

# **books as bodies or bodies as maps**

**by**

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B.F.A., Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2019

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Fine Arts

in the  
School for the Contemporary Arts  
Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Fall 2021

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## **Abstract**

Since my move to so-called Canada in 2015, I have reconsidered the way in which the places I have dwelled are bound to the temporal materialities around me. Through my transits in Mexico City, Oaxaca, Corner Brook, St. John's, and Vancouver, I have come to conceive my body as my primary tool of creation, a site for translation among different systems of value and belief. In books as bodies or bodies as maps I explore this entanglement of embodied relations by repurposing the book as a body and the body as a map. Repurposing Sonja Boon's biographical novel *What the Oceans Remember* as a pinhole book/camera, I took photos along the Vancouver shoreline as a gesture of acknowledgment to the water as the common feature for untold human and non-human stories. Resisting containment, I present the documentation of the places I have collected on walks over the course of 2020-21 in postcards, booklets, a map, and a three-channel video. This is the first iteration of an unfolding project in which I constellate and document the places I have transited through (sometimes as a "temporary resident", sometimes as a citizen) in an attempt to re-see the book as a re-writing device that ultimately affords readers the agency to drift.

**Keywords:** Books as artifacts; drifting; document; diaspora; story-telling; nomadic methodologies

## **Dedication**

*To my grandmothers: Goyita, Amparo y Judith. For guiding me through this process.  
Wherever you might be, I'm still trying to find you.*

*To anyone who has re-written the significance of a compass in a second language.*

## Acknowledgements

This thesis project was supported by SFU, an academic institution situated in the lands who were never ceded by the Squamish (squa-mish), Tsleil-Waututh (tslay-wa-tooth), Musqueam (mus-kwee-um), Katzie (kate-zee), Kwantlen (kwant-len), Kwikwetlem (kwee-kwet-lum), Qayqayt (kee-kite), and Stó:lō(staw-low) nations. To whom I am deeply grateful.

Thank you to my senior supervisor, Peter Dickinson, for mentoring me through the program at a pivotal time in my life and art practice. Your caring comments and thoughtful suggestions made me reconsider my approach to artmaking and writing. Thank you for your patience, your syllabi, and your laughter.

Thank you to my committee members: Kathy Slade and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda. I will always remember and appreciate your attentive input, gentle reminders, and generous resource-sharing through the different stages of the project. My admiration to your work and practices runs deep.

Thank you to Sonja Boon, Verónica Gerber Bicecci, and Billy-Ray Belcourt for weaving texts like blankets which at times of social isolation and eagerness to belong made me company.

Lastly, thank you to the different communities, friends, and beloved folks who held me through my degree. Thank you for all your reassurance, conversations and knowledge-sharing: María Elena Torres, Emily Critch, Mansi Patel, Olivia Valenza, Aakansha Ghosh, Charlie Cooper, Giselle Liu, Hân Pham, Edlyn, Roger Medina, Nicolás Mora, Maria Luisa Santos Cuellar and the “Michitaller”, Vivian Abenshushan’s workshop attendees, and Érika Vitela’s workshop attendees.

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# Defence Statement

## Introduction

My most current “artist bio” reads:

*Currently dwelling in Vancouver, Faune Ybarra is a diasporic artist originally from Oaxaca and Mexico City. Due to the experience of constantly moving and adapting, Ybarra conceives of her body as a site of translation from where she attempts to communicate with the other-than-human. Her iterative practice rejects the (art) object as a given outcome and instead speculates on how nomadic creative methodologies converge to document motion. Past repositories of her work have taken the shape of performance, photo-based objects, and diasporic gestures.*

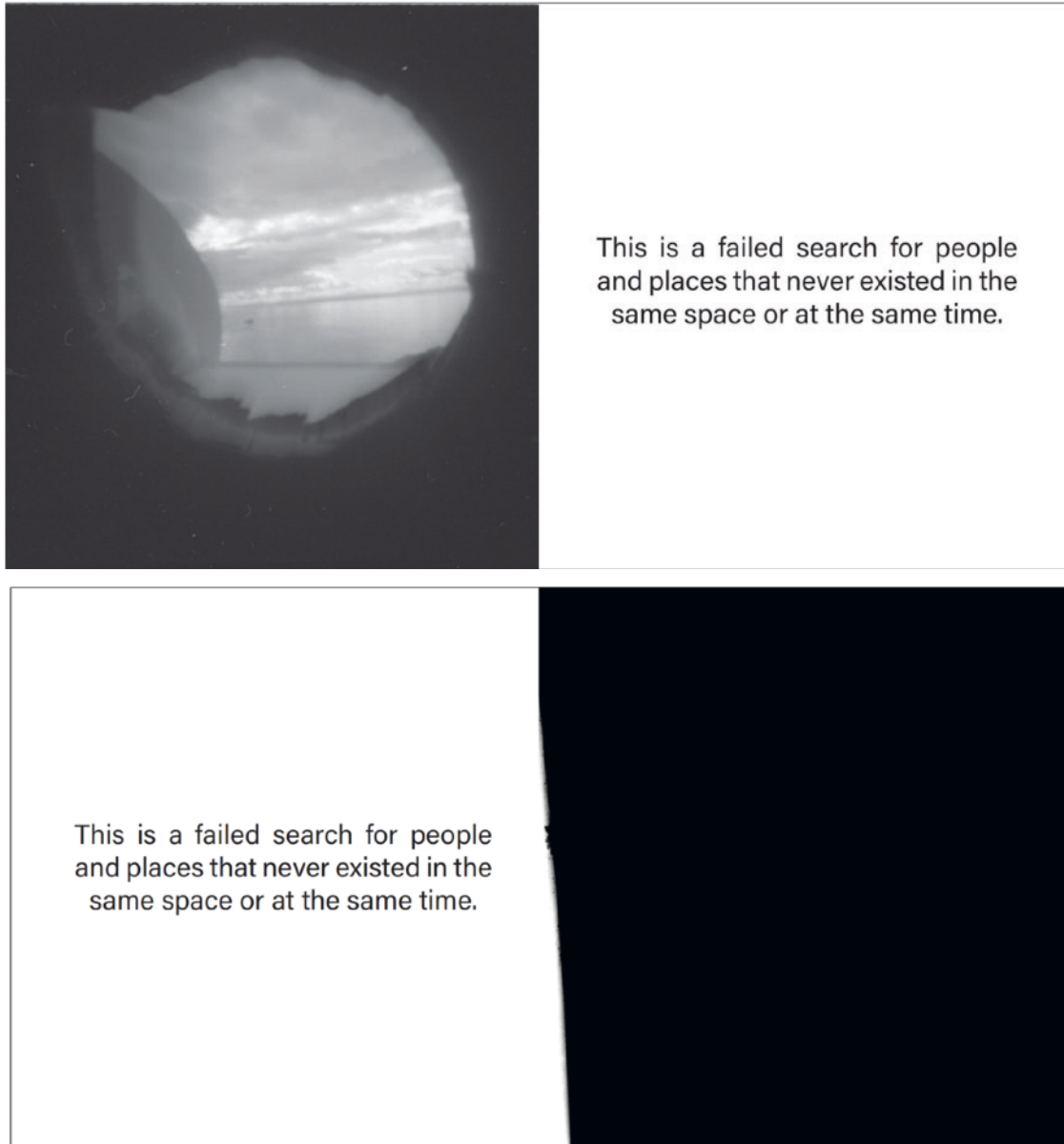
I have edited out all the institutional spaces my work has been made and exhibited in, as well as the academic credentials obtained through my transits in so-called Canada, not in an attempt to conceal the cultural capital I have gained, but in an impulse to situate my (art)making in relation to a commons I have yet to delineate.<sup>1</sup> In attempting to outline *where* or to *which* group(s) of people I might belong I find the first ontological dislocation: the particular social and cultural contexts of the cities and towns I have inhabited, both in Canada and Mexico, are fixed to time zones I cannot inhabit all at once. While looking at art from decades past, T. Fleischmann, in their essay *Time is the Thing a Body Moves Through*, notes: “I try to think of the world when the art was made, and I try to think of now. / It’s odd, then everyone seems to look back at the same time at once, to realize collectively that it can be seen from a perspective. / It reminds me that we’re all telling ourselves a story, as we try to understand where we’ve arrived” (2019, 5). Since the bonds I have developed with the places I’ve dwelled (Mexico City, Oaxaca,

---

<sup>1</sup> This could primarily be what Esteban Muñoz defines as “brown commons,” a “(...) movement, a flow, and an impulse to move beyond the singular subjectivity and the individualized subjectivities” (2020, 2). However, throughout the defence statement I keep returning to the idea of diaspora as a common place from which my practice enacts what Donna Haraway would call “mobile positioning”. In Appendix A I expand upon this idea.



Corner Brook, St. John's, and Vancouver) continue in my physical absence, my affiliation with space occurs through time and time is always a story that is not linear.



**Figure 1.** *books as bodies or bodies as maps* booklet pages.

In this defence document, I do not intend to speculate on how the nationalistic rhetoric of two different countries (or five cities) might affect cultural production<sup>2</sup> but I acknowledge the ways in which the flux of a transnational identity, through the political limitations only accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has shaped my practice and in particular this project.

## In Newfoundland

Before starting the program at SFU, my practice had two endeavours. On the one hand, I was concerned with how a political identity devised by the State influenced the way I understood belonging. On the other hand, I wanted to find my own language, a language to speak with those human and non-human elements around me. Between the abstraction of language and feelings and the taking-shape of a political identity through the lands I've dwelled on, the duality of how these contradictions inform and negate each other was what sustained my practice.



**Figure 2.** Documentation of the installation of *[All These Kilometers] and I still have not arrived. 2019.*

Photo by: Emily Clark.

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<sup>2</sup> In this way, I accept Nikos Papastergiadis' proposition to characterize context "[not as a] singular set of national traits forged in an exclusive setting over a sustained period of time," but rather "(...) a multi-temporal engagement with the past and the present, a cosmopolitan vision of the cultural horizon, and a specific engagement with social realities" (2011, 153)

For the final project of my undergraduate degree, I collected all the application packages I have submitted to the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to enter the country and folded them individually into balloon shapes. Copies of my passport, details of the addresses of my family, medical forms, bank statements, lists of former employers, among other personal information were elevated 5'7" above the gallery's entrance floor. I referenced my height to re-configure the entrance of the exhibition to conveniently fit me while making others aware of how they entered the space.



**Figure 3.** Documentation of the installation of [*All These Kilometers*] and *I still have not arrived*. 2019.

Here, a temporary resident, there a citizen. Displaying all the documents proving my identity over and over and over again in a gallery space was meant to expose the bureaucratic procedures preceding my (art)work. One can only enter into anonymity, Marc Augé<sup>3</sup> writes, “(...) when [one has] given proof of [one’s] identity” (2009, 102). Perhaps predictably, what was meant to be a disruption of the gallery space was soon rendered a part of it. I entered into anonymity and my work was assimilated into a Canadian context. Paradoxically, a work that was created out of all the migratory forms detailing my transits, felt stagnant. I needed the audience to experience, as artist Walter de Maria said, an earthquake in the gallery<sup>4</sup>. Perhaps I needed to feel it first.

On the 32nd anniversary of the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, another earthquake hit the country. Although I was absent for both of them, the stories and lived experiences of my loved ones weighed on my body in a way nothing else had before. Writing art history papers in English while imagining the extent of devastation in Spanish, that was the first time I experienced displacement in the body. The way I projected this “embodied displacement” onto my practice was to let myself be completely seduced by the idea of abandoning meaning in favour of sensation. I started looking for a place in-between language where meaning could only be felt but never be transmitted via words.

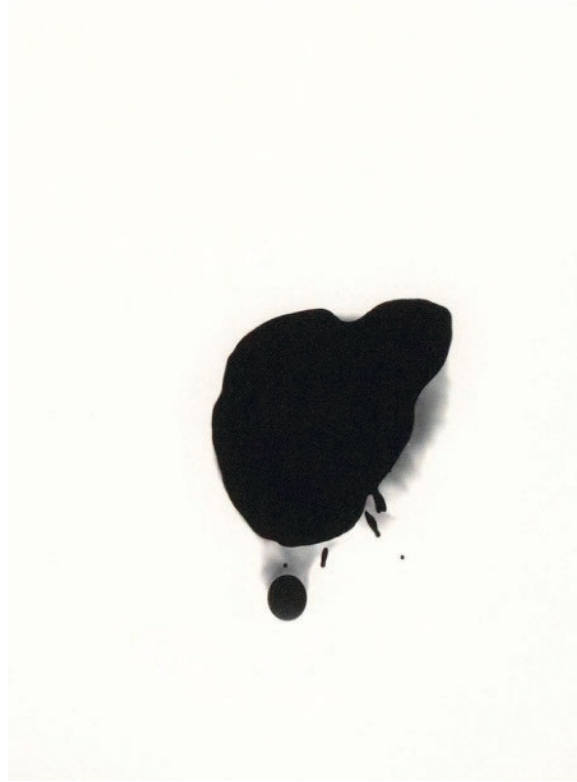
I found a temporary place in the woods of Corner Brook, Newfoundland, where no one cared which language I spoke. I sounded the no-words in my body, the echo of my own voice resonating against my chest. At the same time, I felt the air coming from the woods against my skin; we were not conveying meaning, we were feeling it. The sound recordings of this attempt to communicate with the nonhuman were processed in the darkroom. That is, I played the audio on a speaker as I exposed photographic paper in an enlarger to later place it on top of the subwoofer. I poured developer fluid over the

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<sup>3</sup> In *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Marc Augé discusses anonymity and identity in relation to “non-places”, like an airport. Later in the defence statement I reference Augé again to address the “non-place” my graduation is situated at.

<sup>4</sup> Artist Walter de María has a poem, “On the Importance of Natural Disasters,” where he shares: “I don’t think art can stand up to nature (...) think of a flood, forest fire, tornado, earthquake, Typhoon, sand storm (...) If all of the people who go to museums could just feel an earthquake” (1960, np).

photographic paper and the sound coming out of the speaker made the fluid vibrate on the surface of the paper. The result was these rich black spots with soft, vibrant, unsteady edges.



**Figure 4.** *Phonographic 1*, 2018. 22”x30”. Phonogram enlarged, inkjet on watercolour paper.

On the back of these “phonograms”, I wrote short stories of people walking towards bodies of water. At the time, this was an instinctive choice; now I locate in this gesture the genesis of my MFA graduation project. I used to drift near bodies of water in search of belonging. I was not alone in doing this. Sonja Boon, in her autobiographical novel *What the Oceans Remember*, describes going to Middle Cove Beach in Newfoundland and reflecting on what home is. She writes: “Belonging is fragile, fragmented, multiple. Home is impossible. I am an outsider within, a chameleon who can take on the guise of the local, but who will never truly feel like one” (2019, 8). Having so much of my practice shaped by drifting, moving, walking, and arriving, the pandemic became a turning point in my practice by restricting mobility to one space.

## In Vancouver

*Mobility is a threat when not pursued for work-sake as it circulates knowledge, experiences, struggles. In the past the instruments of restraint were whips, chains, the stocks, mutilation, enslavement. Today, in addition to the whip and the detention centers, we have computer surveillance and the periodic threat of epidemics as a means to control nomadism.*  
(2015, 85)

–Silvia Federeci in “In Praise of the Dancing Body”

For Summer 2020, I had planned to go East, to St. John’s, Newfoundland<sup>5</sup> to conduct research in the Memorial University of Newfoundland Archives and then head South, to Bogota, Colombia, for what would have been the first time I had visited another Latin American country. At the time, I was convinced I could not ground (contextualize) my practice in Vancouver even if I wanted to. Rather, I had the need to “cement” my story in the history of the places I had been a part of and the longing to “further” my affiliation by relation to lands I had never moved through. Staying (in the) present, physically and mentally, has never truly been a part of my skill set.

In *How our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves*, John Paul Eakin defends autobiography, self-writing, as relational.<sup>6</sup> The pandemic (has) traversed my autobiography and, with that, the relationships I sustained with the people, places, non-humans, and other materialities included in my practice. Organically, my practice has shifted to explore, through self-writing, those new relationships; to situate myself not as a maker but an observer of the interrelation of space, people and non-humans, and materials.<sup>7</sup> I renounced my previous self-identification as a “visual” or “time-based” artist

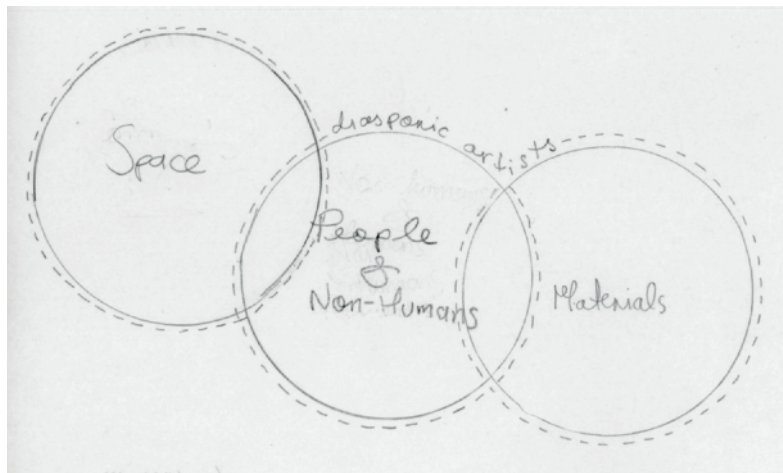
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<sup>5</sup> When I first immigrated to Canada, I lived in St. John’s and Corner Brook, Newfoundland, where I studied for my BFA in Visual Arts at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

<sup>6</sup> “defined by –and lives in terms of–its relations with others” (1999, 43).

<sup>7</sup> In *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Jane Bennett notes “A lot happens to the concept of agency once nonhuman things are figured less as social constructions and more as actors, and once humans themselves are assessed not as autonomous but as vital materialities” (2010, 21). The pandemic, essentially a vital materiality moving through the medium of human bodies, shifted the role I enact within my (art)making.

in favour of the contextuality of the place my practice unfolds from, and started calling myself a “diasporic artist”, an intrinsically political category yearning for belonging.



**Figure 5. A diagram I made in June 2020 to illustrate the role I, a diasporic artist, have within my(art)making.**

In a paper<sup>8</sup> I wrote through the initial months of the pandemic, I concluded:

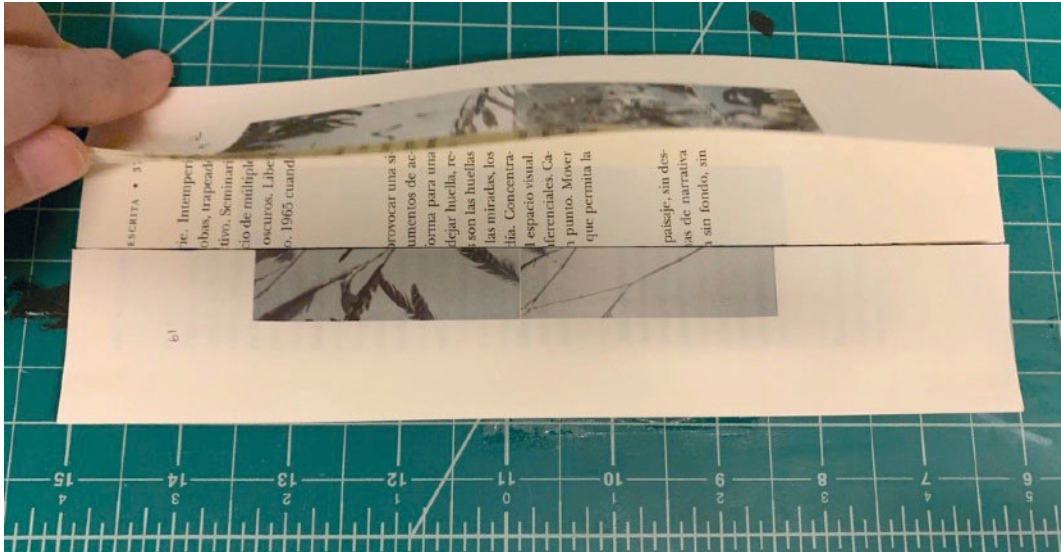
*To name oneself a “diasporic artist” instead of centring the medium, temporality, or country from which one creates is to state awareness of how one’s work might be perceived, is to push against national-state and ethnic affiliation and the assumption that these, on their own, can act as a spine for cultural production. It is my hope that by putting this methodology [the “methodology of the periphery”] in practice, diasporic artists can exercise agency over their own subject(ivity) asserting that these relationships are as important as the work itself. (2020, 9)*

The “pandemic shift” in my practice was to turn to other diasporic, nomadic, and displaced artists and writers looking for commonalities in production strategies that could ground a making that kept being erratic.

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<sup>8</sup> *The Methodology of the Periphery: Diasporic Subject(ivity) in the Collectivity of Cultural Production* was presented at the Universities Art Association of Canada (UAAC) 2020 Conference as part of the panel “Enchantment, Disenchantment, Reenchantment: Rethinking Practices of Interconnection in a Century of Crisis,” moderated by Yani Kong.

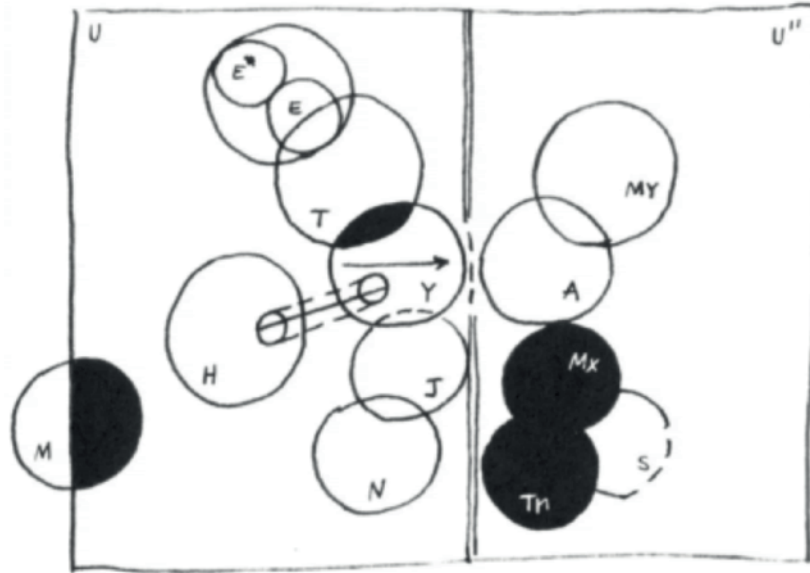
## Nowhere: Where Language Stands Split Open



**Figure 6.** Cut out pages from Gabriel Orozco's *Materia Escrita (Written Matter)*.

This project exists in intimate material investigations of the books of other nomadic, diasporic, and Indigenous artists and writers. These authors, mentioned throughout the defence statement and Appendix A and B, became coordinates from which to delineate the narrative structure that hold the project together. Understanding writers as geographic coordinates comes from the moments I have read their work while in transit to other places. For instance, visual artist and writer Verónica Gerber Bicecci's novel *Conjunto Vacío* (Empty Set) shaped my understanding around time and longing as I prepared to leave Mexico in 2015. In the book, Bicecci uses diagrams to locate herself in relation to the people in her life and the situations unfolding throughout a re-imagined account of her own story. I would pinpoint the need to map artists, writers and their words and drawings to the discovery of this novel, where words and diagrams to locate oneself do not compete for a rank but rather complement each other to tell a story.





**Figure 7. Diagram from *Conjunto Vacío (Empty Set)* by Verónica Gerber Bicecci.**

Through her *graphia*<sup>9</sup> Gerber Bicecci exposes and proposes new ways to understand, complicate, and challenge the relationship between content-form of a book as one that is never clearly delineated. She has made me understand books as systems of vision which primarily, but not exclusively, use sight as an organizational agent. During the process of this project I started looking into literary theory to name what I was doing. I arrived at reader response theory, where the meaning of the text is not given by the author but created by the readers, and the importance of writerly texts<sup>10</sup> to situate the readers within the reading act. I greatly enjoy writerly texts because they allow me to drift through a story, weaving my own in and out, finding and making meaning along the way.

The text of the books I chose to repurpose as pinhole cameras had that quality. I could insert myself into the texts, weaving my story through narrative structures that the authors had opened to share their stories of pain, grief, and displacement. Specific to this project, the book *What the Oceans Remember* features descriptive accounts of the author,

<sup>9</sup> The writing, drawing, mapping, and schematizing in her work.

<sup>10</sup> As referenced by Dennis J. Sumara and Rebecca Luce-Kapler, this term coined by Barthes is used to describe text that "(...) is less predictable. It does not attempt to control the reader; he or she must make his or her own connections between images, events and settings that are presented by the author" (1993,390).

Sonja Boon, visiting archives of the places their ancestors inhabited. At times crude, when she comes across documents of plantations where her family worked, and at times accelerating, when she shares the joy of going through archives like living documentation of the land, Boon's book reaffirms my feelings finding in the archived stories of Newfoundland the living registry of the place I tried to adapt to from 2015-2019 and that I still try to be a part of.

Drawing from Boon's assertion of the archives as living spaces, I look at *books as bodies or bodies as maps* as the documentation of living spaces of what is currently known as Vancouver. That is, the *What the Oceans Remember* book turned into a pinhole camera is documenting a living space and pointing to the possibility of a future archive<sup>11</sup>. I thought that by doing that, situating myself within their texts, I could constellate nomadic motion patterns that could reveal the futurity of my transits.

## Trajectories of Unlooking

*books as bodies or bodies as maps* was presented as part of the MFA graduation show "Trajectories of Unlooking" in September 2021. Trying to move away from the feelings of stagnation from my undergrad project, I decided to make use of two lobbies, the first being the main lobby of SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts (GCA) and the second being the entrance areas of the Audain Gallery, to display the artwork. Lobbies are a non-place, a liminal space connecting people to their next destination<sup>12</sup>. The viewers of my work come to it the same way it was created, in motion. By installing my work in areas of transit, I am inviting people to spend time with my work as they walk by. I find it

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<sup>11</sup> Part of my undergrad (2019) and MFA Spring Show (2020) work was to browse the Memorial University of Newfoundland's archives, trying to sustain a conversation with photographs taken over a century ago. This conversation turned into the "Archive of Embodied Displacement" (2020), a collection of diasporic gestures and time-based media, unfolding and speculating on connections between the East and West coast of so-called Canada.

<sup>12</sup> On *non-places* Marc Augé writes "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" (2009, 77).

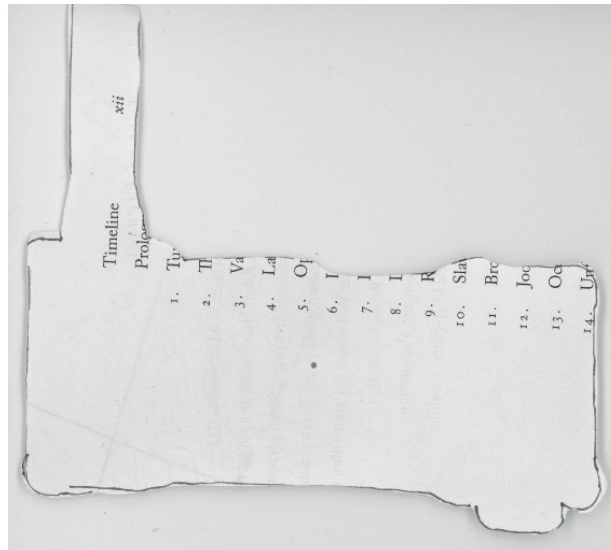
powerful to recognize in the limitations of these spaces an invitation to stay (and spend time with the work) but ultimately only being able to move forward<sup>13</sup>.

Before I describe the elements of the work in relation to the space, materialities, and the theoretical concepts informing the project, I want to precede it by saying that one of the earliest potentialities and limitations of *books as bodies or bodies as maps* was the terminology used to refer to the different components of the project. During the process, differentiating between books, booklets, book/cameras, photos, images, moving image, video, and maps became increasingly important as I was trying to articulate the importance of each. The decision to not title each element of the work beyond their categorization (i.e. the booklets, the video, etc) is a characteristic of this iteration of the project where I am concerned with delineating the role of each element and its relationship to one another. What follows is an attempt to demarcate the limits of each element but this is done under the premise that these influenced and informed one another throughout the project.

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<sup>13</sup> Although people attending the show might feel compelled to return to these lobbies to re-see the work, the primary function of the gallery and GCA lobbies is not to re-welcome people but to facilitate transit within their cultural institutions. That is, the artwork and the actions it invites are only temporary, not related to the space but the time they are bound to. Augé argues, “[s]ince non-places are there to be passed through, they are measured in units of time” (104)

## The Book/Camera



**Figure 8.** Cut out of the camera-mechanism for *What the Oceans Remember* BOOK/CAMERA.

The self-edited book *Materia escrita (Written Matter)*, by Mexican sculpturist Gabriel Orozco, is a register of the artist’s notes, sketches, and journal entries as he travels the world with his work from 1992 to 2012. When this project started, in October 2020, I was drawn to Orozco’s book as he conceived his notebooks as “traveling studios.” I was interested in the artist’s thoughts on materiality and portable formats. Orozco’s *Written Matter* presents a collection of what Verónica Gerber Bicecci would have called Orozco’s “intuition[s],” his internal logic. I studied the structure of this book, both in Orozco’s narrative and the relationship between content-form, and what I found was the possibility of an artifact to register my own transits. Drawing from my interest in pinhole photography, I prototyped *Written Matter* as a pinhole camera as I believed this would shift the role of the content, the form, the reader, and the writer as one that is not easily discernible.

Along with *Written Matter*, books by diasporic, nomadic, and Indigenous writers who had made an impact on my efforts to ground (contextualize) my making in the different places I’ve dwelled in became part of the project: *La Compañía*, by Verónica Gerber Bicecci; *What the Oceans Remember* by Sonja Boon; and *A History of my Brief*

*Body*, by Billy-Ray Belcourt. These authors are now based on cities I inhabit(ed) and I wanted to bring these books along a journey to document the coordinates of my diasporic travels. That is:

- To use, Mexico City-based Verónica Gerber Bicecci's BOOK/CAMERA to document Newfoundland as this was my first transit.
- To use, multicultural flutist and researcher now based in St. John's, Newfoundland, Sonja Boon's BOOK/CAMERA to document Vancouver.
- To use, writer and scholar from the Driftpile Cree Nation and now based in Vancouver, Billy-Ray Belcourt's BOOK/CAMERA to document my project into my future transits in Bogota, Colombia.

Alas, the pandemic halted all travel and I focused on the circuit Boon-Vancouver. Nevertheless, I decided to display all BOOK/CAMERAS as part of the show as a cue to future iterations. These devices were displayed next to the objects that aid the BOOK/CAMERAS' activation: a screwdriver, an elastic page holder, and a washer. While it was not my intention for the audience to touch the BOOK/CAMERAS, throughout the exhibition people felt invited to touch and open them. One reader, in particular, felt compelled to take with them the washer which was supposed to later activate Veronica Gerber Bicecci's book. I wonder if this person thought of their action as "gallery combing" the way other people beach comb on walks by the ocean. I find great comfort in knowing someone subverted expectations and became a collector, if anything, of a washer story in relation to mine. I wonder if exhibitions, like texts, can also be writerly. Inviting viewers to become authors of the work too.

Impromptu collector aside, although it might be evident that the formal decisions made to display the BOOK/CAMERAS would prompt readers to investigate their materiality, for me it came as a revelation that there is an impossibility to renounce curiosity in the face of the unusual.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> When I first learned people had been touching the BOOK/CAMERAS I felt concerned the devices could be damaged but then I decided to leave them up the way they were and see how people interacted with them. I was quite excited to witness the little changes in the shelf; viewers seemed particularly interested in deciphering the "emptiness" of the books. In the following sections I offer some formal answers for the curious seers/viewers of the work.



**Figure 9.** All BOOK/CAMERAS displayed on a shelf at the Audain Gallery Lobby.

## **The Image and The Text**

In a hand drawn zine<sup>15</sup> that rewrites Magritte's "Les Mots et les Images," Verónica Gerber Bicecci writes: "The relationship of image-text is inescapable. Truly, there is no difference between one and another, only a problem called logocentrism (...). Logocentrism makes us believe that images do not think (...). But even in their "emptiness" it is an image who thinks." (2021, np). This project is made up of two components present in each iteration of the work: the Image and the Text. The Image is the resulting documentation obtained with the BOOK/CAMERA. The Text is what I wrote as a companion to the Image.

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<sup>15</sup> "Las palabras y la imágenes" ("The words and the images")

## The Image



**Figure 10.** Image of raw scanned film.

All the images obtained for this iteration of the project were taken with the BOOK/CAMERA *What the Oceans Remember*.

I am reluctant to call the seven rolls of film, which registered the light from the BOOK/ CAMERA, photos. Etymologically, they are the text-book definition of photographs, but I do not think I shot film. I think I re-wrote my surroundings. That is where the difference lies between photo and image in the context of this project. A photograph is the grammatically correct writing with light. An image from the BOOK/CAMERA is a re-writing in verse. These Images are long sentences of places near bodies of water registering in detail breaks and motion within the Image. By presenting composite groupings of these images in video, booklet, postcard, and book/map form I assert that their polysemic capability is multiple.

## The Text

Conceiving the blank page as a map, I assembled standpoints (quotes from authors who influenced the conception of the project) and coordinates (journal entries of my walks across the Vancouver shoreline). The Text weaves together my transits and findings with the political and artistic positionalities of women authors writing about language, form and content, drifting, and agency. The first version of this Text was partially written in Spanish during the workshop “Writing and the photographic image,” led by photographer and writer Érika Vitela. The final version is the result of translating each passage back and forth until I felt that I was not missing anything I said in the other language. This

translation exercise made me appreciate working in both languages as a way to sound stories that otherwise would not exist.

NOTA: TRADUCIDO DE ACUERDO A LA VERSIÓN DE MAYO 17, 2021. LA VOZ EN LA ESCRITURA (AMBAS VERSIONES) ES AÚN DIFUSA.

*Te tomo entre las manos. Eres la memoria de los lugares que he visitado pensando en Sonja Boon, pensando en como su historia se relaciona con la mía y la mía con la de todos los demás escritores que he intentado juntar en esta tesis. A veces veo rutas exactas, como grabadas en un mapa; a veces veo campos vacíos, llanos. No sé a dónde me llevan.*

**Figure 11.** Screenshot of the document where I translated the text.

Note: The full text can be found in Appendix B.

## The Booklets



**Figure 12.** Documentation of the booklets as seen from outside of the gallery.



These booklets<sup>16</sup> are displayed along the lobby window of the Audain Gallery. There are fifteen 8x8.5 inch booklets made up of three double sized pages containing composite groupings of the Image and excerpts of the Text. These pages are not presented in a particular order and they are bound only by elastic thread, open to being switched and reordered. Although I understand people in the gallery won't feel compelled to change the order I have initially proposed, I like to see in this formal decision of the piece a possibility for change. That is, by not stitch-binding the booklets, the possibility of recombining Text-Image is introduced to the readers.

The booklets hang individually from the ceiling with the aid of screw eyes, black cord, and an open hook at the end, which holds the top of the spine of the booklet. Although they are prevented from rotating by the gallery window, they move subtly when viewers enter the gallery. The gallery window has four interruptions, three in the glass seams and one inside the gallery where a white reinforced concrete column stands in the middle of the gallery lobby and the window. Instead of trying to render this column invisible, I incorporated it to the installation by placing a vinyl text on one side reading “flip” and on the other side of the sharp corner “through”.

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<sup>16</sup> Although these “booklets” could be framed as artist books, in the context of the current iteration of the project I categorize them as booklets to understand them as iterations of the Image, a repository of the gesture of using a book as a camera.



**Figure 13. Booklets hanging inside of the Audain Gallery Lobby.**

## **The Book/Map**

The book/map is also on display at the Audain Gallery, on a cornered plinth to the right once you enter through the glass doors. It has taken over the place where the gallery would usually display their books for sale, where they would have the exhibition brochures and where the audience would be asked to leave their bags to enter the gallery space. Since the book/map took over this strategic corner, the gallery made use of an auxiliary table and its office to fulfil these functions. I see this as a sign of the map manifesting one of its functions, to (re)locate and (re)configure the space.

(once again) Referencing my height, a 68 inches-long sheet contains all the photos and text of the project. Across the paper, the seven strips of film resulting from the BOOK/CAMERA *What the Oceans Remember*, are laid out horizontally with fragments of the text creating perpendicular lines. This map folds into a 10" x 9" rectangle refusing to lay flat due to its water-resistant quality, a plastic-like coating I chose hoping to bring the book/map along for more walks near bodies of water. A small vinyl text was applied on the vertex corner of the wall "un/ fold", eluding the centre fold of a book, and acting

as a little invitation to interact with the book/ map. Due to its length, once picked up from the plinth, the reader has to navigate the map in relation to their body. The orientation of text and image prompts a bodily reading of the map, finding new connections (Image-Text) as the reader un/folds.



**Figure 14.** Detail of the book/ map.



**Figure 15.** Readers of the book/map.

## The Video



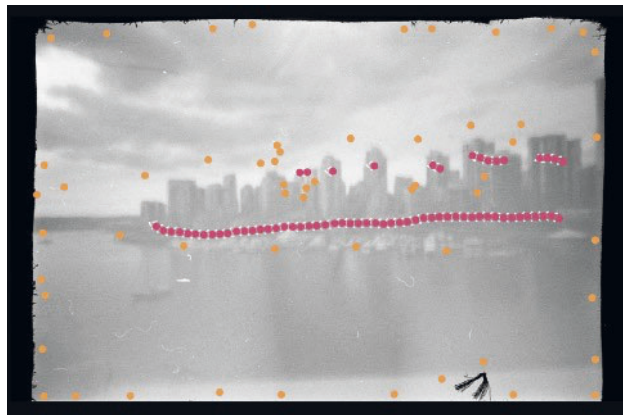
**Figure 16. Documentation of the video at the GCA Lobby.**

A three-channel, 3500 pixels long, black and white video plays on a loop in the SCA lobby. Through its 38-minute duration, six scenes unfold in no particular order. Video documentation of the making and activation of the BOOK/CAMERA is interwoven with the images obtained with it. Flowing between still and moving images, each scene presents a different part of the making of the work, suggesting that there is no clear beginning nor end by superimposing the process of re-writing my surroundings with the repositories created by this gesture. Even through moments of apparent stillness, when only the Images are visible, there is movement on the screen that I subtly animated onto the Image (see below). This as a way to encourage re-seeing the Images not as documentation of the places depicted but as agential elements supplementing the larger narrative of this project about (nomadic) bodies as mapping devices. By presenting parts of the process of turning *What the Oceans Remember* into a pinhole camera and its activation, this video prompts the viewers to make the connection between the BOOK/CAMERAS and the Images. Although the viewer might not stay in the lobby long

enough to see the video and make the connections among all the elements of the work, with each visit the viewer might get a new way to navigate the project as a whole.



**Figure 17.** Video Still, the Image.



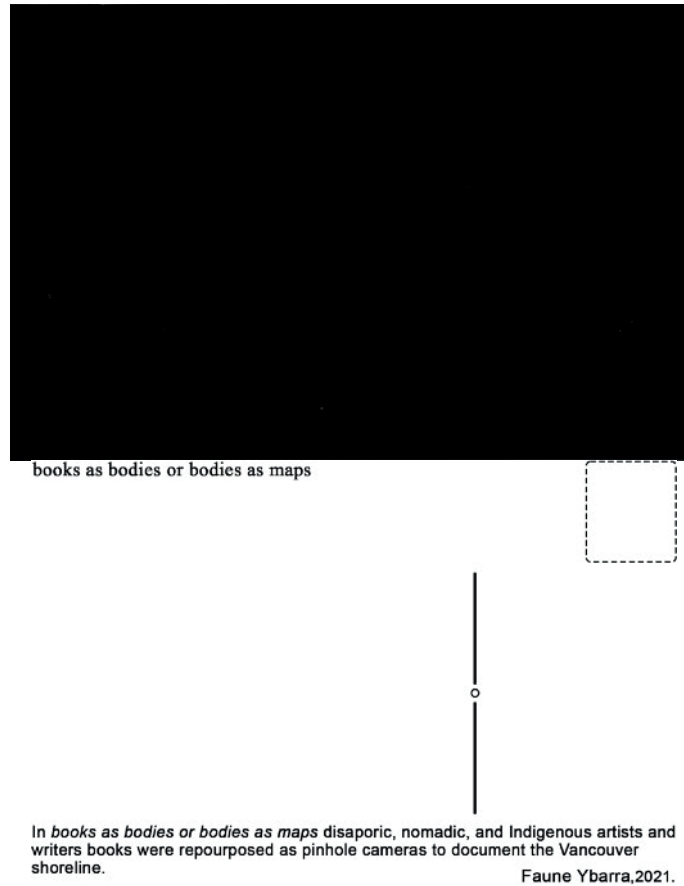
**Figure 18.** Screenshot of the animation project.

## The Postcards: First Coda



**Figure 19. Documentation, postcards scattered at the GCA Lobby.**

These postcards re-affirm this iteration of *books as bodies or bodies as maps* as one that exists through the temporal flows of diasporic motion and nomadism by setting the images in motion beyond the spaces they were produced, processed, and displayed in, and into a perpetual encounter with readers from places I might never know.



**Figure 20.** Front (69/97) and back of a postcard.

## A Second Coda

One of the characteristics of the pandemic was the collective perception of online time as a shared time. Time zones were mere suggestions of place when participating in a Zoom call. Online workshops, seminars, and artist talks were a silver lining for this project as I got to hear from (and at times converse with) the authors and artists I have read throughout the making of this project. Events that I otherwise would have missed by not being in the same place (where they were to occur), were now happening in front of me on my screen. At last, a disembodied experience I could ground in, I thought.

In the Fall of 2020, I attended a series of talks by Verónica Gerber Bicecci called “The book as artifact (to tell stories).” Through this workshop, I had the opportunity to appreciate in the vagueness of my positionalities a common thread, as Bicecci characterized the approach Vicente Rojo’s artist book *Escrito/Pintado* (Written/Painted)



had to asemic writing as intuitive. For Bicecci, the lines, shapes, and colours the author had chosen to represent certain concepts revealed the internal logic in his making. Intuition, according to Bicecci, does not come freely but it is rather telling of the internal processes authors and artists operate from, a logic that magically shows us who we are and perhaps where we are going. From this understanding I started to believe that if we could trace motion to anticipate our next stop, we would find ourselves looking through old notebooks and drafts only to find we have been writing what we were eager to say now, years ago.

In looking back, I find that the eagerness to document motion is to preserve stories in a way my grandparents could not. In my family, reading and writing were not skills that were privileged above the need to feed the children. For generations, knowledge in my family was not institutionalized, which is to say their skills, teachings, and memories were not preserved beyond orality. However, if there is anything that governs my family, it is silence. The few stories I have heard from my mom about her mom are filled with shame. The few stories I heard about my father's side of the family were told to me by my grandmother, reluctantly, one afternoon.

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## Appendix A.

### Books as Artifacts and Bodies as Maps: Nomad Methodologies to Weave the Future

“Our conversation around books is always about their content. (...) The content is important, of course, but the relation between content and container should be, at the very least, coherent and solid. Maybe then one day we could propose something we cannot yet imagine in literature. Can we talk about a book like the cover, the object, and the content were just one?”

Verónica Gerber Bicecci in “Books that are not read” for *Fossil Books*<sup>17</sup>

This essay tries to locate itself on each page, constantly re-routing, building bridges, and constellating nomadic writers and artists talking about agency, mobility, and time. It tries to answer if diasporic motion can be documented and, if agency is to be derived from this movement, could it ever materialize into an artifact? The writing in this essay could try to pass as said artifact, but it is not, it is only a part. These words travel across, through, and with understandings of diasporic motion as a way to articulate their own movement.

[Coordinate ] Walking along the coastline of Point Grey in Vancouver, I pick up a shell filled with barnacles. Barnacles are marine arthropods living in shallow waters that attach to any surface in tidal zones. Trying to find a place to live, they usually weigh down ships, making watercrafts travel times longer. Barnacles can also be found in whales, on rocks, and adrift pieces of wood. They are crustaceans promoting grounding ashore, instigating slowness. I pick up the rock, observe these creatures in detail. Then I leave it with millimetric precision where it was, almost as if someone or something were watching, making sure both the rock and I are exactly where we are supposed to be. The rock with barnacles belongs in Point Grey; for now, I belong somewhere in relation to it.

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<sup>17</sup> This is a translation of Bicecci’s quote on “Libros que no se leen” (Books that are not read) in *Libros Fósiles* (Fossil Books) by Alejandro Magallanes.

## Problematizing Belonging

“(…)the mother tongue weaves the fabric we wear as “identity” but it does not determine who we are until the contrast of “the other” elicits it”

Yásnaya Aguilar Gil in *Ää Manifestos sobre la diversidad Lingüística (Ää Manifests on Linguistic Diversity)*

My research-practice has attempted to map the places I belong to through an active endeavour of relationality. This labour calls for the meshing of the memories of multiple places to form “certainties”. Through the gaps in-between these certainties, I like to weave in my story transiting through Vancouver, Mexico City, Oaxaca, and Newfoundland. For me, it is important to enunciate these places because it is from there that I have and continue to learn what it means to make art and nurture the bonds I sustain with people, non-humans, and materials in my transiting.

More than a visual artist, I am a diasporic artist. My work articulates itself in motion. I regard the contextuality of my practice over medium. This context could be what Nikos Papasterguiadis defines as a “(…)multi-temporal engagement with the past and the present, a cosmopolitan vision of the cultural horizon, and a specific engagement with social realities” (2011, 153). Seeing the commonalities in fellow diasporic authors and writers, I aim to weave their histories and stories of displacement, migration, and grieving with mine. This weaving action presents a tapestry of different understandings of land and time –the actualization of diasporic motion.

In and through my work, it is not my intention to disentangle the political subject from its context in favour of the “diasporic artist” category but rather to find some sort of affiliation within our making strategies that reclaim belonging in transit. Among displaced groups, different subject(ivities) bring into question the intervals of intersection and tangentiality among their transience. Presented as either a personal choice or introduced as a mechanism of control, migration and precarity enact different subjectivities, which Manuela Zechner considers to be “(…) pitted against one another: the migrant and the refugee, the precarious and the subaltern, etc. We situate ourselves in

the attempts of thinking and acting across those. Of bridging the gaps that should keep us separate, of translating, situating, orienting, lending, hiding, trafficking, sharing, collectivizing” (2018, n.p.). In Zechner’s assertion, I see some prompts to begin bridging the gaps between different subjectivities, to begin to locate displaced people in the interstice of a future possible.

Many of the authors, writers, and artists I read to contextualize my practice announced some sort of positionality in relation to the past. A sort of long-term residency somewhere to understand what the future might hold. For instance, Rebecca Schneider<sup>18</sup>, finds in the gesture of holding her hand up to the height a palaeolithic hand stencil a moment to reflect on the contemporary social movement “hands up”. What is in-between this time gap? Which is to ask, where do we stand in relation to time? And to this project’s end, how can we actualize motion through histories that refuse to settle?

In essay form, Sonja Boon and Kate Lahey, examine the potentiality drifting has to “understand the impossibility of a future in the absence of a past, the unruliness of a geography that will not be fixed, and the complexities of a wounded world that cannot be mapped” (33). Drawing upon and juxtaposing the literary works of Indigenous and Black writers and thinkers “in/on/with” so-called Canada, Boon and Lahey theorize drifting as a methodology and metaphor which exposes unique transits in the in-between of past-present-future. Similar to their proposition, I turn to walking adrift in the shoreline of Vancouver with books turned into pinhole cameras by diasporic, nomadic, and Indigenous authors. Dissenting from their assertions, I engage in an exercise of re-looking and re-writing (photo-graphing) my transits as a way to actualize the possibility of a diasporic future.

[coordinate] (here) the diasporic body, (there) the nomadic body.

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<sup>18</sup> Rebecca Schneider (2018) in “That the Past May Yet Have Another Future: Gesture in the Times of Hands Up”.

## Diasporic Motion

In *Crossing Borders: Stories and Essays About Translation*, poet and scholar Chana Bloch conceives translation as an exercise of “imaginative understanding” which allows us to “[cross] the boundary between self and Other“ (2019, p). In her understanding I see an invitation to conceive ourselves as a sort of tangible geographical coordinate from where we engage with the other, positioning ourselves, not only in relation to what we perceive of it but the imperceptible bonds we create with them. My argument for sustaining a practice that traces embodied relationships and decenters the medium from its enterprise stems from the idea of mutual affectation of different subjects (human, non-humans, and else) and the bonds they form.

This has been framed by theoretical physicist Karen Barad as “an incarnate relation that precedes the intentionality of consciousness” (2006, 392)<sup>19</sup> Embodied cognition, the forming of “certainties,” cannot be furthered without close inspection of the agency we afford to that which is around us. The ontology of entanglement, Barad writes, is not about the “right response to a radically exterior/ized other, but about responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming of which we are a part.” I wonder how a constant ‘becoming’ speaks to the process of the iterability of a political subject.

Donna Haraway sees these standpoints as “likely to allow denial of the critical and interpretive core of all knowledge. They are knowledgeable of modes of denial through repression, forgetting, and disappearing acts –ways of being nowhere while claiming to see comprehensively” (1988, 584)<sup>20</sup> Just like Karen Barad, for Haraway relativism negates critical inquiry and it is only through a “commitment to mobile positioning” (what Barad would call intra-activity) that one can achieve accountability. I am interested in the ways diasporic artists and writers have found ways to articulate that

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<sup>19</sup>Karen Barad in “The Ontology of Knowing, the Intra-activity of Becoming, and the Ethics of Mattering”, part of *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*.

<sup>20</sup> In “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective” (1988)

“mobile positioning” accounting for the spaces, people, non-humans, and materialities involved in their transiting.

Visual artist and writer, Verónica Gerber Bicecci is the daughter of Argentine exiles, a diasporic community in Mexico formed as a result of militarism in Latin America in the seventies. Although she has written in the past about trying to avoid telling this story over and over again<sup>21</sup>, she has also concluded that the story ‘despite its simplicity’ has a great impact on those understanding themselves as migrants. This story has certainly made an impact on my practice which has been built upon diasporic artists like her. Drawing from this, I would characterize diasporic making as a conscious effort not only to navigate our bodies as maps but to substantiate our making in internal logics responding to transiting.

In “THE NEW ART OF MAKING BOOKS” Ulises Carrión defines a book as a “space-time sequence” asserting that writers don’t write books “A writer writes texts”. Threading in the etymology of text (“text,” from the Latin *texere*, meaning to weave) we can expand Carrión’s definitions to see writing as weaving *with* time and a book as the weaving *of* time. A text, like this essay, tries to weave together different temporalities and positionalities in each page. A diasporic artist exercises a time-weaving methodology (what Haraway would consider “mobile positioning”) before any other processes they might undertake.

Weaving as a methodology to understand the inseparability of time and space (in our bodies) and of content and form (in books as artifacts) is theorized by Tim Ingold in the *Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (2000):

“A division is assumed between form and substance (...) with artifacts, this relation between form and substance is inverted. (...) It is the form of the artefact, not its substance, that is attributed to culture (...) culture wraps itself around the material things, shaping and transforming their outward surfaces without ever penetrating their interior. (...) Is in the nature of weaving, as a

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<sup>21</sup>As she writes for *Palabras Migrantes (Migrant words)* a book recollecting her experience facilitating an introspecting workshop on writing and drawing at Jackson Hole High School in Wyoming.

technique, that it produces a peculiar kind of surface that does not, strictly speaking, have an inside and an outside at all” (341)

I turn to books as artifacts to situate the act of translating, Bloch’s “imaginative understanding” (2019, p) of that which surrounds us and Barad’s “becoming of which we are a part” (2006, 393).

## **An Issue Of Vision**

A book, for writer Vivian Abensushan, is a “matter of legibility” which intrinsically asks us to position ourselves in relation to what we are reading to complete the weaving act. “By weaving other places to continue seeing the world”<sup>22</sup> –this is how Abensushan responds when I ask her how she articulates her positionalities.

[coordinate] New to Vancouver, I found “my new places”: my new bus stop, my community garden, a restaurant that tastes like home. Two years later, these places don’t exist anymore. It’s this impermanence, the memory of what once was and is no more, that makes me feel at home.

## **Books As Artifacts**

*Libros Fósiles* (Fossil Books) by artist and designer Alejandro Magallanes is a series of books without readers. Magallanes, who owns a bookshop in Mexico City, received a hundred books, dated economy books, that had never been held or picked the interest of a reader. To save them from recycling he repurposed them into objects by individually submerging them in white acrylic paint to later draw new covers on them. There is a “Manual of Anatomic Drawing”, a book on “poetri”(sic), a “blah, blah, blah” book, a book which cover reads “photo-book” and its back cover adds “photo-book:

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<sup>22</sup> Vivian Abensushan was a guest speaker at Veronica Gerber Bicecci’s series of talks I mentioned earlier.



contains photos” and so on<sup>23</sup>. Magallanes turning the primary function of the book as that of an information carrier into an object, reminds me of Barthes’ language-object.

In “Myth Today”<sup>24</sup> (1957), Barthes exemplifies with the relationship between a woodcutter and their trees the use of language. A woodcutter, Barthes writes, “speaks the tree”, his language is immediate, he speaks a language-object because he -the woodcutter- transforms the tree. On the other hand, “metalanguage” does not “act the things”, but “acts their name”. Metalanguage, according to Barthes, is a “second-order” language. A language used only when the tree has already been mediated by the woodcutter. Magallanes with *Fossil Books* becomes the Woodcutter advocating for artifacts (like Barthes does for language) not as mediators of reality but bridges between subject and society.

In the prologue of the later book iteration of *Fossil Books*, Verónica Gerber Bicecci writes:

“Our conversation around books is always about their content. We have gotten used to understanding the cover as an ornament, a procedure, or even worse, a hook for the buyer. The content is important, of course, but the relation between content and container should be, at the very least, coherent and solid. Maybe then one day we could propose something we cannot yet imagine in literature. Can we talk about a book like the cover, the object, and the content were just one?” (3)

Bicecci defends the book not as a knowledge-transmission device but as a technological tool of cultural signification constituted by all its parts. Submerged in paint, the pages (the place where the content of these books usually lies) are permanently closed rendering the books into what Ingold considers an artifact, a surface to be transformed. The life-cycle of the books, considers Gerber Bicecci, was interrupted and their biographies changed to “book-objects”. The reader has to reinvent ways to read these books or rather “imagine the content from the suggestion of their covers”, points Gerber

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<sup>23</sup> The documentation, front and back of the books, are part of the publication *Libros Fósiles* (Fossil Books) published by Almadia in Mexico City, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> “Myth Today” is a chapter In Barthe’s *Mythologies*, 1957.

Bicecci similar to Bloch's "imagine understanding" preposition, both ask the reader to address the reading of these artifacts as a creative act.

[coordinate] I hold you between my hands. You are the memory of the places I have visited thinking of Sonja Boon, thinking about how her story relates to mine and mine with all the other stories from the writers I have tried to bring together in writing. Sometimes I see roadmaps like inscribed in a map; sometimes I see plain fields, the illusion of a meadow. I don't know where they'll take me.

I want to tell you that inside your pages there are all my truths, all the things I know until now.

I calmly await seeing you turned into something else, you can be a book, an accordion, a mural, a post-it. You could have so many forms. Not because I don't know what I want but rather because I reject the (art)object as a destiny.

To be a diasporic artist is to be a repository of many forms. I don't know where I am going and I don't think I will ever know.

I sit down and see the ships go by in Fraser River, I think of you. I see the horizon line at Wreck Beach, I think of you. I walk on top of the uncovered rocks at Point Grey, I think of you. In many forms I have tried to materialize your absence. My sense of belonging doesn't work since the distance re-wrote, in another language, the political meaning of our cardinal points.

Because it hasn't been me alone who caused all this uncertainty.

I wonder if uncertainty is coded in an ancestral pattern in our families because you migrated to a city that used to be a lake. A city that keeps pushing the margins to the center.

I am always trying to escape. To live in the margins, almost like a gesture of trust.

I don't want to find you in my photos, I want to look for you, grandma. Because I know I won't ever find you, I have surrendered to that process.

I want to think that if I touch a tree you will be in its roots. I want to have the certainty that if I touch a body of water I am touching a part of you that I never met.

## Books as Cameras

Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco's self-edited book *Materia Escrita* (Written Matter), a compilation of the notes and drafts from his notebooks from 1992 to 2012, reads on the back "[Orozco's] practice as an artist without a fixed studio or technique (but permanently aware of the world around him) made him forge tools to question and innovate his making (...)" (2014, n.p.). *Written Matter* is an ambulant studio, the container of Orozco's internal logic as he articulates his projects through the years. Travelling the world, he turns to the nomadic medium of text to materialize his projects. Whereas Orozco sees his writing as a consequence of motion, I see in motion the genesis of weaving (text writing).

Through weaving, I subvert the function of books by turning them into pinhole cameras. This gesture provides them with the agency afforded to artifacts. They are book-objects, books looking back at the readers. Books that are cameras expose the relations of responsibility between readers, objects, and the non-human. The positionality of all these elements is set in motion constantly attempting to locate one another, performing their own movement.

[coordinate] I don't know who inhabits whom,  
If my body is the empty space or the empty space my body.  
I don't know who inhabits whom,  
If I inhabit the places I've been to  
or if those places inhabit me.

When I  
think of  
space,  
I  
think of

interstices.

That is, the space between two bodies: for instance, the space between a ship and a dock. Between positive space (the space taken by a body) and negative space (not taken), rhythms emerge, inhabiting one another.

I carry with me something that resembles a book: *What the Oceans Remember* it reads on the spine. “Sonja Boon” right below it. In its 165 folded pages –sawn to a piece of fabric and then glued to a blue hardcover– there are words in another language. I had seen them before in different places, but it was not until I found them all together in this book in Vancouver that they took shape. Boon writes, in the first person, about the journey of researching her genealogy, which expands across the Atlantic Ocean to more than eight countries. I, foreign to seven of them, try to connect her story with mine, not in context but in gesture.

I have removed the words from the book. Inside (in its now emptiness) I propose a re-writing exercise in the form of a pinhole camera. This is a book, yes. A book that looks back at the reader. A book with the agency to re-write my surroundings.

Sonja Boon, in collaboration with Kate Lahey, writes in another text:

we might be tempted to write a happy ending, an imagined future where all of our dreams come true, but (...) it might be more productive to, in the words of Donna Haraway, “[stay] with the trouble” (20216, 1), that is, to refuse the linearity of a future orientation for a drifting that allows present, and future to collide with one another.

Sonja Boon and Kate Lahey, “The Impossibility of a Future in the  
Absence of a Past: Drifting the In-Between,” *Atlantis* Vol. 40, No. 1: 32-  
44.

## **Moving (To Navigate Our Own Body As A Map)**

At the beginning of this essay, it was stated that each page would try to reroute understandings of agency, mobility, and time. There were no promises made to arrive somewhere but rather an invitation to always return to the acknowledgment of interconnectivity of journey and destiny to start again. This essay avoided having an *Ithaca* in mind while describing the transiting of diasporic artists and the ways in which

they have materialized their movement. Posing onto the reader the responsibility to complete the creative act of reading, this essay only hopes it has materialized into a text.

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## Appendix B.

### books as bodies or bodies as maps

This is a failed search for people and places that never existed in the same space or at the same time.

In this text (“text,” from the Latin *texere*, meaning to weave), I try to weave the words that artifactualize my need to archive via an evocative understanding of the places I’ve transited through, a document of my diasporic motion. The documentation of this movement suggests that the agency of the diasporic subject is interdependent to the person’s motion and the materiality of the document. Within this weaving action, I ask if this agency can be turned into an artifact.

What’s written here could pass as said artifact, but it is not, it is only a part. These words constellate the thoughts and the lived experiences of nomadic writers and artists talking about agency, mobility and time.

“Our conversation around books is always about their content. (...) The content is important, of course, but the relation between content and container should be, at the very least, coherent and solid. Maybe then one day we could propose something we cannot yet imagine in literature. Can we talk about a book like the cover, the object, and the content were just one?”

Verónica Gerber Bicecci, in “Books that are not read” for *Fossil Books*

[Coordinate ] Walking along the coastline of Point Grey in Vancouver, I pick up a shell filled with barnacles. Barnacles are marine arthropods living in shallow waters that attach to any surface in tidal zones. Trying to find a place to live, they usually weigh down ships, making watercrafts travel times longer. Barnacles can also be found in whales, on rocks, and adrift pieces of wood. They are crustaceans promoting grounding ashore, instigating slowness. I pick up the rock, observe these creatures in detail. Then I leave it with millimetric precision where it was, almost as if someone or something were watching, making sure both the

rock and I are exactly where we are supposed to be. The rock with barnacles belongs in Point Grey; for now, I belong somewhere in relation to it.

“(…) the mother tongue weaves the fabric we wear as “identity” but it does not determine who we are until the contrast of “the other” elicits it.”

Yásnaya Aguilar Gil, in *Ää Manifestos sobre la diversidad Lingüística* (Ää Manifests on Linguistic Diversity)

[Coordinate ] I hold you between my hands. You are the memory of the places I have visited thinking of Sonja Boon, thinking about how her story relates to mine and mine with all the other stories from the writers I have tried to bring together in writing.

Sometimes I see roadmaps like those inscribed in a map; sometimes I see plain fields, the illusion of a meadow. I don't know where they'll take me.

I want to tell you that inside your pages there are all my truths, what I have known until now.

I calmly await seeing you turned into something else: you can be a book, an accordion, a mural, a post-it. You could have so many forms. Not because I don't know what I want but rather because I reject the (art) object as a destiny.

To be a diaspora is to be a repository of many forms. I don't know where I am going and I don't think I will ever know.

I sit down and see the ships go by on the Fraser River, I think of you. I see the horizon line at Wreck Beach, I think of you.

I walk on top of rocks left exposed by a low tide at Point Grey, I think of you.

In many forms, I have tried to materialize your absence. My sense of belonging doesn't work since the distance re-wrote, in another language, the political meaning of our cardinal points.

Because it hasn't been me alone who caused all this uncertainty.

I wonder if uncertainty is coded in an ancestral pattern in our families because you migrated to a city that used to be a lake. A city that keeps pushing the margins to the center.

Why am I always trying to escape?

To live in the margins, almost like a gesture of trust.

I don't want to find you in my photos, I want to look for you, grandma. Because I know I won't ever find you, I have surrendered to that process.

I want to think that if I touch a tree you will be in the roots. I want to have the certainty that if I touch a body of water I am touching a part of you that I never met.

Regarding the entanglement of embodied relations, repurposing the book as a body and the body as a map stems from the idea of mutual affection of different subjects (human, non-human, and others) and the bonds they form. This has been framed by theoretical physicist Karen Barad (2006) as "an incarnate relation that precedes the intentionality of consciousness." Embodied cognition, the forming of "certainties," cannot be furthered without close inspection of the agency we afford to that which is around us. The ontology of entanglement, Barad writes, is not about the "right response to a radically exteriorized other, but about responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming of which we are a part." I wonder how a constant 'becoming' speaks to the process of the iterability of a political subject.

[coordinate] I don't know who inhabits whom,

If my body is the empty space or the empty space my body. I don't know who inhabits whom,

If I inhabit the places I've been to or if those places inhabit me.

When I think of space, I

think of interstices.

That is, the space between two bodies: for instance, the space between a ship and a dock. Between positive space (the space taken by a body) and negative space (not taken) rhythms emerge, inhabiting one another.

I carry with me something that resembles a book: *What the Oceans Remember* it reads on the spine. "Sonja Boon" right below it. In its 165 folded pages –sawn to a piece of fabric and then glued to a blue hardcover– there are words in another language. I had seen them before in different places, but it was not until I found them all together in this book in Vancouver that they took shape. Boon writes, in the first person, about the journey of researching her genealogy, which expands across the Atlantic Ocean to more than eight countries. I, foreign to seven of them, try to connect her story with mine, not in context but in gesture.

I have removed the words from the book. Inside (in its now emptiness) I propose a re-writing exercise in the form of a pinhole camera. This is a book, yes. A book that looks back at the reader. A book with the agency to re-write my surroundings.

Sonja Boon, in collaboration with Kate Lahey, writes in another text:

we might be tempted to write a happy ending, an imagined future where all of our dreams come true, but (...) it might be more productive to, in the words of Donna Haraway, "[stay] with the trouble" (20216, 1), that is, to refuse the linearity of a future orientation for a drifting that allows present, and future to collide with one another.

Sonja Boon and Kate Lahey, "The Impossibility of a Future in the Absence of a Past: Drifting the In-Between," *Atlantis* Vol. 40, No. 1: 32-44.

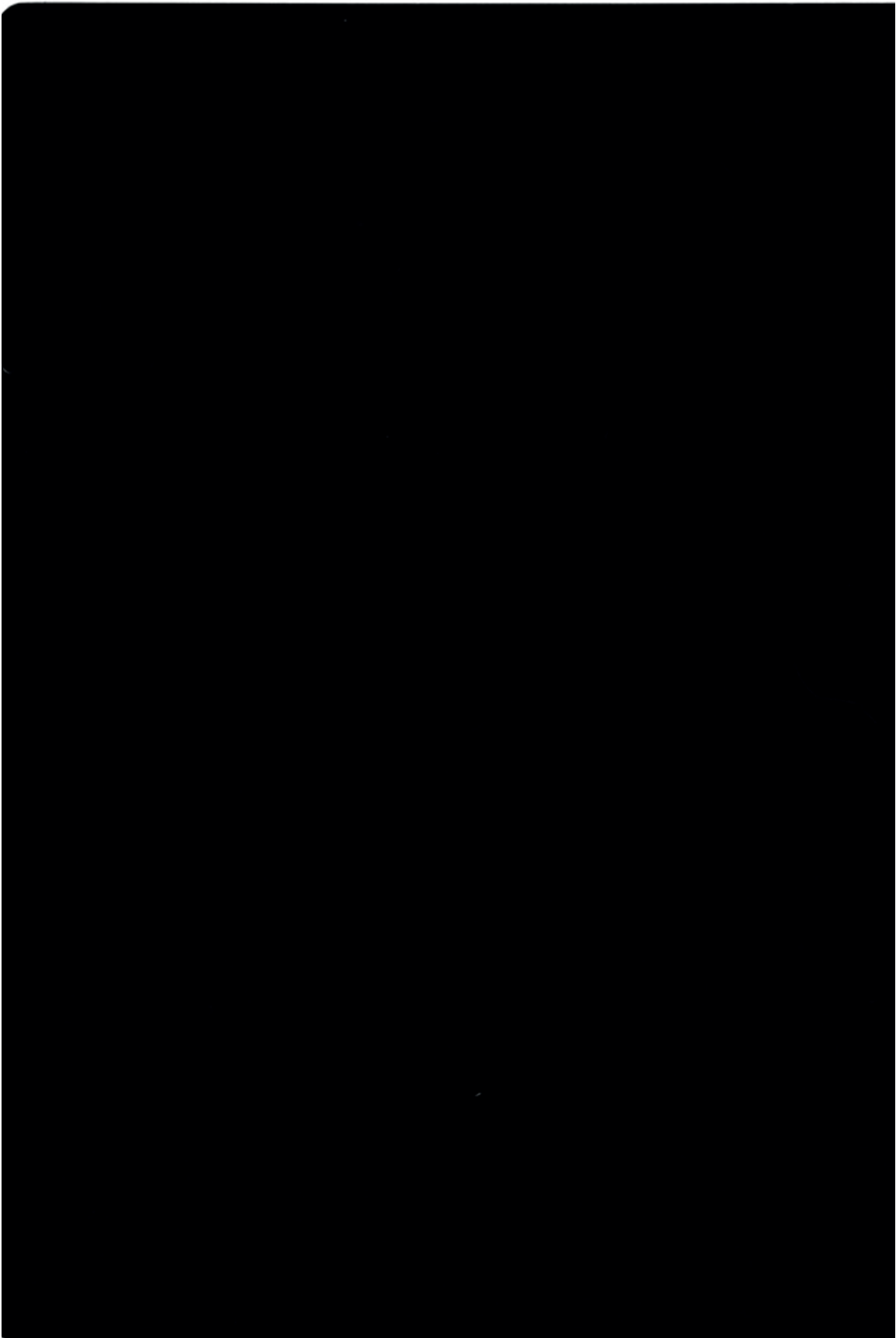
[coordinate] New to Vancouver, I found "my new places": my new bus stop, my community garden, a restaurant that tastes like home. Two years later, these places don't exist anymore. It's this impermanence, the memory of what once was and is no more, that makes me feel at home.

## **Appendix C.**

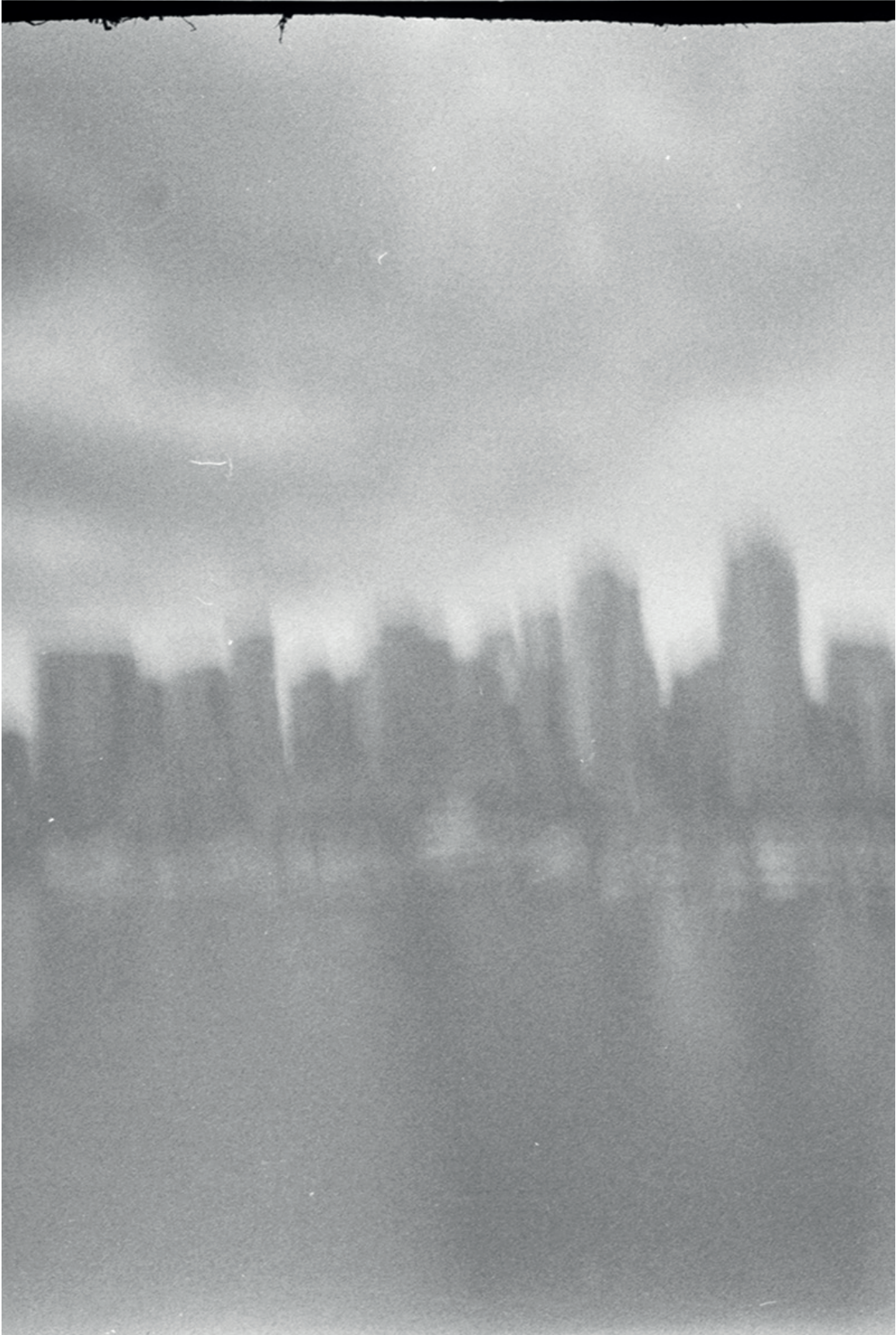
### **The Images**

These Images are long sentences of places near bodies of water registering in detail breaks and motion within the Image. In this appendix, I present to you an iteration of them following library formatting requirements.

**All the images obtained for this project were taken with the BOOK/CAMERA *What the Oceans Remember*.**





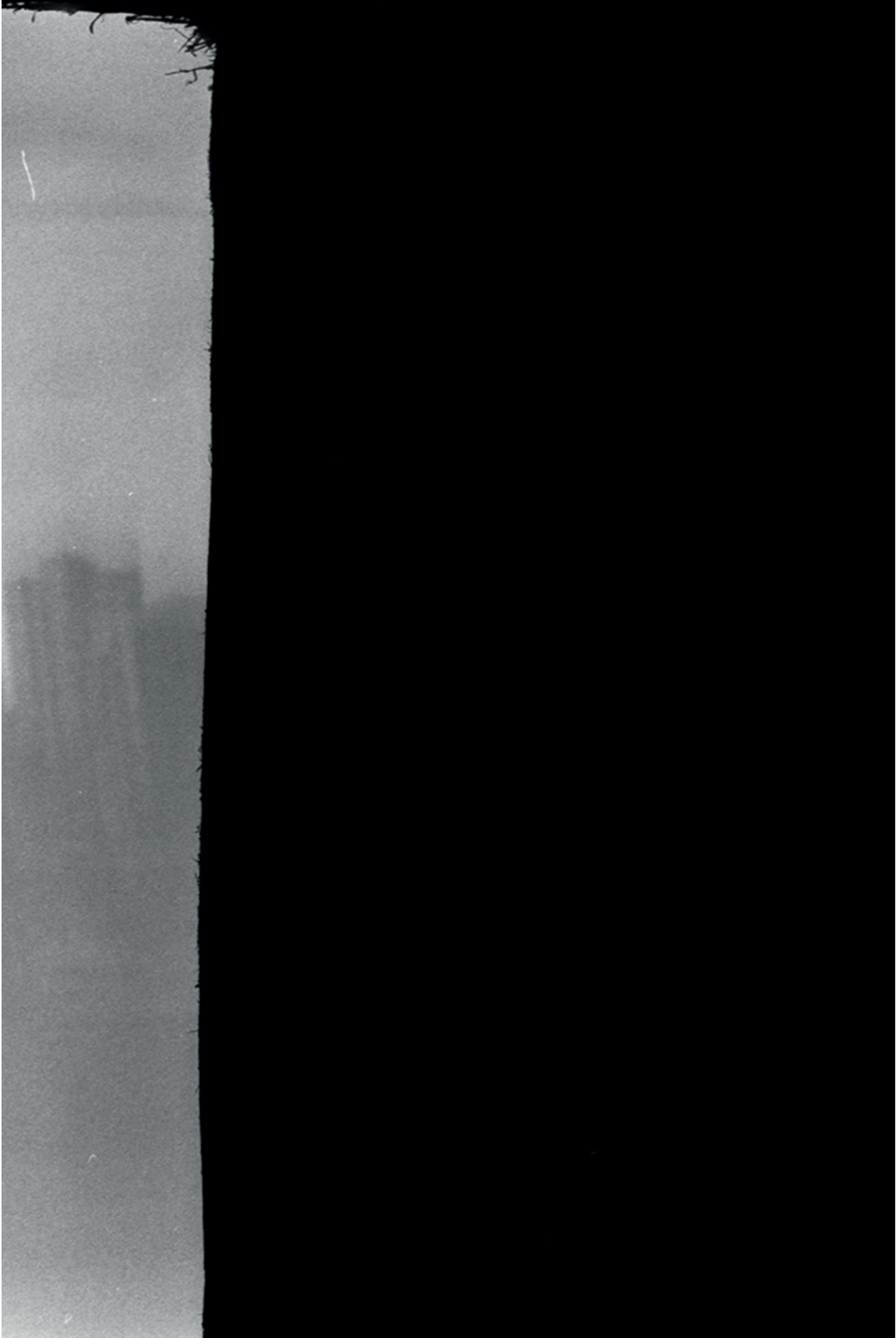




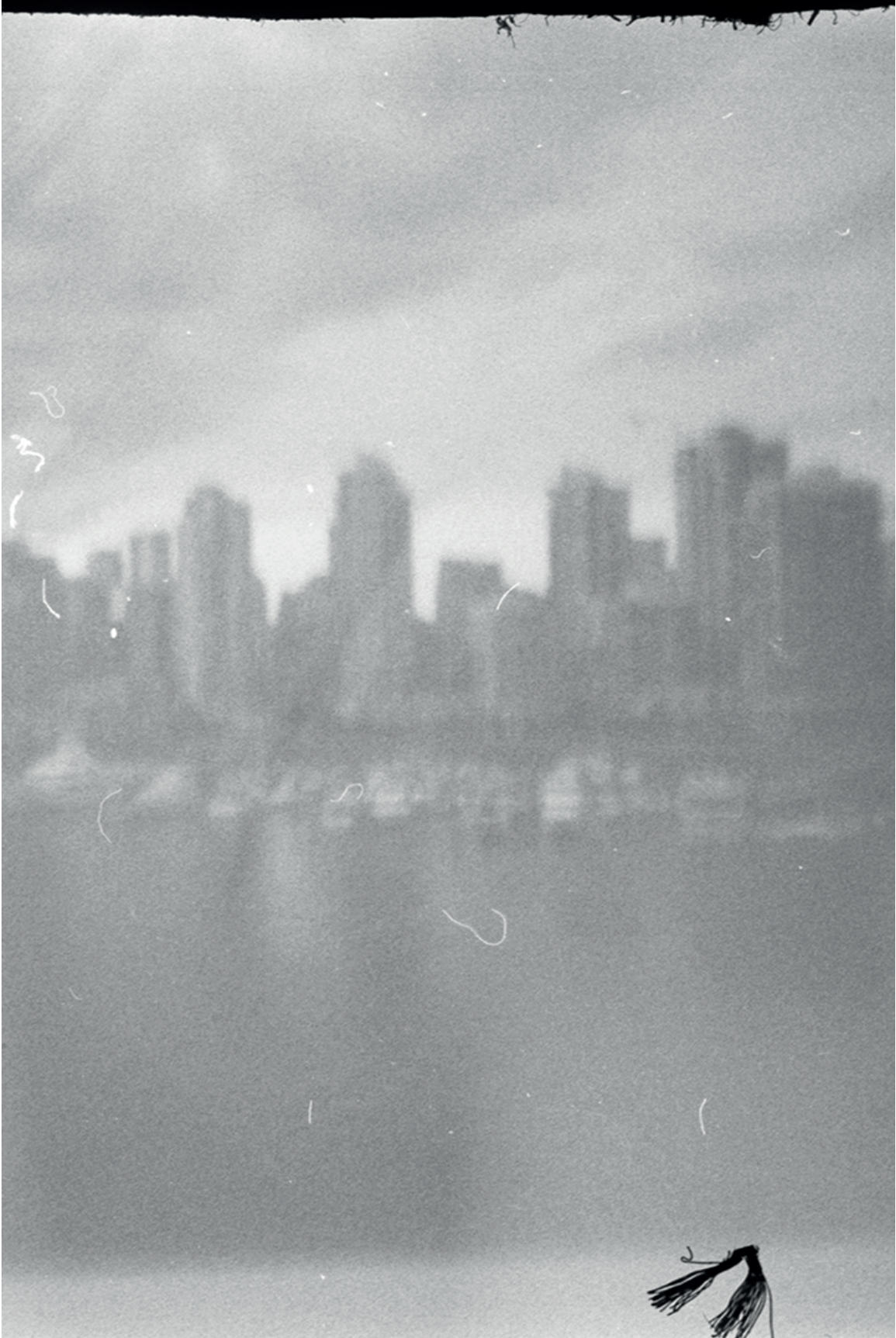


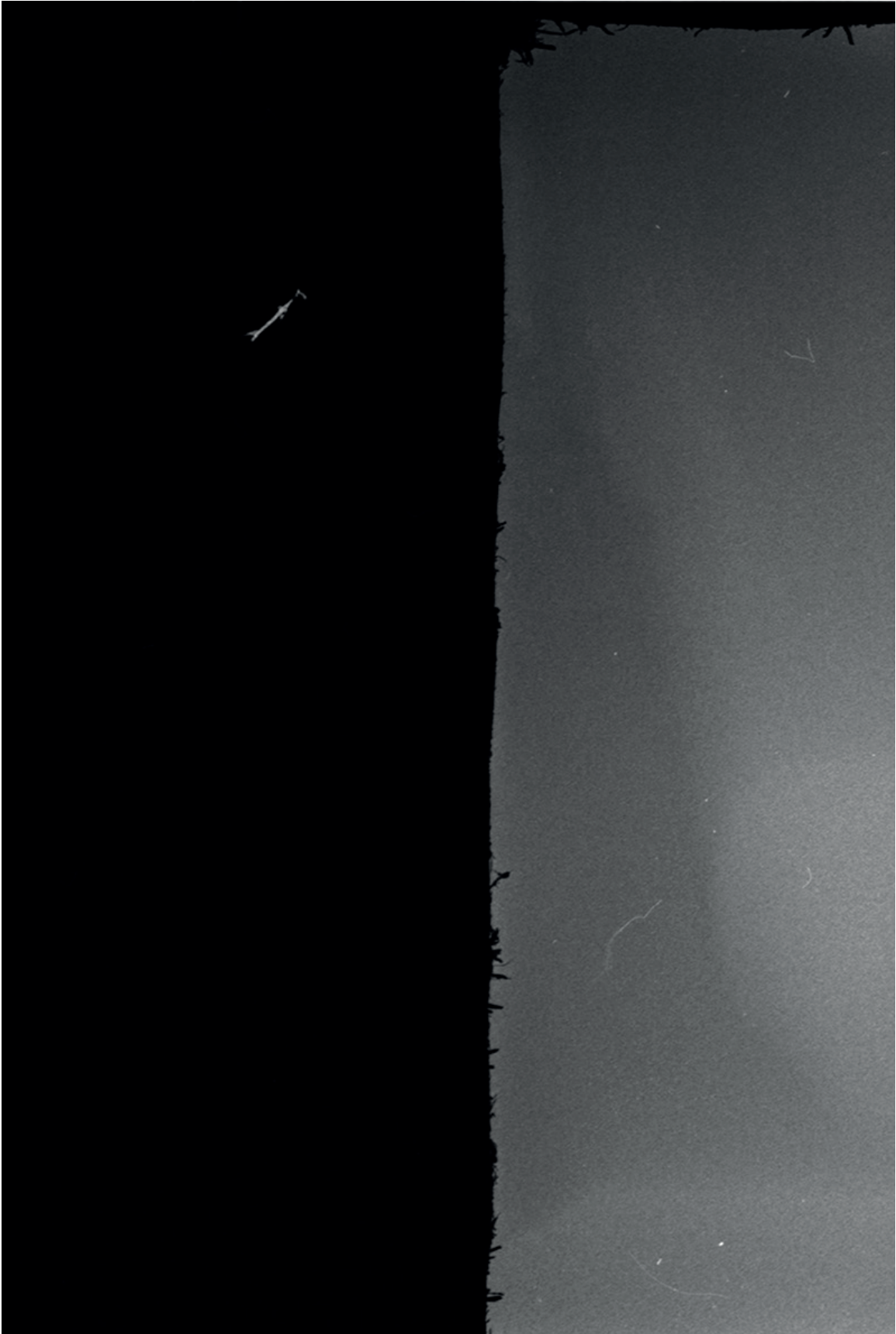


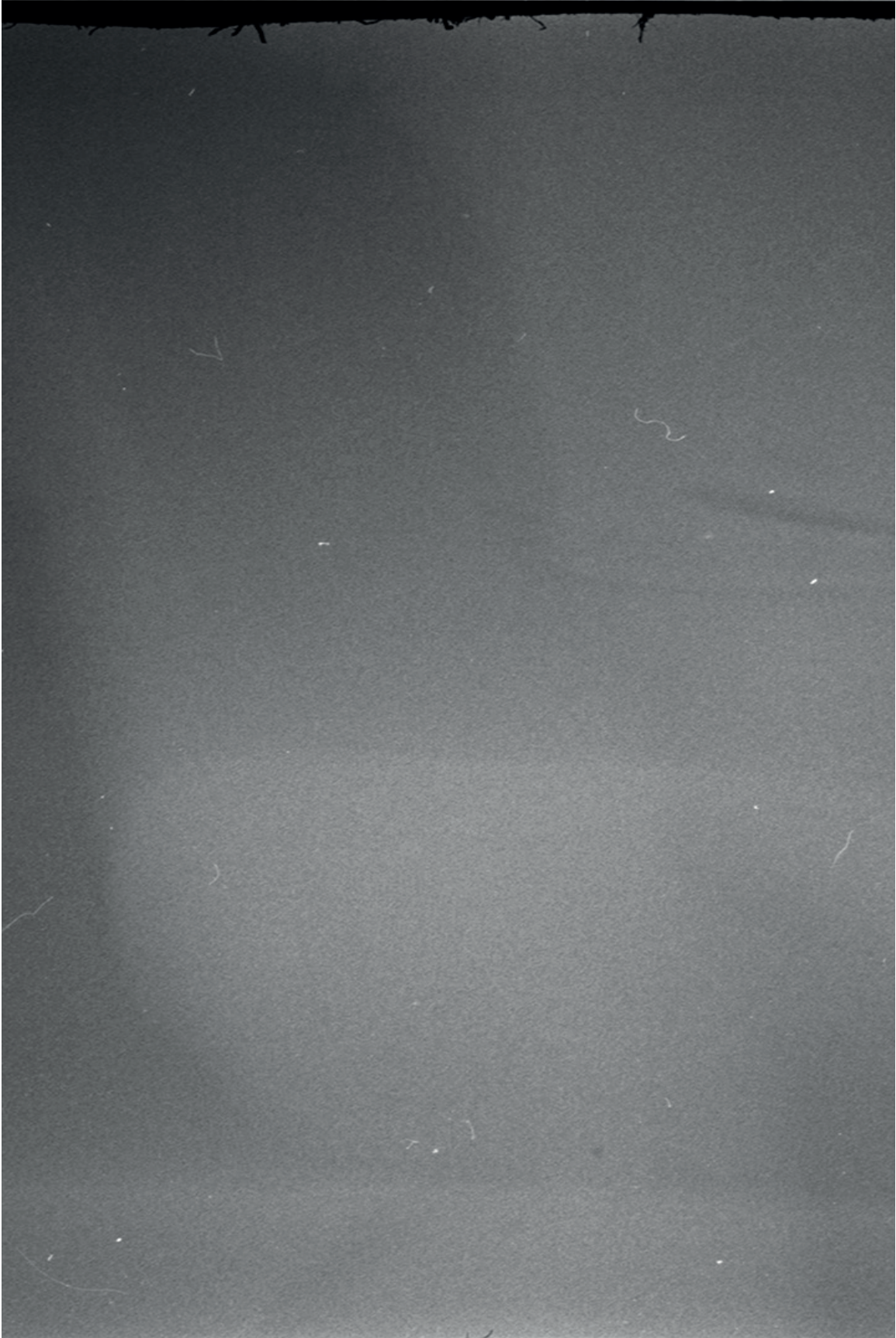






















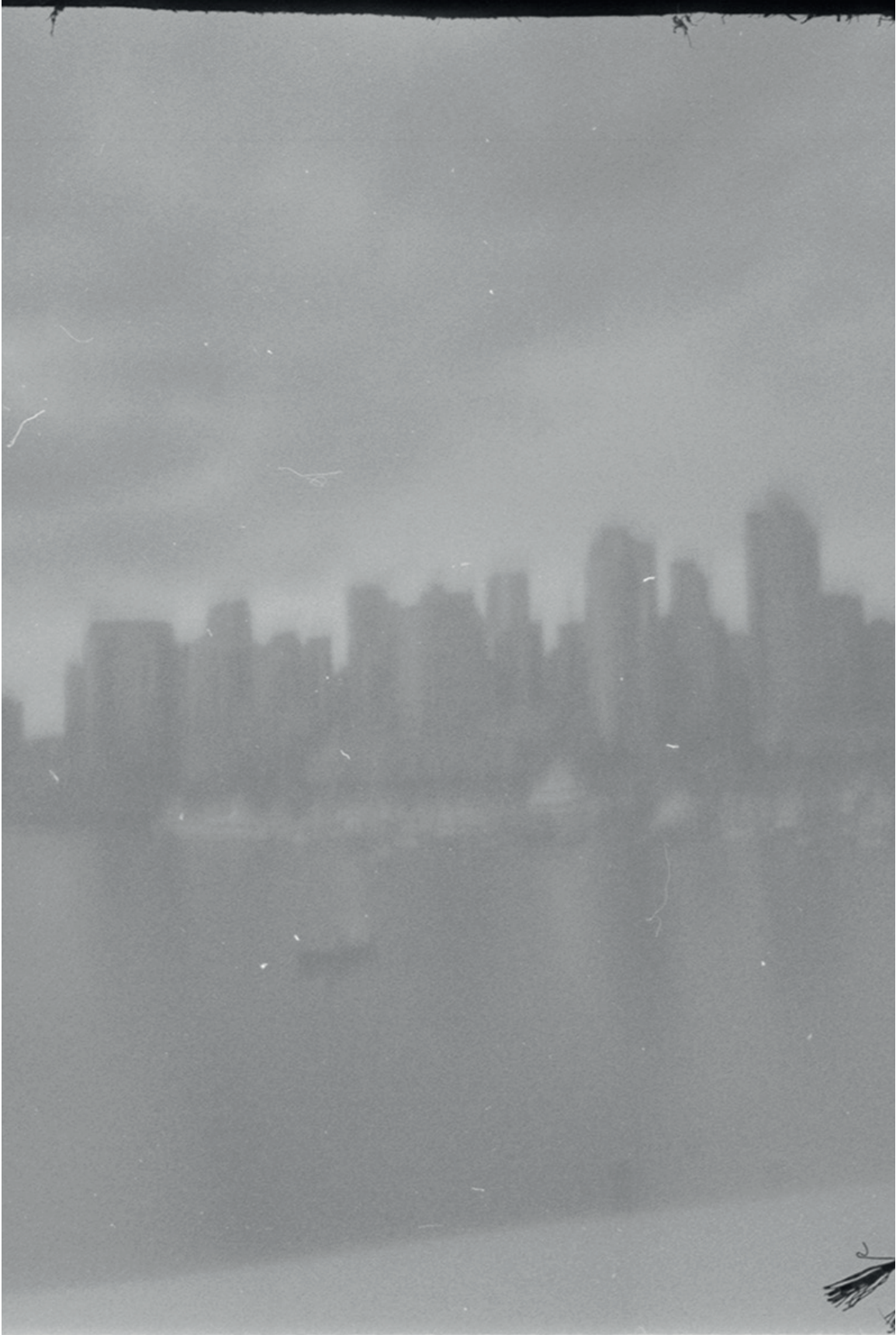




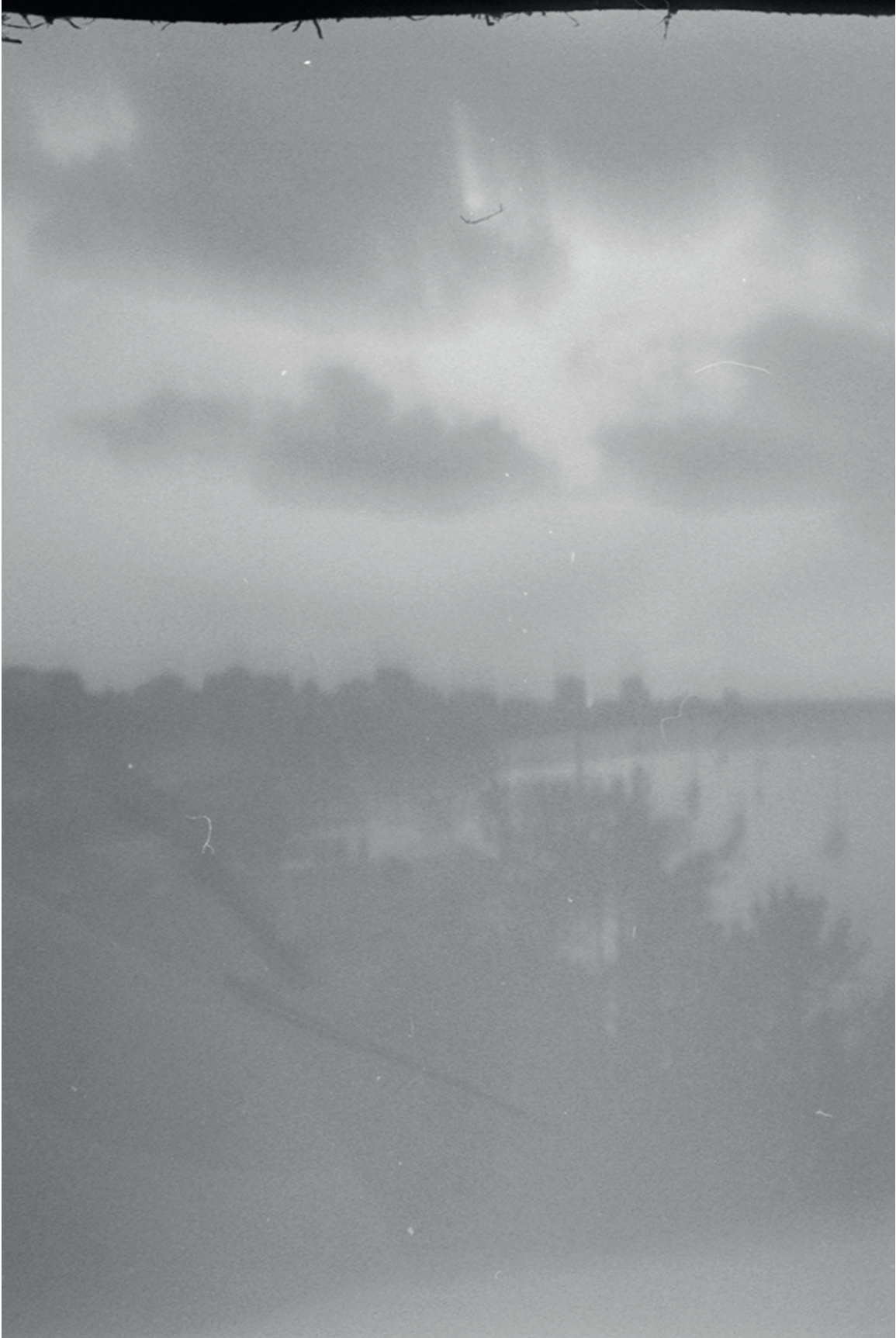


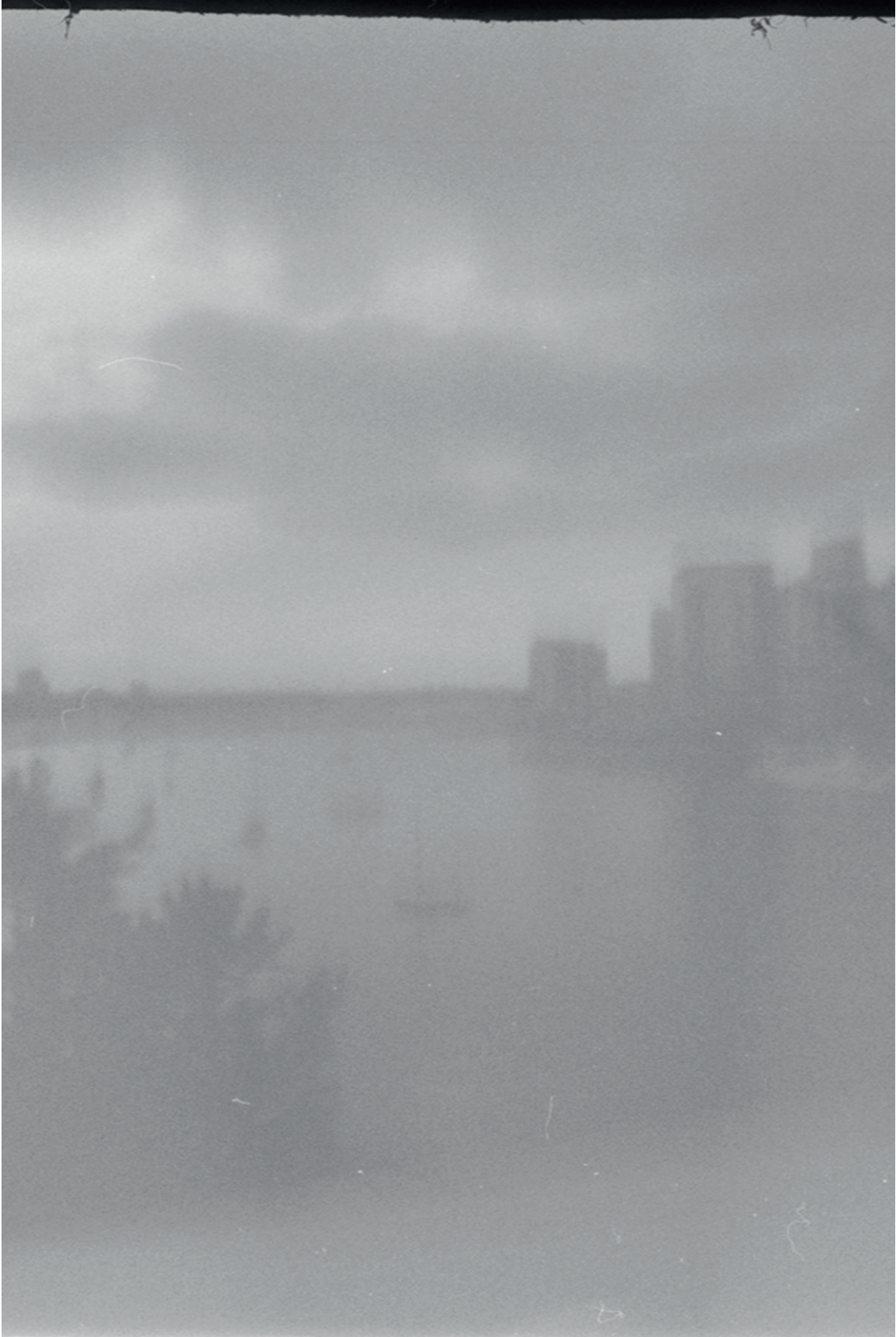




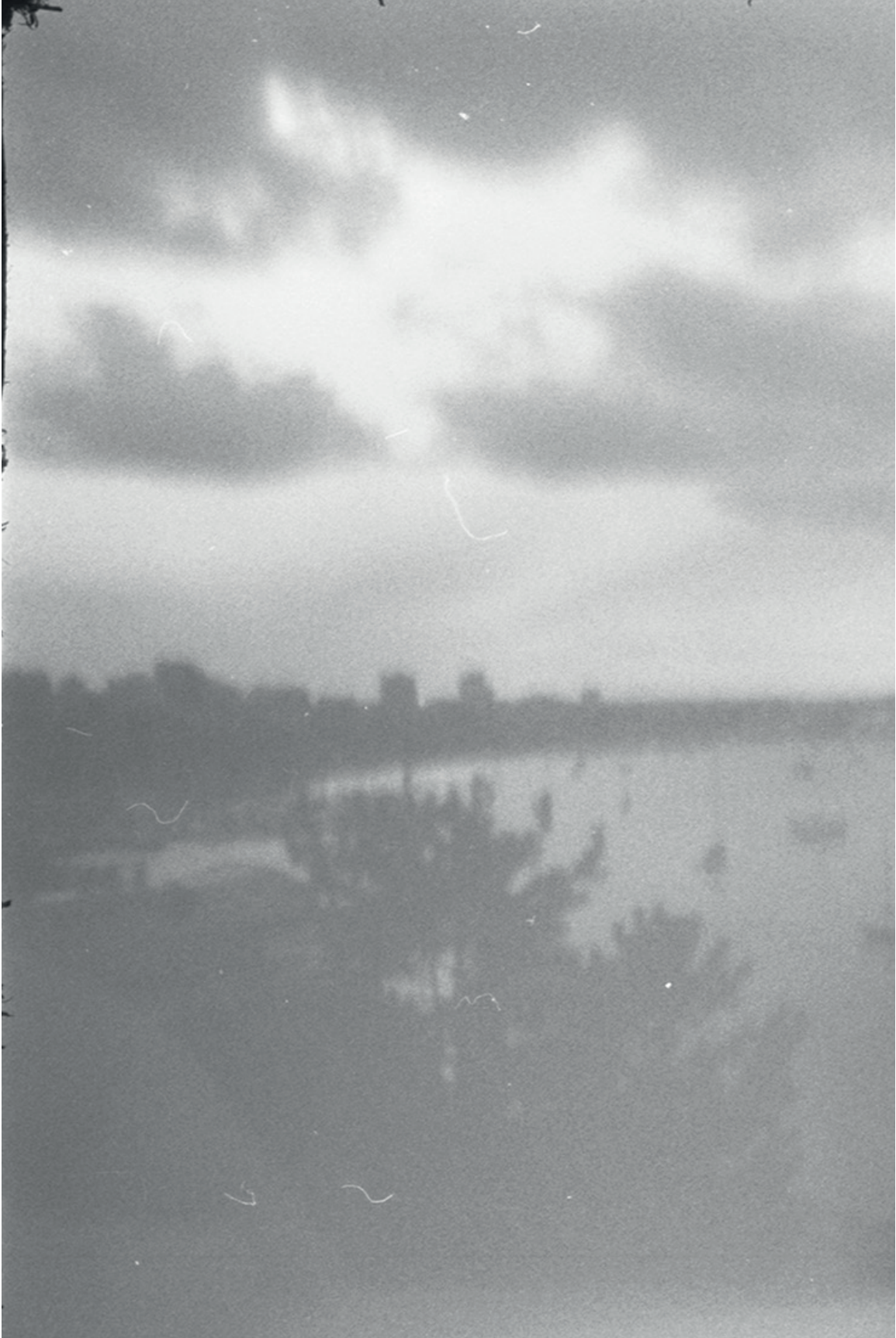


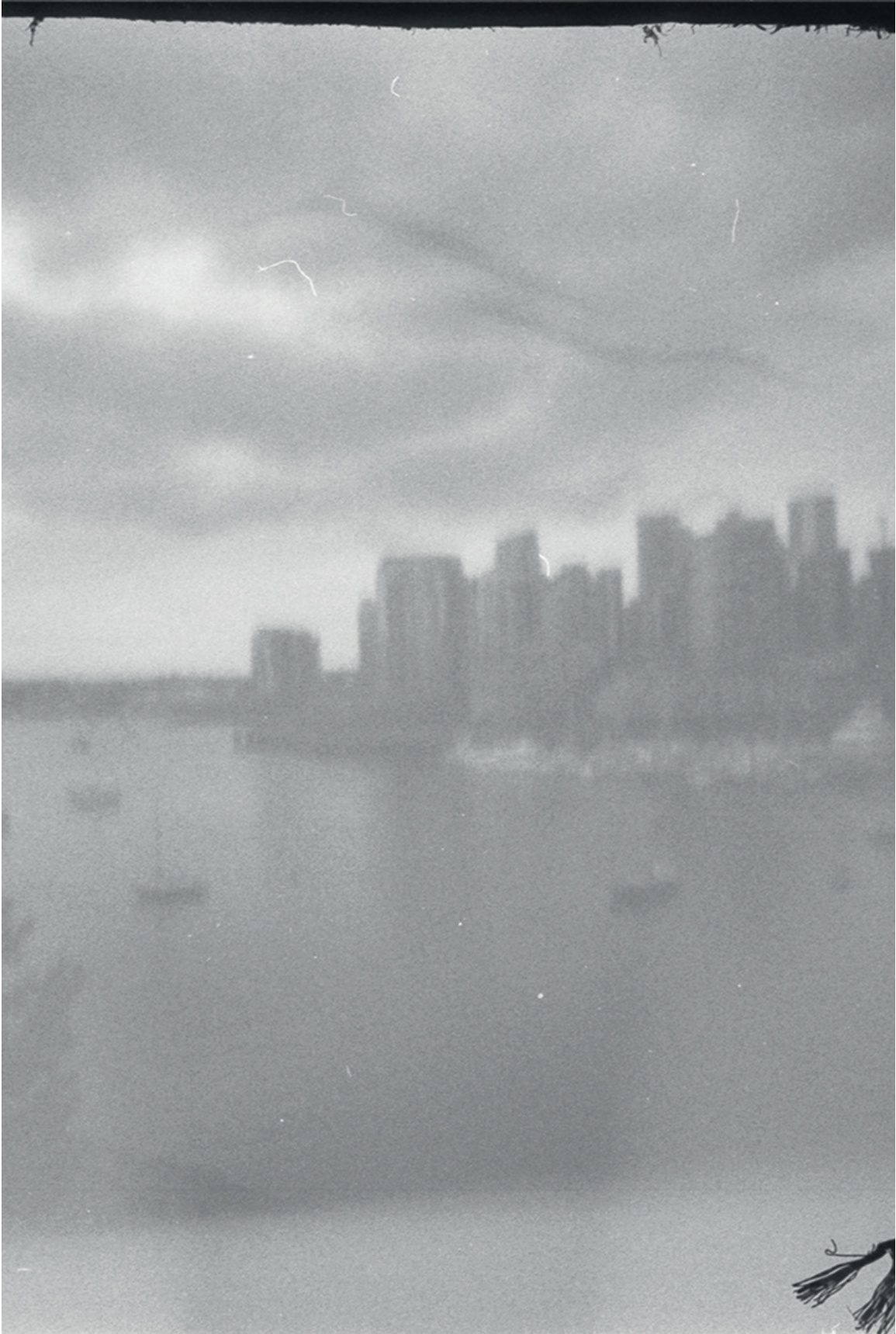






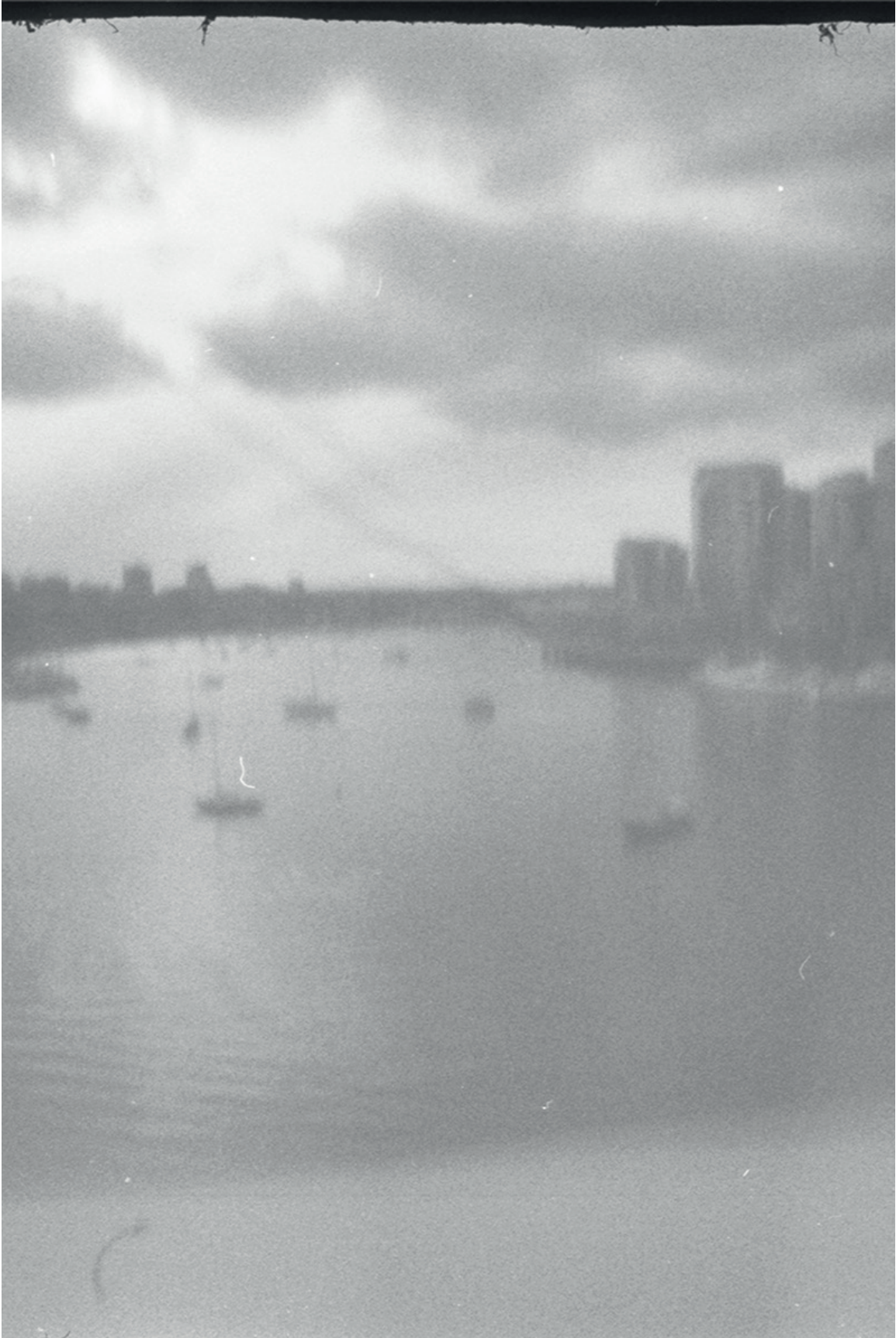




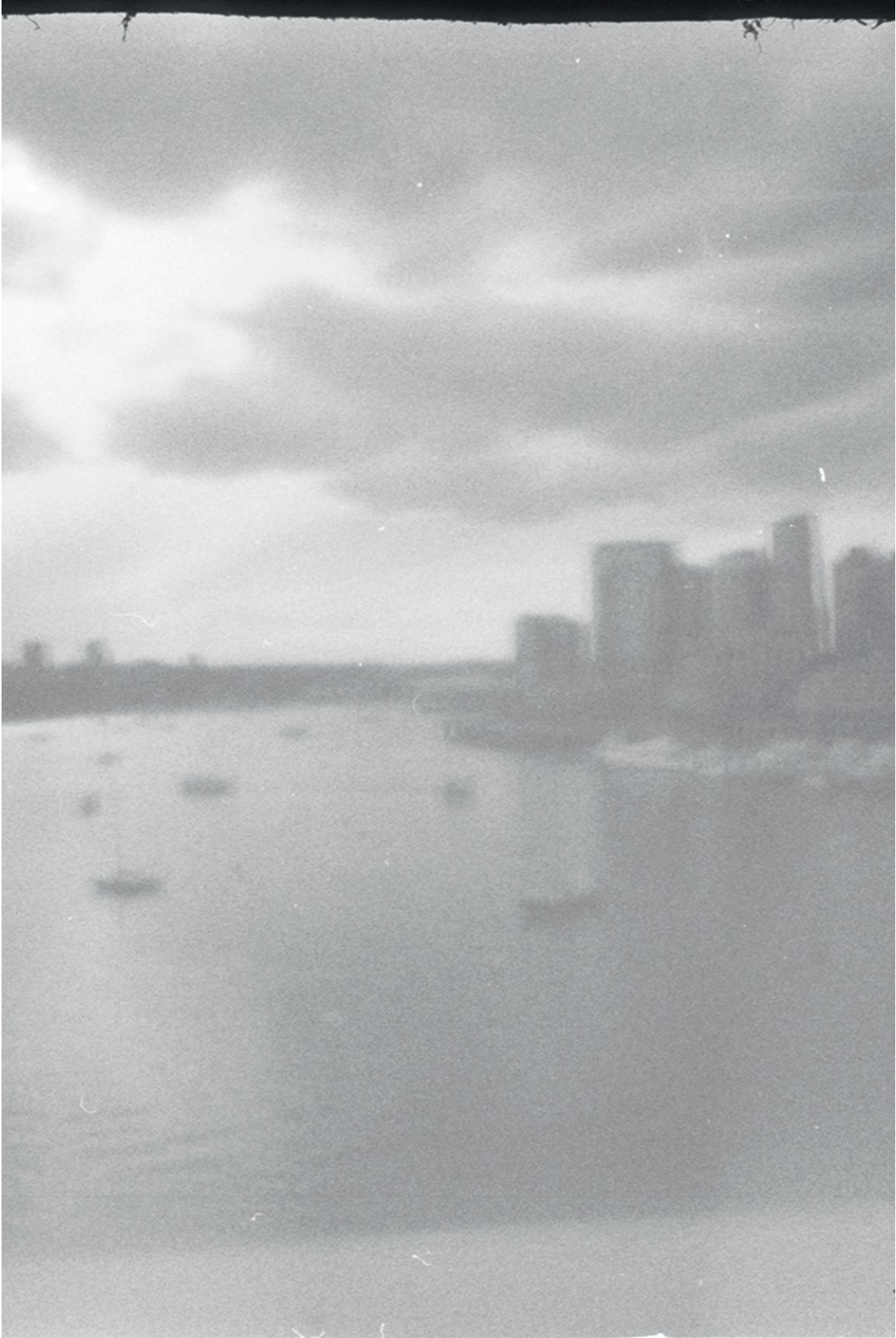




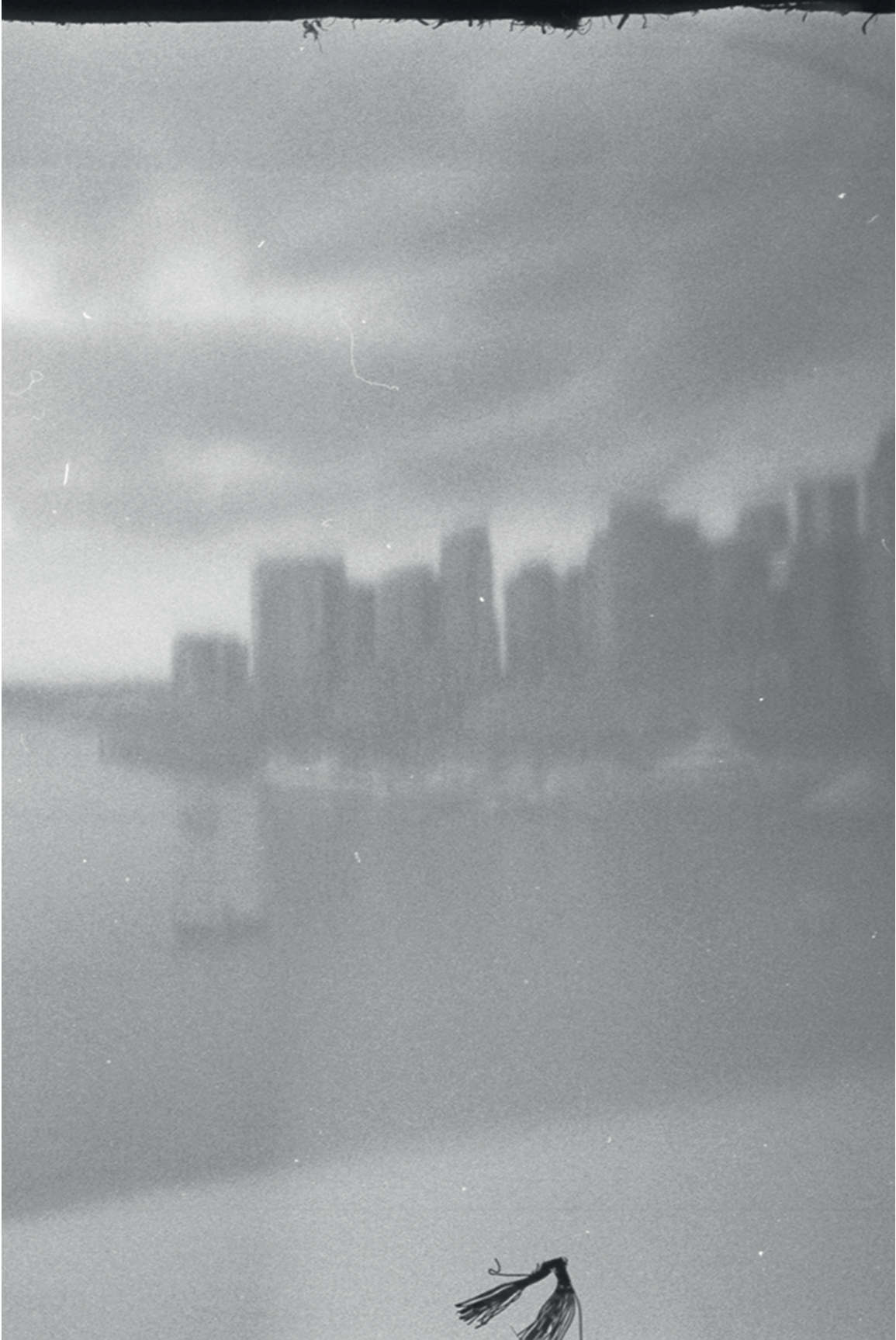










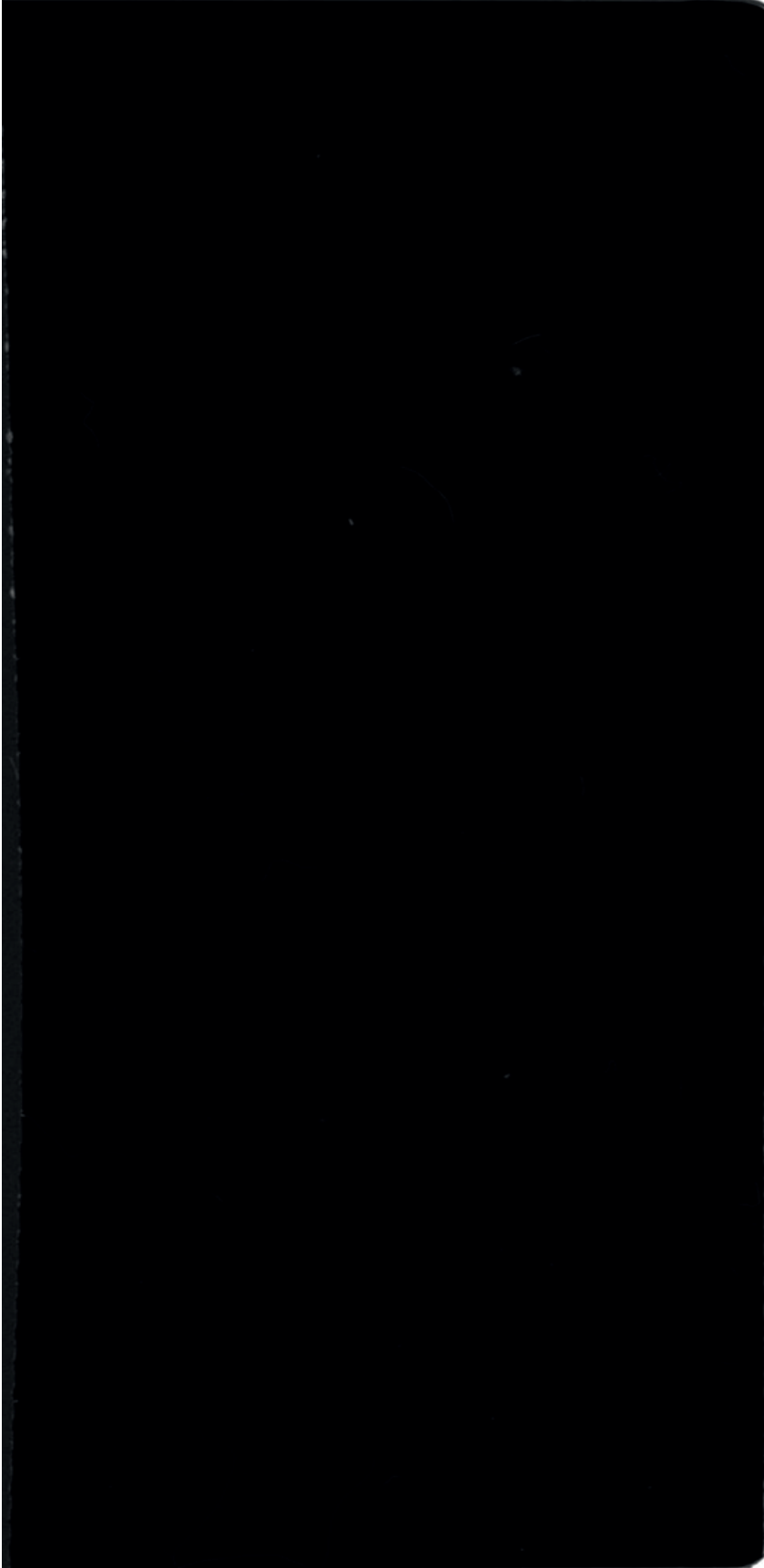


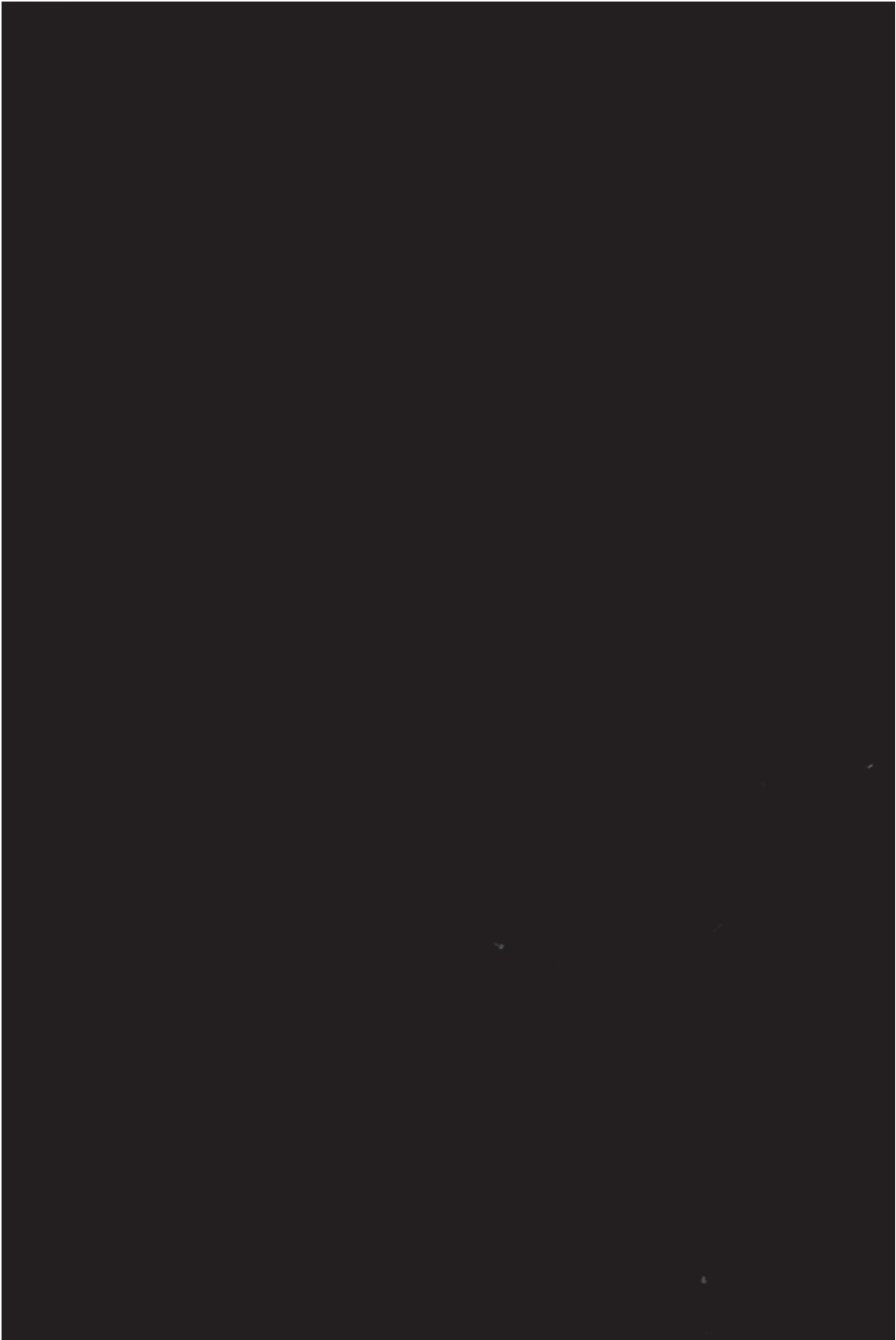






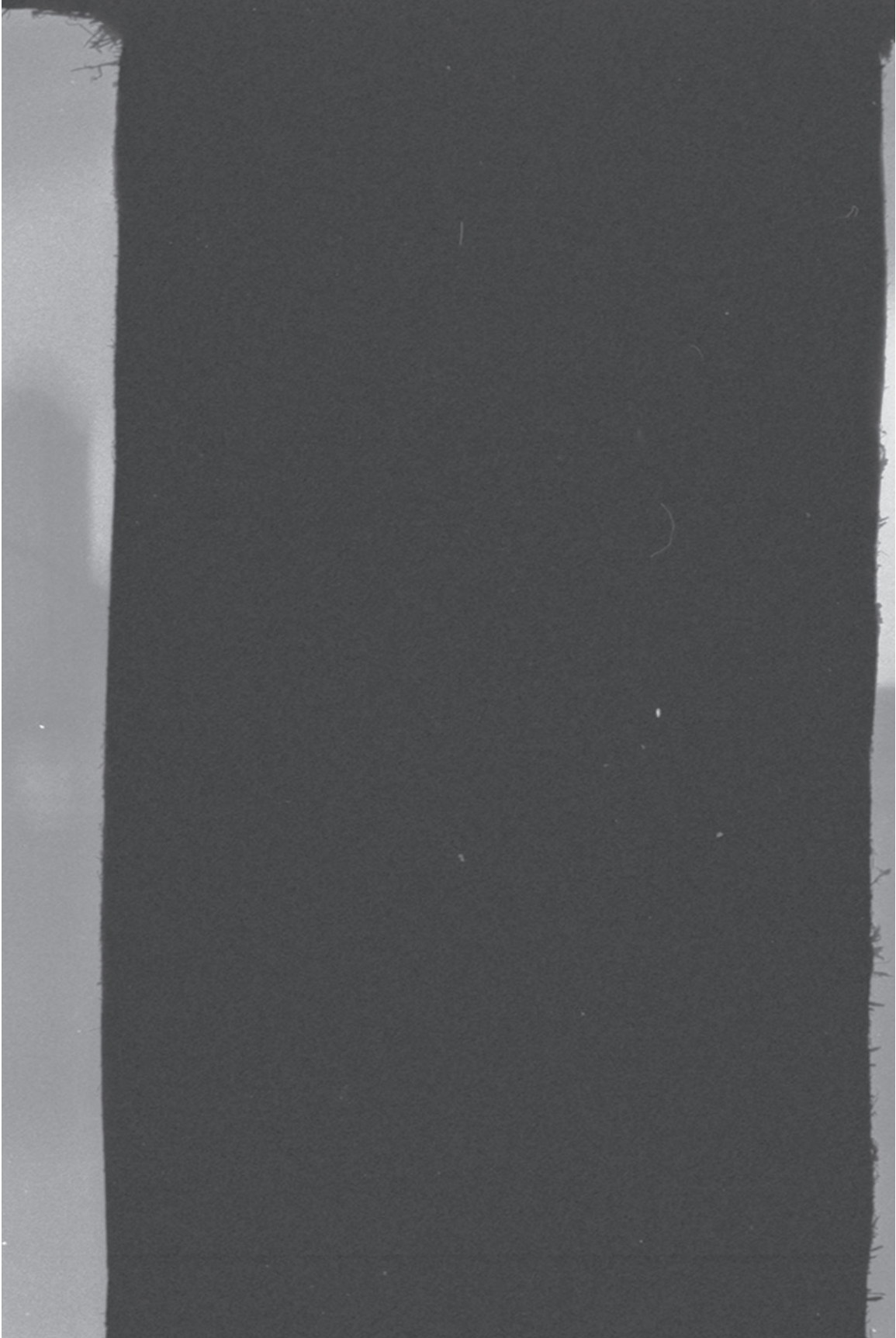


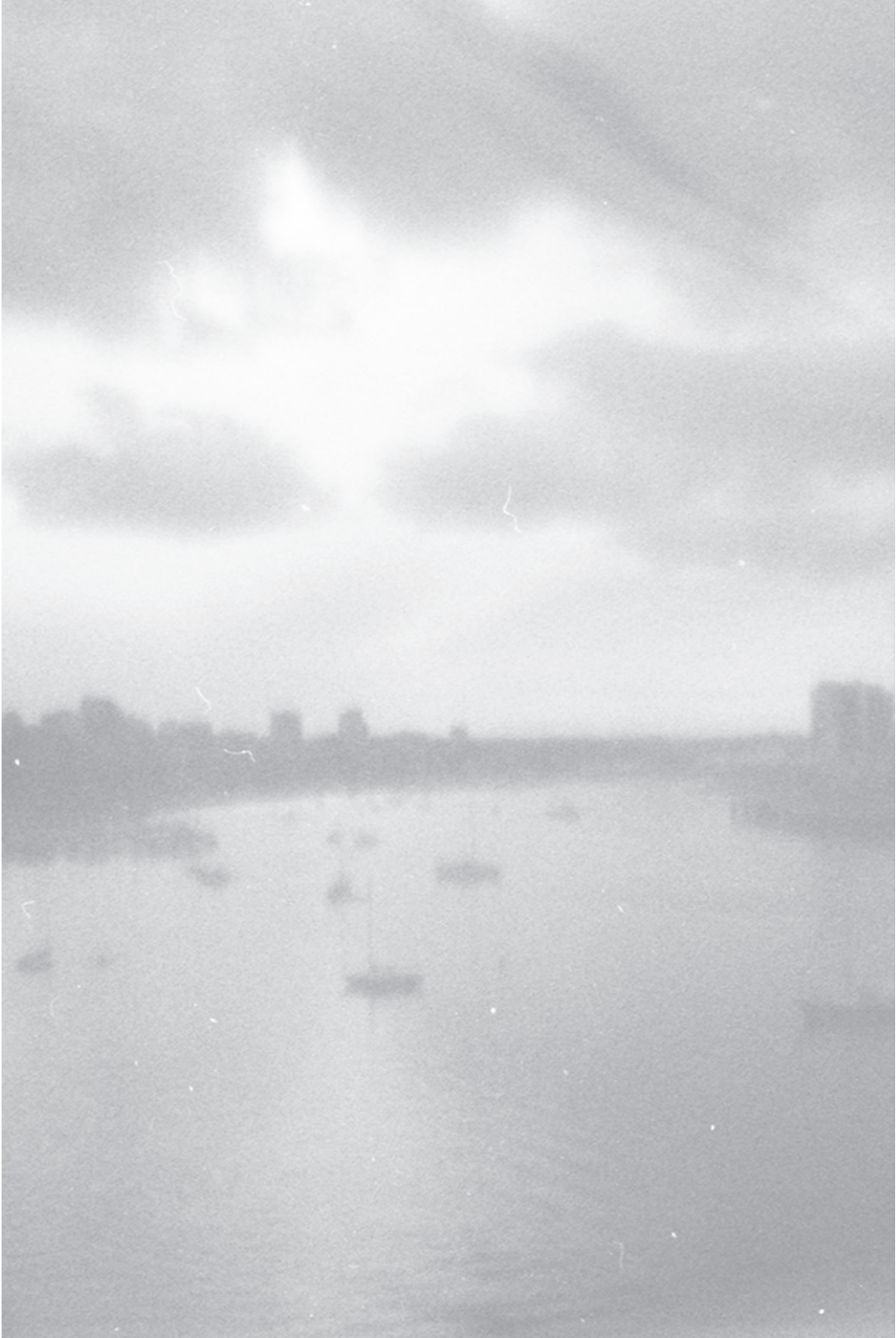




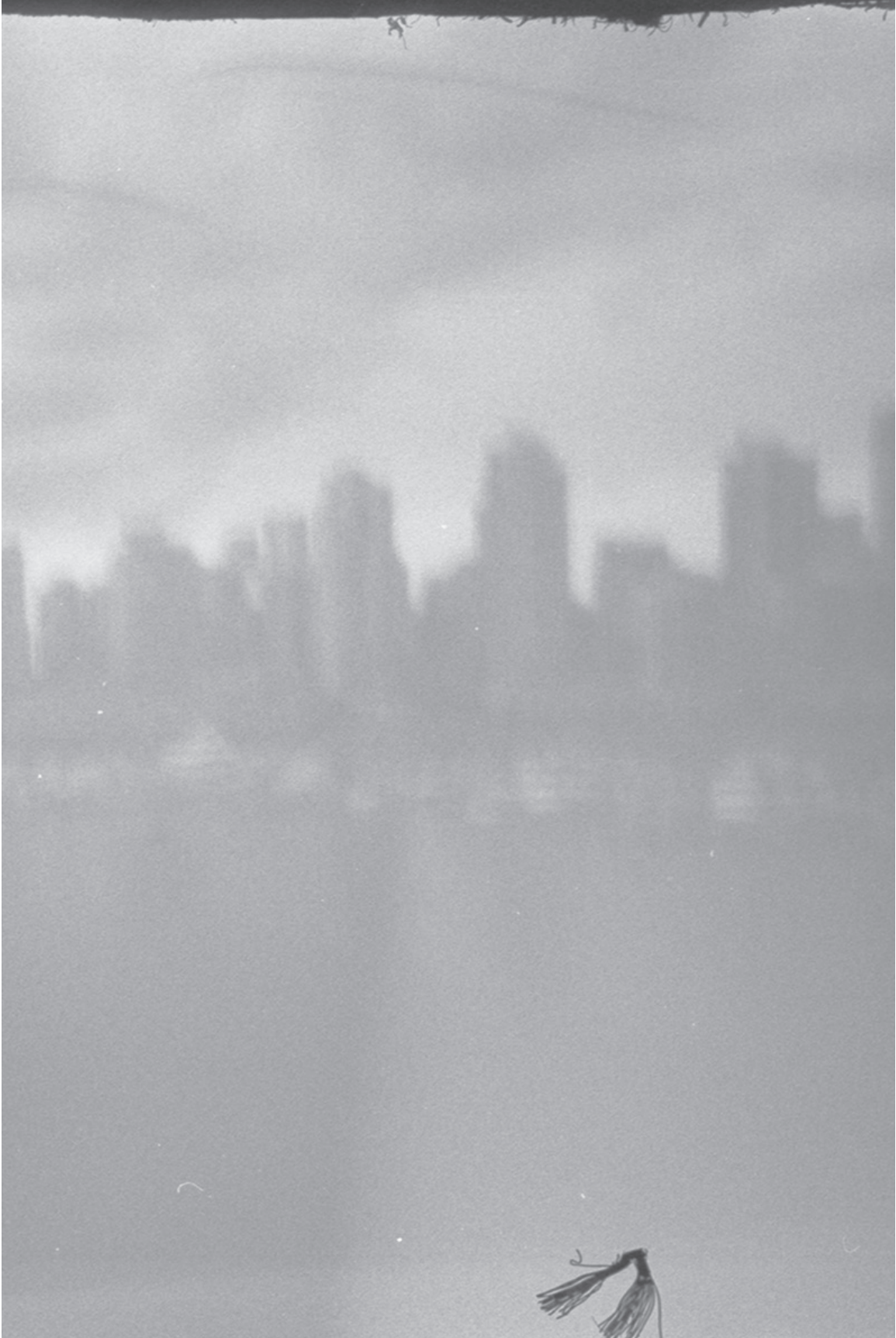










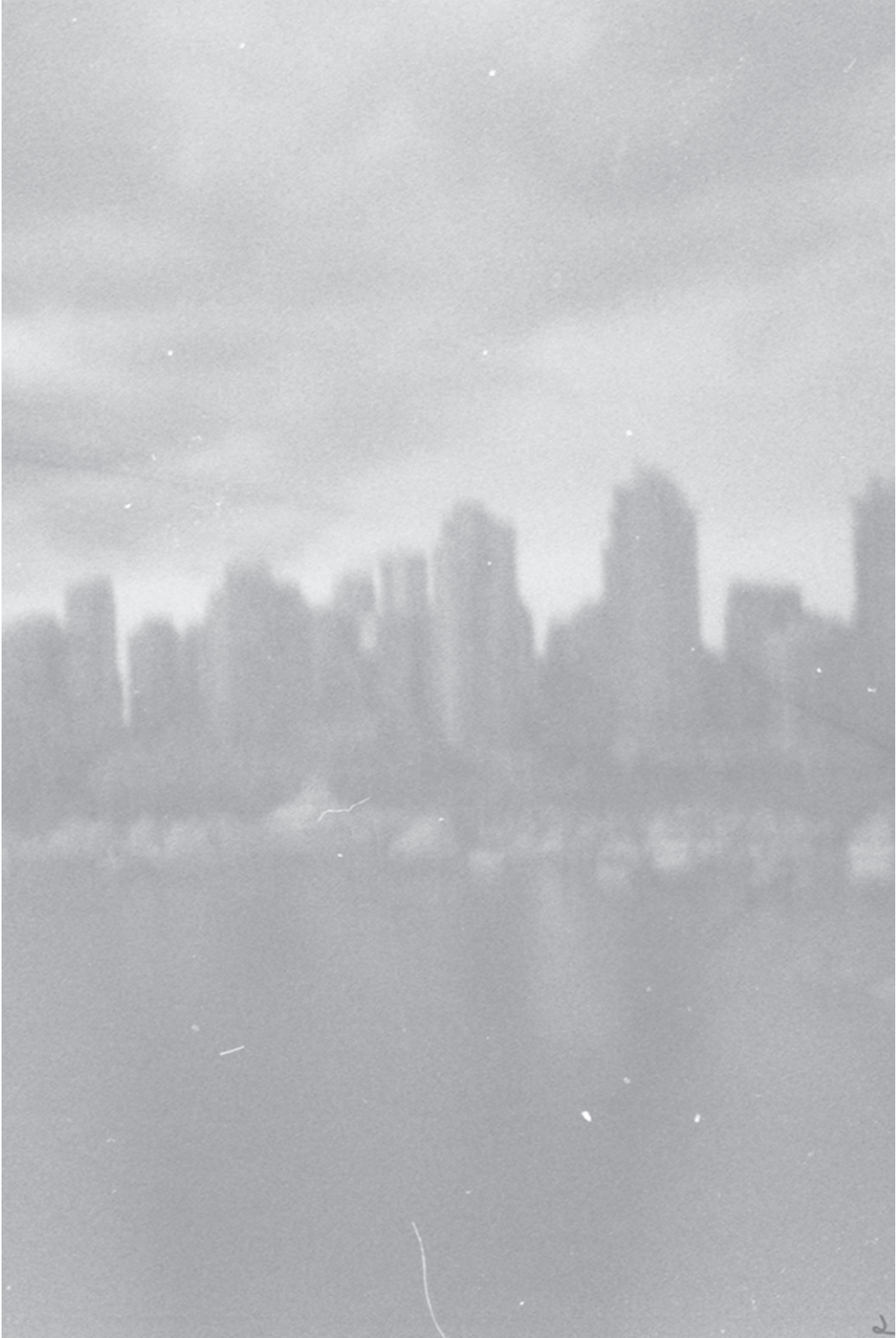




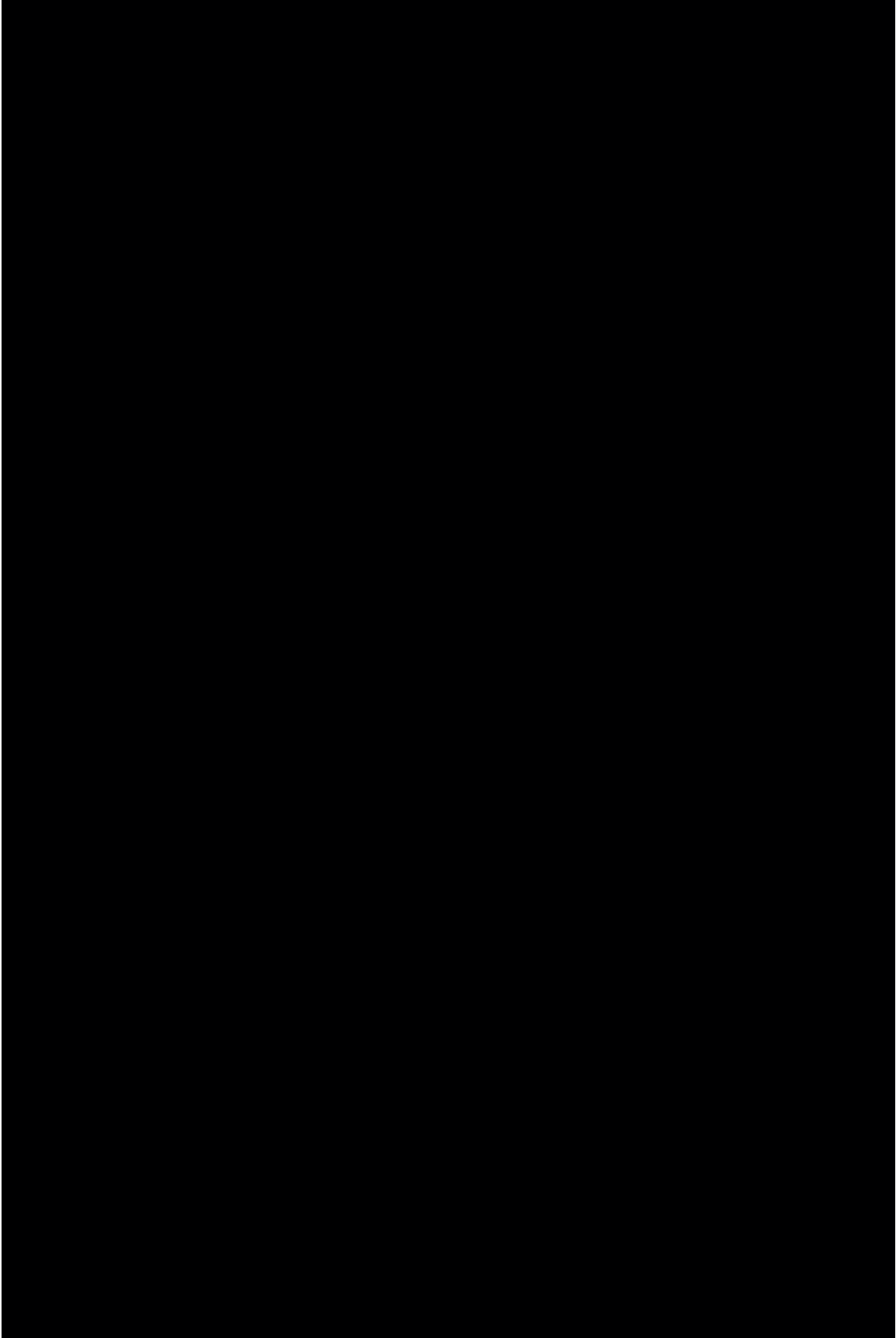




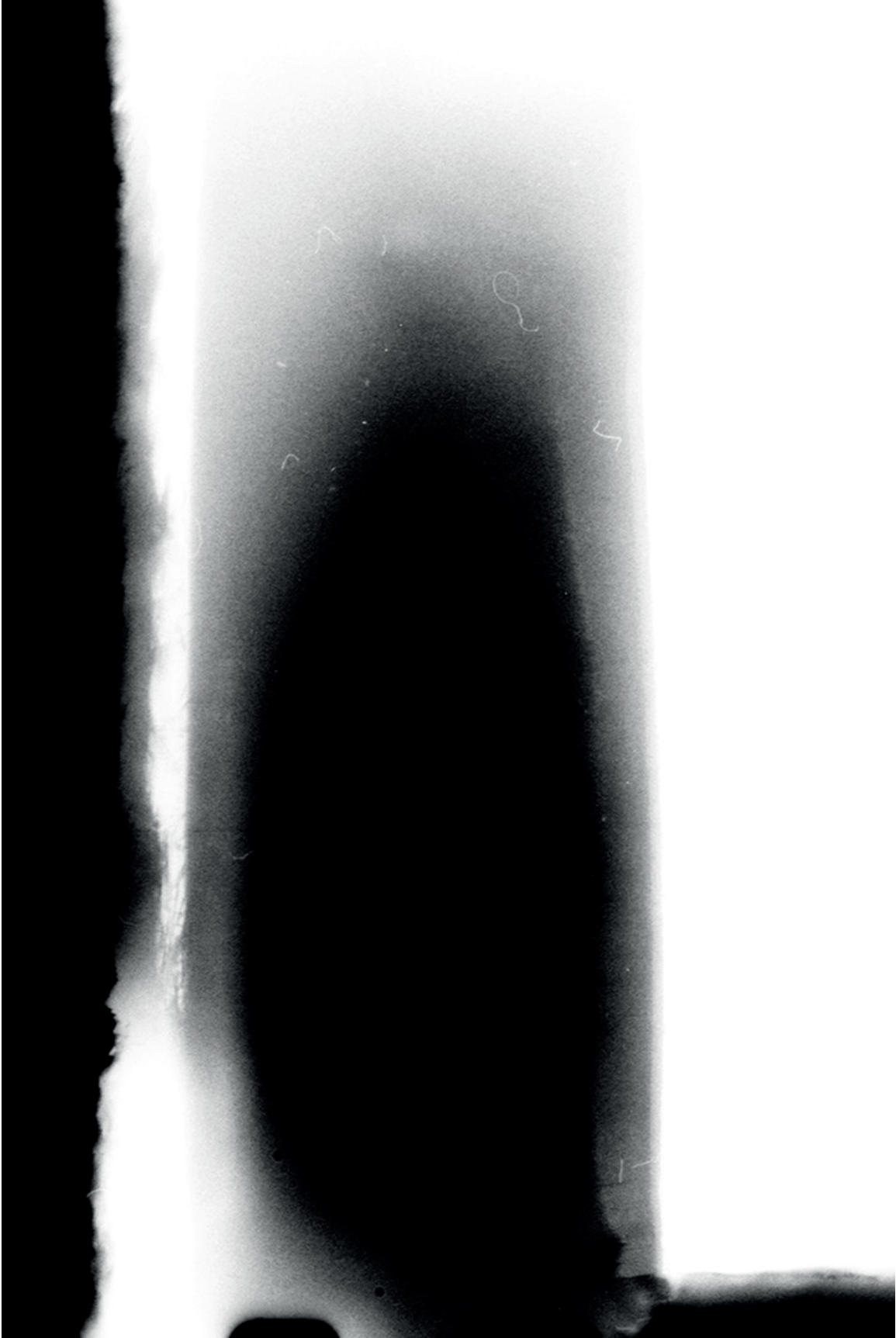
















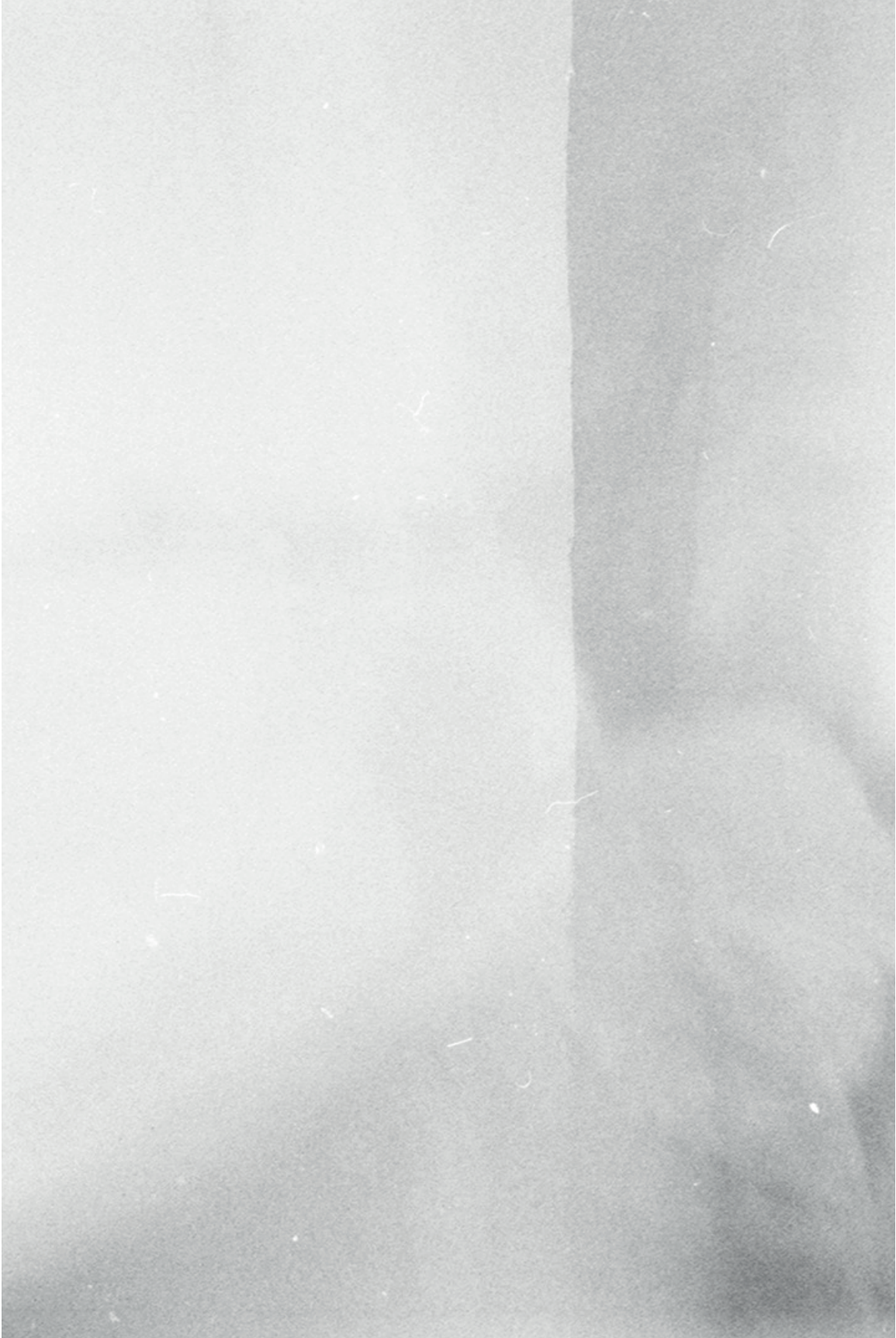






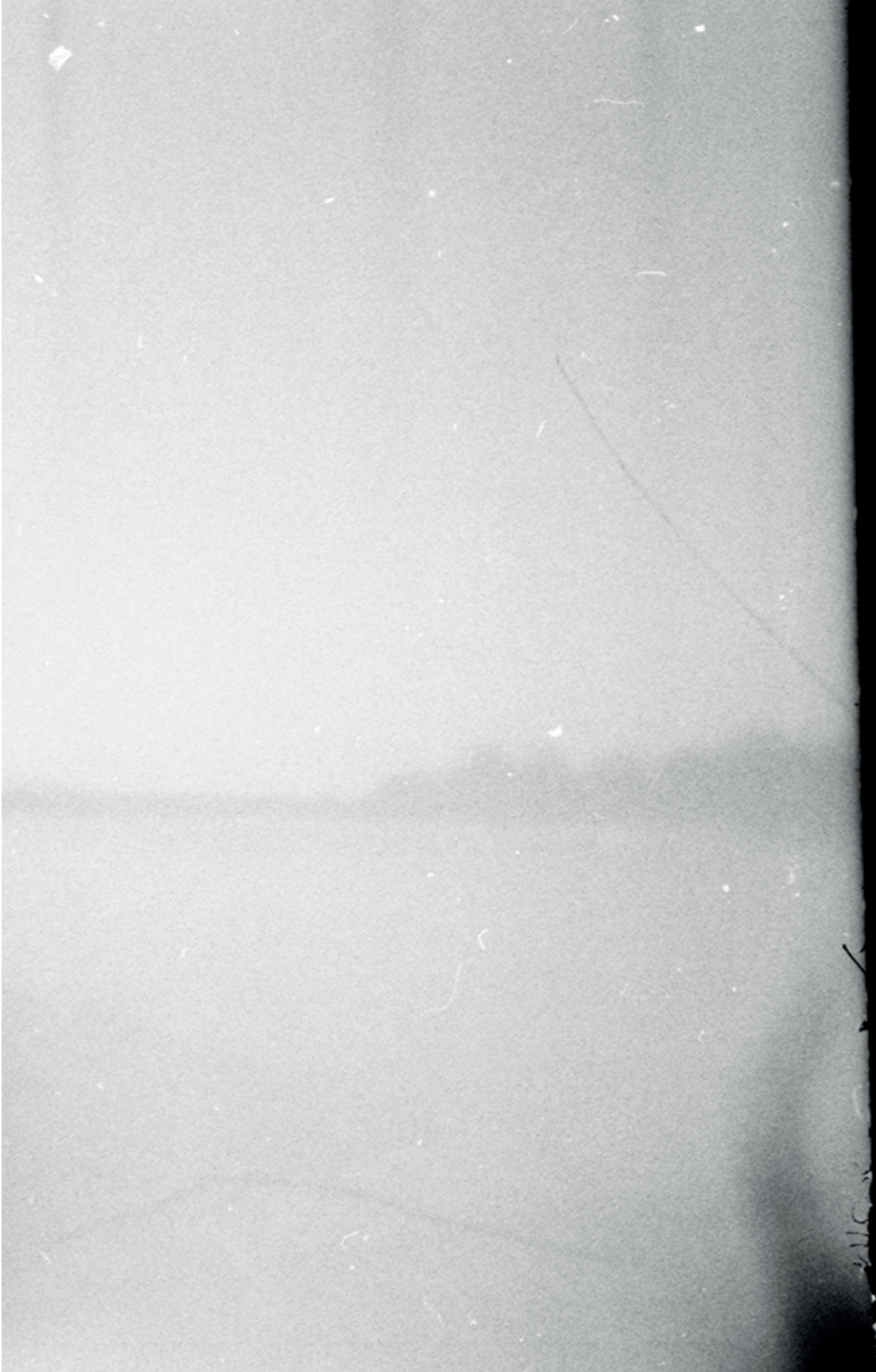






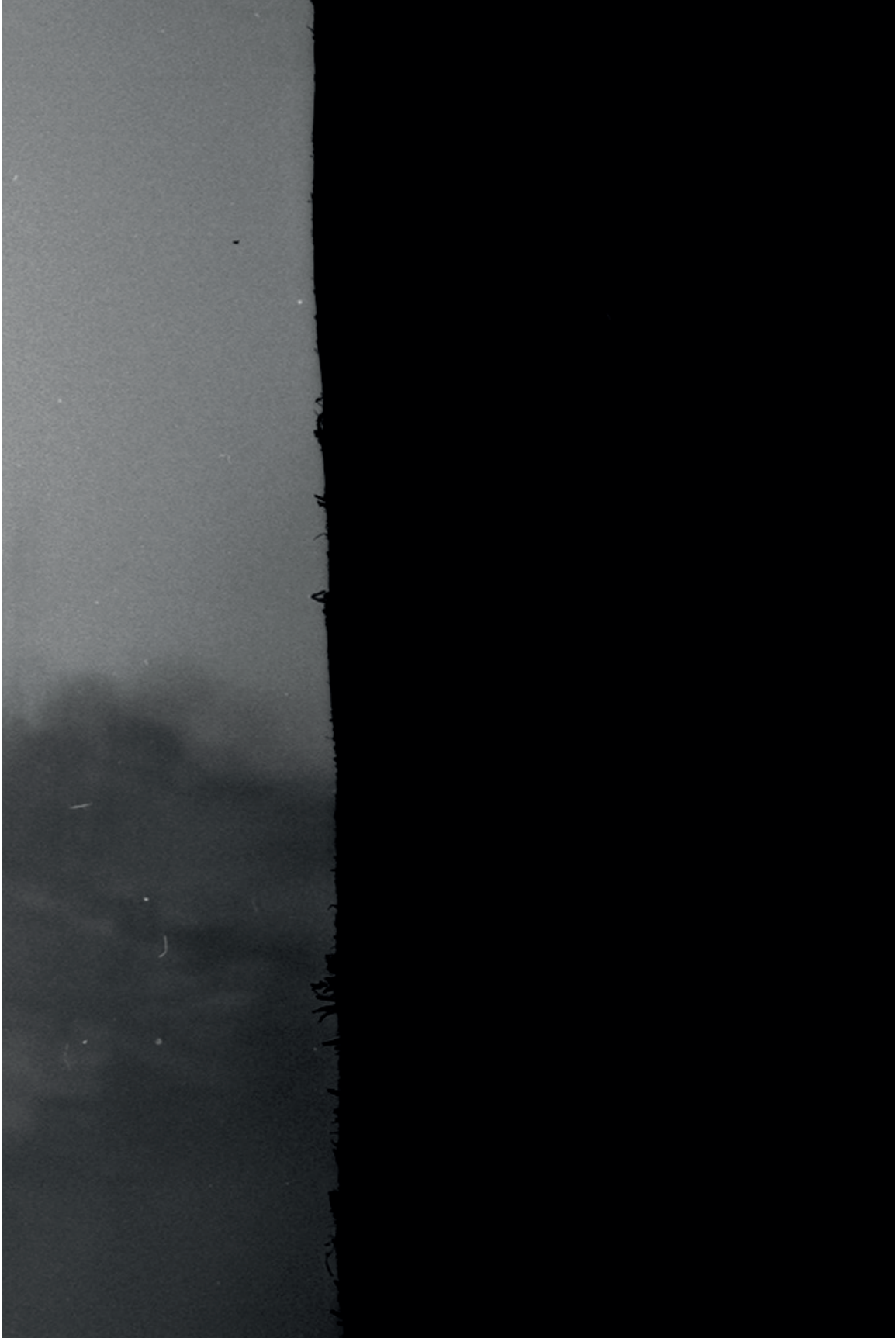








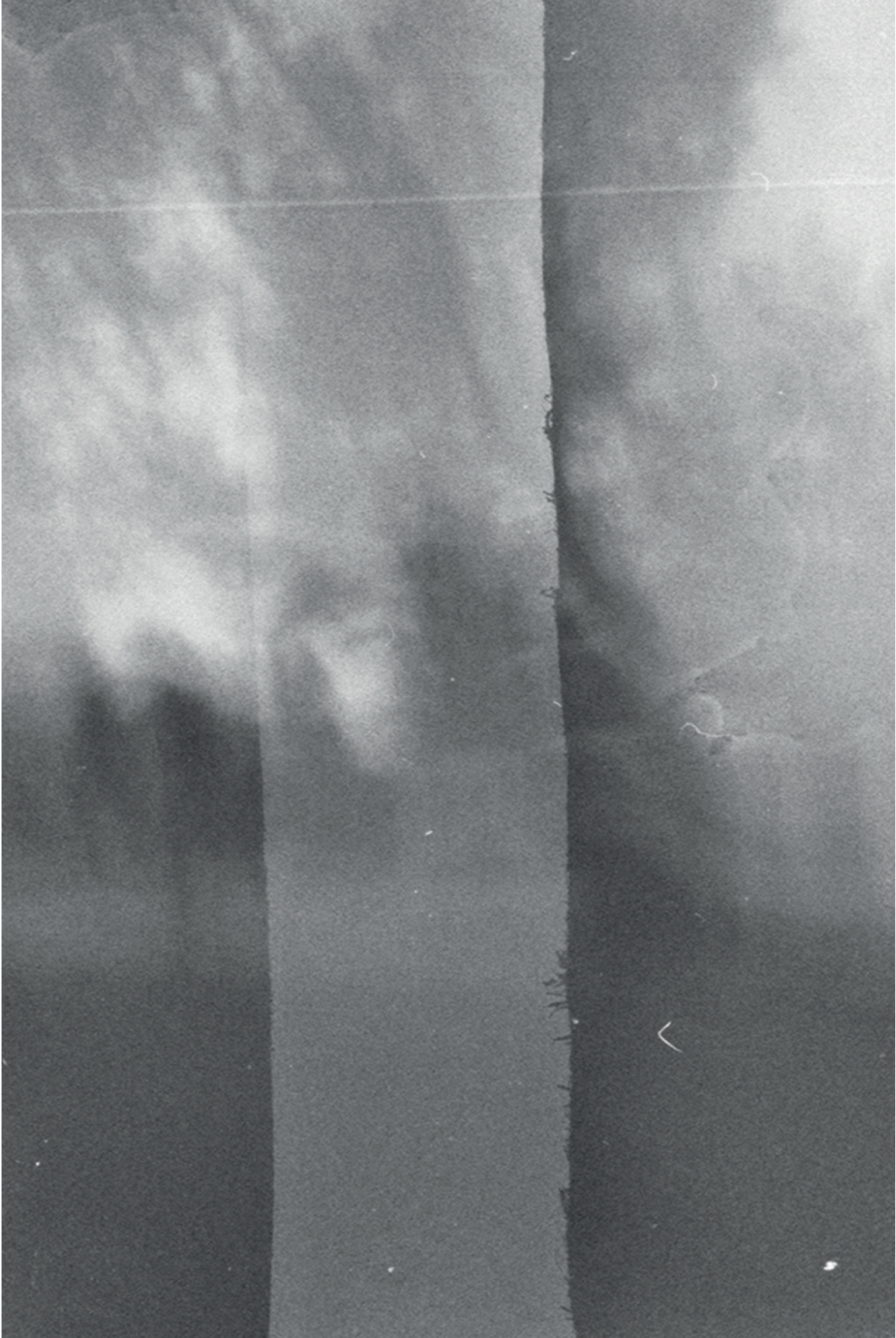






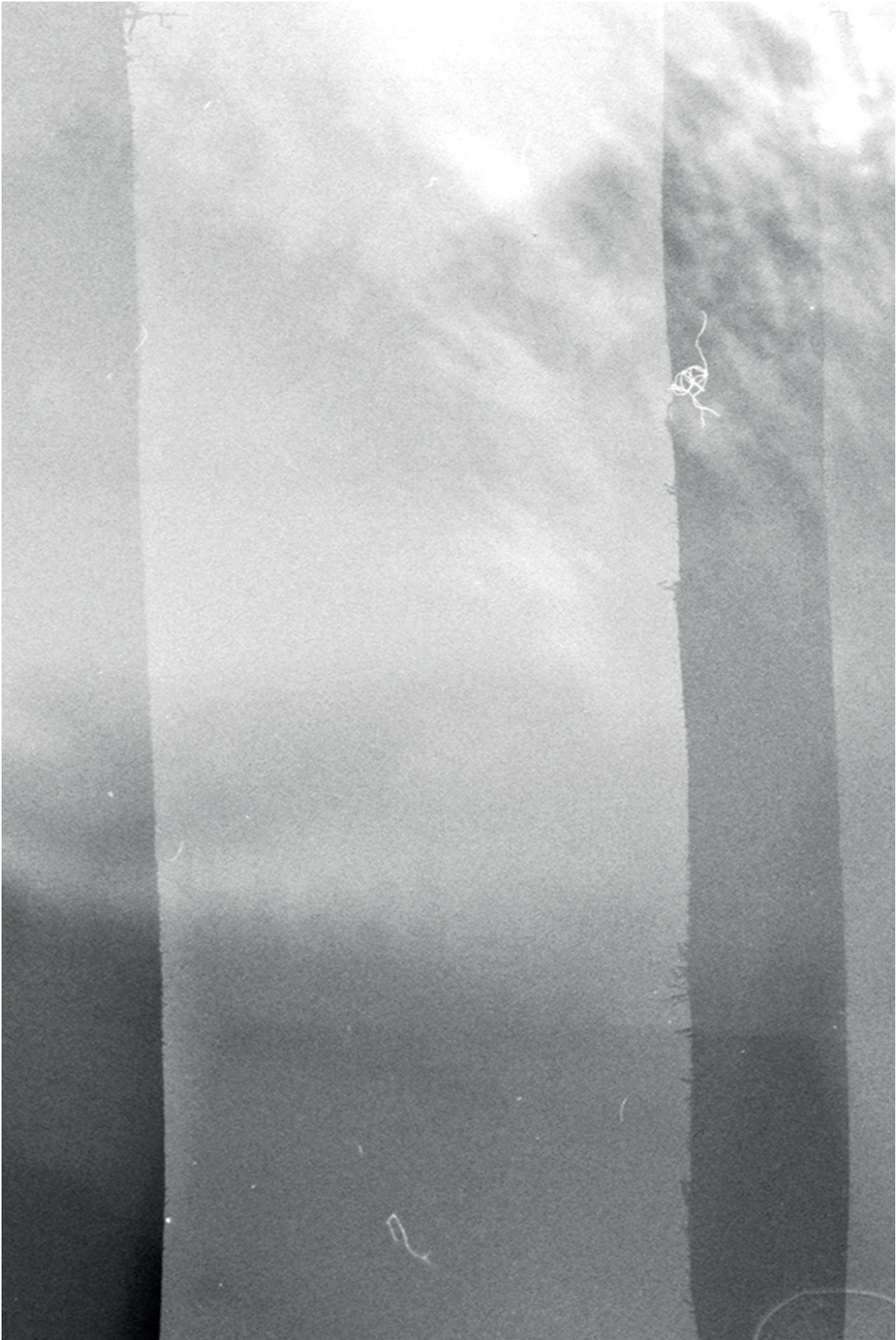


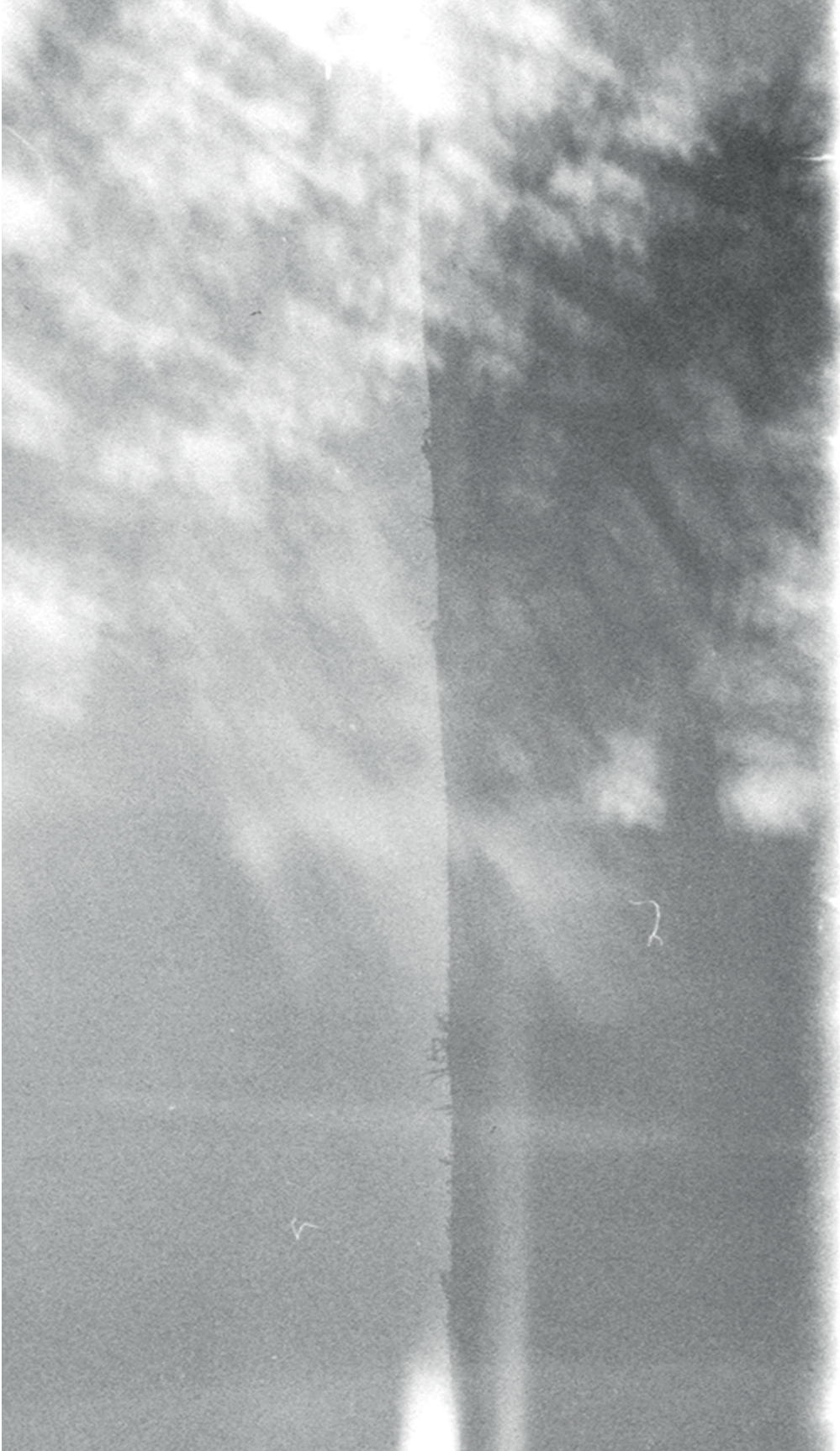






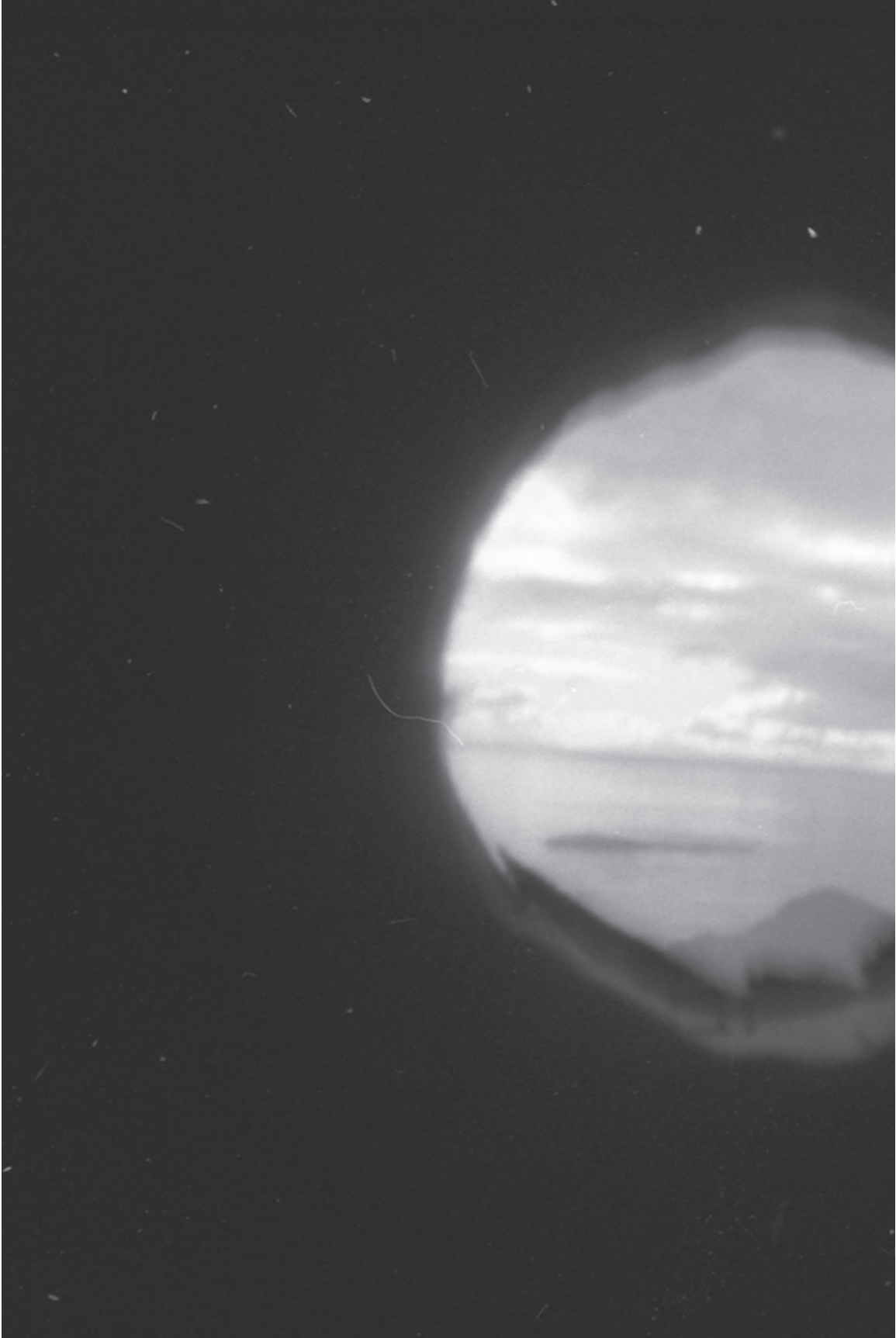


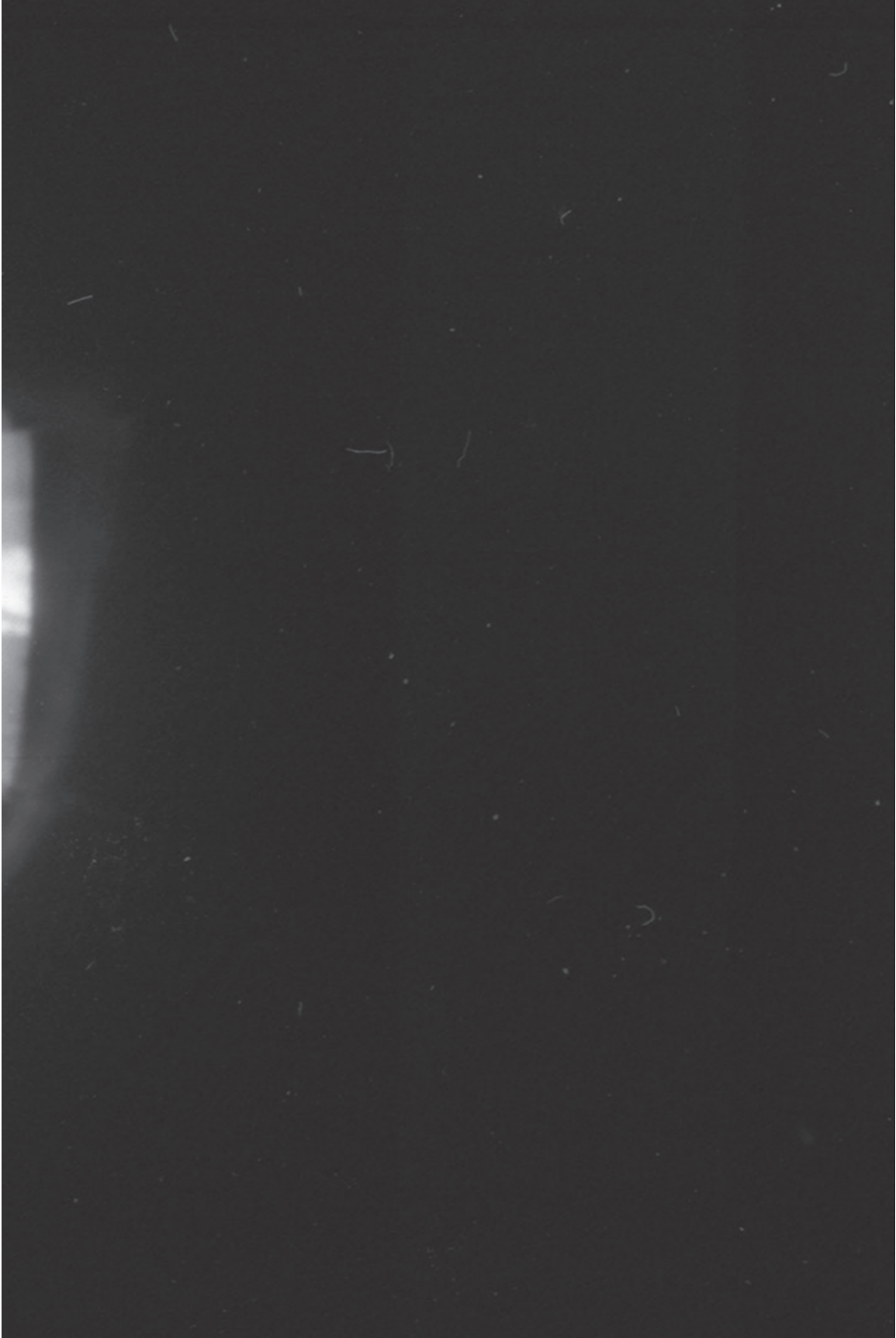


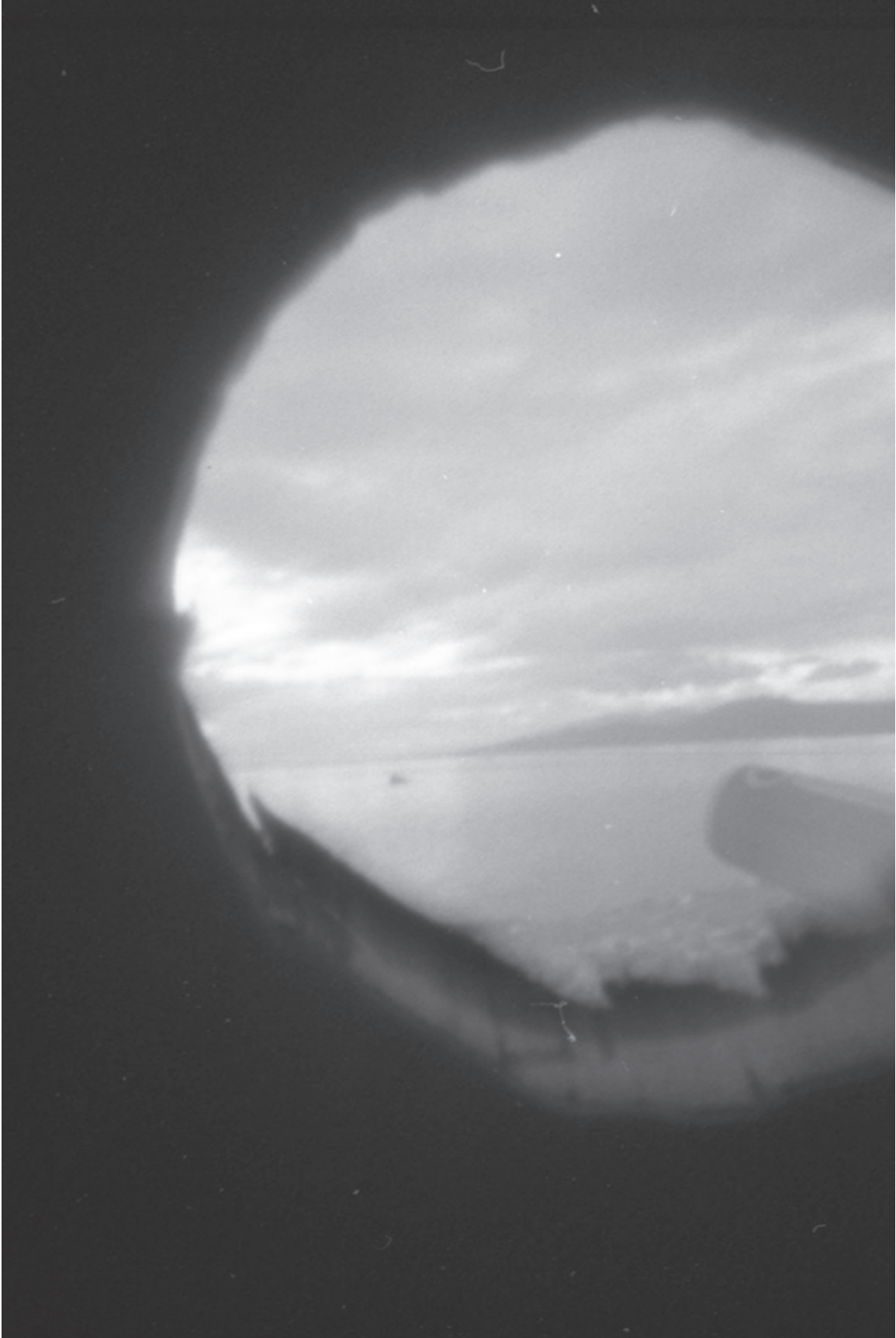




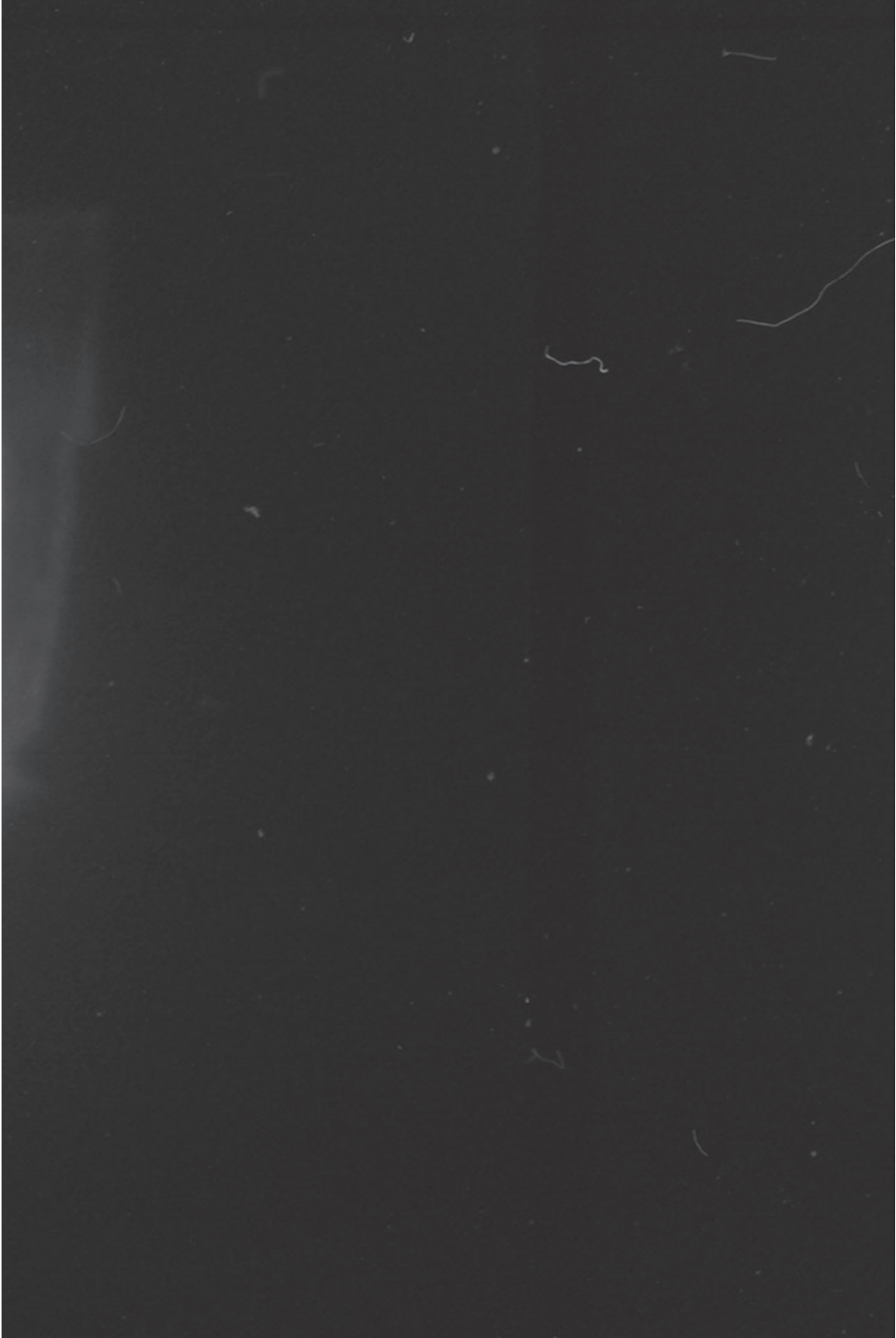


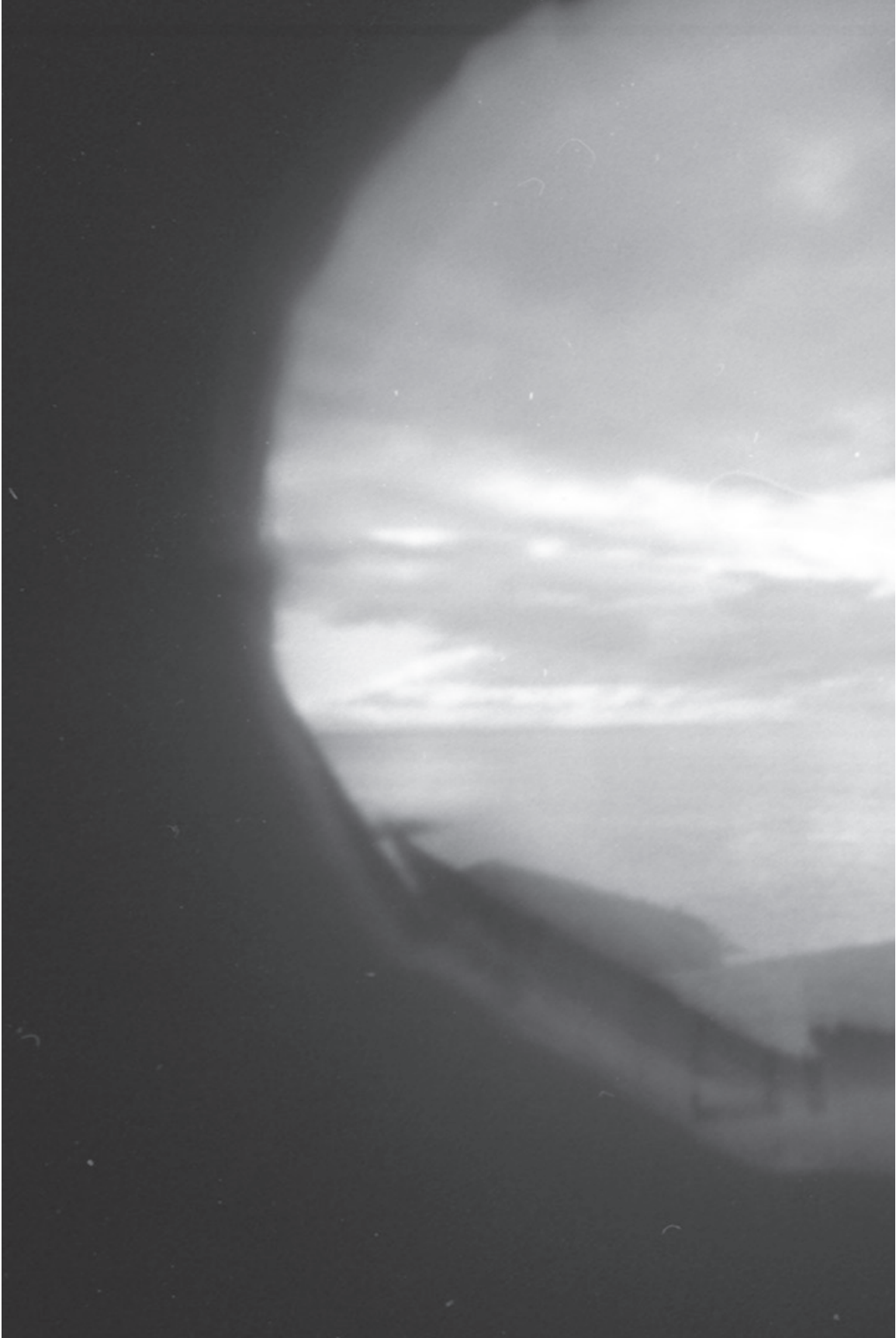


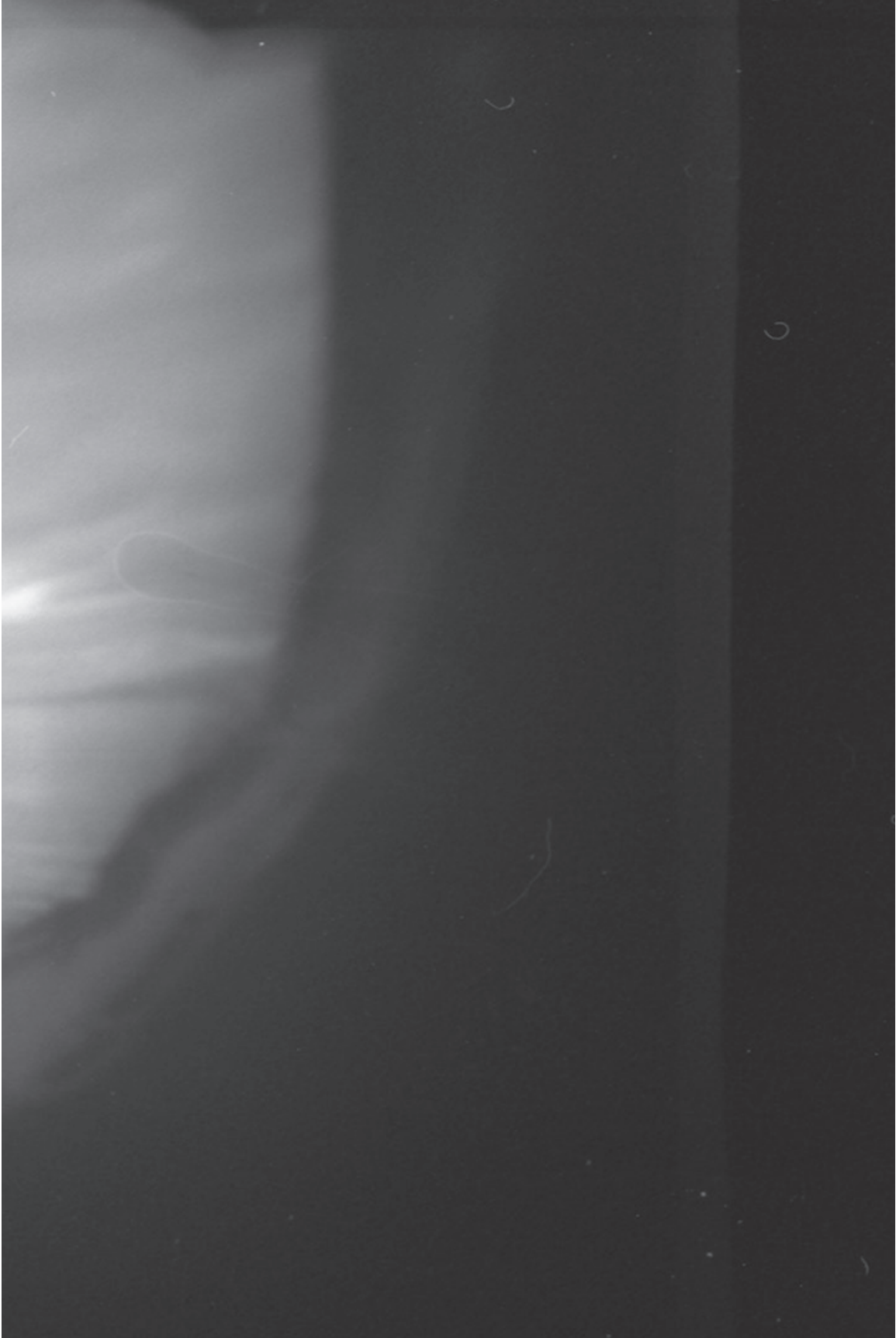


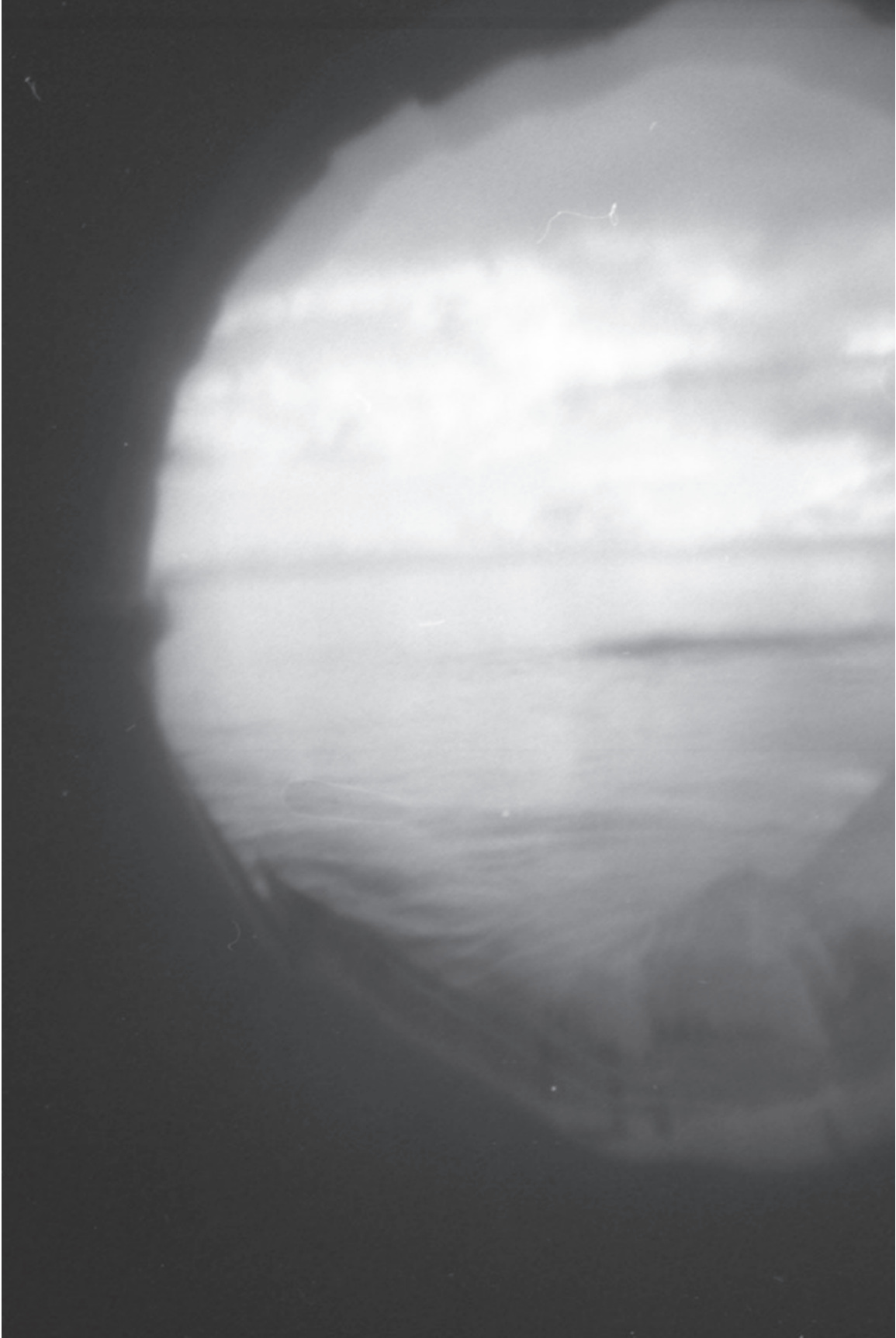


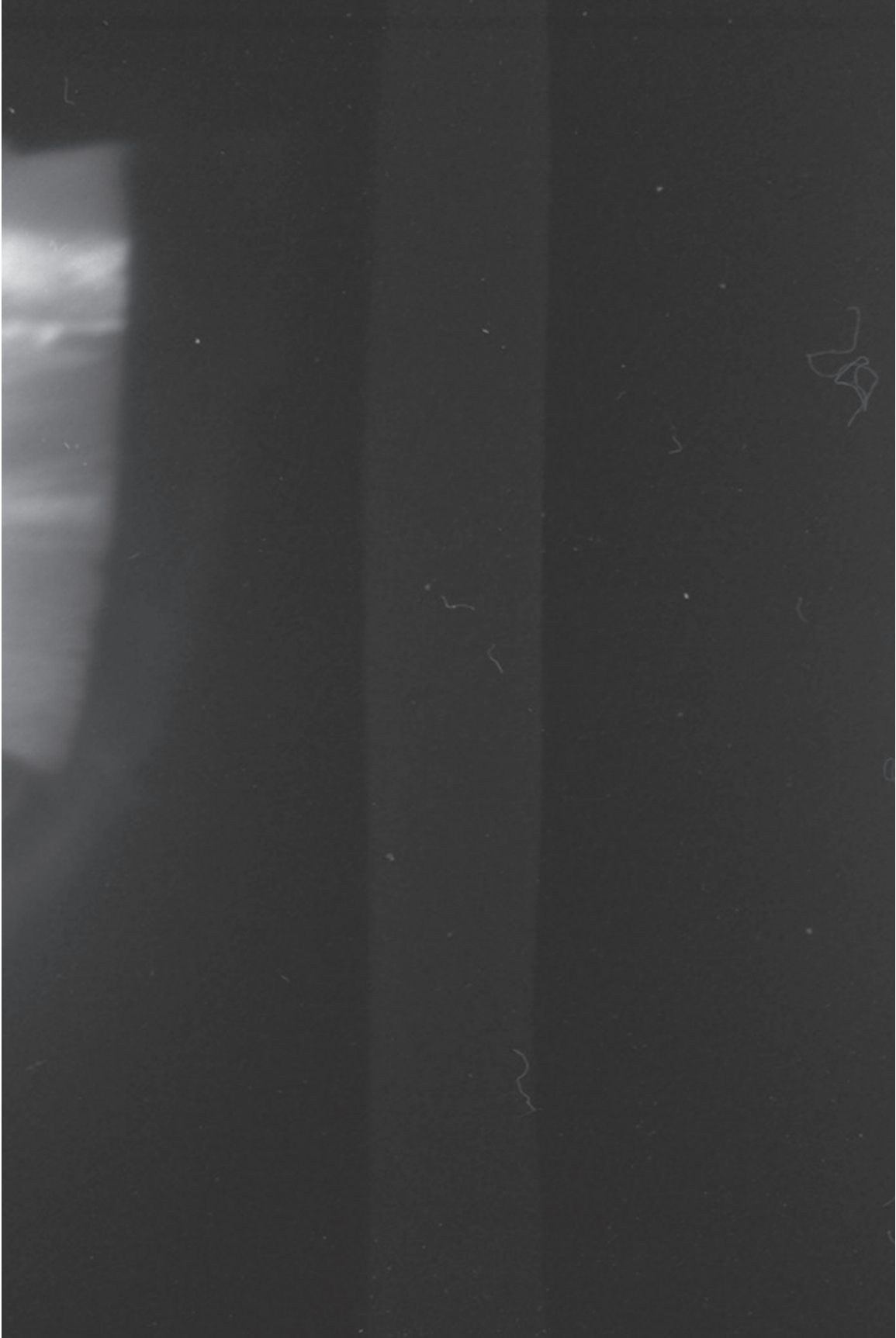




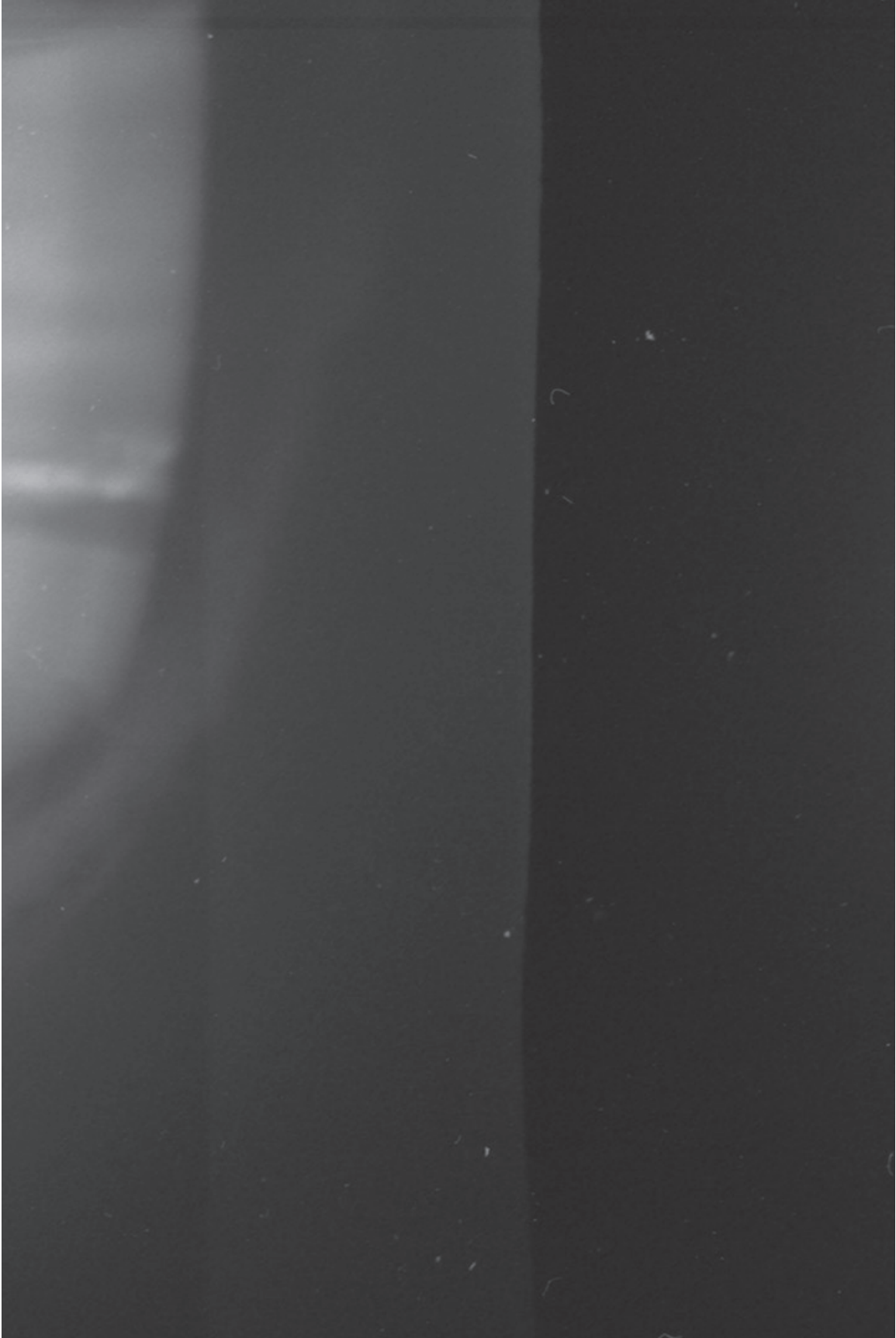






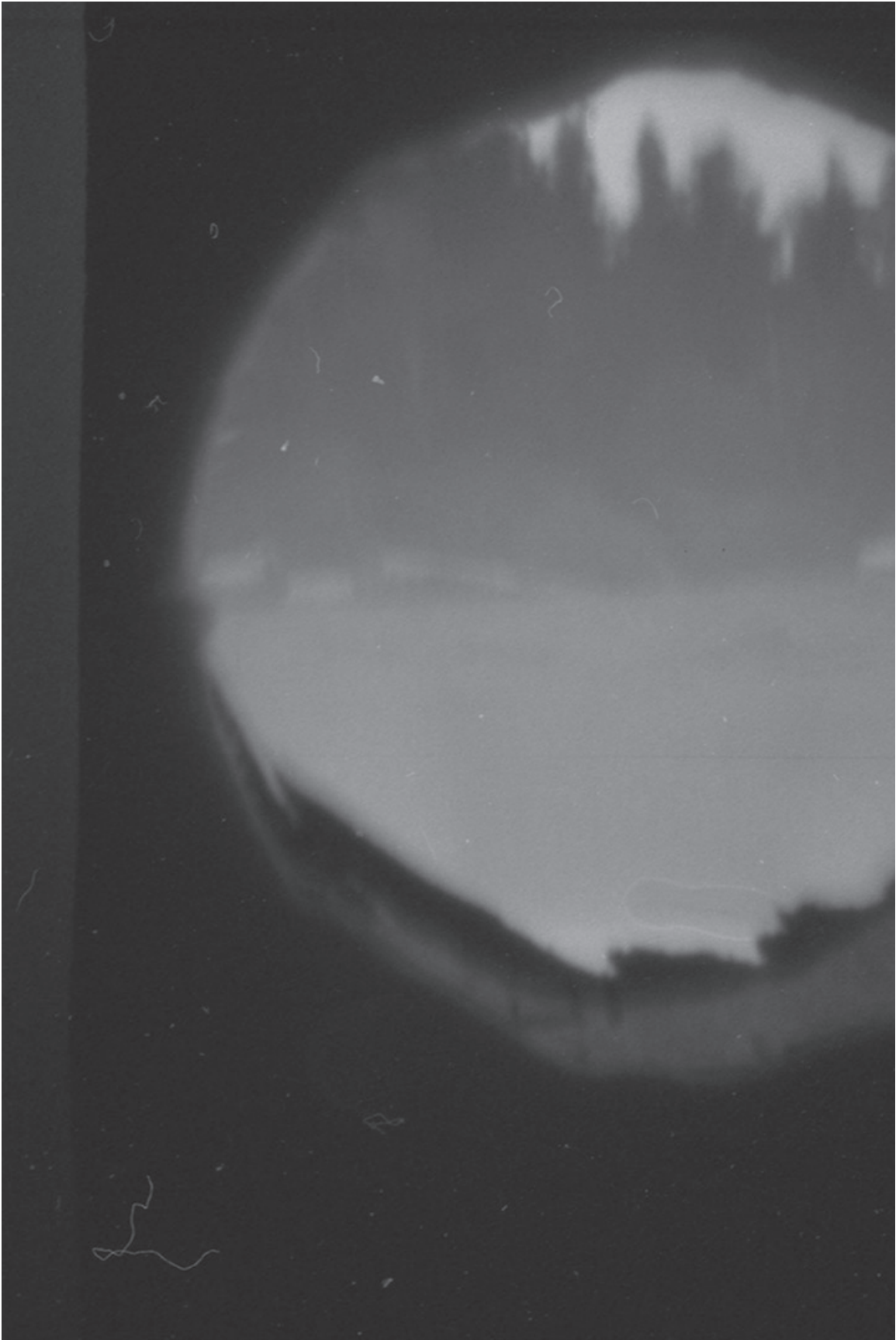




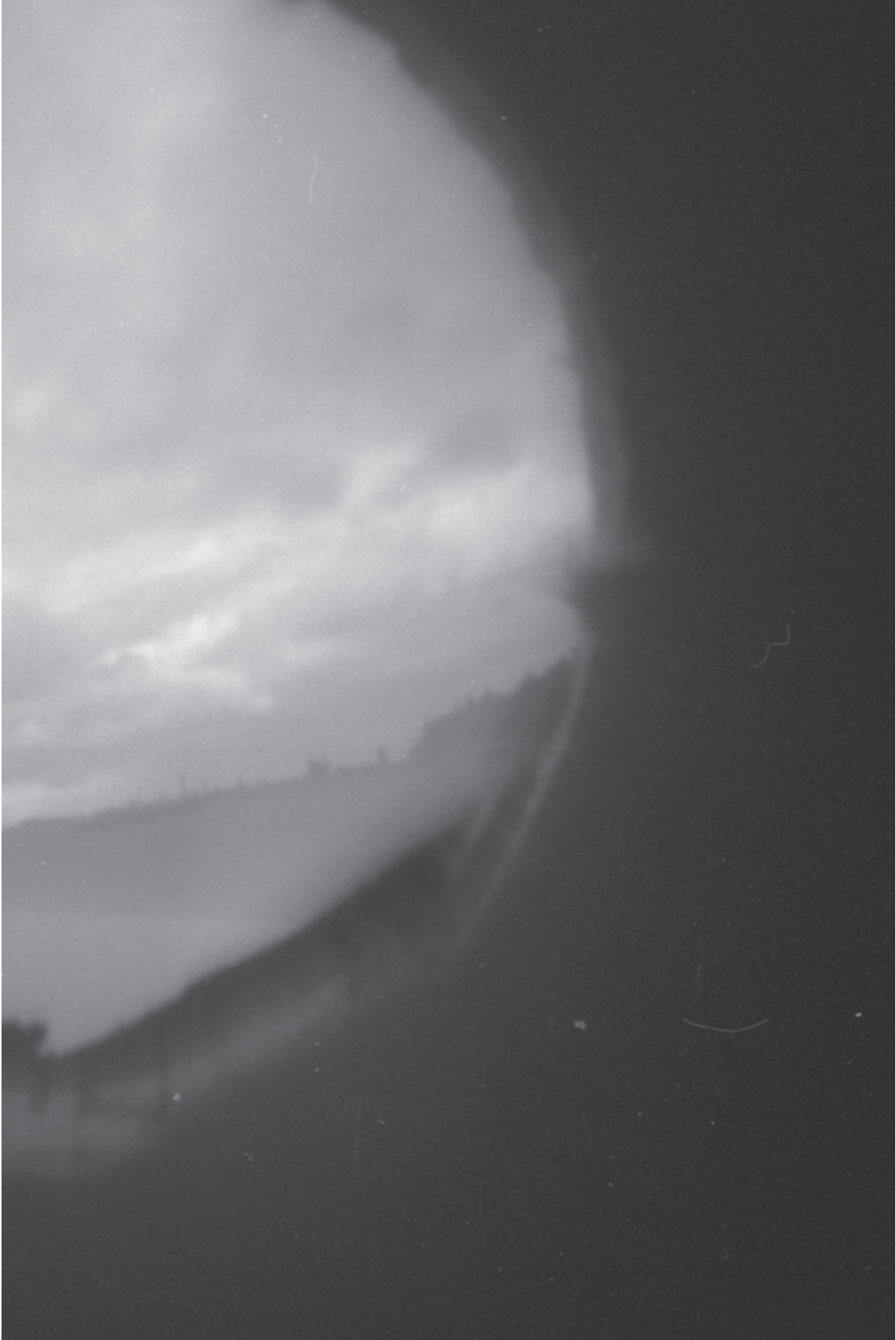


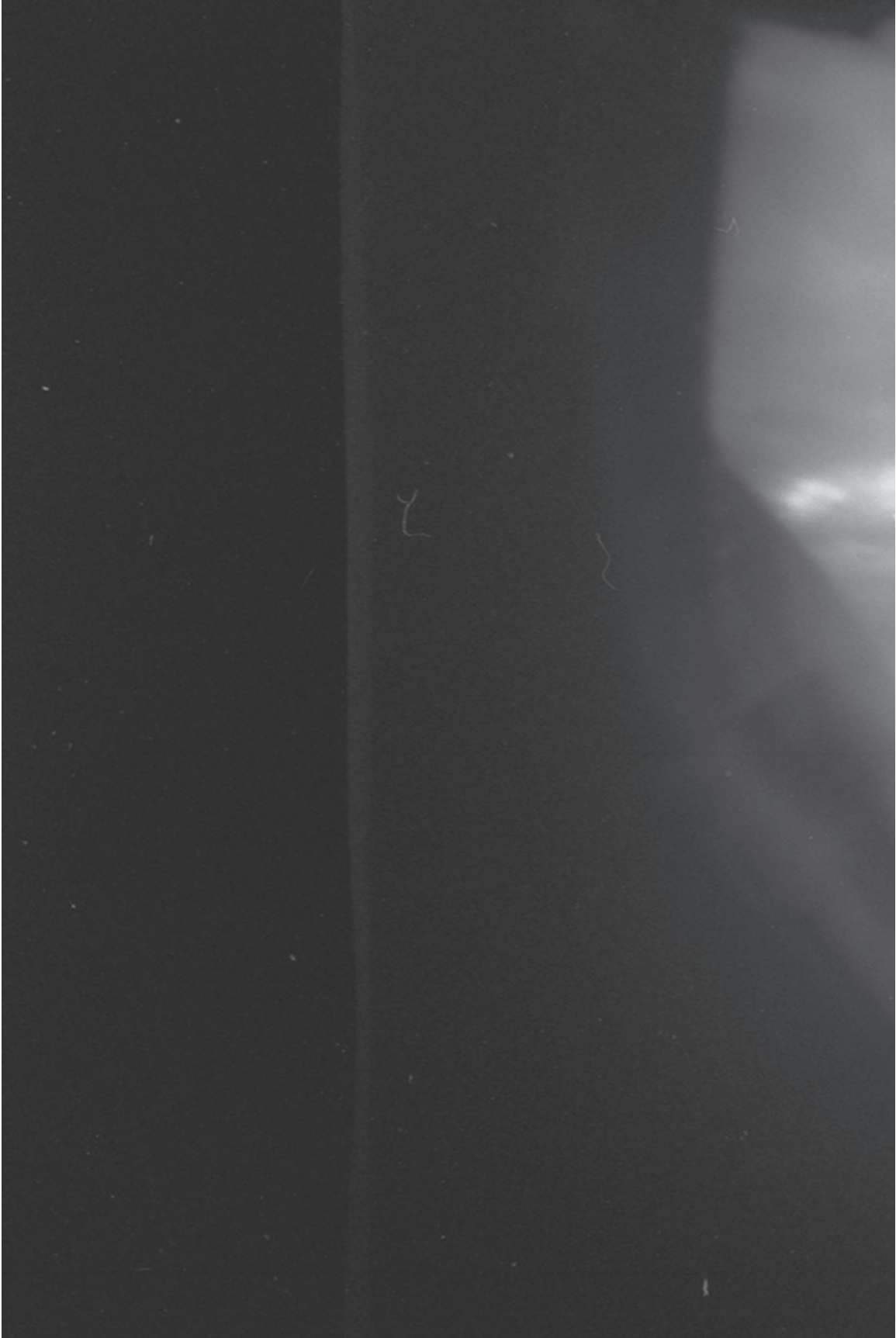




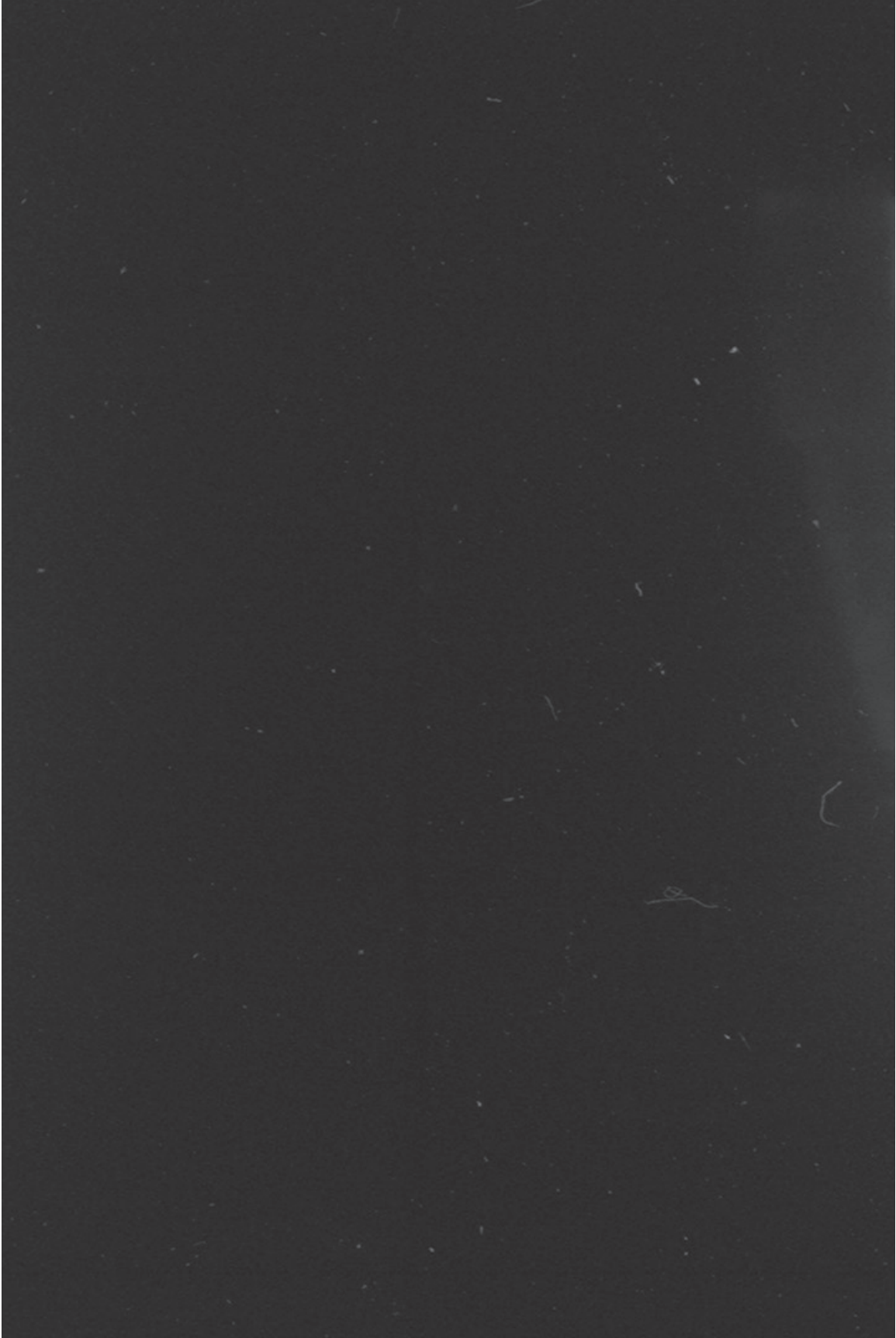
















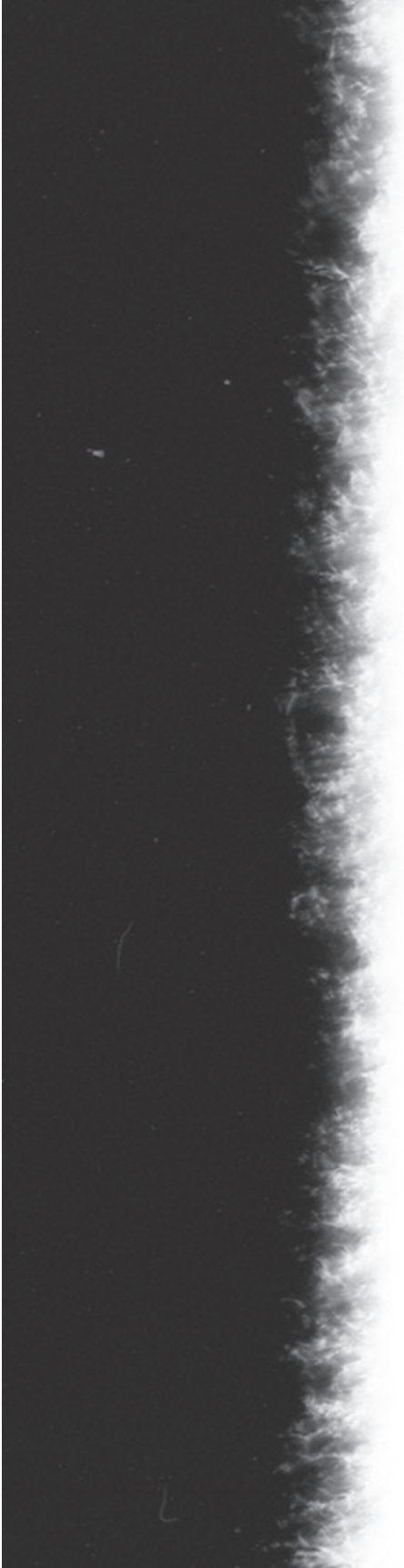






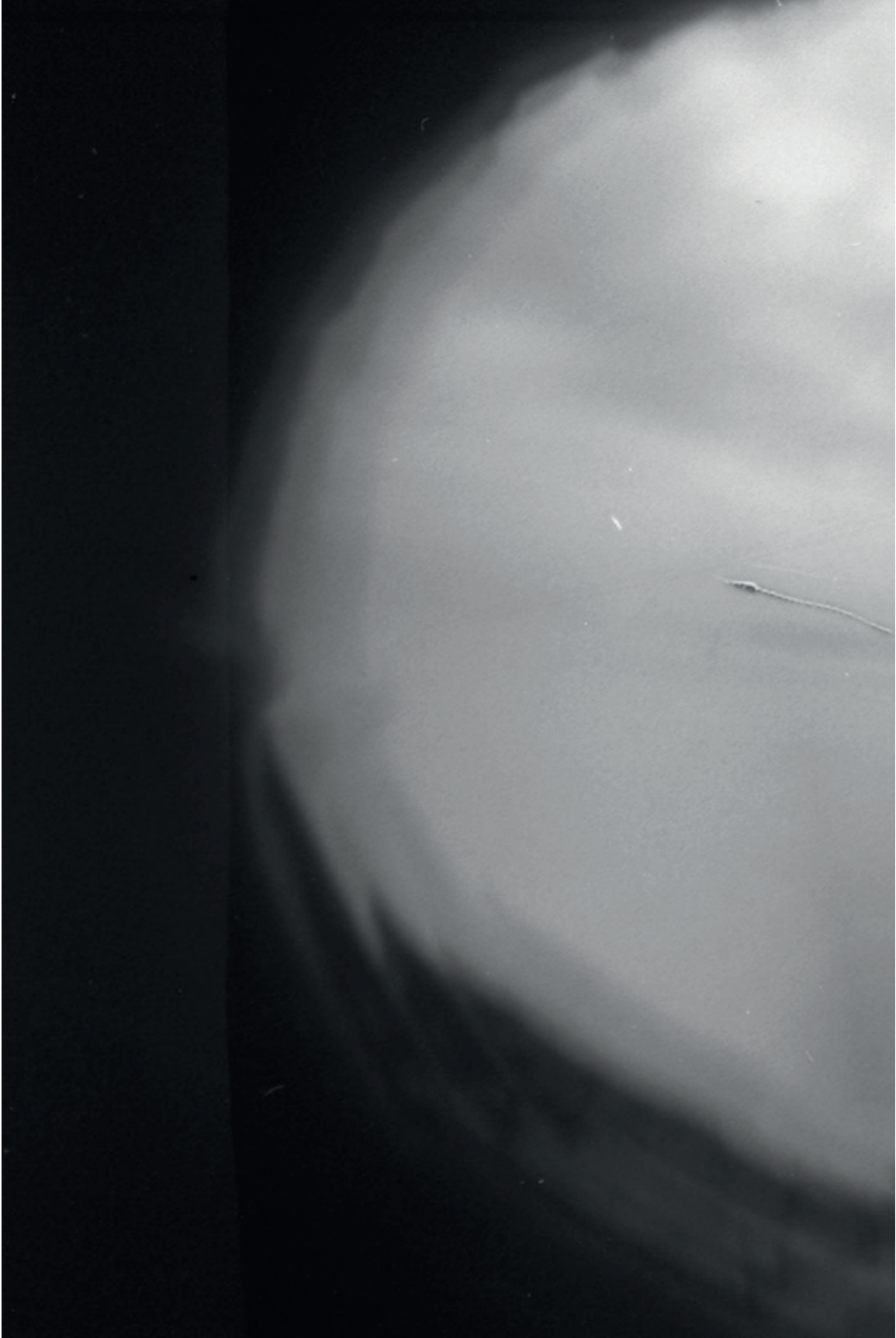






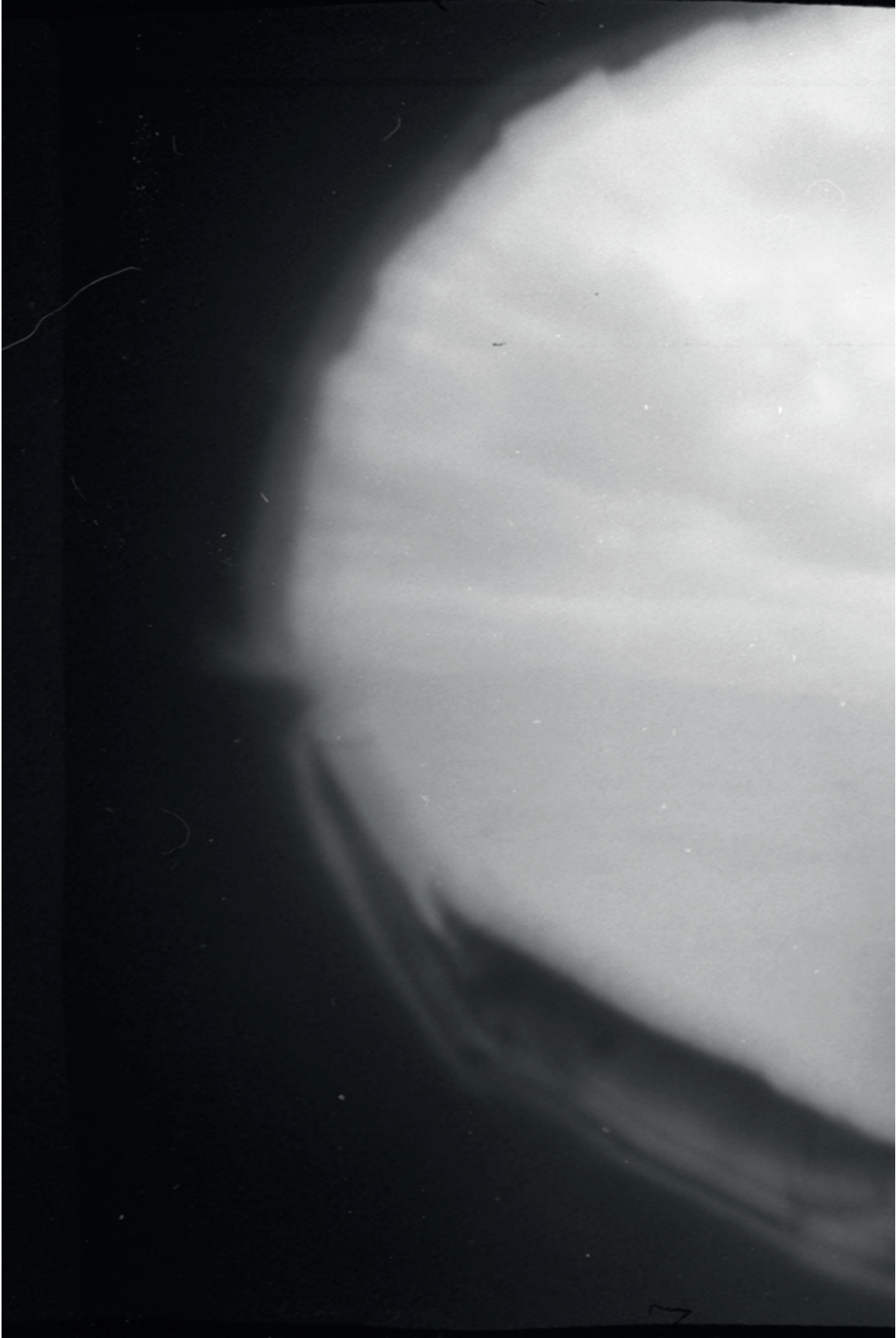












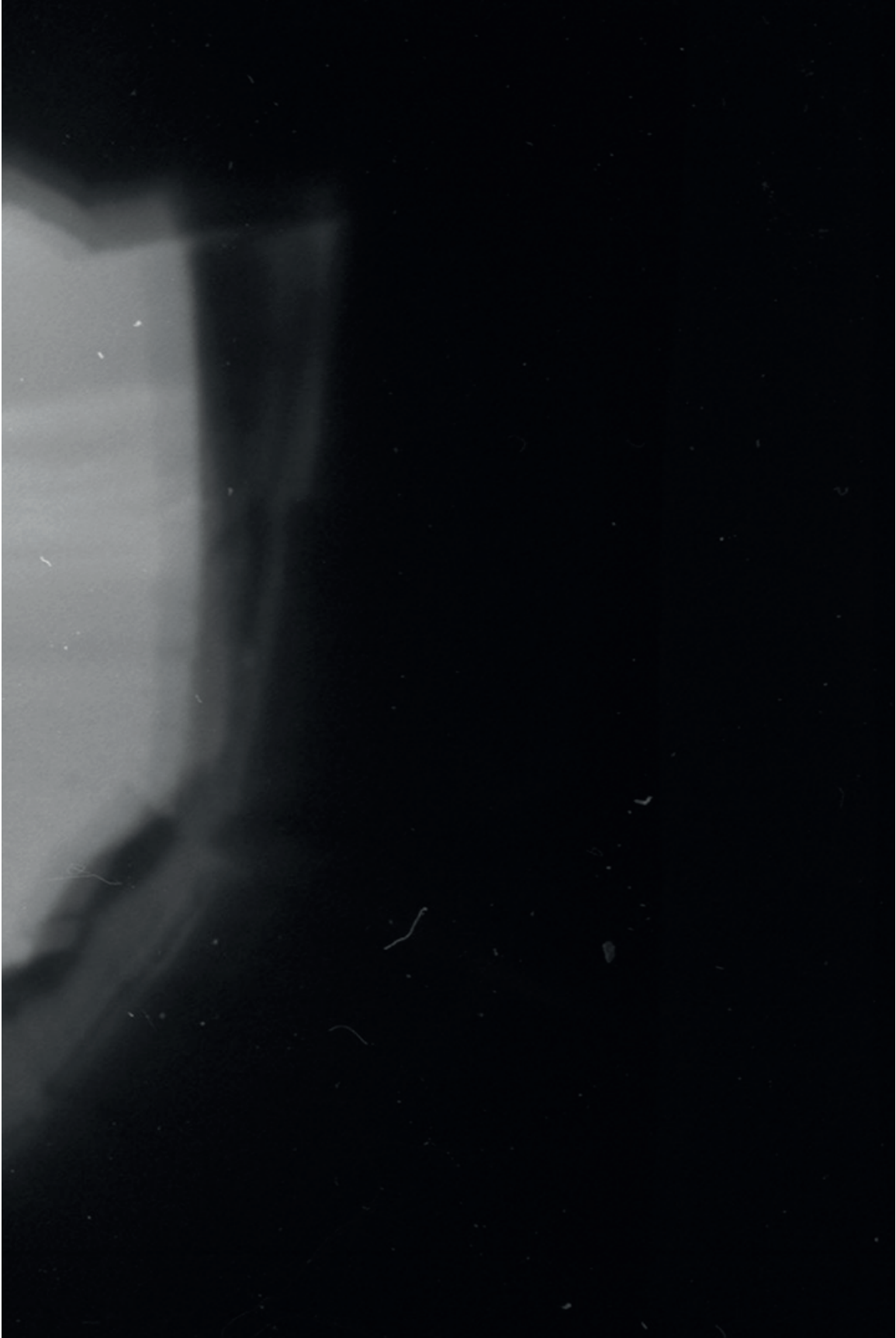






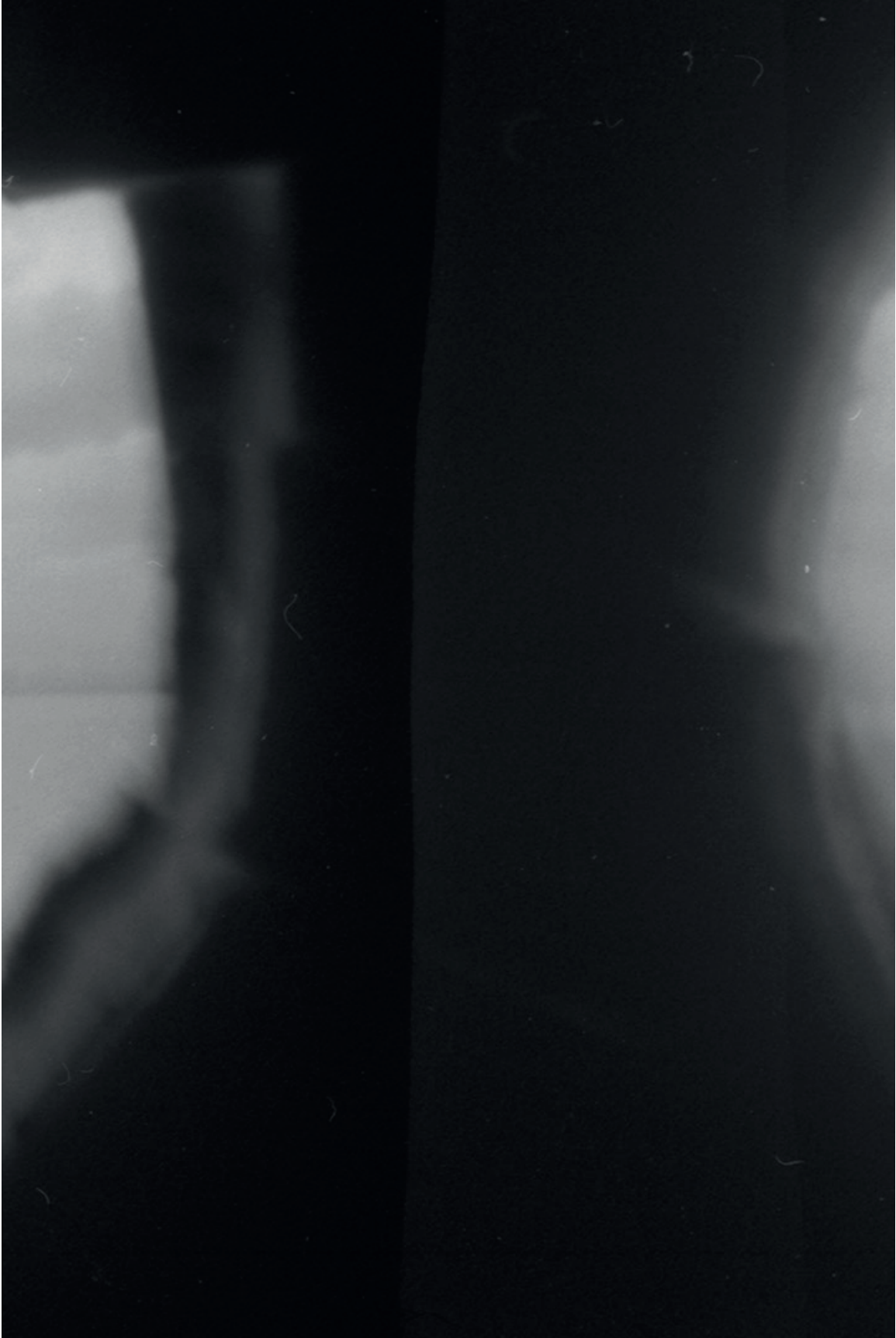








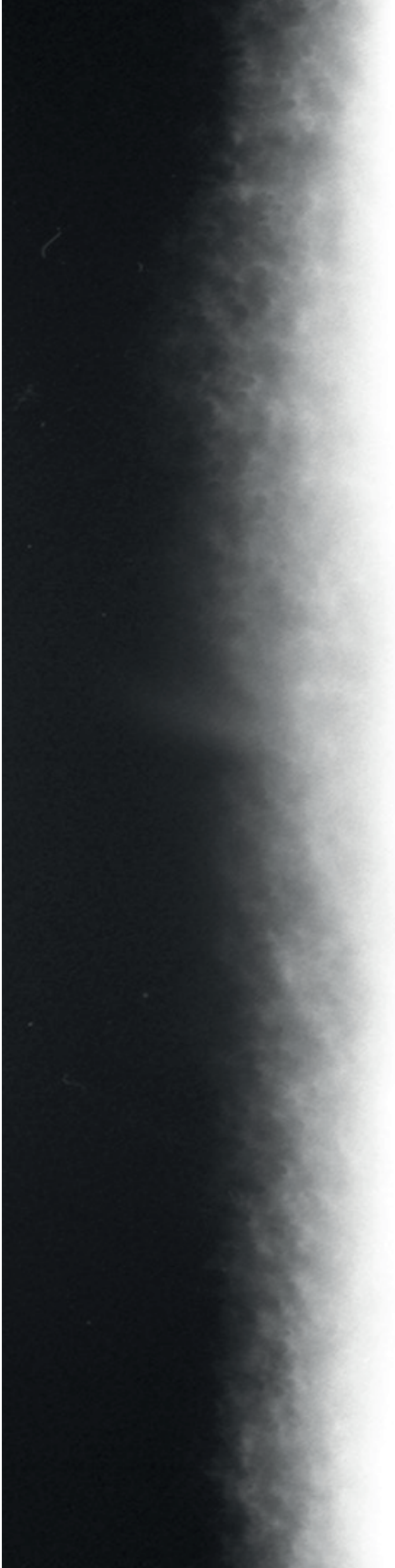


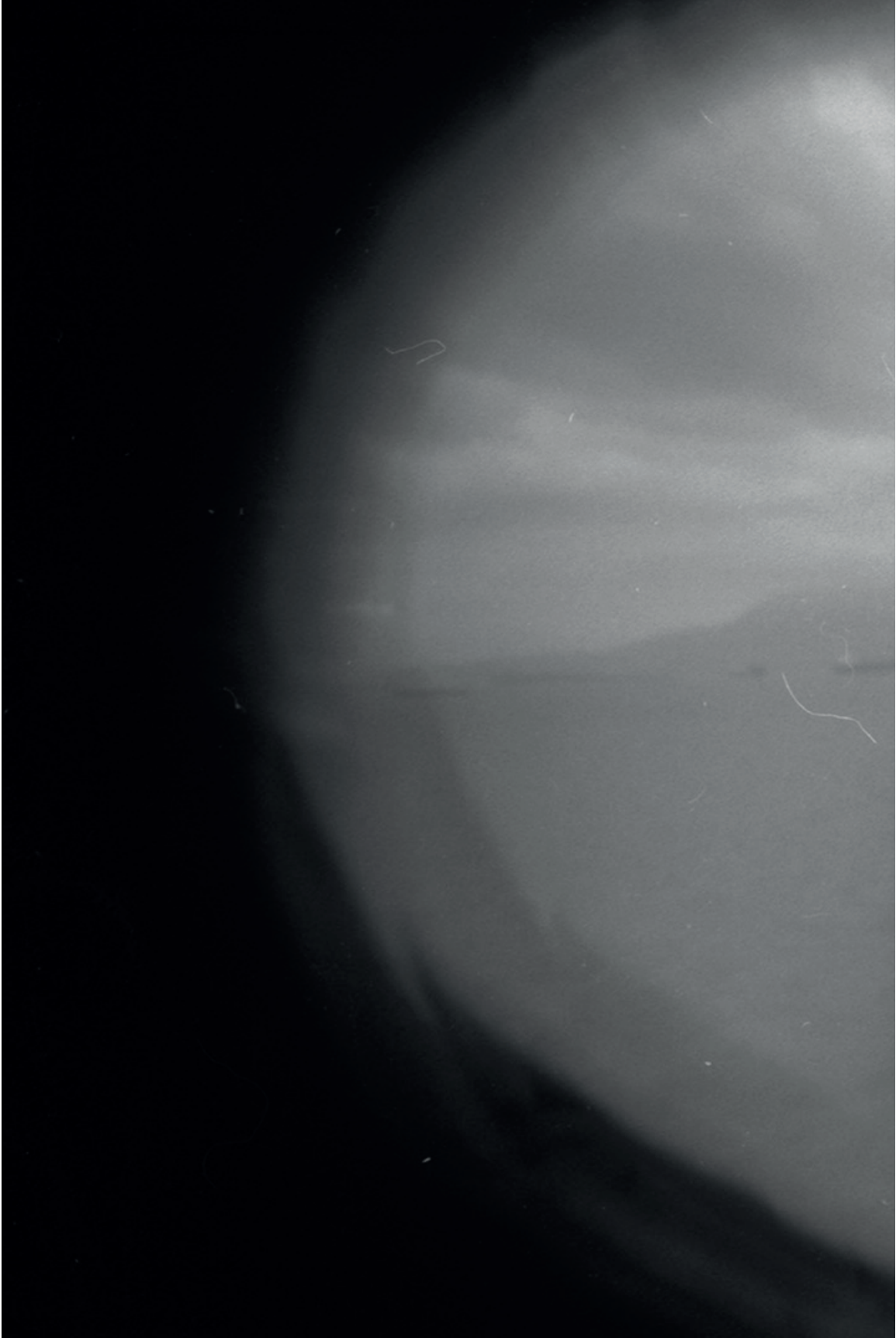


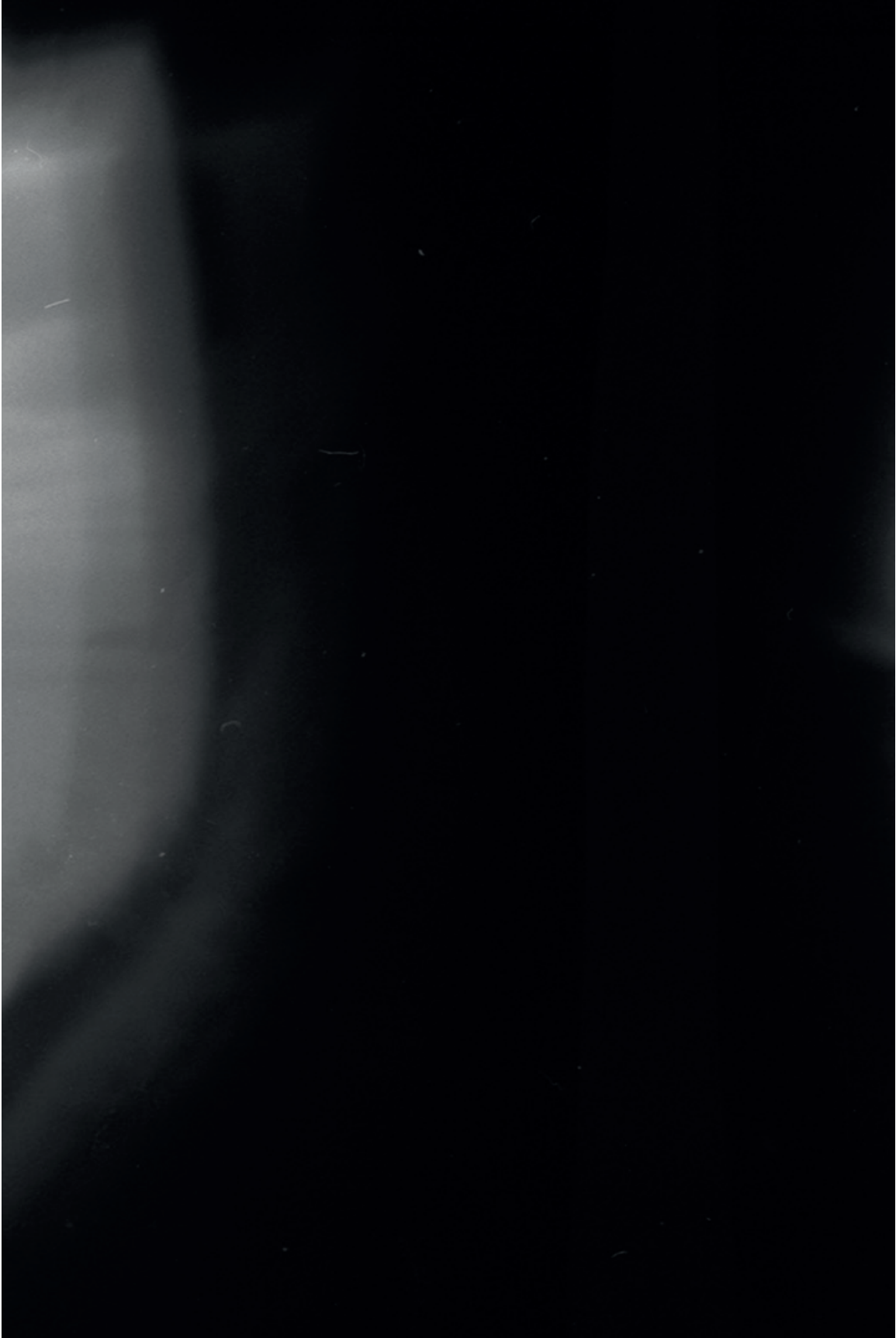






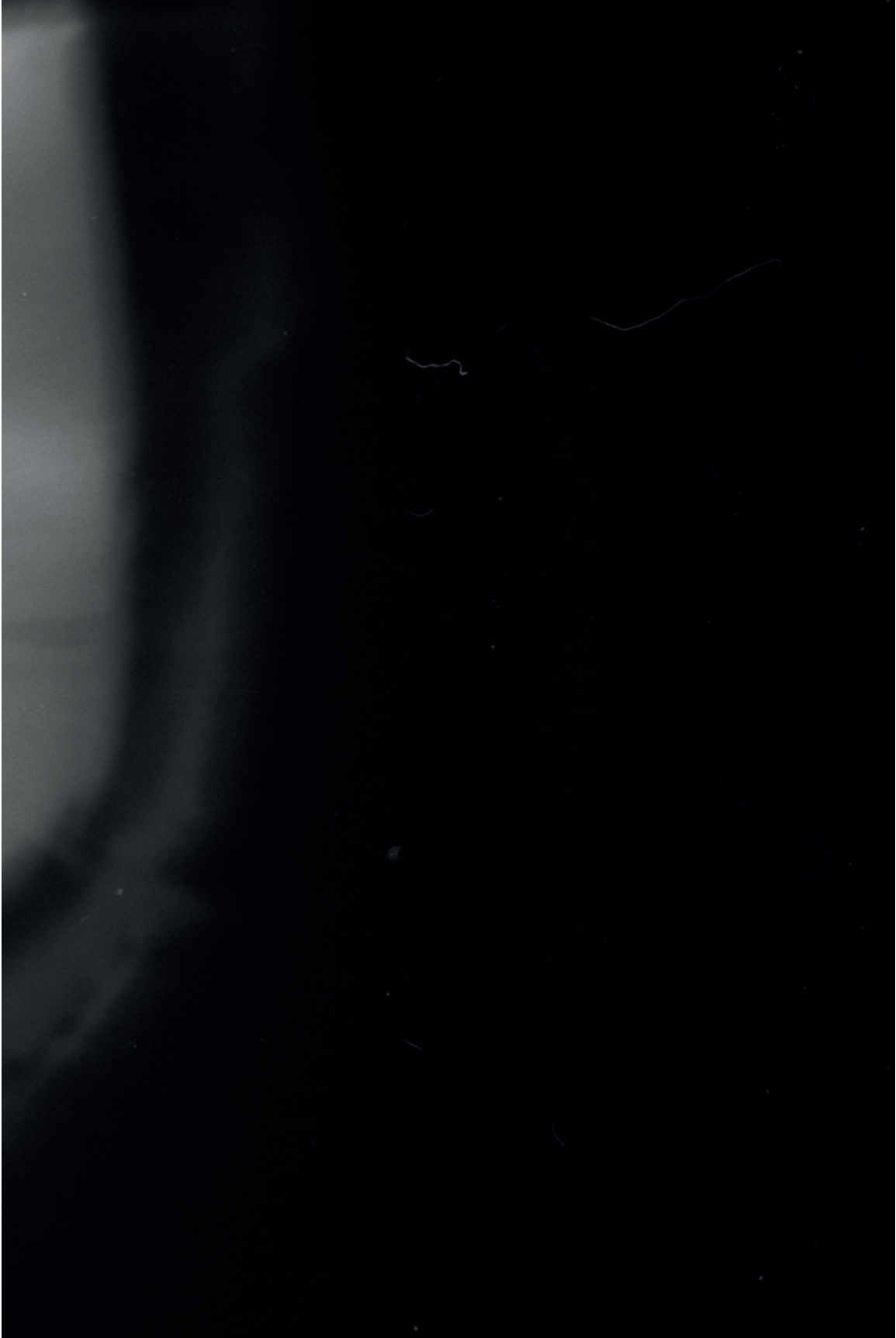








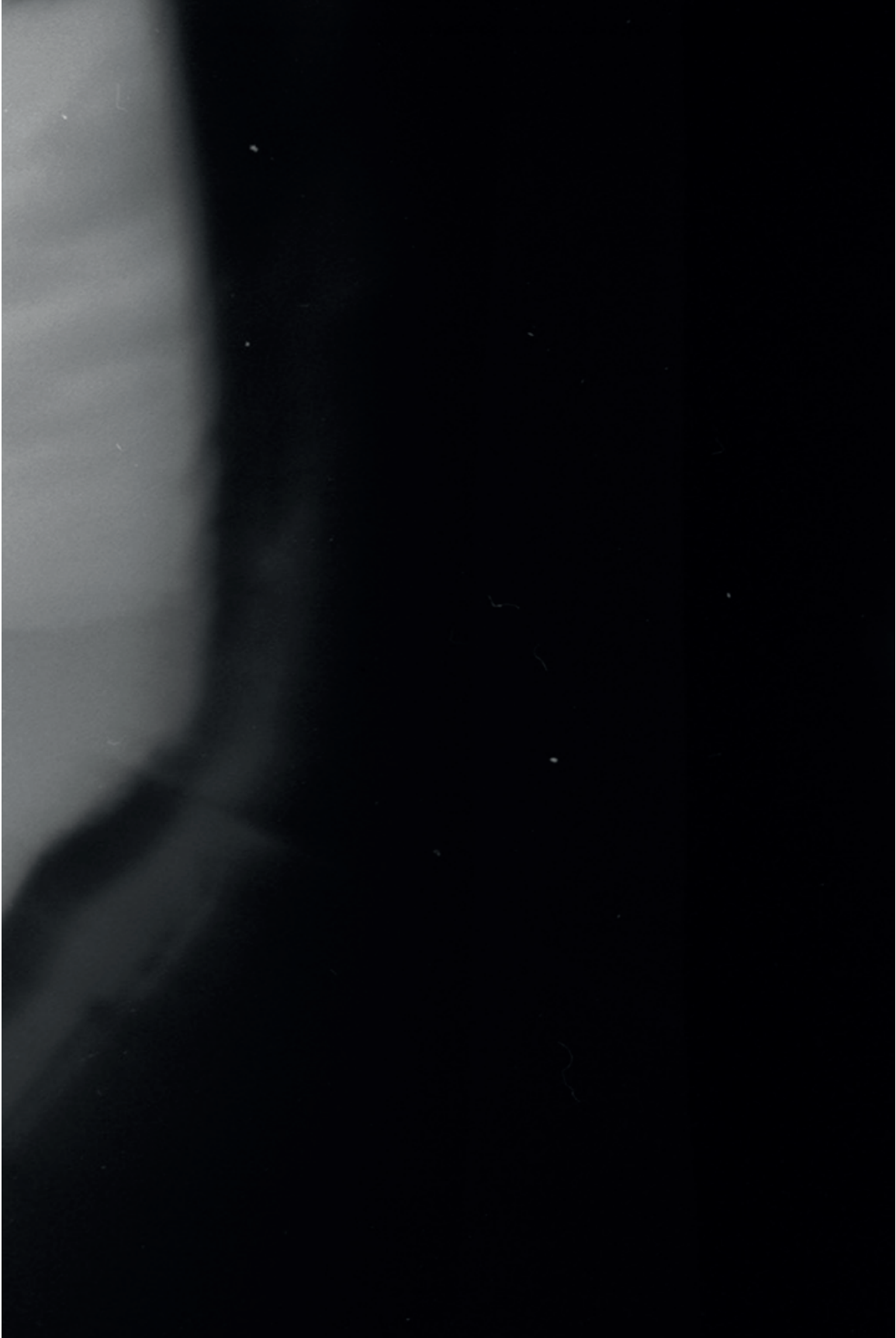










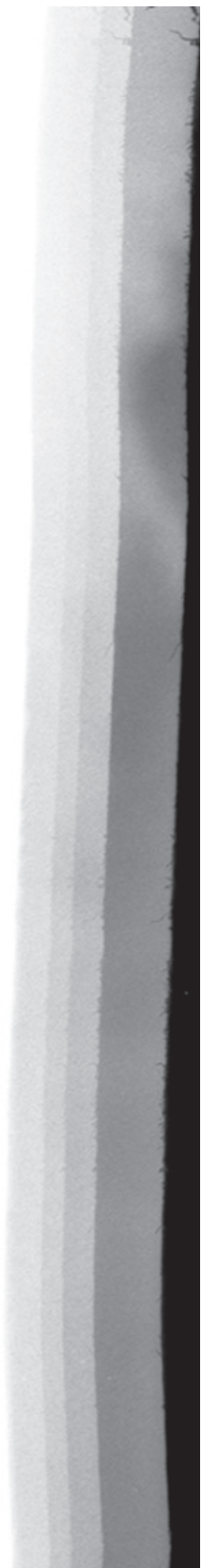


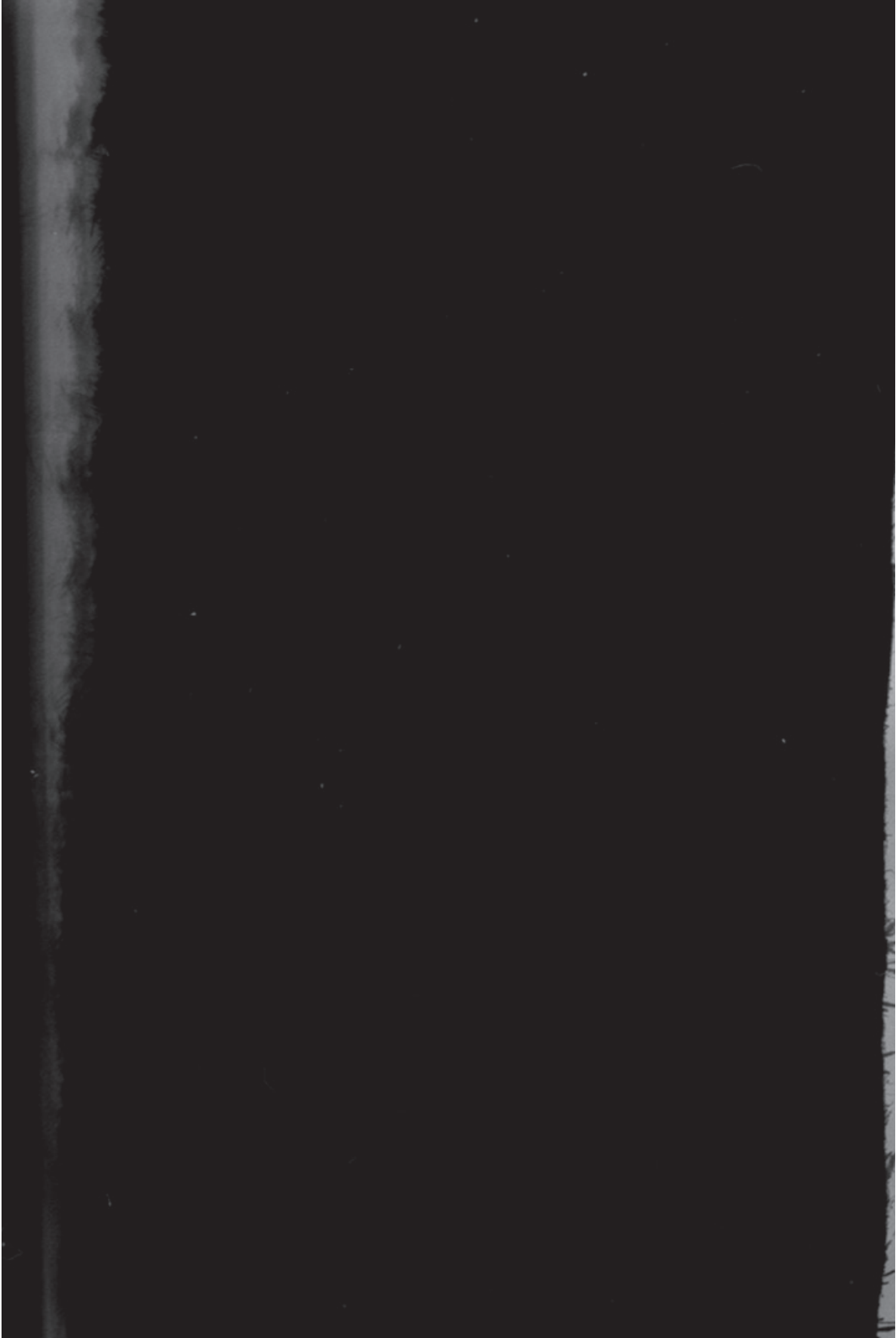






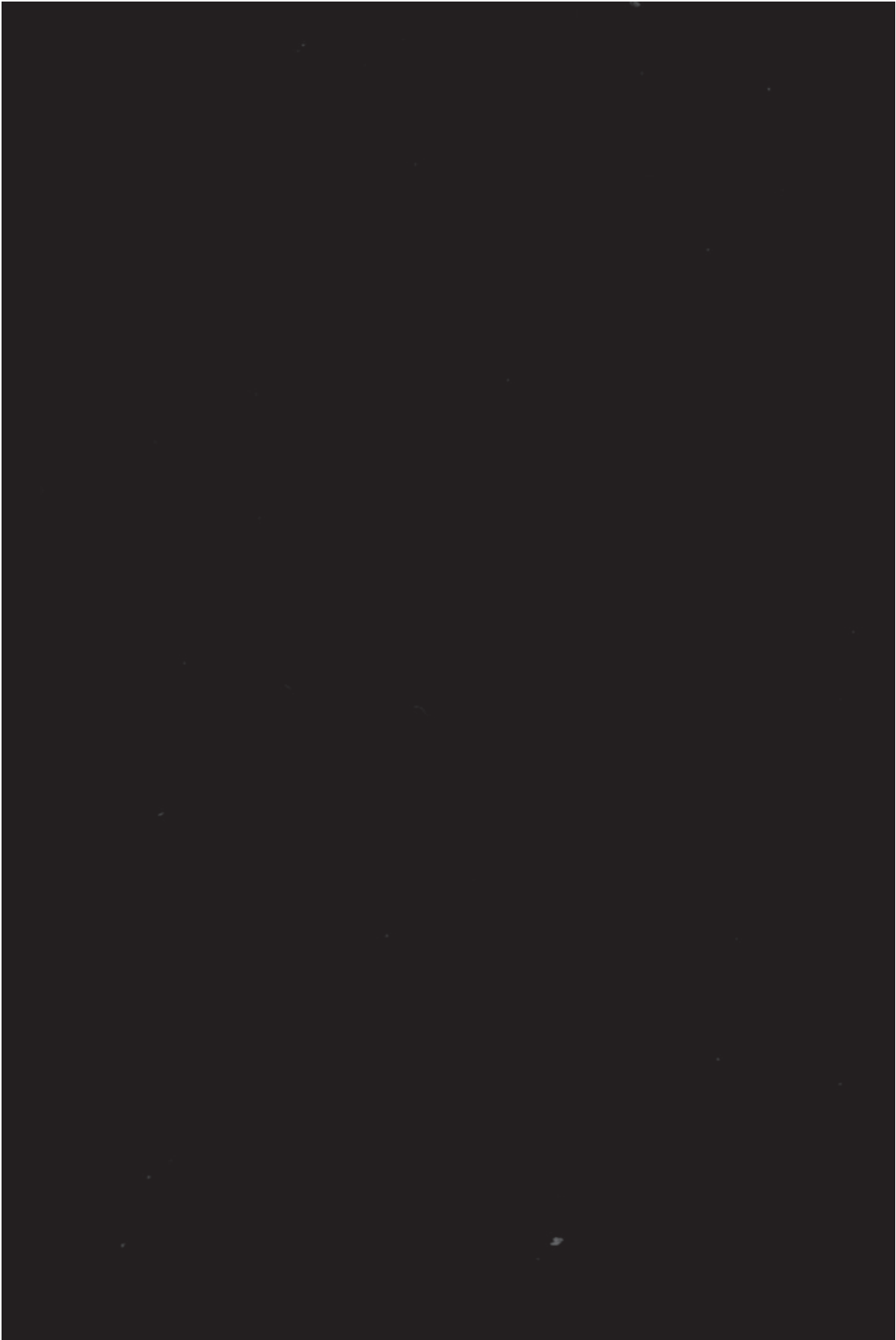


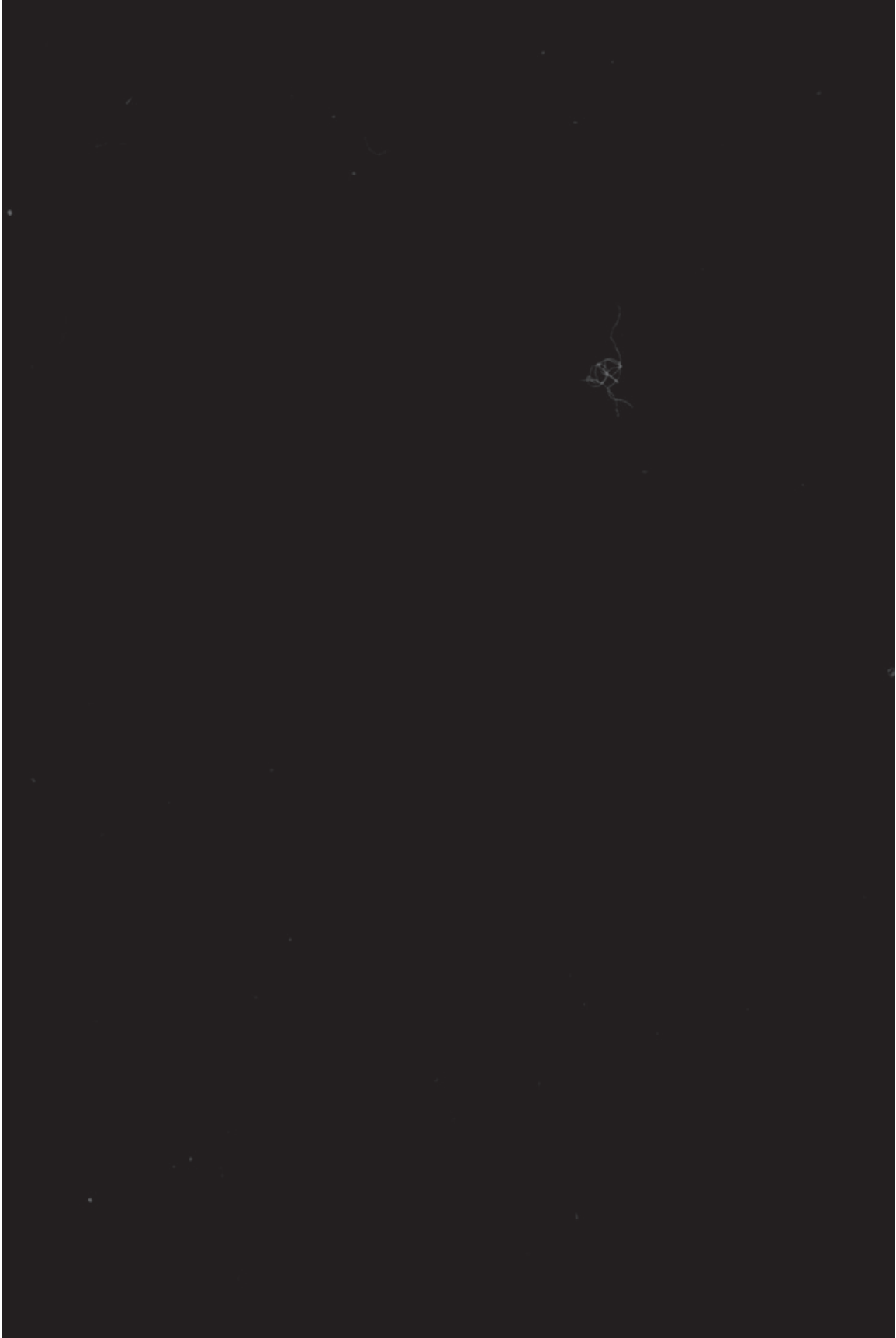












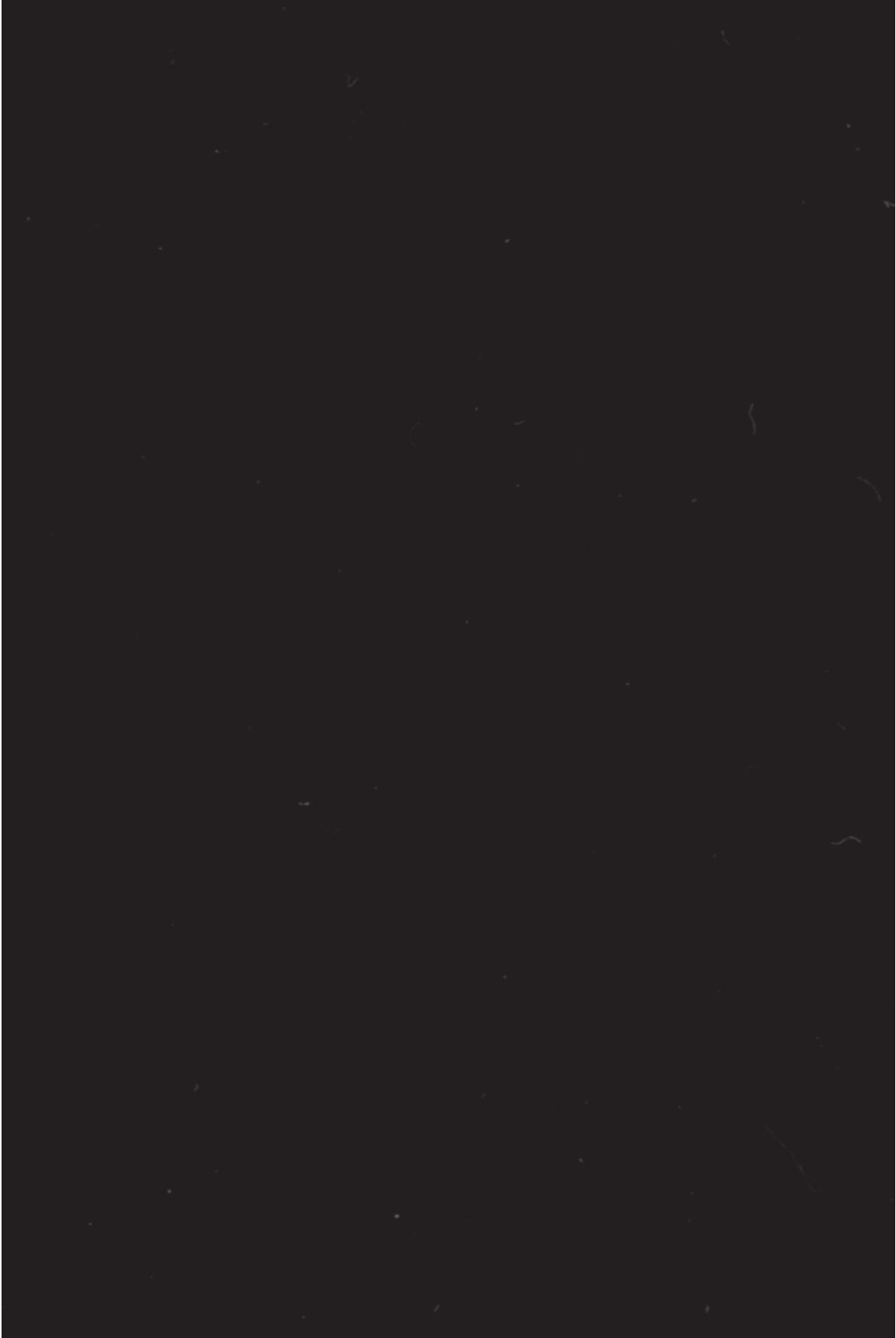


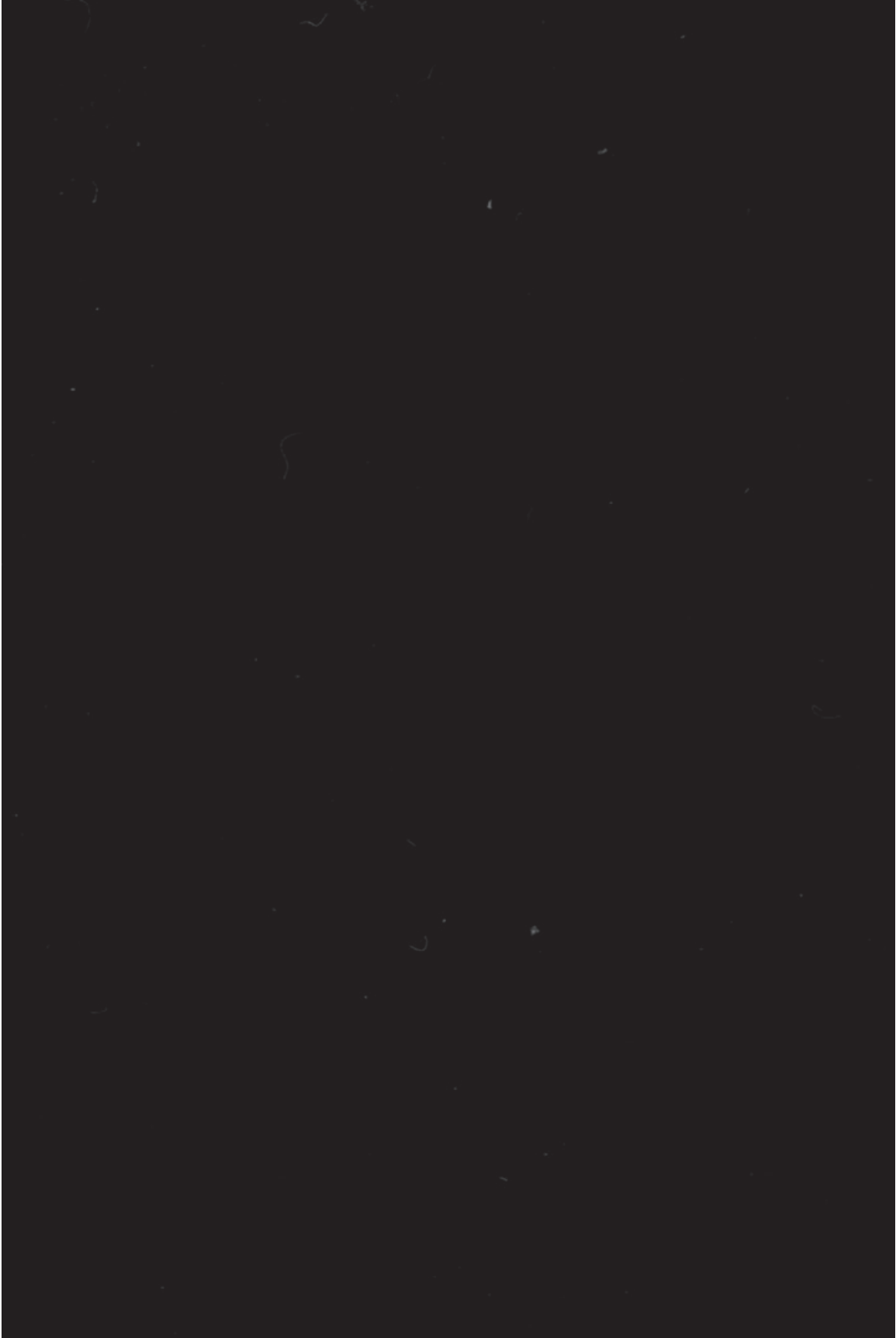


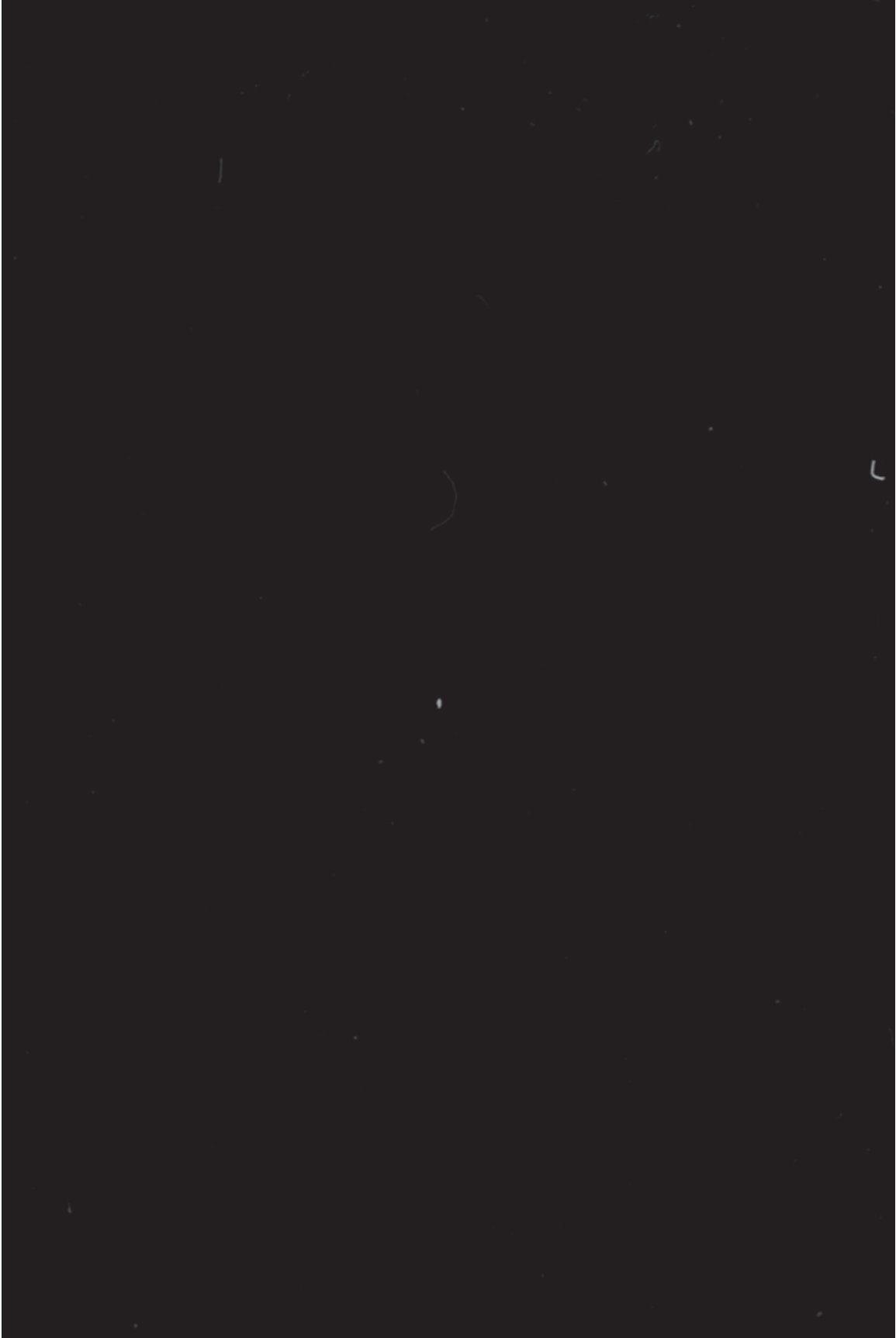
































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