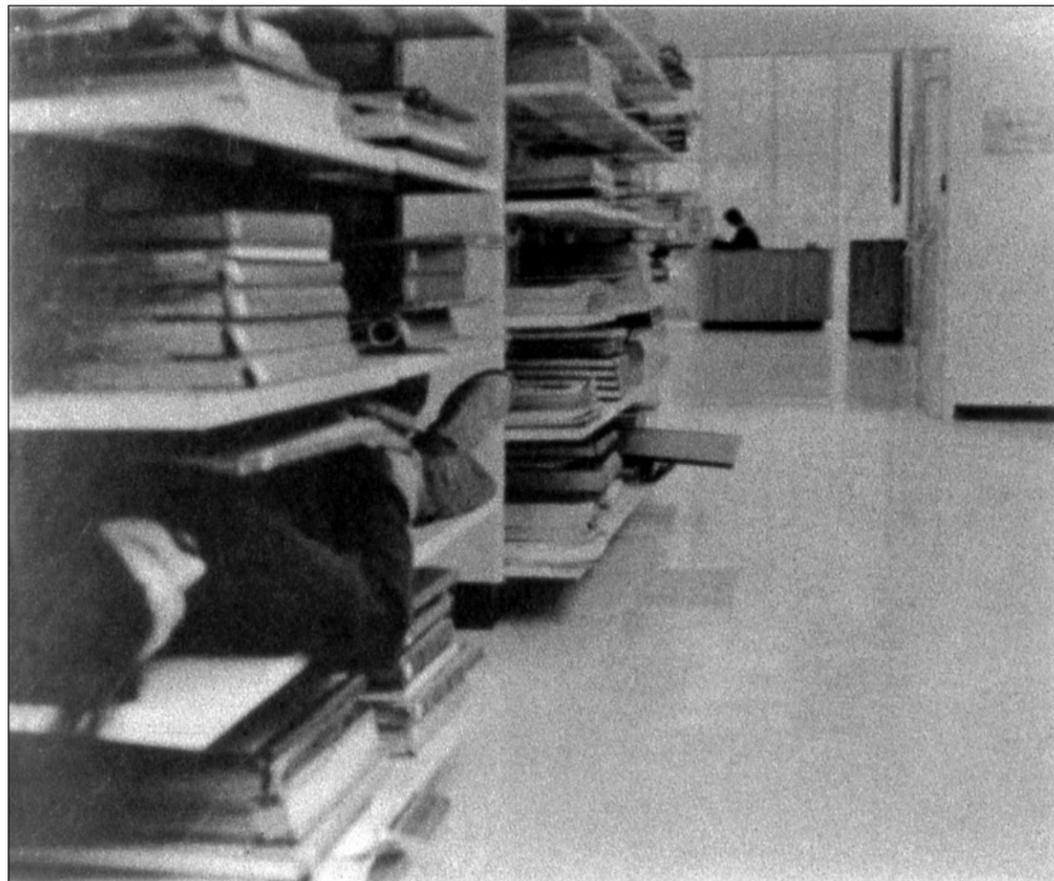


Fig. 116. *Shelf Portrait*, undergraduate project, UC Davis, Davis, CA, photographer, Grant Thorpe, circa 1969.

## PROPAGATIONS/ANTECEDENTS

*Propagations* showcases examples of concepts and projects that extend the photographic work into alternate, trans-photographic media, technologies and visualization strategies. *Antecedents*: a selection of realized projects concurrent with or conceptually resonate to many of the photographic installations.

Working with geographic, geologic and conceptual sites, mapping is an important visualization and site research instrument operating on several layers. Photographic images of a site under study, sighted and framed to reveal pictorial, structural, contextual and conceptual content, are forms of mapping. In addition to specific images or formal relationships, the site's environment, climate, habitat, geography, geologic history and ecosystem may be embedded if not visually available in an individual or series of images. Bathymetric mapping is used by scientists to visualize underwater terrains, typically the bottom of lakes and oceans. *Ocean Scan/Eastern Atlantic/Canary Islands* >> *Spain/Broadway Canyon/NYC*, 1998-99, are two projects that utilize bathymetric scanning technology, one for a stratigraphic visualization of an ocean surface journey extending to the sea floor, the other exploring Anthropocene/geologic analogs of architecture, the urban environment and potential sea-level rise.

The *San Francisco Wharf Complex*, 2008-present, which considers the built elements of the San Francisco wharf as a geologic formation, employs a range of visualization technologies for both research and project development. Three studies for this project: *Foraminifera/San Francisco Wharf Transit::Cretaceous/Anthropocene*, *Exploratorium Conceptual Study: Pier 15/17 - SF Bay Geo-hydrologic Sections/Fence Diagram* and *San Francisco Wharf Complex / American Industrial Center Carbonate Group*, adapt engineering, scientific and historical data into experiential and conceptual interpretations of the *Wharf Complex*.

The proposal, *Drone/Video/Lidar/Anthropocene Bathymetric Mapping Project: Scan Pattern Study/Triassic Hawksberry/Ashfield Strata, Depositional Flow Structure/Sydney College of Art Site*, 2016, which examines bathymetric mapping and lidar scanning systems for site research and project development, is one of several adaptations of the 1998-99, Canary Island and New York City concepts. A similar use of light to scan and map the environment to formulate perceptual and ontological questions using analog devices, such as: searchlights, Fresnel lenses, gobos and projectors, in a series of works developed for Coral Gables, FL, or similar, tropical, urban environments, are exemplified by: *Deep Horizon..*, *Land/Sea Metalogue..* and *Deep Water Crossing*, 2019. *Venice Substructure Complex/Phase I & II*, 2016-21, has parallels to the *San Francisco Wharf Complex* examination of sub-surface structures as part of the geologic history and ecology of its terrain. For *Phase II* of the project, flags with digitally printed imagery, reveal structural and material relationships of the Venetian subsurface and the larger ecology of northern Italy.

Numerous environmental projects are antecedents and covalent investigations of similar themes of the photographic works, such as: global metabolism, site, geologic and natural history and systemic relationships of land, sea and architecture. In these works as in many of the photo works, research plays an important generative roll. The interior of *Lahontan Group III/Vanishing Ship (Greenhouse for Lake Lahontan)*, 1987, contains water and sediment from Pyramid Lake, NV, the largest remaining remnant of the now vanished, much larger, Pleistocene, Lake Lahontan. *Metabolism and Mortality/O<sub>2</sub>*, 1992, is arranged along the projected perimeter of a large, dead, beech tree, offering energy representations from two different geologic times. *Metafossil (Pinus: ponderosa, radiata, balfouriana)*, 1992, suggests a sculptural map and migration of indigenous, Holocene/Anthropocene pine species. *Holocene Passage*, 2002, uses local Italian moss and an architectural intervention to create a climatic passage through the installation space, echoing themes of the *Landscape Projections (For an Unknown Window)* series. The geology flag projects, such as: *Protogaea Civica (Franciscan Formation)*, 2005, use location and geologic mapping symbols to demarcate the terrain beneath the installations. *Rapson Group/Geology Text Panels* and *Site Index* are two heavily site-researched projects on the same site, that investigate the stratigraphic, biologic, paleo-geographic and material elements of the project's terrain and architecture. Geologic maps, gps and aeromagnetic surveys played critical rolls in the development of these works.

At the beginning, near middle and end of this volume are elements of *Reef Facies*, an ongoing series of photographs examining global carbonate systems as 'reef facies' through geologic, geochemical and anthropocentric lenses. The ecologies and transformations of oceanic, terrestrial and atmospheric carbonates as contemporary living reefs, tufa formations, limestone, marl and marble facies, Anthropocene carbonates and related forms suggests a global meta-reef composed of interrelated reef facies.



Fig. 117. Ocean Scan/Eastern Atlantic/Canary Islands >> Broadway Canyon Scan/NYC // Environmental/Urban /Sea/Land / Multi-beam Sonar Scan Concepts, 24 in. x 48 in., inkjet on paper, notebook sketches 1998-99, photo collage, 2016. Terrain/urban images courtesy: Google Earth, Data SIO, NOAA, US NAVY, NGA, GEBCO, Image Landsat.

*Ocean Scan/Eastern Atlantic/Canary Islands >> Spain/Broadway Canyon/NYC.*

*Ocean Scan/Eastern Atlantic/Canary Islands >> Spain* was specifically developed for a project *Ocean Scan 1998*, a proposed project for a sailing ship on the open sea between the Canary Islands and Spain. Each 24 hr. segment of the journey the ocean floor is scanned using towed, multi-beam, side-scanning sonar, producing a visual profile of the bottom of the sea the ship is passing over. This profile is then printed by and on-board computer and printer onto mylar or Tyvek cloth and becomes the flag flying from the main mast on the following day. The flags accumulate so the entire night passage is displayed. After the journey, the flags are shown on land as an artwork.

*Broadway Canyon/NYC* examines the Anthropocene ‘canyon’ of Broadway, NYC, NY, as a geomorphological construct of human agency using a LIDAR array (bathymetric side-scanning sonar analog) towed behind a dirigible “sky ship,” similar to contemporary ROV ocean technology/systems. Conceived as an conceptual

component of the solo exhibition, *Morphology of Change*, featuring the installation, *Holocene Terrace*, Lance Fung Gallery, NYC, NY. The canyon-like structure of Broadway, where the gallery is located, is considered a ‘type formation,’ one of many canyons comprising major elements of the architectural geomorphology of the city. The inset of the sketch sheet (lower right) describes a range of site-scan concepts geologically contextualizing *Holocene Terrace* within the ‘formation’ of New York City by the use of oceanographic and geologic imaging systems.

The term “anthroturbation,” developed in conversation with the USGS geophysicist, Paul Spudich, is used to describe the built environment as human disturbance of the landscape in geologic terms. The perception of New York City as a geologic formation was formally initiated in 1998 with the photographic work *Franciscan/Manhattan Formation* in the solo exhibition, *Dialogues with Nature*, at the Lance Fung Gallery, NYC.

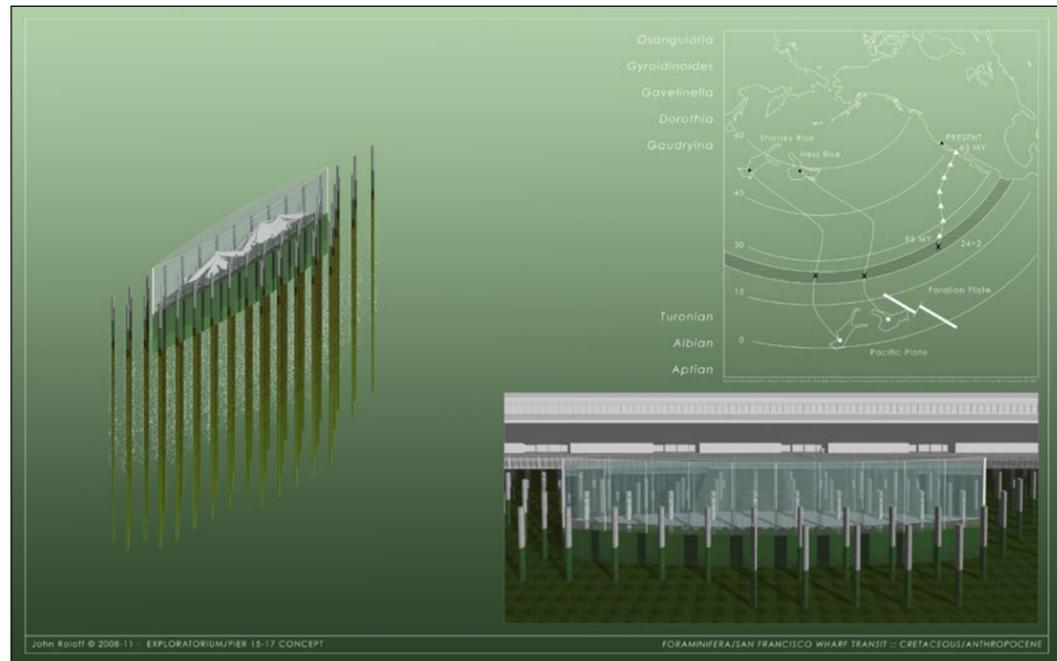


Fig. 118. Foraminifera/San Francisco Wharf Transit::Cretaceous/Anthropocene, 40 in. x 64 in., inkjet on paper, 2008-11. Conceptual study of the mid-Pacific, Cretaceous carbonate deposit across 90 million years to the current Santa Cruz Mountains, CA. Part of the geologic analysis of the Exploratorium's cement pilings supporting Pier 15-17. One of numerous studies, San Francisco Wharf Complex.

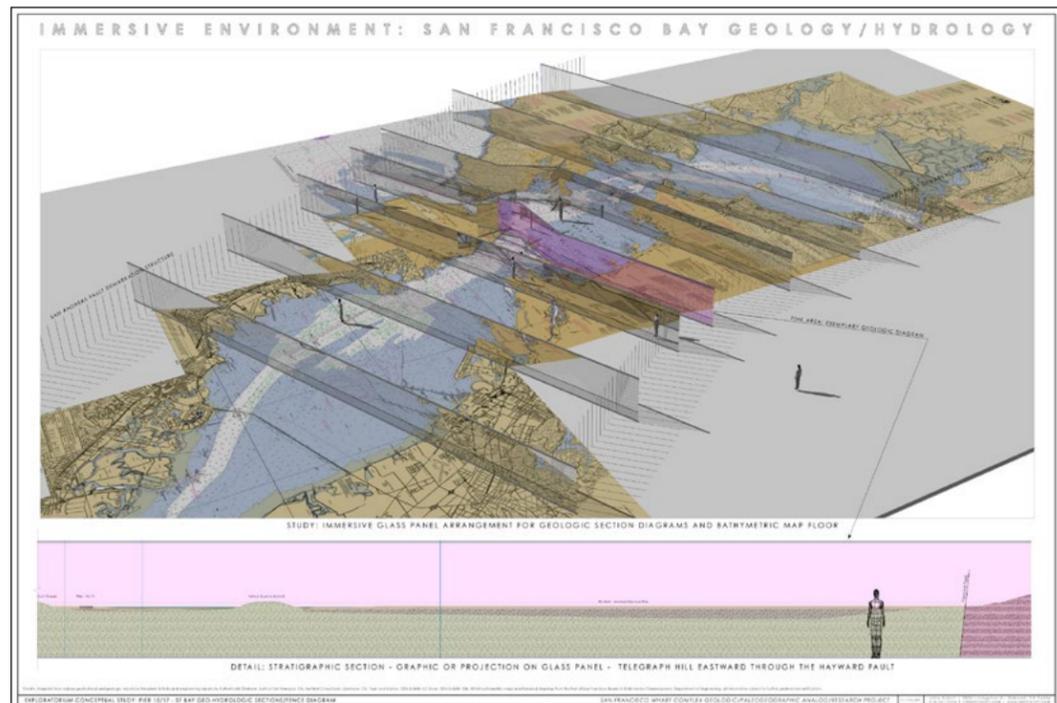


Fig. 119. Exploratorium Conceptual Study: Pier 15/17 - SF Bay Geo-hydrologic Sections/Fence Diagram, 24 in. x 36 in., inkjet on paper, 2009. One of numerous studies, San Francisco Wharf Complex.

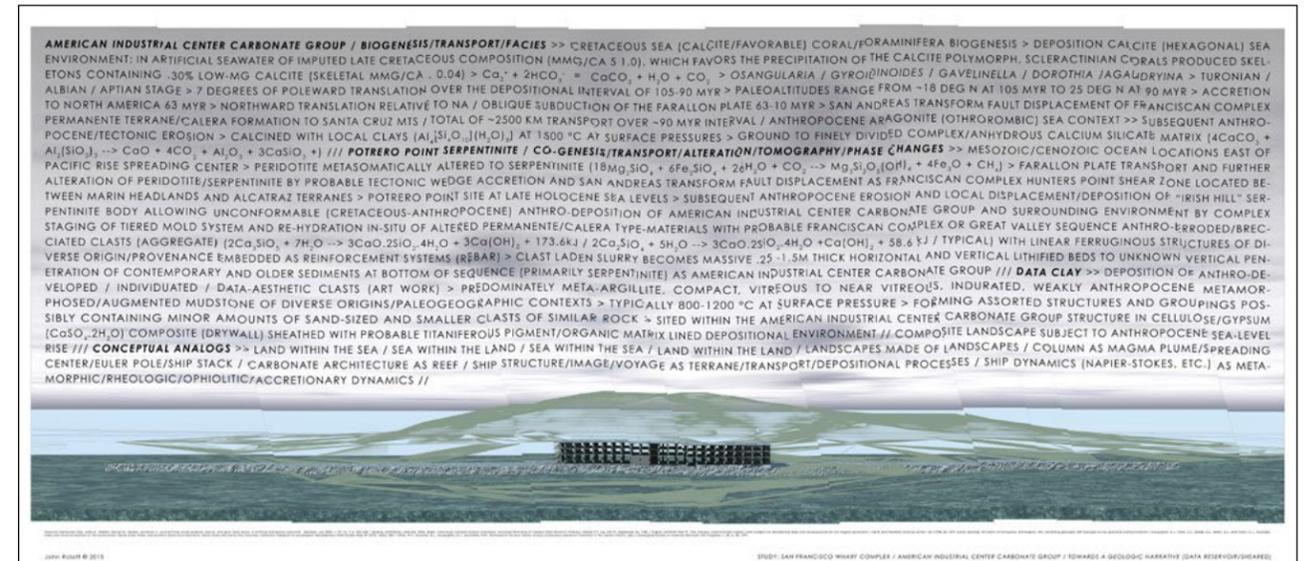


Fig. 120. Study: San Francisco Wharf Complex / American Industrial Center Carbonate Group / Towards a Geologic Narrative (Data Reservoir/Sheared), 40 in. x 96 in., digital print on paper of digitally sheared text and image, 2015.

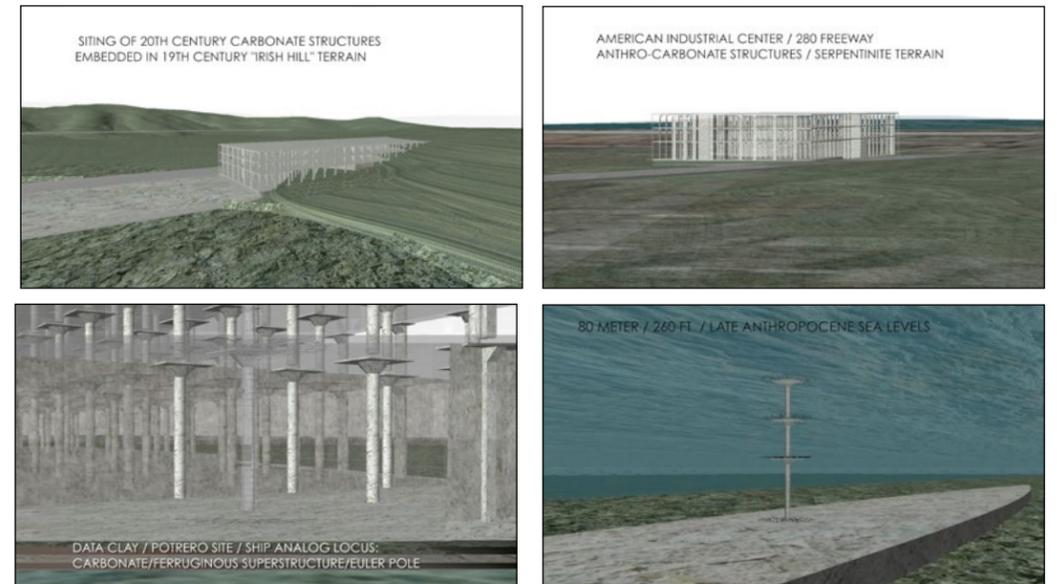


Fig. 121 A-D. San Francisco Wharf Complex/American Industrial Center Carbonate Group, video stills, 2015

San Francisco Wharf Complex/American Industrial Center Carbonate Group

Data Clay: Digital Strategies for Parsing the Earth, Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco, CA, 2015

San Francisco Wharf Complex/American Industrial Center Carbonate Group, is comprised of two components, a video and a text/image panel (both shown above), conceived for "Data Clay" as part of the San Francisco Wharf Complex, 2008-present. The exhibition project is a geol-spatio-temporal and material study of the reinforced concrete, American Industrial Center, the exhibition's physical space near the San Francisco waterfront. This study suggests a geologic/performative envelope for the data-driven materiality of the exhibition. Exploring an uber-set of material origin and transformation of the museum's site and architecture, San Francisco Wharf Complex/American Industrial Center Carbonate Group suggests an isomeric context of site's materiality and its constituents. A central column of the exhibition space (reinforced concrete as the pivot point of the video), phantom ships (as the geologic/material transport mechanisms of the site, architecture and works of the exhibition) and ortho/topographic data of the site and structure (a story of denudation and fabrication) as interwoven protagonists.



Fig. 122. Drone/Video/Lidar / Anthropocene Bathymetric Mapping Project: Scan Pattern Study / Triassic Hawkesbury/Ashfield Strata, Depositional Flow Structure / Sydney College of Art Site, inkjet on paper, 24 in., x 48 in., 2016. Image courtesy of Google Earth.

### Land/Sea/Hawkesbury Facies

*Future Stratigraphies*, Sydney College Of The Arts, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, 2016

*Drone/video/lidar/Anthropocene Bathymetric Mapping Project: Scan Pattern Study/Triassic Hawkesbury/Ashfield Strata Depositional Flow Structures..*, is a study for: *Land/Sea/Hawkesbury Facies*, 2016. This series is derived from: *Ocean Scan/Eastern Atlantic/Canary Islands >> Broadway Canyon Scan/NYC // Environmental/Urban /Sea/Land / Multi-beam Sonar Scan Concepts*, 1998, of environmental and urban bathymetric studies using aerial, multi-beam sonar to study the built environment in geologic/oceanographic terms. For the Sydney project, Ron Boyd, an Australian marine geologist, contributed vectors for the fluvial and deltaic systems depositing the Hawkesbury sandstone and Ashfield shale during the Triassic Period, the main stratigraphic units of the Sydney area. The paleo-dynamics of the ancient rivers/deltas were plotted as directional vectors for the drone scan patterns to map the SCA site. This pattern creates a link between the facies and paleo-geography of the Mesozoic foundations of the landscape and the fa-

cies geography of the site's Anthropocene strata as well as potential global, Anthropocene sea level rise. *Land/Sea/Hawkesbury Facies* is planned as a project with two phases. *Phase I*: drone-based, preliminary and articulated way-point video scans of selected areas delineated by vectors describing the flow of the two Triassic river systems that deposited the main stratigraphic units beneath Sydney. *Phase II*: To utilize the information from *Phase I* for detailed scanning and computer generated, simulated, bathymetric mapping of the site using more expensive, scientific LIDAR drone systems. LIDAR uses lasers for aerial mapping in a similar way to multi-beam sonar sound waves produced by transducers, which are effective only in aqueous/bathymetric environments. The scans are optimized for 80 meters above sea level (usgs estimate of full global glacial melt sea rise).

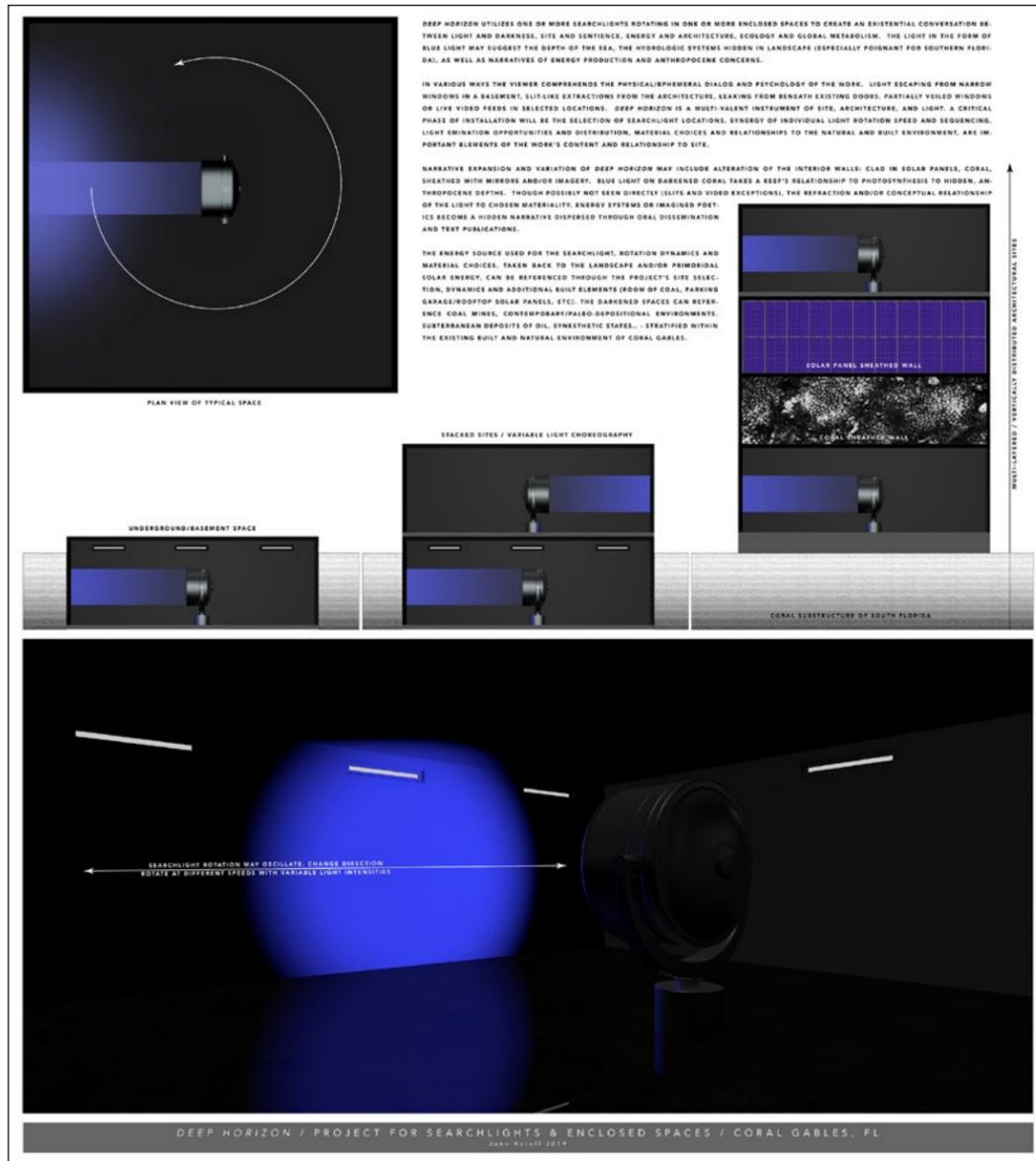


Fig. 123. Deep Horizon / Project for Searchlights and Enclosed Spaces, 36 in. x 36 in., inkjet on paper. One of numerous conceptual studies for Coral Gables, FL or coral/urban environment, 2019.

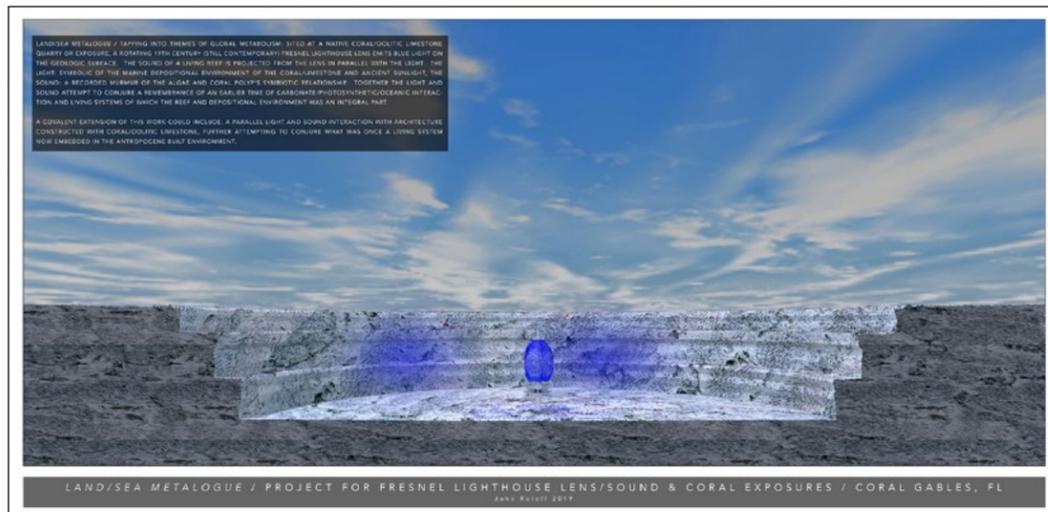


Fig. 124. Land/Sea Metologue / Project for Fresnel Lighthouse Lens/Sound & Coral Exposures, detail, full image, 36 in. x 36 in., inkjet on paper. One of numerous conceptual studies for Coral Gables, FL or coral/tropical environments, 2019.



Fig. 125-126. Blue Projection Window Gel Studies: Deep Water Crossing and Study: Deep Water Crossing, 48 in. x 29 in. and 36 in. x 36 in., inkjet on paper. One of numerous conceptual studies for Coral Gables, FL or sea coast, urban environments, 2019.

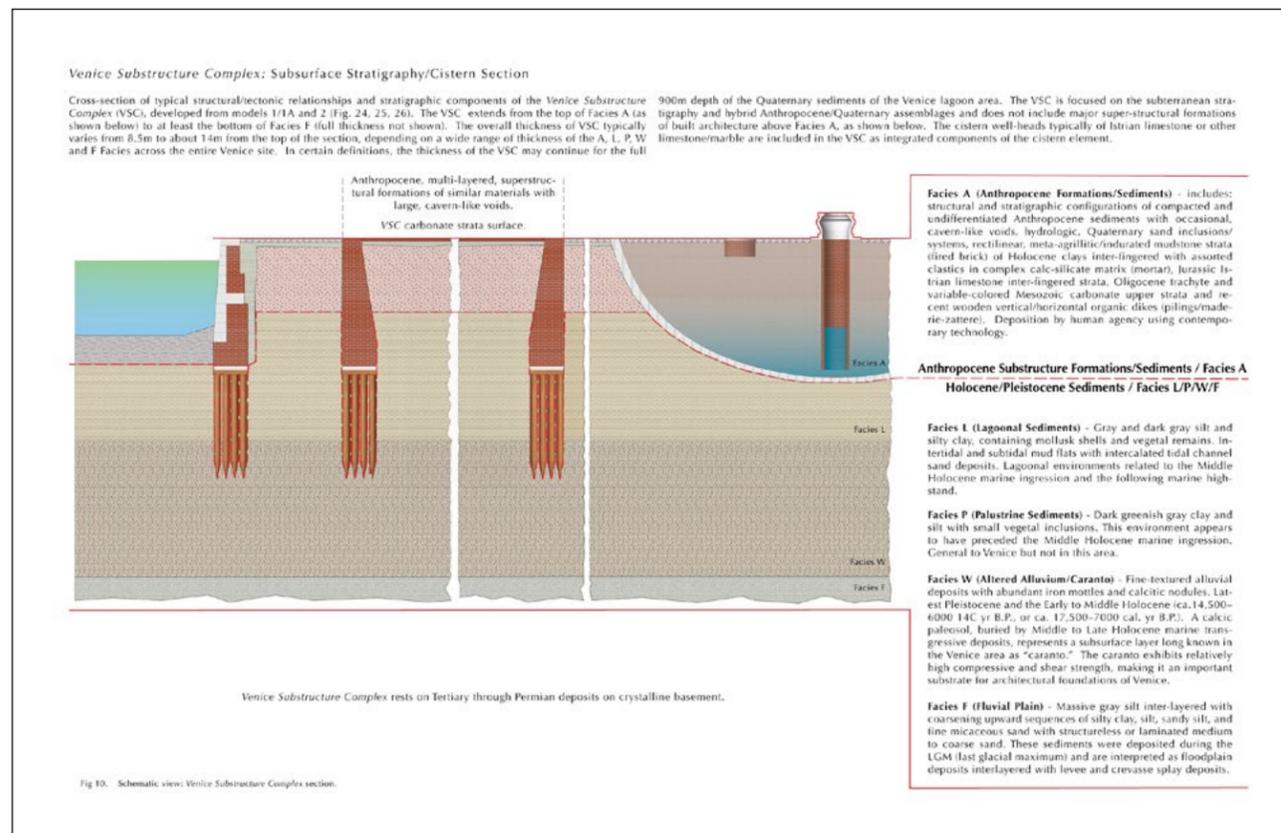


Fig. 127. Venice Substructure Complex: Subsurface Stratigraphy/Cistern Section, pg. 10 of the research document, Venice Substructure Complex (Phase I), 2016.

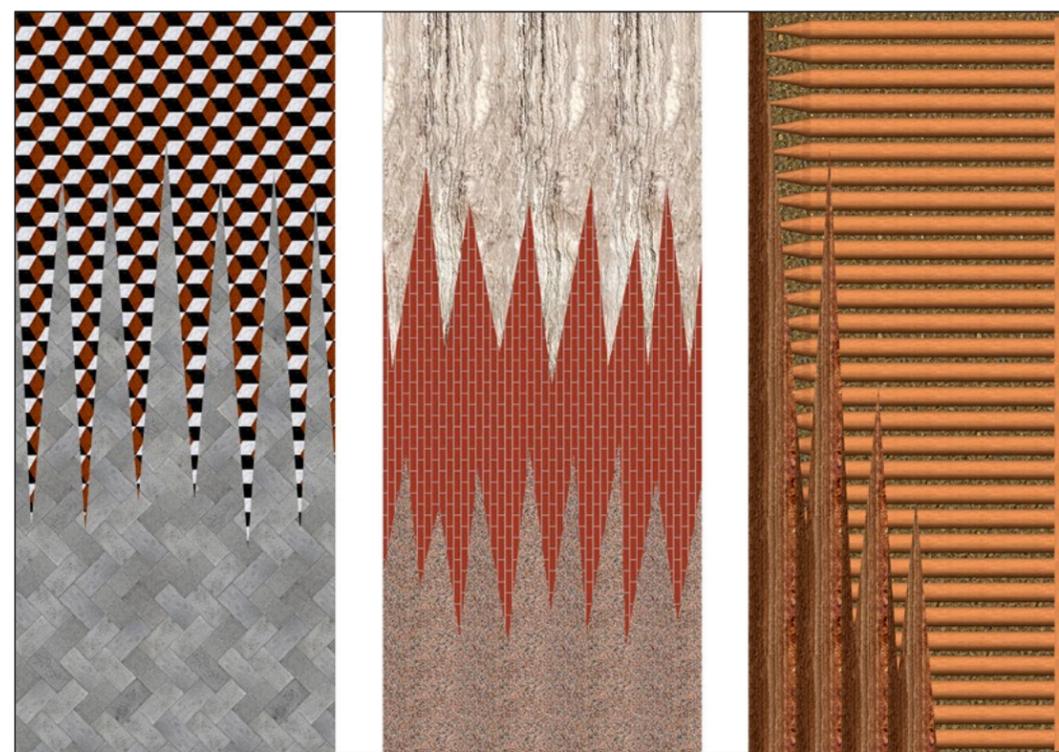


Fig. 128. Venice Substructure Complex, flag studies, 42 in. x 96 in., inkjet on polyester. Flag symbolism, left to right: Carbonate(Marble) Flooring/Trachyte Paver Facies, Istrian Limestone/Indurated Mudstone (Brick)/Cistern Sand Facies and Organic Tree Trunk/Altered Alluvium/Caranto Sediment Facies.



Fig. 129. Venice Substructure Complex/Phase II, installation study, three flags, 42 in. x 96 in., ea., inkjet on polyester. Interior installation: stacks/mounds of wood, marble, trachyte, Venice lagoon sediment, Istrian limestone, sand and brick, counter-balance the flag poles, Archivio Emily Harvey, Venice, Italy.

### Venice Substructure Complex/Phase II

Archivio Emily Harvey, Venice, Italy, planned for 2022

Venice Substructure Complex/Phase II is a sculptural installation of symbolic flags, Venetian natural and architectural materials and documents derived from Venice Substructure Complex/Phase I, a research project completed during an Emily Harvey Foundation residency in 2016. Venice Substructure Complex/Phase I & II refer to a unique, largely hidden, system of historical wooden pilings installed as the primary structural foundation of the city of Venice, an invisible forest. The origin and scope of this assemblage, is the contemporary landscape of Venice extended in geographic, geologic, climatic and cultural terms over an area of what is now northwestern Italy, Croatia and Slovenia.



Fig. 130. *Vanishing Ship (Greenhouse for Lake Lahontan)*, front installation view, 12 ft. h., glass, steel, paint, water and sediment from Pyramid Lake, NV. Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, 1987.



Fig. 131. *Vanishing Ship (Greenhouse for Lake Lahontan)*, front installation view, 12 ft. h., glass, steel, paint, water and sediment from Pyramid Lake, NV. Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, 1987.

### *Metabolism and Mortality / O<sub>2</sub>*

Performance furnace/kiln tableau - Tyler School of Art, Elkins Park, PA, 1992

Left: *Greenhouse*, center: *Furnace*, and right: truncated, dead beech tree.

Sited along the circumference of what was the drip-line of a large, now dead, beech tree on the Tyler Campus are the project's two principal elements: *Furnace* and *Greenhouse*. These two instruments symbolically represent the beech tree's past, photosynthetic, life and current death systems on a macro-molecular level. *Furnace* and *Greenhouse* were envisioned as ions of an oxygen molecule (O<sub>2</sub>) separated by the primal and arboreal forces of entropy and dissolution but are still united and activated by similar thermal processes. The *Furnace* by ignition of fossil fuels developed by the photosynthesis of sunlight in ancient forests and their subsequent geologic distillation. The *Greenhouse* by the collection and entrainment of contemporary solar energy. The solar heat within the *Greenhouse* is measured differentially from the outside atmosphere by its internal thermometers (a span of as much as 50 F. between the inner and outer environments has been noted).



Fig. 132. *Metafossil (Pinus: ponderosa, radiata, balfouriana)*, 7 ft., 10 ft. and 12 ft. l., steel, refractory cement, species specific pine boughs and needles, 1992. Image: Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA. Collection of de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA.

*Metafossil (Pinus: ponderosa, radiata, balfouriana)\**

*Metafossil (Pinus: ponderosa, radiata, balfouriana)*, 1992, has three principal sculptural elements, the structure of each unit was developed by the layering of a single species of needle-laden pine branches in wet refractory cement over a steel armature. The organic needles will decay over time to create a fossil-like representation of each variety in the form of a descending ship.

The pine needles of each species were collected from their contemporary native habitat in the mountains of coastal and central California. The form of the descending ship refers to the process of geologic deposition of sedimentary/natural material and the transience of 'indigenous' bio-cultures across the landscape as a result of climactic change.

\*The title was shortened from *Metafossil (Metabolism and Mortality) Pinus: ponderosa, radiata, balfouriana*, in about 1996.

*Holocene Passage*

*Intervening the Space: Gordon Matta-Clark/John Roloff*, installation by John Roloff, Archivio Emily Harvey, "NEXT," 2002 Venice Architectural Biennale, Venice, Italy.

Aligned with a view of the Rialto bridge, the installation is an enclosed "passage" between two open windows of the gallery space. It is a transparent, glass and wood-framed structure lined with a field of moss collected from the forests of Northern Italy. The properties of the moss may be altered by daily climate change and other natural phenomena through the open windows at either end -- on dry days the moss is a dormant grayish color, on moist days, to the extent that weather can reach within the structure, a vibrant green. Additionally, other forms of nature such as birds and insects may interact within the enclosed space. *Holocene Passage*, forms a channel of nature through the gallery space, much like the Venetian canals and their sinuous interaction with the architecture of the city.

*Holocene Passage* investigates two resonate themes, one that relates architecture and human activity to larger natural systems and geologic time, the second, in a similar way to the Land Kilns and other environmental works, where forces of nature are made visible in a confined environment and a dialog ensues between nature, the structure and its contents. Conceptually, the moss is seen as a bridge in time between the present and an ancient geologic past. Like the moss contained in *Holocene Terrace*, 1999, Lance Fung Gallery, New York, NY, 1998, it is symbolic of the primal conditions of sedimentary deposition, referencing the origin of many geologic materials that later became the brick and stone used for construction of the city's architecture. In this context, the city is seen as a geologic formation, formed by parallel human activities: quarrying as erosion, transport as flow and construction as sedimentation. Conceptually as well as physically, *Holocene Passage* is intended to be a confluence of time, site, metaphor and process.



Fig. 133. *Holocene Passage*, wood, glass, sheet rock, moss, open windows, Archivio Emily Harvey, Venice, Italy, "NEXT," Architectural Biennale, 2002.

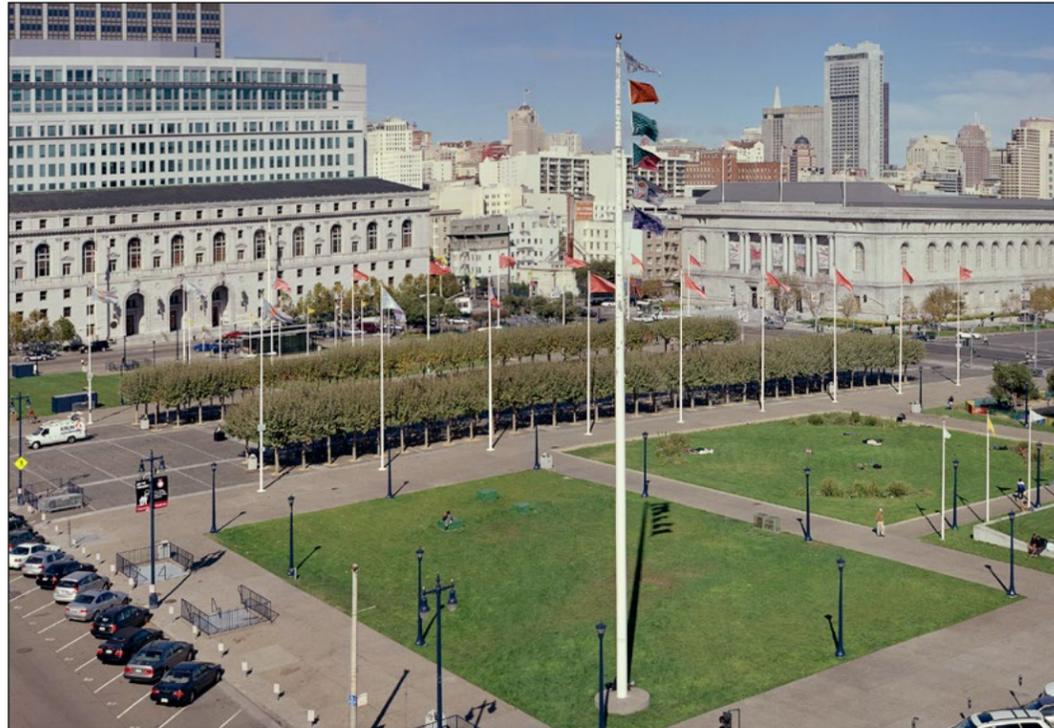


Fig. 134. *Protogaea Civica II (Franciscan Formation/San Francisco, CA)*, 18 flags, sizes variable, *High Five* exhibition, Civic Center Plaza, San Francisco, CA

### *Protogaea Civica II (Franciscan Formation/San Francisco, CA)*

The work, *Protogaea Civica II (Franciscan Formation/San Francisco, CA)*, is the second and largest of three variations of the *Geology Flags Project*, a system of symbolic demarcation of site-specific geologic structures and materials using flags. This version uses 19 flag poles at the San Francisco Civic Center Plaza as part of the 2005 exhibition, *High Five*, presented in conjunction with the opening of the new de Young Art Museum in Golden Gate Park, sponsored by the International Center for the Arts at San Francisco State University, in association with the San Francisco Arts Commission, the San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum, and the de Young Museum.

The flags used in *Protogaea Civica II (Franciscan Formation/San Francisco, CA)*, emblematically identify the Civic Center's site in relationship to the Franciscan Formation/Complex, the bedrock beneath the larger Bay Area, east of the San Andreas Fault. The Civic Center, in geologic terms, rests unconformably (a time gap in deposition) on part of the Franciscan Formation called the Alcatraz Terrane, near its western edge. The Alcatraz Terrane is a large block of primarily 135 million year old meta-greywacke, a sub-greenschist-grade metamorphic marine sandstone, accreted by the process of plate tectonics onto the coast of Central California forming part of what is now known as the Coast Ranges. This terrane is bordered and underthrust to the west of the plaza by the Hunters Point Shear (or *Mélange*) Zone, a shale matrix with suspended blocks of other Franciscan rocks<sup>1</sup>. The Alcatraz Terrane's sandstone and Hunters Point *Mélange* are represented by the flags on the 18 central poles of the Civic Center Plaza. The large pole at the corner of Polk and Grove Streets has a series of Index flags representing materials of the larger Franciscan Formation including architectural copper (the façade of the deYoung Museum), contextualized within this group as a Holocene/Anthropocene Era constituent.

1. Wakabayashi, J., 1992, *Nappes, Tectonics of Oblique Plate Convergence and Metamorphic Evolution related to 140 Million Years of Continuous Subduction, Franciscan Complex*, California Journal of Geology, v. 100, p. 19-40., and in e-mail and personal conversation with the author.



Fig. 135. *Rapson Group/Geology Text Panels - Copper*, geologic provenance text etched in-situ on copper panel, Foreground: *Site Index*, anorthositic gabbro slabs (detail) with GPS coordinates of origin quarry, Rapson Hall, College of Design, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, 2013.

### *Rapson Group/Geology Text Panels & Site Index*

West Garden, Rapson Hall, College of Design, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, 2001-13

*Rapson Group/Geology Text Panels* and *Site Index* are two complex, multi-phased, public art projects based on geologic and biologic concepts and research, for the College of Design at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN (UMN). The projects are based upon geologic and biologic research of the site responding to both the original building designed by Ralph Rapson, after whom the College of Design facility is named and a new annex designed by the architect, Steven Holl. *Site Index*, 2004, was developed in collaboration with Rebecca Krinke, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture at UMN as a geologic and biologic response to the Rapson Hall site, and forms a context for *Rapson Group/Geology Text Panels*, developed by John Roloff in consultation with the geologist, Carrie Jennings, MN Geologic Survey.

*Rapson Group/Geology Text Panels*, installed 2013, describes geologic and geographic information about the natural origin of three of the four primary materials used in the construction of the new and older sections of the Rapson Hall structure: copper, concrete and Profilit glass channels. The descriptive text is etched directly into each material in-situ. The fourth material, brick of the original Rapson Hall, was researched and developed but not installed as planned. The premise of *Rapson Group/Geology Text Panels* is to consider Rapson Hall as a Anthropocene geologic landscape constructed of diverse geologic landscapes, and to use the text as a means of suggesting and visualizing the extensive paleogeography and history the architecture represents.

The geologic information for each material-text panel includes: mineralogy, age of original deposit, location of deposit (longitude, latitude, depth altitude or depth, geologic context), Anthropocene/Holocene transport and depositional/installation characteristics, analysis of metamorphic processes, original and current depositional environment and facies, and other relevant characteristics of the materials and processes in a geologic/anthropocenic context. Geologic laboratory analysis was performed on samples of each material by Katherine Waring and associates at the UC Davis Geology Department (thin sections) and Mineral Labs, Inc., Lakewood, CO., as appropriate for the material: scanning electron microscopy (SEM), energy-dispersive x-ray spectroscopy (EDS) and/or x-ray fluorescence (XRF), or x-ray diffraction (XRD).



Fig. 136. Inspecting photographic panels of *Orchard (Slump) II*, studio, Oakland, CA, 1998.

John Roloff is a visual artist who works conceptually with site, process and natural systems. He is known for his ceramic works and outdoor kiln/furnace projects done from the 1970's into the 1990's, as well as other large-scale environmental projects, gallery installations and objects investigating geologic and natural phenomena. Based on an extensive background and ongoing research in the earth sciences, he works from geochemical and global metabolic perspectives. His work since the late 1960's engages poetic and site-specific relationships between material, concept and performance in the domains of geology, ecology, architecture, ceramics, industry, metabolic systems and history. The ship is a central image of his work, metaphorically evoking psychological and transformative processes of the sea and land in geologic and contemporary time. He studied geology at UC Davis, Davis, CA, with Professor Eldridge Moores and others during the formative days of plate tectonics in the late 1960's. Contemporaneous with geology he studied art with Bob Arneson and William T. Wiley also at UC Davis in the late 1960's. He received a master's degree in art in 1973 from CSU Humboldt. In addition to numerous environmental, site-specific installations in the US, Canada and Europe, his work has been included in exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, UC Berkeley Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Smithsonian Institution, Photoscene Cologne and the Venice Architectural and Art Biennales, *The Snow Show* in Kemi, Finland and *Artlantic: wonder*, Atlantic City, NJ. Art works in the public realm that explore geologic and related concepts can be found at sites such as: Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco, CA, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, I-5 Colonnade Park, Seattle, WA and Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA. He has received 3 visual arts fellowships from the NEA, a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship, a California Arts Council grant for visual artists and a Bernard Osher Fellowship at the Exploratorium, San Francisco, CA. He is represented by Anglim Gilbert Gallery in San Francisco and Professor Emeritus, Sculpture/Ceramics, San Francisco Art Institute. More information is available at [www.johnrolloff.com](http://www.johnrolloff.com).



Fig. 137. Study: Reef Facies (Lambda State), detail, b&w photo, size variable, Oakland, CA, circa 2000.

