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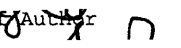
NON-PLACE AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE SCANTINESS OF REALITY


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Submitted to the Department of Architecture in
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NON-PLACE AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE SCANTINESS OF REALITY
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Submitted to the Department of Architecture
on May 10, 1996 in Partial Fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

The schizophrenia of peripheral urban conditions might be seen as related to the formation of a new ontological notion of space that we still perceive and express in a partial and incoherent way, or that we might not be totally aware of.

The growth of chaos and disorder, considered as an entropical phenomenon, no longer is to be seen as a destruction of order. It is a potential source of a new kind of contemporary attitude and construction, of an activity that transforms the multitude of the components of a scanty system in a novel scanty totality containing its own richness, coherency, and identity. The price for the existence of a collective evolution is a production of permanent entropy: the creation of a new "order", which is distant from "equilibrium", is to be found through a generative exploration of disorder.

The present work aims to transform this latent energy into an urban form.

[strategy]

There are several ways of constructing a work. One is by making a system to make decisions, another is by making decisions at each step. This experiment unifies them in a thinking/design process evolving from a system of abstractions derived from existent conditions to a further exploration of their spatial potentials. The ideas informing the system become the content of the work. The area of Paris-Nanterre west of La Defense is the place for those ideas to be tested and spatially formalized.

[construction]

A simple vocabulary of lines and shapes devises a system free from associations with previous methodologies and design processes. It generates a series of object-systems that belie traditional representations and understandings of physical space, informing an alternative strategy at urban scale through a broad exploitation of its geometrical possibilities in the way they can be seen, interpreted, combined, shaped, and re-shaped. The strategy is then open to three-dimensional interpretation.

[ideas]

The ideas informing the strategy are a mean of getting away from an inclusive formalization of the architectural result, from the idea of form as an end, and rather to use form as a means: they are to simultaneously explain the ontological and the processual interpretation of non-place space; they aim to create an interdependence of language and image, and create a narrative mirroring the scantiness of reality in interdependence with the different stages of the visual progression in the making of two and three-dimensional space.

[result]

The physical outcome becomes a three-dimensional expression of an idea and of its generative process.

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ON NON-PLACE

[non-place and the acceptance of the scantiness of reality]

When an international flight crosses Saudi-Arabia, the hostess announces that during the overflight the drinking of alcohol will be forbidden in the aircraft. This signifies the intrusion of territory and culture into space. Returning after an hour or so to the non-place of space, escaping from the totalitarian constraints of place, will be just like a return to something resembling freedom.

On earth, **non-place** is not a spatial left-over, but a potential place for another kind of attitude, another kind of contemporary experience and construction. In opposition to the notion that the schizophrenic condition of degraded cities and areas without a name and a face is a historical disaster, non-places as the physical expression of the solitude, squalor, vastness, and man-made wilderness of the new loci where an increasing proportion of our lives is spent (peripheral areas, infrastructural arteries, informational networks, supermarkets, airports, stations, and the areas around them) relate to the formation of a new notion of space that we still perceive and express in a partial and incoherent way, or that we might not be totally aware of. We still try to act against it.

Accepting the **scantiness of reality** means that non-places ought not to be tamed, but explored exalting their challenge while confronting the incertitude of the contemporary condition: an approach that explores itself from within in order to reveal the entire and at the same time fragmented society's attempt to build itself, with every elaboration, into a new coherent sense of itself while it is reaching out for some measure and test of its identity.

A heuristic approach basing itself on the acceptance of **uncertainty** tries to explore three contemporary figures of excess: overabundance of events, spatial overabundance, individualization of references. Architecture then becomes an exploration of the anthropology of supermodernity.

[Bill arrives in the city in November.]

He didn't know much about it, except for all the invading media bombardment about its surprising economical and physical development, and even of its ever-increasing tourism, symbol of that economic miracle of which everybody was so proud of. It was, in a certain sense, the modern city by definition: therefore he was expecting buildings of recent construction, modern typologies, wide boulevards and freeways and all. And skyscrapers, sure. And then he was imagining its fervent public life, its cafes, squares, busy streets, its hectic markets, its pedestrian streets and sunny parks; and he could sit back on one of those benches in a peaceful

street corner, light a cigarette, and enjoy the theatrical promenade in front of him. All of that, of course, "organically merged into the development of the modern city".

It was as if he already knew its morphology: regular blocks provided, as prescribed by the economic dynamics of modernity, and needless to say reported in the local building code, of a higher density in the central districts and a rarefying of heights (and, he was sure, of land values as well) at its peripheral extremities. In a word, a defined city, with its own boundaries and identity, maybe ugly in some parts, but what to do about that.

Bill arrived in the city in November, and that's exactly what he found.

Everything as it is supposed to be, everything at its place, as urban analysis teaches, and a confirmation of the immutable relationship between building typologies and urban morphology throughout its evolution ("and, after all, everybody knows that the modern city is the deterministic product of one model through its numerous variations"), and of a socially responsible and politically efficient planning policy and administration. Reassuring for his conscience.

He had to start working there on a biweekly basis, and so begun his life of a metropolitan nomad. He bought a new car, better than the train: highway beats railroad two hours to three and a half. He could always sell it back when the high-speed train started (that was going to be very strategic, taking him right into the inner metropolitan subway network. He had carefully studied the transportation planning of the city during his previous train rides down).

It was after his very first trip that Bill realized that the landscape he was going through was contaminating the serenity of his certainties in regard to urban form and experience. Needless to say, he was not that candid not to know the immeasurable dimensions of the peripheries, nor that sentimental to refer back to the cinematographic imagery (Pasolini, Malle, Resnais, you know) expecting the sprawl to dissolve at any moment into the countryside. As he was zipping under one of those luminous highway signs giving the ambient temperature ("just in case someone wants to take a little stroll outside"), he realized he was feeling some sort of unprecedented anxiety.

He was aware that the highways and the landscape around them were representing an incommensurable linear extension of some, some metropolitan formal asset "yet to be reorganized, rationalized, made efficient and understandable". But he was not yet thinking that the highway environment was in a way the physical place of a behavioral continuity with the city he thought he was leaving behind, and with the one that he was reaching: he was continuing to do some, some sort of urban things. "Insert the ticket....insert your card. Have a good trip. Drive safely." And

his bank account was changing in real time. Same thing at the gas station: he pulled out his Visa card, got some money out the ATM ("Thank you for your custom"), entered the store, vaguely feeling some sort of enjoyment for the freedom received by having got rid of those practical matters and, more intimately, by the reassurance that his card went through and did what it was supposed to do: sorting him out, confirming his identity, or maybe proving his innocence. He was not that candid to think of the gas station as some modern version of Hopper's ones, and filling up his car felt like an excuse to enter an infinite metropolitan bazaar: a crowded place where hundreds or thousands of individual itineraries converged for a spell, unaware of one another; tires of any brand were followed by any sort of merchandise, from rugs to salami, Lindt chocolate, toy guns; next to it, a small section for bicycles and motorbikes' helmets, then newspapers and books (adventure, science fiction, spy fiction, travel). He stopped at the porn section, and while browsing his eyes got attracted by a car advertisement (only later he realized it was not because of the graphics, but for the car had the same name of those highly designed seats on Air France): "One day, the need for space makes itself felt... it comes to us without warning. And never goes away. The irresistible wishing for a space of our own. A mobile space which can take us anywhere. A space where everything is to hand and nothing is lacking...Already, space is inside you... You've never been so firmly on the ground as you are in the Renault (E)space". Medicines, tobacco, plastic boots and umbrellas and deodorants and car deodorants and ashtrays and picnic boxes and Tampax and prophylactics. Travel guidebooks, of which a good 80% of the region, right next to a wide range of local crafts and goods. He started thinking how in that section the gas station was turning into an aggressive center of regional culture: local stuff, and lots of maps useful to anyone who was thinking of stopping. Of course no one who passes by stops, but they may pass by again, with a different effect: that abstract space becomes strangely familiar to them over time, just like others know everything of the duty-free shop at JFK. A passing stranger feels at home only in the anonymity of motorways, service stations, megastores, hotel chains. He stopped for a coffee.

Bill started to think about the links between all that he was seeing and going through, from the metropolitan sprawl to that place and its most minute living manifestations. What kind of society stopped, or maybe was settling down in that gas station to give a sense to all of that? What human activities, what anthropology was hiding behind such an articulate spatial and commercial mask?

He started looking around more carefully, and seeing the opulence and at the same time the squalor of the space he was inhabiting in that very moment. The thing that was surprising him the most was confronting all of that with "reality": for sure no local or regional administration could have been involved in it, nor it could have relatively invested that much money on the renovation

of a public square, or on the remodeling of the public gardens in the first development ring. And truck drivers seemed to have disappeared from that landscape: that place was busy with a heterogeneous population that he hadn't quite noticed before: it seemed to be there from nowhere to shop, eat prefab sandwiches, watch television, telephone, fax. A group of teen-agers was fixing an appointment there for the night, exactly there, in that banal non-place, to watch the game. Ninety-six inch screen, no kidding.

When he sold the car and jumped on the high-speed train to get off in the outer development rings to catch the metropolitan subway network and-its-radial-and-tangential-twirling-in-and-around, he saw exactly the same things and the same behaviors he missed the train oh excuse me four forty-five no i'm sorry it's my last one and thought of his friend Jun Takahashi from Tokyo, telling him that those unfortunate little daily events were actually some form of adolescent excuse to go to the driving range upstairs, and how at that point he would miss two, three, eight trains he decided to get inside another one of those eclectic bazaar stores prophylactics toys big screens basically a lot of people hanging out sat down time for caffeine and cigarette got out his laptop no drop dialed up:

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Server (DSMAXINE) Version 7.7L Thu Mar 9 04:08:11
1995
Received: from PACIFIC-CARRIER-ANNEX.MIT.EDU by
po7.PHI.COM (5.61/4.7) id AA18764; Wed, 24 Apr 96
14:46:07 EST4435
Received: from SBBRYAN@SOPHIA.PHILO.COM with SMTP
id AA09835; Wed, 24 Apr 96 15:44:42 EDT
From: pooge@1978.8372compuserve.com
Received: by 32000.3GRX:\%F (5.57/4.7) id AA14387;
Wed, 24 Apr 96 15:45:47 -0400
Message-Id: <9604241945.AA14387@sophia.philo.com>
To: bill@sophia.philo.com
Subject: scrambling our minds up, but not quite.
Date: Wed, 24 Apr 1996 15:45:45 EDT
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hey guess what happened the other night.
Giuseppe and I were talking for a long while in front of a few bottles of Sangiovese. The subject of the conversation (which turned into a screaming on his side) was an imaginary replacement of the Cathedral of Santa Croce. We got to no better argumentation than the one seeing a huge multi-level parking lot in the very core of the city, of the exact same size of what in our minds was now a torn-down cathedral. In our opinion that was the only true, honest, vivid expression of our time that was deign of substituting its former decrepit symbol. No matter how much we would regret that substitution, at the same time we would be so glad and full of hope in seeing such glorious courage of intervening.
Got the bottle ready for your comeback,
pooge

Opened a magazine forgotten there which aroused his professional interest: "the homogenization of needs and consumption patterns is one of the overall trends characterizing the new international

business environment... Starting from an examination of the effects of the globalization phenomenon on European and American business, on the validity and content of the universal market and on predictable developments in the international marketing environment, numerous issues are discussed"; The article ended with an appraisal of "the conditions suitable for the development of a mix that would be as logic and standardized as possible" and of a "logic and efficient architecture of the information age". Outside, in the shade of the *grandes ensembles* he started noticing the life that was inhabiting dismissed industrial sites, warehouses, the space underneath elevated railroad tracks, the back of train stations, dark corners, other gas stations, all overlooked by endless facades of balconies. He stopped and looked at an elementary school playground filled with kids playing in between and in the shade of those enormous buildings. A girl no older than seven came up to him and said from the other side of the wire-frame fence: "si tu tourne le coin il y'a un creche. Ils sont encore plus jeunes la" [if you go around the corner there's a kindergarten. They are even younger there]. The nature of human space, indeed. He remembered he had forgotten to log out. Log out. "Are you sure you really want to log out?". Log out. He started thinking of a strange blend of Greenaway, Giacometti's House of 4am, and the Nolli's plans of Rome, in their crisp representation of urban hierarchy, "privateness", "publicness", whatever.

He was wondering that other common, shared and reassuring characteristics of the contemporary city could have been altered, or questioned in that urban explosion that in its fall-out had disseminated on the territory an uncontrollable and pollenary series of spatial archipelagoes, behaviors, events. Together with boundaries and the whole concept of *fine urbis*, the explosion made blocks disappear, and with them all his knowledge and certainties about any possible relationship between urban morphology and building typology, let alone his sense of orientation at that very moment. It was the exact contrary of the modern metropolitan form that he knew so well, that he studied at school, and that he could read and interpret. Those forms and spaces, erratic, pollenary and vehicular, not only were contradicting any sense of orientation and confidence, but were also challenging any possibility to foresee an organic development, or for that matter any other sort of intervention regardless of scale. Its form, to put it succinctly, and according to his previous and shared knowledge of "form", simply did not exist, or was very well hidden: pieces of non-city, but that by no means could have been defined as countryside, nor as construction yards or development areas, were enclosed in the urban landscape, and were alternating with higher density parts of no evident relationship with their surroundings. Lots and reclamation areas seemed to gain an irregular space of existence of their own not re-traceable at sight, extending with no apparent logic the non-Euclidean and fractal geometries of former or ancient boundaries. The urban territory, as a complex whole, had managed to escape from any sort of control at least in

its appearance, and was not designed according to any sort of Master Plan if not in the linear tracing of the infrastructural networks: highways, freeways, communal roads, tunnels, interchanges, underground high-speed roads, subway lines, elevated metro lines, in their absolute, almost tautological going, were conditioning the form and spaces and functions of that part of the city much more than the presence (or the absence) of ten, hundred, thousands dwellings or condominiums. The crossing of five, ten, thirty, fifty-meter wide streets, but most evidently their ventilation shafts, interchanging nodes, above ground intersections, rotaries and service stairwells and fire escapes and protection gates and fences and wire-frame gates and locked underground passages and ventilation shafts and interchanging nodes and above ground intersections were becoming elements, or landmarks, of that part of the city; in between, a bundle of buildings of various nature of which direction, hierarchy, sometimes even function were escaping any immediate comprehension, and of which the voids in between were attracting the eye much more than the closed volumes: those, away from any commonplace on the spread-out of "modernity" à la Cité Radieuse, were neither having the form or character of "public spaces", or of private ones; they were not quite gardens (or they were sort of undecided if they wanted to become so), but closer to a series of disordered and overlapped orchards, or just animated with an exotic identity of no precedent, aim, plan, in both temporal and spatial terms. In any case, those empty spaces could not be defined as "unbuilt" anymore: it was as if a chemical reaction had forever transformed their thickness and density.

It was different from previous peripheral experiences of him, when low single or multi-family suburban dwellings looked terribly repetitive and always unfinished: he could have always read the different layers of the different familiar assets in time, all clustered around an initial built nucleus, just like in a geological section in which every color, every mutation reveals a certain stratification and its respective geodesic event; in that context, Bill could have re-traced the socio-economical evolution of every family that inhabited that particular house, and derive from several of those analyses some sort of metro-anthropology of the Homo Contemporaneus. But he couldn't think of anything intelligent, coherent or revealing about what he had in front at that moment, just some commonplace random thought and no operative strategy in mind. He did remember the importance that Gerard Althabe gave to staircase life as opposed to the square and garden one in his studies of big housing estates in Saint Denis and the Nantes periphery, for example. But he couldn't quite make the link with what was in front of him at that moment: self-construction and high technology, no precise sense of orientation or function, and of course no well-lined up store fronts anywhere to choose from, enter, and ask for the goddam directions. As he was walking around what was not really a "corner" trying to find his way, he was thinking of how many things he still hadn't seen of that non-place in his unexpected ethnological inquiry, and if, as in any

ethnological study, he was all of a sudden accepting all the limitations of it, and turn them into assets: he suddenly realized that he was again trying to categorize and synthesize what he was seeing, without being quite able to see it all, let alone understand it: he was subconsciously applying "some method" as a need for effective contact with that non-place (or, the interlocutors, in the ethnological case), yet unable to perceive it all, in the inside and the outside, at different times of the day and of the night (or, in the ethnological case, he was facing the difficulty of determining the representativeness of the chosen group). In other words, he was unable to assess what the people he was speaking to and the places he was seeing were telling him about the places he was not seeing and the people he was not speaking to. His set of mental and visual categories, far from being of an exclusive or prescriptive kind, but more as some sort of reassuring references, suddenly collapsed. There was nothing to suggest him that the case of some great African kingdom was any different from that of an ex-industrial site in the Paris suburbs. All of that, at the end, was unexpectedly preventing him to think of his knowledge and education from being simply cumulative, and was even undermining its continuity. Reaching far beyond the physicality of the actual place, it felt like an endless semantic bombardment.

Quite an unfortunate discovery, since he had just accepted to teach design at the local school of architecture.

[the end of space referents]

There is no doubt that the diffused metropolis, with its aleatory going, has long occupied the territories of the "ager romanus": "the castles" south, "the shore" in the west, "the villages" north, and "Hadrian's Villa" east, are but toponymical declinations of one physical reality only.

Yet, "downtowns" and "historical centers" still exist, reinforcing the general notion that western culture has always physically as well as culturally developed around urban centers (and the influence that a relatively small city such as fifteenth century Florence could extend over an enormous area is an instance of the evolution to come). Anyone who takes the Metro in Paris, though, with its names echoing the streets and monuments on the surface, experiences a sort of mechanized daily immersion in the city below a city seldom if at all seen, and that conditions Parisians to think of Alesia, Solferino and Bastille as invisible spatial landmarks rather than historical places or cultural references.

Contemporary urban form and culture seems to express something different from the re-interpretations of historical notions and precedents in contemporary city making, and from the reconsideration of a hierarchically structured relationship

between private and public space; it doesn't even seem to respond to the numerous interpretations of the living models of Modernity (in architecture, in the transformation of the Modern into Modernism, leading to a fixed system not only in stylistic form, but also in an entire structure of norms and values: some sort of architectural logic, or morality); needless to say, it remains by all means insensible to international calligraphic *maquillages* proposed by postmodernity.

On one side, ideologies of a "collective effort and destiny", in their commonplaces about the territory in-between capitalism and socialism permeated by the always present underlying rhetoric of "history and innovation", seem distant from any representation of a condition paradoxically falling out its obvious over-generalizations. On the exact opposite side, it does not seem that a certain heroic, nihilistic, or apocalyptic lyricism about the evolution of the city (as expressed or implied by certain cinematography of Lane, Scott, or Allen) is anywhere contained in those urban expressions; and neither it is in "houses like mountains", "bigness", "artificial landscapes", or the novel *existenzminimum*. If we step away from these two general viewpoints, and simply rely upon evident observation, it is interesting to notice how the last "typologies" are not even capable to survive to the time of their own realization and inhabitation: still unfinished, they are already self-modified, encroached, deformed, culturally and physically squatted in the inside and in the outside. But not even this seems to get closer to the point. More in general terms, volume, form, function and appearance of the single building plays a structurally and operationally marginal role in non-place space: structurally because other elements, objects or aggregation of objects seem to define the image and matrix of the new city; operationally because its "building", to be intended in a cultural and pragmatic sense (the punctual function container/construction as a re-elaboration and reinterpretation exercise), lives for inertia, relying on the two-folded justification of "inexpensively serving its purpose" (the low-tone), or remaining open to any semantic liberty (the high-tone): the obvious, widely recognized and outspoken result is that of a vast urban banality (the low-tone) punctuated by single architectures (the high-tone). Very uninteresting and, as I will discuss later, very questionable statement. What seems more revealing is to notice how the latter, despite its bearing heavy loads of semantic messages, remains unable to have an influence in any way, even a negative one.

In a few words, the urban culture expressed by all of the above in its different facets and expressions, its typological, formal, morphological essence is by far overruled by the facts. The awkward structure of social uncertainty appears more like a widespread expression of no specific regionalism or contextualism.

profoundly rooted in an ever-increasing individualization of urban referents: a cultural strabismus indeed.

Numerous factors seem to concur in determining the vanishing of those models: the ever-increasing morphological and economical power of infrastructural networks (physical as well as immaterial) however seems the true expression of rapidly mutating work relationship, need for personal space, production and distribution methods as for goods, money, culture, relationships, and how, ultimately, the combination of these factors fall on the metropolitan territory in a way rather similar in all contemporary cities, almost regardless of their dimensions. The non-place arising from it is about the same in Los Angeles as in Taipei, in Delhi, Nanterre, Francavilla: the exact opposite of everything that Architecture and Planning has tried to efficiently construct in a precise relationship between form and function by means of defined standards and building typologies as derived from a deterministic pre-conception about common, shared living values and necessities.

In the making of contemporary space, these general assumptions might be questioned at their very base: if the disorder of non-place overwhelms and relatives, it then becomes harder and harder to superimpose notions and methods aiming to tame and euphemize them; but most importantly, if we agree that urban space represents but one of the resulting aspects of a much more complex structural reality, but that, at the same time being one if not the only verifiable datum of such reality, it constitutes the more concrete viewpoint with which to confront an understanding of it, it therefore becomes even more difficult to justify such superimposed notions as a principle of intelligibility, let alone a principle of common identity.

Moreover, if we recognize non-place as a different individual dimension (physical, physiological, psychic and sociological), as a synthesis (the expression of a culture which itself is regarded as a scanty whole), rather than an helpless product of a chain of mistakes resisting any possibility of acting within it, then we are recognizing "individuality" as a founding element rather than an apocalyptic end of societal values (which we may regard as an easy way out, triviality, or commonplace).

When all or part of this is taken into consideration, it is never towards a search for new paradigms capable to express those underlying values, towards a novel expression of space existence and construction, and ultimately for a new creativity. It is either acknowledged by the most autobiographic and deliberately self-referential architectural currents which understandably (but not necessarily legitimately) considering "individuality" as an open environment, and the lack of sensible referents as reinforcement of their owns, or, on the other side of the coin, it becomes merely acknowledged as some sort of undeniable anthropological *factum* still generalized to a microsocietal degree: the family, private life, "places of memory", "architectural myth", and the ever-increasing spread-out of notion

such as "collective memory/places of memory" typical of the automatic architectural reactions of, to cite a minute representative, Aldo Rossi and Giorgio Grassi. Both these positions meet halfway the non-place space: if the first is risking to border off into formalism, the latter approaches it in an obsolete form which seems to tell us what we are by showing what we are no longer.

Without returning to the conceptual generalizations around culture and individuality touched upon above, non-place seems a separate, isolated realm with an identity of its own. In other words, "it is safe" from the risks of being overruled by strategies and methodologies that don't pertain to it: non-place is made more complex by the overabundance of events in the present than undermined by the planning and architectural superimpositions of prevailing modes of historical reinterpretation and reconfiguration (paradoxically becoming themselves a radical subversion, or a counter-culture), as much as less subverted by utopian visions and upheavals, or deconstructivist vocabularies than complicated by the spatial overabundance of the present. Non-place space is simultaneously result and expression of the spectacular acceleration of the planet (in terms of human and information transport) bringing with it a change of scale (in terms of organization of space and behaviors), and an increasing sense of chaos and fragmentation (in terms, again, of spatial configuration, and function), and in the fragmentation and proliferation of imaged and imaginary references (in terms of meaning that we attach to a place and a function performed in it).

That "something else" I said was animating contemporary urban culture, might be at this point (and more courageously) defined as a rapture from current thinking of urban form. Its acknowledgment moves in the opposite direction from the one considering non-place as a mistake, a contradiction, or a dichotomy, but as a fundamental value inclusive of all its negative dimensions, themselves representing a potential to explore without falling in the contradictory tendency of trying to synthesize its multifaceted social and physical expressions. A new thinking of space is called to reflect upon its being at the same time "scantiness" and "collective expression", or better, "a collective expression of scantiness": paradoxically, chaos, displacement and disorder being first *Civitas* and, only afterwards, *Urbs*.

Still those spatial manifestations of the non-place are often if not always labeled as mere inarticulate conurbations. They are there to be corrected, or to provide an excuse to perform freely and gesturally re-falling into an ever-bouncing ignorance of the "other". They seem to represent, instead, the creation of "another" city of the in-between, transgressive, stubborn, designless, self-representative, culturally heterogeneous, and needless to say far from being a transient phenomenon. Self-constructed in its resistance to the Plan (or physical representation of the failure of the Plan's paradigm, not of the Plan's inefficiency).

Sometimes abusive, always functionally abusive in the non-placelessness of the "left-overs" where other unacknowledged activities tend to reconstitute another kind of acknowledged space inside them. Flexible, adaptable, mutable. Of a nature in which the rules of growth, adaptability, transformation, are more similar to the ones of a living organism than to any of the rules and values that have constructed the city of the Plan, or the tectonics of the Architecture. In a way, a condition not too far-removed from the *bidonvilles*, seen as huge kinetic structures where public and private constantly change according to necessity. The occupation of non-place space in the peripheral metropolis happens according to these new "rules", belying any existent parameter towards their reading and comprehension.

Non-place space doesn't seem to be a natural evolution of modernist models, nor of garden cities or new towns. Their form and functions deny any specific configuration, don't refer to a figurative identity of the residential urban fabric, and on the contrary find references of their identity and patterns in viaducts, highways, railway bridges, warehouses, and dismissed industrial sites. In this scenario, the elevated metro line becomes a roof distant from sentimentalisms à la Truffaut for a *clochard* world. What here has been called "non-place" is therefore a new equation between those arteries and the multiplication of the left-overs around them, bringing to a new relationship between movements of population and new urban concentrations, in opposition to the sociological notion of "place" as a culture localized in time and space: if a "place" can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a "non-place". The hypothesis put forth here is that "supermodernity" produces "non-places", meaning spaces which are not themselves traditional anthropological spaces and which do not seem to integrate the earlier "places".

High-speed roads and railways, interchanges, stations of any sort are just as much non-place as the means of transport themselves, and as much as the space around and under it previously symbolized by "the roof of the elevated metro line": they represent the backbone/potential of the new city, ignored or acted against just as much as it does to the prostitution-smoking weed-playing soccer happening under that no longer metaphorical "roof".

This brings us to propose a further clarification: the sociological/anthropological picture arisen is one of abstraction, fleeting individuality, the temporary and the ephemeral: all expressions that, it can be argued, can be applied to the non-place as to the place. Non-places can never exist in pure form: places tend to reconstitute themselves inside it; relations are restored and resumed in it. But what is interesting is how, now more on the physical expression of space, place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally expressible and identifiable.

Therefore, contemporaneity does not (yet) manage to obliterate places, but pushes them to the background: it seems that non-places are the real expression of our time, one that it has been described as much as itself allows to do, and that could even be quantified, if that had any sense at all, by totaling all the air, rail and motorway routes, the inside volumes of the so-called "means of transport" (trains, cars, aircrafts and so on), airports and railway and subway stations, hotel chains, large retail outlets, the spaces in-between (or so-called left-overs), parking lots, and finally the complex maze of cable and wireless networks.

It appears as an urban form no longer related at the quality or lack thereof of the architecture that builds it. An omnipresent impossibility to recognize "places" along with what looks like a definitive overturning of certain spatial categories: the built and the unbuilt, the natural and the artificial, the urban and the rural, the very definition of "the city" in the way it can be described in its form and limit. Quite a disappointment for whom, after the avant-garde of the 50's, and along the fascinating tales of the Californians, the Dutch of the Opbouw group, or the Czech of the Devenstil team, and the British Tecton, Mars, the Spanish Gatepac, the South-African Transvaal Group, and god knows how long the list could be, a big disappointment, I was saying, for whom was then expecting or dreaming that the future of the Modern Metropolis would be Archigram's walking skyscrapers and the visions of Superstudio and Archi7. No Plug-in City in the metropolis' future, no revealing or significant increment of the urban transformations brought in by the new technological visions of those years. Even Sant'Elia disappeared, as well as Calvino's visionary poetics. And it doesn't seem we get any closer to refer back to Walter Benjamin, when his interest in Parisian passages and, more generally, in iron and glass architecture was principally deriving from his seeing them as an embodiment, or a wish, to prefigure the architecture to come: some dream of anticipation. Orwell. Kafka. Nothing of it all, Bill was thinking, in the reality of facts. Closer to something in between Foucault's heterotopias and Fellini's scaffolding in 8and1/2.

If we don't fall into the easy way out of a proclamation of a helpless nihilistic anarchy, or the affirmation of our impotence in a revived decadentist *ennui et ideal*, what we are facing today in new terms is what Marcel Mauss and the culturalist school confronted thirty years ago: how to think about and place the individual. Less generally, of this non-place space, of this systematic absence of an a priori identity easy to recognize, of this all, what is to do? Can we start to think about its fragmented yet collective expression and representation, and about its spatial potential, without superimposing "architecture"?

[approaching the phenomenology of space]

In search for a translation of the uncertainty of contemporary culture into an urban form, general assumptions in city making at urban and architectural scale are questioned as preconceptions, and viewed from an alternative physical as well as societal standpoint: the counterassumption is the belief on the impossibility nor the cultural justification to synthesize, control, and euphemize our present condition.

Physically.

The search for a harmonious re-sewing of the dichotomy between core and periphery, for the recreation of dense urban patterns, for criteria derived from historical precedents, and ultimately the inertial idea of profoundly reshaping or virtually creating part or even the entire tangible reality, is opposed with a speculative exploration of a different approach based on the consideration of patterns of physical and social settings arisen without any deliberate intention and conscious choice, moving away from the preconceived idea of their being dichotomies, mistakes, or contradictions.

Socially.

It seems we can talk of two ontological levels, one for the private the other for the public, in understanding and interacting with space.

Private "knowledge" is still common and understandable. It is accepted. However, knowing about the public space is not so clear. Private ontology has relatively remained the same throughout time, and in small towns the distinction between public and private shrinks down: public space is almost private space. If we don't know our private space -- the house -- we are confronting ghosts, surrealism, or madness.

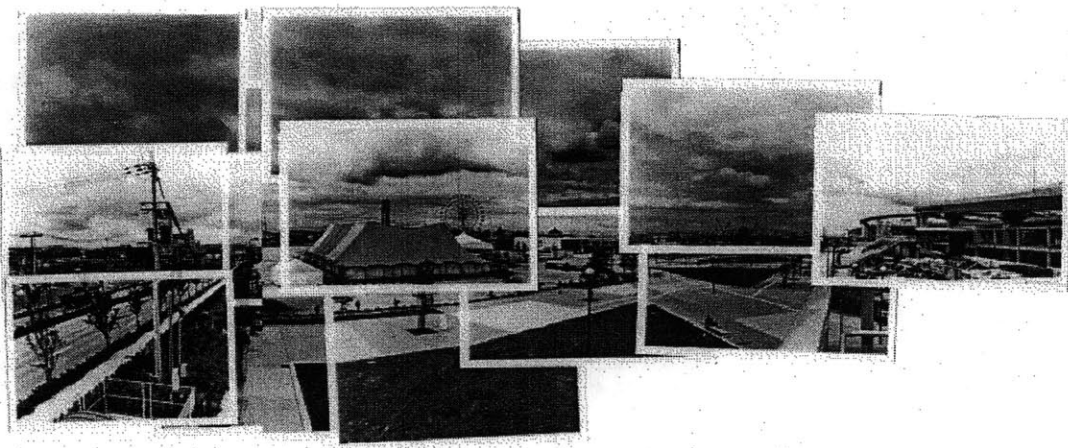
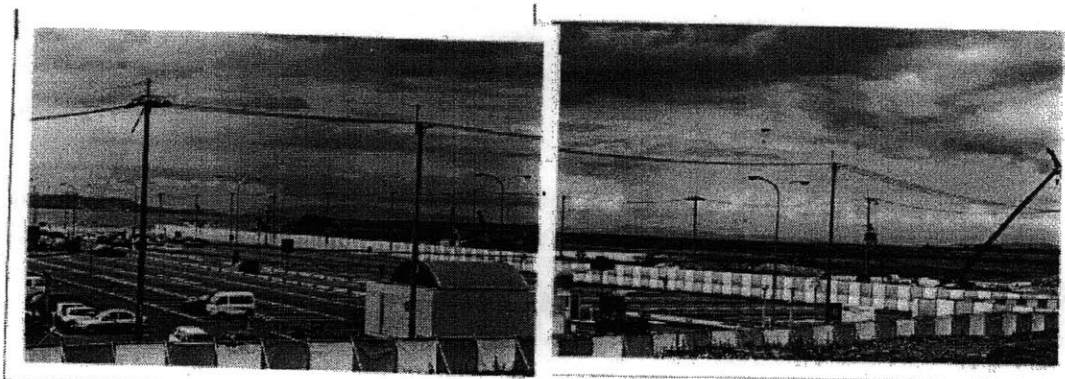
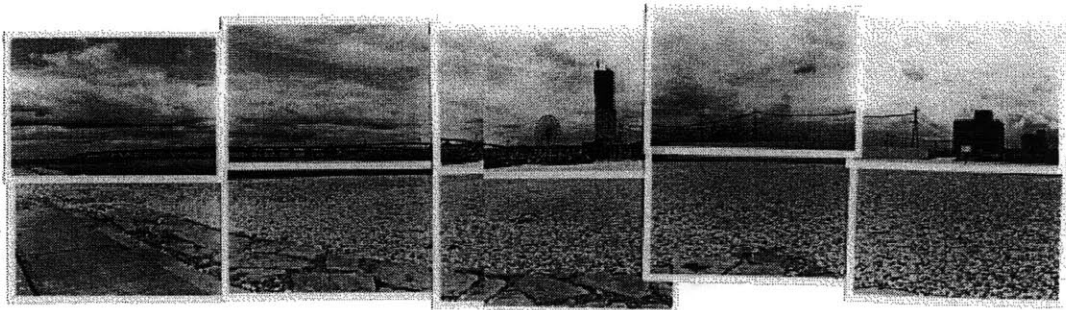
Ontology of the public has changed intensely: there is an ever-increasing acceptance of the scanty knowledge of the outside of our private realm. "Publicness" becomes a personal confrontation with the unknown. Lacking tact of the outer realm, we are naturally transferring the frame of references that we spontaneously apply to our private space to the outside. That is our only grip to survival: a transformation of reality according to our sensitivity, our perception, our personal science. Ghosts and surrealism are exceptions of our intimate knowledge of the private, and they become the main inhabitants of the public. They remain personal interpretations of space, therefore, both in the inside and in the outside, profoundly private.

We should probably reconsider our ontological notion of space, still tied to a set of values that are vanishing, disappearing, fading away, long gone.

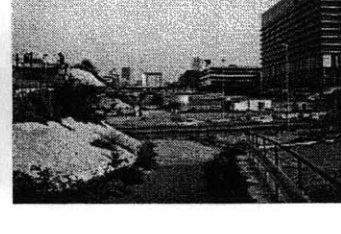
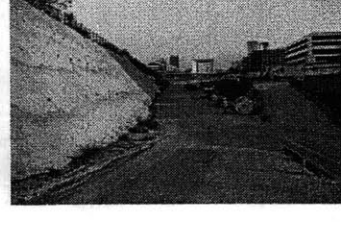
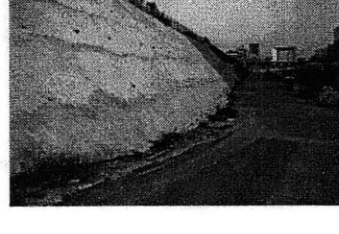
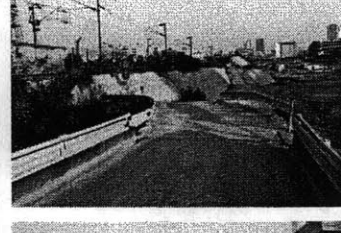
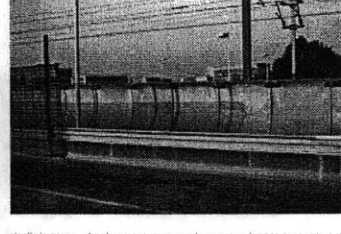
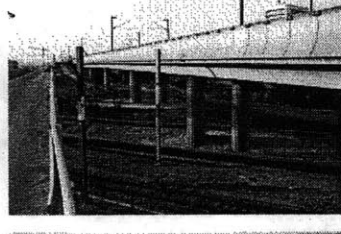
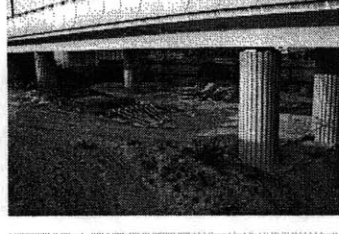
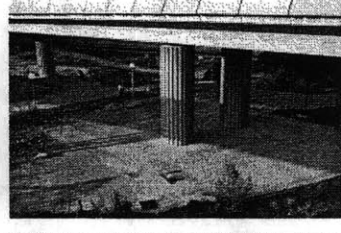
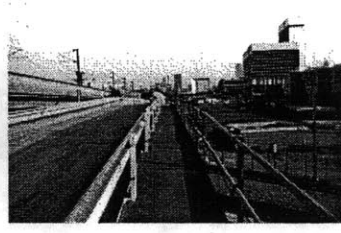
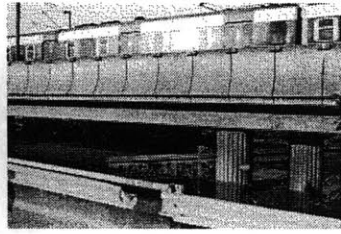
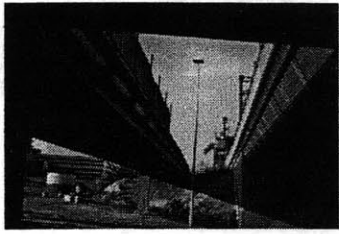
If we draw one more parallel with the ethnologist, the "place" held in common by himself and those he talks about is simply a "place", occupied by the indigenous inhabitants who dwell in it, and while doing it they cultivate it, defend it, mark its favorite points and keep its frontiers under surveillance: this place common to the ethnologist and its inhabitants is, in the sense of

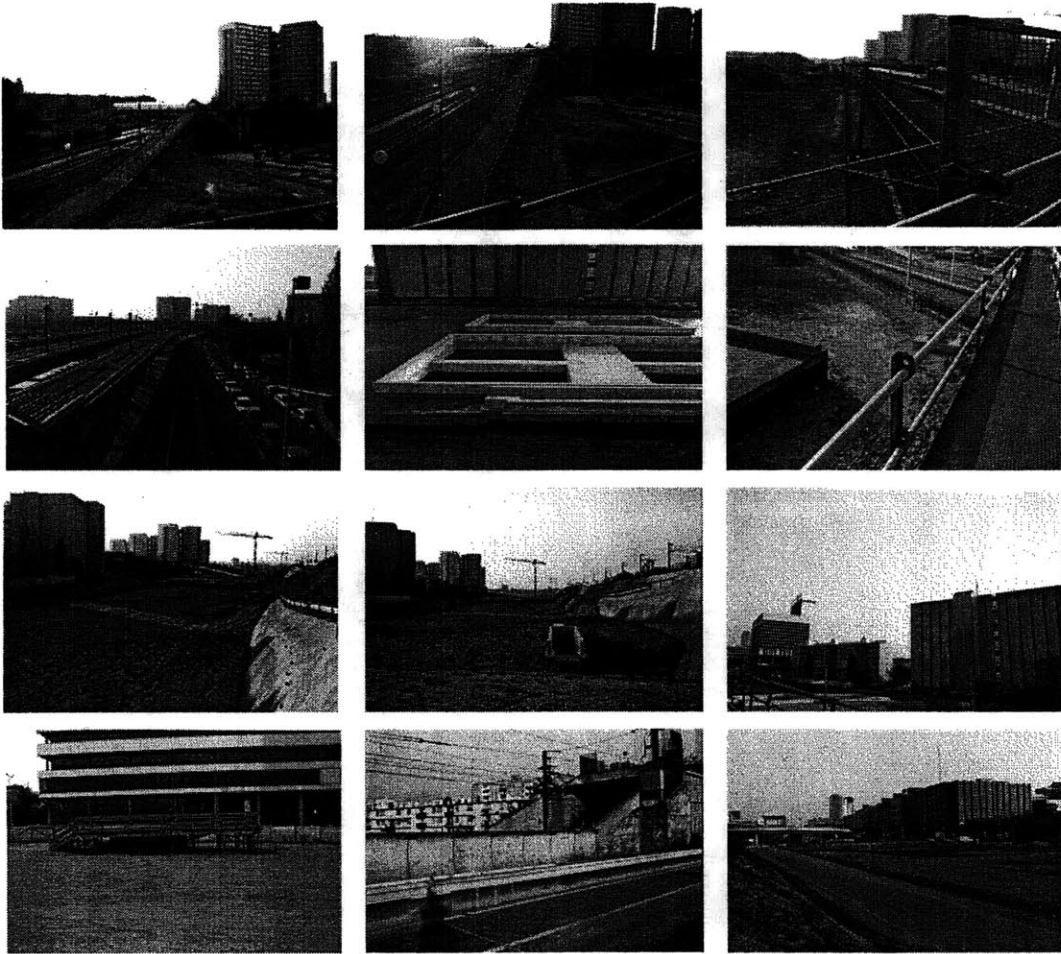
the Latin word *invenire*, an invention; it has been discovered by those who claim it as their own without deliberate intention and conscious choice. Just transforming it while using it.

Freed from automatic inferential principles of an unidirectional development and from a technological enlightenment for granted, and questioning the dogmatic axiom modernity=progress, it doesn't seem that non-place space can be studied and understood via existent processes. On the contrary it seems appropriate to start from the awareness of a fundamental change in the same categories of urban space. Can we, for instance, continue to define the spatial categories of the road, the square, the street fronts? And according to which system or logic? Utilizing the formal structural categories of the traditional space and process (as accumulation of historical knowledge) resembles a question (or a problem) badly formulated and, according to the same logical disciplines, making it then impossible to answer (or to even try to solve). The non-place that I tried to explain previously as a contemporary urban representation/expression seems to embed in itself the non-model of the formal destructure (not to be confused with deconstruction) of the city, in parallel with the phenomenologies or individualities previously outlined of a more recognized destructure of the social communities of contemporary *metropole*. The underutilized fringes, the almost mute ones, or the ones that murmur words apparently without sense constitute the forgotten or blamed urban "material" potentially richer in expression, and indeed representing the present cultural condition. Not consolatory, yet authentic, actual, and unknown to the old, consolidated urban form and its inhabitants. Probably needing, if we are confronted with an intervention within its realm, another strategy of space.



dubai rotterdam rome





paris-nanterre west of la defense. sequence of photographs. walking. taken ahead (60%), left and right (30%), and behind (10%), approximately one every minute, at irregular intervals.

HEURISTIC DESIGN INVESTIGATION
design process synopsis

Such an approach to design intervention and its physical outcome(s) is questioning "traditional" design processes. Intervening within a physical and cultural framework impossible to synthesize requires to work according to a non-linear method, following a speculative approach: an alternative generative process.

[a. heuristic design investigations 1: at urban scale]

two-dimensional abstractions of elements and patterns into lines and forms as potential shape generators, and exploration of their geometries as how they can be shaped, re-shaped, re-combined, and exploded.

[b. heuristic design investigations 2: at architectural scale]

three-dimensional exploration of two-dimensional abstraction. Its construction evolves through a phenomenological representation viewpoint at architectural scale: the design tool is heuristic and experiential (therefore following an inside-out generative process) typically away from the linearity of sketched conceptualizations, followed by formalizations of the generative idea into traditional two-dimensional design representations through a back and forth process between plans, sections and elevations while conjecturing its spatial three-dimensionality. It simultaneously challenges traditional design processes as well as certain CAD environments. In more practical terms, and in reference to the fact that the design exploration aims to touch upon general issues from a specific site and urban condition, we might question the validity of traditional processes for a project based on speed and acceleration (the multiple intersections of infrastructure) and on experience (a representation of non-place space in its social and physical dimensions).

The alternative approach is on the contrary based upon an exploration freed from the limitations of spatial conjecturing and visual imagining: it is focused on the building of "one room after the other" according to a sequential path of experiences through a series of interactive computer modeling and representations pushing their compositional freedom and affordances to manipulate shape, allowing perception to prevail over conception: one generates the other in no specific order (added on, intersected with, placed inside), yet following the shape generators as derived from the two-dimensional abstraction of the "acceptance of extrapolation of abstraction". Plans and sections become a resultant of such process.

HEURISTIC DESIGN INVESTIGATIONS 1
on the larger context of non-place

[the frustrated system in physics:]
[design speculation in the larger context]

In approaching design intervention in schizophrenic urban conditions, traditional cartography and tools for mapping, understanding, and designing appear inappropriate and misleading: they fail to represent the non-placelessness of contemporary relationships between form, space and activities, and to reconsider the apparent anarchy with which sense of disorientation, squalor, vastness and solitude are inclusively labeled. Their aim is to superimpose objective strategies and approaches based on the search for a harmonious merging of planning and architecture as the prime mover of city form: the final objective generally is a re-sewing of the existent conditions into dense urban patterns, the search for functional and spatial hierarchy in contemporary urban form, and ultimately a physical translation of a general matrix of design parameters and methodologies.

In more practical terms, any traditional intervention would start with a morphological reading of the urban context, trying to recognize the evolution of the territory, the dominant typologies, the hierarchical structure between public, semi-public, semi-private and private places, the green system, landmarks and places of historical/archeological relevance, heights of buildings, vehicular and pedestrian path systems, and functional distribution; most categories get successively broken down into more focused definitions of use, ownership, form, access, and control, in order to achieve an understanding of the existent condition to then proceed implementing a preconceived given end (or, more explicitly, to "correct" according to a precise set of prejudiced criteria). No matter if the analyses and further elaborations are more or less sensitive to the specific context, nevertheless the design output is based on a conceptual and formal system that is "logic", "functional", "organic" (the "order") superimposed onto the "illogic", not necessarily "a-functional" yet surely "disorganic" (the "disorder") without questioning the very nature and legitimacy of those definitions.

The abandonment of such notions and objectives becomes needed when existent "anarchy of form" and "non-placelessness" is recognized as a potential place containing its own richness, identity, and "order" which is distant from "equilibrium": a force upon which to base a new thinking of urban form. An alternative thinking bases itself on the acknowledgment of the present condition as a formed reality with a structure of its own characterized by a high level of formal complexity, and often by an irreducible state of structural chaos: something resembling, if you will, the frustrated system in physics.

Physics defines "frustrated" those systems that are subject to variables in such a high number and random configuration to prevent them from producing a "unique", "organic", "foreseeable"

output: this impossibility to reach that "organic answer", this stage of undetermined dynamism defines the "frustration state". Frustrated systems seem to escape any theoretical deterministic approach to their analysis and utilization or, in other words, any attempt to construct the base from which to start in search for a solution. But. Surprisingly, starting from the optimization of one of the variables, physics measure in the frustrated systems a production of energy which is higher than the one produced by a system in equilibrium. It seems that non-place space could be defined as a "frustrated city".

The first question is whether we are confronting a chaotic, disordered urban form that we can still understand as an evolution of the modern metropolis, or if we think that it represents a relatively slowly sedimented form yet a new urban event no longer understandable with traditional tools and categories.

Enough has been said on the invalidity of the first case, but let's simply assume we decide to explore the second option.

The first problem that we are facing becomes the description of this contemporary urban form outside the socio-typo-morphological categories utilized so far: how we can try to construct new strategies for the description, new comprehension and design-thinking/design-process of spaces and volumes that detach themselves from any linear "analytical" strategy (analysis: an.a.lyt.ic \.an-*l-'it-ik\ \-i-k*1\ \-k(*-)le-\ \.an-*l-*-'tis-*t-e-\ aj [LL analyticus, fr. Gk analytikos, fr. analyein] 1: of or relating to analysis or analytics; esp : separating something into component parts or constituent elements 2: skilled in or using analysis {a keenly ~ man} 3: not synthetic; esp : logically necessary : TAUTOLOGOUS (~ truth) 4: characterized by analysis rather than inflection 5: PSYCHOANALYTIC 6: treated or treatable by or using the methods of algebra and calculus rather than geometry - an.a.lyt.i.cal aj - an.a.lyt.i.cal.ly av - an.a.ly.tic.i.ty).

[object and system]

It would be easy to further galvanize the already heavy emphasis placed in the individual reference (or in the individualization of references) and somehow turn it into an operational strategy of absolute freedom, or into the justification for a lost modernity to which nothing remains to be done except map its traces, list its buildings, index the complexity of its functions.

Attention should be given to a process shifting from the method to the object in the forming of an exploratory system. The process at the larger scale aims to produce a "merged system" of factors of singularity (of objects, of elements, of lines) where the

components pile up and interrelate without destroying each other. In fact, quite the contrary: they become a system without hierarchy of any sort.

One might argue that the system could then be interpreted as a "method", but the question of the object generates it, comes first, is decisive: the object, becoming of an unrecognizable nature compared to other objects within the system, gains, if you will, Plato's "objectivity"; more down to earth, it lives off the same right of the visual amenities that animate any non-place: the new chewing gum, Guatemalan bananas, Venice -- the City of the Doges --, the new Armani scent, a call for a lost cat on a window of a subway train, on a poster, on the side of the highway, under the elevated metro line, existing but playing no part in any integrated synthesis: they simply bear witness in their nature of being equivalent and unconnected.

Why reuniting the individuality of objects into a system, then? And why in an abstracted form, devaluating space and urban figurative elements while turning them into a frozen moment in time, dead, fixed, static, immobile, instead of seeing its links with history, time, and imagery of the city as a dialectic relationship of richness, fecundity, evolution?

Respectively for the two following reasons: first, as previously noted, it seems that the volume and form of the single building/object regardless of function, plays a structurally marginal role in non-place space, opening at the same time any possibility and any semantic *arbitrium*: the result is that of a vast urban banality (the low-tone architecture and the unavoidable presence of the civil engineering), punctuated by single events (the high-tone architectures). The latter, bearing heavy loads of semantic messages, remains unable to have an influence in any way, even a negative one. The sum of many different "good" architectures, then, doesn't guarantee *ipso facto* a "good" urban form. And vice versa: paradoxically, the effective presence of many "ugly" buildings is not *per se* pejorative of contemporary urban space. But more importantly, the dissolution of space and the lack of sensible referents have become an architectural appropriation of an autonomous self-referential vision: the absence and the dematerialization of what-is-specific-to-the-site has become an architectural theme, yet an ambiguous one, let alone a little too available, a bit too convenient. As a result, the action justified or fostered by the dissipation of referents loses its vision and definition at the very moment it physically incorporates their dematerializations and individualities: turning them into "inhabited spaces and functions" becomes a denial of the "things" they might have become and that would have differentiated them from "architecture". We could also say, in brief, that at that point architecture in particular decreases its value while claiming to do the opposite, and in general loses its previous communicative potential.

Other parameters, other conditions, another plasticism, functions, something "other" seems to determine the potential of contemporary city form. The quality or potential of the state of things seems

to lay in the space in-between and the way it is determined by the different individualities through their geometric interrelationship and colliding tensions representative of the fragmentation that is at the core of non-place space's configuration; in the non-volumetric -- but not for this un-architectonic -- intersected, juxtaposed, exploded relations among the singular urban objects regardless of their nature and imagery. From here the importance of exploring these conditions from a systemic point of view rather than merely semantic, fostering a structural thinking of the phenomena instead of relying on more evident aspects of the semantic explosion (without diminishing the importance of researches such as the ones of Venturi and Scott Brown).

Second, history and time has been long associated with schematic and unevincenced notions of evolution, continuity, organic development, and the collective project of existence; it then seems that talking in terms of mere space as individual entity, even more if an abstraction of it, carry with it an air of anti-history and self-referential counter-culture, or in the worst case, it can be generally addressed as a "technocrat" approach. Yet, if what we are trying to explore is the second option previously described (the scantiness of reality as a container of a potential new thinking and operational "order" which is distant from "equilibrium"), then we have to understand that the notion of time and history is questioned as the icon of a culture that not only does not seem to acknowledge non-place, but try to act against it: in other words, abstraction as a form of tracing the form of object implantation, delimitation and demarcation, their modes of tabulation, the organization or non-organization of their domains, and the homogenization of objects and elements into merged systems disestablishing any hierarchical representation of space, alludes not only to an operational strategy, but also to a more general philosophical and, if you will, "political" position: that of abstracting as a mean of throwing into relief processes of power associated with history.

The following synoptic descriptions of the systemic mapping will therefore use experimental terminology that have nothing to share with renown ones, but that do partially derive from them in search for another understanding of form. For instance, it is important to say that within the system or different systems, the object is represented not only in its more evident schizophrenic, linear or volumetric extrusion, but it considers everything included in non-place space: it is not difficult to encounter in peripheral chaos morphologies (mainly residential) still dictated by a weak sign of a resisting roman *centuria*, or by the flowing of a little stream of water of apparently no structural importance, or from an old agricultural asset. These intervene, of course, in the dialectic of the intersections and harsh juxtaposition of the other patterns of disorder and displacement, redefining or discovering uncommon relationships instead of declaring their antinomy.

Instead of trying to control and re-direct reality in a harmonious bonding of urban textures, a new mapping of the city explores the superimposition of layers, intersections, and harsh juxtaposition in order not to recombine, but to see, interpret, combine, shape, and re-shape into potential urban forms: the underlying design objective does not aim to conceal or tame challenges, but to explore and exalt them.

Within the counterassumption of the exploration of an epoch of simultaneity and juxtaposition, this urban scale strategy (or thinking method) is one of a simple abstracted vocabulary of lines and shapes forming a complex network defining a new pattern derived from their intersections: an ensemble of relations generating shapes jaggging one another, set off against each other, implicated by each other. Mapping the city according to the singular identity of its parts and geometrical characteristics could be seen, in a way, and with an other analogy distant from self-contained referents, as the acknowledgment not of a *civitas* composed by proletariat, bourgeois and capitalists, of political parties and their respective physical expressions, but rather as a *civitas* of consumers, travelers, sportsmen, businessman, prostitutes, hobbyists, and rockers. A homogeneous state pervades even the harshest antinomies (formal, spatial, functional).

A palimpsest or a new configuration is then formed, a circulation and relationship of elements with only apparently a random output according to multiple classifications, in the search for some type of relations of propinquity, colliding tension of elements and fluxes in order to achieve a new understanding or foster a new thinking of space through their superimposition; the whole site, then, is read as a complex set of, again, intersections, movements, and harsh juxtapositions launching different spatial associations, allowing to see the intertwining, or *the form of relations*, among the individual objects and their respective archipelagoes.

The search for a common order, familiarity, knowledge, and confidence in the reading and indexing of space might then be replaced by shapes exalting the fragmentation of the present condition: a mapping of the city based on a heuristic abstraction of the different objects might lead to a novel interpretation of the scantiness of reality.

[system of exploration and extrapolation of confusion]

visual imaging:

complex intertwining of simultaneous abstract two-dimensional projections derived from existent conditions.

nature and scope:

open to representation and interpretation in opposition to a representational technicality *a priori* (or coherence of

architectural analysis and drawing). For interpretation here is meant the extension of the simple concept of the architectural drawing extended at the urban scale: drawings can signify more than can be embodied in stabilized frameworks of objectifiable data (traditional cartography and representations): going from the material sign, apparently pointless and useless in its abstraction, into the internal intertwined reality of those lines and shapes, the represented system(s) ceases to be abstraction and start to reveal structure. Their manifestation is not mediated by symbolism, they are not physics nor poetics of space, but, again, structural abstraction of existent conditions. The following abstractions cannot -- ontologically and deliberately -- dissociate the question of collective identity (the resulting system) from that of individual identity (the lines or shapes determining them).

superimposition:

as objects are represented a-hierarchically (see "object and system"), the same strategy is applied to the successive reading of abstractions (or extrapolation of abstraction): contemporaneity of importance of the different systems, instead of execution of a series of progressive linear steps towards a solution. The superimposition phase generates a second set of shape resultants that are more based on the interaction of the components within the (n)systems and not simply by the addition of the (n)systems' properties. In other words, the superimposition of (n)abstractions cannot produce a summation of qualities because no qualities are embedded within their grammar: the outcome is (n)new systems that are different in shape abstraction/representation from its parts because its parts act on each other to produce intersections, rotations, triangulations and subtractions according to their multiple interactions based upon the density of colliding fluxes. Imagine atoms, parts and molecules moving on a planar surface.

construction one (individual synopses):

ABSTRACTION1

continuing straight and curved lines in all transversal directions without limit.

existent/potential transversal fluxes in respect to linear formal axis.

lines: (abstraction/ideal continuation of) roads, paths, elevated metro/rer lines, freeways, highways, snCF/future tgv train tracks.

output: merging of linear elements. original identity and position unidentifiable.

ABSTRACTION2

continuing lines in all directions without limit.

lines: (abstraction/ideal continuation of) roads, infrastructure, orientation of buildings, orientation of plots, direction of blocks.

output: merging of forms and patterns; interrelationship between linear and punctual elements; abstraction of identification of colliding tension. original identity and position unidentifiable.

ABSTRACTION3

squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles. overlapped.
shapes: dominant forms as abstraction/primitive shape containers of similar incomplete archipelagoes' geometries (blocks, aggregation of blocks of same orientation and direction)
output: dominant abstraction of existent patterns; geometric abstraction of displacement in overlapping shape resultants.

ABSTRACTION4

squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles. overlapped.
shapes: abstraction/primitive form containers of incomplete archipelagoes' geometries (blocks, aggregation of blocks of same orientation and direction, pre-existent or existent linking paths, rotation of primitive shapes displaced respect to surrounding pattern(s), main infrastructural arteries as linear closed geometries, underground/hidden infrastructure via instances of their presence, vertical barriers -- abrupt change of level, above-ground tunnels -- horizontal barriers -- visual permeability of unreachable areas). cemeteries, backspaces, loading and unloading areas, squatted degraded structures, gas stations, empty lots as places at night (prostitution, drug smoking and injection).

output: merging of forms, objects, physical and visual patterns; interrelationship between abstraction of physical and experiential realms -- original identity and position unidentifiable. geometric abstraction of displacement in overlapping shape resultants -- identification of visual and/or spatial tension as potential shape generators.

ABSTRACTION5

continuing lines in all directions within overlapped squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles.
lines: (abstraction/ideal continuation of) roads, infrastructure, orientation of buildings, orientation of plots, direction of blocks.

shapes: abstraction/primitive form containers of incomplete archipelagoes' geometries (abstraction3).

output: merging of forms, objects and patterns: original identity and position unidentifiable; intensity of visual and/or spatial tension according to density of continuing lines in overlapping shape resultants -- abstraction of colliding tension.

construction two (synopses of dual and trial superimposition):
superimposition of abstractions. extrapolation of dominant primitive shapes and lines. generation of shapes with potential form. generation of relationships lines as shapes with potential form.

EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION1)

lines and polygons.
extrapolation of superimposition of abstractionland2:
intersections and multiple successive triangulation at
intersection and/or tangential points according to density of flux
of abstraction2.
output: generation of abstract shapes and relative relationships
with potential form.

EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION2)

lines and polygons.
extrapolation of superimposition of abstractionland3: multiple
successive intersections and triangulations among lines, squares,
rectangles, trapezoids, triangles and respective shape resultants
via their overlapping.
output: generation of abstract shapes and relative relationships
with potential form.

EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION3)

lines and polygons.
extrapolation of superimposition of abstraction2and3: multiple
successive intersections and triangulations among lines, squares,
rectangles, trapezoids, triangles, and respective shape resultants
via their overlapping.
output: second generation of shapes and relative relationships
with potential form as iteration/reductive effect of
superimposition2.

EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION4)

lines and polygons.
extrapolation of superimposition of abstraction3and4: multiple
intersections and triangulations among squares, rectangles,
trapezoids, triangles and respective shape resultants via their
overlapping; rotation of polygons around pivotal intersections
according to density of colliding tension, and successive
subtraction from original shape.
output: generation of abstract shapes and relative relationships
with potential form.

EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION5)

lines and polygons.
extrapolation of superimposition of abstraction2,3and4: multiple
intersections and triangulations among lines, squares, rectangles,
trapezoids, triangles and respective shape resultants via their
overlapping; rotation of polygons around pivotal intersections
according to density of colliding tension, and successive
subtraction from original shape.
output: generation of abstract shapes and relative relationships
with potential form.

EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION6)

lines and polygons.
extrapolation of superimposition of abstraction3,4and5: multiple
intersections and triangulations among lines, squares, rectangles,

trapezoids, triangles and respective shape resultants via their overlapping; rotation of polygons around pivotal intersections according to density of colliding tension, and successive subtraction from original shape.

output: generation of abstract shapes and relative relationships with potential form. iteration/reductive effect of superimposition⁴.

construction three (shape resultants):

ACCEPTANCE1

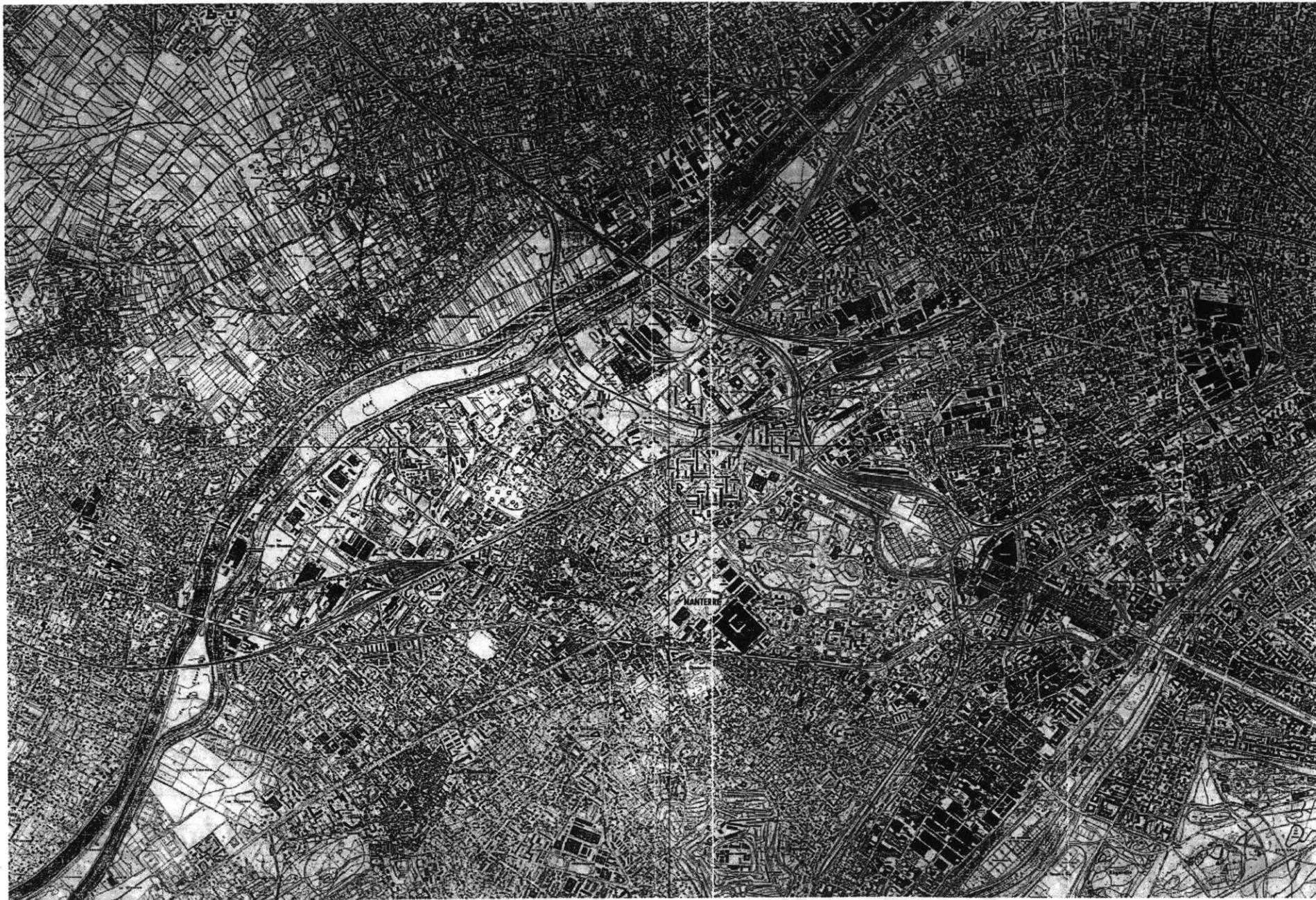
urban strategy as one of the possible interpretations of multiple superimpositions of abstraction. extrapolation and extrusion of primitive shapes and lines. transformation of relationship lines in shapes. transformation of shape generators in extruded shapes.

[from shape to form]

Are these representations architectural metaphors or are they synthesized in a project? Are these representations architectural metaphors of the terminal or the initial explosion of contemporary form?

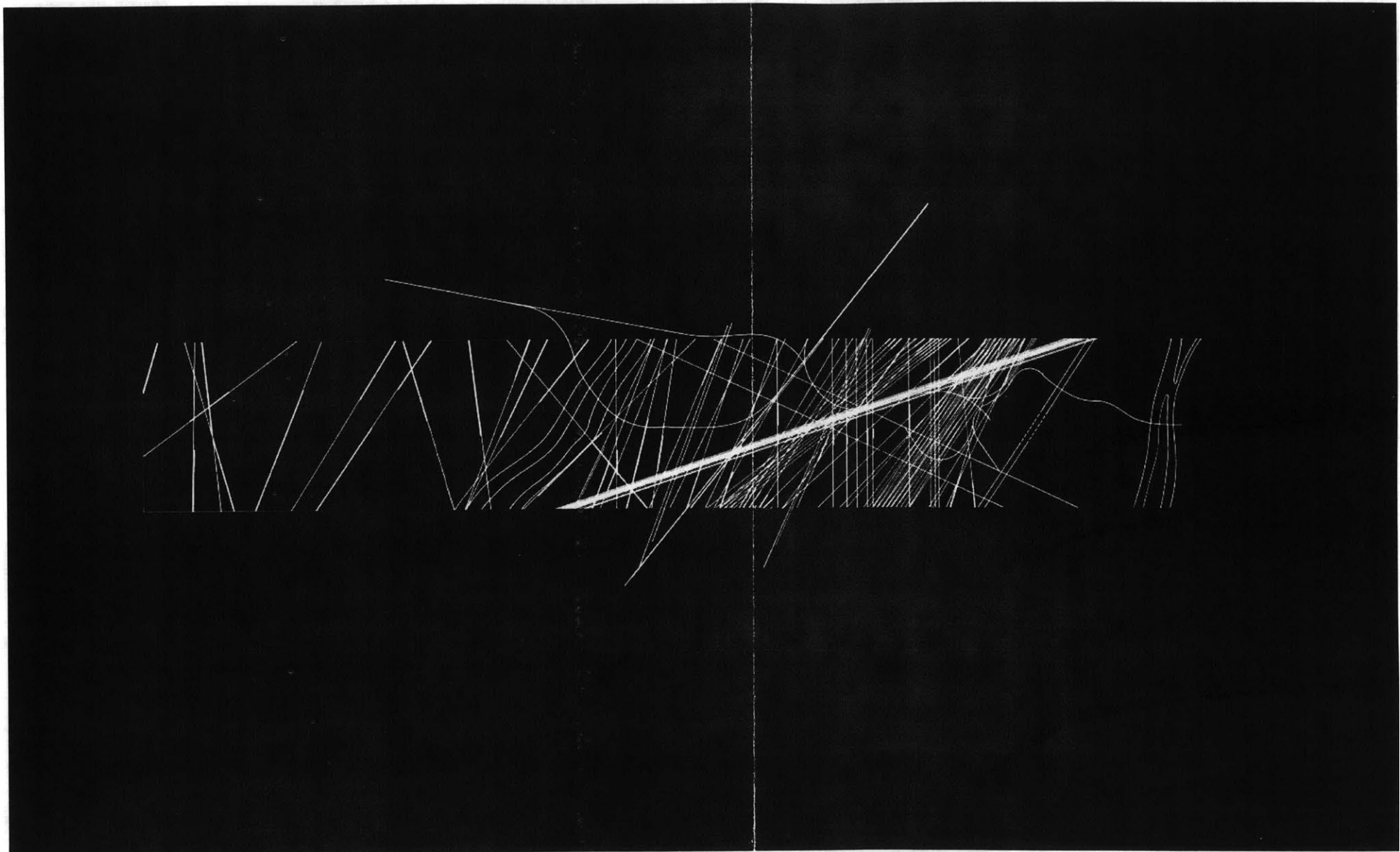
Transposing content into spatial operation is the objective of the last map (acceptance1). However, it is an example of one of the numerous spatial configurations that are possible, according to the interpretation given to the different shape generators (volumes, voids, voids inside volumes, etc.).

The superimpositions of abstractions do not form a prescriptive or deterministic palimpsest leading to an automatic inferential generation of form; abstraction is not achieved by the elimination of contents leading to a linear step-by-step process towards a Plan, but it is to be intended as a complex structural essence the two-dimensional manifestations of which are open to an interpretation of the several sub-systems' flat projections (no more blocks, open spaces or infrastructure here), now open to three-dimensional investigation.

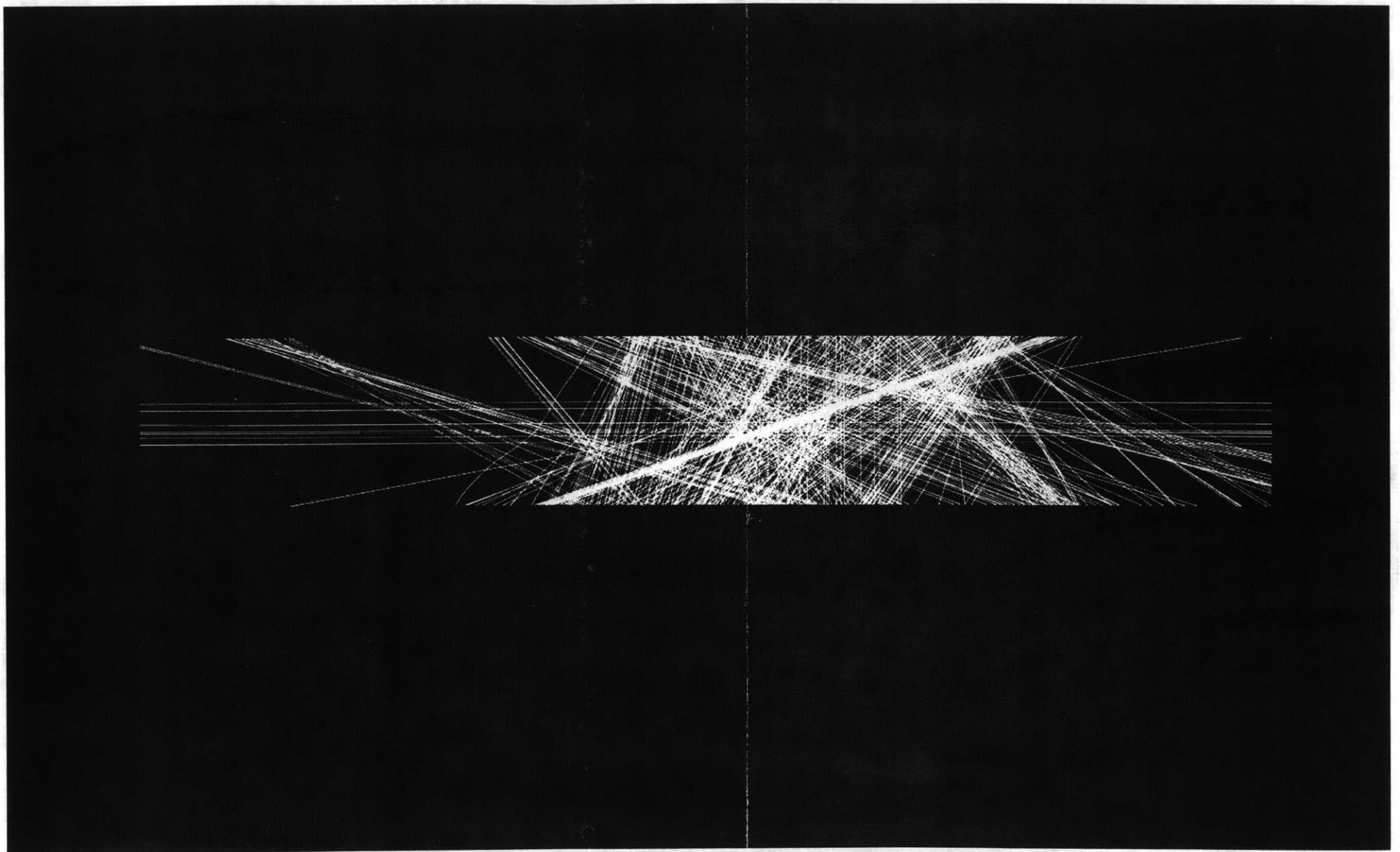


paris nanterre , west of la defense

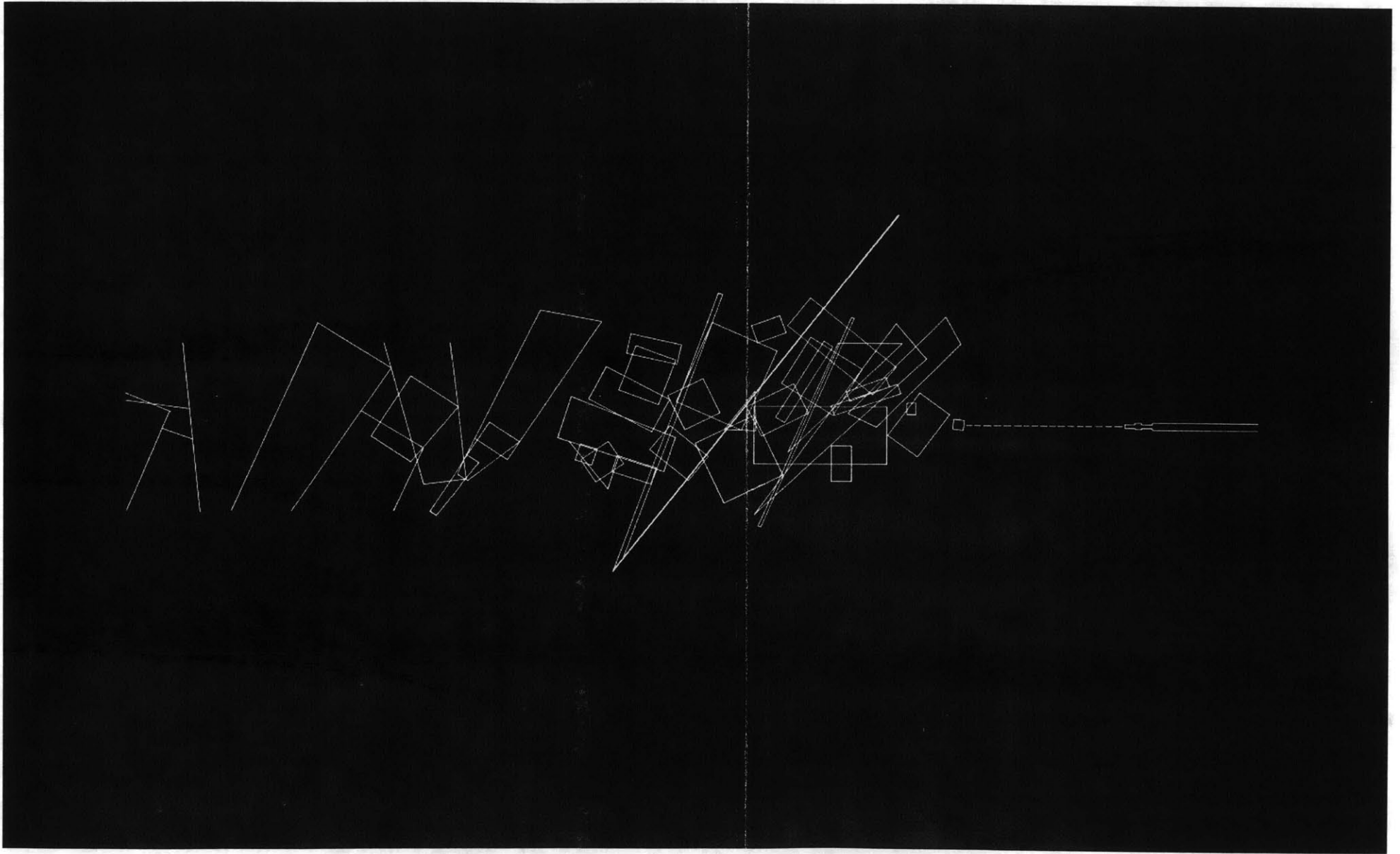




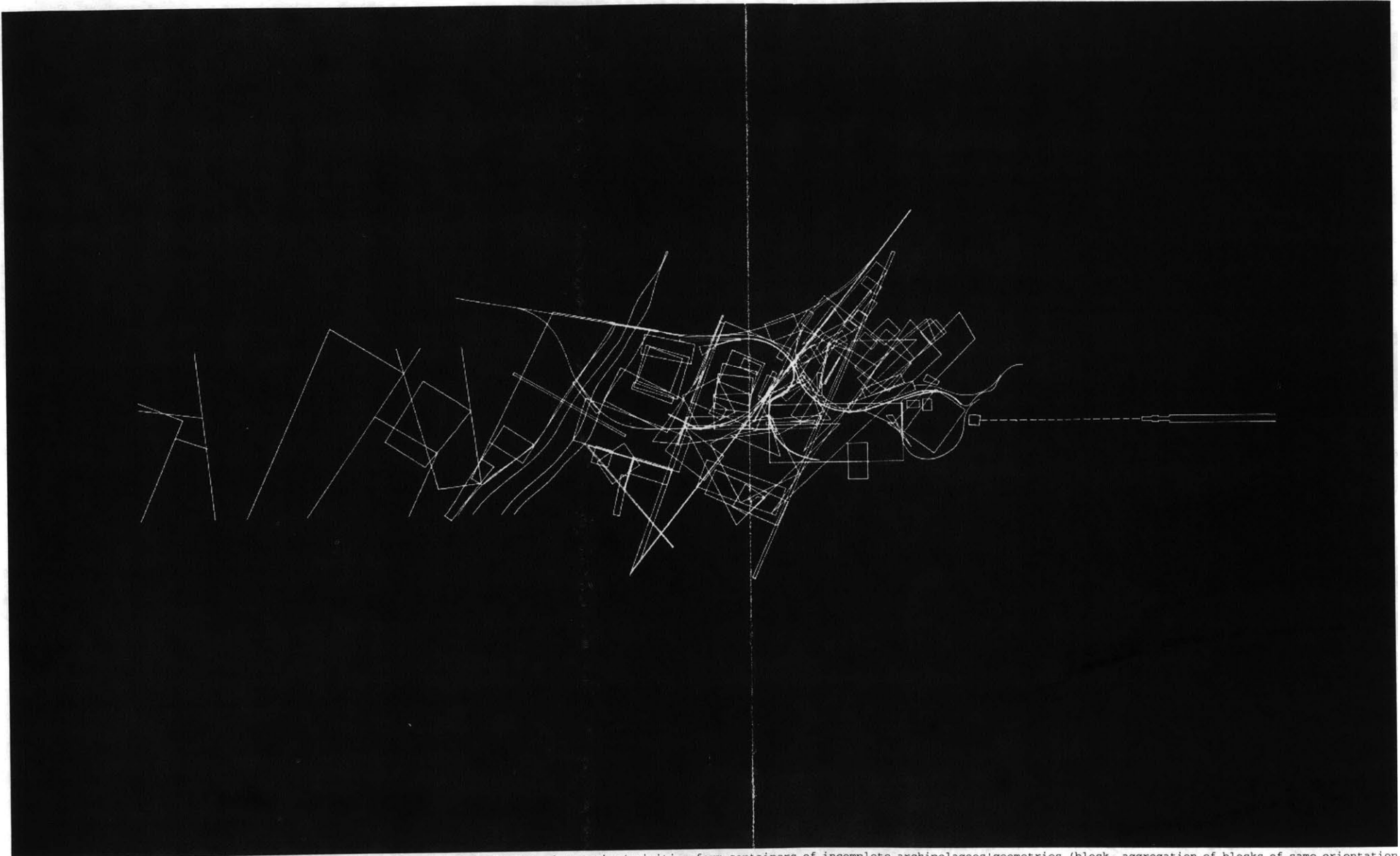
ABSTRACTION1 continuing straight and curved lines in all transversal directions without limit. existent/potential transversal fluxes in respect to linear formal axis. LINES: (abstraction/ideal continuation of) roads, paths, elevated metro/rer lines, freeways, highways, sncf/future tgv train tracks. OUTPUT: merging of linear elements. original position and identity unidentifiable.



ABSTRACTION2 continuing lines in all directions without limit. LINES: (abstraction/ideal continuation of) roads, infrastructure, orientation of buildings, orientation of plots, direction of blocks. OUTPUT: merging of forms and patterns; interrelationship between linear and punctual elements; abstraction/identification of colliding tension. original identity and position unidentifiable.



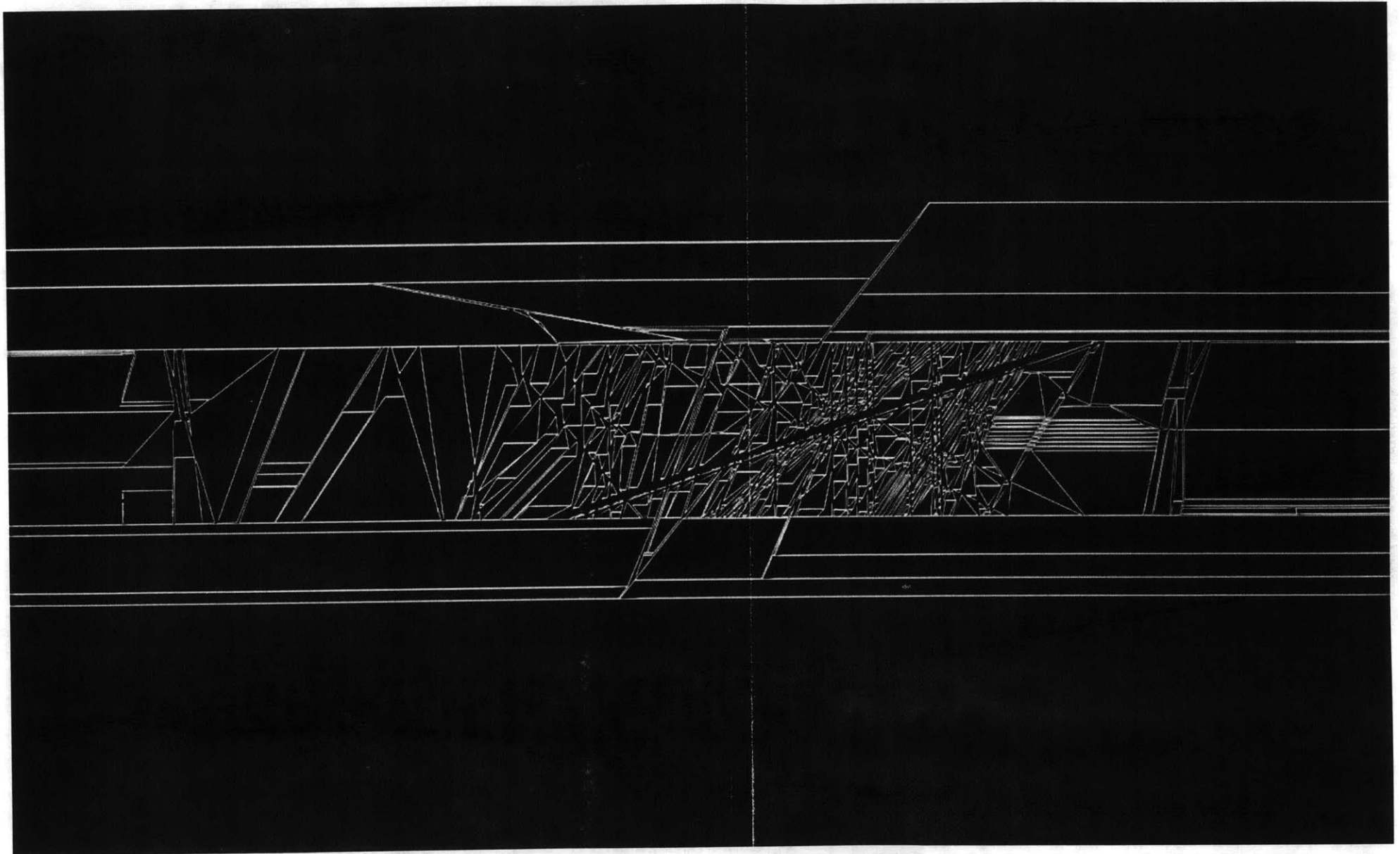
ABSTRACTION3 squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles. overlapped. SHAPES: dominant forms as abstraction/primitive shape containers of similar incomplete archipelagoes' geometries (blocks, aggregation of blocks of same orientation and direction). OUTPUT: dominant abstraction of existent patterns; geometric abstraction of displacement in overlapping shape resultants.



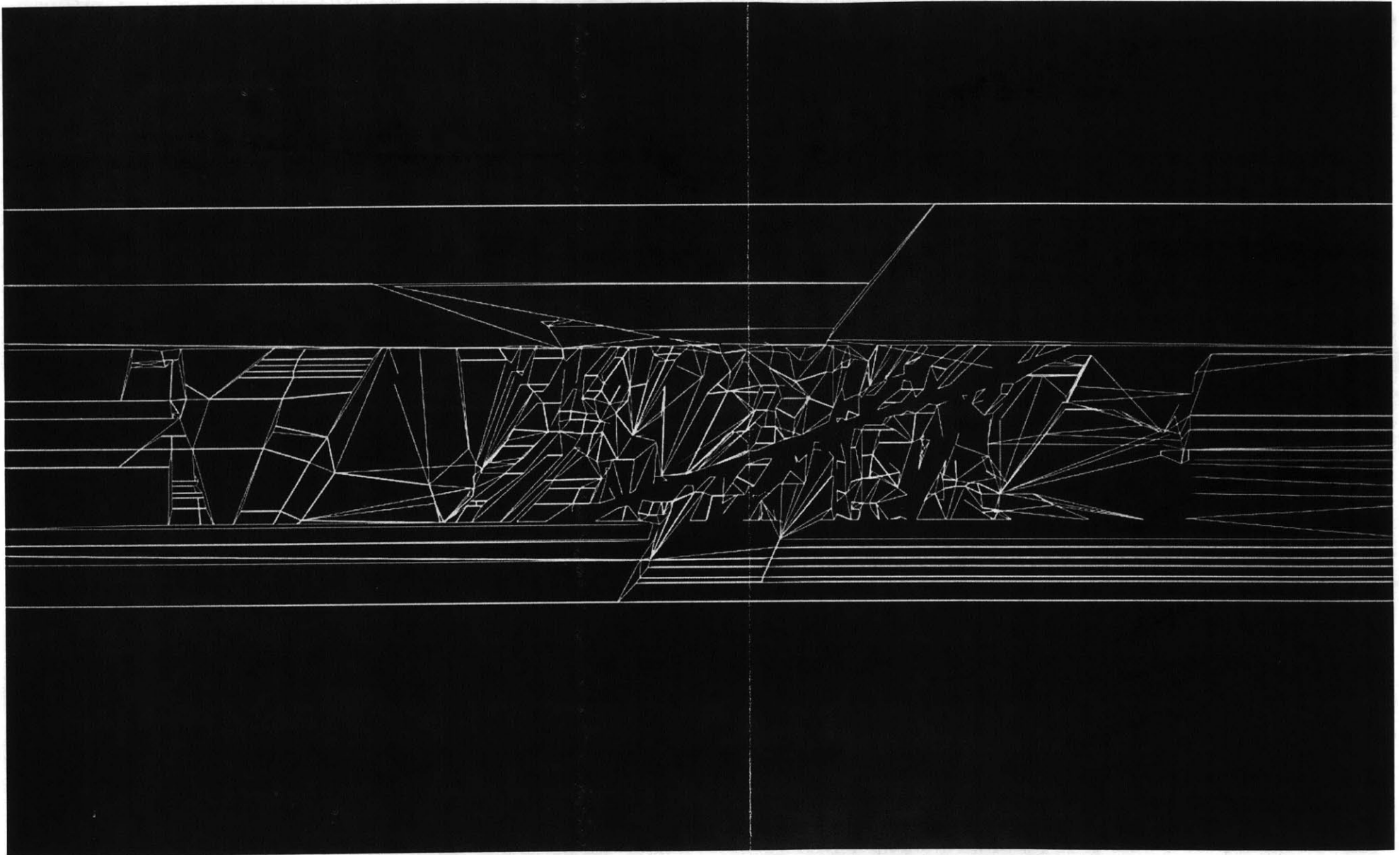
ABSTRACTION4 squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles. overlapped. SHAPES: abstraction/primitive form containers of incomplete archipelagoes' geometries (block, aggregation of blocks of same orientation and direction, pre-existent or existent linking paths, rotation of primitive shapes displaced respect to surrounding pattern(s), main infrastructural arteries as linear closed geometries, underground/hidden infrastructure via instances of their presence, vertical barriers -- abrupt change of level, above-ground tunnels -- horizontal barriers -- visual permeability of unreachable areas, squatted degraded structures, gas stations, empty lots as places at night (prostitution, drug smoking and injection) OUTPUT: merging of forms, objects, physical and visual patterns, interrelationship between abstraction of physical and experiential realms -- original identity and position unidentifiable. geometric abstraction of displacement in overlapping shape resultants -- identification of visual and/or spatial tension as potential shape generators.



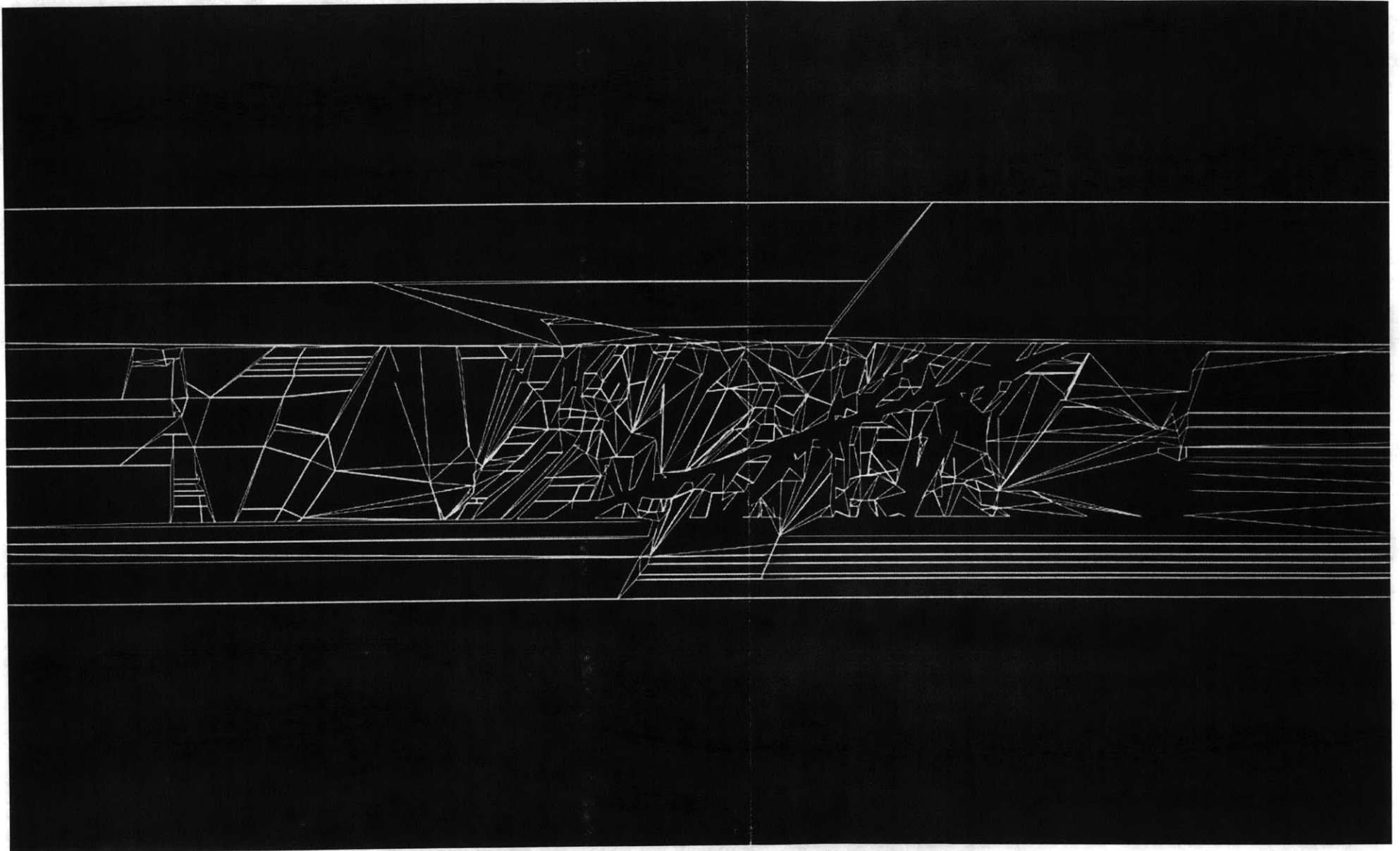
ABSTRACTIONS continuing lines in all directions within overlapped squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles. LINES: (abstraction/ideal continuation of) roads, infrastructure, orientation of buildings, orientation of plots, direction of blocks. SHAPES: abstraction/primitive form containers of incomplete archipelagoes' geometries (abstraction4). OUTPUT: merging of forms, objects and patterns: original identity and position unidentifiable; intensity of visual and/or spatial tension according to density of continuing lines in overlapping shape resultants -- abstraction of colliding tension.



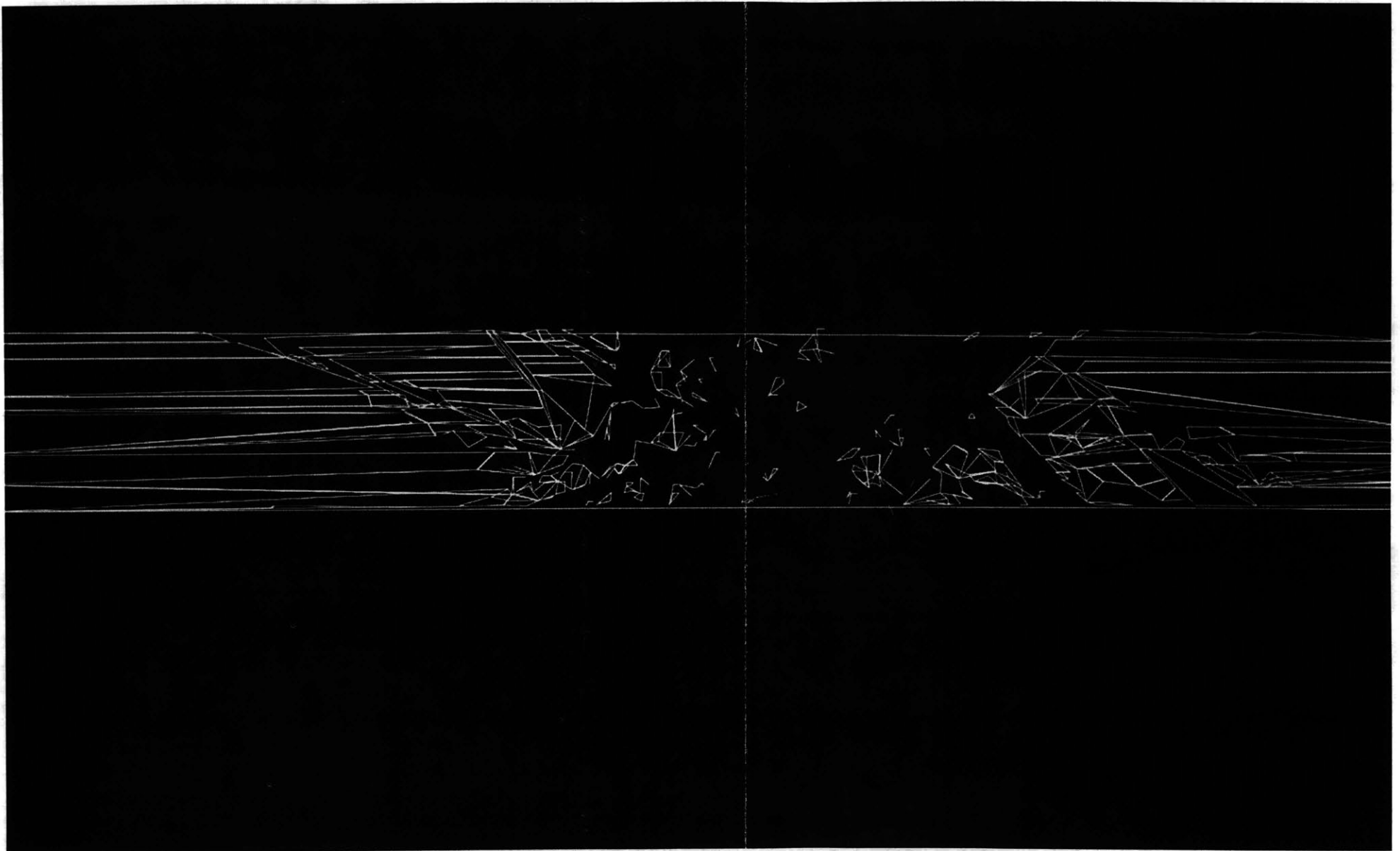
EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION1) lines and polygons. extrapolation of superimposition of abstraction2and3: multiple successive intersections and triangulations among lines, squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles and respective shape resultants via their overlapping. OUTPUT: generation of abstract shapes and relative relationships with potential form.



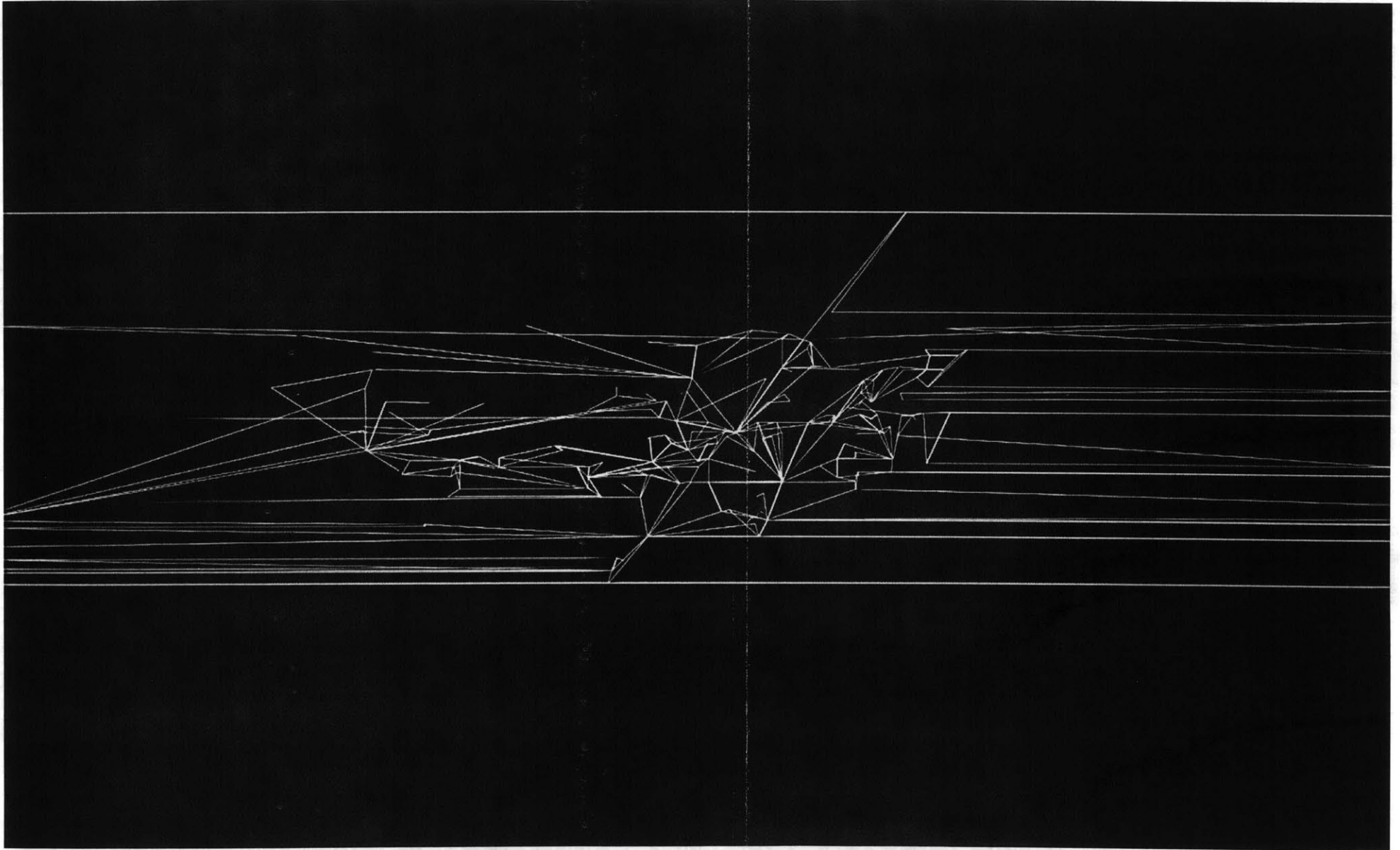
EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION2) lines and polygons. extrapolation of abstractionland3: multiple successive intersections and triangulations among lines, squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles, and respective shape resultants via their overlapping. OUTPUT: generation of abstract shapes and relative relationships with potential form.



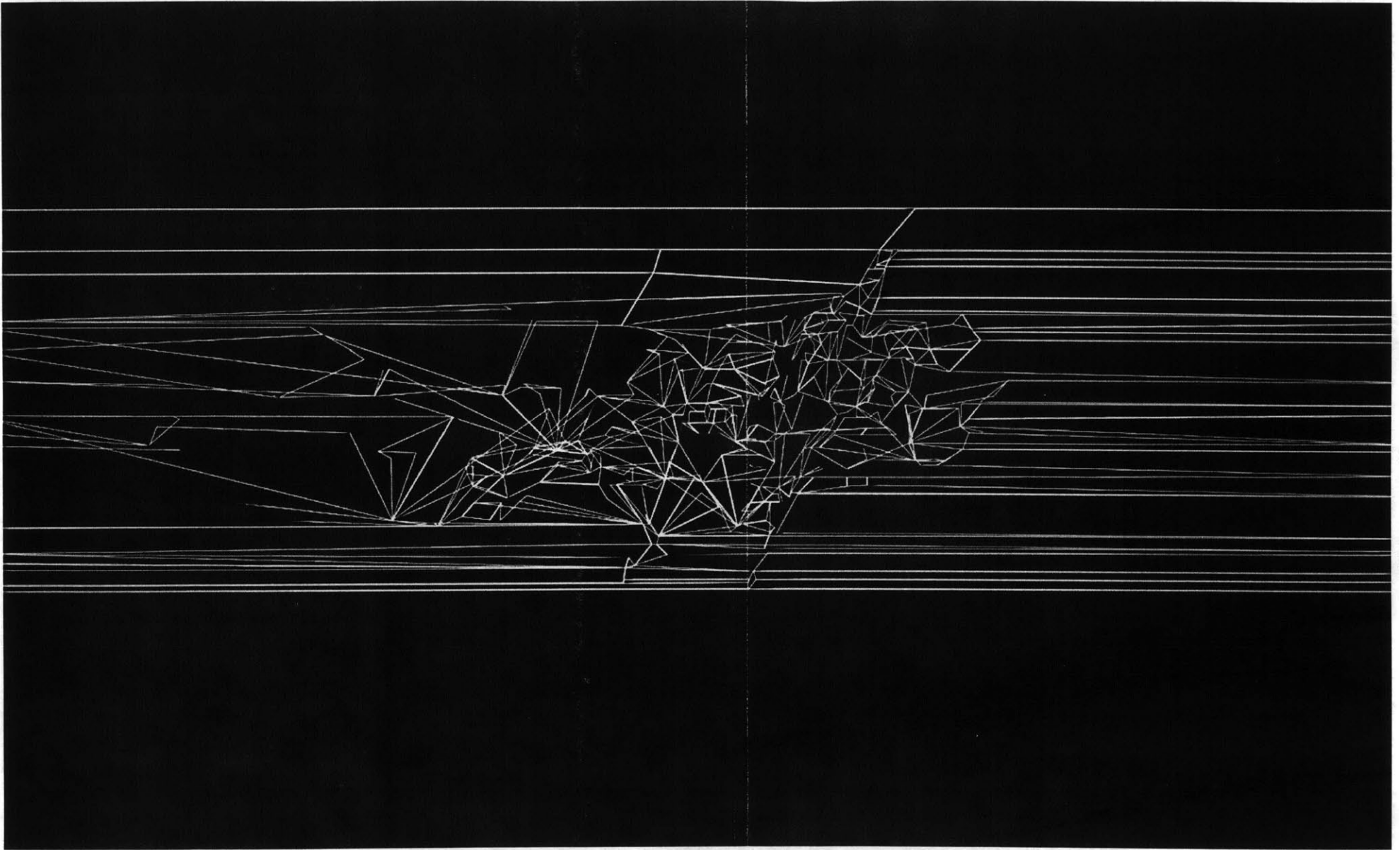
EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION2) lines and polygons. extrapolation of abstractionland3: multiple successive intersections and triangulations among lines, squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles, and respective shape resultants via their overlapping. OUTPUT: generation of abstract shapes and relative relationships with potential form.



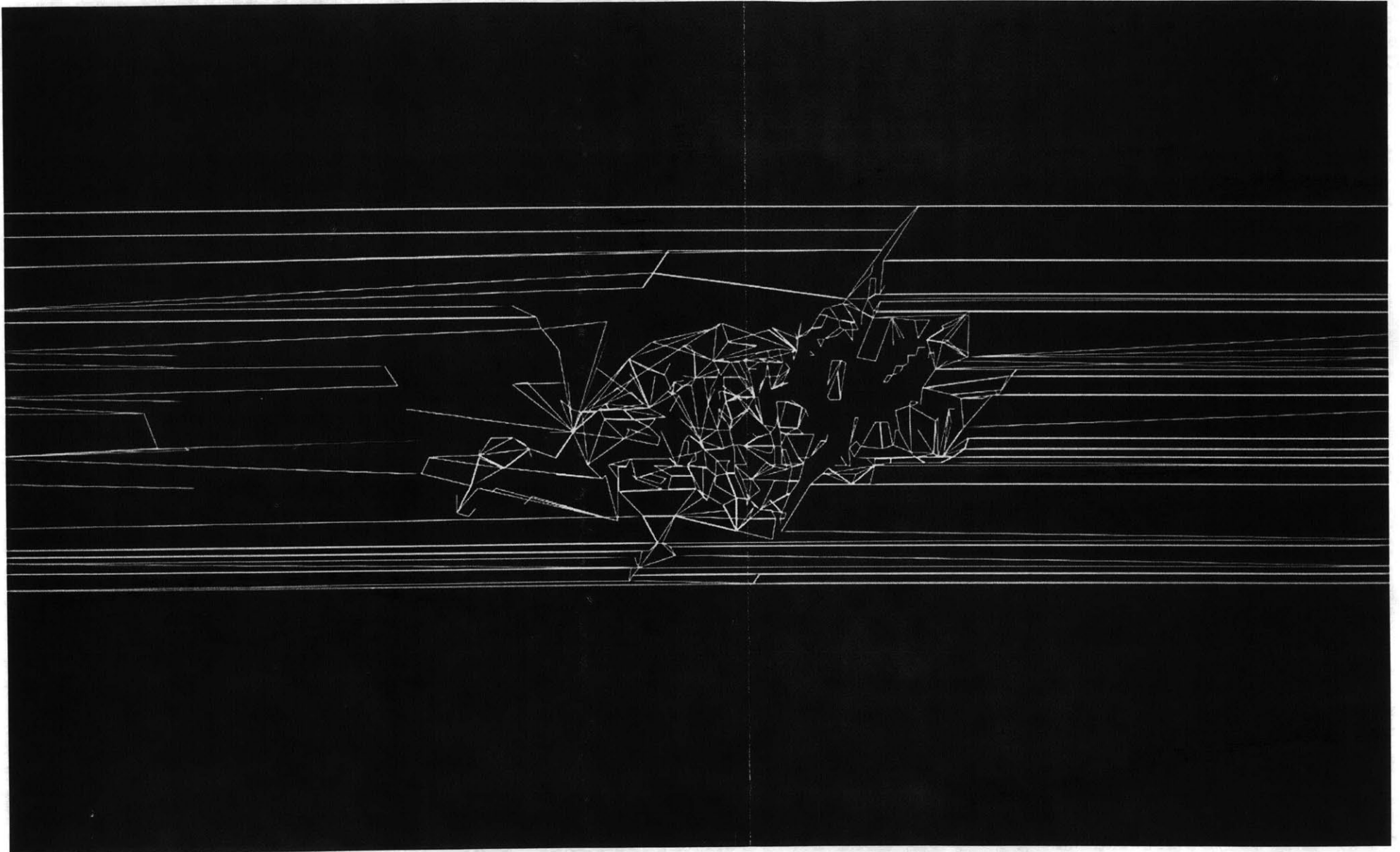
EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION3) lines and polygons. extrapolation of superimposition of abstraction2and3: multiple successive intersections and triangulations among lines, squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles, and respective shape resultants via their overlapping. OUTPUT: second generation of shapes and relative relationships with potential form as iteration/reductive effect of superimposition2.



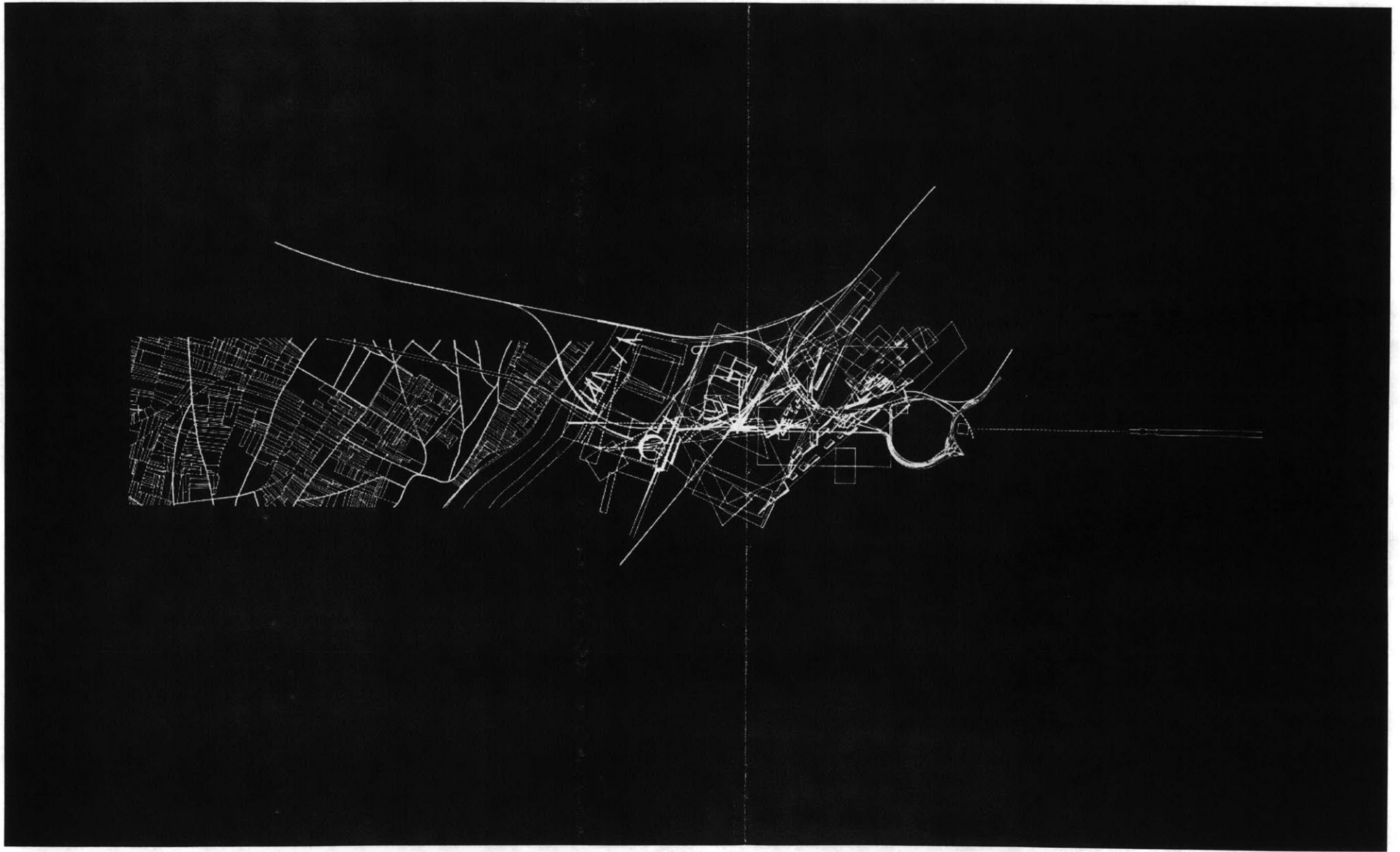
EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION4) lines and polygons. extrapolation of superimposition of abstraction3and4: multiple intersections and triangulations among squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles and respective shape resultants via their overlapping; rotation of polygons around pivotal intersections according to density of colliding tension, and successive subtraction from original shape. OUTPUT: generation of abstract shapes and relative relationships with potential form.



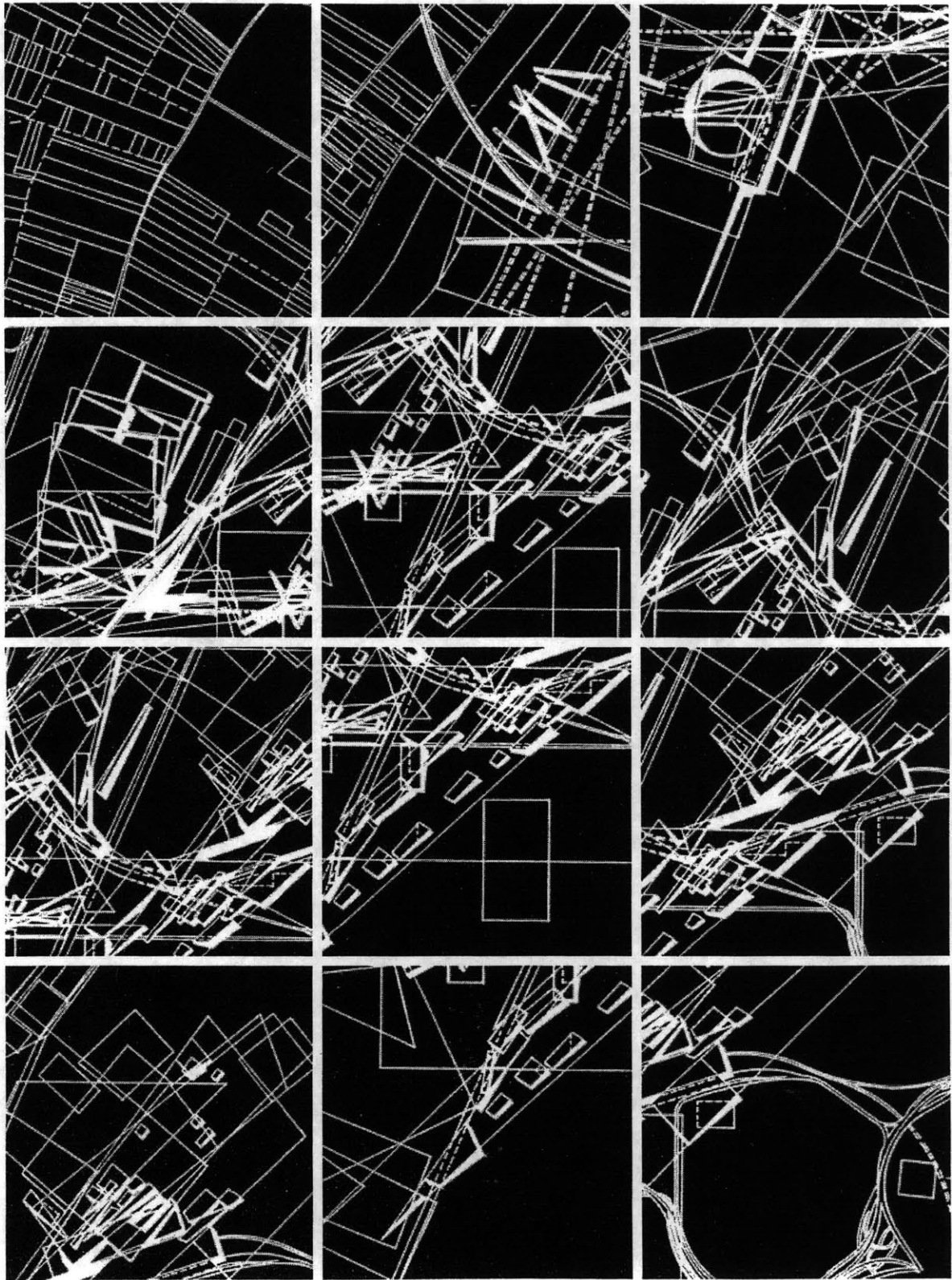
EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION5) lines and polygons. extrapolation of superimposition of abstraction2,3and4: multiple intersections and triangulations among lines, squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles and respective shape resultants via their overlapping; rotation of polygons around pivotal intersections according to density of colliding tension, and successive subtraction from original shape. OUTPUT: generation of abstract shapes and relative relationships with potential form.

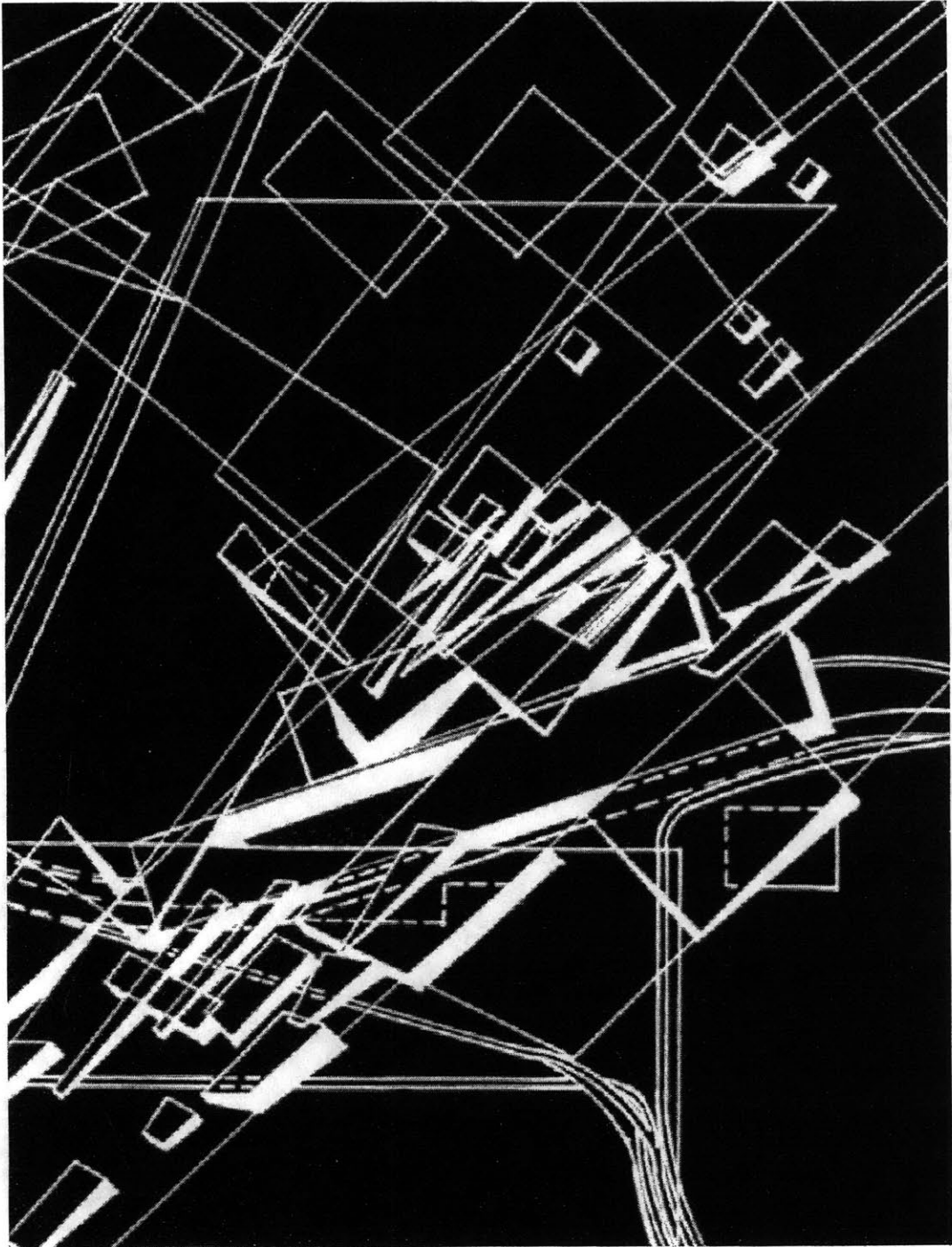


EXTRAPOLATION OF ABSTRACTION (SUPERIMPOSITION6) lines and polygons. extrapolation of superimposition of abstraction3,4and5: multiple intersections and triangulations among lines, squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles and respective shape resultants via their overlapping; rotation of polygons around pivotal intersections according to density of colliding tension, and successive subtraction from original shape. OUTPUT: generation of abstract shapes and relative relationships with potential form. iteration/reductive effect of superimposition4.



ACCEPTANCE1 urban strategy as interpretation of multiple superimpositions of abstractions. extrapolation and extrusion of primitive shapes and lines. transformation of relationship lines in shapes. transformation of shape generators in extruded shapes.





HEURISTIC DESIGN INVESTIGATIONS 2
on three-dimensional interpretation
(or the architectural form of non-place)

[3d exploration of the acceptance of extrapolation of abstraction]

The design investigation at the larger context is now subject to further exploration. The shape generators interpreted into a general urban planar configuration can then be exploited and turned into form: we are entering into the architectural interpretation/representation of non-place.

Just like the design exploration at urban scale, the approach to architectural intervention is challenging traditional design processes. Intervening within a physical and cultural framework impossible to synthesize requires to work according to a non-linear method, following a speculative approach: an alternative generative process.

The design exploration aims to explore two concepts present throughout the work:

- 1) Ontological: a representation of non-place space through design.
- 2) Processual: the change of scale and the shift to three-dimensional representation requires a shift in the design process involved in regard to the abstraction system of the previous investigation.

[ontology of space:]

[reasoning on the design exploration of non-place]

I have been questioning whether contemporary notions of "publicness" have disappeared, are fading away, or have been transformed into new forms of putting one owns body in public. We might see this new way as no longer related to the notions of "staying", "pausing", and their traditional scenarios typically represented by "the square", the "pedestrian street", the "public garden", the "downtown galleries and shopping areas", the "peaceful street corner". The verb "to pause" implies that, eventually, we will move on: a contemporary notion of "public space" should stress this ever-increasing concept of "pausing", and turn it into an urban form.

Of the infinite themes that seem to throw the validity of architectural design out of the game, one seems to assume the characteristic of an irreversible crisis: in the production of public metropolitan space, both the conceptual and figurative potential of "the design project" appears as sterile. "Squares" in the contemporary city continue to be designed and produced for the simple reason that they continue to be evoked by architects and planners, administrators, and by common people; but any new square seems to enhance a sense of agensis and impotence, no convincing identity, and ultimately a confirmation of its out-of-placelessness regardless of the success, or lack thereof, of its design. Simply, it doesn't seem that the destructured landscape of peripheral areas allows to use the formal categories that are

usually re-evoked: to persist in their use generally produces a final effect of desolation, an enhanced disorientation, and a lack of sensible referents even more than the original situation. A square: and to do what?

The quest shifts to the search of some form of contemporary civitas, some sort of shared meaningful experience that we can alternatively refer to. Is there a possibility to continue identifying a space which is "public" but not necessarily "collective", and consequently derive from it a new thinking of urban form? Is there any possibility to re-saw form to meaning, events to space and scope?

Traffic arteries, railways, highways, underground transportation, and their adjacent spaces constitute one of the most important physical and social matrixes of the city. They are a potential place for a new urban attitude and construction, yet their locus still remains largely unexplored, if not euphemized or concealed. If infrastructure is the backbone of the metropolitan city, then it should be re-seen not as the connecting network of a Langian Metropolis, but as the very toponymy of the word "metropolis": matrix, mother, the generator of *something else*. Transportation nodes, such as the Metro/RER station chosen as site of this design, set a new scenario for a contemporary condition of human contact, and new urban expressions might become their spatial resultant both under and above ground, ultimately revealing their essence as an urban fact.

At this point, a re-definition of the functional and physical potential of these non-place spaces, and a reflection over their latent attributes of complexity and richness becomes needed. Just like an elevated metro line or a freeway overpass are not and cannot exhaust themselves in their obvious monofunctional role -- as their iconic meaning within the city overrules the importance of their original function (becoming at the same time a real and metaphorical "roof") -- so today the subway station cannot limit itself to be a subway station. As simple as that.

Let me explain.

In general terms, the parameters or variables in game are in ever-increasing growth (and we are back to the frustrated systems in physics). This brings us to justify the simple statement above in an inextricable social and physical elaboration towards a new operational thinking process.

First, from a simple physical point of view, the structural and functional solidity of an infrastructural artery can be questioned in its deterministic/prescriptive checking of an exiguous number of parameters (clearing, slope, base, ramps, stairways, ventilation shafts, and so on), and could be exploited into more complex spaces capable to formalize more and more integrated and intertwined spaces, functions, and aesthetics away from an architecture that covers a decorative role exhausting itself in a pillar of Nervian torsion or of a Calatravian plasticism, but

architecture that starts to think them as real occasions for the construction of a new urban asset.

Second and most important, to choose a metro station as a design exploration to simultaneously address alternative cultural and processual objectives, needs to be further explained from a wider point of view. This with particular reference to the design's a-functional and a-programmatic standpoint, physically resulting in an encroachment of the metro station with a bundle of spaces "waiting-to-be-inhabited" by the most diverse and, again, intertwined and non-predictable functions.

To begin, the word "non-place" as it has been described in so far designates two complementary but distinct realities: spaces formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure, adjacent areas, and so-called left-overs) and the relations that individuals have with these spaces. The result is that these non-places bring with them a whole set of relations -- with the self and with others -- which are only indirectly connected with their purposes: if traditional places of, say, historical centers create or still represent the organically social, non-place creates the solitary contractuality.

So why such counter-functional position. It seems that the culturalist view of societies, in its effort to be systematic, has got obvious limitations: to synthesize a singular culture is to ignore its intrinsically problematic character, a complexity of social texture and a variety of individual positions that do not seem deducible or represented by the functional categories of present planning and architecture practice. The organization of space in non-place follows a complex founding of "places" that are at the same time collective in terms of sharing a space, and largely individual in practice. If we decide to acknowledge a simultaneous thinking about singular identity and shared relations, then we have to take into account the components of shared identity (shared by the whole of the group, or the actual waiting and catching of the train), particular identity (of a given group or individual in relation to others, or what happens and what they could do before catching the train), and singular identity what makes the individual or group of individuals different from any other, or why they are doing it or wish to do it before catching the train). Complex indeed, and indeed as undefinable as the anthropology of supermodernity appears to be today.

Let's consider, in other words, two commonplaces, one for the individuality, the other for the community: the Aristotelian "every body occupies its place", and "form follows function". It seems to me that the proper functional place, as much as absolute individuality, becomes more difficult to define and think about in our times.

The handling of space in the project is one of the means to this end: spaces that are simultaneously open to any function -- temporary as well as definitive, yet appropriated in a non-place

form of "colonization" -- and that are the physical manifestation of the superimpositions, movements, intersections, and harsh juxtaposition characterizing non-place space as previously described. This specific place/non-place is perceived as containing a order/non-order in which elements are distributed in relations of random coexistence, and becomes an instantaneous configuration of potentially multiple positions: this means that the elements (spaces and individuals) coexisting in the same place may be distinct and singular, but that does not prevent them from being in relationship, or representing a shared identity conferred on them by their common occupancy of the place. It becomes, rewinding back to the first chapter, the exact contrary of the image that we are no longer; they develop into the appearance and proliferation of non-places.

The interesting thing seems to be how, starting from these preoccupations, and following an alternative design process based upon such intentions, spaces are produced that can indeed be recognized not as a mere metaphor, or artistic expression, but as space: another notion of space, maybe definable as an anthropological architecture of non-place.

It is however important to say that this simultaneous symbolic and concrete construction of non-place is not intended to merely address the commonplace of the vicissitudes and contradictions of contemporary social life, but serves as a thinking process in the construction of space for all those it assigns a position. In the design of these spaces, we cannot extend theoretical approaches of deterministic influence, and the search for global solutions, and not even superimpose the certainties of our individual world and experience. Any of these spaces are aimed to be able to spatially exist without necessarily need to arrive at any particular identification of the function/use of each one of them: we could define it as a dematerialized use of the occupied space, almost virtual except physical, fulfilling a function to which is never required to produce an identity. After all, no contemporary metropolitan societies result rooted nor rootable in a specific physical context, characterized by a particular spatial physiognomy inside a determined social space. With a crude analogy, we could say that the people in those metropolitan bazaars on the side of a highway, in a food court, or in a large subway station node, freely decide to live those spaces without finding nor trying to find any identity to mirror themselves in, or any sort of collective acting and gathering on the contrary of the people who, at night, used to fill public squares in the past. I would argue that they look for the relaxing over-contextual uniformity of space that allows the "nomad" to recognize (a service station, a duty free shop, an empty space under an elevated metro line) without knowing anything of it, and regardless of their geographic location; moreover, to have the chance to have a "place" in a social context without being called to take part in it, without necessarily having to reach an integration with the many individualities that temporarily occupy those spaces. Therefore, the collective action taking place in

non-place remains the *summation* of single individualities, and seldom arrives to express the *integral* of a common public identity.

In other words, non-place is the contrary of utopia: it exists now and doesn't host any organic society. This is not to be taken negatively: the three-dimensional design exploration reflects that lack of the possibility to categorize the relationship between form, space, and functional programming, and at the same time stays away from the easy cradles of nihilism and poetics. If all of this is arguable as an oversimplification of architecture, I can only reply that it seems to me to disclose the versatility of a formal and functional microcosm that wants to tell its story and has never had the chance to through architecture, but only in their natural, spontaneous appropriation of space in non-place.

In brief, three are the points addressed by the design:

- 1) a physical expression of the cultural features of non-place.
- 2) a generative process aiming to address an architecture that starts to critically think about the immutability of its product, and the abandonment of the notion of temporal and spatial "completeness".
- 3) its development underground as a metaphor of a non-place reality still unacknowledged aboveground: this notion is reinforced by its design process, following an inside-out generative sequencing of design decisions, rather than the outside-in traditional processes of the "aboveground".

Through its alternative generative process (from two-dimensional abstraction to three-dimensional design exploration, allowing more and more subjective decisions to intrude), the project questions the notion of space and function, and develops a new way of thinking and dealing with contemporary urban forms: an exploration of the rapture between public and private (the acceptance of public space as private space: a city built upon intimacy); an openness to transform, grow and become something else than its design rather than architecture as the final step of the design process fulfilling a program; architecture as an instrument of perception within its own exploration of vastness, solitude, squalor, as an idiosyncratic relationship with the physicality of reality; the creation of our own personal order, familiarity, knowledge, confidence within the displacement and fragmentation of space. Its functional and perceptual openness overturns traditional assumptions about the deterministic, permanent, unique, and autographic nature of the architectural scale.

When an international flight crosses Saudi-Arabia, the hostess announces that during the overflight the drinking of alcohol will be forbidden in the aircraft. This signifies the intrusion of territory and culture into space. Returning after an hour or so to the non-place of space, escaping from the totalitarian constraints of place, will be just like a return to something resembling freedom.

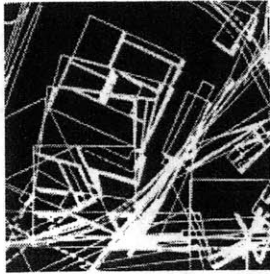
[on an alternative architectural process]

The process refers to a discursive formation that is not defined in terms of a particular program, form or object, not a style, neither is based on permanent concepts, nor of a persistence of a thematic, but, following the abstraction system at the larger scale, it becomes a system itself only through an irregular or random dispersion of social and physical "statements".

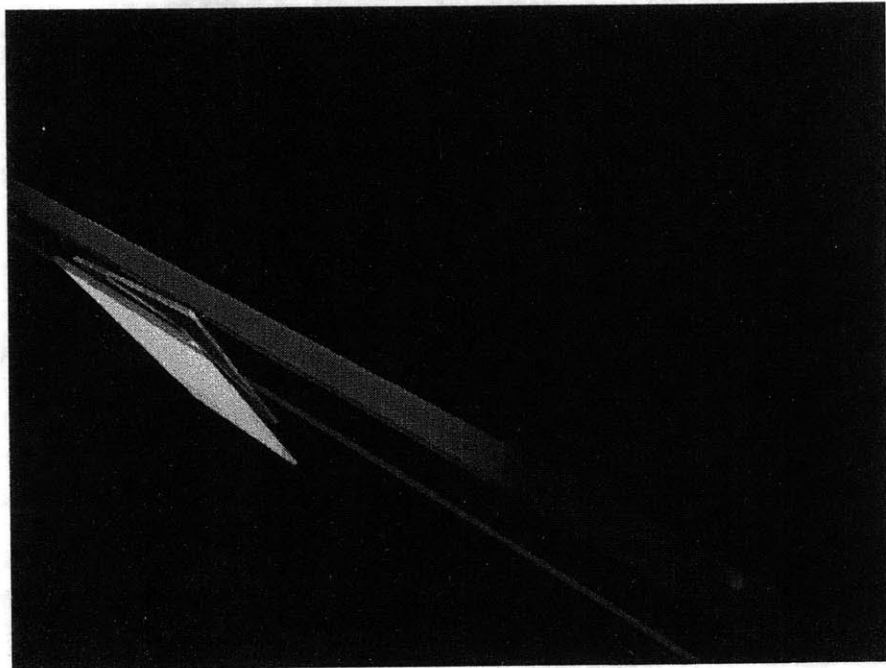
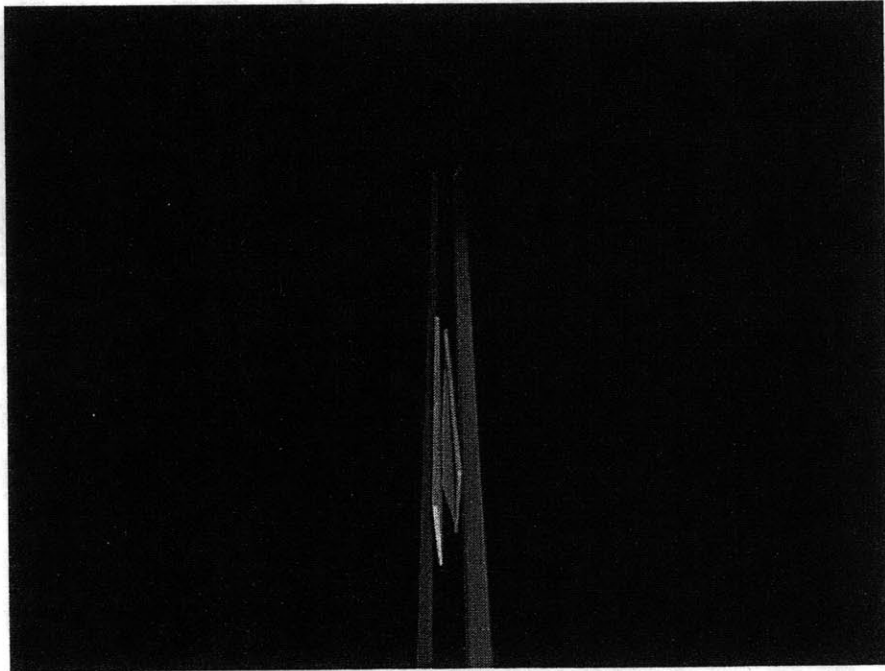
The design investigation is a three-dimensional exploration of two-dimensional abstraction. Its construction evolves through a phenomenological representation viewpoint at architectural scale: the design tool is heuristic and experiential (therefore following an inside-out generative process) typically away from the linearity of sketched conceptualizations, followed by formalizations of the generative idea into traditional two-dimensional design representations through a back and forth process between plans, sections and elevations while conjecturing its spatial three-dimensionality. It simultaneously challenges certain CAD environments and the cross-section in its definition of union between content and surface, as well as a way to convey finality and design exploration for it excludes movement (a common critique indeed, yet hard to deny), and most importantly the overtaking, the overlapping and the metamorphosis associated with the experiential and kinetic energy of interactively constructing a space. In more practical terms, and in reference to the fact that the design exploration aims to touch upon general issues from a specific site and urban condition, we might question the validity of traditional processes for a project based on speed and acceleration (the multiple intersections of infrastructure), and on experience (a representation of non-place space in its social and physical dimensions).

The alternative approach is on the contrary based upon an exploration freed from the limitations of spatial conjecturing and visual imagining: it is focused on the building of "one room after the other" according to a sequential path of experiences through a series of interactive computer modeling and representations pushing their compositional freedom and affordances to manipulate shape, allowing perception to prevail over conception (in other words, experiencing and simultaneously thinking that we experience): one generates the other in no specific order (added on, intersected with, placed inside), yet following the shape

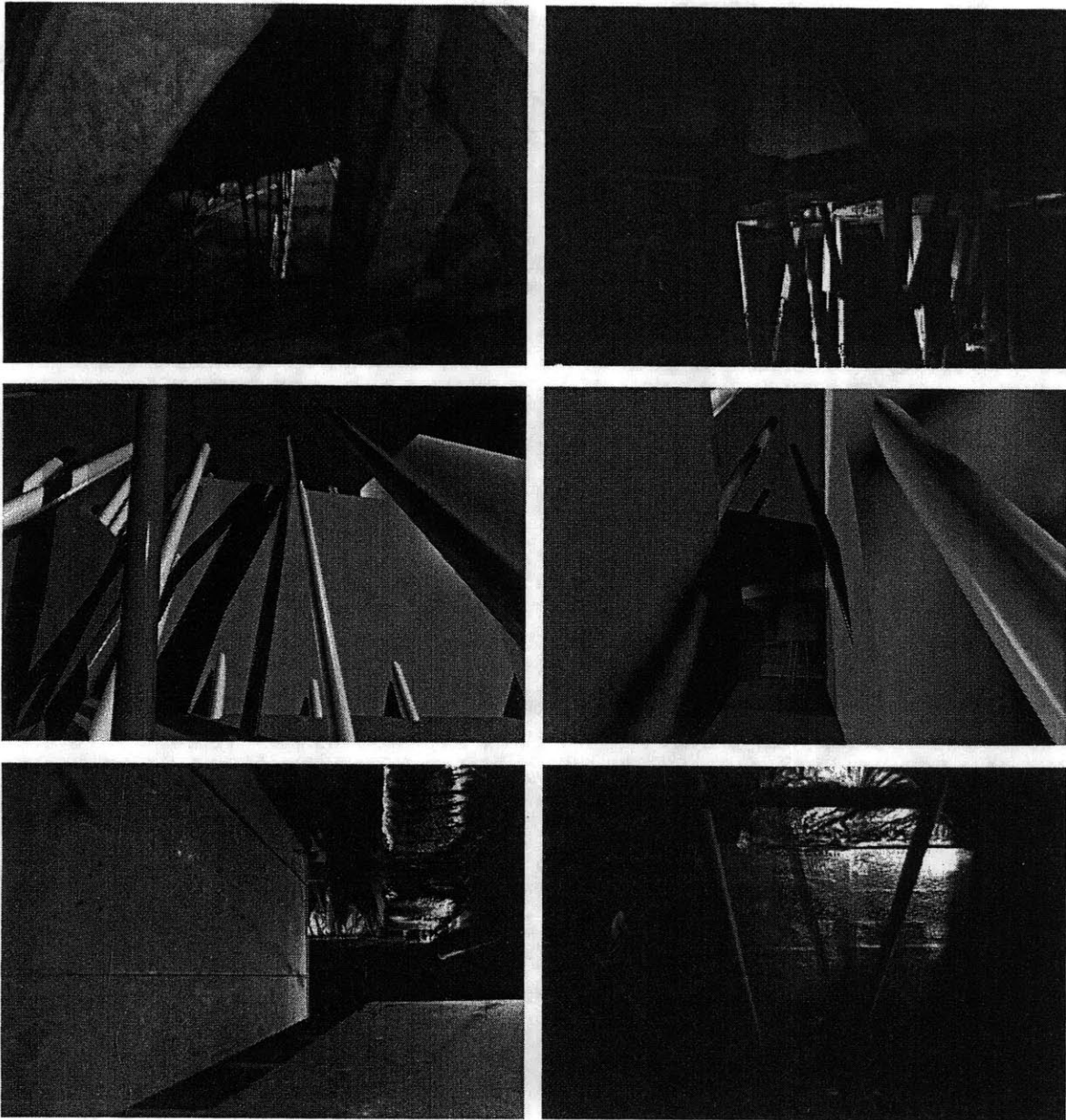
generators as derived from the two-dimensional abstraction of the
"acceptance of extrapolation of abstraction".
Plans and sections become a resultant of such process.



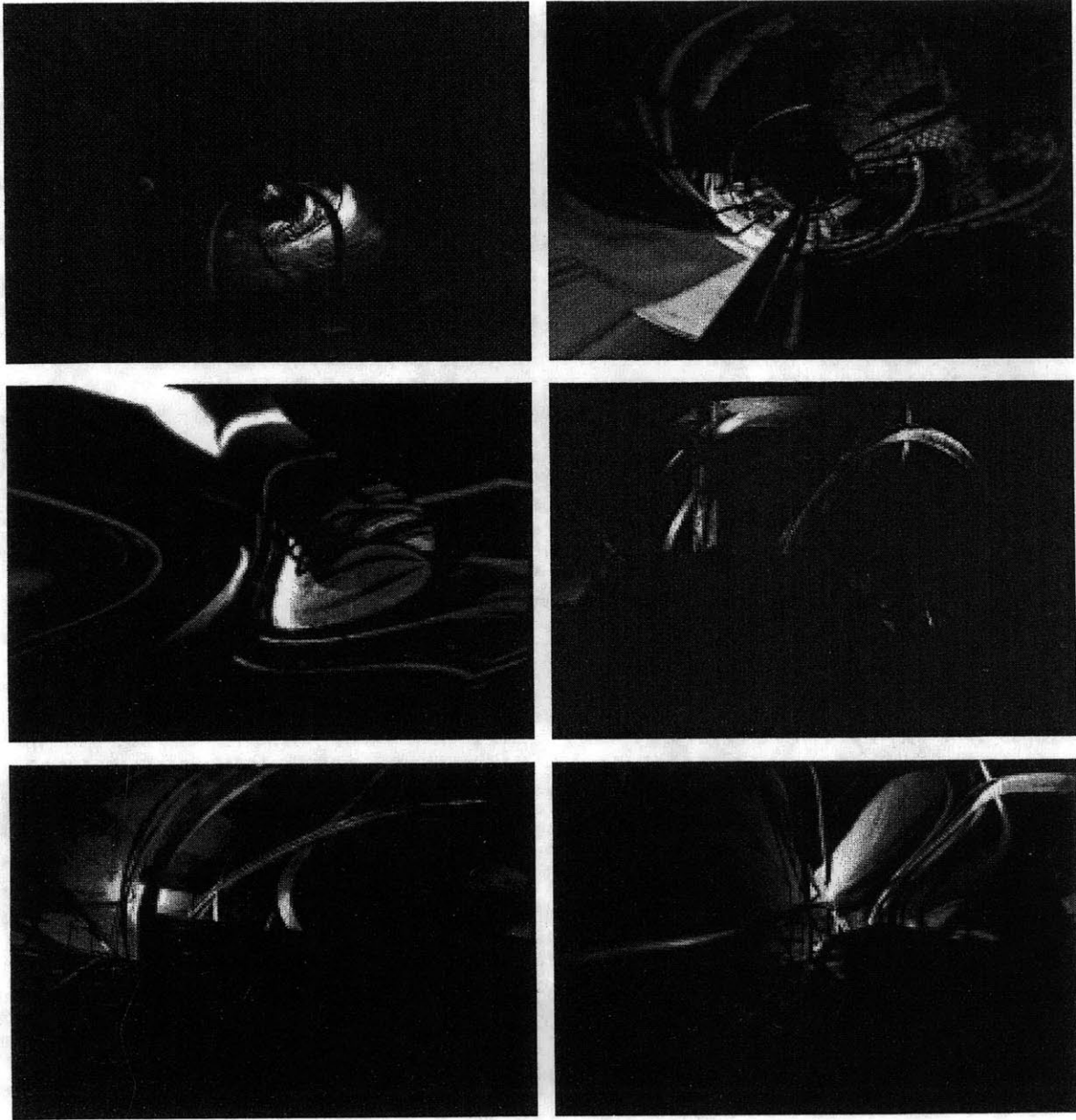
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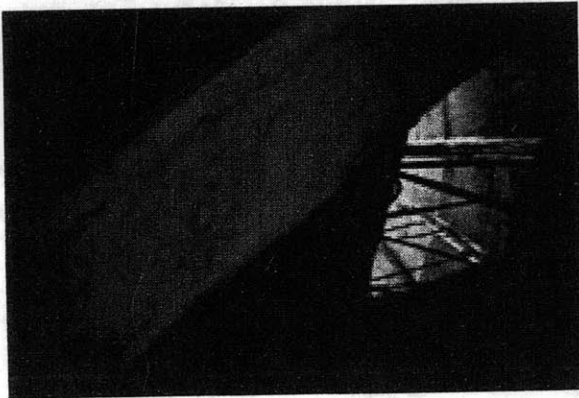
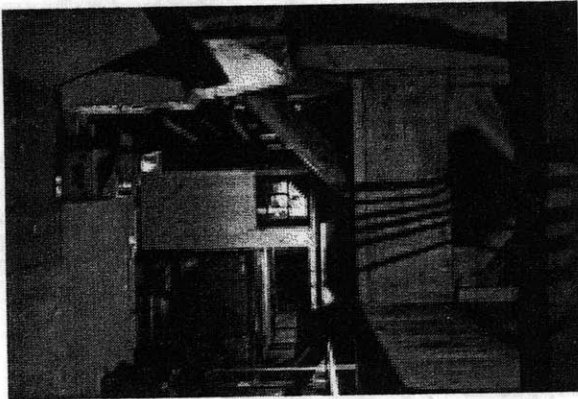
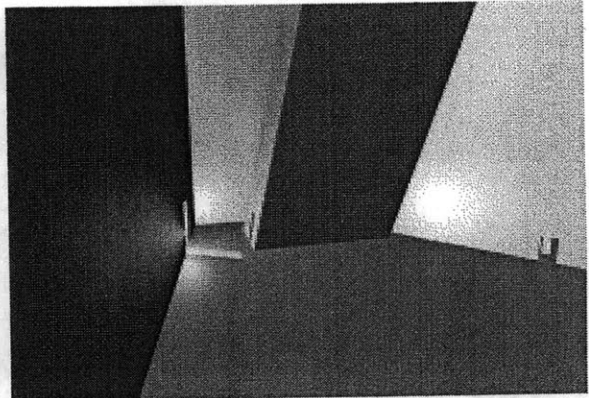
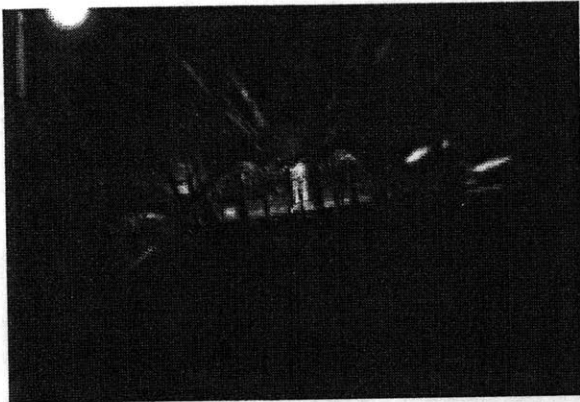
from shape to
form. first
interpretation of
shape generators:
extrusion of walls
from acceptancel.



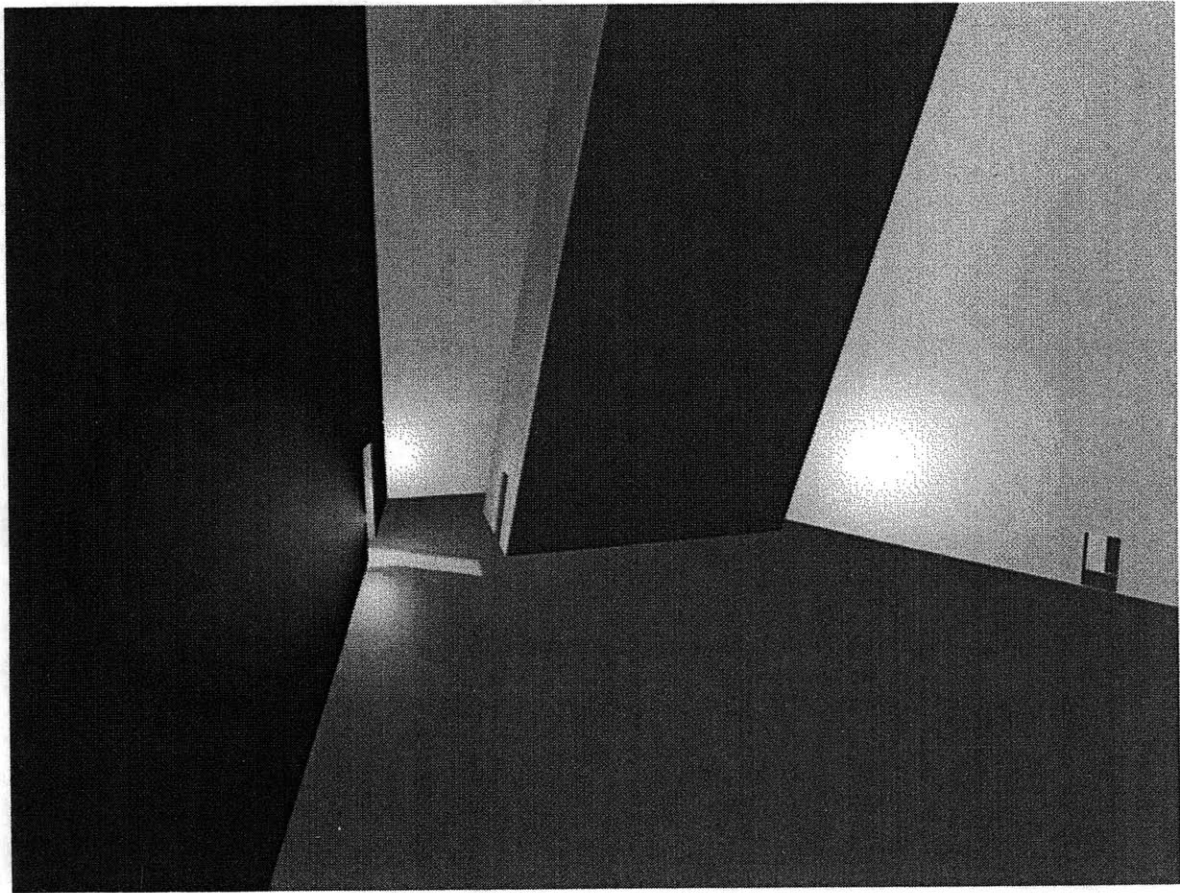
paris-nanterre west of la defense. sequence of photographs. walking. taken while designing from the inside. taken ahead (60%), left and right (30%), and looking down (10%), at irregular intervals.

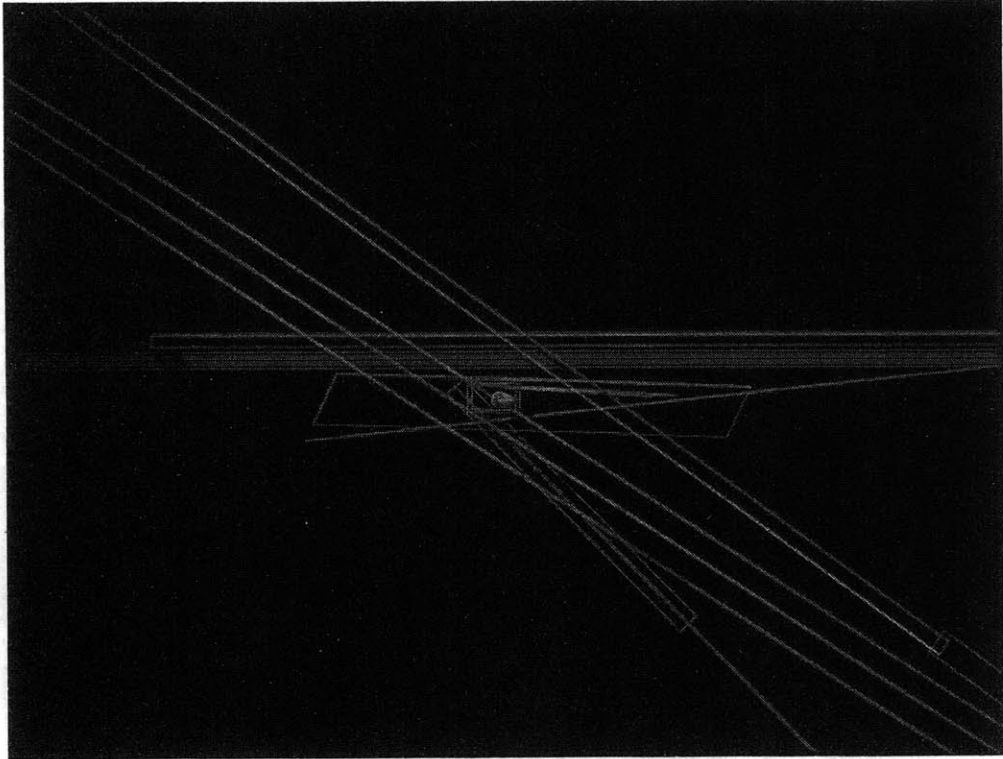


paris-nanterre west of la defense. sequence of photographs. walking. taken while designing from the inside. taken ahead (90%), left and right (10%), at irregular intervals.

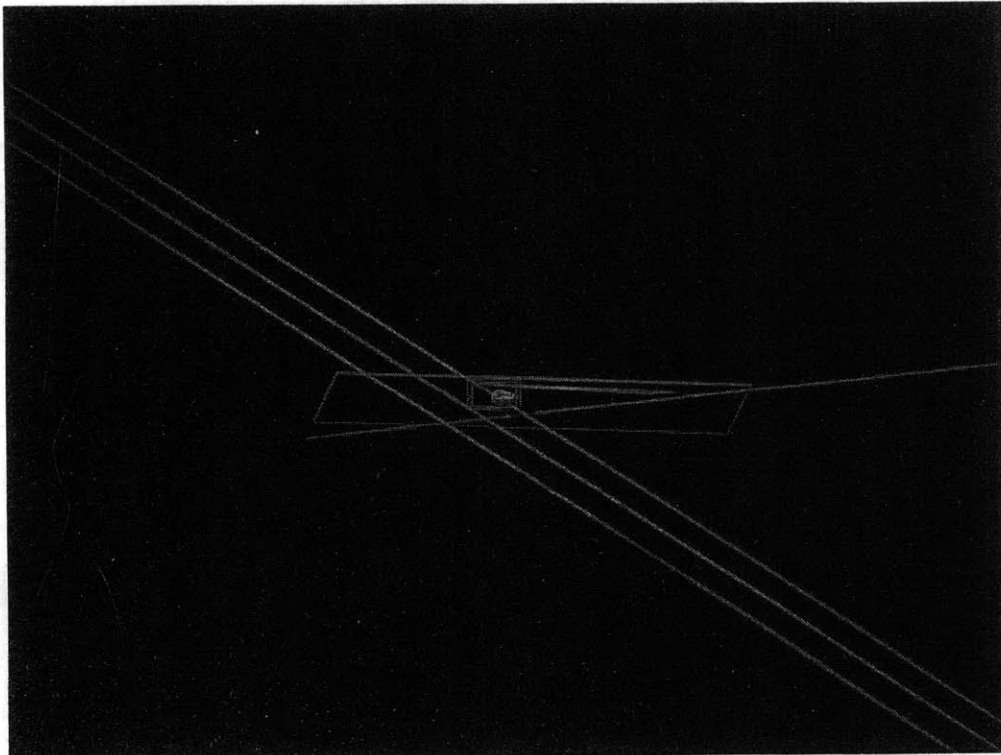


paris-nanterre west of la defense. sequence of photographs. walking. taken while designing from the inside. taken ahead (60%), left and right (30%), and looking down (10%), at irregular intervals.



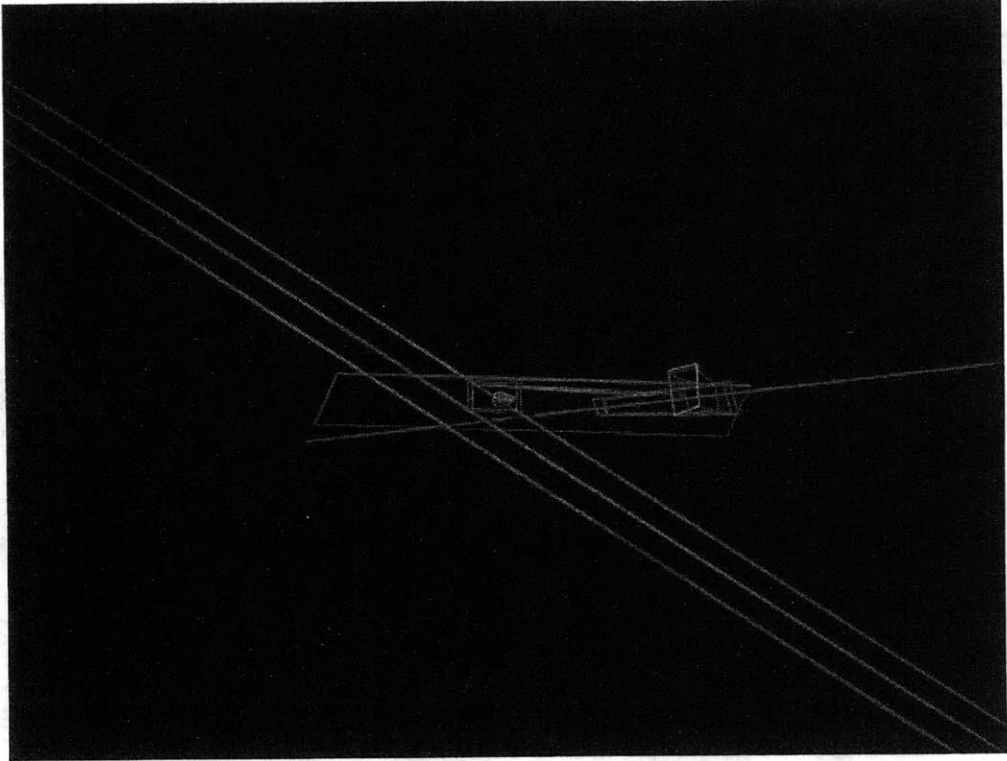


plan 1

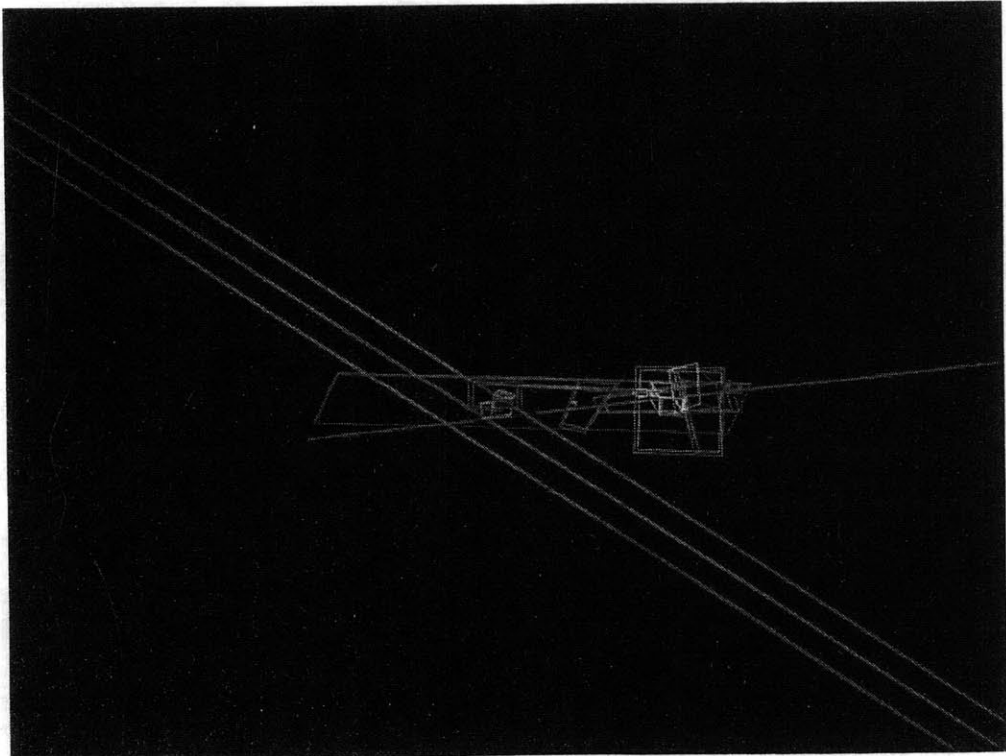


plan 2

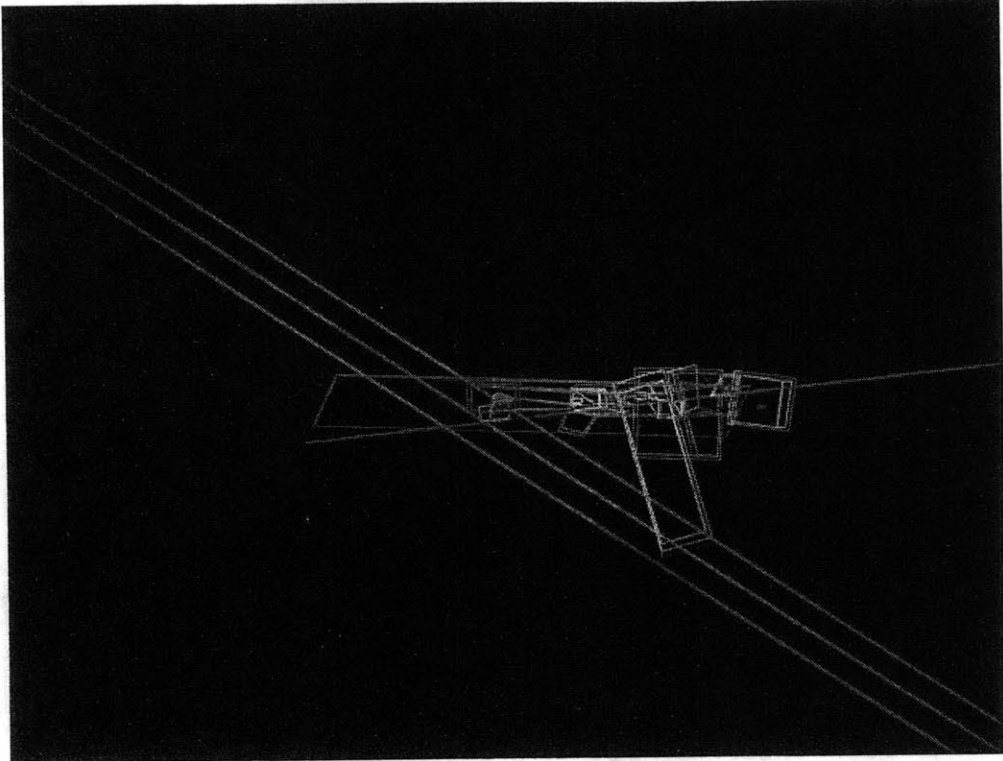
generation of plans showing incremental adding of elements as
resultant of inside-out design process.



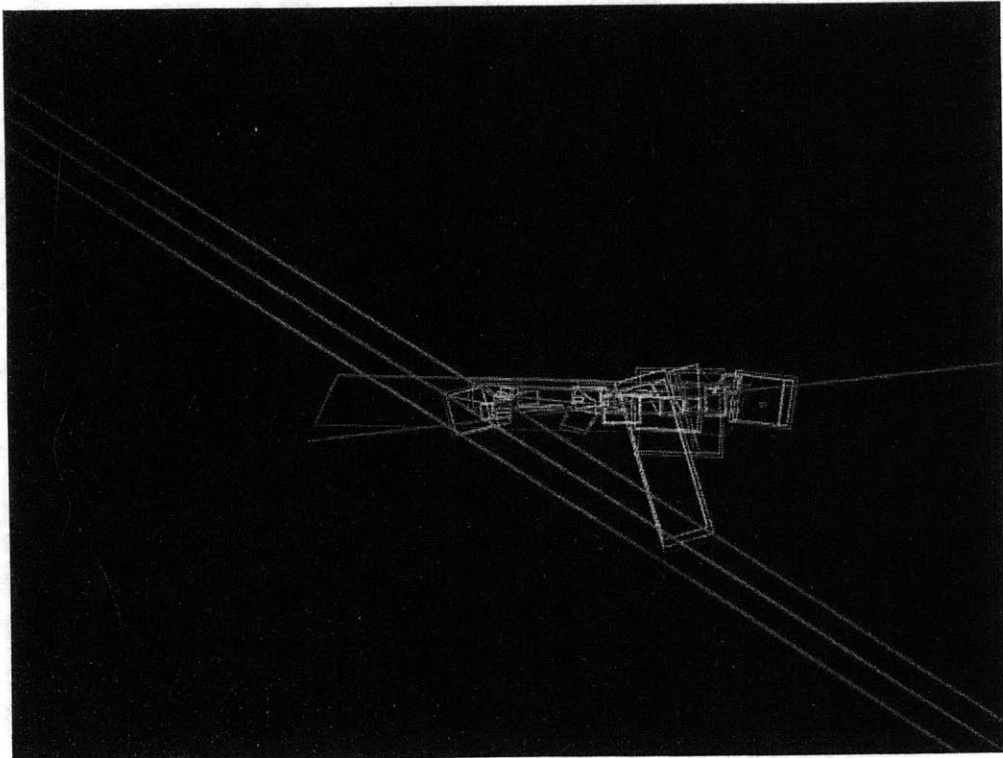
plan3



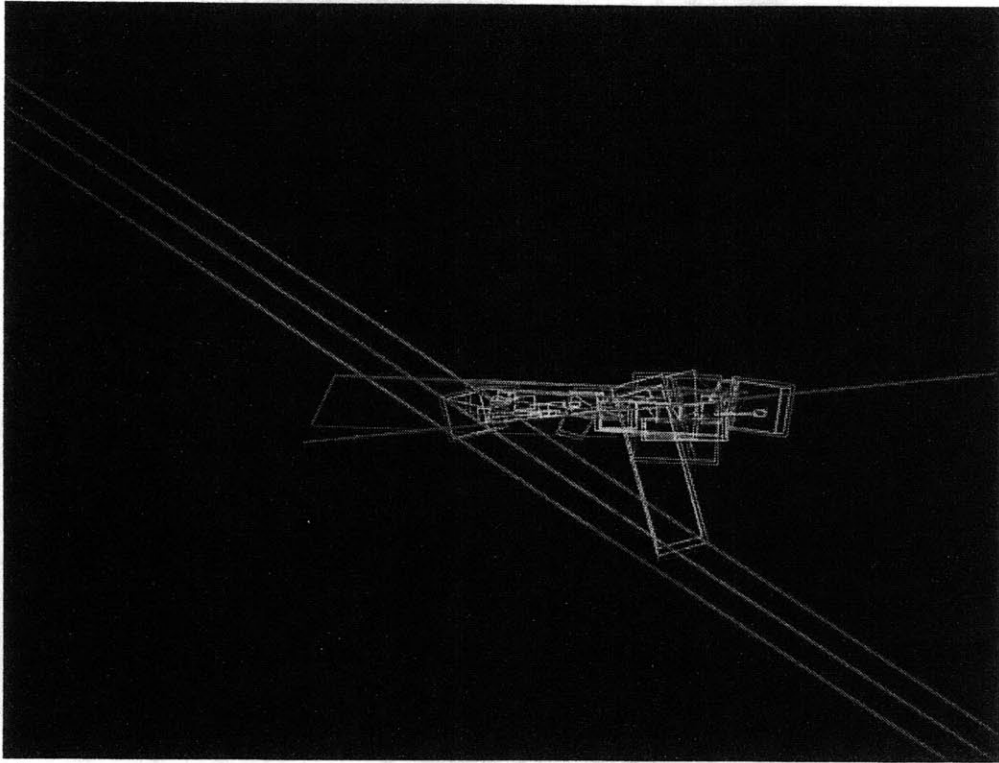
plan4



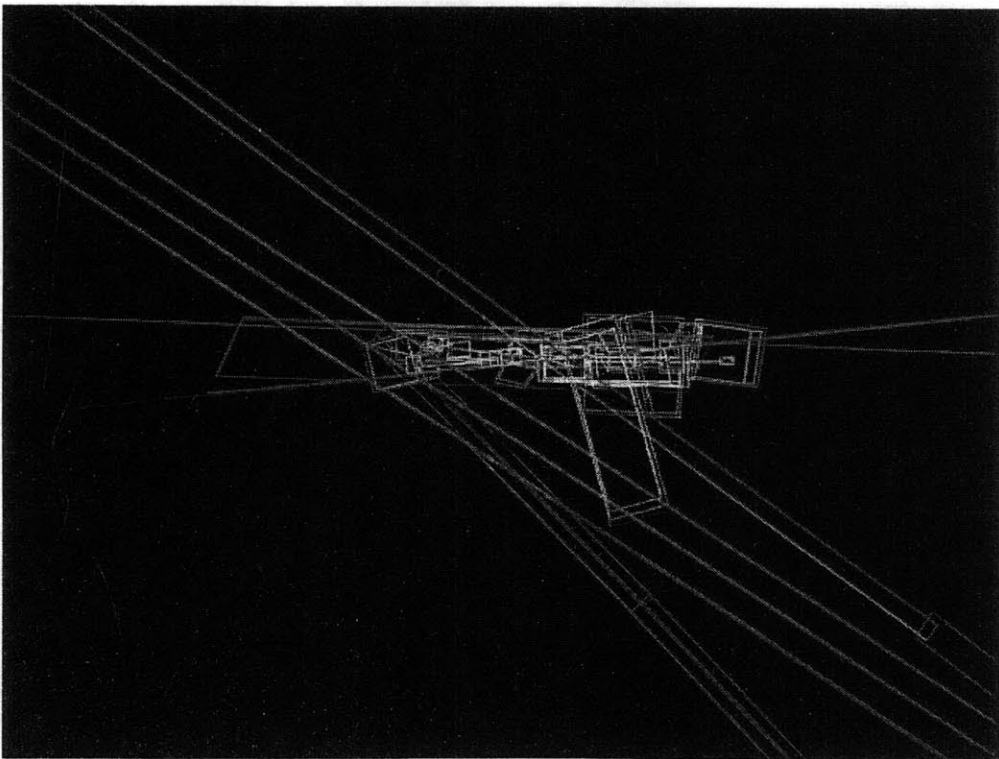
plan5



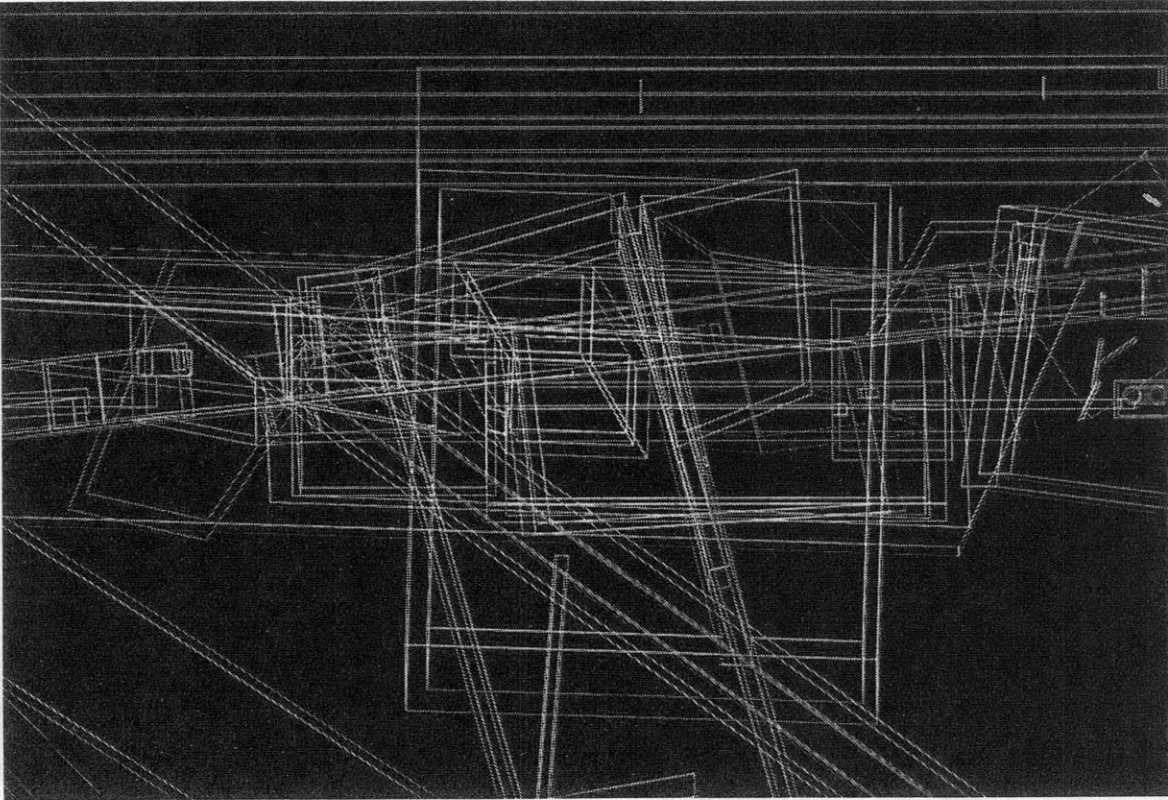
plan6

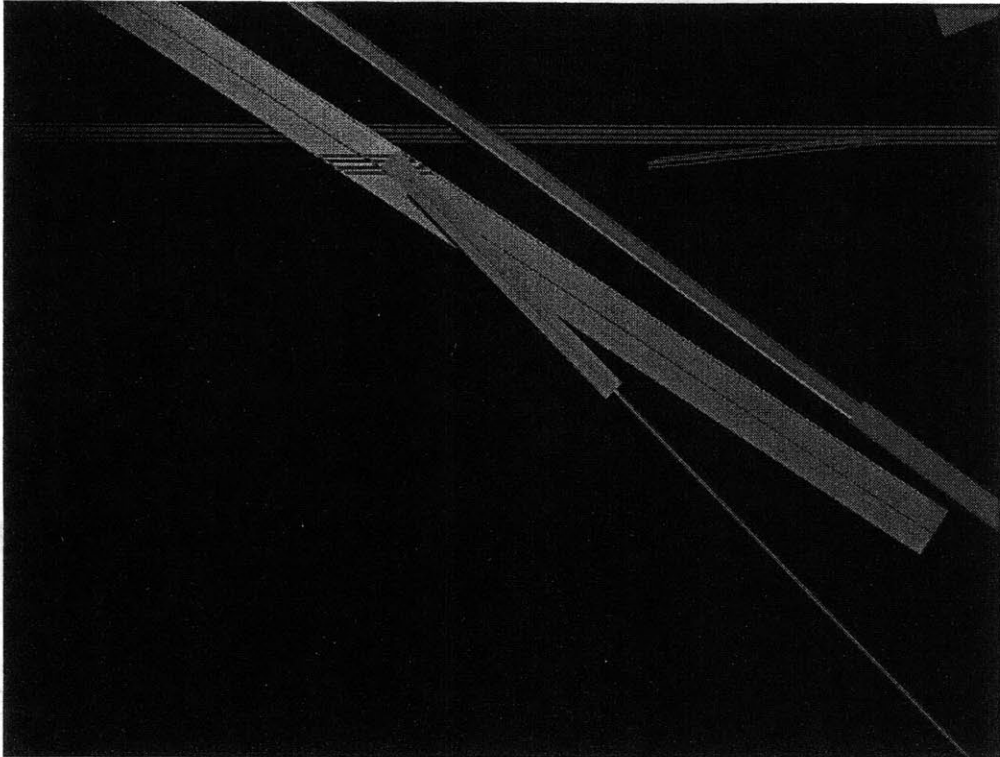


plan 7

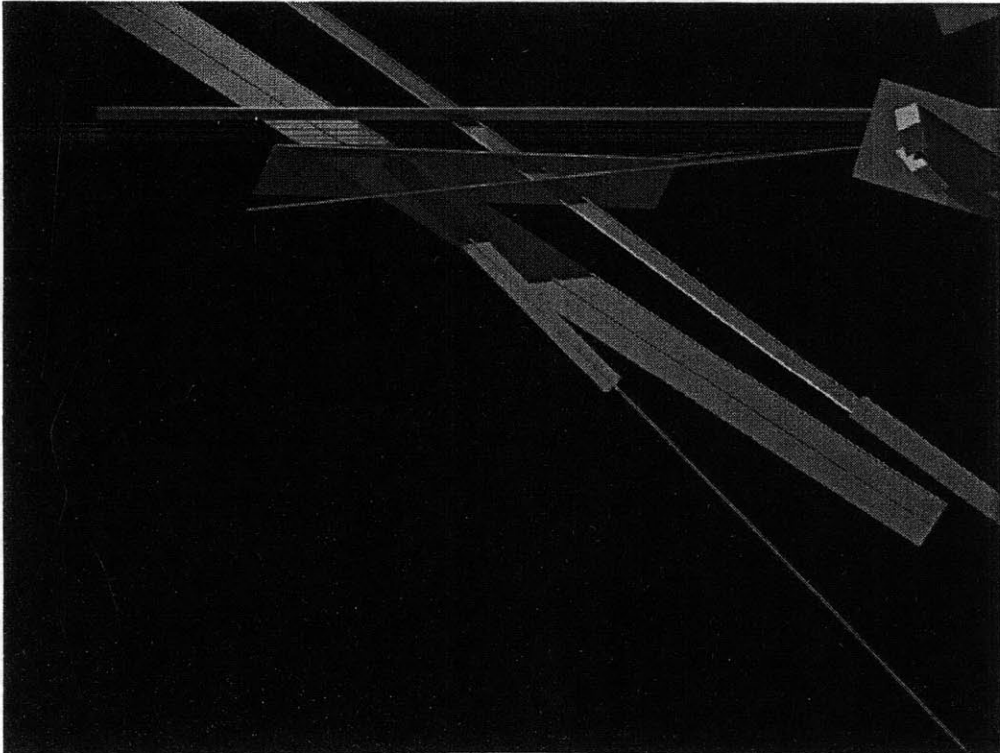


plan 8

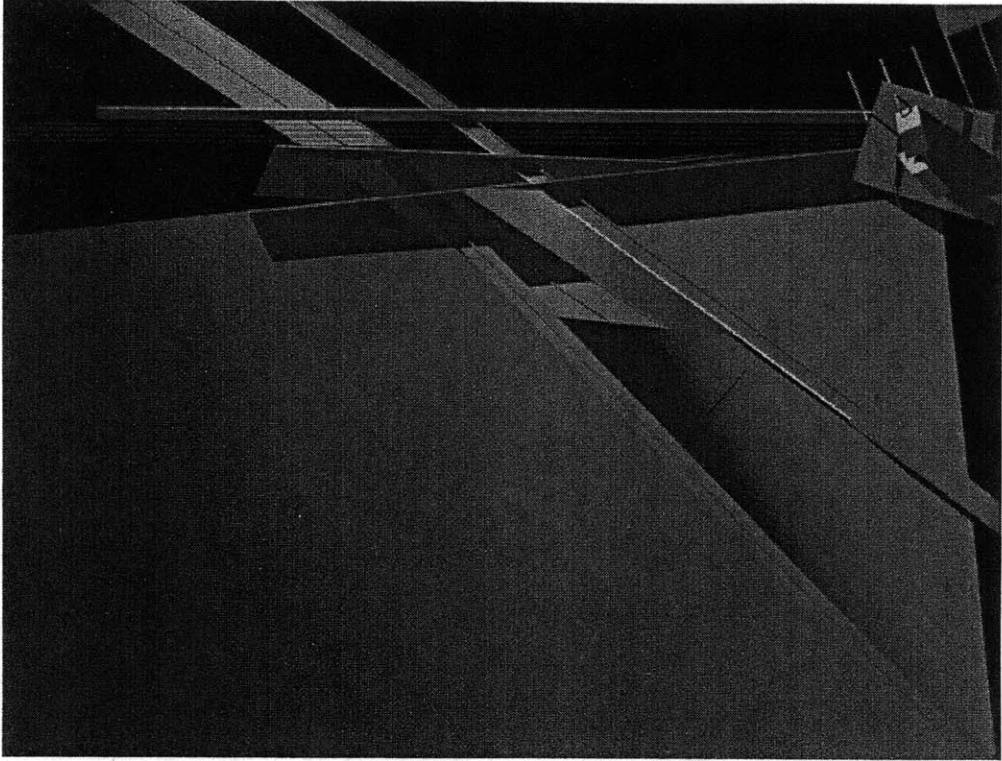




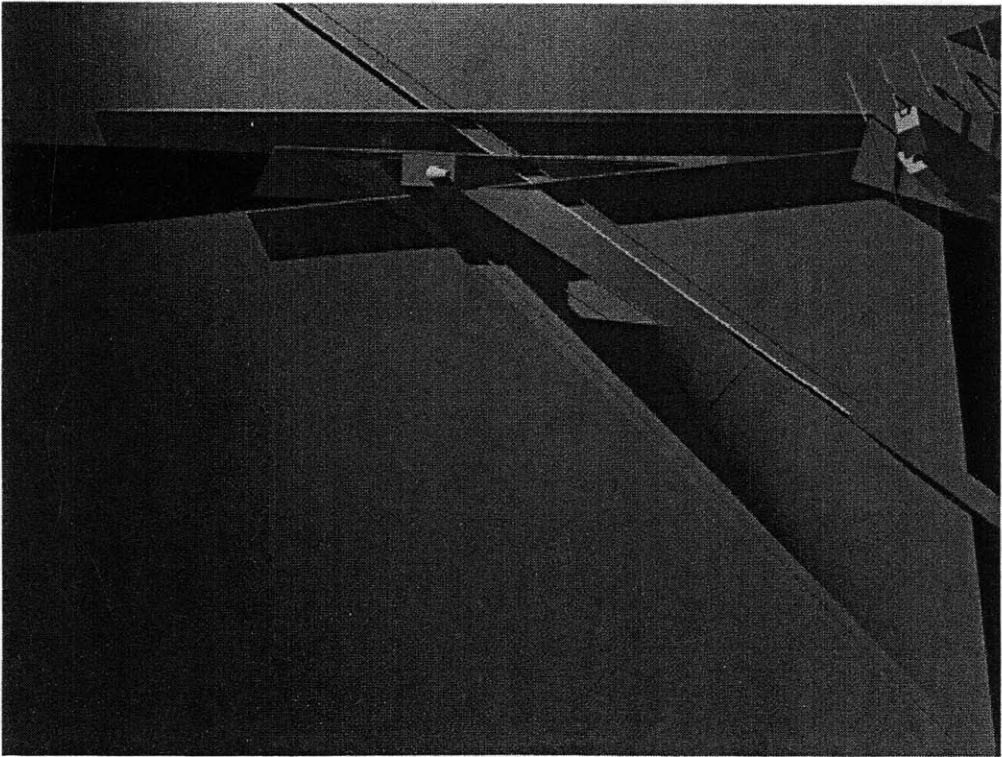
existent condition.metro/rer lines intersected at different levels
by elevated train line,communal high-speed road,underground highway



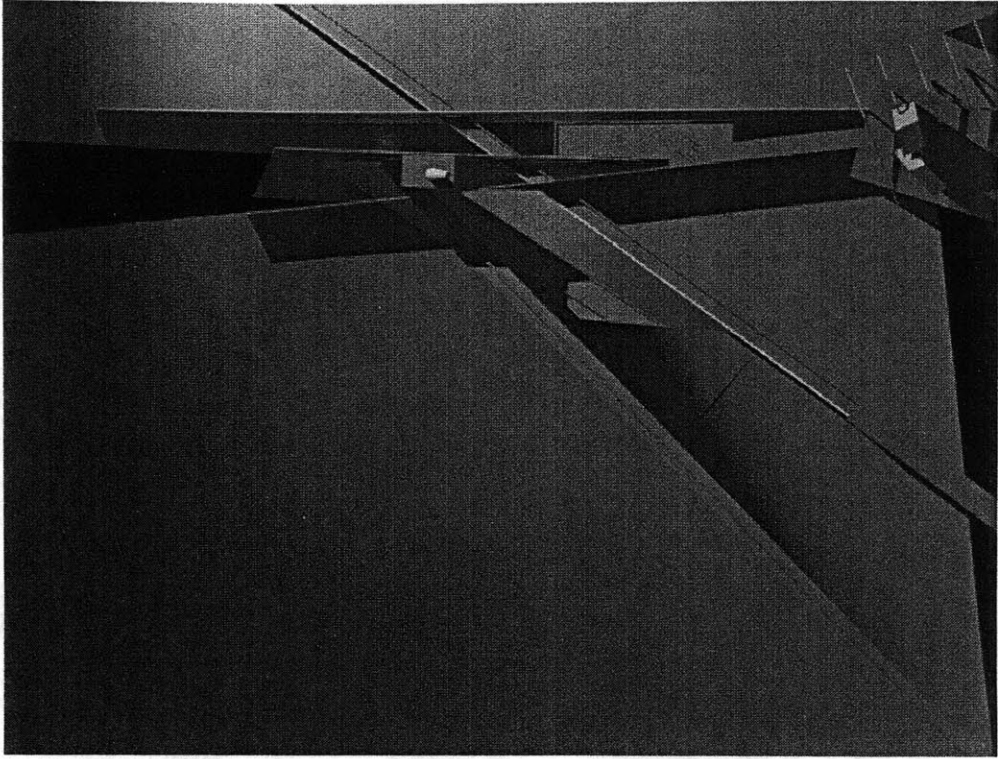
intersection1
from shape to form/from generation of plans to resultant volumes.
top-down sequence showing incremental addition of elements as
resultant of inside-out design process.



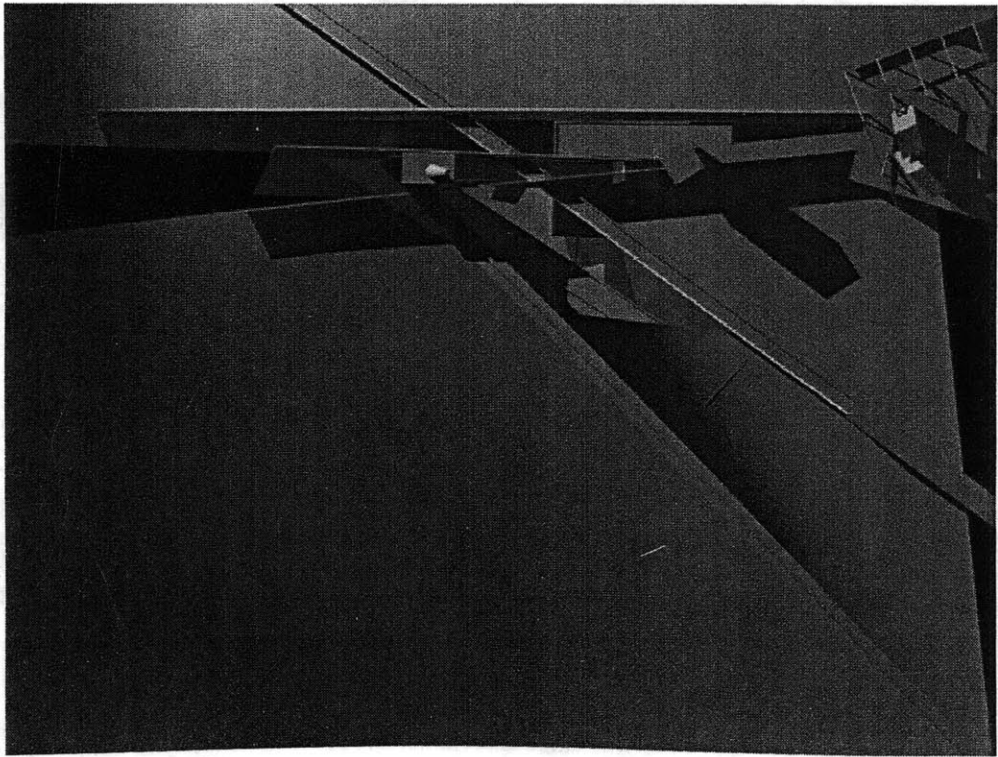
intersection2



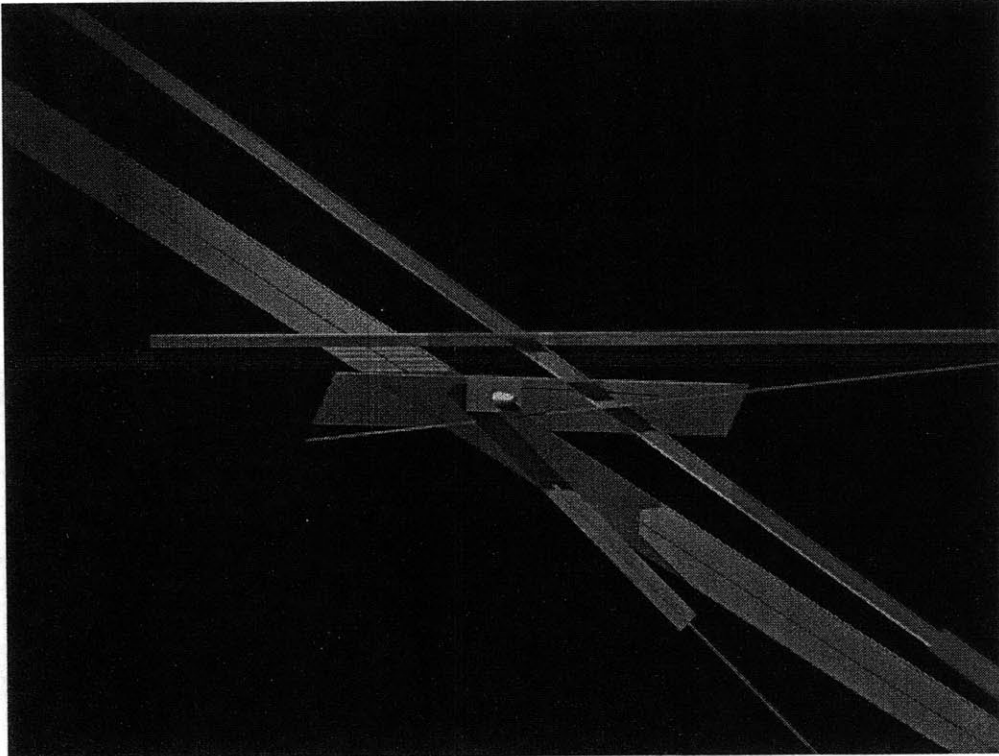
intersection3



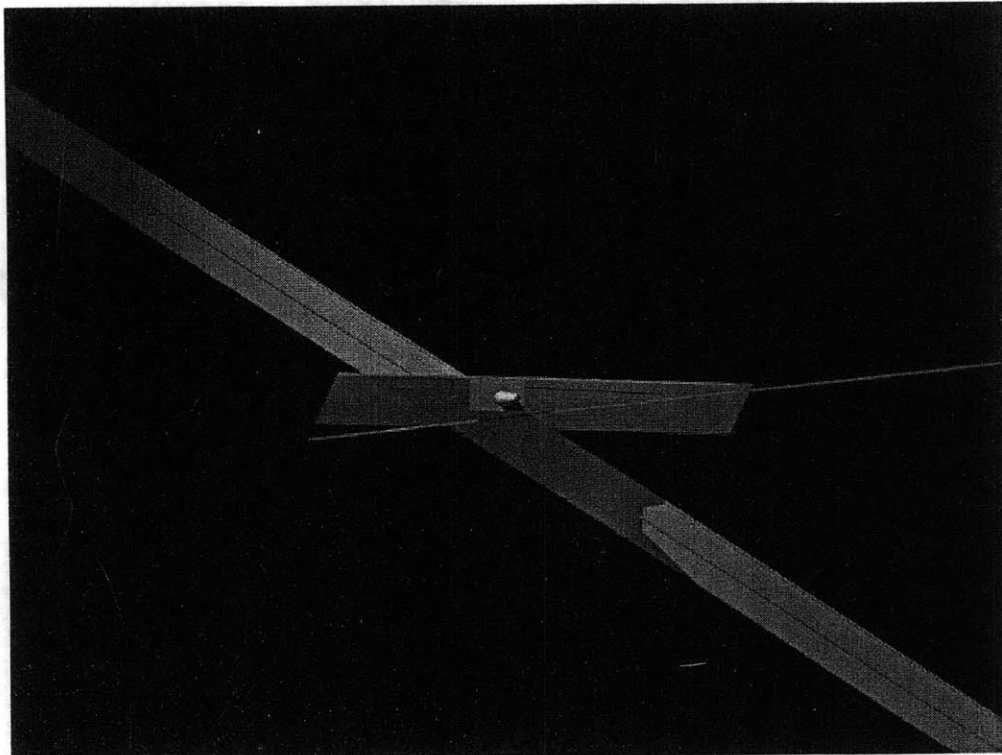
intersection4



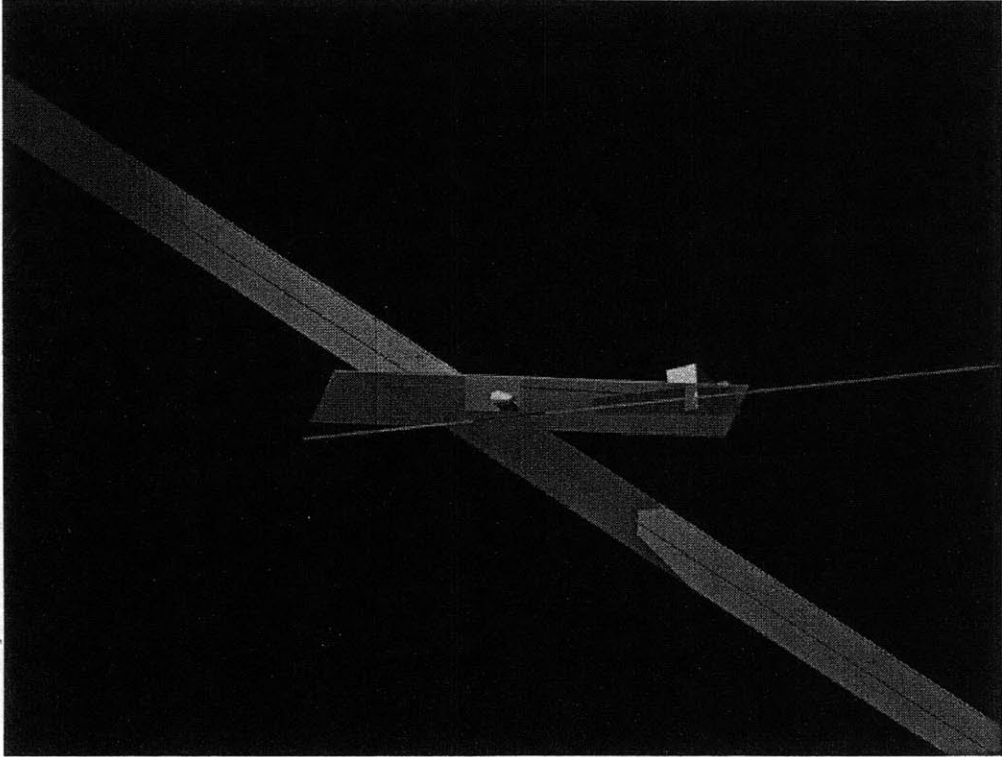
intersection5



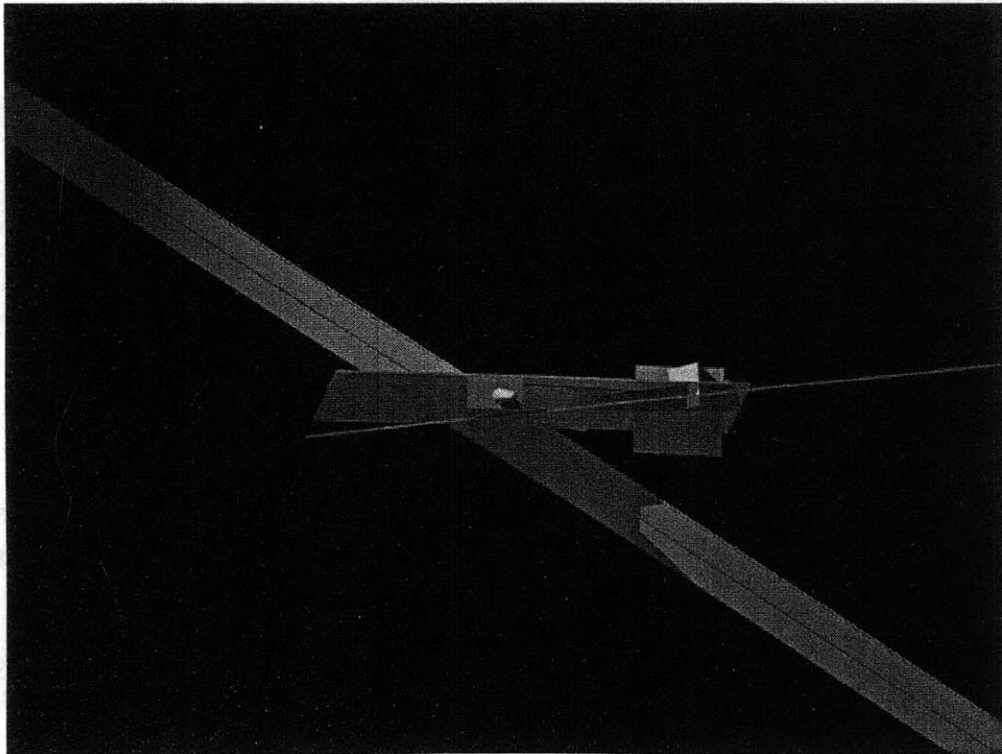
intersection6. ground level.



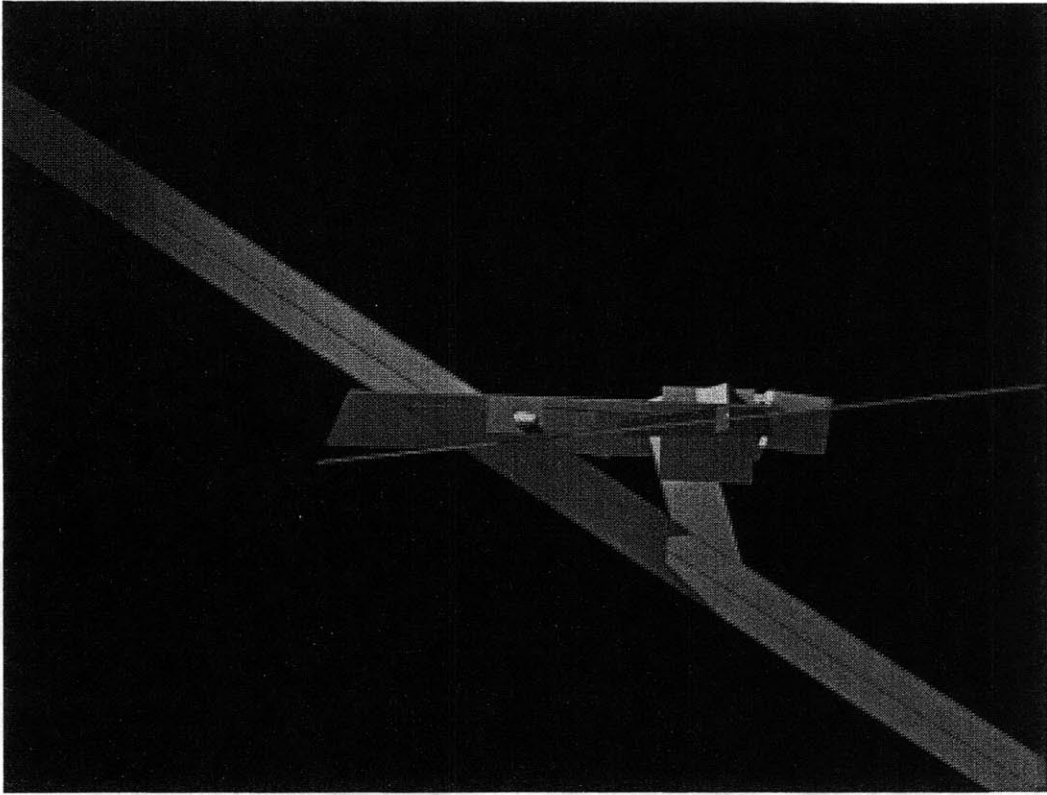
intersection7. level one below ground.



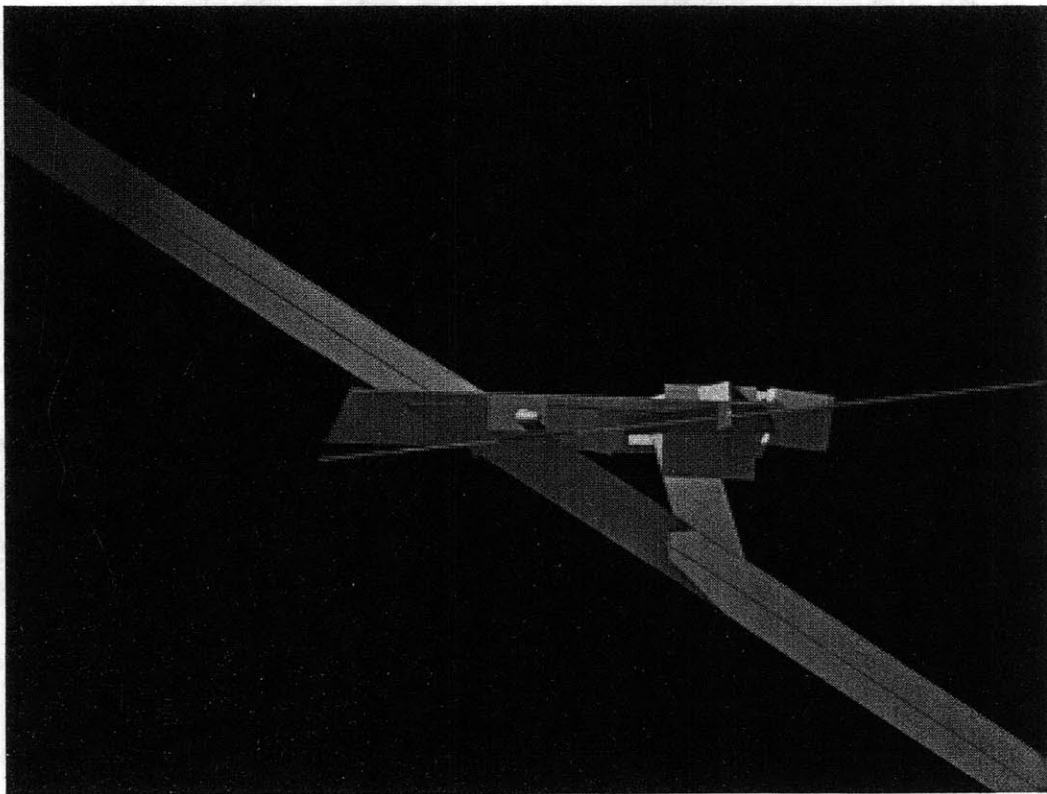
intersection8



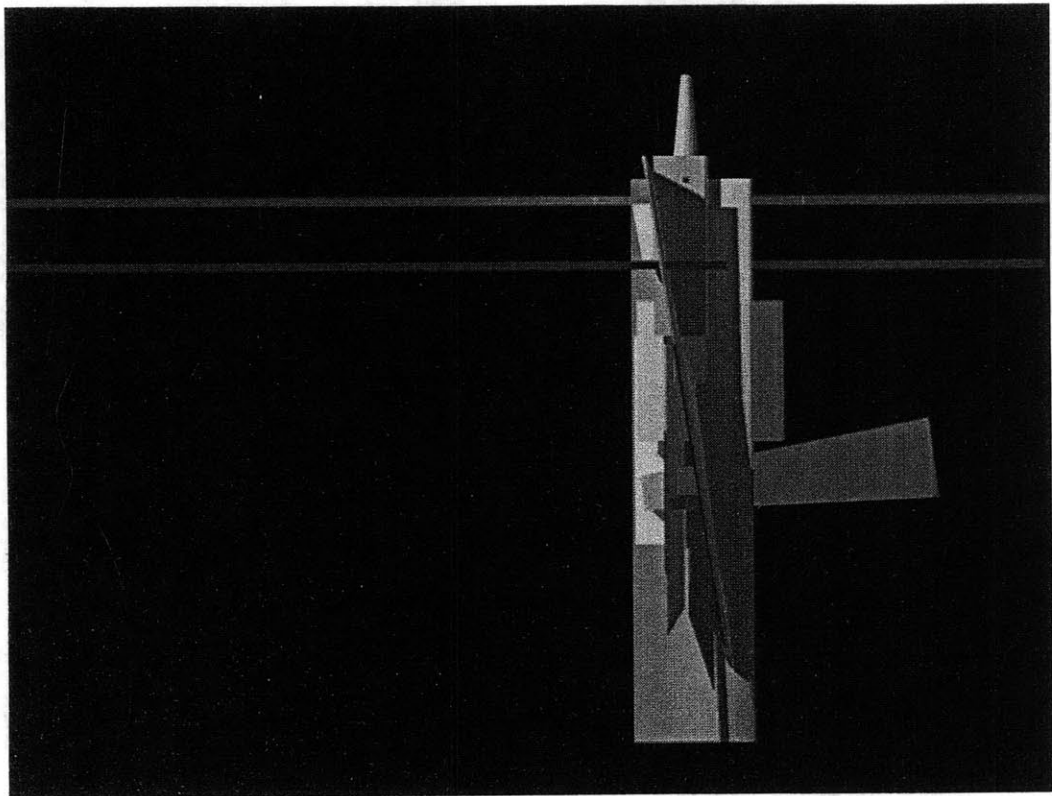
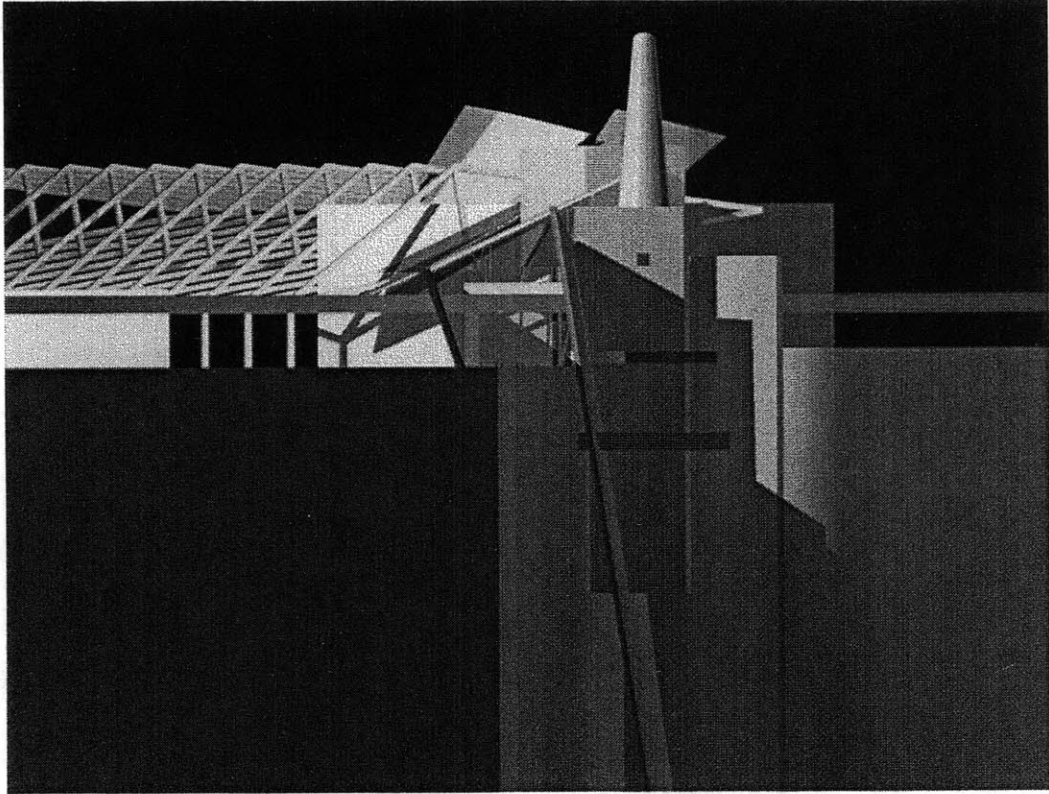
intersection9

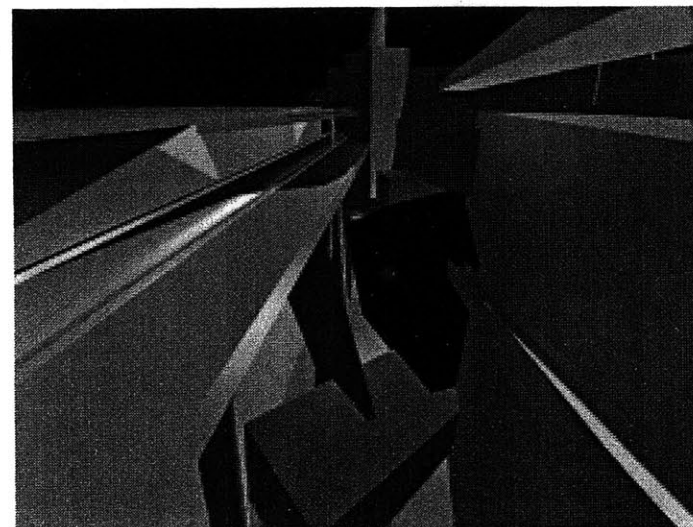
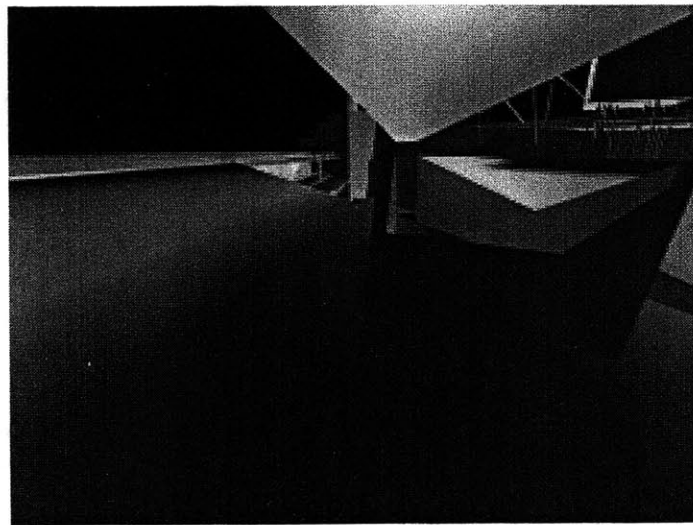
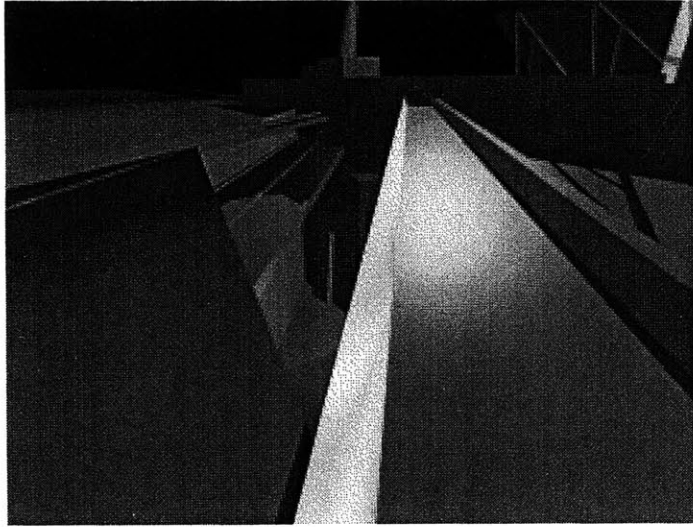


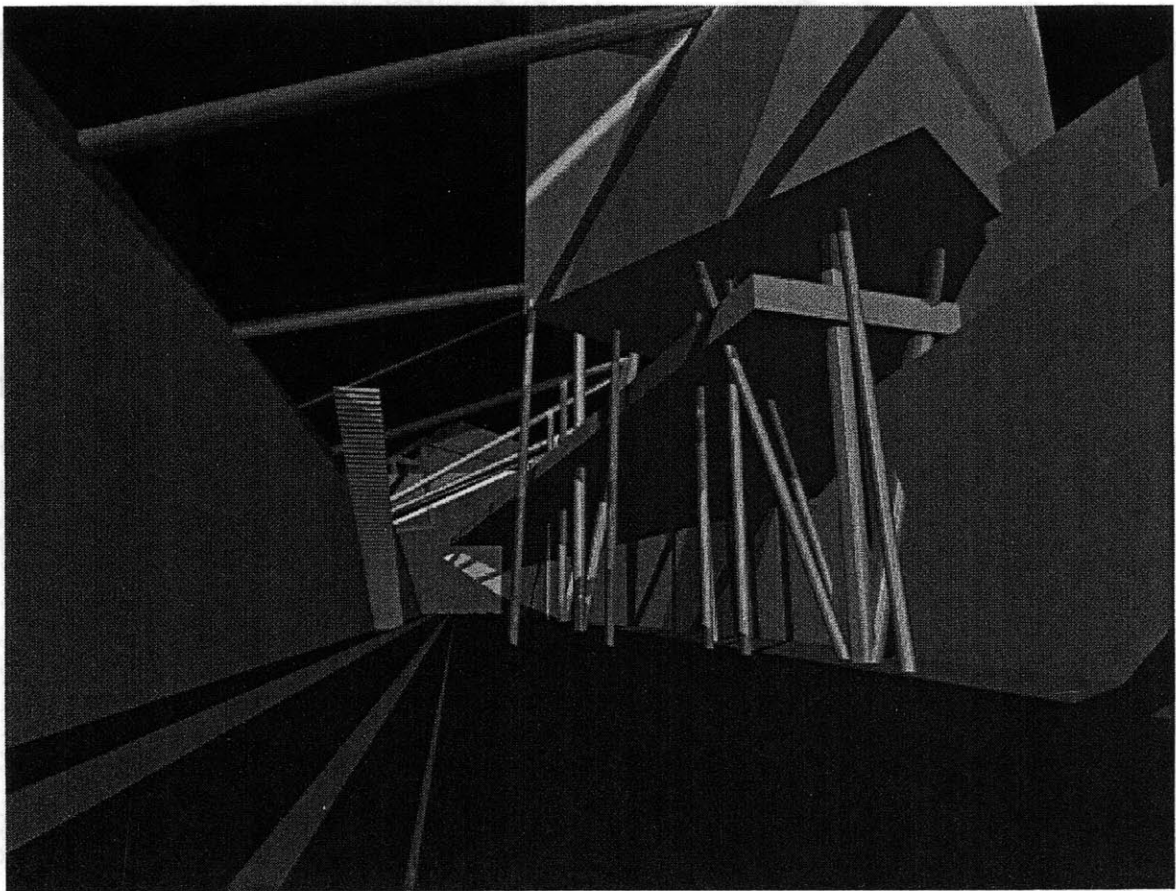
intersection10

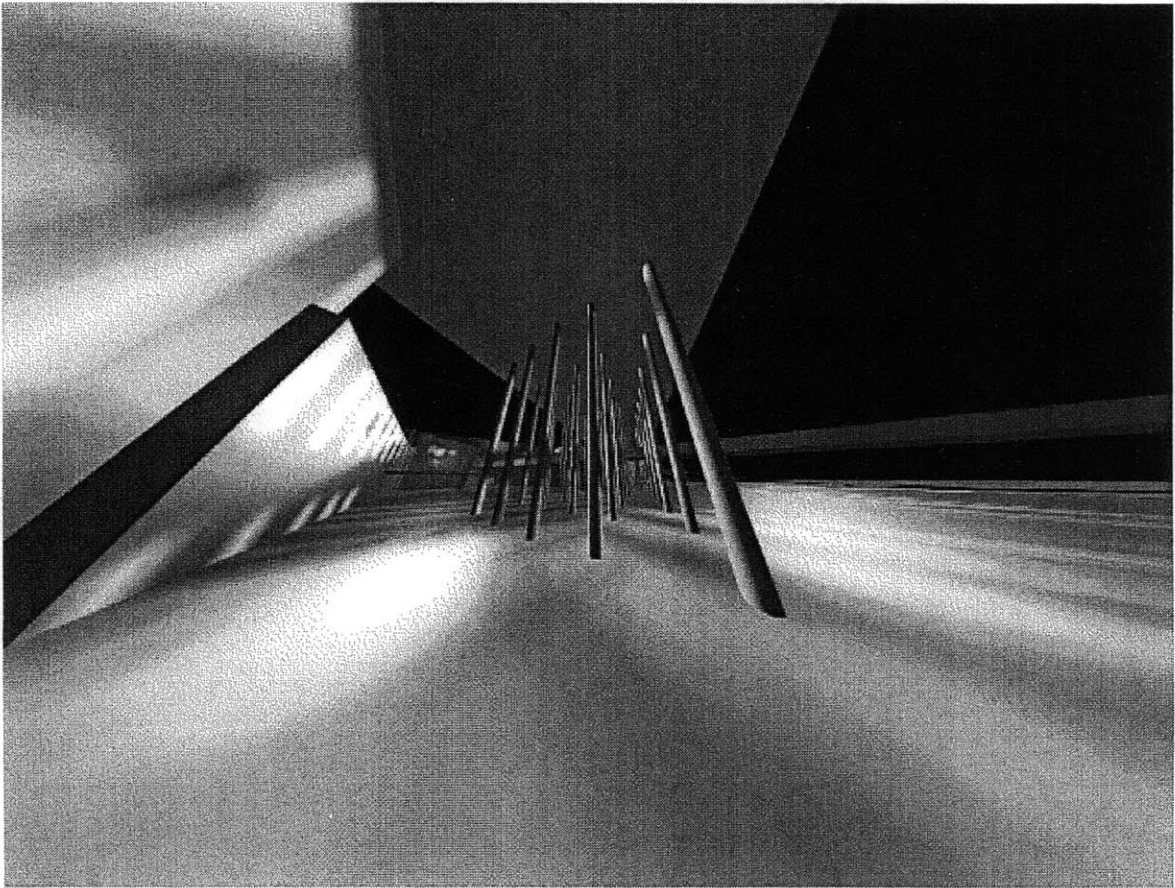


intersection11









CONCLUSION

An existent condition can be subject to alternative theoretical explanations and investigations, and to alternative descriptions linked to those theories. The legitimization of these theories are then linked to the ideological acknowledgment of the morphological structure of chaos and disorder as reflected in a particular urban condition that is representative of an objectifiable expression of the values and forms of non-place space.

Strategies to be considered in the "project" cannot merely be those of an extension of the formal domain of "the city", and that we are confronted with the necessity to give a different weight and a different evaluation of the aleatory and disordered growth of the metropolitan non-place as a container of a different order and identity. The quality of things is to be localized in another exploration of design thinking and design processes trying to understand the semantic and structural eruption of contemporary culture, and turn it into a new thinking of urban form.

At the end, the simultaneous emergence of two different design processes at urban and architectural scale seems to point to the fact that the potential acknowledged in non-place is a position that screens off certain ideas of the prevailing culture and take up a separate position from which it is possible to react critically.

Non-place is the contrary of utopia: it exists now, and it does not contain any organic society. The design investigations are simultaneously a metaphor and a heuristic strategy of the acknowledgment of the iconic and cultural meaning of non-place space. Far from being counter-culturalist (but finding the terrain of another, existent culture), or theoretically unwarranted, away from being prescriptive or deterministic in its opposition to traditional design processes or exclusive self-referential positions, the present work is rather a symptom of a strategic thought, one that, through its design exploration at different scales, poses the space of discovery within the schizophrenia of contemporary urban conditions as a terrain for architectural re-thinking.

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