Alexey Bogolepov is an artist currently living and working in Saint Petersburg, Russia. His work comprises architectural photography, sculpture, video and installation in a broad exploration of modernism both in the post-Soviet states and worldwide. He is interested in making analytic art that produces political commentary on the subjects of power structure, ideology of space, planning practices and systemic vision.

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Education:
2007 - University of Alaska, BLA in Fine Art
2012-2014 - "Photography as Research" program, FotoDepartament Foundation, Saint Petersburg

Solo exhibitions:
2017 - "Triacon", Vyksa Steel Works History Museum, Vyksa, Russia
2016 - "Interface/Container", Gallery Triangle, Moscow, Russia
2015 - "Efficiency Ritual", FotoDepartament Gallery, Saint Petersburg, Russia
2014 - "BLOC", Schusev Museum of Architecture, Moscow, Russia
2014 - "Function", Alvar Aalto Library, Vyborg, Russia

Selected group and joint exhibitions:
2017 - "Hosting the Inhuman", Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow, Russia
2016 - "White Nights", Baltic Biennale of Contemporary Art, Saint Petersburg, Russia
2016 - "Children of Avant-garde", Mobahaus New Wing, Saint Petersburg, Russia
2016 - "Simple Equation: Inner Modernism", GROUND Moscow, 5th Moscow International Biennale of Young Art parallel program
2015 - "Experiences of Brownian motion", Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography, Moscow, Russia
2015 - "White Nights", Gallery Kranjčar, Zagreb, Croatia. Organ Vida International Photofestival
2015 - "White Nights", ZIL Cultural Center, Moscow, Russia
2015 - "We-ll-timed", Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow, Russia
2014 - "We-ll-timed", ZEH, Minsk, Belarus
2014 - Institute.Production, Smena Center, Kazan, Russia
2014 - "We-ll-timed", FotoDepartament Gallery, Saint Petersburg, Russia
2014 - Shukhov Tower. The unmoved value. House of Architects, Saint Petersburg, Russia
2014 - Young Photography, Syktyvkar, Russia
2013 - Russian Territory, Komaba, Tokyo, Japan
2013 - Young Photography, FotoDepartament, Saint Petersburg, Russia

Residencies:
2017 - VYKSA A-I-R, Vyksa, Russia
2016 - ZARYA Center for Contemporary Art, Vladivostok, Russia
2015 - TOKAMAK, Helsinki, Finland
2014 - PhotoDom, Manifesta 10 parallel program, Fotodepartament, Saint Petersburg, Russia

Publications:
2018 - Hosting the Inhuman: Antology. Exhibition reader, published by V-A-C Press
2017 - "Efficiency Ritual", "Amplitude" compilation, published by FotoDepartament
2017 - Field trip review on Aroundart.org
2016 - Interview on Aroundart.org
2016 - "Five-legged Tread of Progress" on Colta.ru
2015 - Rock all night: excavating the origins of St Petersburg on Calvert Journal
2015 - "White Nights" on Bird in Flight
2015 - "Efficiency Ritual" on Aroundart.org
2015 - "Power Structure" for Calvert Journal special report on the Post-Soviet city
2015 - Fotografia Magazine, "Politics of Architecture: A Reflection on Soviet Era Buildings"
2015 - Øsmosis, "BLOC": Technocracy and Soviet architecture
2014 - Review of Torbjørn Rødland's «Vanilla Partner» for Photographer.ru
2014 - "New Petersburgers" on Aroundart.ru
2014 - The Guardian, New wave: 24 photographers changing the way the world sees Russia
2014 - Lost Horizon for Calvert Journal special project "Russian edgelands: journeys in the urban wilderness"
2014 - Factory Architecture on Urbanautica magazine
2013 - Calvert Journal, Parallelism

Print prices:

All series (except “Parnas” and “White Nights”, see below)
30×40 cm, edition 5+1AP / €350
50x70 cm, edition 5+1AP / €750
60x90 cm, ediiton 3+1AP / €1200
70x100 cm, edition 2+1AP / €1500
90x120 cm, edition 1+1AP / €2500
100x150 cm, edition 1+1AP / €3000

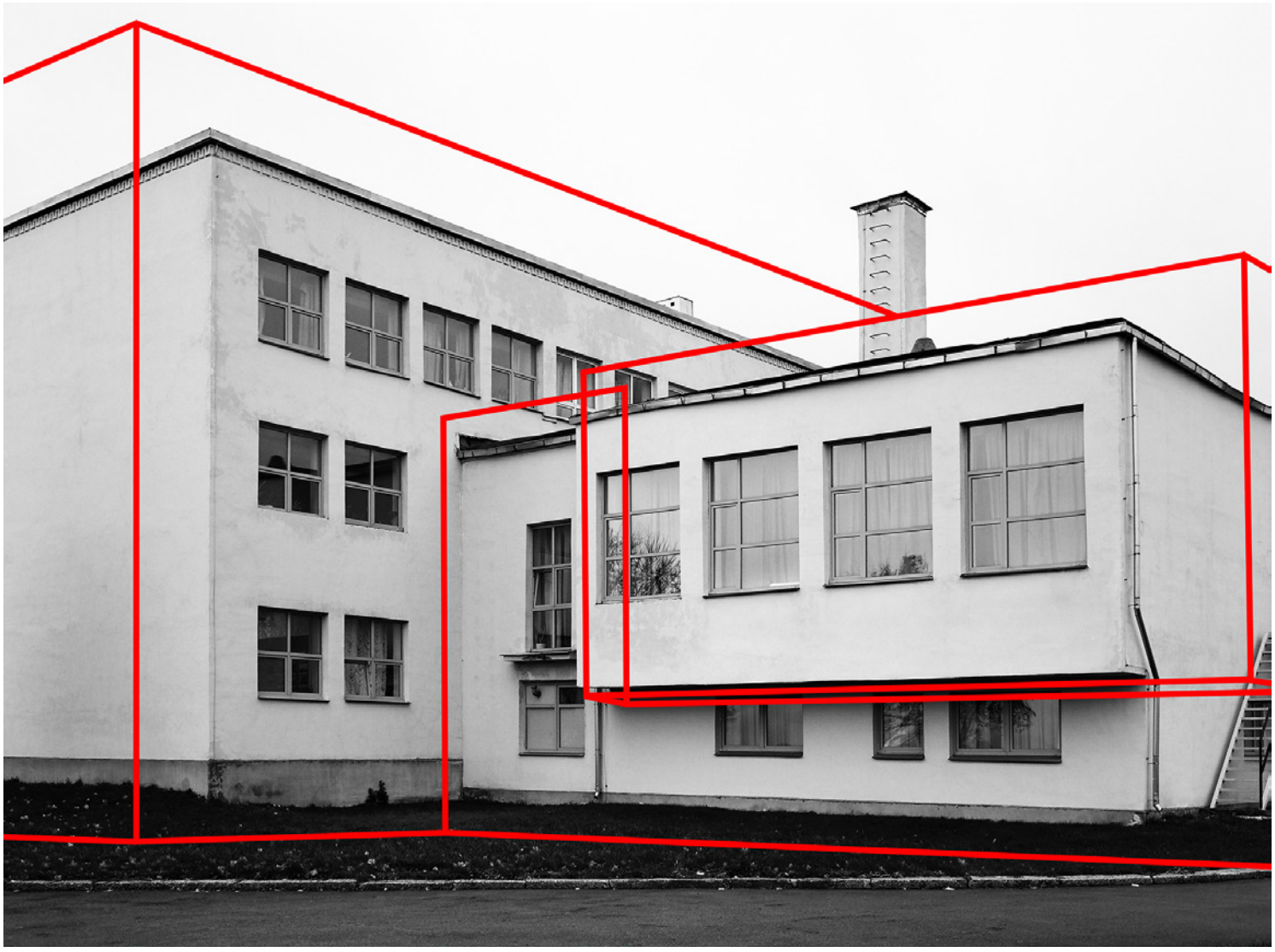
Parnas project
40×50 cm, edition 10 / €250
50×70 cm, edition 10 / €350

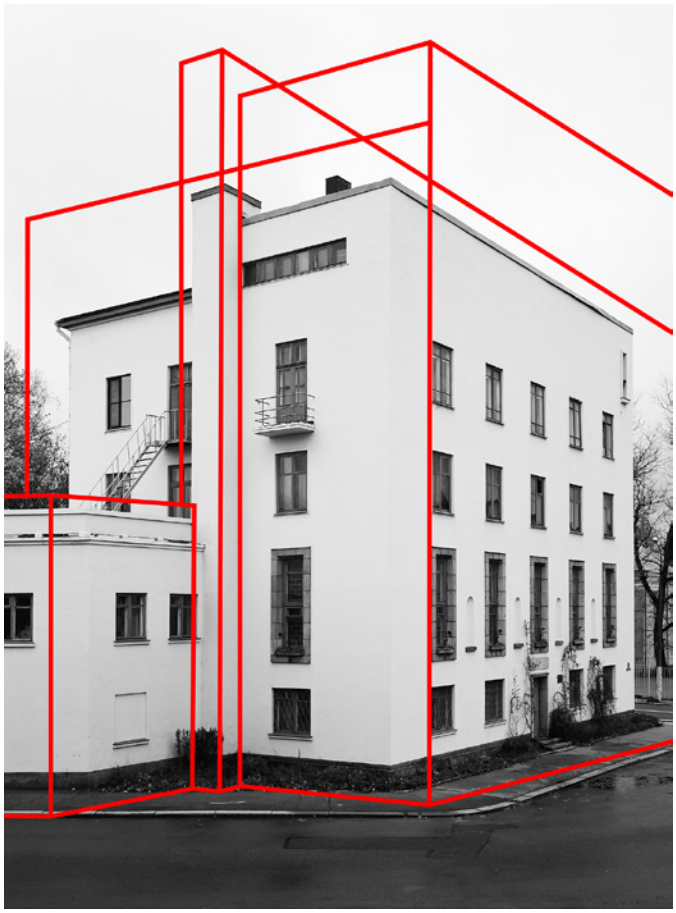
White Nights project
60x90 cm, ediiton 10+2AP / €500
90x120 cm, edition 5+2AP / €1000

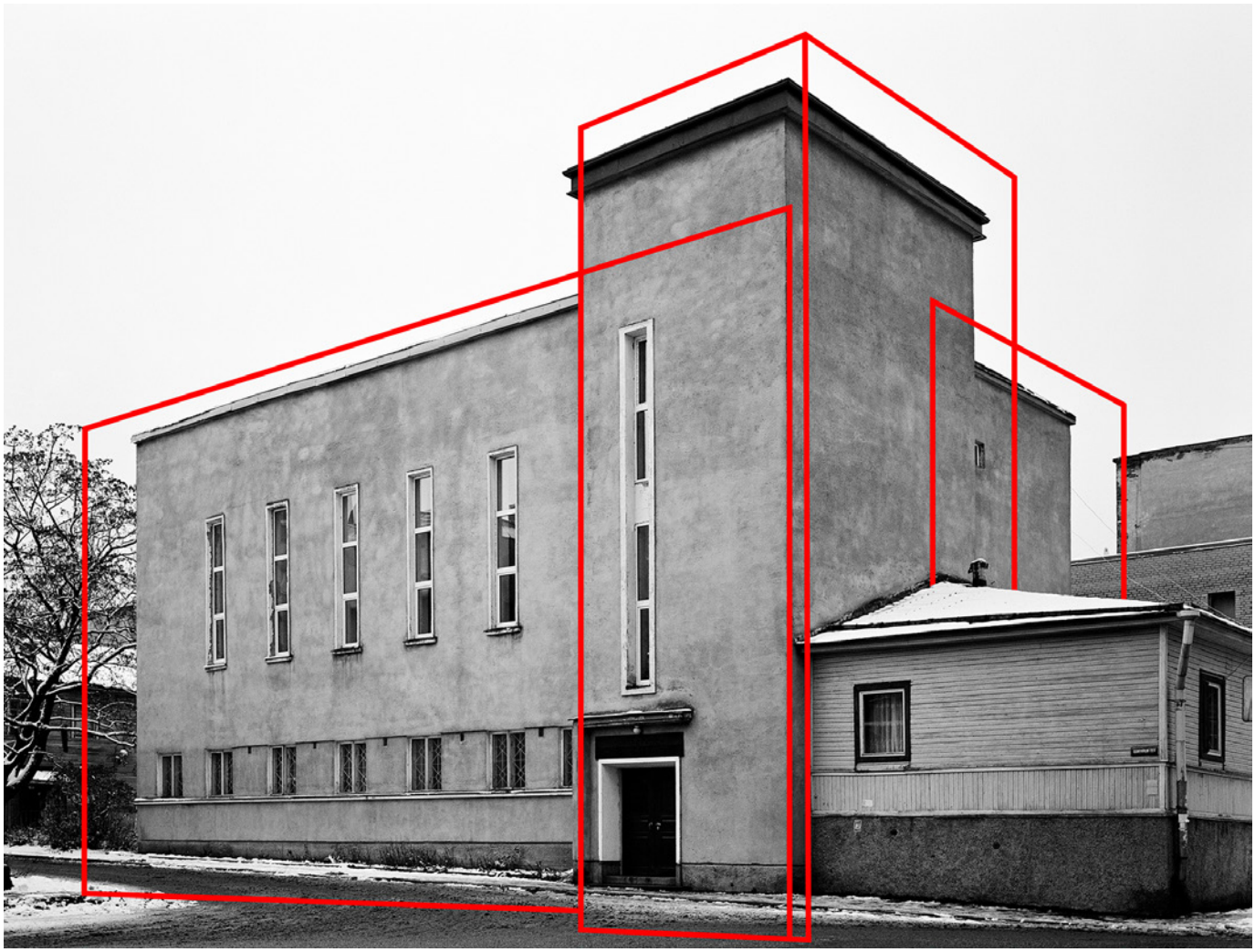
Print quality: archival pigment print on Baryta paper. Shipped internationally in tube.

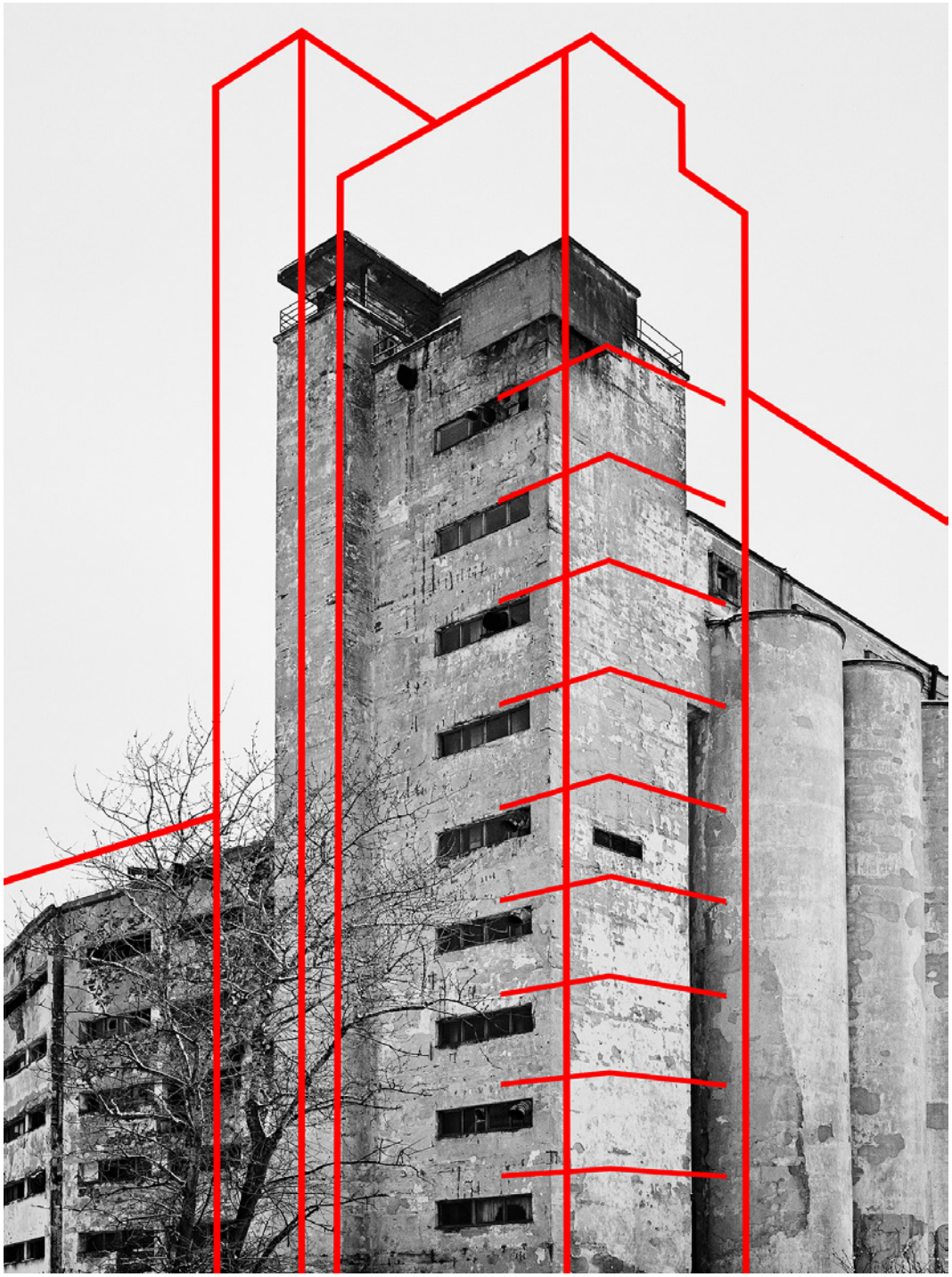
Function
2013-2014

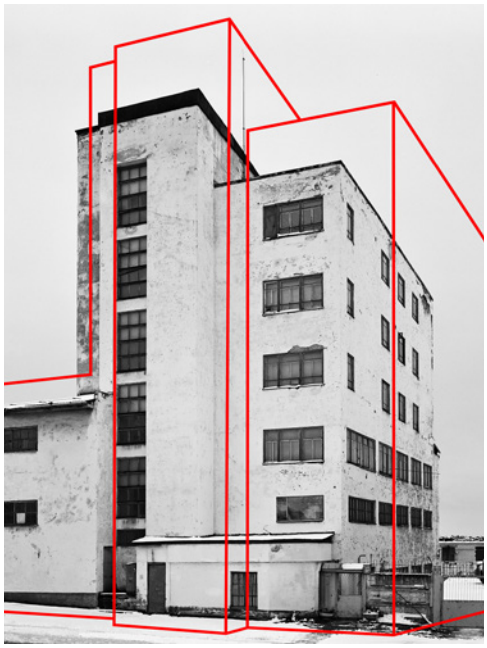
Function is an experiment in integrating architectural photography with contemporary art practices. It is a study of 1930s functionalist architecture in the city of Vyborg, Russia (formerly Viipuri, Finland). The visual syntax of these buildings is laid out in a form of an architectural guidebook and combined with quotes from modernist literature, produced roughly at the time of their construction. The resulting juxtaposition creates a window for the viewer to make new associations and get immersed into the mindset of the interwar period.
The project was exhibited at the newly restored Alvar Aalto Library in Vyborg in 2014.

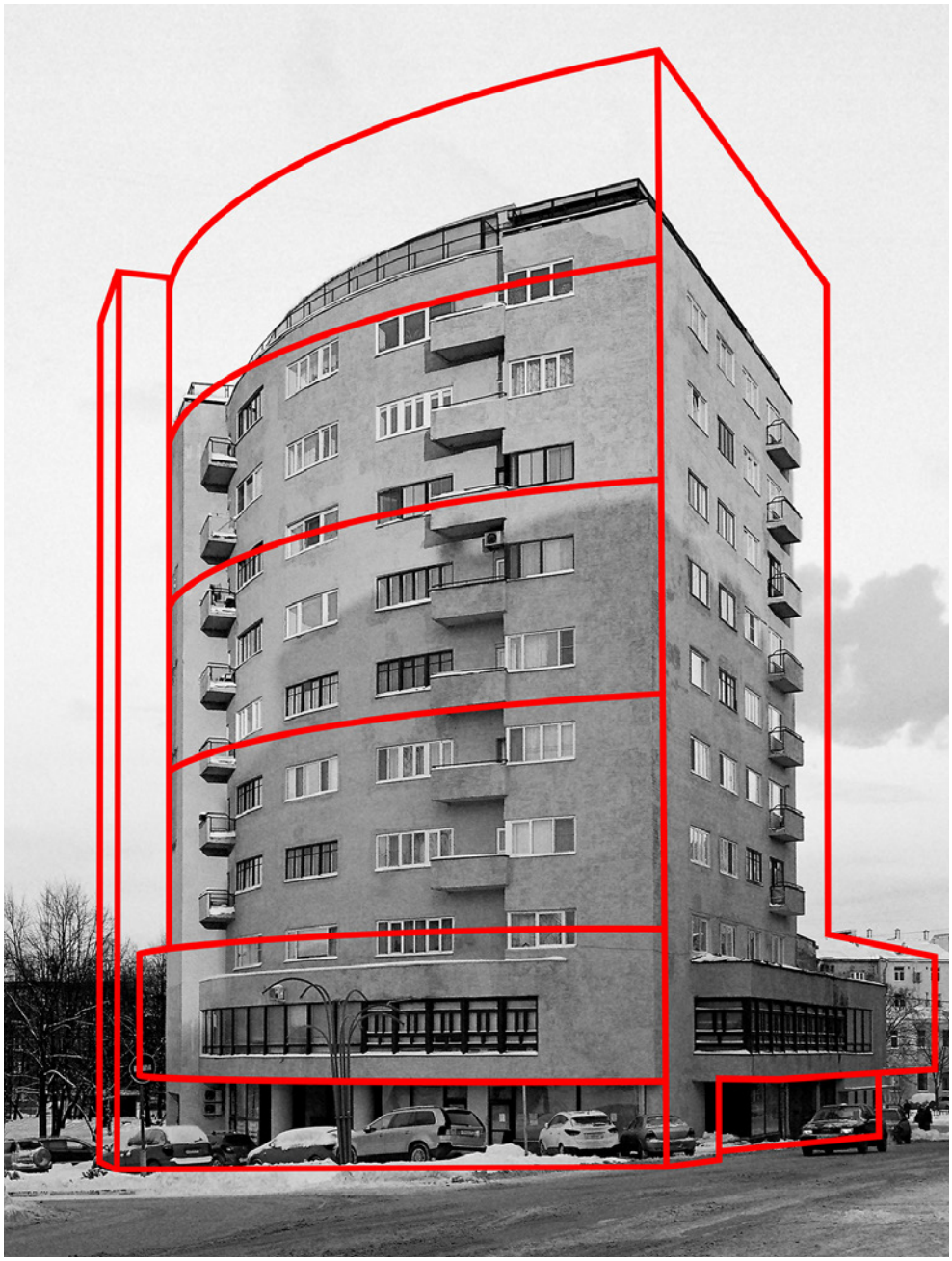


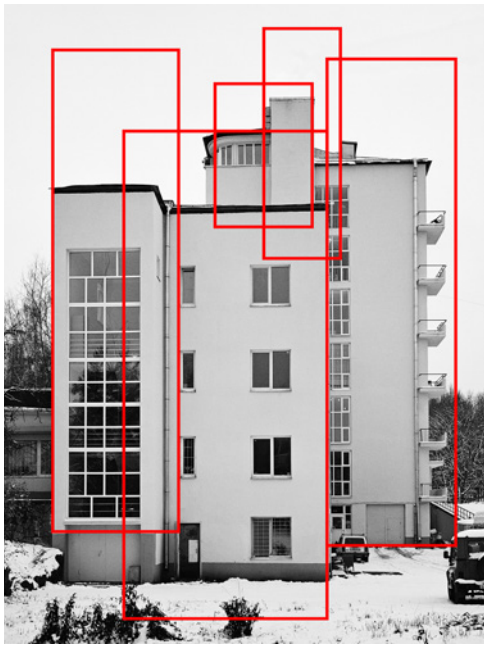


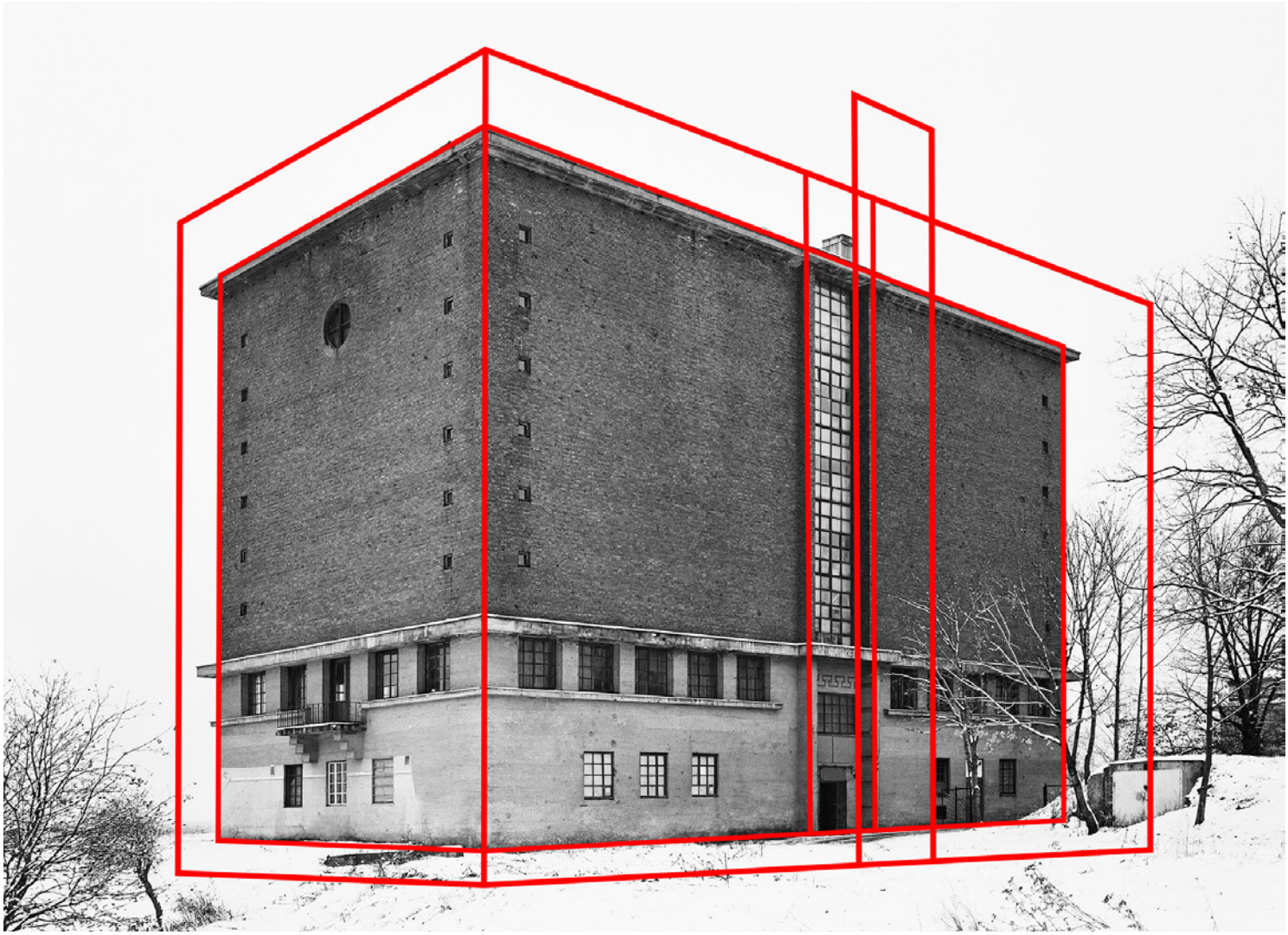


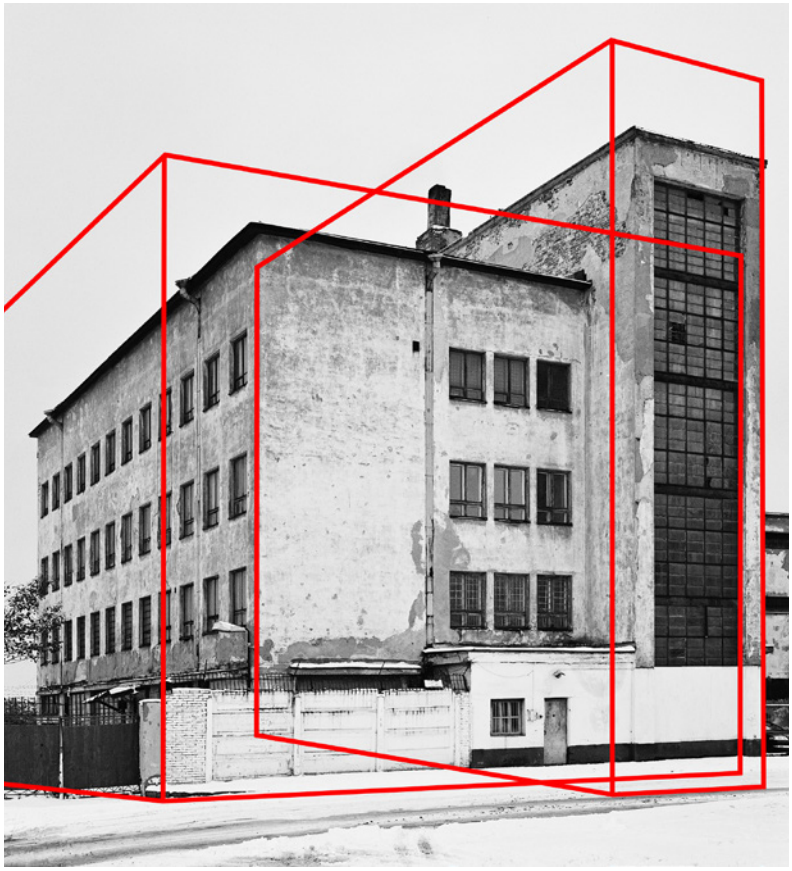












Parnas
2014

Saint Petersburg is growing northward. One can practically see new residential districts and infrastructure spring up in a matter of months around and beyond the KAD – a busy circumferential highway, defining the city's boundary. Where recently there were only swampy grasslands, dotted with lonely wooden houses and unsightly garage cooperatives, there is now, and will be in the foreseeable future a never-ending construction site. For an observer this is a chance to catch a territory in transition, in a delicate and almost poetic state of being not quite urban and not quite rural. These photographs attempt to capture the subtle peculiarities of a rather modest and undistinguished place, the likes of which are probably many. And just like in other Russian urban peripheries, here you occasionally wander across imposing brutalist factories, utilitarian structures of unknown purpose, and vast no-man's land areas.

ДСК БЛОК

ТАМОЖНЯ
CUSTOMS

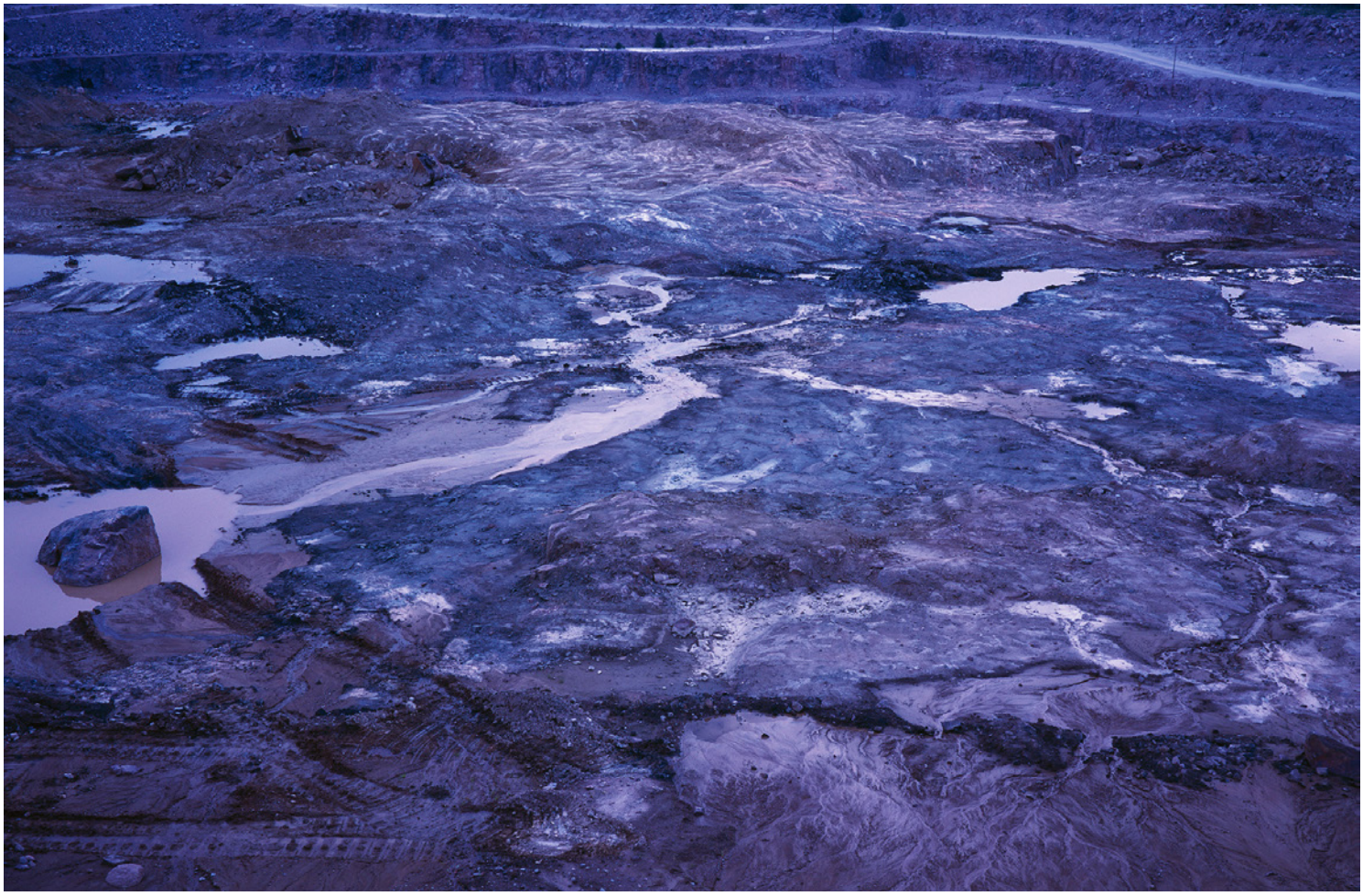
ТЕРМИНАЛ

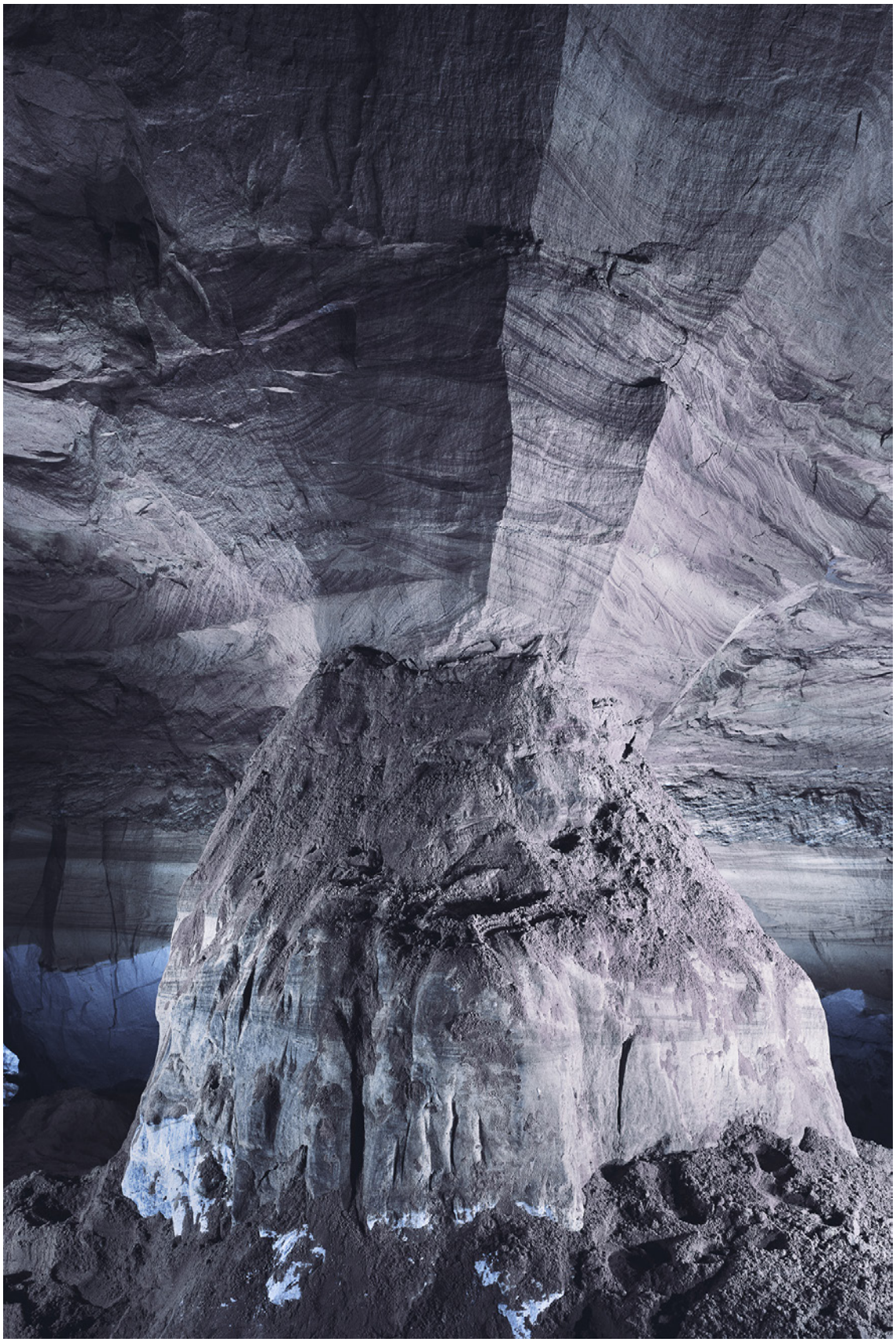
White Nights
2014-2016

Any discussion of Saint Petersburg risks running into a specific solemn language. In Soviet years the vocabulary of the Golden Age of Russian literature was employed to conserve the city in its past. As a result, Saint Petersburg became recognized through a cluster of recycled labels - regal, official, imperial. Even “white nights” from a strictly latitudinal phenomenon turned into a dusty cultural construct, a backdrop for tourist strolls along bridges and embankments of the “museum city”.

Step-by-step refusal of outdated language brought us to the most basic layer – the city as a collection of natural materials, transported from nearby deposits into the Neva delta and assembled there in a certain order. We followed these routes to their sources – quarries, pits, mines. The project shows the city as fractures and cavities, left by extraction of rocks and minerals used in its construction. Marble tiers, granite stages, clay strata containing sand lenses – all make up the crust of the city, remaining after flesh was scraped out of it. Saint Petersburg has been frequently considered a phantom city or a mythical city – an abstract utopian project, brought to life through sheer willpower, at a great price and against all odds. Moving from abstract to concrete, we can also claim that it’s an anthropogenic geological process, a massive work of land art, dislocated earth.

White Nights is a collaborative photography project by two Saint Petersburg-based authors, Alexey Bogolepov and Egor Rogalev.





BLOC
2014

If a time period is to be judged by its official artifacts, then Soviet Union in its later days appears to be a space, where technocratic thinking was endorsed and appreciated. This can be clearly seen in the buildings of the 1970s and 80s, linked to the military-industrial complex – numerous arms factories, research institutes and engineering bureaus. They were allocated lucrative, dominant spots in the fabric of urban development. Yet at the same time, they are completely insulated from the surrounding environment, their facades are impenetrable, and the entire territory is surrounded by an aura of secrecy, which is needless today.

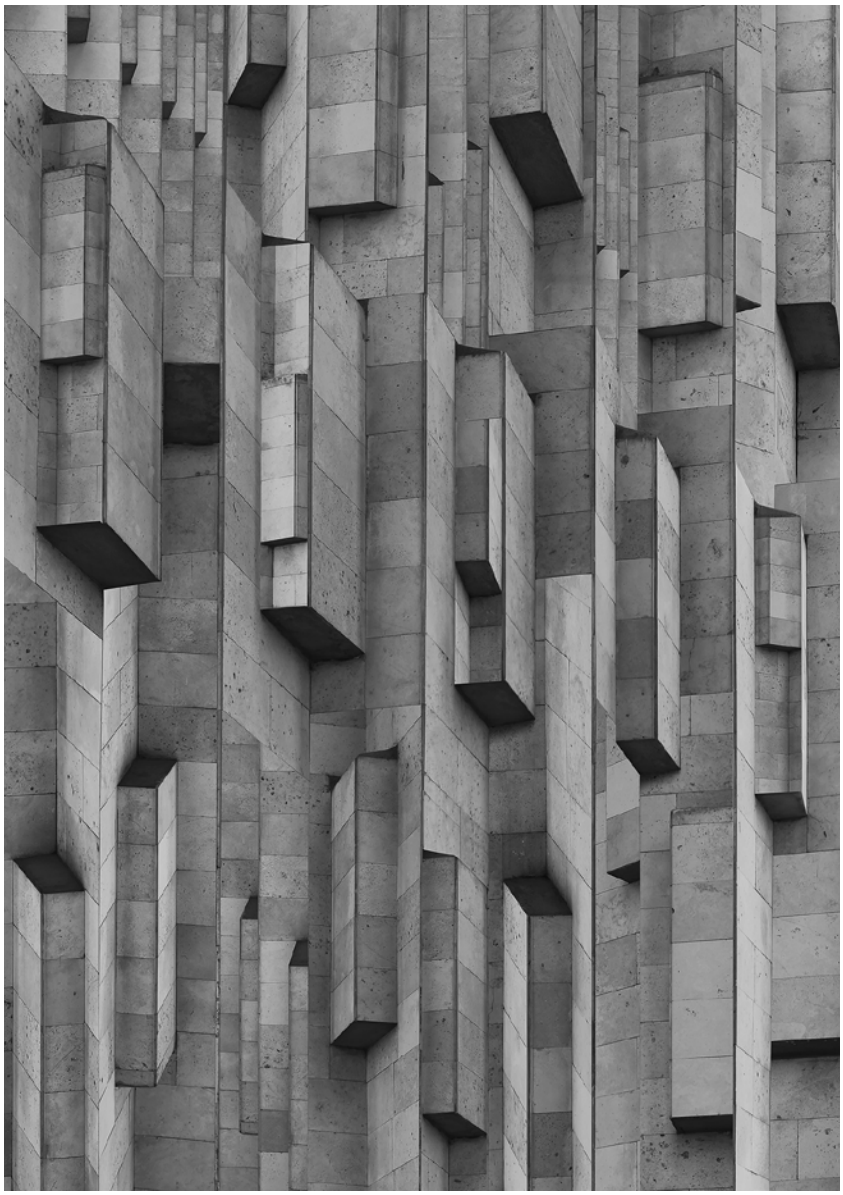
Such architecture functions like a multi-layered text, announcing to its users and observers the rules of the game in an era of scientific socialism. One can pick out many messages: a history, stopped in its tracks; an aim to retain structure for structure's sake; a quasi-religious ideology. However, it seems to me that on a basic, psychological level there is a certain limitation built into the architecture – a limitation of language, a limitation of movement, a block in consciousness.

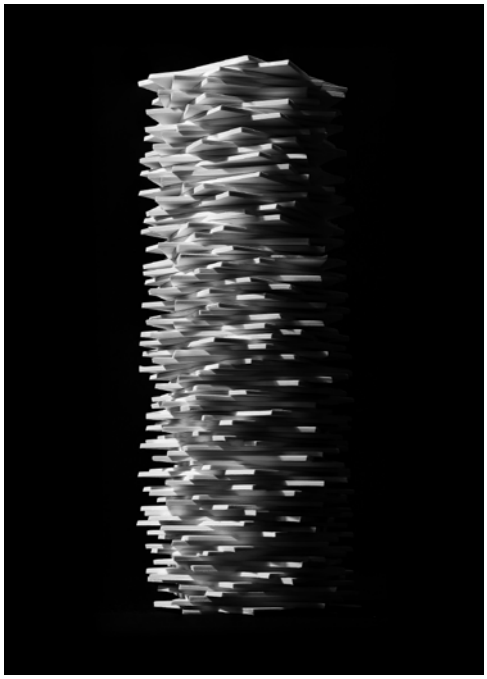
Efficiency Ritual
2015

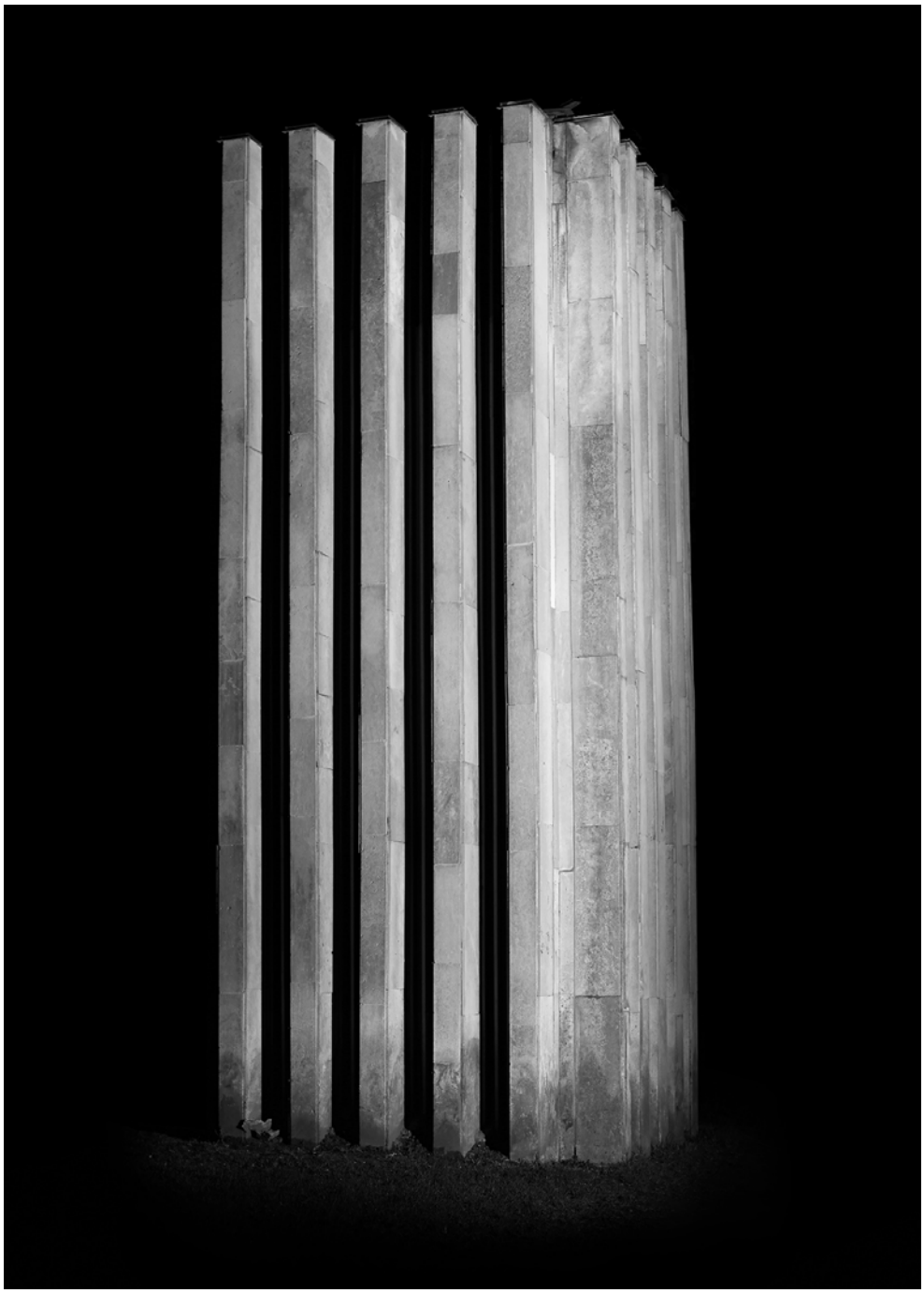
A sober look at the human condition instills little optimism – we are equally pressured by the ever-receding future, and an entropy, directly linked to the finitude of our bodies. We cannot do anything forever, least of all adhere to our principles. Every conscious act is steadily subjected to disintegration into a ritual, a habit, something done pro forma. Coherence of objects upon examination turns out to be a set of contingent coincidences. As with the probable case of the emergence of first amino acids, contingency is a starting point, a given that requires no explanation. Delving into this material equates to a general survey of processes beyond human control.

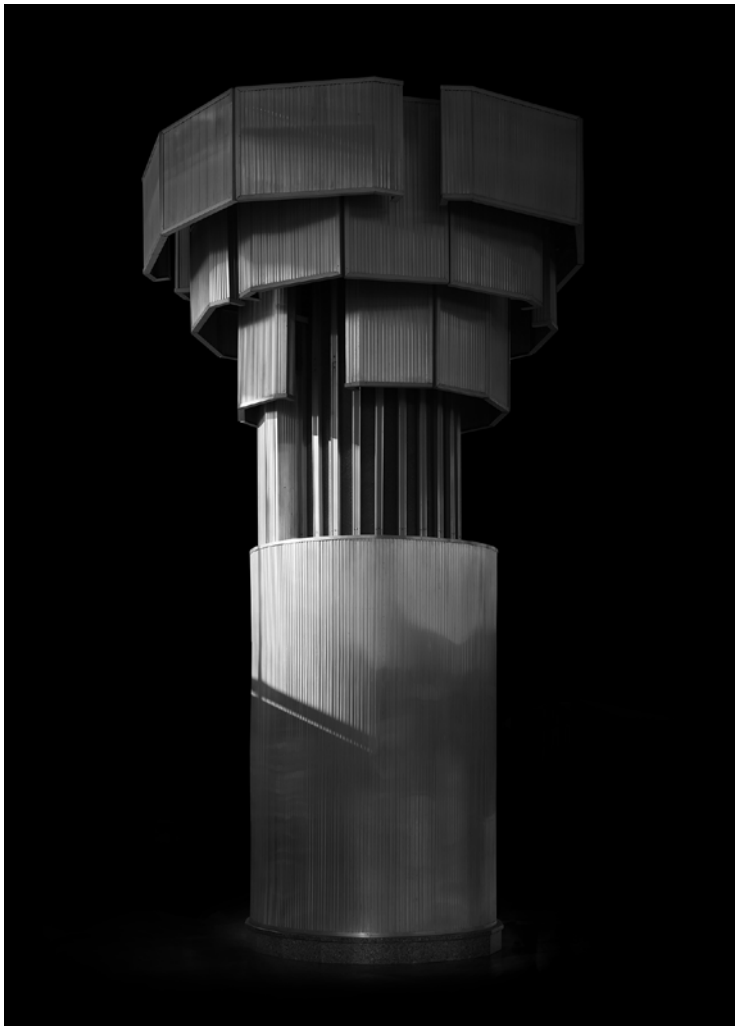
In this work a method of "speculative modernism", combining construction and documentation is used to locate a specific point, where form over and over again loses its connection to function, and ritual equilibration replaces analysis. Architecture is the most visible example of this shift. However, it is observable in many areas of our life – in language, in relationships, in such seemingly paradoxical phenomena as modernist décor, technical aesthetics, highly laborious hobbies, outdated technologies, overly elaborated sciences with limited applications.

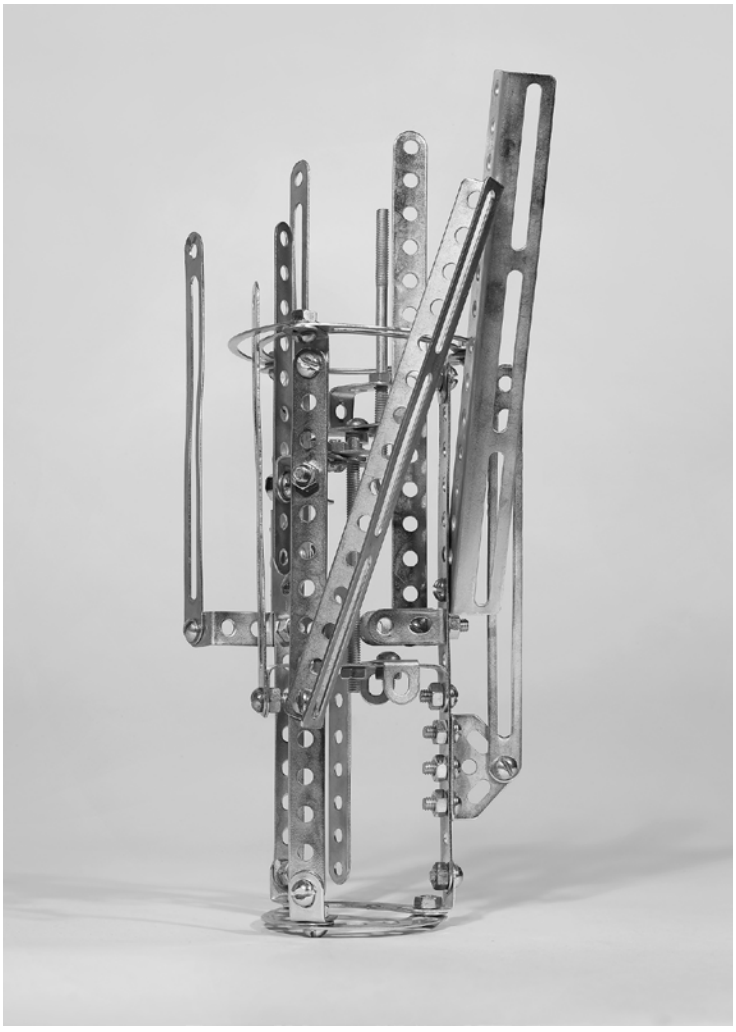
Ritualization is an anaerobic process, guaranteed to emerge in the absence of constant revisions, reconsiderations and updates. Spores of rituality cover everything human and find an especially nutritious environment in various linear and grid-based milieus and habitats. In these favorable conditions they start to sprout through the bodies of purisms via channels of detalization and texturization. A first acquaintance with efficiency rituals must entail collecting, drying and mounting them into a specimen folder in order to later learn from them certain skills, which fell out of the ethical spectrum: searching for cracks in any monolith, orientation to a goal, which you will not live to see, and a blind inclination to the closest light source.

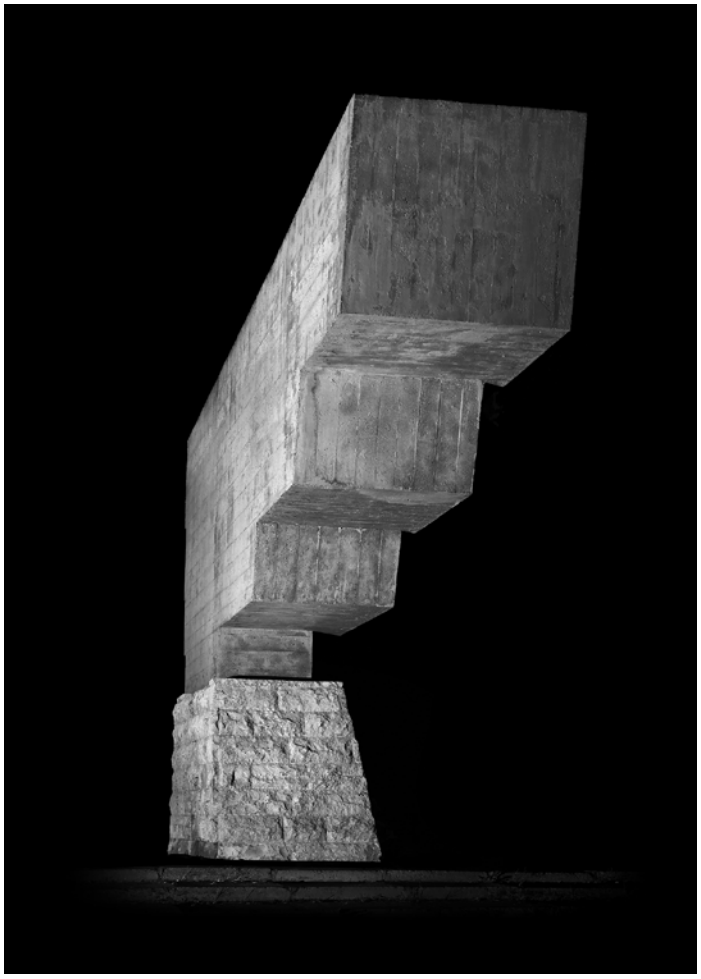


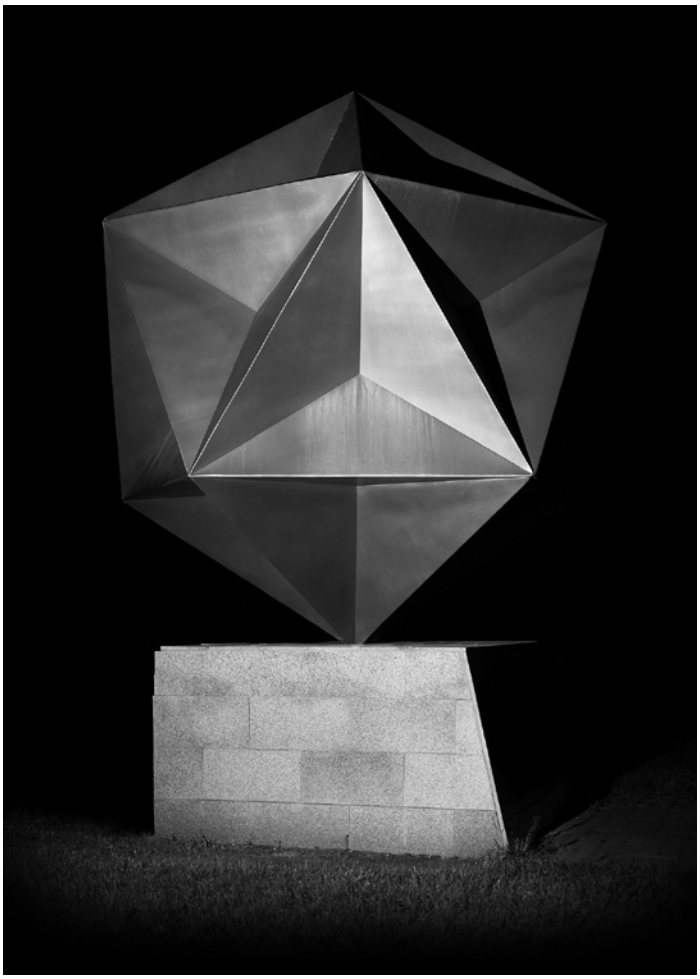


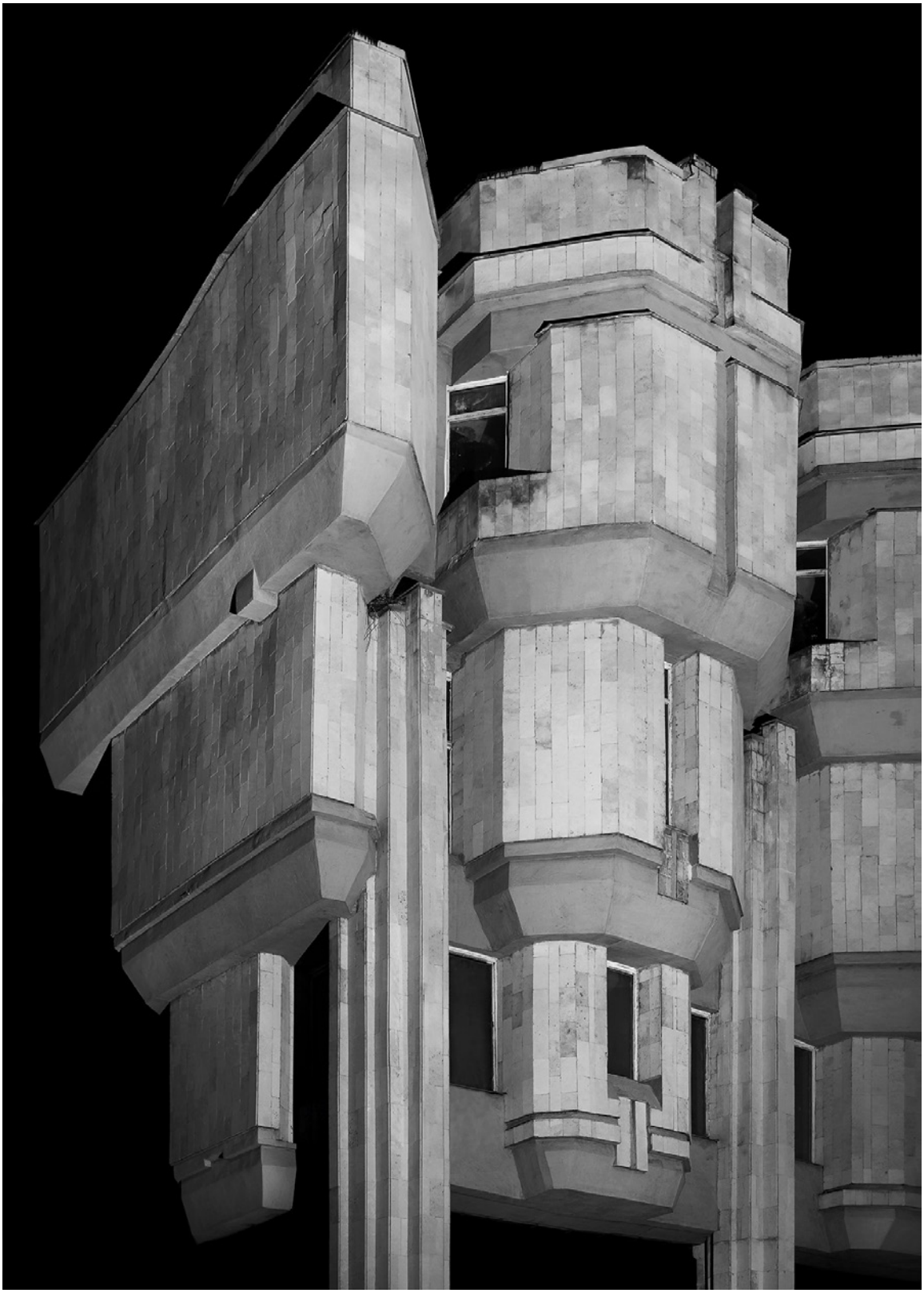


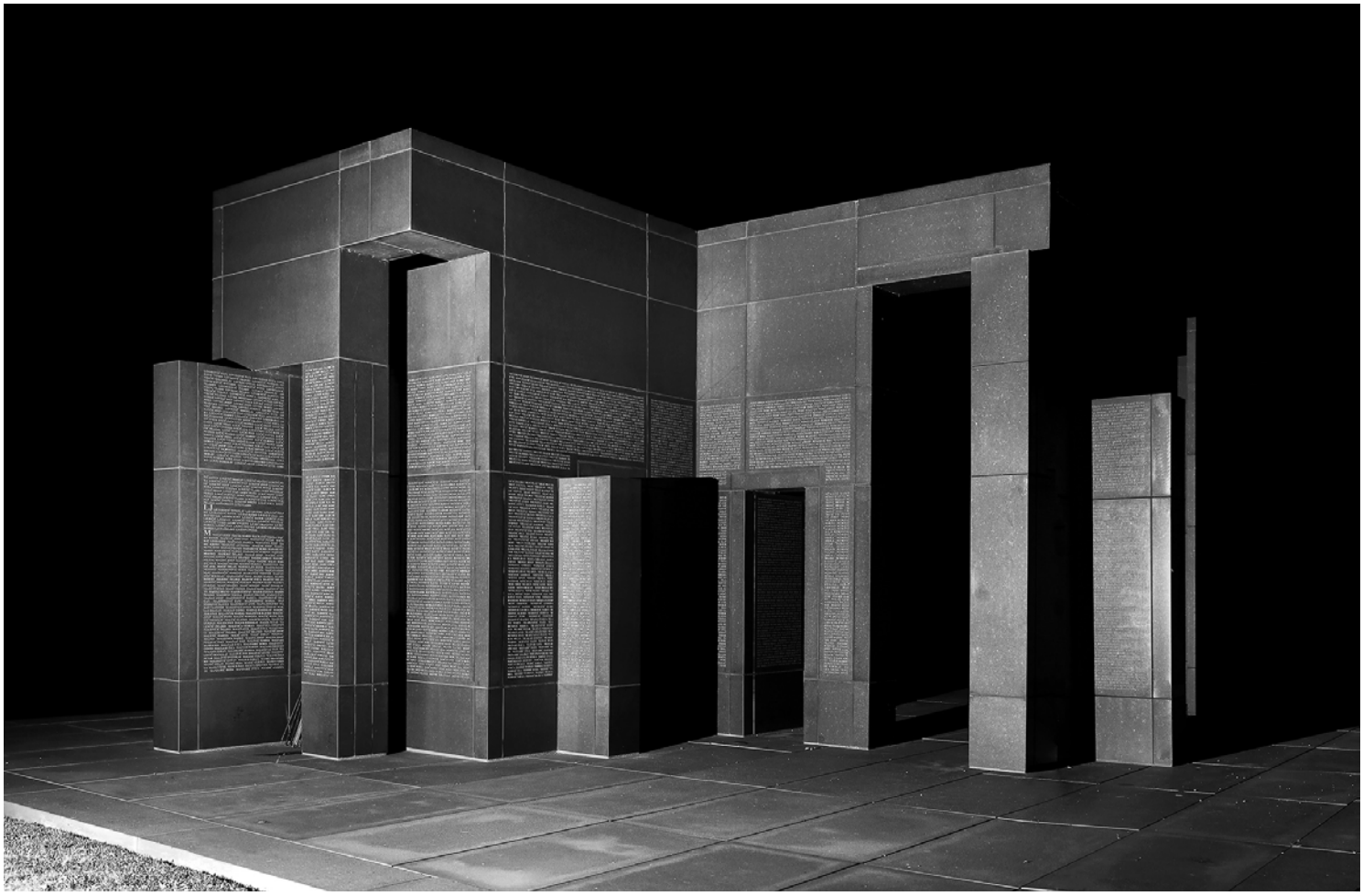


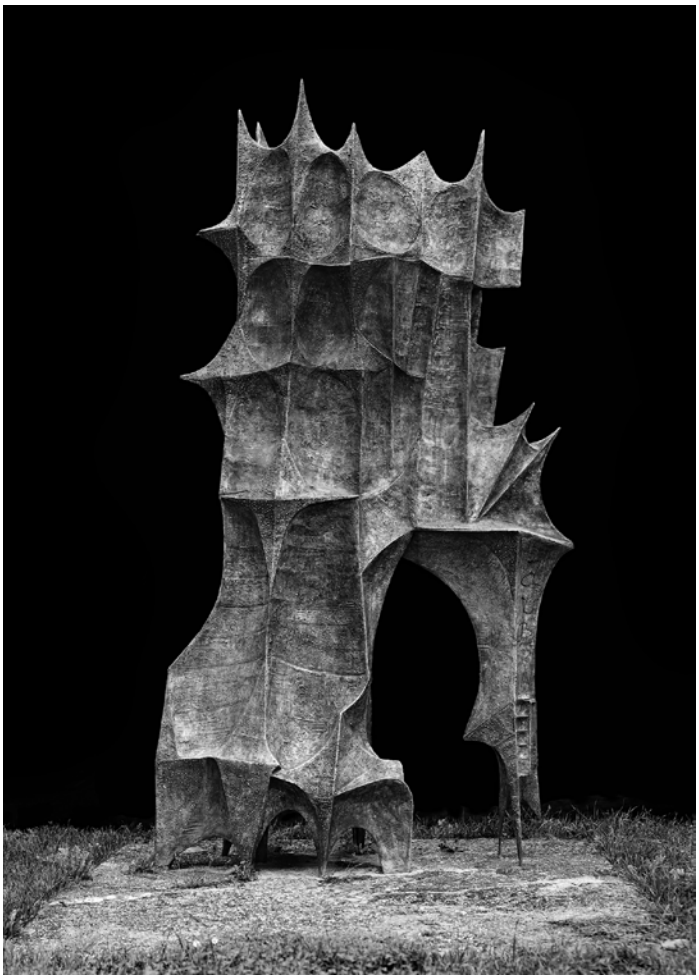


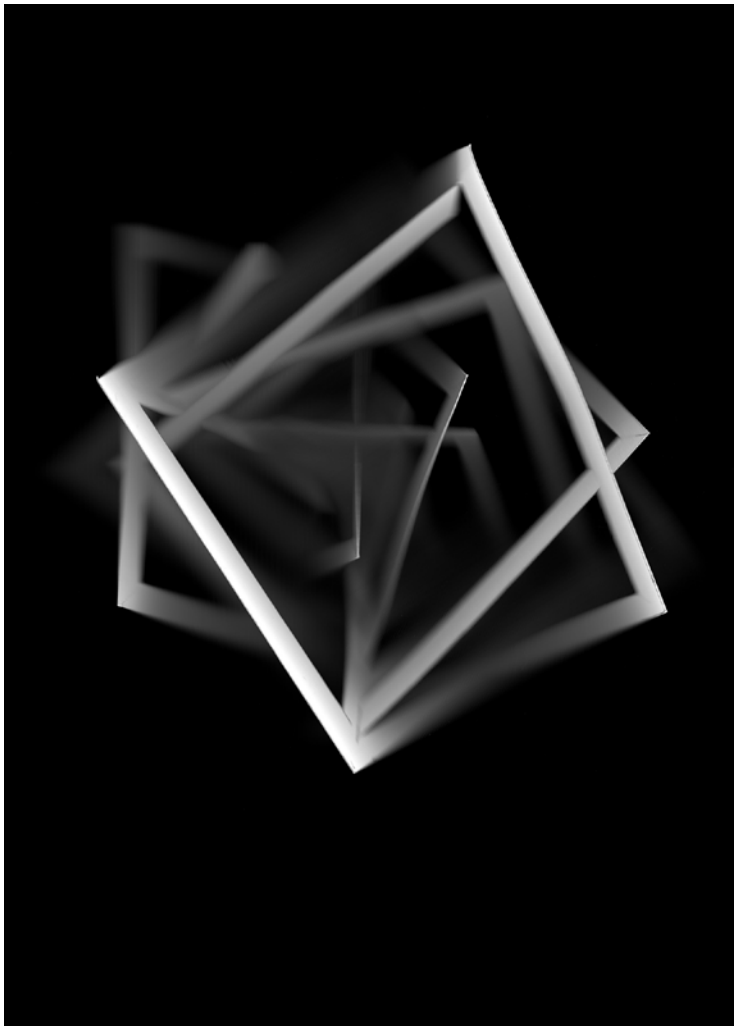












Interface/Container
2016

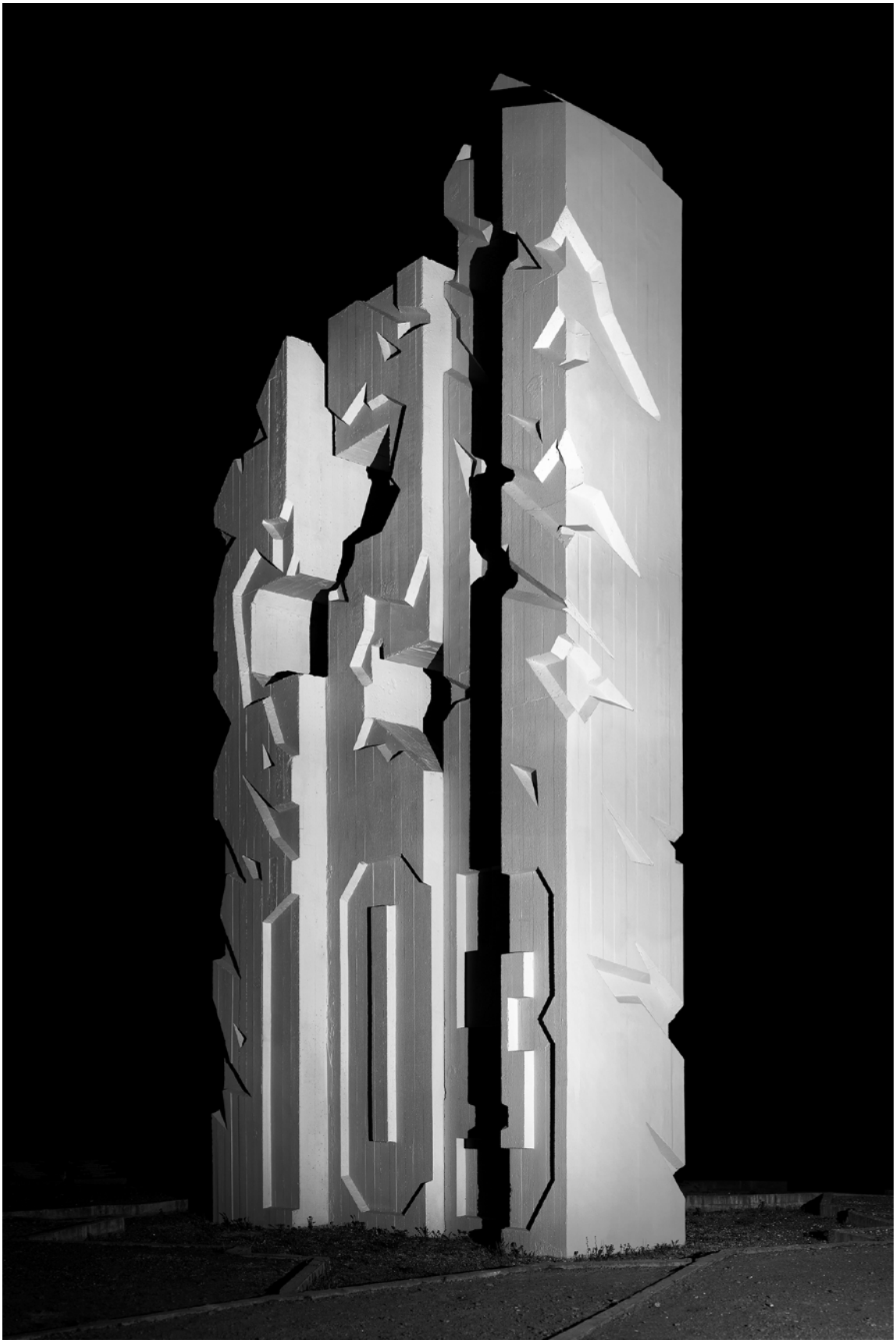
Things built according to a manual are more of an exception than a rule. In this sense we are fortunate to live in an environment that carries such a deep imprint of intentional design. This reality was built by adepts of general organizational theory, who projected their program through five-year rhythms. Their plan took shape in a polarizing moment that launched a movement towards one classic attractor – a closed, centralized system.

Chronic vulnerabilities of this condition are taught to every student of the Academy of Public Administration – invariance, data stagnation, malfunctions of the center. Yet value judgements set aside, it was this organized impulse in a single direction that left behind itself a wake of resemblant objects, forms, and patterns. Each specimen from this torrent is a local simulation of the catastrophe that gave birth to it. This is what we perceive as morphological uniqueness of soviet modernism, and what enables us to speak of an isomorphism between, for example, modernist propaedeutics and structure of a modernist state. The entire complex is self-similar, integrated and permeated by a multidirectional transport system that carries operators, which enforce directives of the abstract machines.

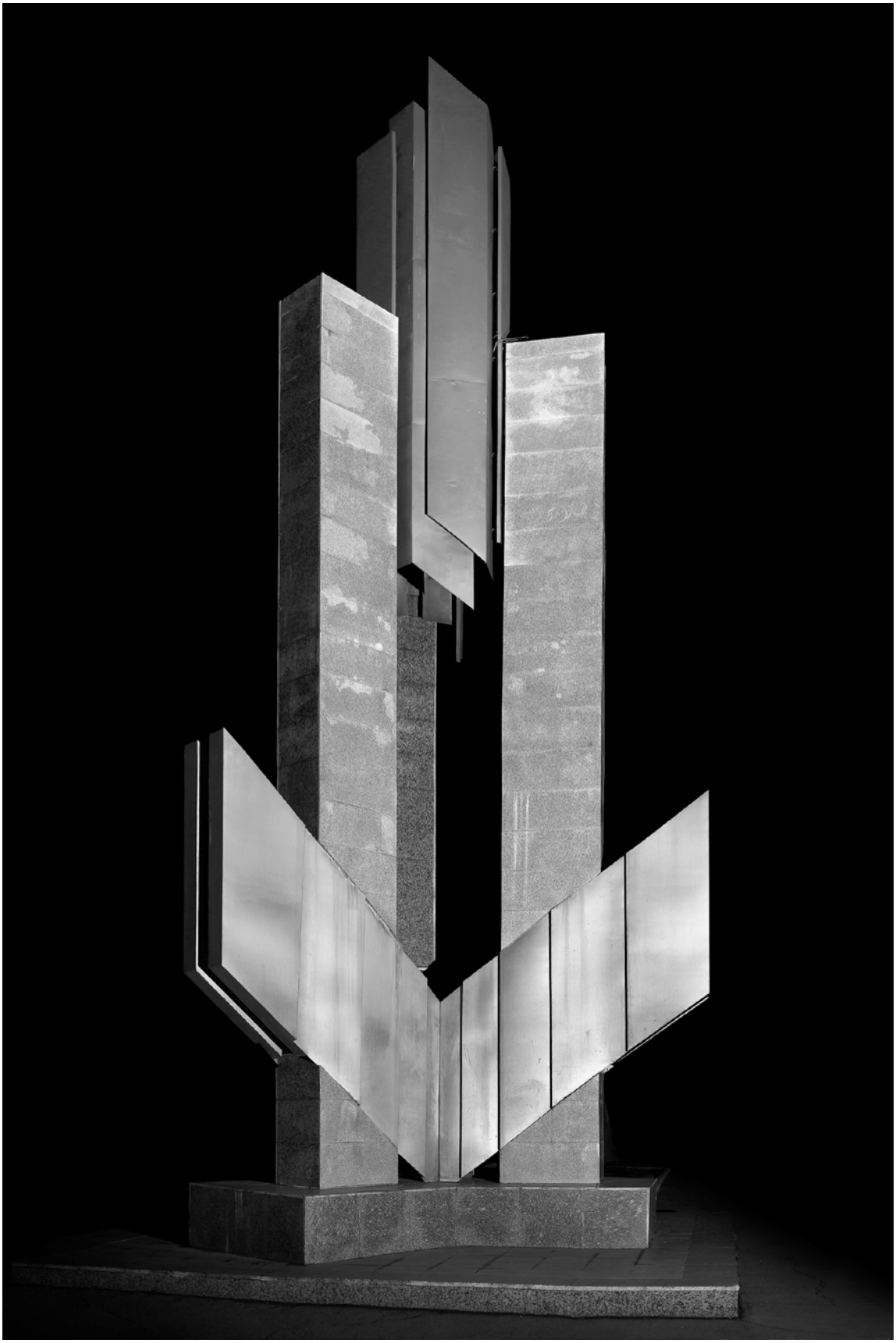
Two such operators are examined here – mediation and containment. The first, mediation, occurs when one element squeezes itself between two others, making itself an indispensable link. The businessman is a middleman between the customer and the good, the priest – a mediator between the parishioner and the deity, the party – an interface between the citizen and the truth. The second operator is containment, specifically in the sense of a container encasing content. From the Corbusian living unit to esoterics of border control, containerization has developed into an overgrown modernist fetish. Post-soviet space is symbolically annotated and heavily containerized. It is filled with mediatory markers and cascades of hierarchies that arrange ideological accents and consolidate chains of subordination.

When connections break, what is left are empty containers and objects taken "out of context". One of the key processes of contemporaneity is a revision of these assets, loading them with new substance, often unrelated to the original one. This is further complicated by an "agency of form", which exhibits a memory effect and refuses to passively accept just any new content. A clear understanding of these processes is the first step towards reprogramming them.

Ghost Village. 2016.
Pigment inkjet print on paper mounted on dibond, matte lamination, 200x100 cm.

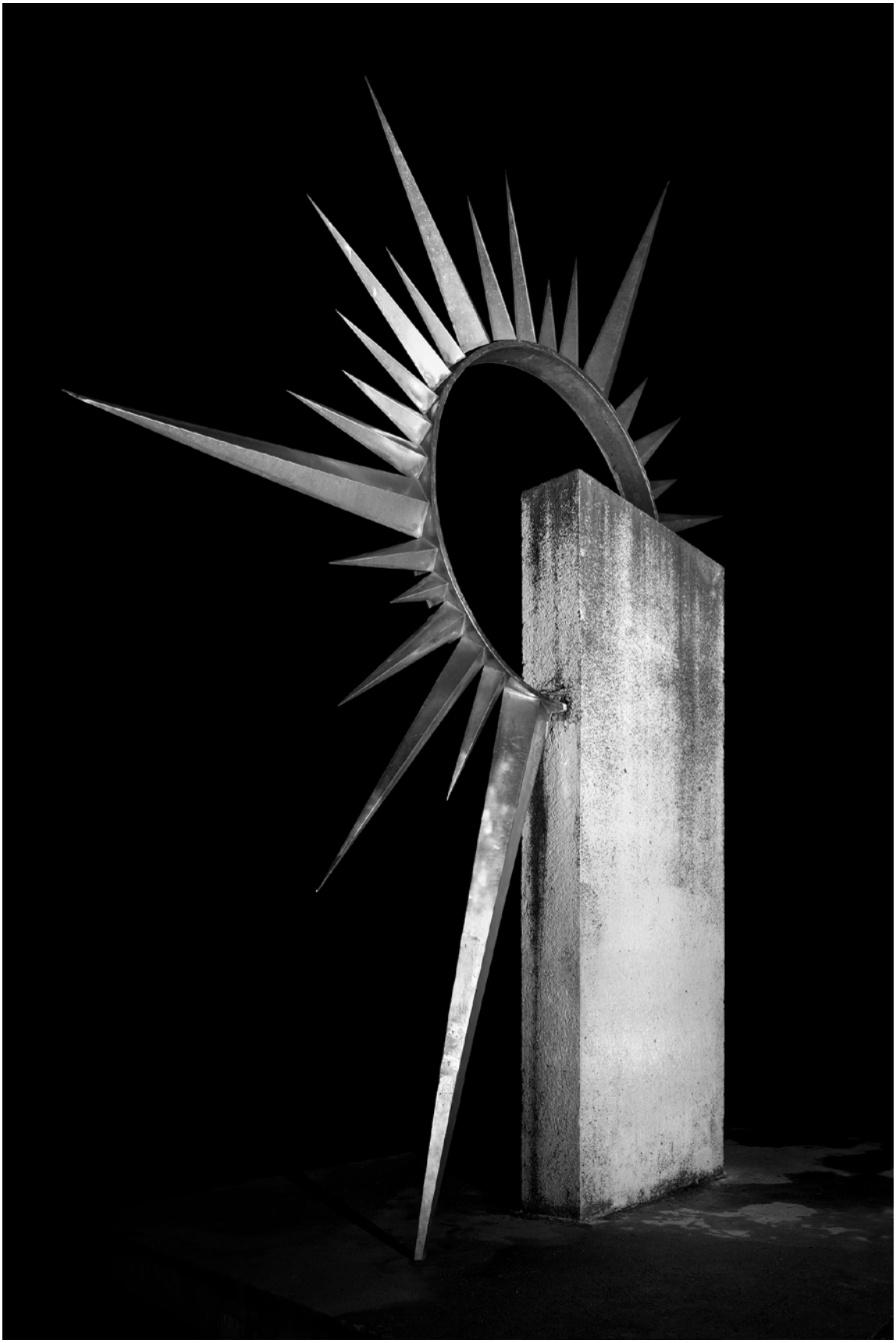


Unconquered height. 2016.
Pigment inkjet print on paper mounted on dibond, matte lamination, 100x150 cm.
Edition 1+1AP.



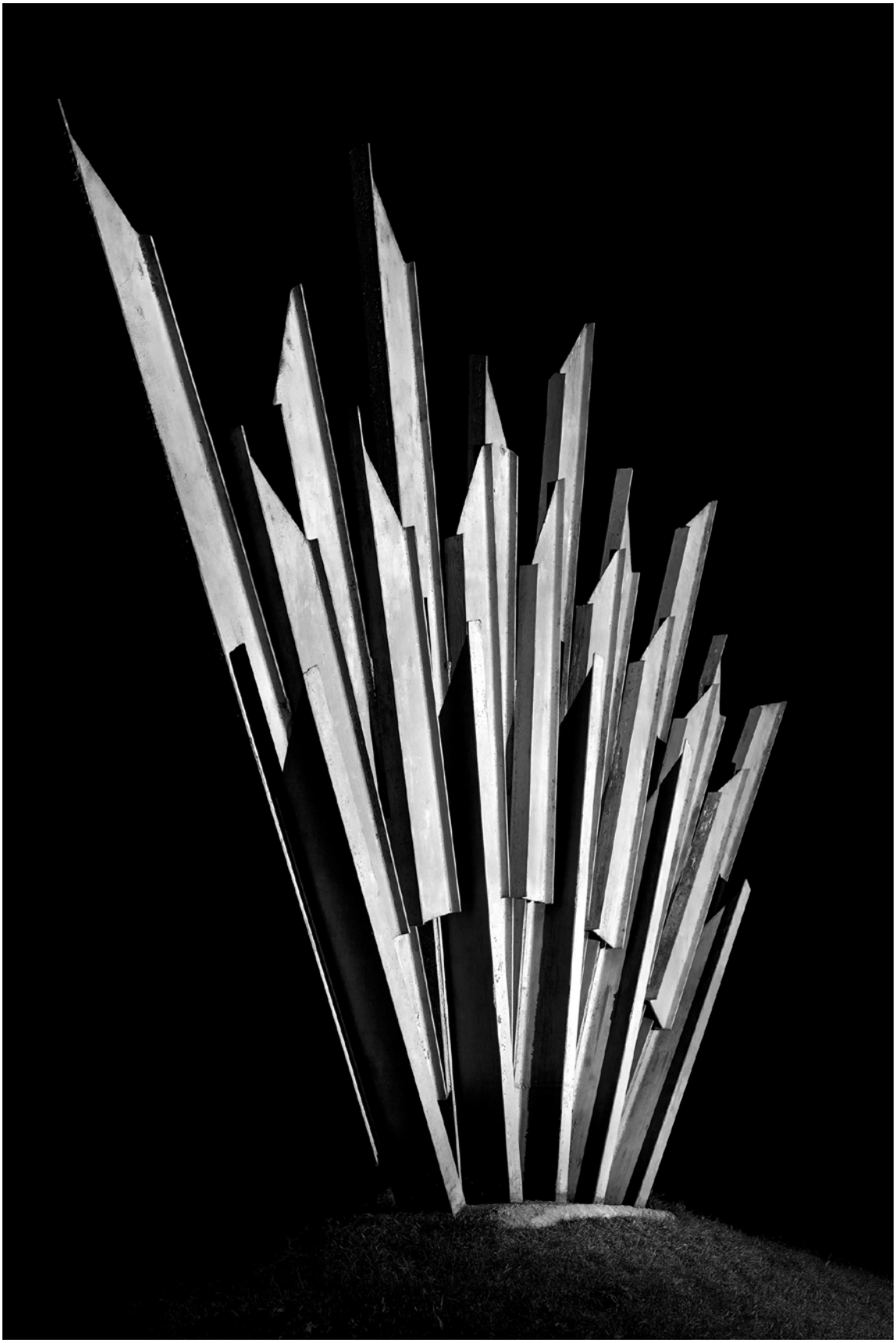
Victory. 2016.
Pigment inkjet print on paper mounted on dibond, matte lamination, 100x150 cm.
Edition 1+1AP.

Moloch of Totalitarianism. 2016.
Archival pigment print on baryta paper, 60x90 cm. Edition 3+1AP.



Sun. 2016.
Archival pigment print on baryta paper, 60x90 cm. Edition 3+1AP.

Farn. 2016.
Archival pigment print on baryta paper, 60x90 cm. Edition 3+1AP.



Blast. 2016.
Archival pigment print on baryta paper, 60x90 cm. Edition 3+1AP.