

# ***Dean Kessmann***

*Light Years, Chemical Days,  
and Digital Seconds*

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and Digital Seconds*

VisArts-Kaplan Gallery • September 2021

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Dean Kessmann:  
Light Years, Chemical Days,  
and Digital Seconds

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All works © Dean Kessmann



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# Acknowledgements

First and foremost, it has been an honor to work with Kristen Hileman in her role as the Mentoring Curator for the VisArts Emerging Curator Program. I want to express my appreciation for the time and careful consideration she has given to my work over many years, but especially for her thoughtful and insightful essay in this publication. Kristen has gone above and beyond my expectations over this past year, even so far as conducting a “studio visit” at a rest stop off of I-95 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Joshua Gamma, the VisArts’ Emerging Curator in Residence, contributed an astute essay. In his essay he makes compelling connections between my practice as an artist and the field of design from his background as a designer as well as a curator. While I have only recently gotten to know Joshua, entirely through online interactions because of the pandemic, I want to share my gratitude for his dedication to this project.

I am also thrilled that Molly Springfield agreed to write the third essay from her perspective as an artist and friend. I have known Molly for most of the years that I have lived in Washington, DC and have had the pleasure of exhibiting my work alongside her amazing drawings. Given that her drawings are inspired by and filled with carefully selected texts, I appreciate her reflections on the blankness that she has identified in much of my work.

Finally, I want to thank Susan Main for her kind introduction that skillfully ties together the three essays in this catalogue. I found her description of the subjects of my work as evidence, or “terrains that for the most part exist on the periphery of attention” to be intriguing. As a photographer, I, as one might expect, appreciate how she goes on to write how this evidence is brought into “focus” through my visual explorations.

The catalogue was beautifully designed by Martin Brief, who I met in graduate school at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale nearly three decades ago, where and when, I’m quite certain, he took part in group critiques of the earliest photographs in this exhibition. In addition to his design skills, Martin has a rigorous artistic practice that continues to be an ongoing source of inspiration to me.

On a more personal note, I must acknowledge the ongoing support that I receive from my wife, artist Jennifer Dorsey. She sees my work before anyone else, in addition to serving as the first, and often last, editor for my always overly wordy

writing. Her critical eye enables her to get to the essence of my work, often better than I am able to do. Thank you for helping me to grow as an artist and writer, and most importantly, a more caring and compassionate person.

I would like to mention a few institutions that have made what I do possible. Multiple projects included in this exhibition and catalogue have received financial support from The George Washington University (GW), where I am currently serving as the Program Head of Studio Arts and Professor of Photography. Throughout my time at GW, I have received research support at the university level as well as from the Columbian College of the Arts and Sciences and my home unit, the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design. Another incredibly important organization that has provided much needed funding is the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. Lastly, prints from two of the projects on view were produced while I was an artist-in-residence at Light Work, an amazing non-profit photography organization in Syracuse, NY that has been supporting artists since 1973.

Lastly, this exhibition and catalogue would not have been possible without VisArts and the support provided by the Windgate Foundation. VisArts is a forward-looking arts organization that provides opportunities for artists, curators, and arts enthusiasts at all levels. Thus, I want to thank everyone at VisArts for all that you do for the local and regional arts community!

Dean Kessmann

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# Introduction

Dean Kessmann creates nuanced images of the elements, geographies, and forces embedded in systems that shape human activity and interaction. Using camera and camera-less processes, his photographs present objects and sites that fade into the background or remain at the edges of consciousness, yet play powerful roles in how we collectively move through the world. Where the wall meets the floor, a graphic on a cereal box, a pixel, the pavement underfoot, plastic shopping bags, a blank Word document open on a computer screen—Kessmann abstracts evidence from design interfaces, the built environment, and consumer exchange, terrains that for the most part exist on the periphery of attention. They come into focus through his conceptually rich and visually compelling photographs that probe the complex relationships between humans and their designed environments.

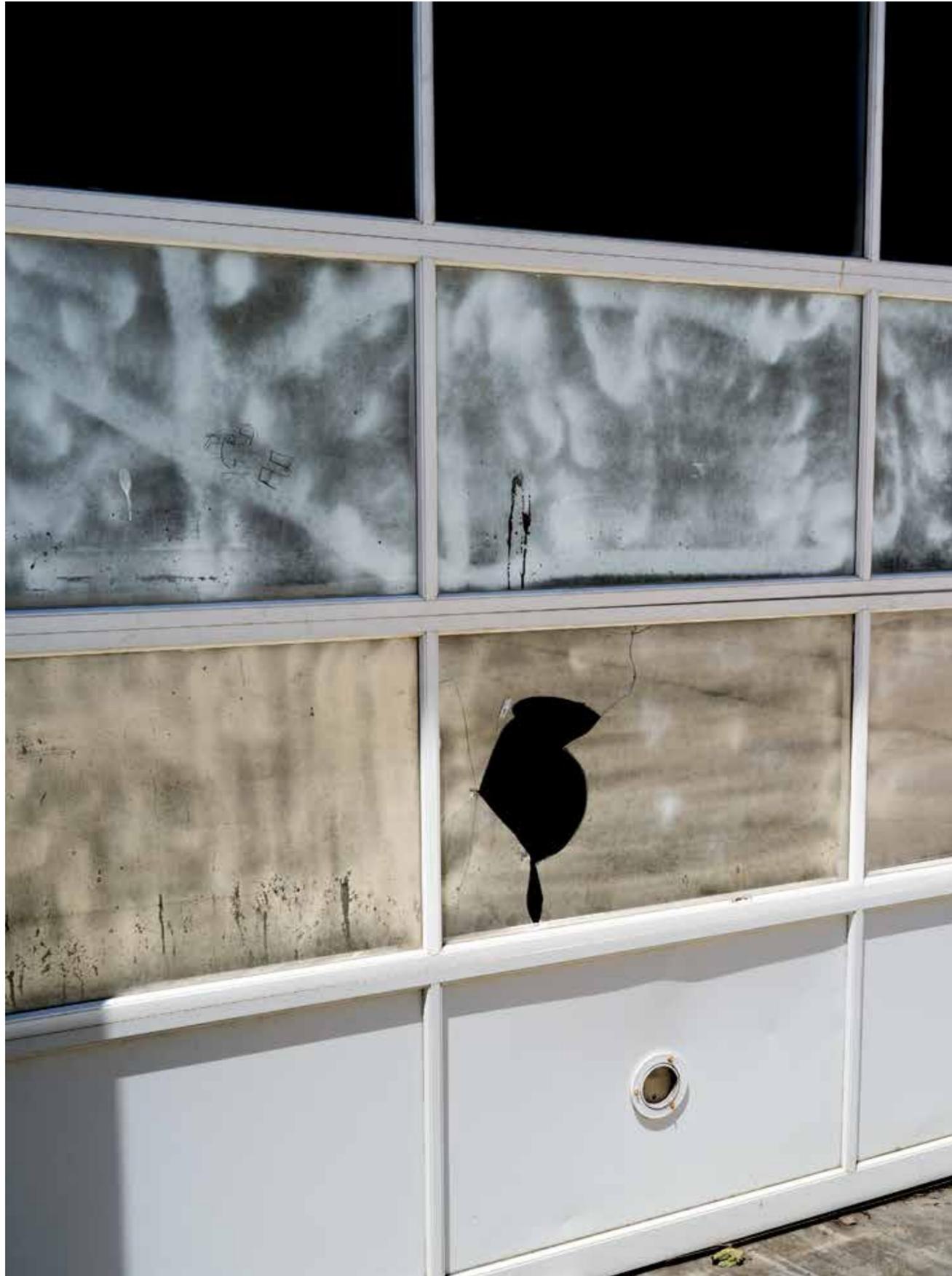
2020 Mentoring Curator Kristen Hileman assembled photographs from over twenty-five years of Kessmann's career offering an in-depth exploration of his critical approach to photography. In her essay, Hileman examines Kessmann's trajectory of subjects including "urban space through consumer accoutrements to computer desktops," his keen formal choices, and acute sensitivity to the realm of human relationships. She finds in Kessmann's discreet but progressive series of investigation, a visual destabilization of complex social and exchange systems. By stripping away, zooming in, and expanding the field of focus physically and conceptually, he compresses the materiality, mission, and value of images. His images vacillate between abstraction and representation in compositions where emptiness, ambiguity, and evidence of the fundamental relations underlying photography, consumption, and digital and built environments co-mingle. Hileman attributes additional layers of meaning and emotion to Kessmann's empty spaces, finding them particularly resonant in the midst of a global pandemic where virtual experiences soothe absence and take the place of physical presence.

Emerging Curator Joshua Gamma's essay places Kessmann's creative process of "meandering with purpose" in context with Situationist *dérive*, psycho-geography, and slow looking. Focusing on the influence of physical, social, or design geographies on behavior, Gamma proposes that the artist's photographs, through their deconstruction of design, may lead to an awareness of its presence and a reclamation of power by critical examination.

Molly Springfield considers Kessmann's scrutiny of absence and potential. Springfield points toward the subtle individual materiality of Kessmann's series of photographs of blank pages and the creation of forms and patterns that suggest photochemical relations hidden within the photographic/imaging process. The artist, Springfield contends, alludes to an ontology of emptiness enmeshed within a myriad of visible and invisible forces and material presence.

**Dean Kessmann: *Light Years, Chemical Days, and Digital Seconds*** and this accompanying publication are made possible through the VisArts Emerging Curator Program generously funded by the Windgate Foundation. The program is a unique learning opportunity that pairs a mentoring and an emerging curator to present exhibitions and programming reflecting a broad spectrum of curatorial vision. VisArts is extremely grateful to Dean Kessmann, Kristen Hileman, Joshua Gamma, and Molly Springfield for expanding and enriching our visual and cultural experience through their research and passion for this project.

Susan Main  
VisArts Gallery Director and Curator (2012-2020)



# Emptiness and the Poetics of Implication

by Kristen Hileman



Lee Friedlander, *NY State*, 2001, Courtesy of the artist, Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, and Luhring Augustine, New York © Lee Friedlander

In a 2010 essay for *Aperture* magazine, the ever-subversive filmmaker and artist John Waters imagines how much contempt cars must have for human beings. The starting point for his unconventional narrative is Lee Friedlander's black-and-white photograph *NY State*, 2001. The dynamic formal qualities of Friedlander's image—tight cropping around a windshield that looks out to the disorienting diagonals of an auto-transport truck—act as a scaffold that energizes the person-less image and animates Waters' reverie. Without even a shadow to indicate the presence of a person, Friedlander puts viewers in an empty driver's seat, inhabiting the car's perspective. In Waters' subversive reading of the photograph,

this vehicular protagonist plots to turn the "newborns" nestled on the transport truck against their future "domineering owner[s]."

Waters puts his finger on the power of Friedlander's strategically structured composition, concluding his text by recognizing the influential photographer's ability to "document the secret world of human detachment." Indeed, Waters himself probed a similar subject in his own oddly cropped 1998 *In My House* photographs of overlooked domestic locations including the space under his bed and the interior of his dishwasher. Embedded in Friedlander's and Waters' imagery is the human drive to assemble environments and accumulate things that reflect not just our mundane activities, but our desires and idiosyncrasies.



John Waters, *In My House Series: Under My Bed*, 1998, Chromogenic print, 16 x 20 inches, Courtesy of the artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Aspen. © John Waters

These are intimate sites and personal objects that nevertheless remain separate, even alienated, from us. Dean Kessmann's poetically spare photographs of urban scenes absent human figures and radiant scanned images of everyday objects might not carry the menace of Waters' version of Friedlander's *NY State*, but they engage rigorous formal strategies to make the subtle narratives of the inanimate world and their anthropological implications more visible.

Small gelatin silver prints of construction sites around St. Louis made with a 4 x 5 view camera comprise Kessmann's first photographic series, *Construction/Destruction*, 1994. In works such as *Untitled #94-17* and *Untitled #94-104*, raw materials prefigure ruins even before they are shaped into structures. Oddly staggered planks emerge from a grave-like excavation in the former image, befuddling any logic of erection. What horizontal surface could these verticals support? How and where are they anchored? In short, while the pillars imply human intention, how might they come together as a functional structure? Eliminating surrounding context in his shot, Kessmann amplifies the mystery, tying the construction's apparent purposelessness to a companion quality of timelessness. We do not know whether we are at the beginning or end of this story of intervention into the environment because of the cryptic manner in which the artist framed the visual information at hand. These early works evoke Lewis Baltz's 1970s series *The New Industrial Parks near Irvine, California*. With no people visible in zones

normally associated with productive activity, with "industry," the radically cropped warehouses and offices in Baltz's images present a severe human geometry that seems to have altered the landscape always and forever.

Images like Kessmann's *Untitled #94-92* and *Untitled #94-96* soften the visual tension between human construction and the natural environment, but the observational critique persists in formal contrasts such as the stark variation in tone between piles of sand and a ravaged hillside in the latter image. Light glinting off a concrete slurry that has collected in truck tracks is quite beautiful when Kessmann's *#94-92* flattens out into a purely formal study of texture, contrast, and tonal variation. Indeed, the work recalls James Welling's black-and-white photographs in which texture transforms unassuming materials and situations into abstractions. However, Kessmann allows just enough sense of spatial depth to creep into the background of his image for it to retain the sense of being a scarred place. Throughout the *Construction/Destruction* series, the melancholic insinuations of Kessmann's arresting formal choices seem to be more about damage than development.

Kessmann returned to small-scale images of the built landscape a decade later in *Between Here and There*, 2003-2007. These color works, shot on 35 mm film, were taken in Washington, DC, but all indicators of specific geographic location are removed from compositions in which space almost fully compresses into a flat picture plane. Although

recognizable, fragments of crosswalks, seams of paving tar, and spray-painted construction guidelines have tipped into elements of abstraction. The white and red gestural splashes of *Untitled #38*, printed 2007, bloom across a grey-brown field, reacting to a dark vertical that defines the right edge of the composition. It all seems to add up to a color field painting, except for the materiality and palm-sized scale of the print, which connote photography—a medium in which the creative act is associated with hands-off seeing rather than active manipulation of tactile materials. That distinction is significant for Kessmann's series. It reminds us that the color, directional lines, and abraded surfaces that animate his images derive from the collective activity of the producers and users of a city. Kessmann recognizes these signs through his photographic seeing. He makes it possible for us to contemplate sites of constant person-to-person, person-to-thing, and person-to-place interaction (interfaces that involve building up, wearing down, directing, following, and falling out of step) by eliminating the distraction of durational movement, filtering most sensory noise, and amplifying the still, silent imprints of countless humans.

Kessmann's camera pulls back once again to catalyze a stronger quality of spatial narrative in more recent considerations of Washington's streets: the series *Meandering with Purpose*, started in 2018, and printed at scales ranging from 8 x 6 inches to over 4 x 3 feet. *Untitled (131)*, 2018, is filled with optically stimulating indicators of activity. A tidy, white minimalist



James Welling, *LA-C 22*, 1977, Gelatin Silver Vintage Print  
Image: 4 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches, Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner  
© James Welling

grid structures the composition, but at a canted angle so that it cannot completely correspond to an abstract painting's picture plane. At every vertical stage of the image, a visual obstruction to seeing beyond the grid exists. A bottom row of opaque white panels is followed by a row of glass windows obscured by beige paint. The next row, vibrating with splotches of white spray paint hints at translucency but reveals nothing. Finally, a top row appears to be clear glass but remains darkened because of the relationship of light inside the building to that outside. Moreover,

this top row is too high above the head of the average adult to provide much access if we were standing on the scene. Perhaps some other person shared our frustration with the gridded barrier, because there is a circular break in one of its central panels. The broken glass might have satisfied the vandalizer's curiosity, but we, looking into the photograph, remain too far removed to peek inside the hole. In spite of these obstacles, we can recognize the scenario as a familiar one: a business in transition, one owner and function giving way



Gabriel Orozco, *Darth Vader*, 2014, Pigment Print, Image: 20 x 16 inches, Courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery © Gabriel Orozco

to the next, with an outsider disrupting the private phases of ending and beginning—a common, but symbolically charged scenario in a place of high human population density.

While the city has offered Kessmann's camera an almost perfectly person-less grid readymade for painterly abstraction, the image is not about the intactness of an individual artist's acts of resolving materials and constructing form. Instead, it is about the effort, aesthetics, and narrative of seeing in a world reverberating with human relationships. In this regard, Kessmann's work aligns with that of his contemporaries Gabriel Orozco and Wolfgang Tillmans. Like Kessmann, their images of cities are stirring in both their formal cohesiveness and the way that humanity infuses scenes in which no people are present. For those who are inclined, imagining and assessing the motivations, connections, and disconnections of all those invisible human actors—those who have left and those who are waiting to arrive—can become a project leading to empathetic, critical, and even moral considerations.

Alongside Kessmann's practice of using large format and handheld cameras to engage with the marks that humans have made on their environments, he has employed camera-less techniques to closely examine familiar objects, detached from the contexts of use and circulation in which they are normally encountered. Although his tools change in these works, Kessmann continues to see photographically: with nuance and selectivity, as well as an understanding of how different



Wolfgang Tillmans, *himmelblau*, 2005, Framed C-print, Image: 82 3/4 x 57 1/8 x 2 3/8 inches, Image by Wolfgang Tillmans, Courtesy of the artist, David Zwirner, New York, Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne, Maureen Paley, London, and Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland

qualities of time can enter and profoundly affect an image. In the 2005 series *Plastic on Paper*, crumpled plastic shopping bags float on white grounds, glowing with inner light generated from a digital scanner. The artist refers to these works as "scanograms." Once again, the framework of a painterly, abstract field is evoked, but it extends out from a single

piece of evidence of human interaction. The process of scanning—of mapping each bag's distinctly ridged, pocketed, and stretched terrain with light—transforms the modest vessels into something embryonic, suspended in a lab-like space. When we consider the bags' instrumental roles in commercial exchange and unabashed consumption, the visual ambiguity of their form encompasses a conceptual question: Is this a cell burgeoning into a thriving organism or an incipient corporate logo poised to blight the landscape?

The enhanced filminess of the scanned bags has a noteworthy correspondence with the materials of photography, including the transparency of negatives and thinness of photographic paper. Like photographs, these bags can be torn. Yet, despite this fragility, bags and photographs carry items of significance (products in one case, memories in another) for people. Moreover, most bags and photographs are imbued with a mythology of persistence. We see them as overcoming the tenuousness of their material and failing to break down in an organic way, following us, for better or worse, across stretches of time. There is something poignant and unnerving in seeing the bags of failed chain stores Borders and Blockbuster—fossils from a previous entertainment age—frozen within Kessmann's photographs. One wonders how many such plastic artifacts (a more transportable artifact than the equally eternal-seeming construction materials in Kessmann's *Construction/ Destruction* images) have outlived their corporate creators in dispersed landfills, and

whether the former contents of these bags still hold more purpose and meaning for their owners than the funds once exchanged for them.

In *A Year at a Glance*, a series made in 2007, Kessmann broadens his inquiry into the commodity and symbolic value that humans pour into membranes manufactured from plastic and paper. Again leveraging the luminous, transparent qualities of thin material when it is scanned, the artist creates diptychs by digitally layering scans of every front cover produced by well-known art magazines over the course of a year in one image set, and every back cover in its companion set. The magazines' mastheads, reiterated over and over in the same font and position, remain legible, while monthly trending artworks, artists, and topics blur into seductive passages of color. Similarly, the luxury products advertised on the back covers of these magazines are ghostly abstractions of their former selves. While intensely lush and visually satisfying, Kessmann's series destabilizes the system of art and appreciation. Separated from the specificity of human talent and the personalities of those who make, analyze, and sell it, art becomes an anonymous backdrop for each magazine's branded authority, as well as a visual product equivalent to the fancy watches and fashion promoted on back pages. For many who have engaged with the highly commodified and privileged system of art that is represented by these types of publications, the messages that emerge from Kessmann's acts of digital

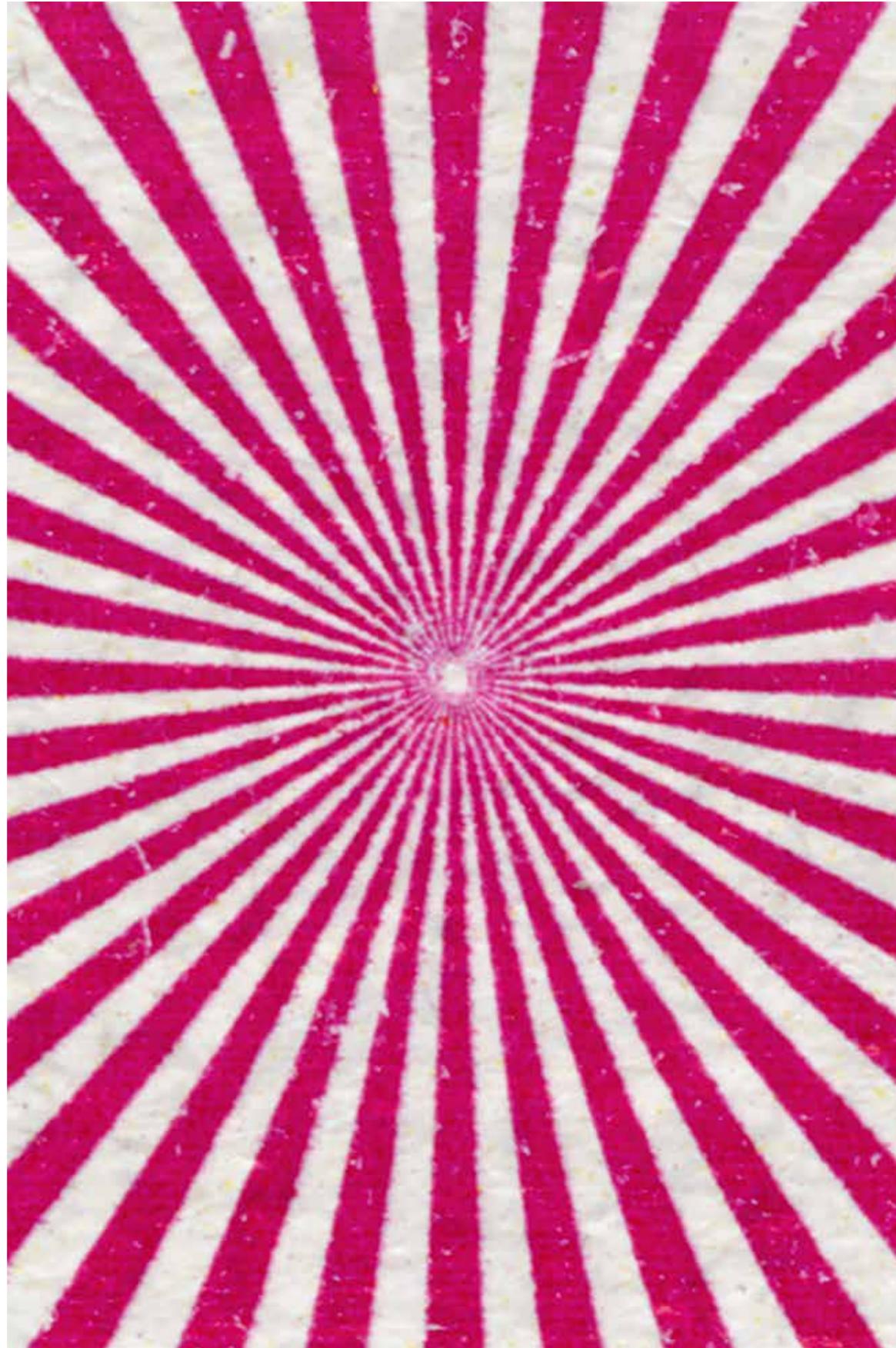
abstraction might resonate as truer than the messages promoted in the magazines' articles and ad copy.

Kessmann executes a slightly different type of revelatory formalism in his ongoing *Potential of Pixels* series (started in 2016) and the related *A Word a Week* series, 2020. Careful seeing, structuring, and selecting what is left in and out of an image's frame continue to be the key operations in this work, which excerpts everyday digital experience to make it both odder and more subject to critical observation. However, the accumulative density of *A Year at a Glance* has given way to the suppression of individualizing detail, exposing a stark visual skeleton in the two recent series composed from computer screen captures. Kessmann strips away nearly all text, numbers, and icons to present the visual templates that define our interfaces with Microsoft Office software in *Potential of Pixels*. The empty city streets in his photographs are matched by these empty screens, no less suggestive of the potential for human interaction and imagination, but far more emphatic in conveying that the visual and conceptual field on which these pursuits play out is systematized and constrained by borders. Microsoft's calendar software, featured in *Word Banner Calendar #2, 2016/2020*, orders our days in proprietary modules within a graphic identity generated by one of the world's most powerful corporations rather than our personal preferences for visualizing our lives.

In *A Word a Week*, we are confronted with a proliferation of blank Microsoft Word windows. To generate the series, the artist successively opened 52 textless documents, filling his screen with a cascade of windows untethered to their intended purpose and serendipitously corresponding to the number of weeks in a year. Kessmann configures the windows differently in each screen capture, opening the digital interfaces to new readings and analogies much like the plastic bags transformed in the *Plastic on Paper* pieces. Nonetheless, as with the bags, these grey bordered white rectangles retain an inescapable "materiality" connected to their source. The gentle shading that distinguishes one window from the window "behind it" speaks more to the functional illusionism of super-flat screen-life than to expressive spatial representation in painting. As much as some of these compositions evoke floorplans and blueprints, the pristine voids of the rectangles and perfect regularity of their edges reflect machine-regimented design rather than the spontaneity of human sketches and process-oriented drawing. For cynics and/or those from generations that existed before the reign of the tech giants, aesthetic and intellectual choices do not determine these simulated blank slates, made monolithic by Kessmann's photographic minimalism, but are circumscribed by them.

The twenty-five-year trajectory of Kessmann's subjects from urban spaces through consumer accoutrements to computer desktops resonates strongly in 2020, the year

this essay was written and a time when a global pandemic has resulted in unforeseen experiences of detachment, absence, and relocation to virtual spheres. This current situation adds layers of meaning and emotion to Kessmann's intentionally empty renderings of sites and objects designated by and for human activity. Already at the time his photographs were taken, Kessmann deployed his camera and other light-based means of image capture to distance his subjects from literal frameworks of physical manipulation and superficial narratives of use. In emphasizing the formal potential of these newly strange places and containers, however, he calls our attention to the ways in which they powerfully represent essential human structures: social systems and exchanges that flourish in an age where the entwining of medium and message (and, by extension, brand) is as ubiquitous and stealthily significant as Walmart bags and Outlook appointments. But infused as they are by formal strategies, Kessmann's images always pair poetic vision with criticality. It is the poetic qualities of the artworks that both conveys and transcends the melancholy of feeling alone in a world that brims with commodities, technologies, and infrastructure. Just as Kessmann has resolved his compositions through balanced form, varied visual texture, and a sense of beauty, might we be more deliberate in bringing balance, difference, and a sense of beauty to the kinds of systems, interactions, and locations that we create and inhabit?



# Show Transparency Grid: Tools for Looking

By Joshua Gamma

"Above the explorer and the puzzled listener, communication wires hum faintly in the breeze, adding their voice to the conversation, reminding the explorer how much they stitch together Americans with programmed messages..."

—John R. Stilgoe, *Outside Lies Magic: Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places*<sup>1</sup>

"...the secret ambition of design is to become invisible, to be taken up into the culture, absorbed into the background. The highest order of success in design is to achieve ubiquity, to become banal... Most of the time, we live our lives, within these invisible systems, blissfully unaware of the artificial life, the intensely designed infrastructures that support them."

—Bruce Mau and the Institute without Boundaries, *Massive Change*<sup>2</sup>

While researching college options as a high school student, I struggled with what I felt at the time to be the enormous pressure to pick a major. How could I reconcile my interests in art, history, science, and architecture? Did picking one mean giving up on the others? During a visit to the University of Texas at Austin, I bumped into the Dean of the College of Fine Arts in an elevator, our conversation unfolded roughly as follows:

*Me:* "I noticed that one of the degrees y'all offer is in Design. What does that mean exactly?"

*Dean, CoFA:* "Look around you; everything is designed. Someone designed your clothes; someone designed this book; someone designed this elevator and the system that makes this elevator operate; political systems are designed. Design is a way of solving problems, a way of thinking."

This statement feels obvious to me now, but as a 17-year-old it was revelatory. The Dean

proposed design as a study of everything—a making sense of how the world works and a reimagining of how the world could work. This conversation set the tone for my trajectory as a designer. I have never interacted with design as strictly a discipline that deals with graphics, websites, buildings, or objects, but as an approach to understanding society's physical and conceptual structures. The fingerprints of the designer can be seen in every human-made object and interface we encounter. Design, in this way, mediates a substantial chunk of our experience with reality. Design, therefore, can control as much as it can guide.

Dean Kessmann's photographic works reflect our world as a designed experience. His practice stems from a lineage of artists who are not static observers of their environment, but rather are observers in motion—"explorers" as design historian John R. Stilgoe would say.<sup>3</sup> These artists use movement through space as a means to collect material, meditate, or find inspiration. Kessmann specifically navigates the urban



Film stills of Corita Kent's students with finders. Baylis Glascock, *We Have No Art*, 1967, Baylis Glascock Films © Baylis Glascock

landscape, differentiating his actions from the countryside walks of artists such as Richard Long or Andy Goldsworthy. Sister Corita Kent's "slow-looking" class field trips and the Letterist/Situationist *dérive* make for better comparisons. Both, like Kessmann's practice, involve intentional excursions into ordinary urban settings and operate as design research, gathering information that can be used to critically analyze how our experiences are designed and how they could be redesigned.

Los Angeles's East Hollywood neighborhood, which Kent explored with her students in the 1960s, provided a visually dense landscape within which to teach her students how to

be better observers. She gave her students "finders"—square holes cut into cardstock—to assist them in reframing the visual information of the city. She described these finders as "a tool for looking... a device which does the same thing as a camera lens or viewfinder. It helps take things out of context, allows us to see for the sake of seeing, and enhances our quick-looking and decision-making skills."<sup>4</sup> Kent taught her students to use these finders in the same way Kessmann uses his camera, as a microscope for zooming-in on overlooked details. In fact, early in his career, Kessmann used a finder as a tool to compose scenes. Kent frequently used her own research photographs of the city as source material for her more famous activist screen prints, using flattened, deconstructed power lines, billboards, and street signs as part of her visual toolkit. She grounded slow-looking in such spiritual-aesthetic concerns



Richard Sprengeler, *Dean Kessmann, Flood Wall, St. Louis, MO*, 1991, Gelatin Silver Print, Image: 7 7/16 x 9 6/16 inches, Courtesy of the artist © Richard Sprengeler

as mindfulness and finding beauty in the everyday, but the study of urban graphics served her mission practically, providing a digestible, populist design vernacular with which to communicate.

During the 1950s, Guy Debord of the Parisian avant-garde group the Letterist International, coined the term *dérive* (French for "drift") to describe the particular practice of city exploration developed by the group (later *dérive* became a crucial concept for the Situationist International). Debord saw the *dérive* as both a poetic gesture and a scientific research tool in the field of *psychogeography*. Debord describes psychogeography as, "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, whether consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals,"<sup>5</sup> and describes the *dérive* as a walk in which "persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there."<sup>6</sup> That is, during a *dérive*, explorers open themselves up to the psychological structure of the city—the "consciously organized" design logic, the topography it reacts to, and the human and nonhuman ecologies it creates—and follow wherever these flows lead. The data gathered from *dérives*, often visualized in maps, then becomes material for proposed interventions. The Letterists and Situationists were, after all, Marxists looking to radically transform society.<sup>7</sup>



Corita Kent, *Mark C. Bloome gas station*, 35mm slide, ca. 1964, reprinted with permission of the Corita Art Center, Los Angeles, corita.org

In his 1998 book, *Outside Lies Magic: Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places*, John Stilgoe encourages his readers, often design students, to become pedestrian explorers in much the same way. His explorations are informed by the history of the urban landscape. He speaks of new ecologies created by humans rerouting rivers, introducing invasive species, and cutting off animal migratory paths. He posits that the chronicle of human usage teems just beneath the surface of the built environment. Many gas stations, inns, and general stores "still stand in places useful for tired walkers and tired horses." Certain shopping plaza arrangements tell of the proliferation of cars and "the spread of wide-open-space, West Coast-style retailing across the nation in the 1950s and 1960s." He constantly points to the undergirding connecting it all, but also delights in noticing, "a tiny detail like a trace of pollution in a nearby brook, a hole roughly cut through the chain-link fence guarding the power

substation... a Summer Help Wanted sign in the window of a brooding, ivy-covered brick structure..." Stilgoe's observations unveil a dance between human commerce, the natural world, and the grid installed by urban planners. The grid sometimes adds valuable structure; other times it needs breaking. Stilgoe affirms that although the designed world frequently transmits "programmed messages," this kind of close looking-by-exploration can expose the mechanisms, that we may be more critical and able to deconstruct these programs to reveal what he calls the magic in everyday places.<sup>8</sup>

Exploring for these artists and theorists serves as an idiosyncratic mode of information gathering. The initial impulse might be to find beauty in the commonplace or to follow subconscious desire lines, but the product is raw data—the profile of a city user.

Kessmann calls his explorations *Meandering with Purpose*. Both a mission statement and the title of an ongoing photo series, *Meandering with Purpose* (2018–), finds Kessmann intuitively taking photos as he walks the streets of Washington, D.C., the city he has called home for many years now. He describes the project as a "circling back to what propelled [him] to make photographs in the first place" and "the luxury of taking the time to wander with the sole purpose of being open to any and all situations that one might intentionally or inadvertently happen upon."<sup>9</sup> Kessmann's open-ended urban drifts free him to follow any path without the need to accomplish a specific task, and

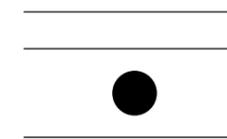
sometimes reveal other creative possibilities, such as his *Concrete Photographs* (2018). The series presents quiet ruptures as moments of contemplation—screen, wood, and wire barriers between public thoroughfares and construction sites; aggregate inconsistencies, stains, and repairs in concrete structures; shifts in texture and material on building facades. Over the past few years, the *Meandering with Purpose* body of work has become a visual manifestation of exploration and a living archive of the city grid and the overlooked beauty in its cracks.

In the similarly-minded *Between Here and There* (2003–7), Kessmann zooms-in on marks made on city streets. In one image, gooey black asphalt smeared intentionally but sloppily flanks a manhole cover on the right and left, a quickly drawn ladder-like structure frames the top of the closed portal in white spray paint, and red and blue marks flit about the picture plane. Upon closer inspection,



Dean Kessmann, *Untitled #11*, 2003-2006 (printed 2007), Archival Pigment Print, Image: 2 21/32 x 4 inches © Dean Kessmann

the red and blue marks seem to be part of a graphic system but are chopped and obscured. Only in the upper right-hand quadrant does one start to see that a message might read top-to-bottom:



I can see why the artist speaks of these visually striking photographs in terms of abstraction. Taken out of context, these textures and energetic markings can begin to resemble the pure color and form of abstract expressionist paintings. Kessmann, however, blurs the line between abstraction and representation here. Of course, he fully "realize(s) that the spray-painted symbols have meaning to the people who apply them to the roads and sidewalks." They function as a visual language, as typography—abstract forms that are by definition representational, narrative. He also admits, "it is a language that [he does] not care to decipher," his interest, "is not in decoding and translating their exact meaning, but in revising the language by fragmenting its characters, rearranging the text, and coercing these otherwise straightforward documents to dissolve into abstraction."<sup>10</sup> As an artist and as an observer, there is no need for Kessmann to interpret these runes for us. He does not attempt to make sense of the designed world. He does not make judgements nor intentionally expose flaws, but by elevating the

quotidian graphics of the urban landscape, he reminds us that there is a hidden logic to the places that we live.<sup>11</sup>

Elsewhere, Kessmann employs less traditional photographic techniques to illuminate the obscured systems we brush up against every day. *Utilitarian Abstraction* (2014–) zeros-in on the architecture of mass printing by blowing up, to epic scale, scans of registration marks and color swatches from cardboard packaging. He became interested in these printer's guides through another routine motion, "the banal process of breaking down cardboard boxes to be placed into the recycling bin." He describes *Utilitarian Abstraction* as "on some level... autobiographical," a user profile containing "a selective and subjective picture of [his] family's consuming habits."<sup>12</sup> The body of work functions as a self portrait we can all relate to during our current COVID-induced reliance on package delivery. *Potential of Pixels (work-in-progress)* (2016–ongoing) captures computer screens displaying digital document templates stripped of any content. Kessmann grabs this updated visual of the tyranny of the blank page from digital space—perhaps the most obviously designed, though no less manipulative, environment we inhabit. With layers of semi-transparent scans of a year's worth of popular art magazine covers (front and back), *A Year at a Glance* (2007) clarifies where layout grids remain rigid and where they are flexible, as well as pointing to another structure worthy of our scrutiny, "the system of advertising and marketing integrated within the distribution of art news."<sup>13</sup>

The work exhibited in *Light Years, Chemical Days, and Digital Seconds* functions as more than two decades of design research magnifying the edges of systems most of us take for granted. Similar to Debord's *dérive*, Kent's slow-looking, and Stilgoe's exploration, Kessmann's practice is both poetry and research, a playful meandering that nevertheless provides real data that can help viewers think more critically about how their own context is designed.

Exploration-as-data collection fits nicely into the "Observation" step in the "Human-Centered Design Process," as described by Don Norman in the Holy text of user experience/user interface (UX/UI) design, *The Design of Everyday Things*. Norman recommends designers observe would-be users "in their natural environment," where they would be using the object or system in question "in their normal lives." In this case, the explorer being the user and the city being both the system and the environment. Norman notes that the problem a designer is hired to fix is usually not the actual, fundamental problem, so they must be open to new information. "In the real world," he writes, "the problems do not come in nice, neat packages. They have to be discovered." Echoes of the Letterist/Situationist desire to uncover the psychology of the city can be found throughout *The Design of Everyday Things* (originally *The Psychology of Everyday Things*). In chapters with titles such as "The Psychopathology of Everyday Things" and "The Psychology of Everyday Actions,"



Dean Kessmann, *Dole Fruit Bars Variety Pack*, 2014, Archival Pigment Print, 292 x 58 inches © Dean Kessmann

Norman thinks through how people interface with complex systems and how designers can make these systems more "human-centered."<sup>14</sup> A well designed process will feel natural, invisible. Internet algorithms collect the same sort of personalized data from users

as they fall down rabbit holes in cyberspace or allow Google to track their location while they run errands in physical space. The paths algorithms send users down may also feel natural, even as they lead to impulse buys and conspiracy theories.

Despite the oversimplification of its binary formation, the saying, *Good artists ask questions / Good designers solve problems*, suggests an important dialogue between art and design. Virtually every object and system that comprise the physical and

digital environments we inhabit, contain programmed messages from another entity, whether from a singular maker, an architectural tradition, or the marketing apparatus of a major corporation. Kessmann's body of work reminds us of this fact, and can help us question these systems and imagine a better future by closely examining and deconstructing the design of our world. The designers of these systems would be wise to look more often at the observations and questions of artists like Kessmann.

## NOTES

1 John R. Stilgoe, *Outside Lies Magic: Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places* (New York: Walker and Co., 1998).

2 Bruce Mau and the Institute without Boundaries, *Massive Change* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2004).

3 Stilgoe, *Outside Lies Magic*.

4 Corita Kent and Jan Steward, *Learning by Heart: Teachings to Free the Creative Spirit* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992).

5 Guy Debord, "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography," originally appeared in *Les Lèvres Nues* #6 (September 1955), in *Situationist International Anthology* (Revised and Expanded Edition), trans. Ken Knabb (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006) and <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/urbgeog.htm>

6 Guy Debord, "Theory of the Dérive," originally appeared in *Les Lèvres Nues* #9 (November 1956), revised and reprinted in *Internationale Situationniste* #2 (December 1958), in *Situationist International Anthology* (Revised and Expanded Edition), trans. Ken Knabb (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006) and <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/2.derive.htm>

7 See "Proposals for Rationally Improving the City of Paris" for some occasionally brilliant, usually absurd proposals. "Proposals for Rationally Improving the City of Paris," originally appeared in *Potlatch* #23 (October 1955), in *Situationist International Anthology* (Revised and Expanded Edition), trans. Ken Knabb

(Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006) and <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/paris.htm>

8 Stilgoe, *Outside Lies Magic*.

9 Dean Kessmann, "Meandering with Purpose," 2019, <http://www.deankessmann.com/meandering.html>

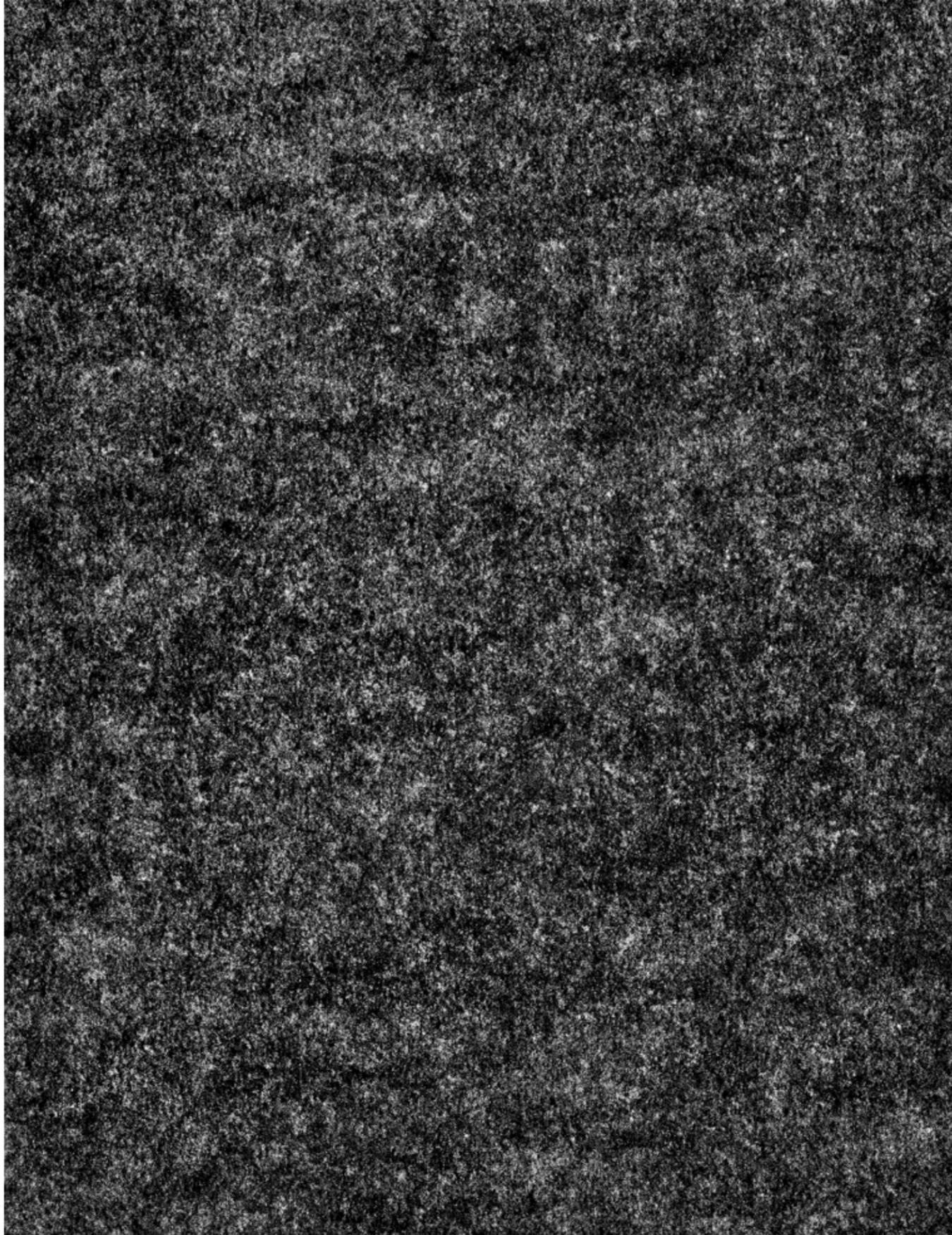
10 Kessmann, "Between Here and There," 2019, <http://www.deankessmann.com/hereThere.html>

11 For more about the hidden world of design see Roman Mars and Kurt Kohlstedt, *The 99% Invisible City: A Field Guide to the Hidden World of Everyday Design* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 2020) and the *99% Invisible* podcast.

12 Kessmann, "Utilitarian Abstraction," 2019, <http://www.deankessmann.com/utilitarian.html#baran> The exhibition *Light Years, Chemical Days, and Digital Seconds* does not include prints from *Utilitarian Abstraction*, but rather from the subset *Details: Utilitarian Abstraction* (2015-) which the artist sees as a separate series derived from *Utilitarian Abstraction*.

13 Kessmann, "A Year at a Glance," 2019, <http://www.deankessmann.com/year.html#baran>

14 Don Norman, *The Design of Everyday Things* (Revised and Expanded Edition) (Philadelphia: Basic Books, 2013).



## To Sit With Absence

By Molly Springfield

Sitting at a small table in the dark, illuminated only by a desk lamp, the artist Joseph Kosuth was giving a lecture about his work at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC. He appeared to be reading directly from a stack of papers in front of him. As Kosuth wrapped up, he held the last few pages up to the lamp.

To my friend, Dean Kessmann, who was sitting in that darkened auditorium one evening thirteen years ago, the pages appeared blank. Had Kosuth really been reading from a printed text that whole time, or had it been a performance? Dean's initial amusement at Kosuth's possible prank gave way to an appreciation of the scene's beauty: "a handful of white pages appeared to be glowing and floating within the darkness, an idea brought to light, an illuminated manuscript of another kind."<sup>1</sup>

Kosuth, a pioneer of late 1960s Conceptual art who famously argued for artists to forgo aesthetics for ideas, had inadvertently created an aesthetic experience that inspired an entire series of physical artworks: Dean's 2009 project *Art as Paper as Potential: Giving/Receiving*, which takes 365 pieces of standard blank paper as source material for a video, a lightbox-mounted duratrans print divided into three sections, and a series of archival pigment prints.<sup>2</sup> The project illuminates the larger conceptual themes that his work investigates: relationships between abstraction and representation, compression and expansion, and physical objects and digital information.<sup>3</sup>

For me, though, what stands out is the way that Dean's project functions as an extended meditation on blankness. Blank spaces are captured—and often take center stage—throughout Dean's photography of the past decade. In addition to *Art as Paper as Potential: Giving/Receiving*, the projects *Test Strips*, *Charting Color on Neutral Ground*, and *that which is no longer there, if it ever was* offer up blankness and mine its latency to reveal hidden subjects. In dictionary terms, to be blank is to be colorless, expressionless, unfinished, empty. Blankness suggests a void or an unbroken surface. A space to fill in, or a space to rest. In everyday life, blank spaces—mental or physical—can be hard to come by. When we do find them, it's hard to slow down to appreciate the quiet, neutral oblivion they can provide. It's often only in these blank spaces where we can make peace with absence, accepting it as a natural and necessary part of our existence.

More than a year into a global pandemic, I can't help but project onto Dean's work the profound isolation and loss we've all experienced to varying degrees. Our lives may seem full of blank spaces now. Spaces left behind by the experiences we should have had and the people who are gone. Dean could not have foreseen this reaction, of course, but good art speaks to whatever moment in which it finds itself.

•••

Dean's first serious investigations, as a student in Illinois and Missouri in the early 1990's, were with black-and-white film shot using a large format camera. Because

he had not yet been exposed to many contemporary artists, his process was, by his own description, that of a photographer emulating photographers who worked 50 to 75 years earlier. He didn't make enlargements from his 4 x 5 inch negatives; instead he used the light from an enlarger to make 4 x 5 inch contact prints. In Dean's words, he "didn't have any in-depth formal training as an undergrad in photography. ... There weren't many options [at my school]. I took the few courses offered—taught by the graphic design professor—and supplemented them with independent studies and internships to earn the equivalent of a minor in photography."<sup>4</sup>

Dean worked with the photographer Richard Sprengeler, who became a friend and mentor.<sup>5</sup> The two would explore St. Louis together, cameras in hand. Sprengeler also introduced Dean to the work of Edward Weston and Paul Strand, whose large-format photographs



Dean Kessmann, *Parking Space with Brick Wall*, 1992, Gelatin Silver Print, Image: 4 x 5 inches © Dean Kessmann

sought to record honest images of their surroundings.

Of these formative years, Dean says, "It was a very formal way of working. Whereas Sprengeler was producing multiple bodies of work, one of which is now a forty-year long documentation of the city of St. Louis and the surrounding areas, I wasn't interested in content in the least early on. It was just about making interesting black and white photographs of whatever random thing I decided to take a picture of—mostly the detritus found in urban environments because that's what I was attracted to. But there was no conceptual component to the work or any sense that I was recording the history of these places."<sup>6</sup>

But don't always trust what we as artists say about our own work. By the time Dean saw Joseph Kosuth give his lecture at the Hirshhorn in 2008, there were plenty of rich conceptual threads that had been weaving their way through his work for decades, and his practice had evolved to incorporate various digital methods. *Art as Paper as Potential: Giving/Receiving*, initially inspired by that lecture, continues to spin out those conceptual threads, but also speaks to time and the daily struggle of making art.

The project offers three different components: a large, lightbox-mounted duratrans print divided into three sections of 365 individually scanned blank pieces of white paper; a video, in which the same 365 sheets of blank paper that were scanned for the lightbox piece slowly rotates, the pile diminishing



Dean Kessmann, *Installation Photograph of Art as Paper as Potential*, 2010, Video Projection and Lightbox-Mounted Duratrans Print, 90-minute loop and 4 x 21 feet © Dean Kessmann

and then growing back up, sheet by sheet; and a solitary stack of 365 individual archival pigment prints, which are sometimes displayed on the wall in an arrangement that represents the actual dates on a calendar in which the work is on view.<sup>7</sup>

For the duratrans print, Dean imported each individually scanned sheet of paper into Photoshop one at a time, building the composition organically from left to right. Sheets overlap in varying ways, producing varying degrees of opacity. The final arrangement is Dean's own "illuminated manuscript." It suggests a deconstructed book whose words are erased or not yet written. This tension between erasure and possibility continues in the video, as the stack of 365 sheets methodically delete and replace themselves. For Dean, it's here that the giving and receiving of the project come into play:

The idea of giving and receiving in this project primarily exists in the video piece. As that pile spins, it goes down one sheet at a time, so things are leaving. And then, as it gets down to the final sheet of paper, the pile starts to grow back one sheet at a time, so it's now about receiving. I think about this piece in terms of things coming into the studio and things going out. This continuing process of ideas coming in, ideas going out, work coming in, work going out. Both physical and conceptual.<sup>8</sup>

This daily negotiation with the slippery nature of ideas is familiar to most artists. Especially if we've internalized the lessons of Conceptual Art, we may fear the dearth of ideas that the metaphorical blank page represents. In the third element of *Art as Paper as Potential*, Dean upends this metaphor by showing us that a seemingly blank piece of paper is not really blank at all.

As Dean went through the process of preparing each individually scanned piece of paper for printing, he significantly increased the contrast to emphasize the subtle variations within each sheet. When he held a sheet up to light, he found he could match it to its scan. Each sheet, even though an industrially produced sheet of standard printer paper, contained unique information. A fingerprint formed in pulp.

The scans were darkened as a nod to the positive/negative relationships in photography. In particular, the translation of a piece



Dean Kessmann, Installation Photograph of *Art as Paper as Potential*, 2010, Archival Pigment Prints, 11 x 8 1/2 inches each © Dean Kessmann

of negative film into a positive print. The collective stack of 365 prints records the time of its own making—a small monument to the seemingly mundane day-to-day transactions that happen in life and in the studio. But blank spaces are not boring. They are full of small, subtle shifts that can provide revelations if you take the time to examine them.

This thread—of paper and its possibilities—continues in Dean’s 2011 project *Test Strips*, in which he returned to his roots in the darkroom after a decade of working digitally. While digital technologies are constantly upgrading and changing, the fundamentals of

positive-negative photography remain more or less unchanged since its discovery by William Henry Fox Talbot in the nineteenth century. Anyone who has waited patiently in a darkroom for an image to manifest in the developer tray knows the thrill of witnessing photography’s magic. *Test Strips* was an opportunity for Dean to renew his longstanding relationship with photography’s essential nature.

During that decade of capturing and editing images digitally, Dean was still connected to traditional film photography through his teaching. At the end of each semester, students in his introductory black-and-white photography course would leave behind their unused 8 x 10 inch silver gelatin photographic paper. Dean collected this paper at the end of an academic year and used it to produce the abstract photograms that make up *Test Strips*.

To make these photograms, Dean deployed a photographer’s standard technique for determining the proper exposure for a particular negative. Normally, a negative is placed in the enlarger and sections of the photographic paper beneath are exposed to light in increasing time increments. The



3 6 7 12 15 18

Test Strip Example

exposure for the final print is chosen from these “test strips.” The photograms also reference the Zone System, a technique that photographers use to expose and develop their negatives to help them make final prints that closely match how they previsualized what the real-world scenes would look like in black and white. The eleven distinct bands in each *Test Strip* photogram match the eleven distinct tonal gradations of the Zone System.

Dean took a random approach for determining the width of each band. Some photograms contain larger areas of darker tones, others lighter. Each band its own separate step along the spectrum of the paper’s base white to maximum density black, each band a measure of the amount of time that light was allowed to activate the chemistry contained in the silver-gelatin paper.

This visualization of time is underscored in the way the photograms are installed, allowing for an ebb and flow between black and white. Whether arranged in a single row



Dean Kessmann, Installation Photograph of *Test Strips*, 2014, Gelatin Silver Prints, 9 3/4 x 7 3/4 inches each © Dean Kessmann

or in a grid, the photograms bring you in and push you out—echoing the rise and fall of the stack of paper in *Art as Paper as Potential*’s video component.

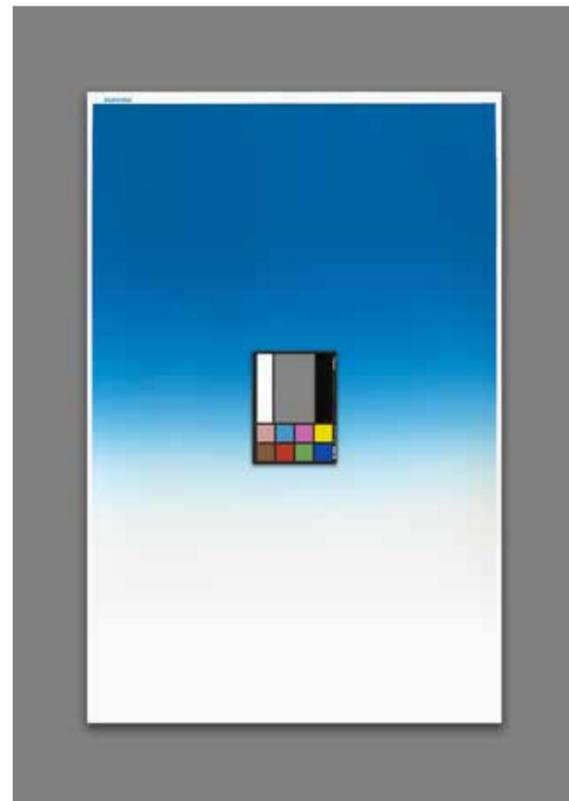
I can’t help but see the photograms in pairs, the varying widths of their bands laid out like the pages of an open book. Like the pages of the deconstructed book I see in *Art as Paper as Potential*, these pages are also blank. To the extent that they contain anything, they hold the record of Dean’s methodical manipulation of each band’s exposure to light. Analogue film photography was originally intended to capture representations of our knowable, observable world. In *Test Strips*, Dean captures the absence of a subject.

And in a reversal of the more common practice of digital editing tools mimicking analogue effects, the arrangement of the tonal bands in each *Test Strips* photogram mimics the stair-step patterns that can appear in digital images. Rather than produce a smooth gradient, Dean chose to create an analog image that references digital banding. Because, as much as he is rooted in traditional photography, Dean’s work has fully embraced and exploited the many ways that an image can be captured digitally.

*Charting Color on Neutral Ground*, an ongoing project begun in 2016, collages several digital-capture technologies—camera, scanner, and information generated by computer applications—to create images that use the basic materials found in commercial photography studios as their subject matter. And, as in *Art on Paper*

as *Potential* and *Test Strips*, Dean upends the figure/ground relationship by elevating the ground as the subject.

Early in his career, Dean worked as an intern and staff photographer in multiple commercial studios that did small-product photography for which the gradient background paper and color-calibration charts that appear in *Charting Color on a Neutral Ground* were items of everyday use. And the neutral gray background



Dean Kessmann, Munsell Color x-rite Kodak Gray Card Plus on Flotone #603 on Photoshop 50% Gray, 2016 (printed 2021), Archival Pigment Print, Image: 85 1/2 x 60 inches  
© Dean Kessmann

in each print is a direct reference to the Kodak Gray Card, used by photographers to produce consistent exposure and color within an image.

To construct the prints for this project, Dean photographed various gradient backdrops with a digital camera. Those images were placed on top of the neutral gray background generated in Photoshop. The color-calibration charts were separately scanned using a flatbed scanner and centered on the gradient backgrounds. The final touches are the drop shadows placed between each layer of the image. A cheeky nod to the popular graphic design trope of the late 1990s, they are additional digital information within the images that also reference our habit of having multiple windows open simultaneously on a single screen.

They also underscore the objectness of objects that normally read as generalized atmosphere or are cropped out of final images altogether. The background becomes a gray monochrome. The blue to white gradient backdrop becomes a sublime color field painting. The calibration chart becomes a hard-edged geometric abstraction.

Blank spaces are easy to overlook. In *Charting Color on Neutral Ground*, the tools of consumerism are raised to the scale and consideration we normally reserve for high art. In *Art as Paper as Potential*, the quotidian, plain white sheet of paper is made monumental. *Test Strips* gives form and pattern to invisible photochemical reactions. In each project, Dean asks us to pay attention to overlooked, under-examined surfaces.

The archival pigment prints that make up Dean's most recent series, *that which is no longer there, if it ever was*, ask us to consider the illegible residues of urban life. The series is a subset of *Meandering with Purpose*, an ongoing project Dean started in 2018. Both the series and broader project are a return to his practice as a young artist in which he would allow himself to wander city streets, eyes and mind open to any and all possibilities, camera at the ready. While an artist's ideas are certainly fostered through consistent intellectual inquiry, they are also nourished by unstructured, intuitive experimentation. Dean realized that he missed that freedom.

The images in *Meandering with Purpose* are generally recognizable as scenes of city infrastructure, captured to reveal their visual poetry. *that which is no longer there, if it ever was* documents micro views of this infrastructure, focusing on the surfaces of metal utility boxes that have become ad hoc neighborhood bulletin boards to create abstract images.

In Dean's closely cropped images, the paper flyers posted by job hunters, pet seekers,

and community organizers are long gone. Annotated with graffiti and slowly erased by the general wear and tear of weather and time, their illegible residue is a blankness defined by absence. The specificity of a lost cat's name or a handyman's phone number may be subtracted, but we recognize the evidence of their having been there—the Pompeian-like artifacts of a drip of spray paint, a bit of tape, a sun-bleached outline.

It's these outlines within the images that I'm drawn to. As in *Art as Paper as Potential*, Dean has increased the contrast within each image to emphasize the small differences and details that would otherwise go unnoticed.

What was originally a more flat, scant image becomes a rich, gestural abstraction. The outlines overlap. They slip back and forth from the surface. They simultaneously exist and disappear.

Like the blank of a white sheet of paper, these spaces provide a place for my mind to rest, a place to sit with absence.

#### NOTES

1 Dean Kessman, "Art as Paper as Potential: Giving/Receiving," 2009 <http://www.deankessmann.com/artPaper.html>

2 As research for this essay, I listened to a recording of the lecture Dean saw Joseph Kosuth give in 2008. Sadly, there is no video, so I couldn't see the moment that inspired Dean, though at one point I thought I could hear the rustling of paper.

3 Dean Kessman, "Artist Statement," <http://www.deankessmann.com/statement.html>

4 Dean Kessmann. Personal interview. March 15, 2021.

5 See Spengler's photograph of a young, earnest, head-full-of-hair Dean on page 20 of this catalogue.

6 Dean Kessmann. Personal interview. March 15, 2021.

7 In the project's original 2010 installation at Conner Contemporary Art in Washington, DC individual prints were hung in calendar formations on the wall to represent each day of the exhibition with the remaining prints stacked on the floor.

8 Dean Kessmann. Personal interview. March 15, 2021.

PLATES



# Construction/Destruction

Silver Gelatin Prints, 1994







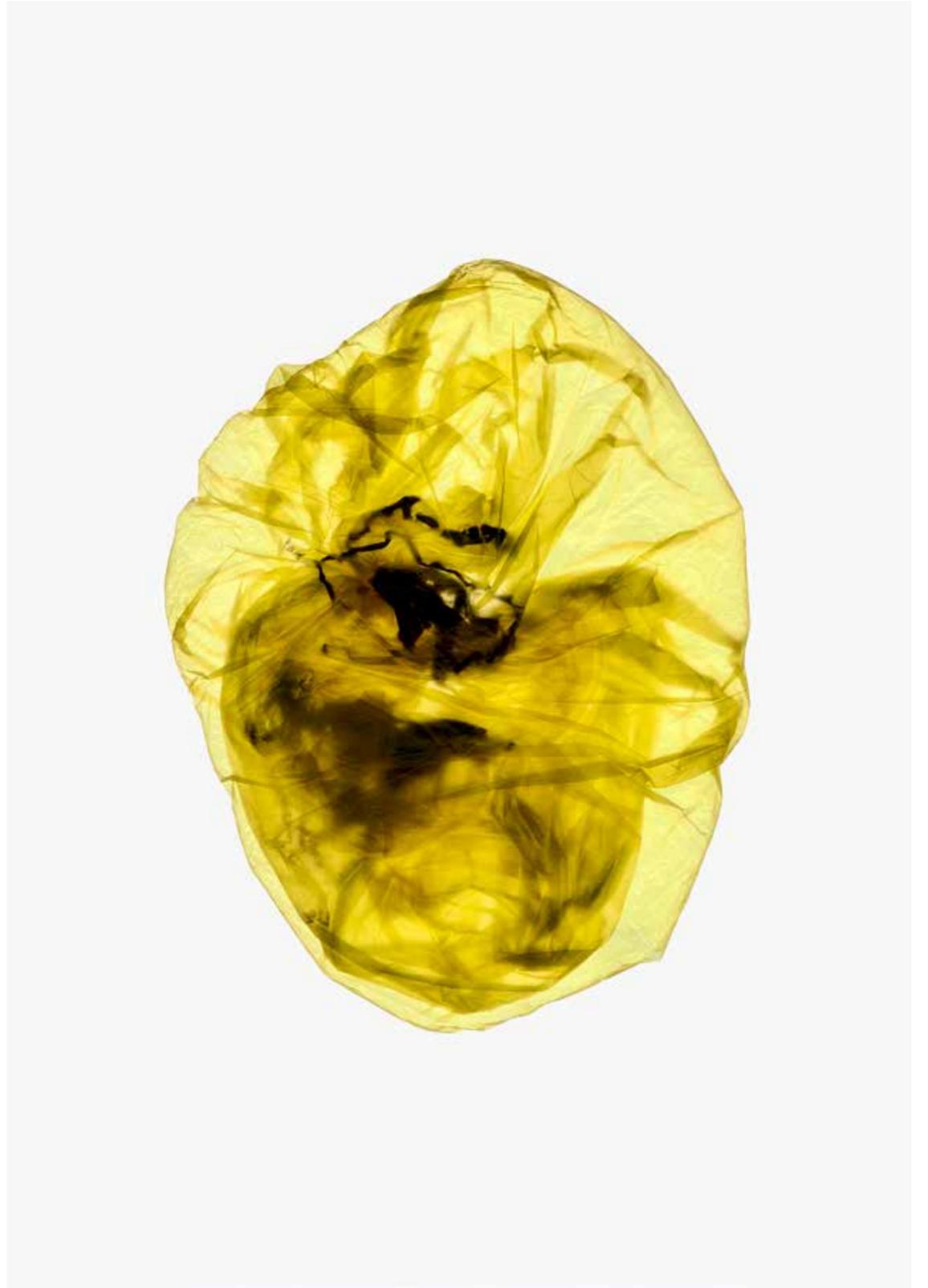
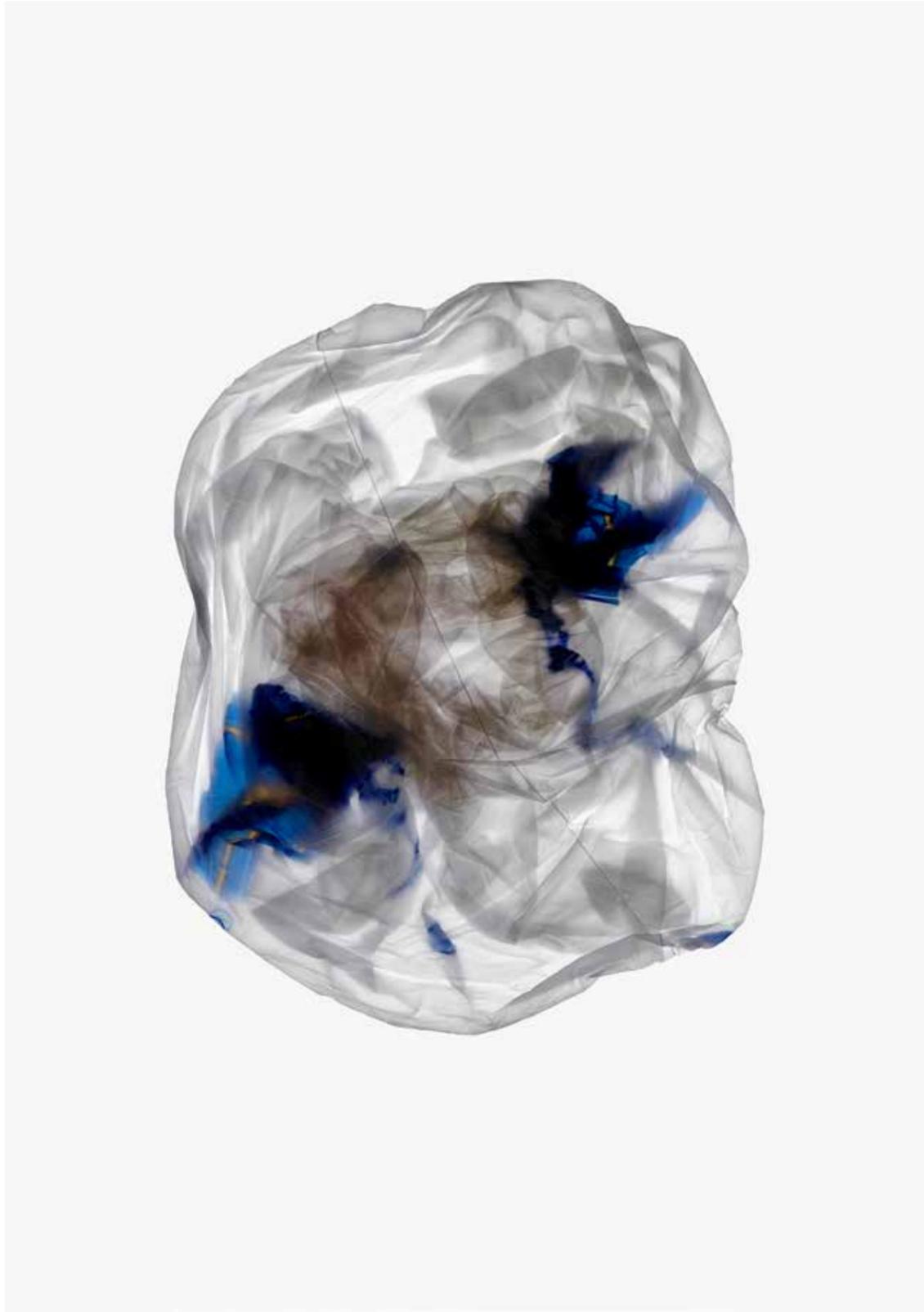


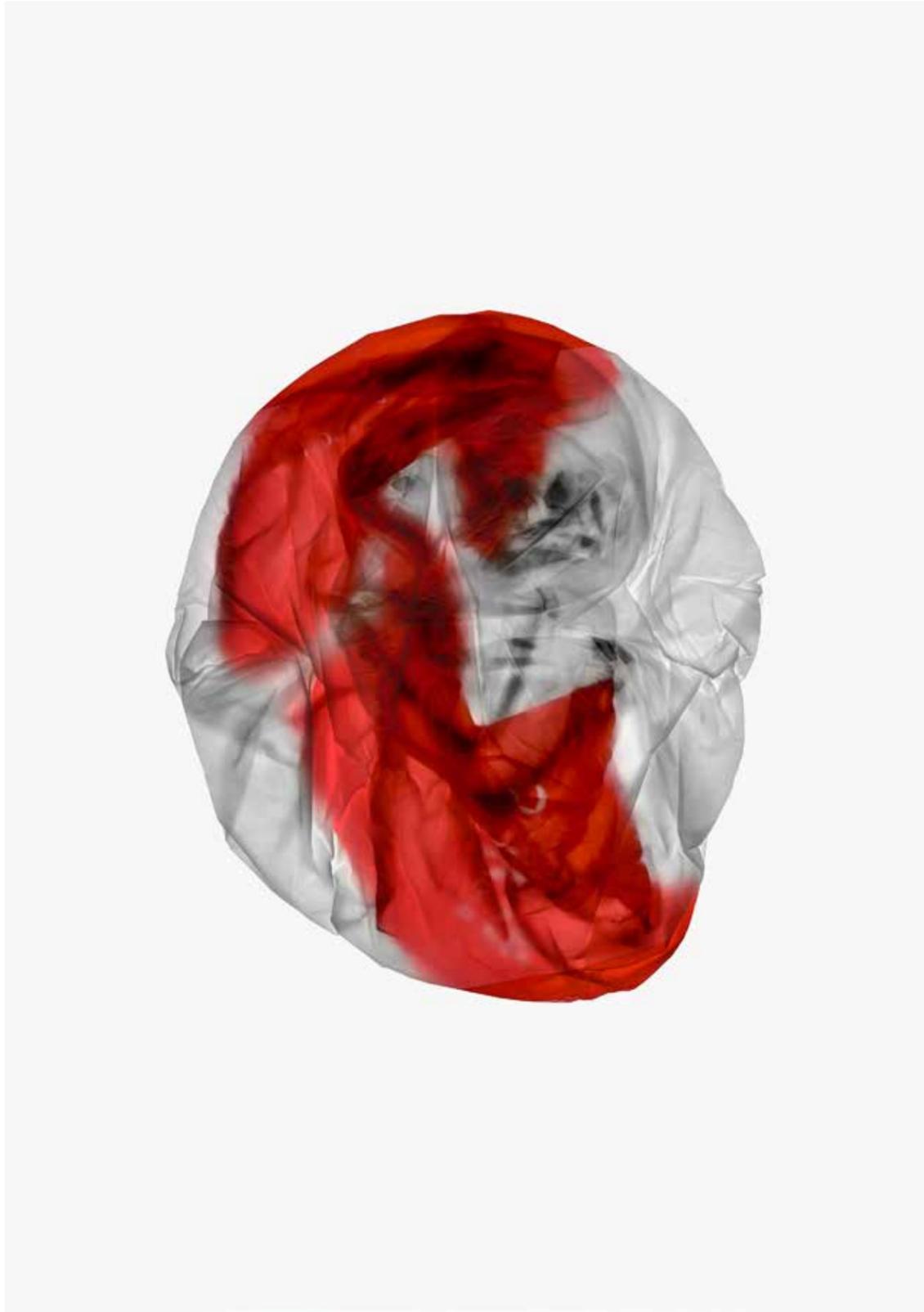


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## Plastic on Paper

Archival Pigment Prints, 2005







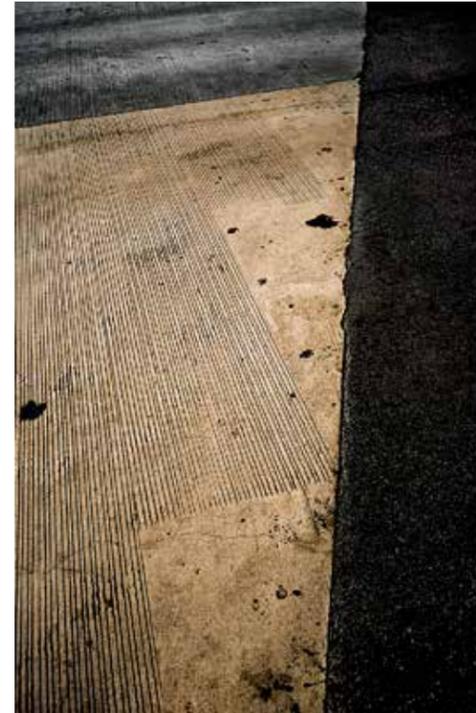
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# Between Here and There

Archival Pigment Prints, 2003–2007













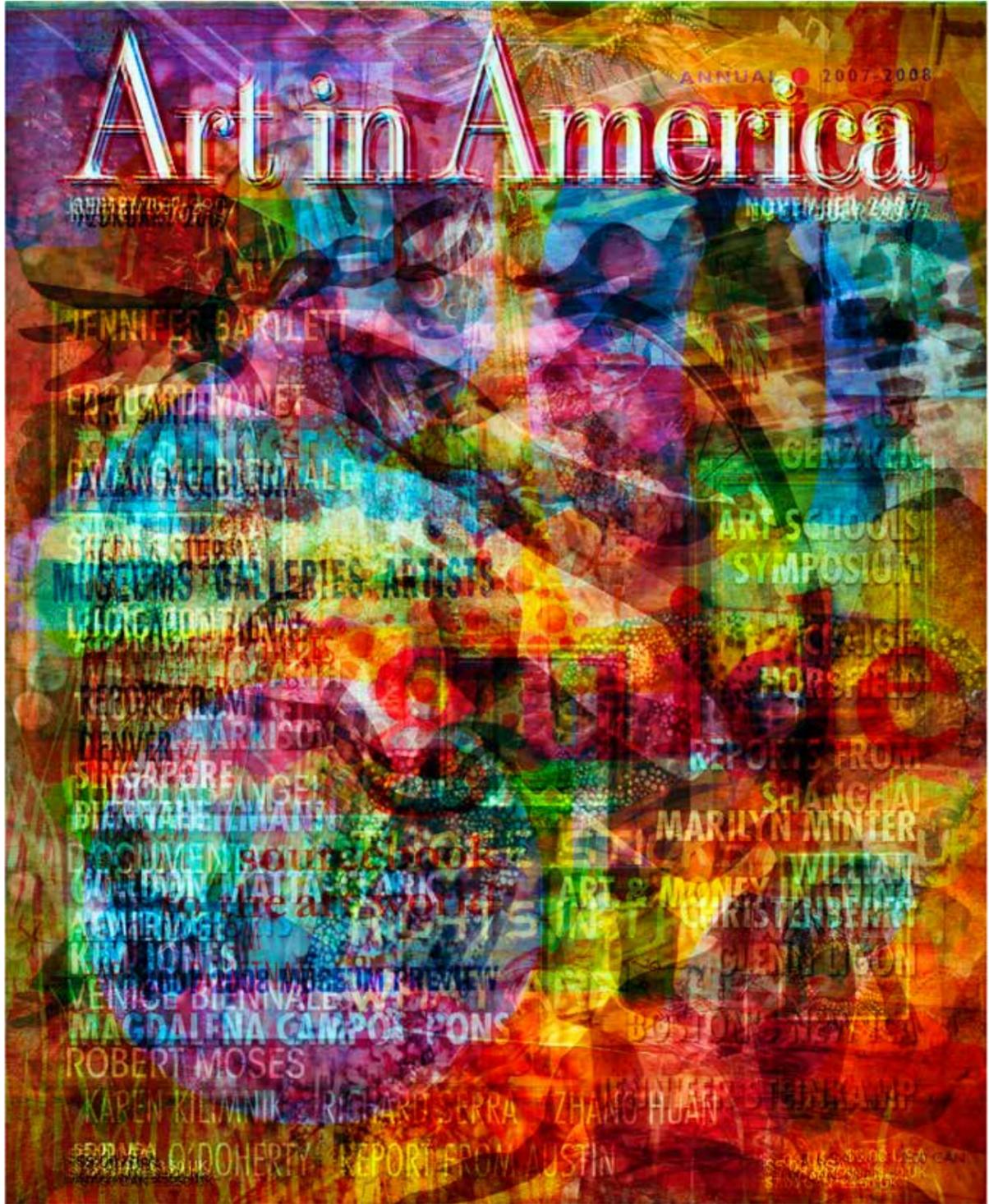
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# A Year at a Glance

Archival Pigment Prints, 2007

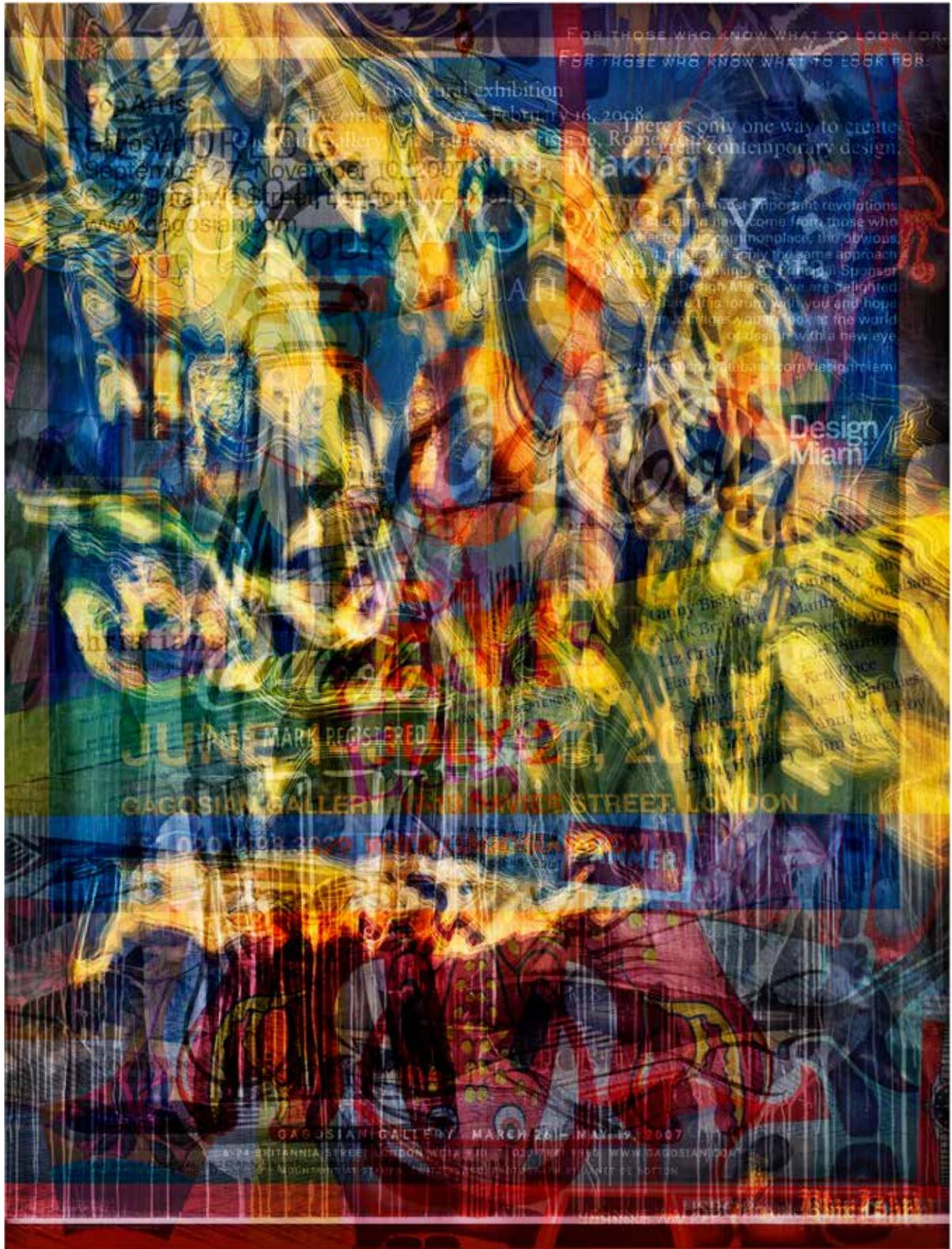


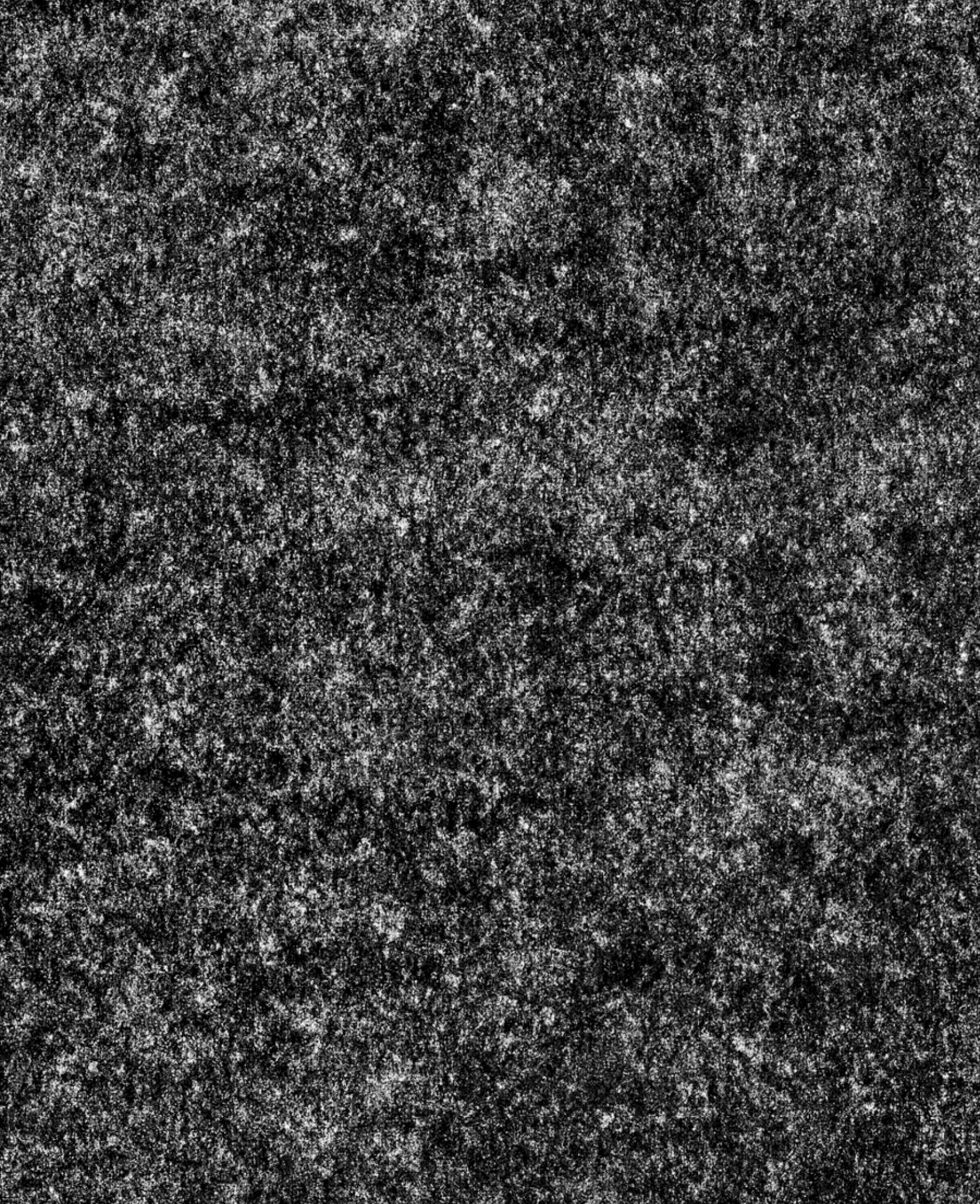










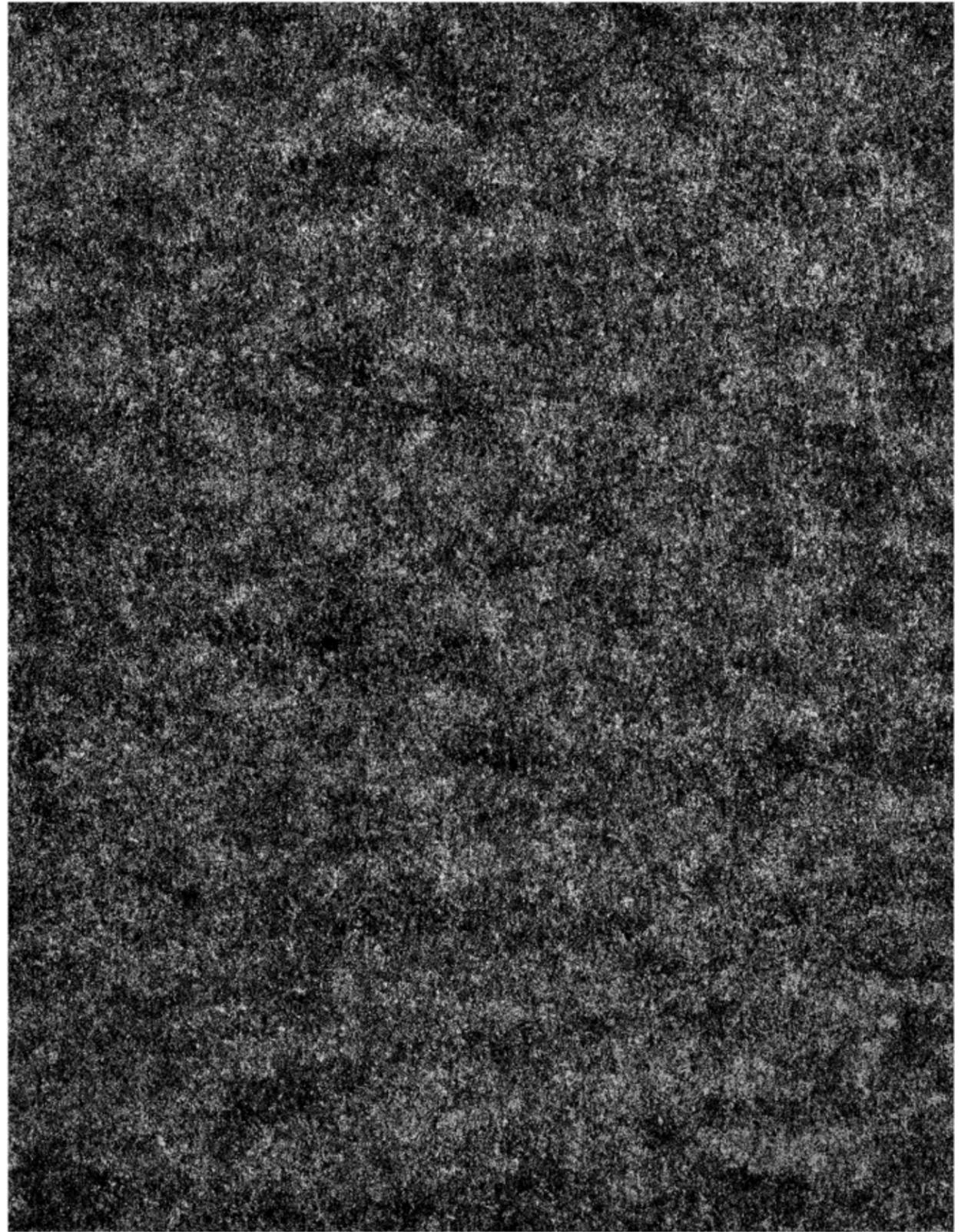
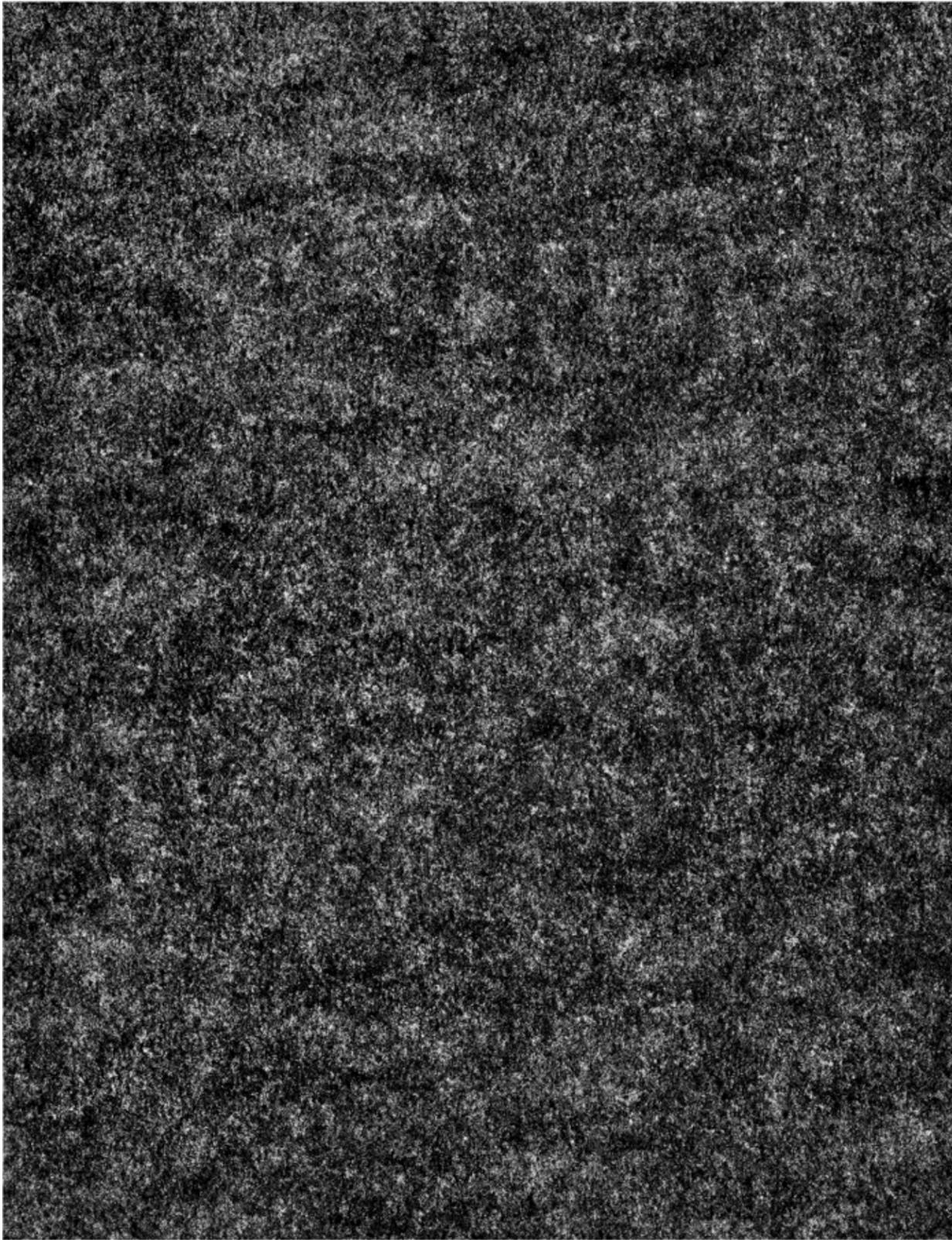


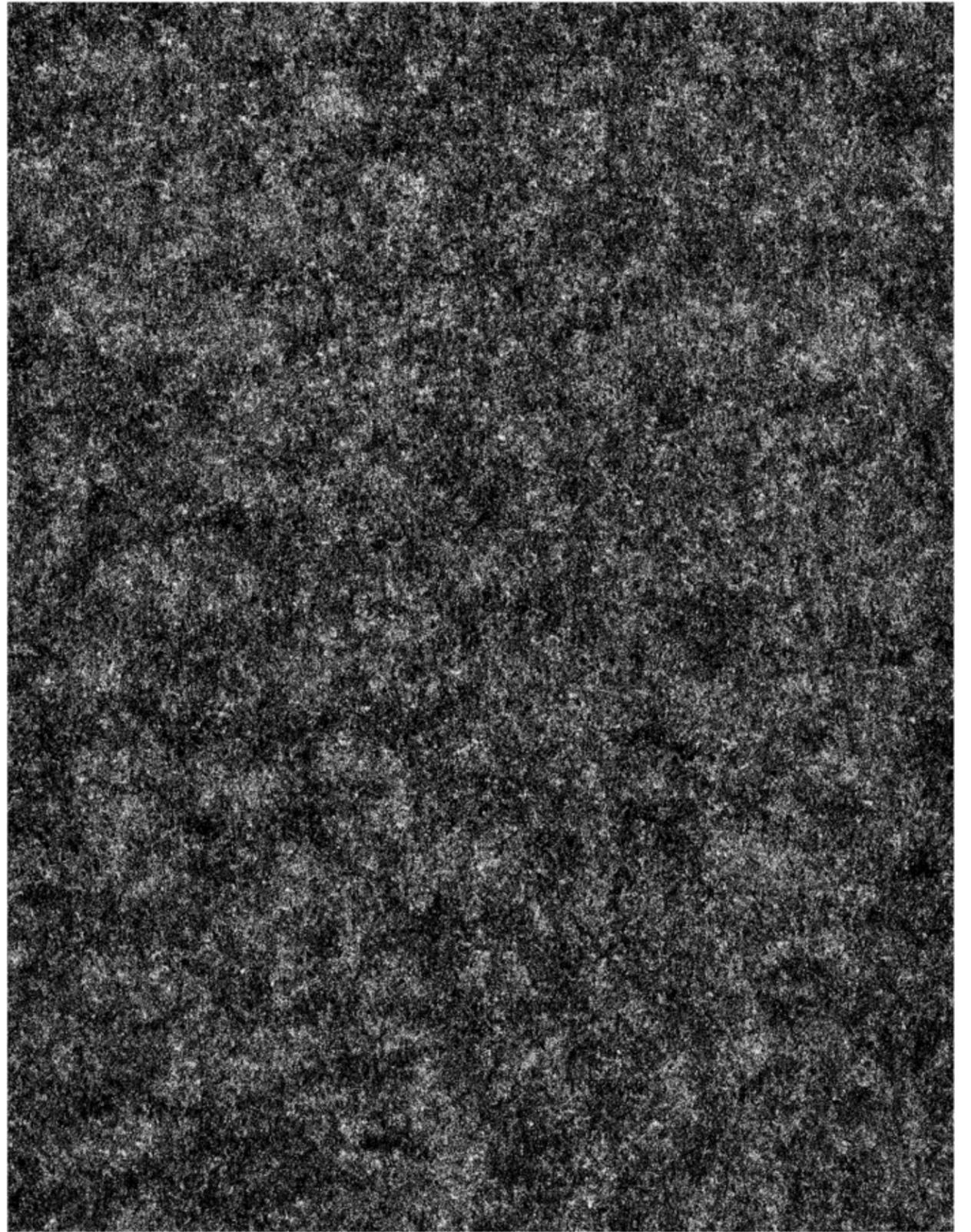
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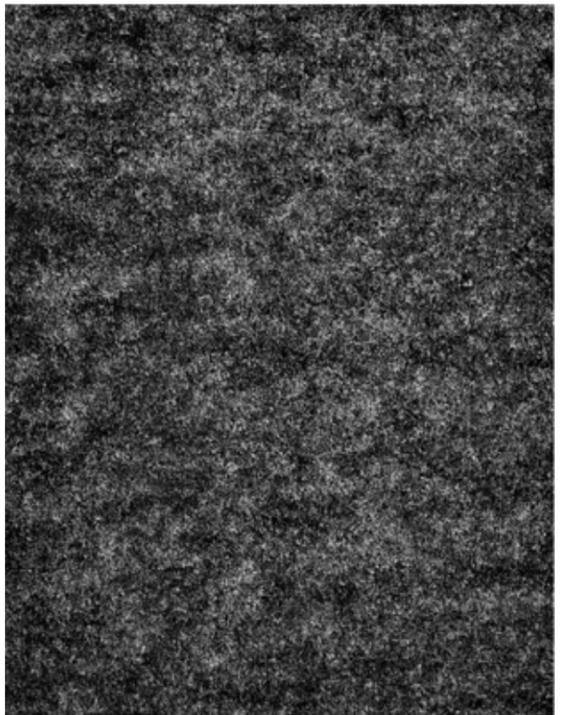
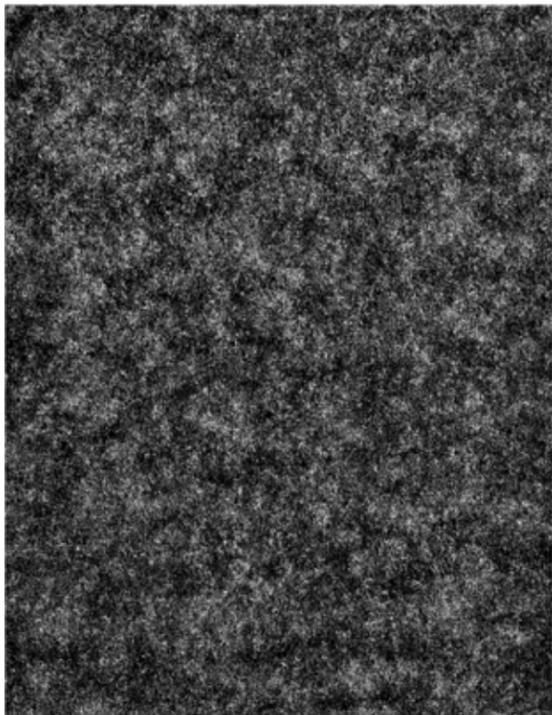
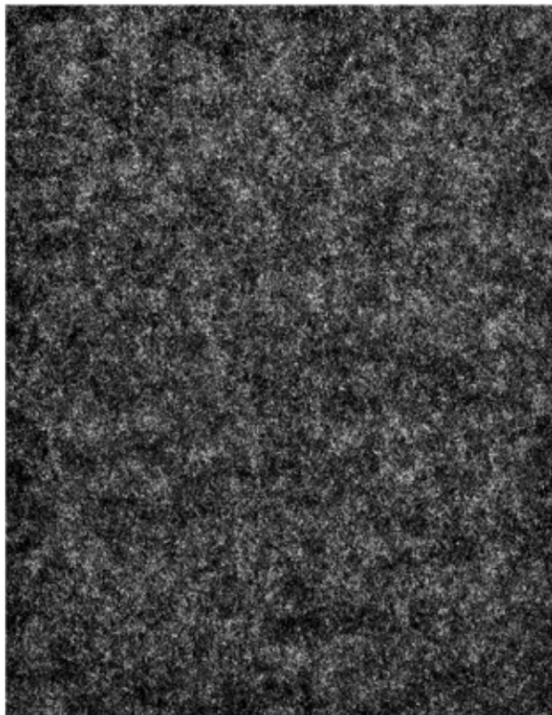
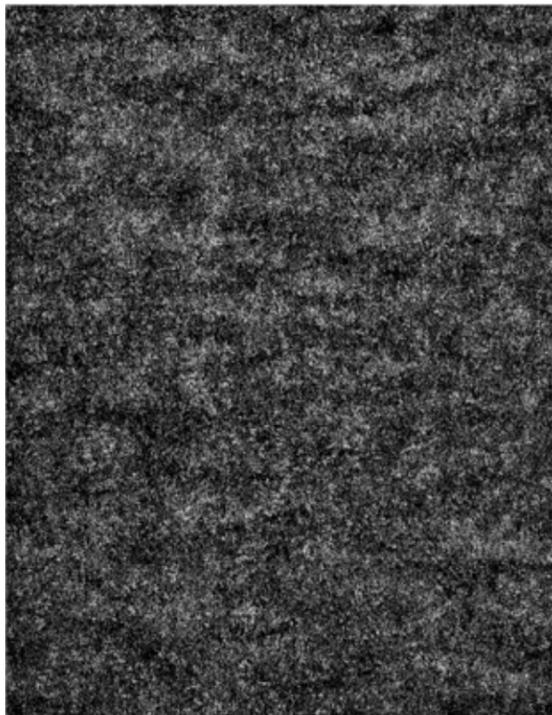
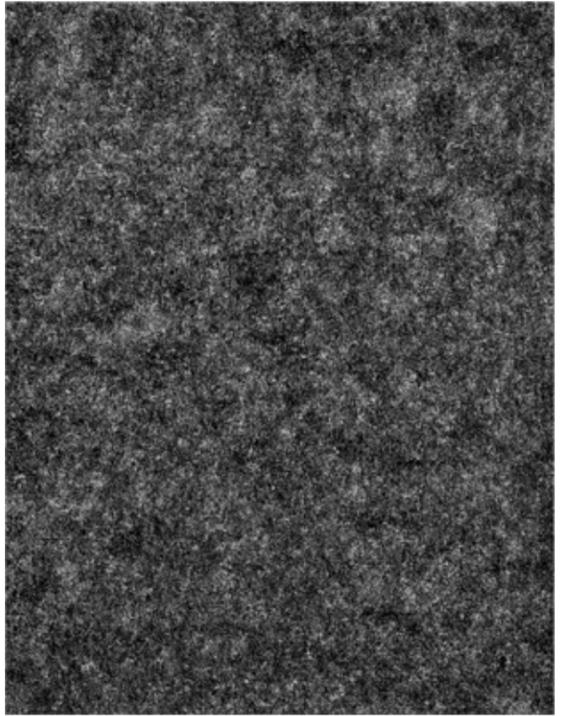
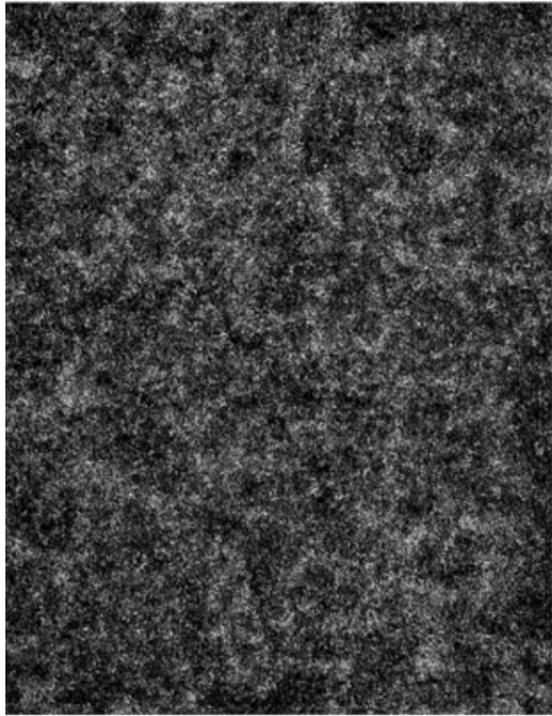
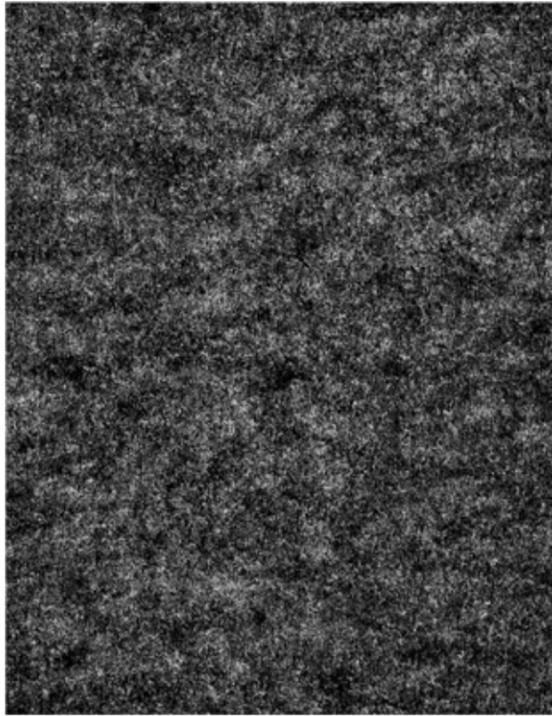
Art as Paper as Potential:  
Giving/Receiving

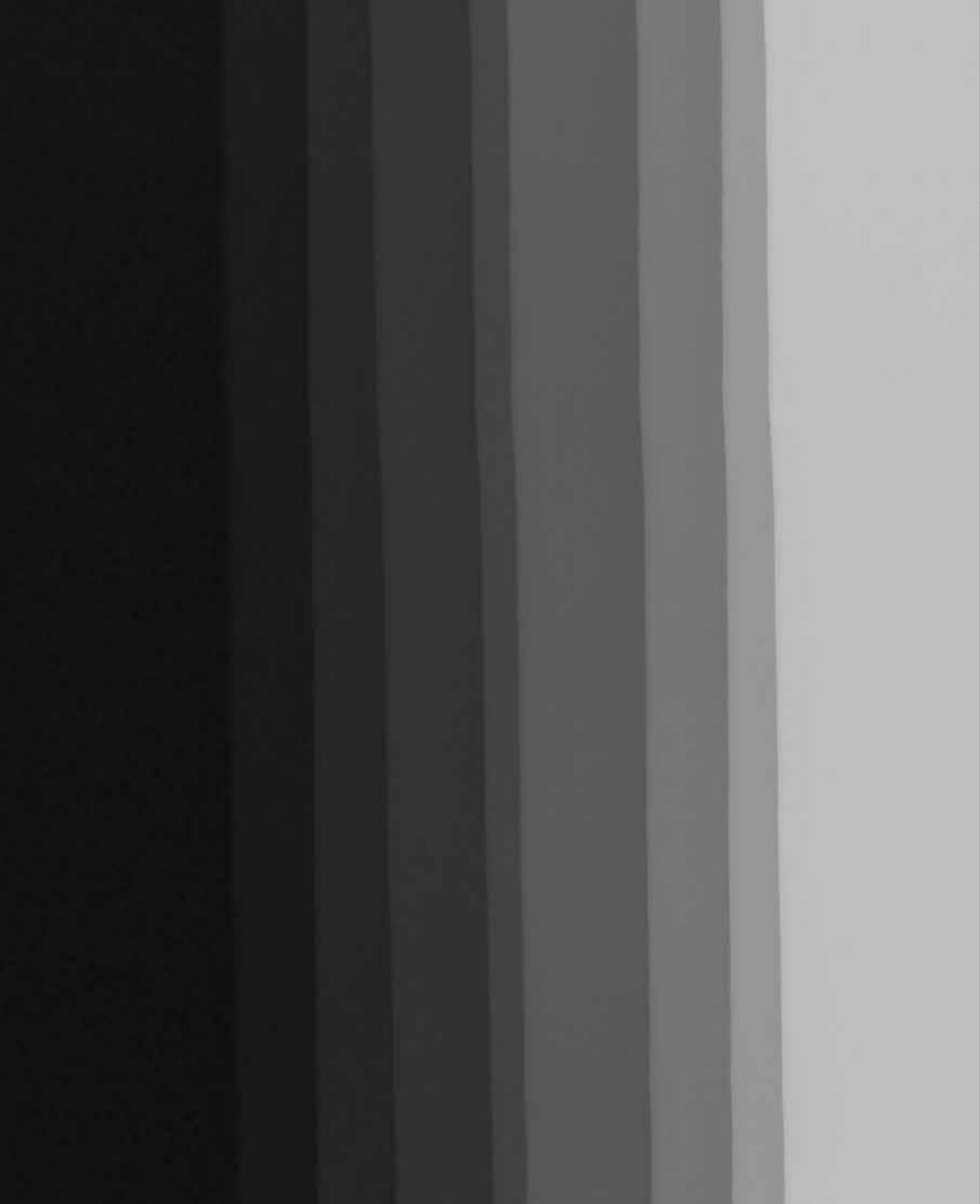
Archival Pigment Prints, 2009







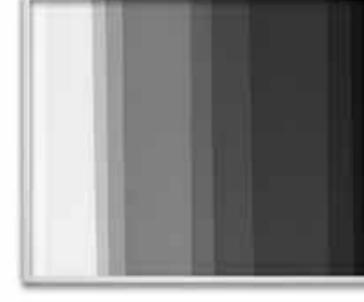
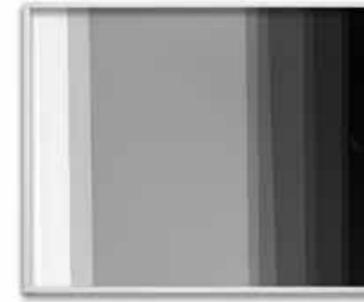
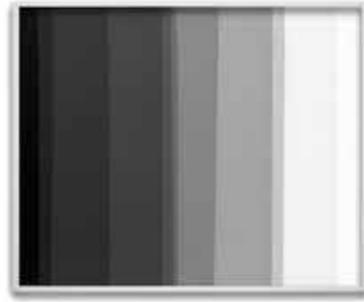
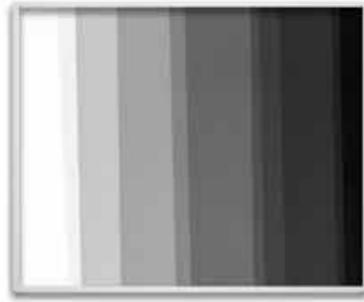


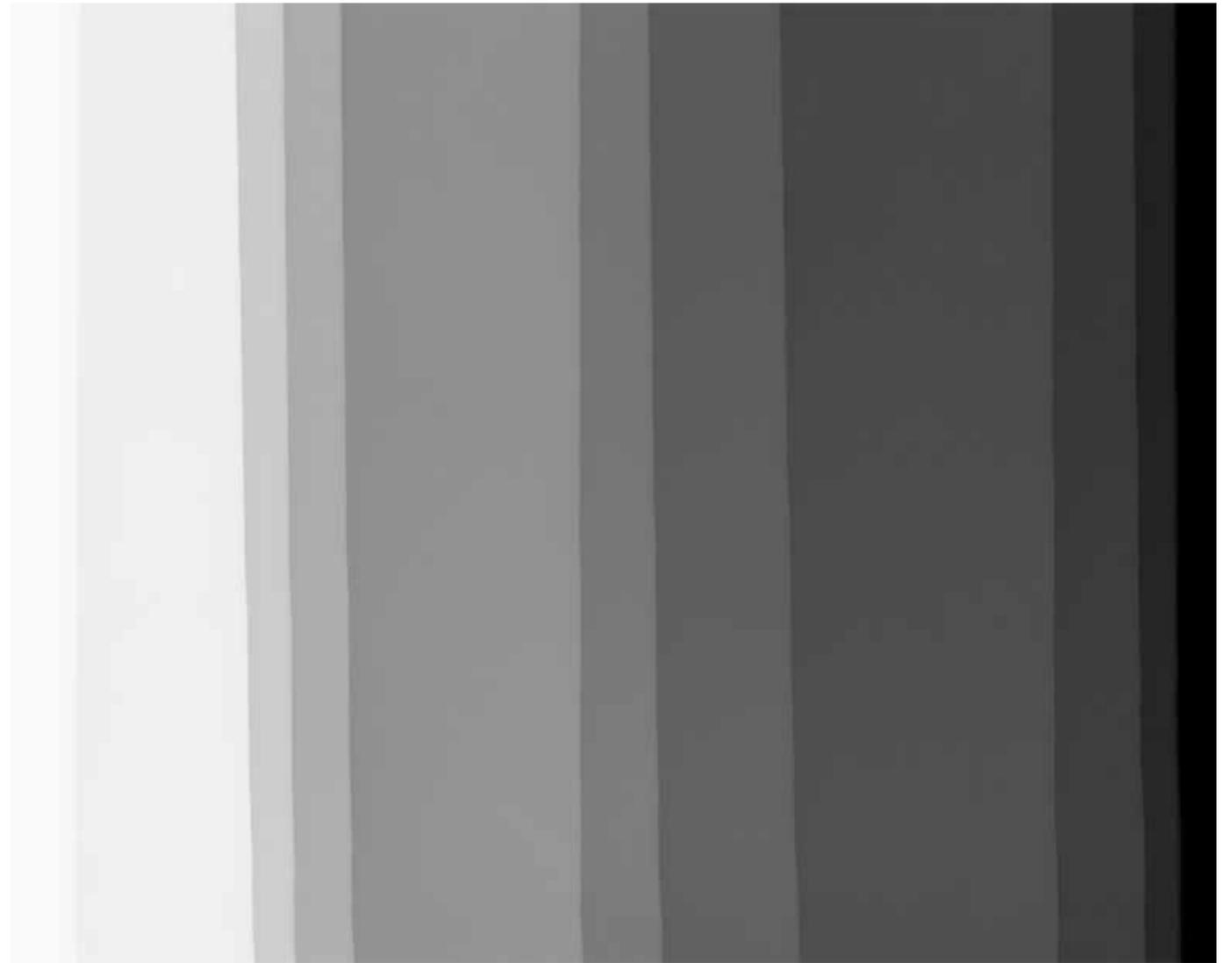
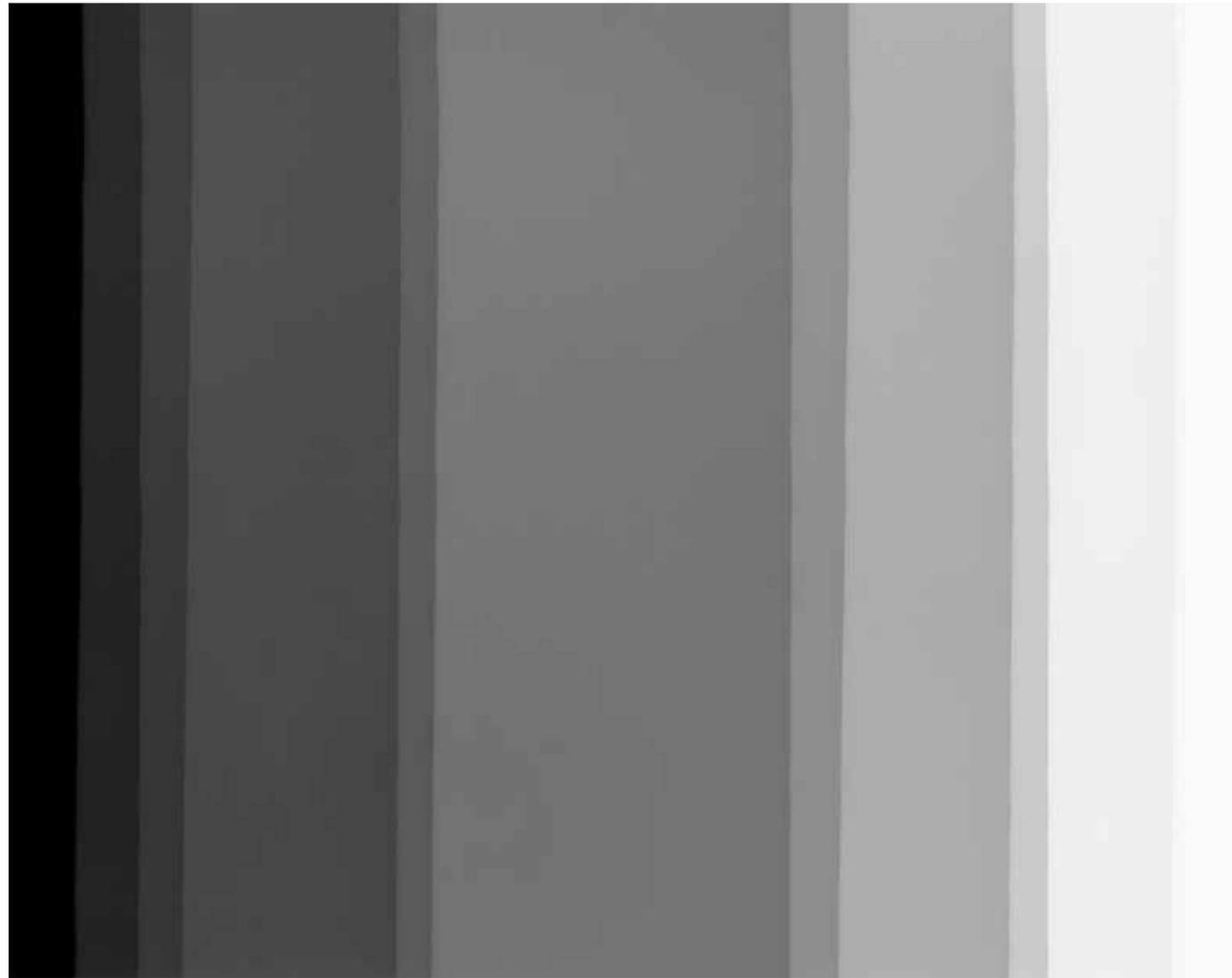


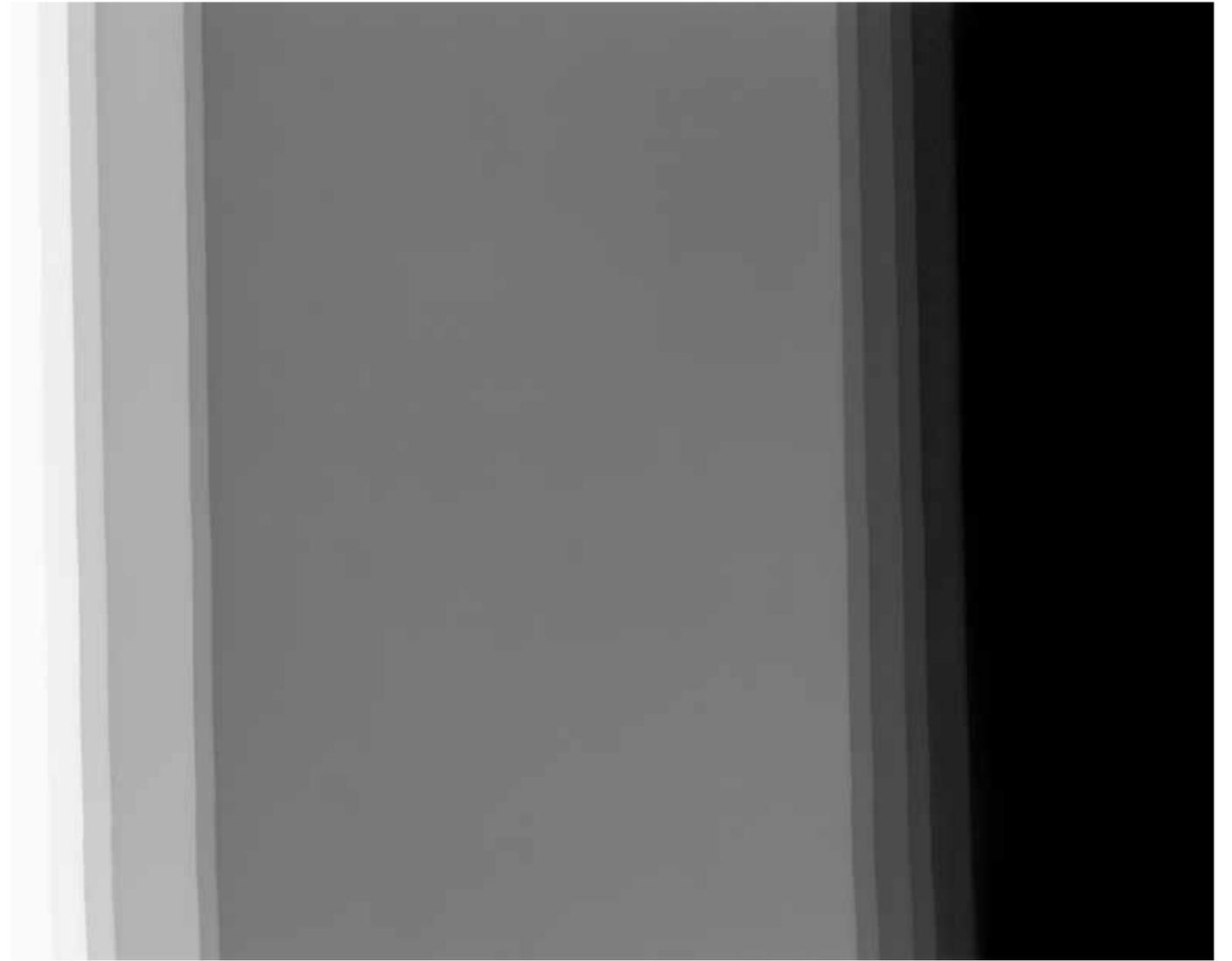
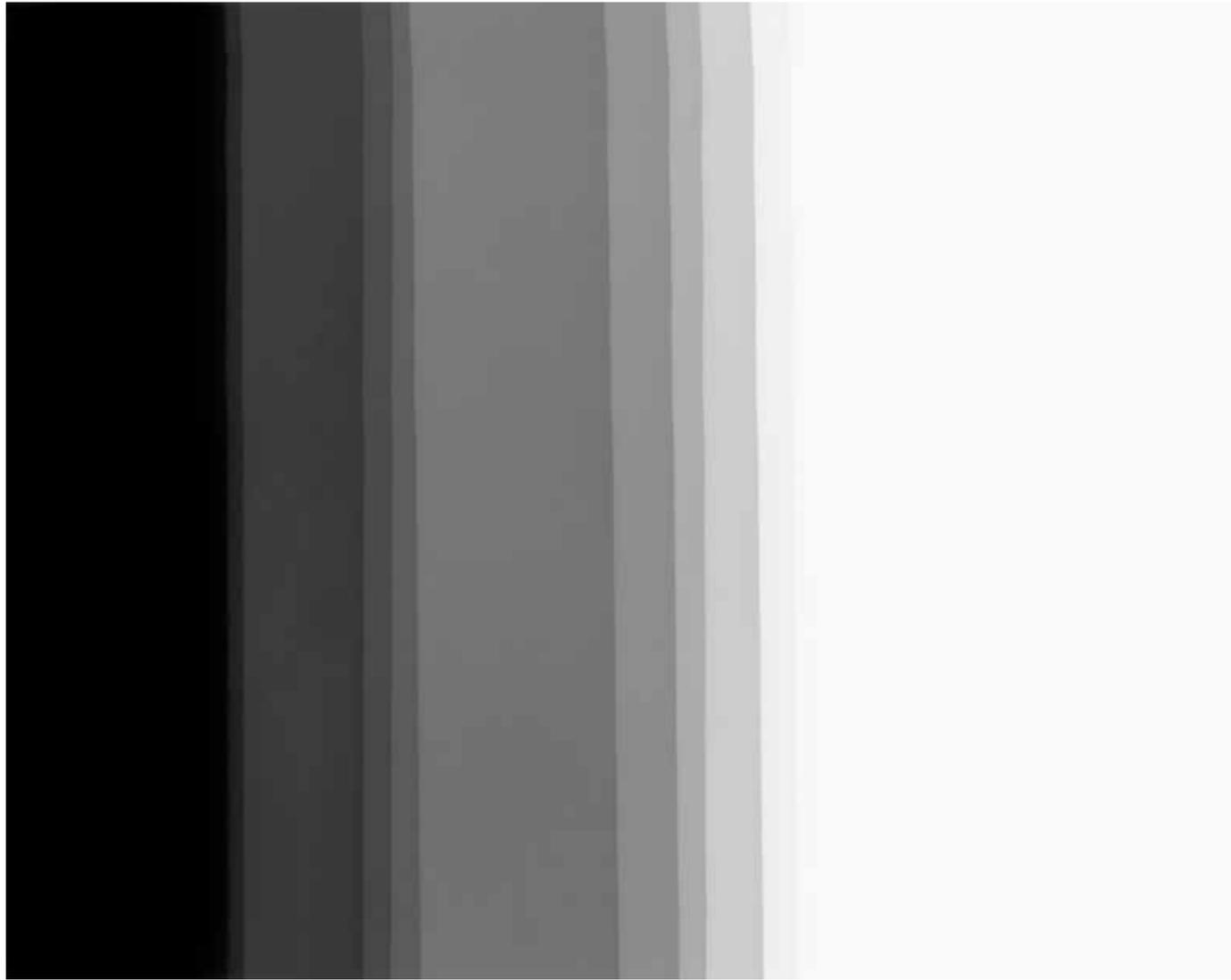
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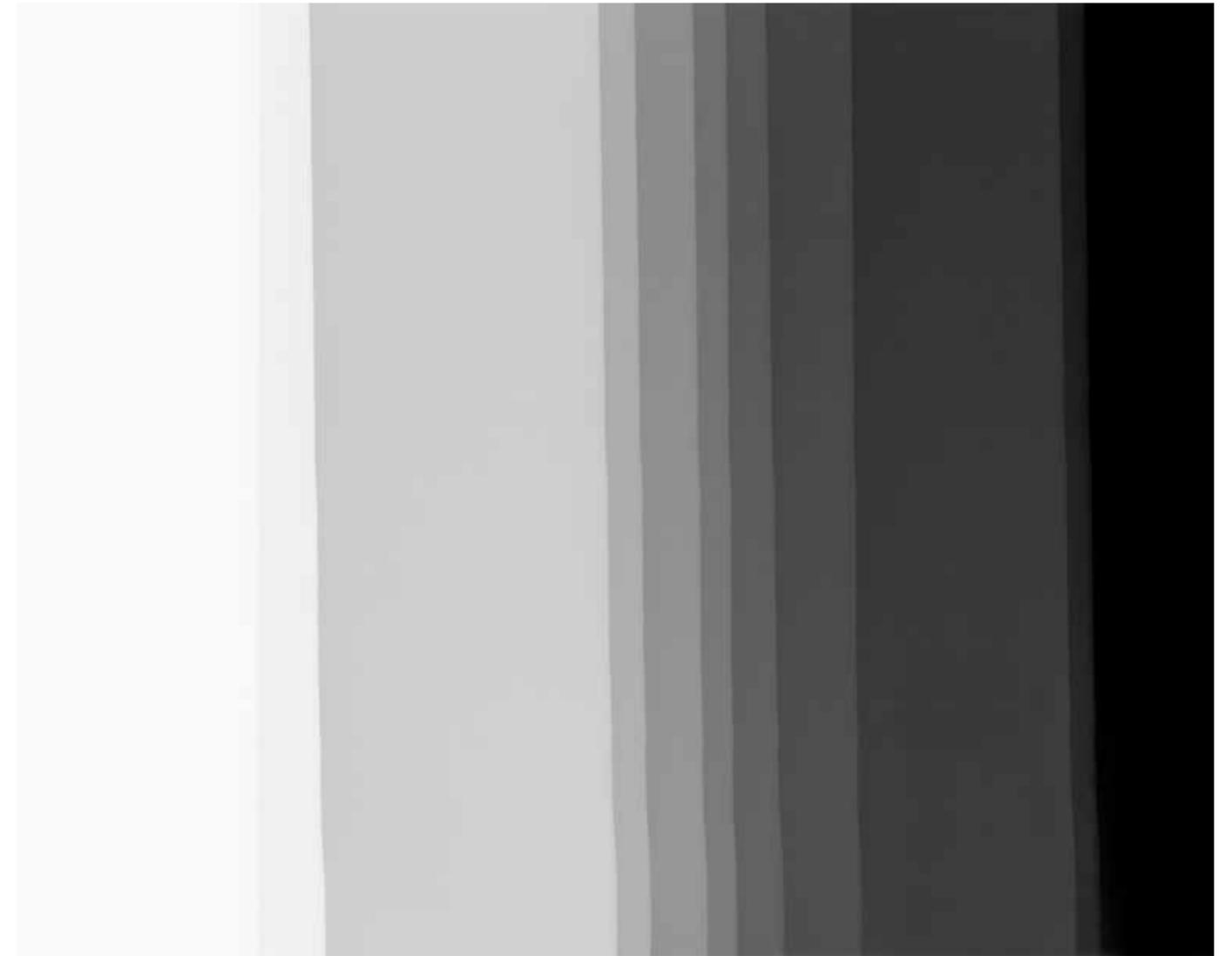
# Test Strips

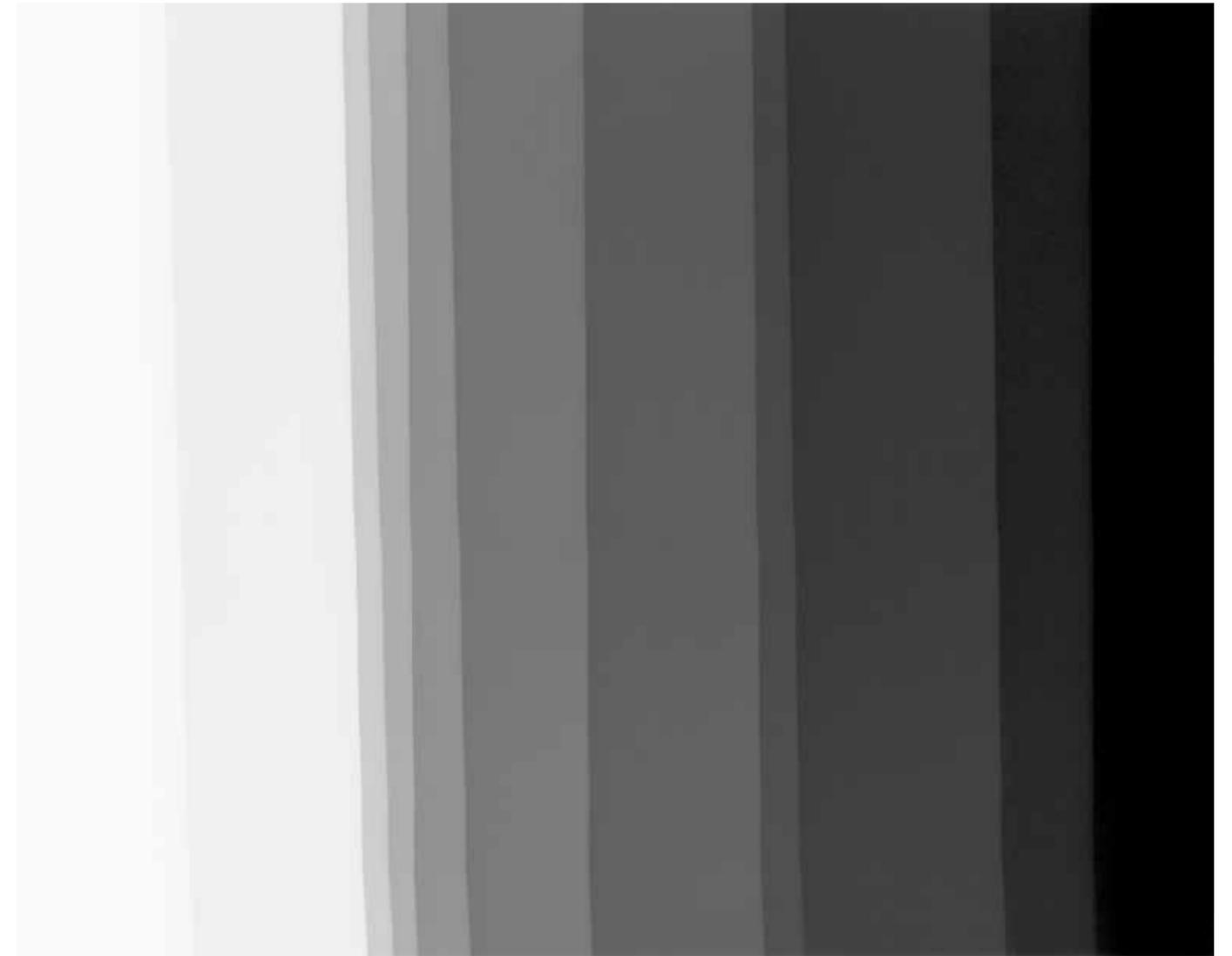
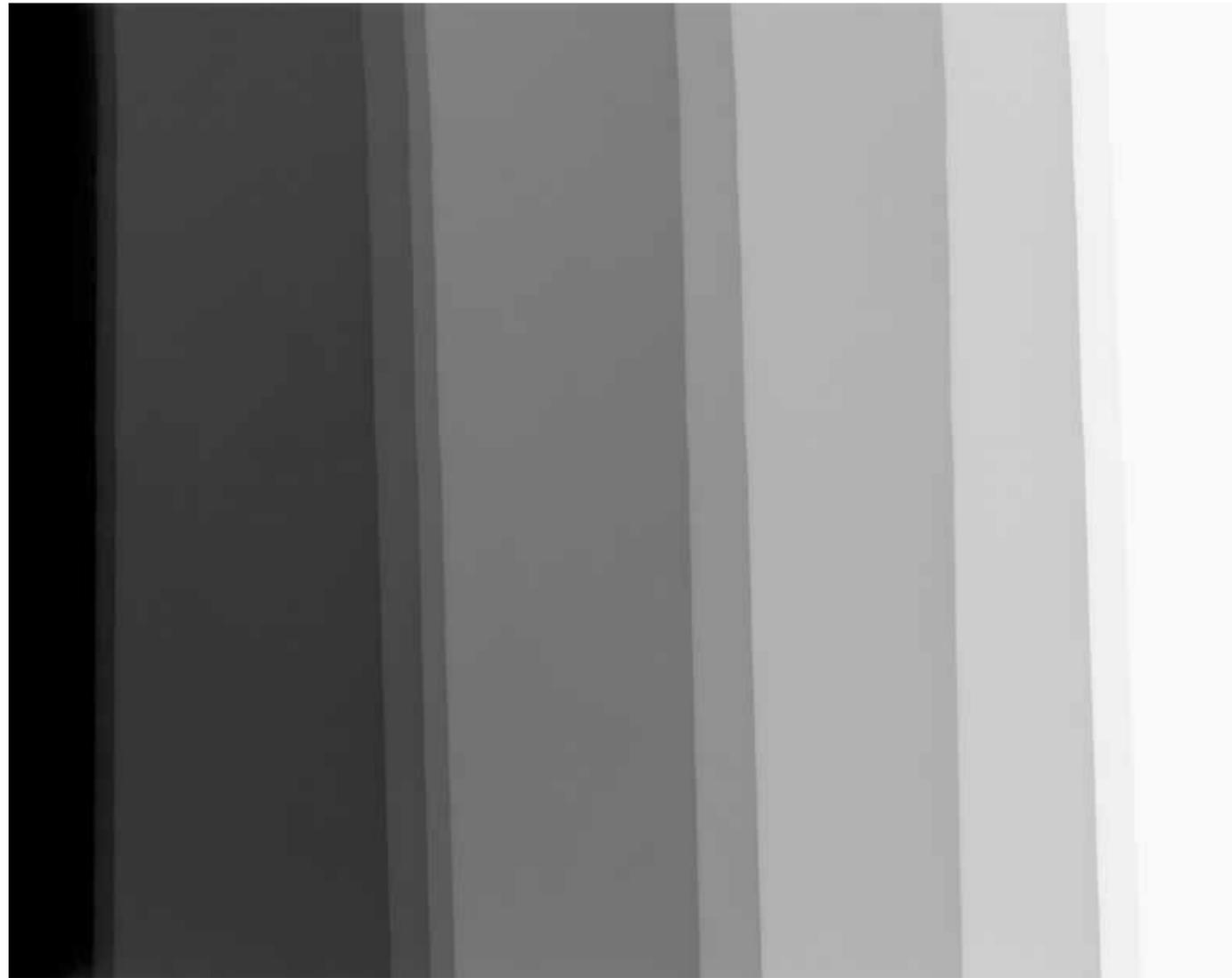
Silver Gelatin Photographs, 2011

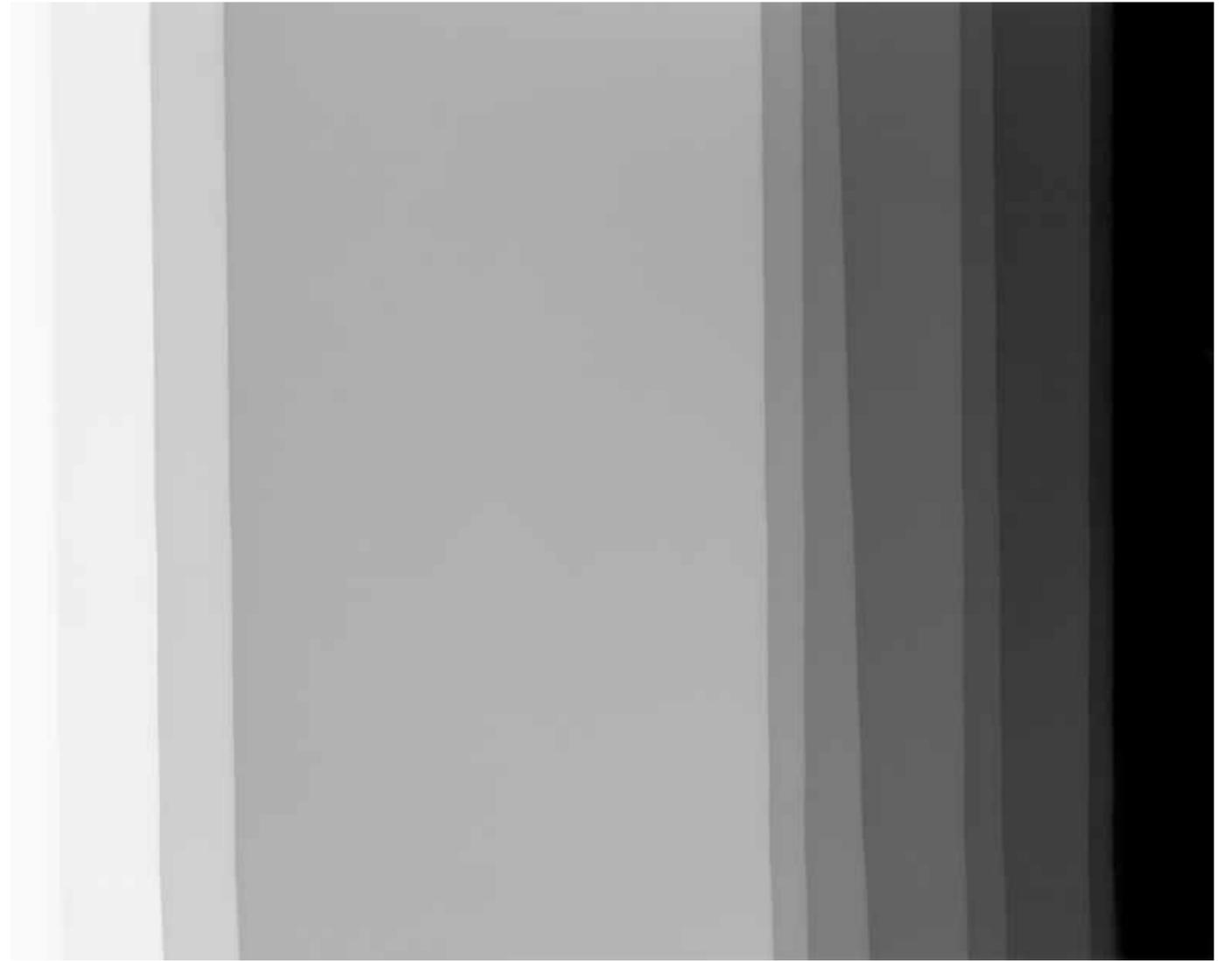
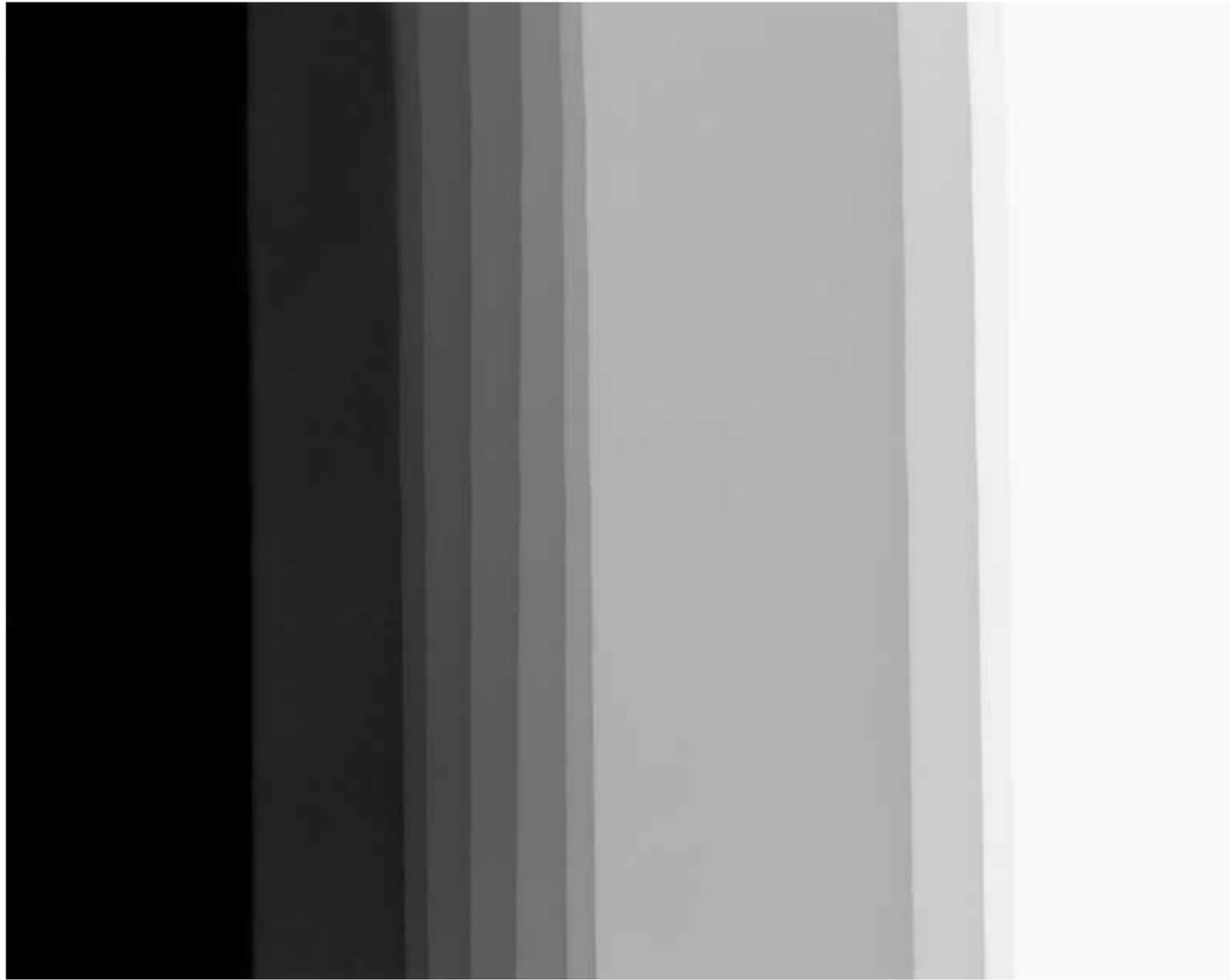


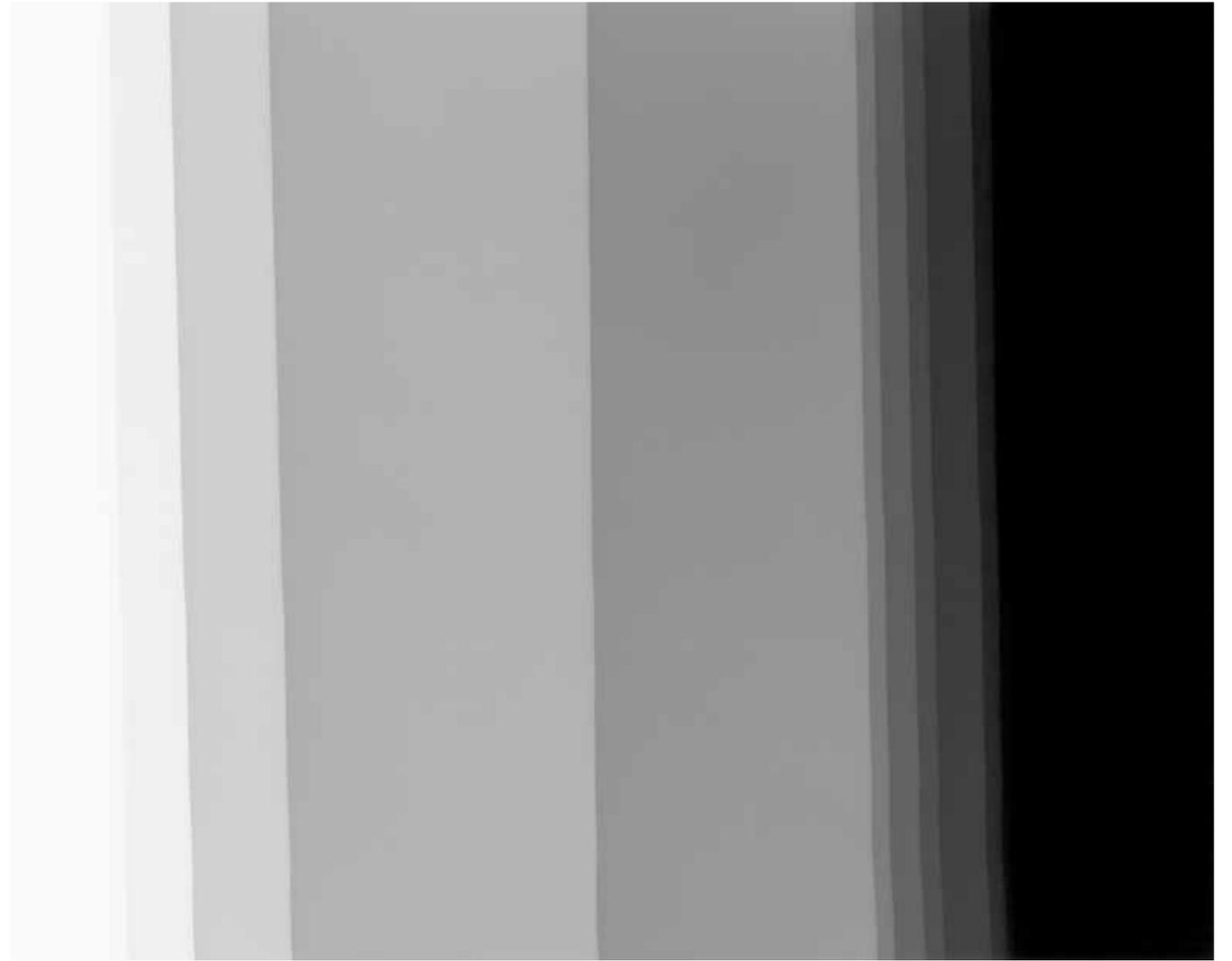


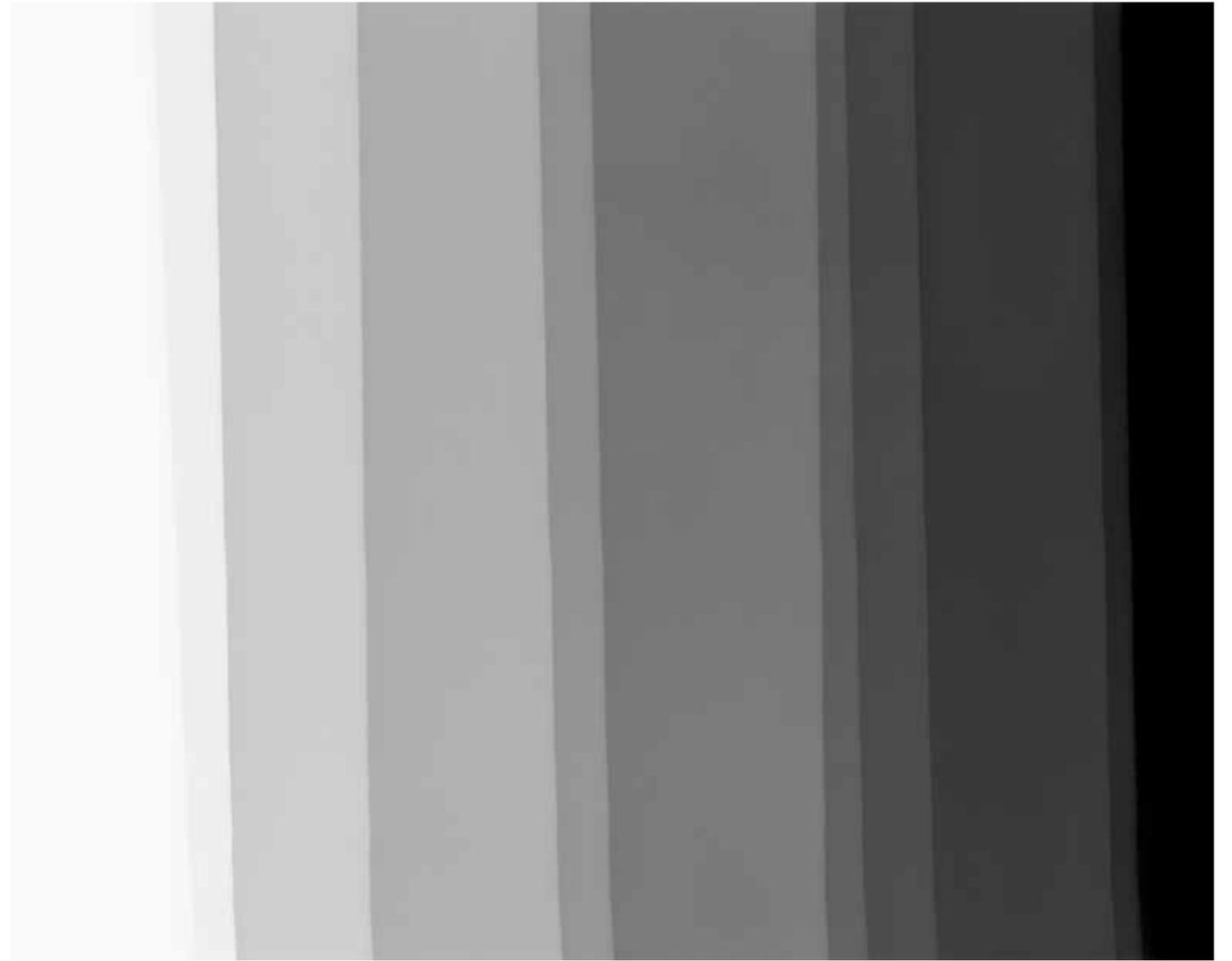
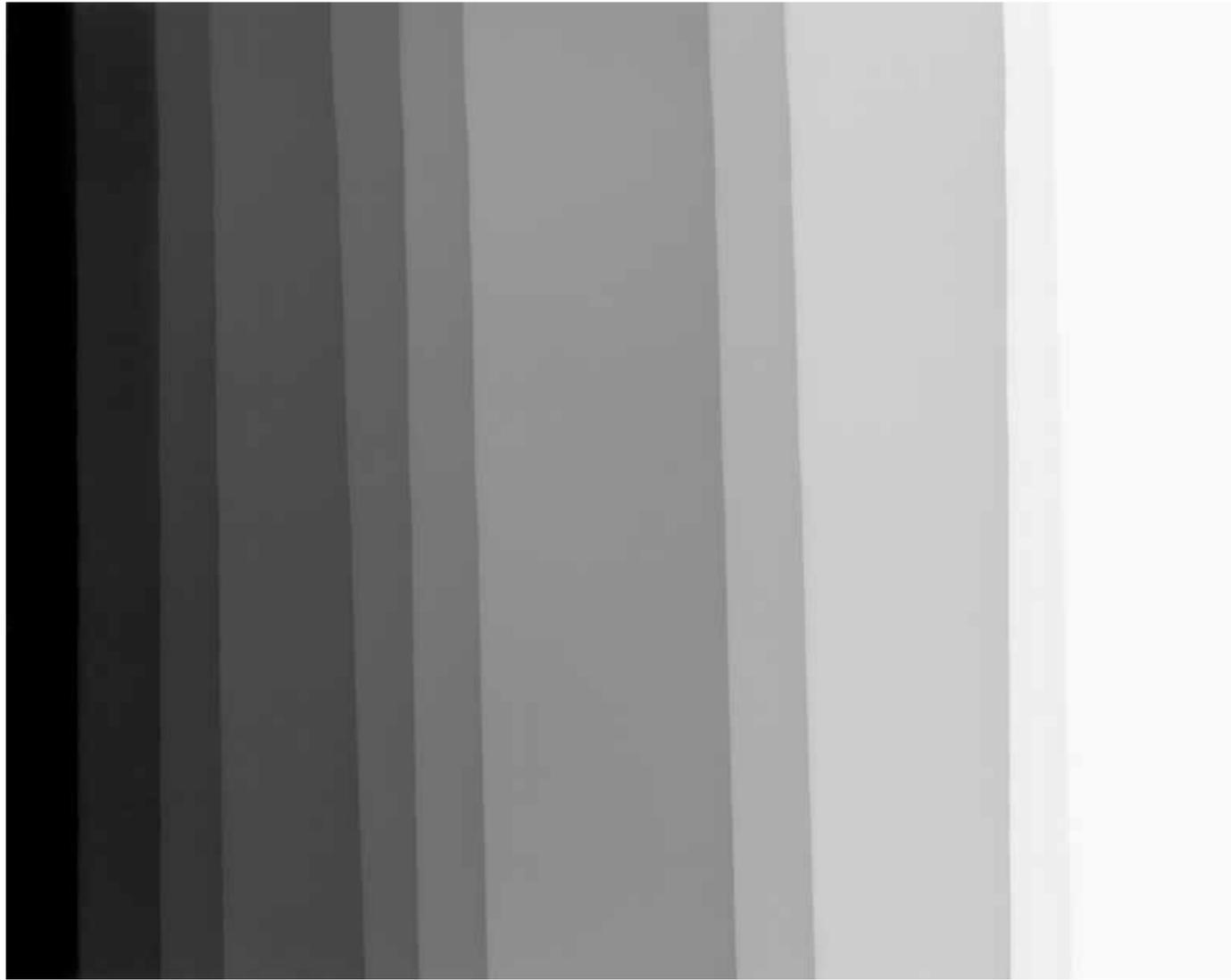


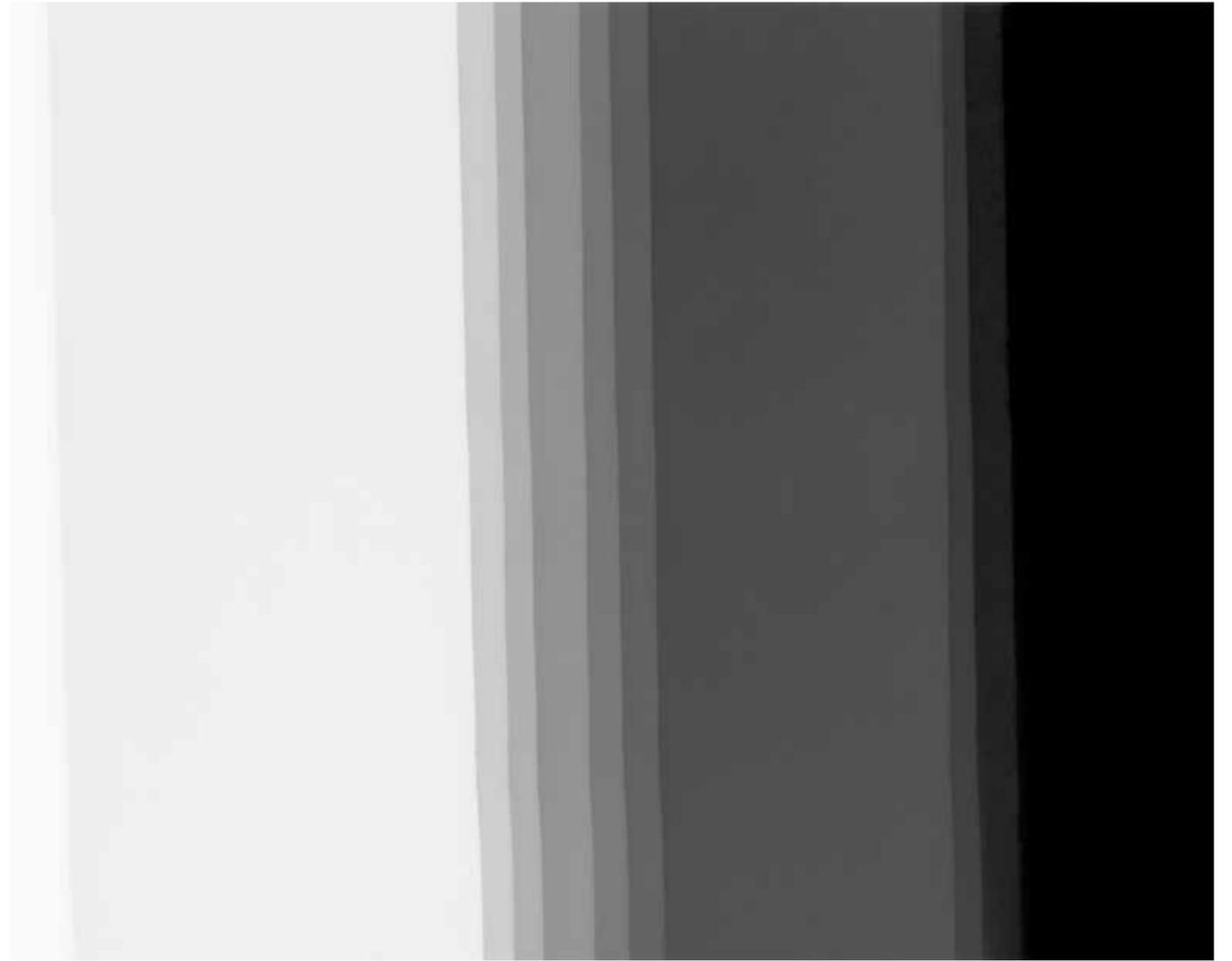
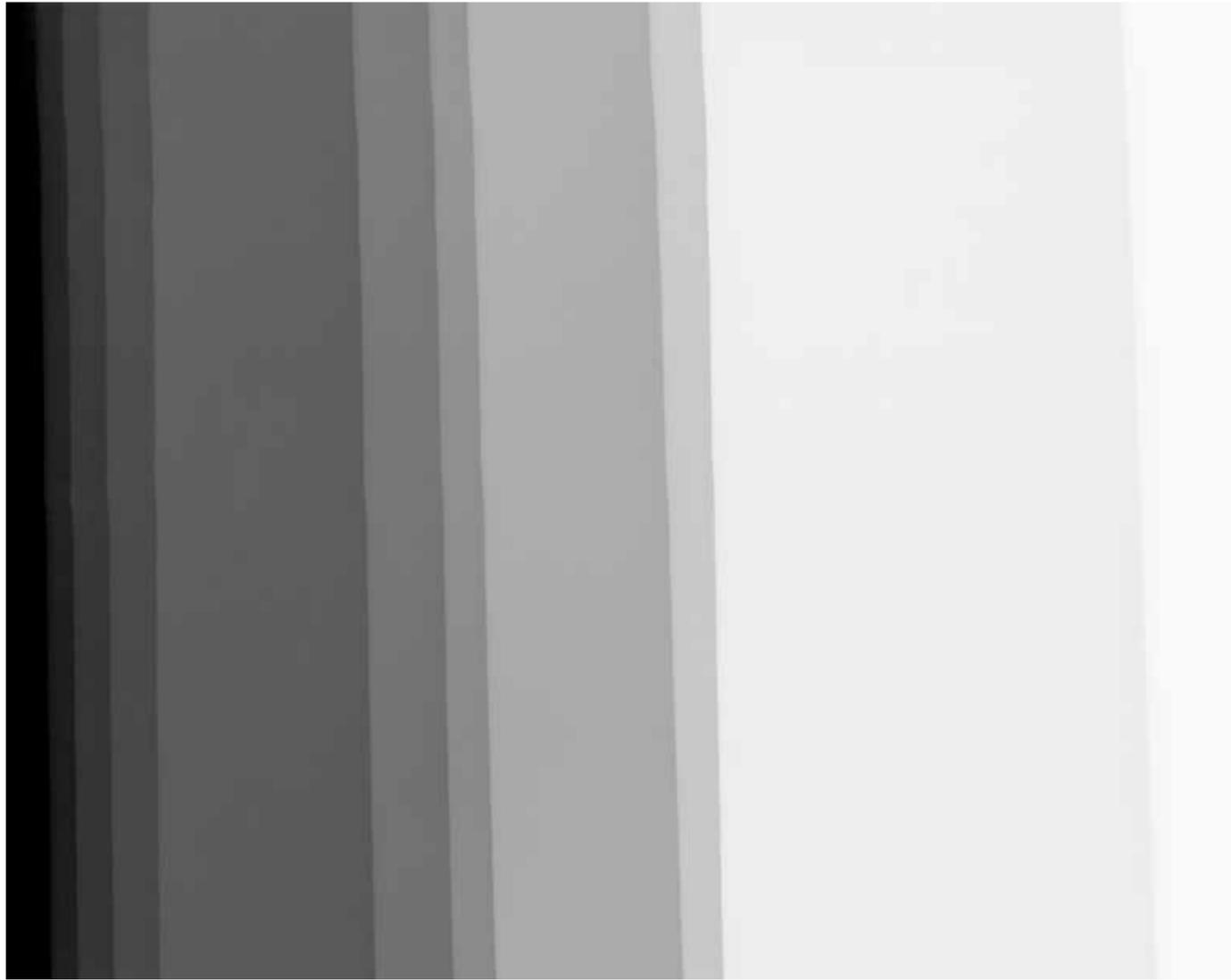




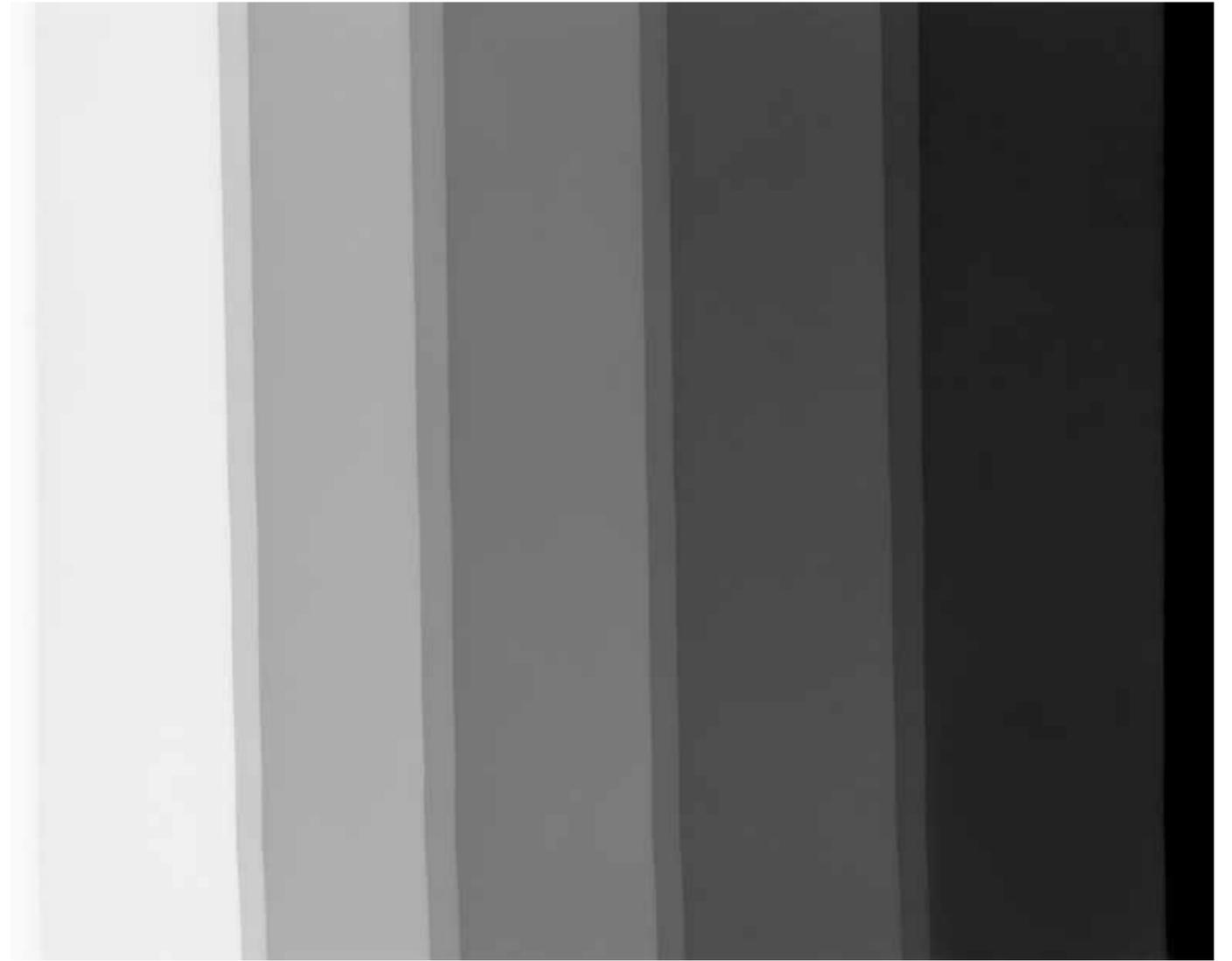
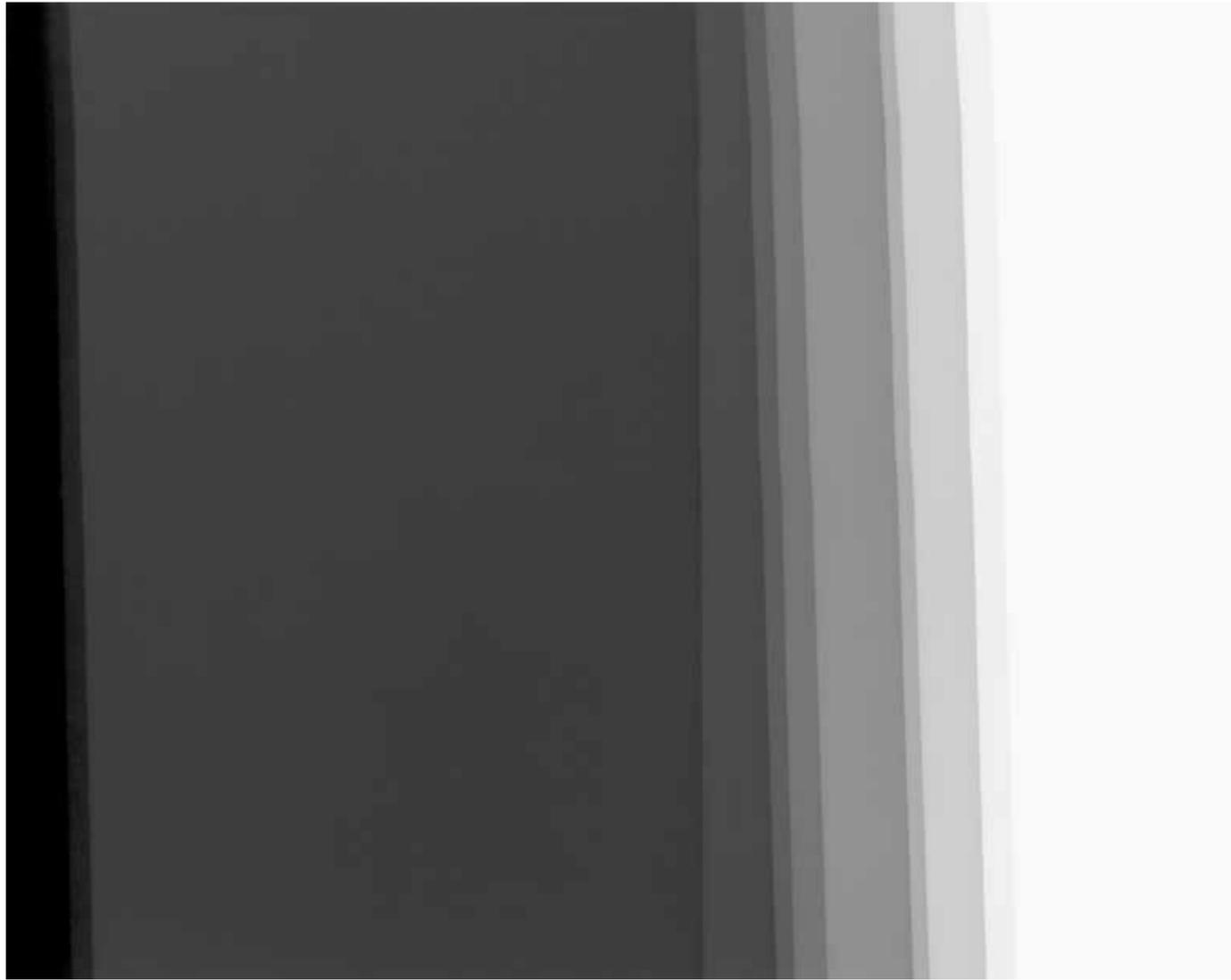


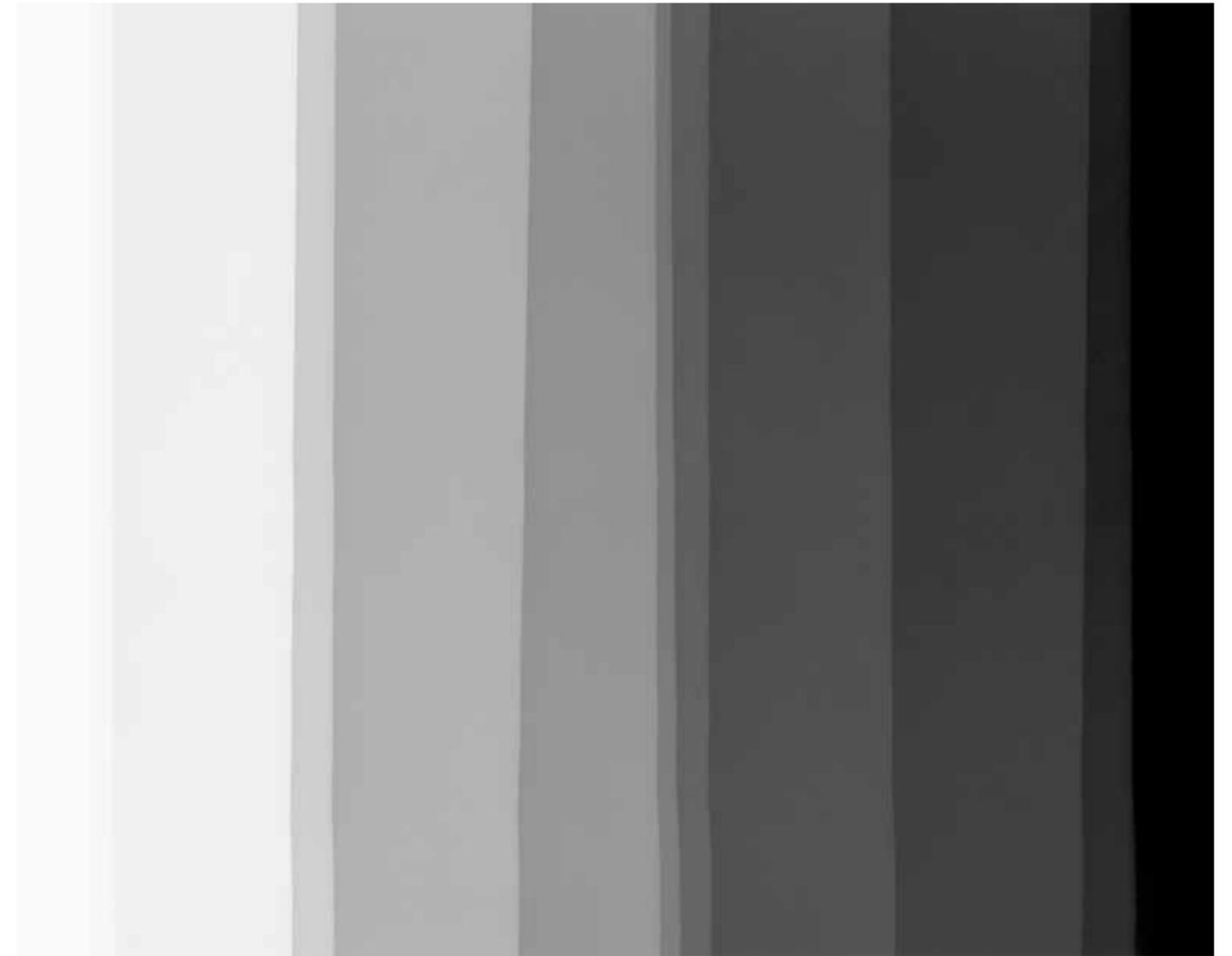
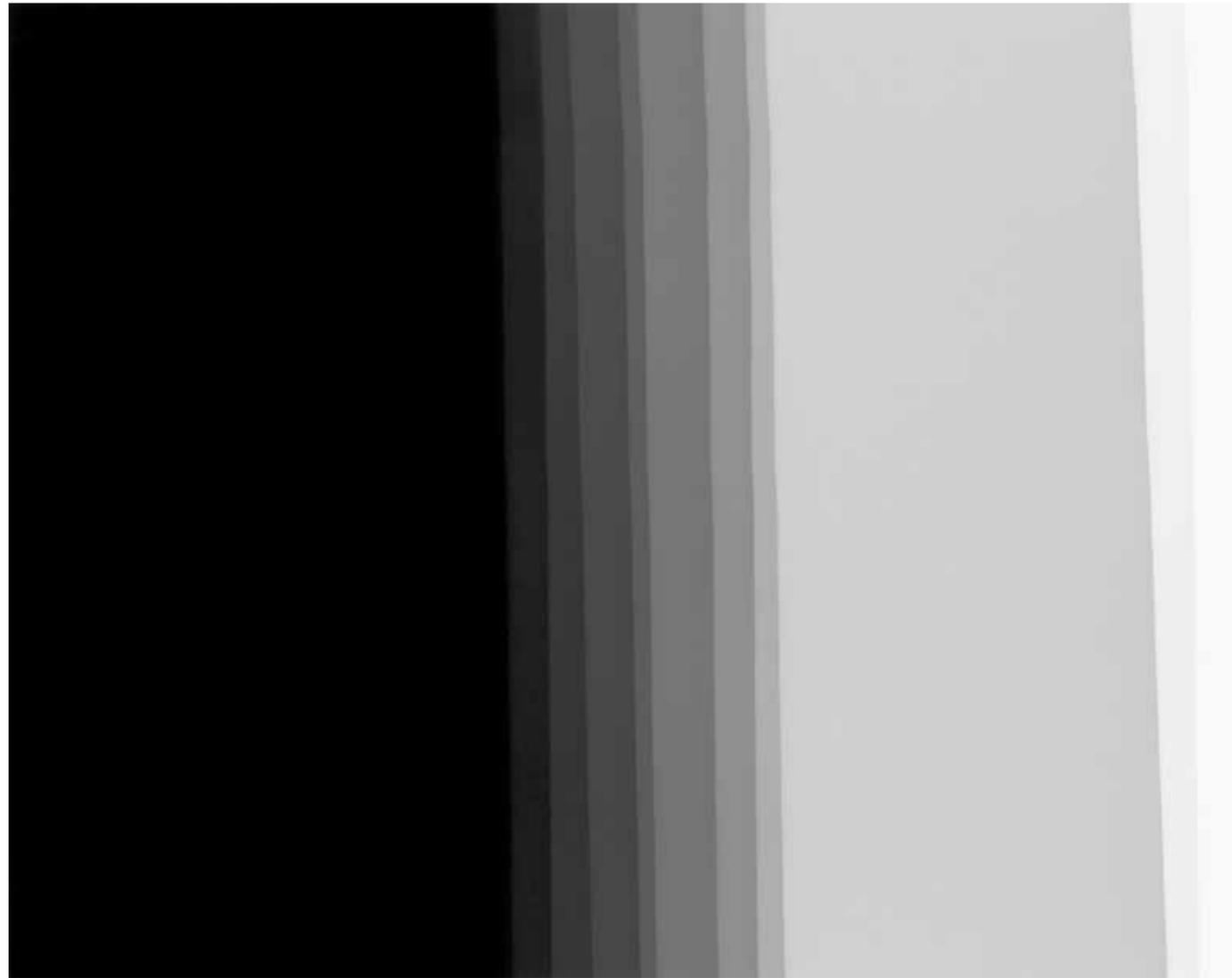


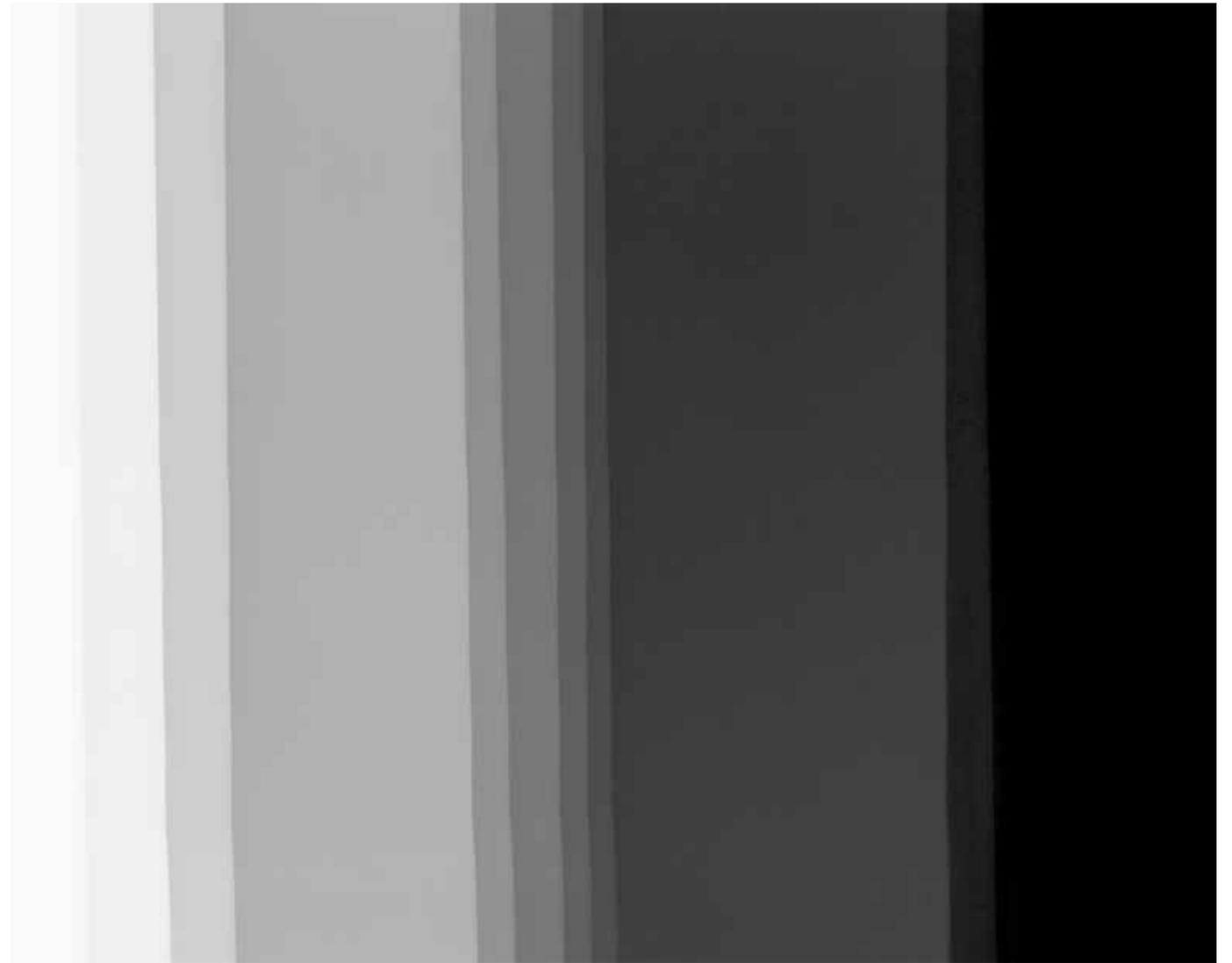
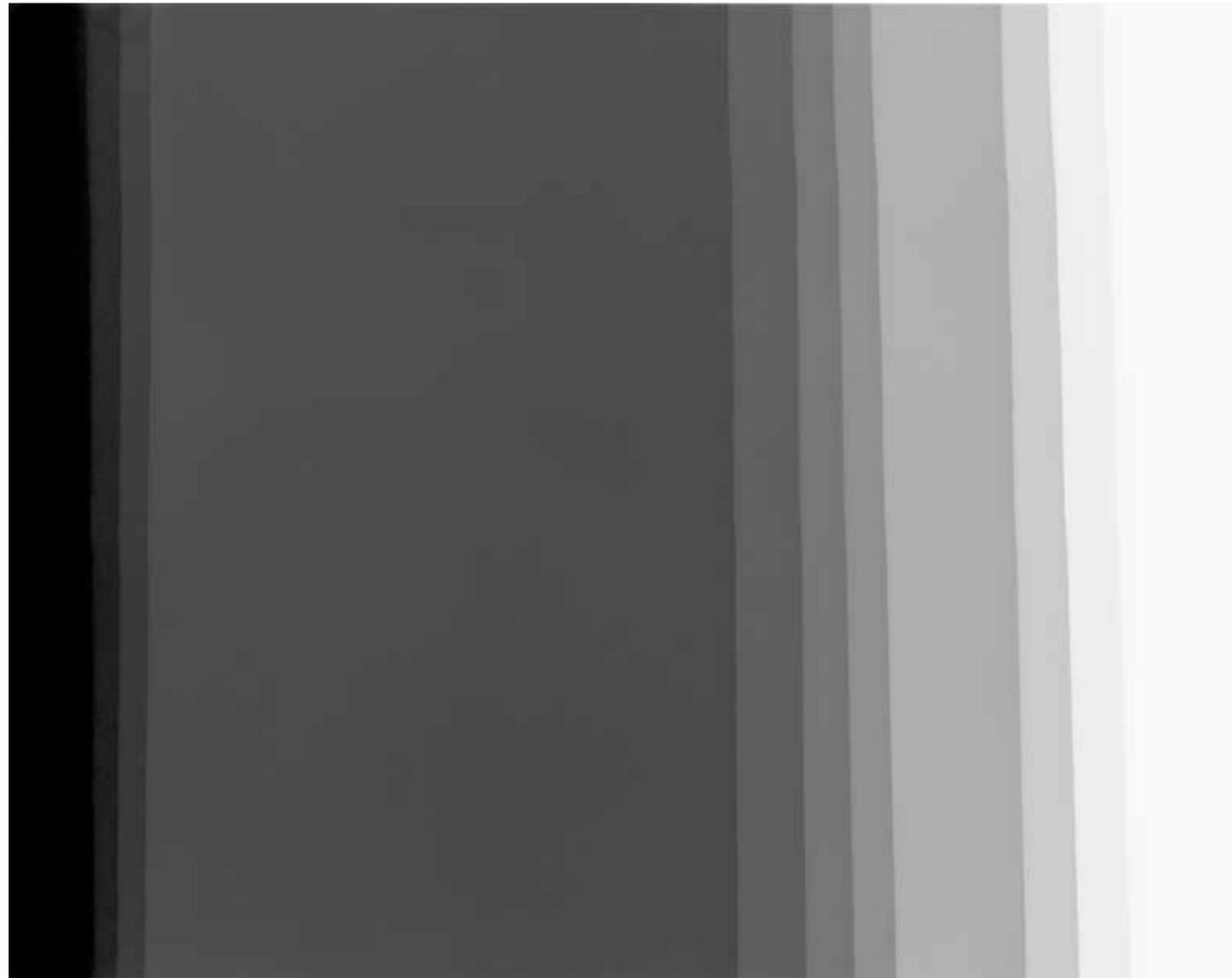


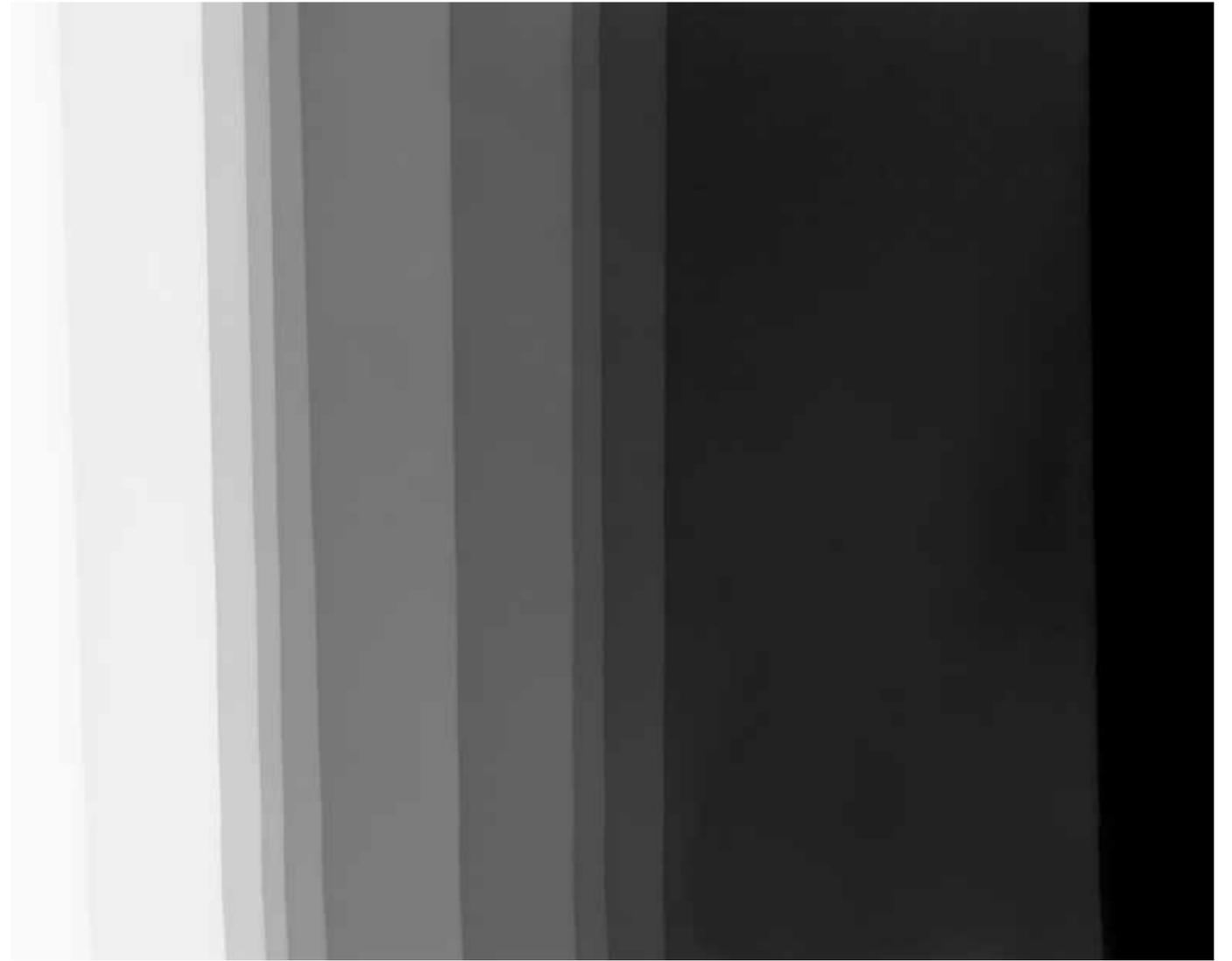
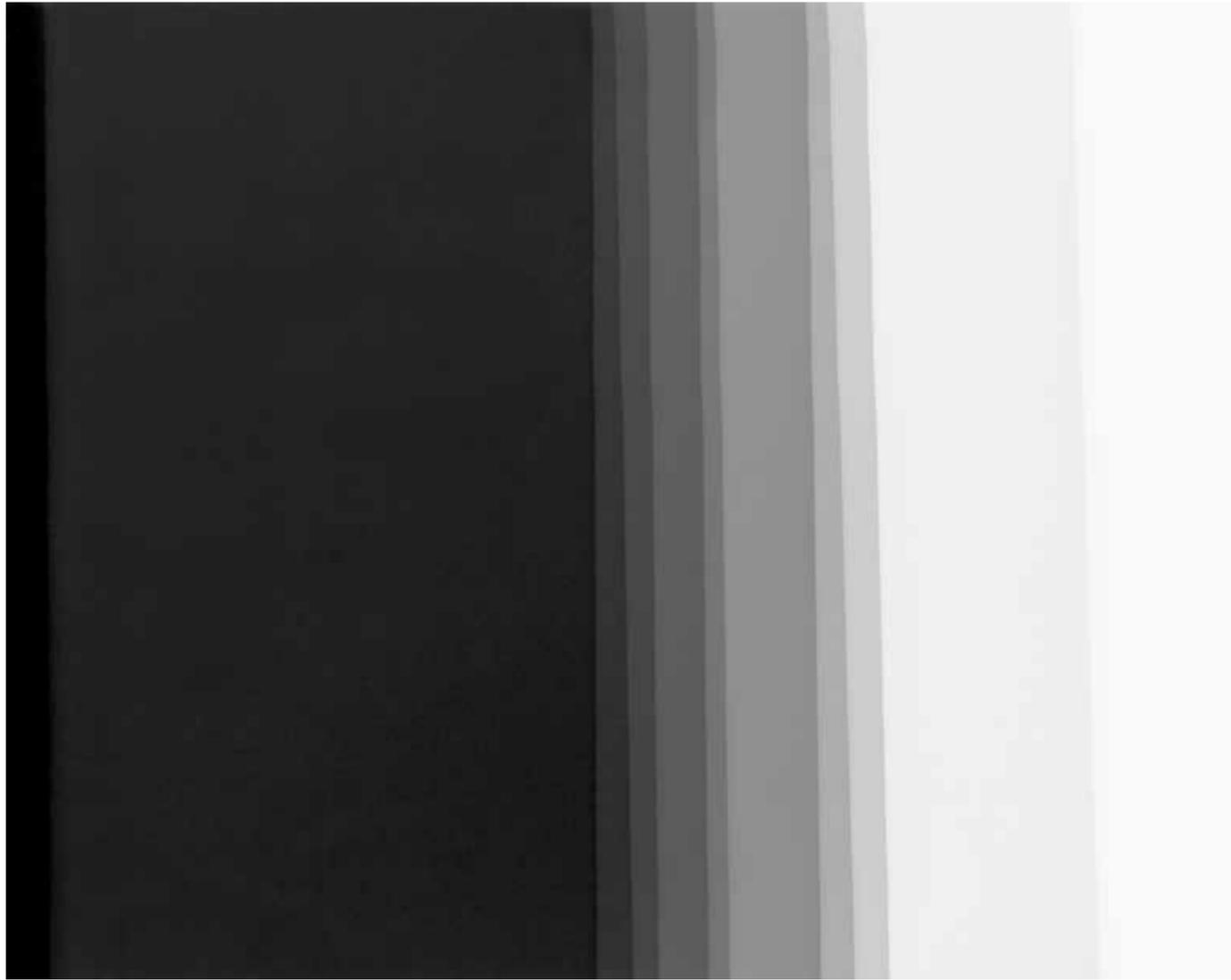


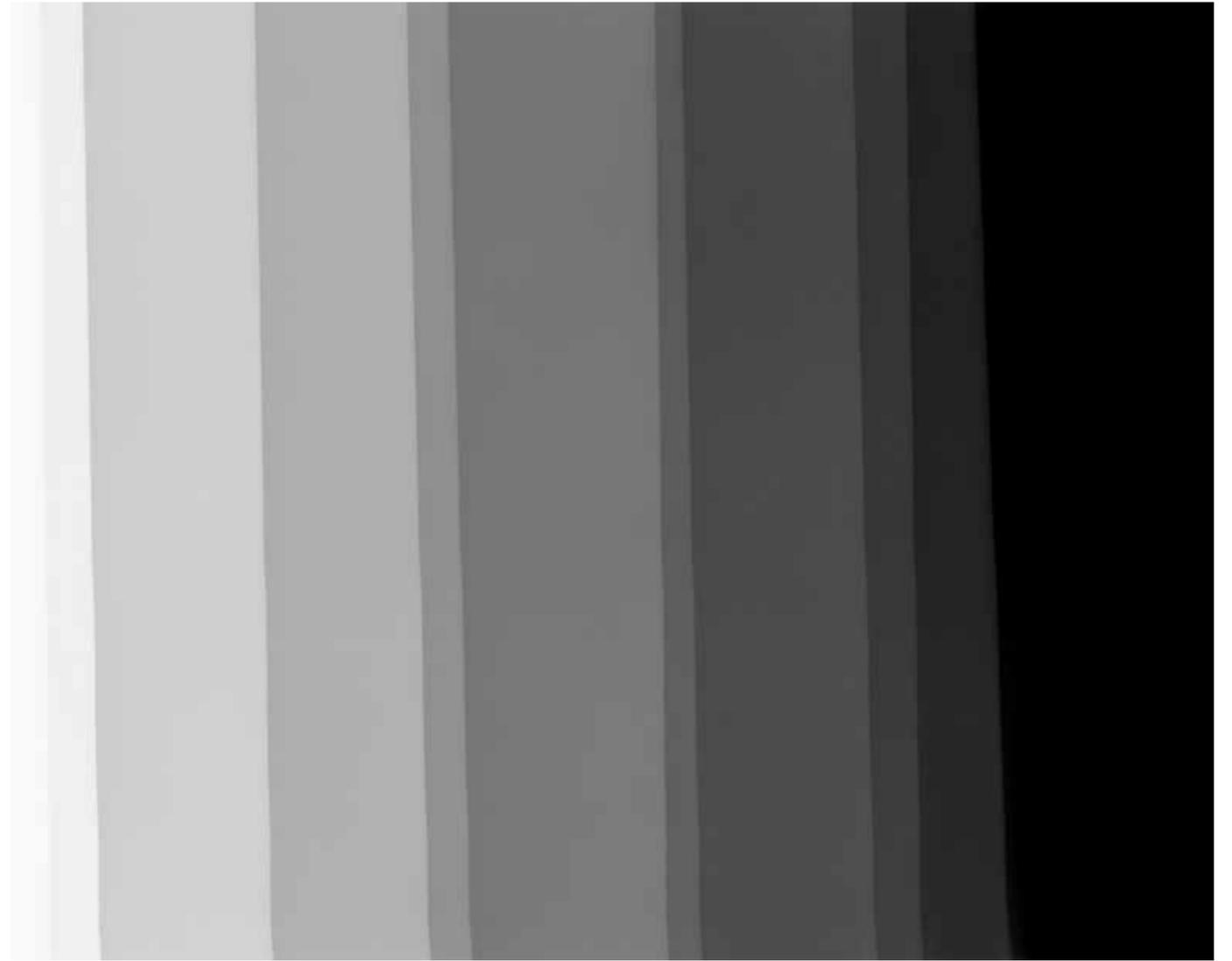
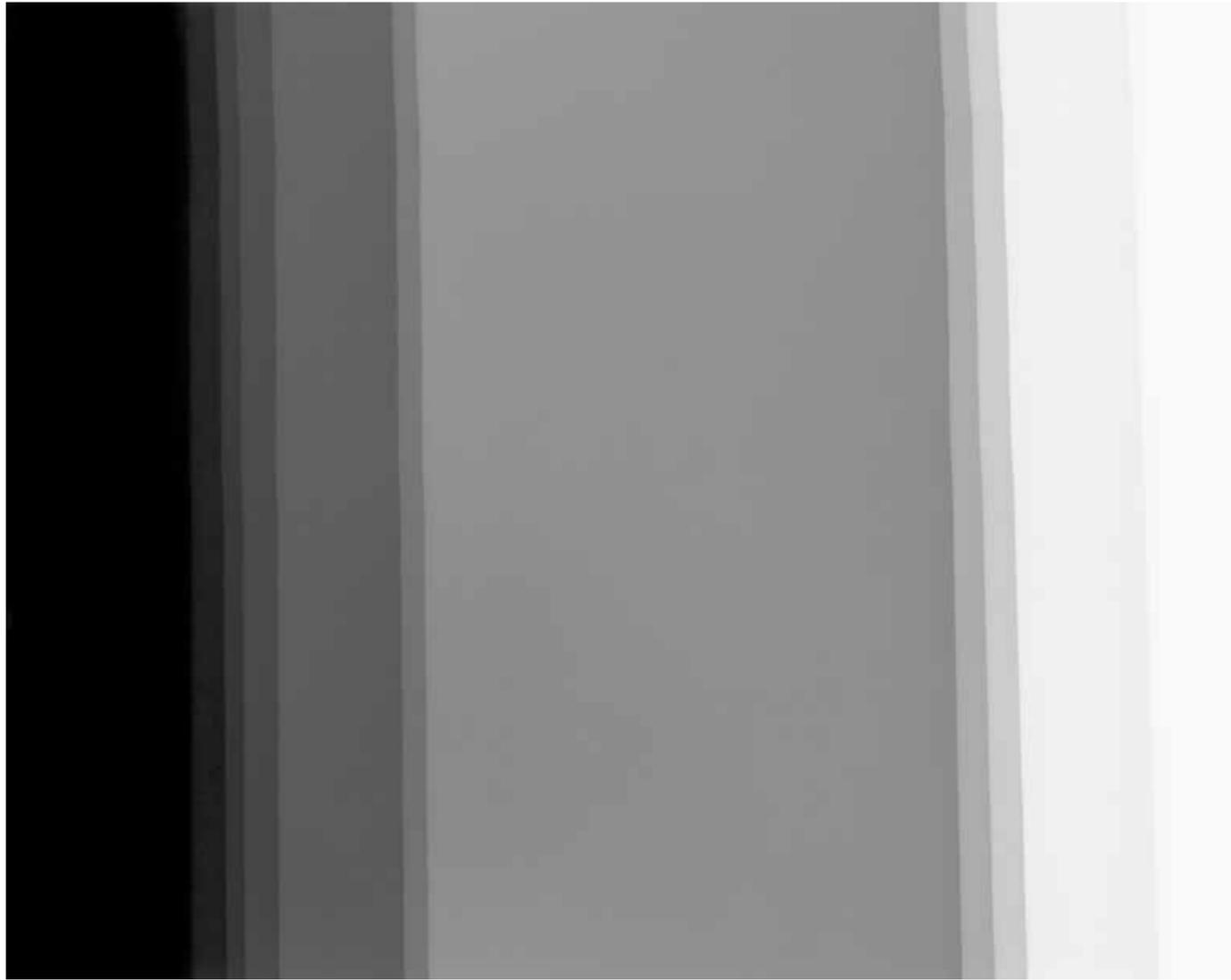


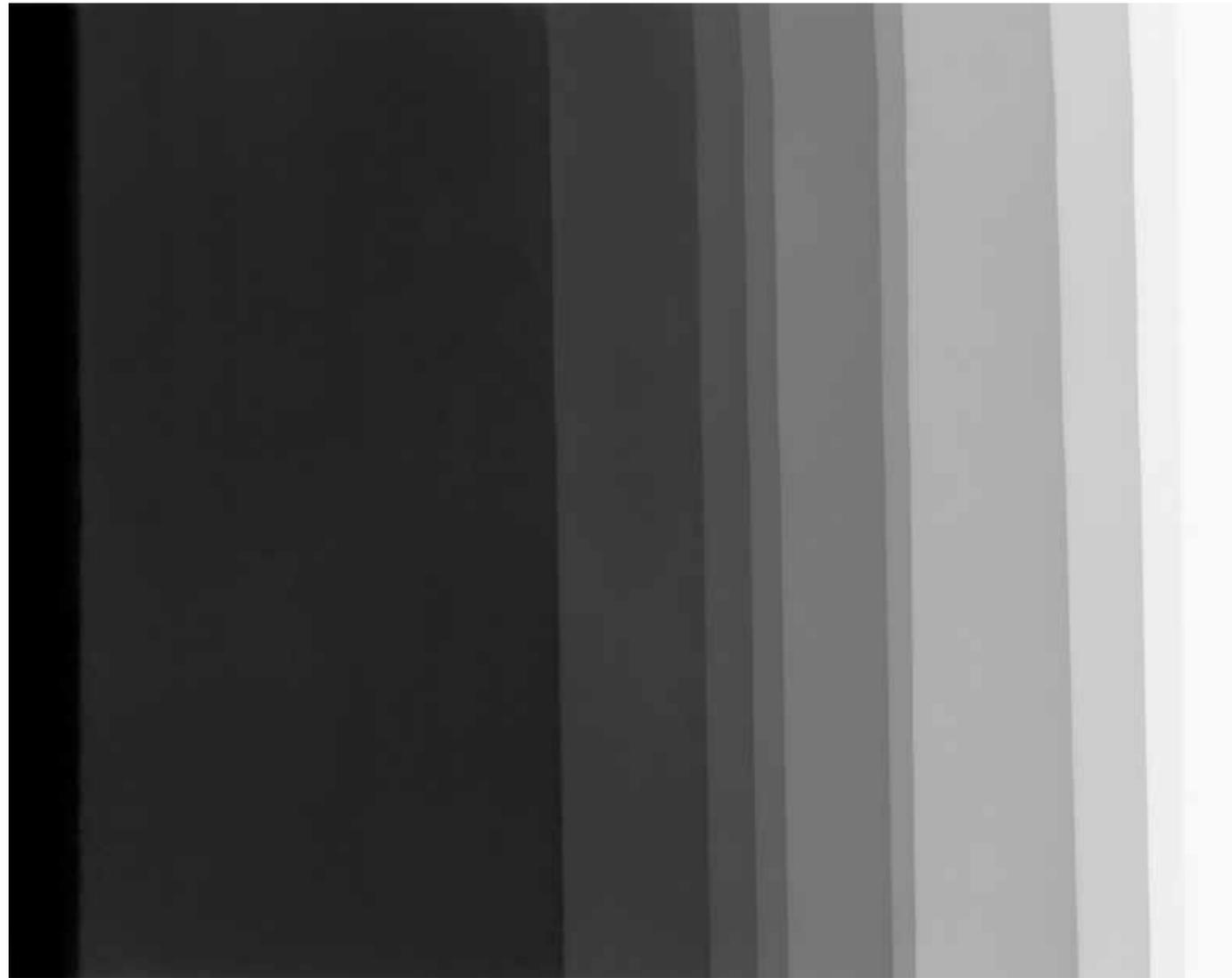


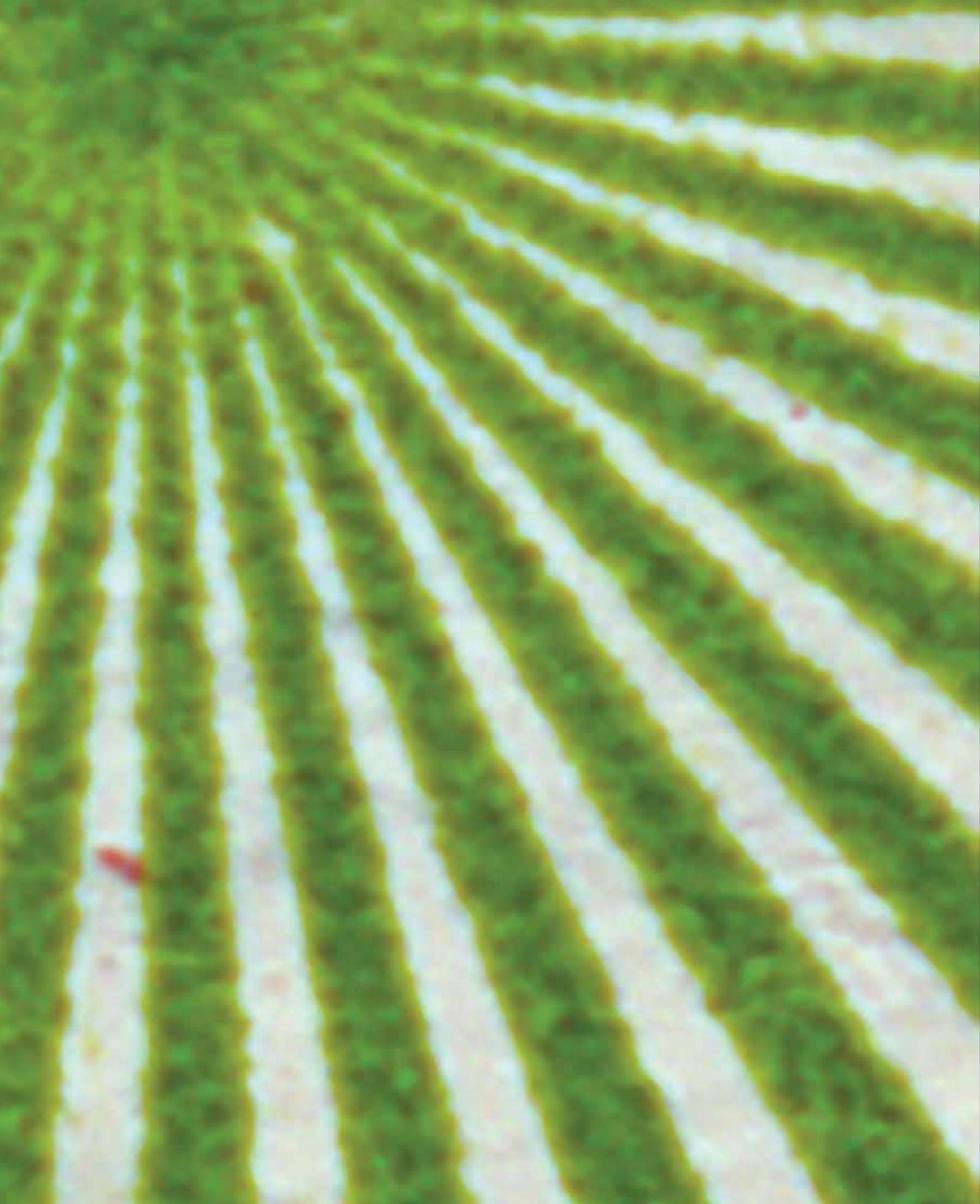








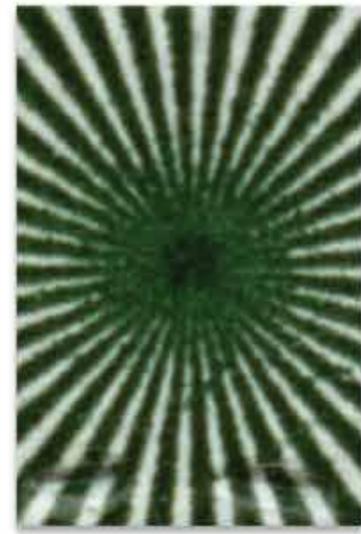
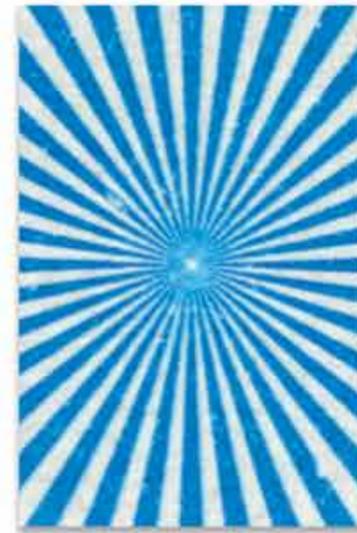
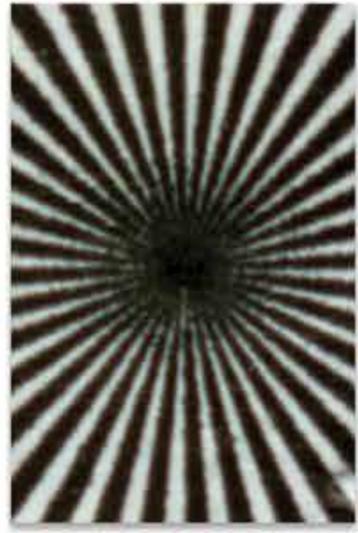
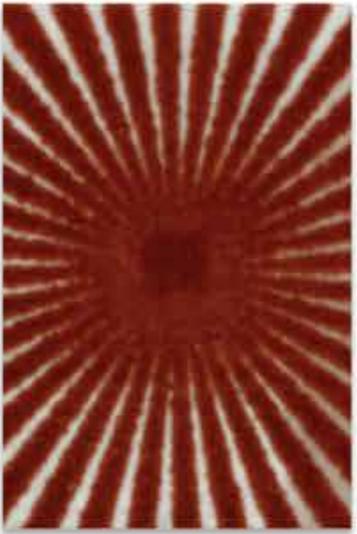
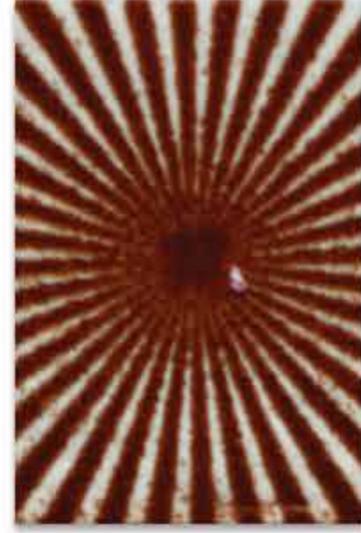
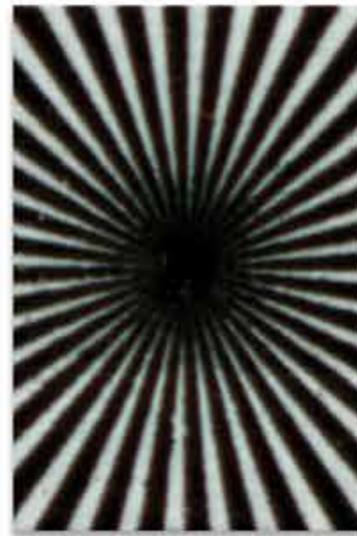
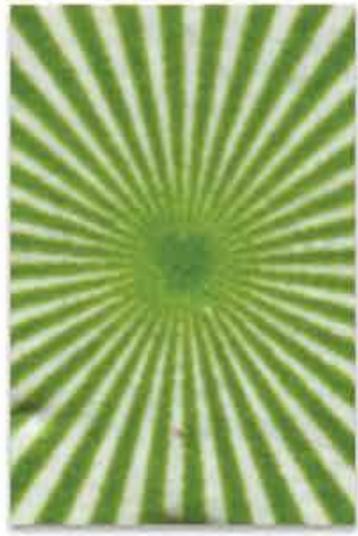
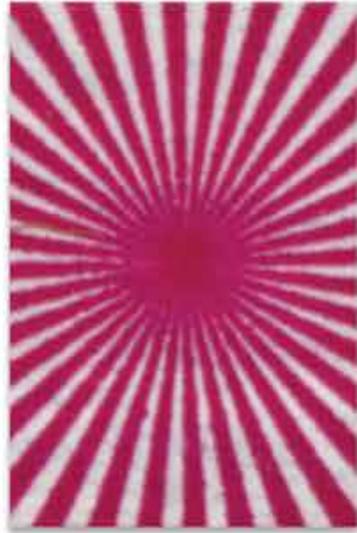
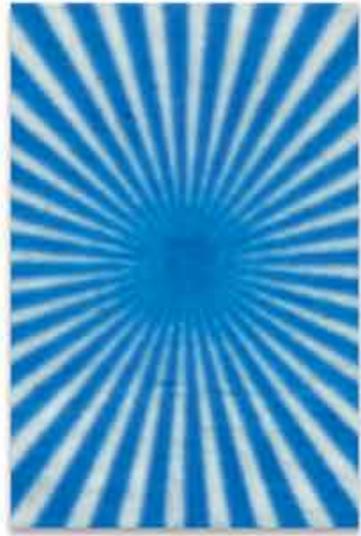


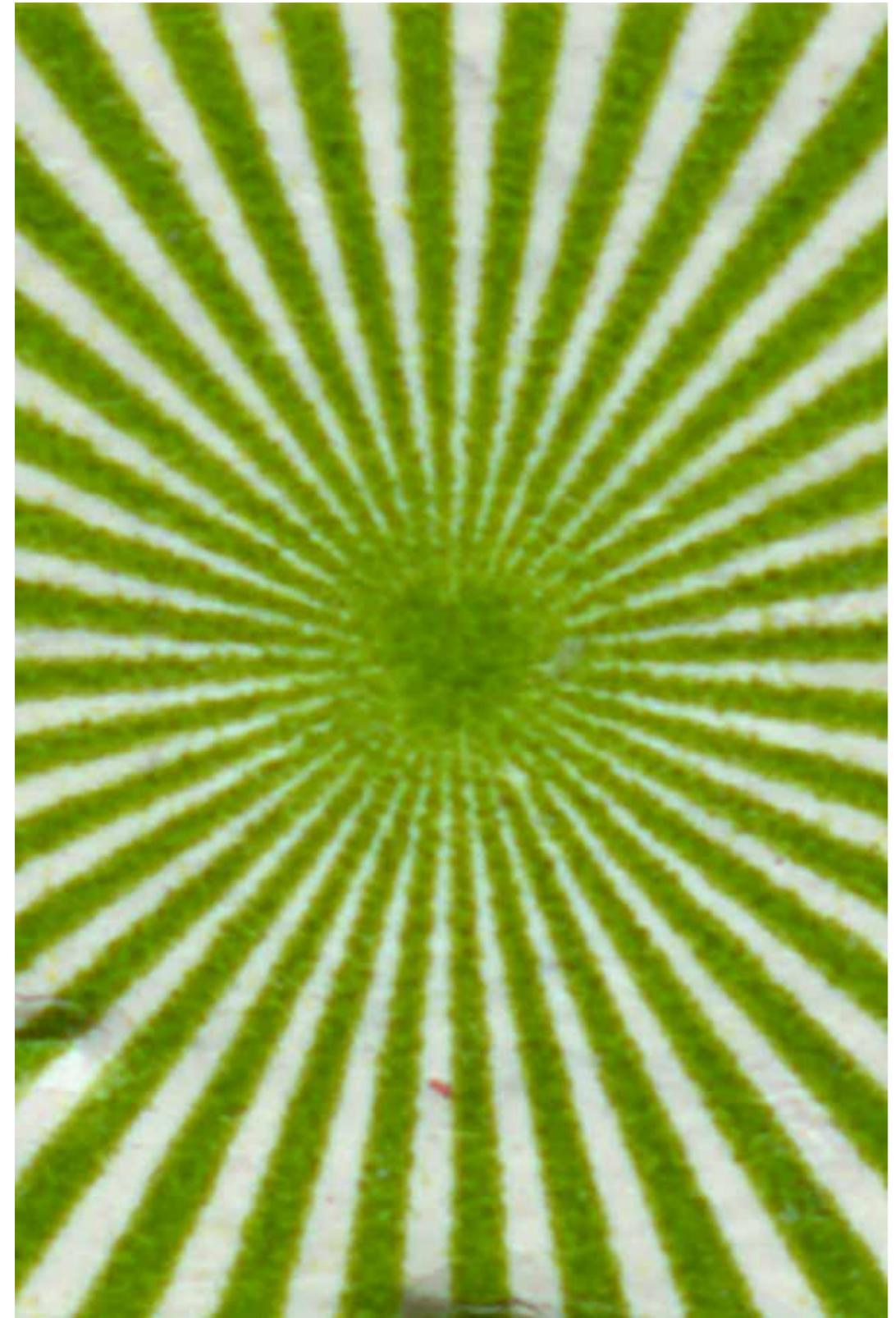
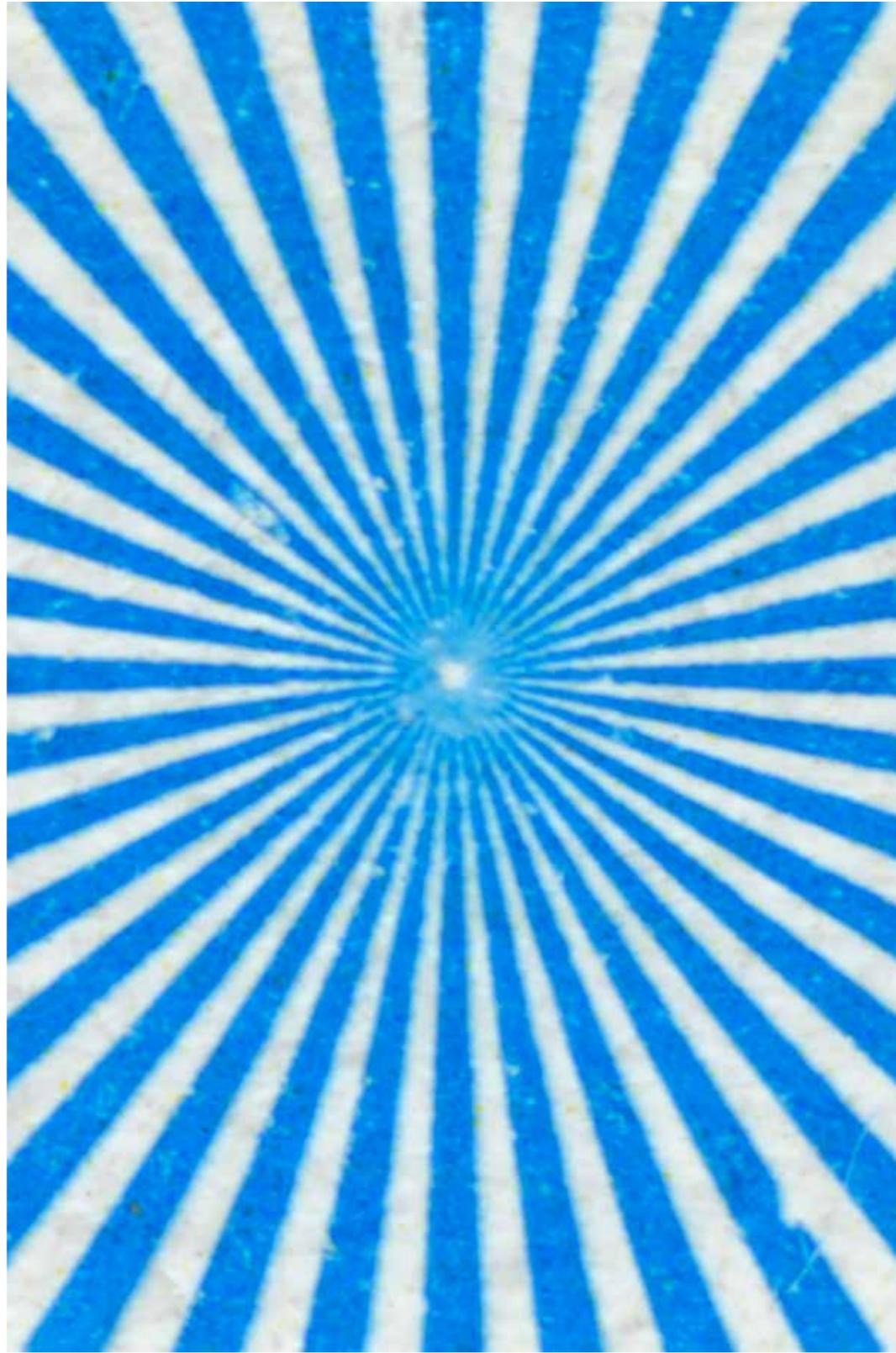


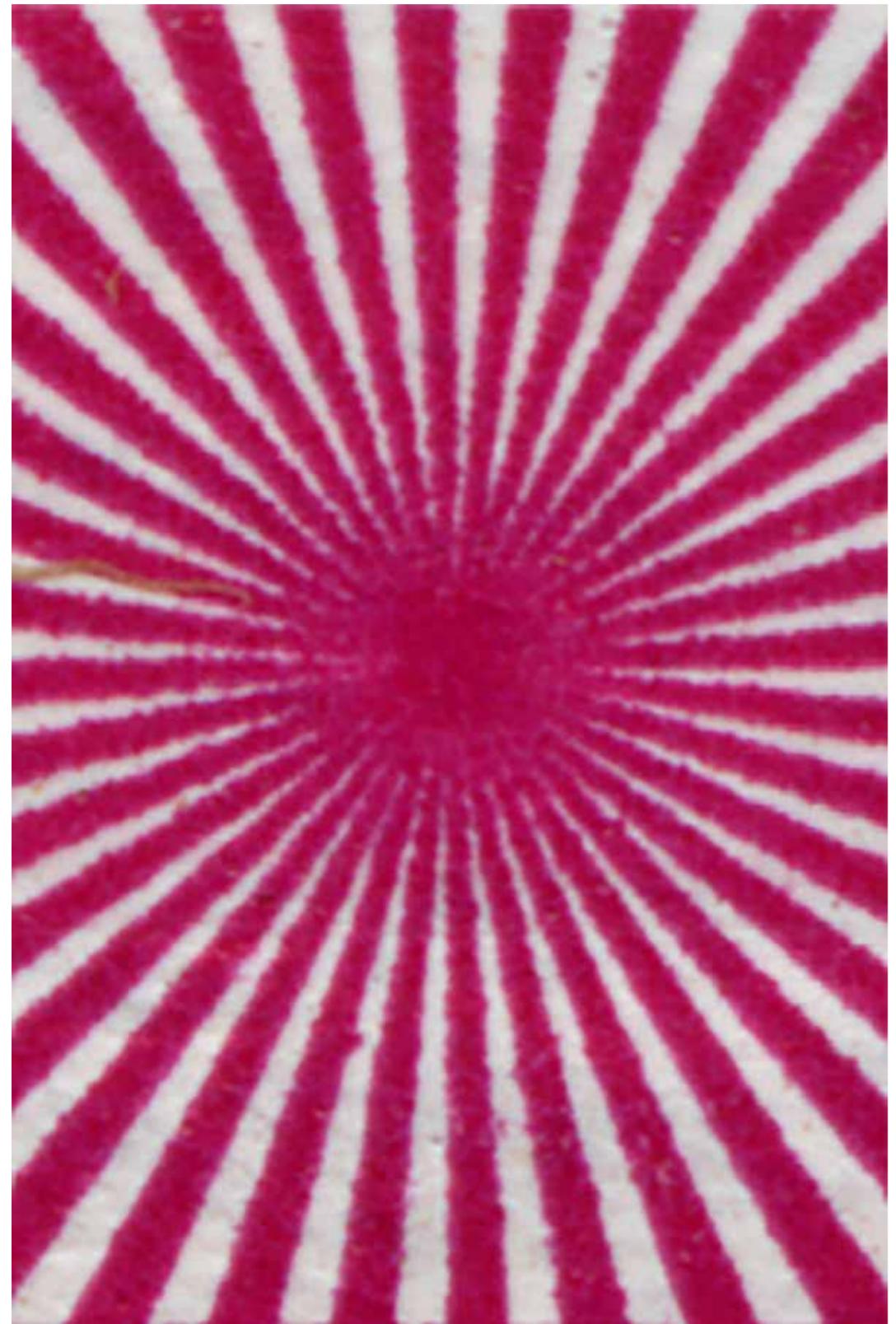
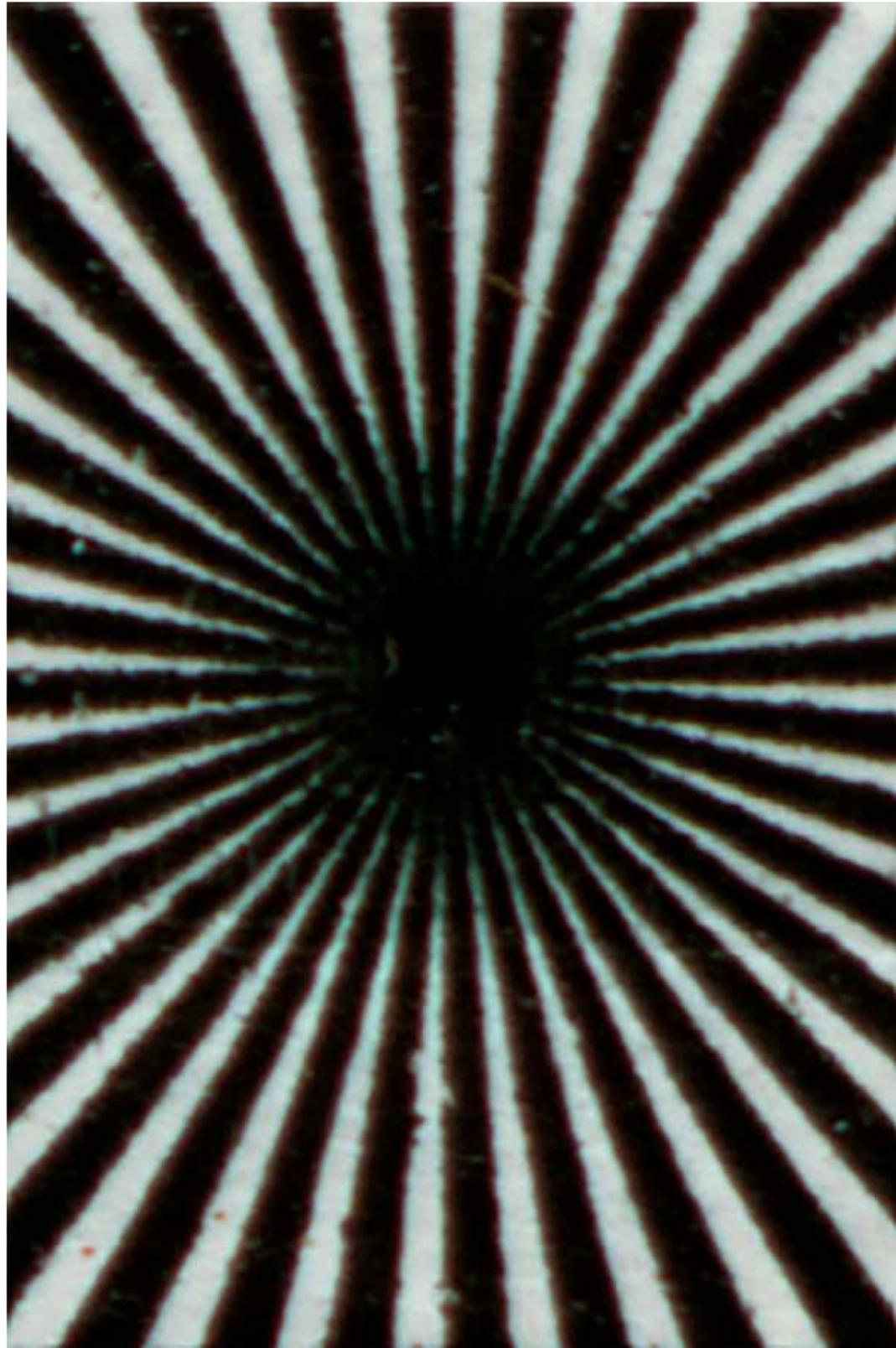
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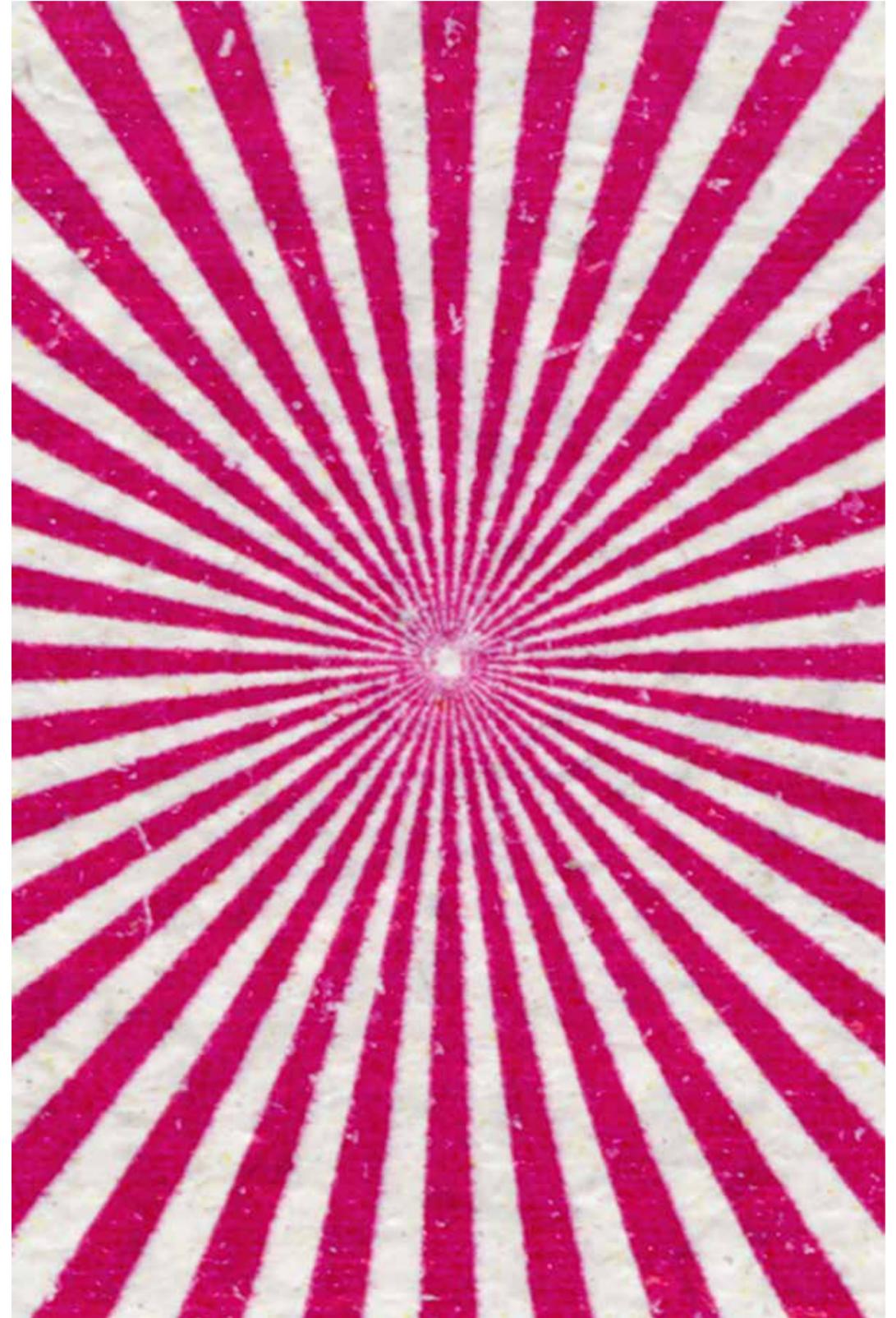
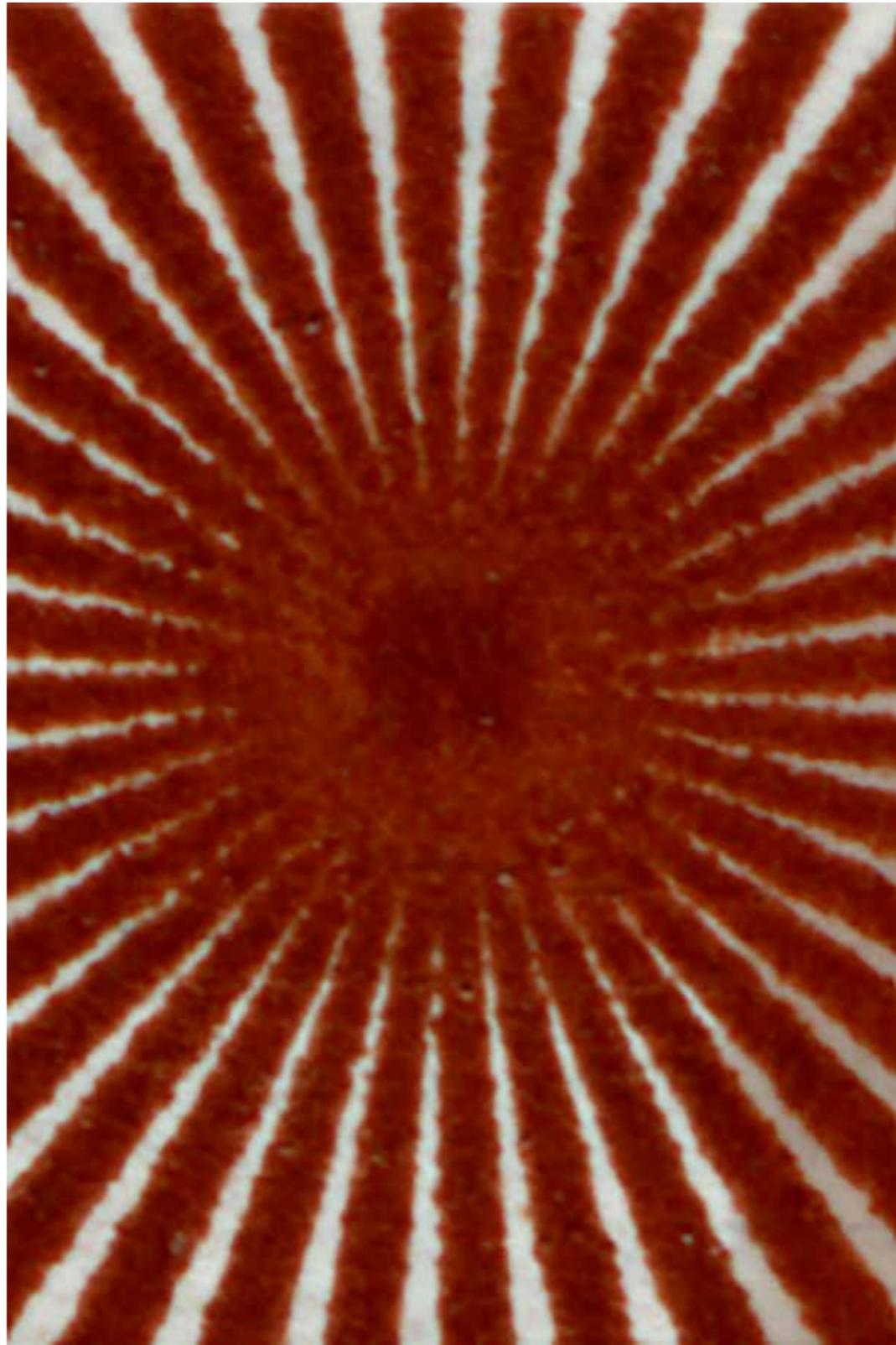
## Details: Utilitarian Abstraction

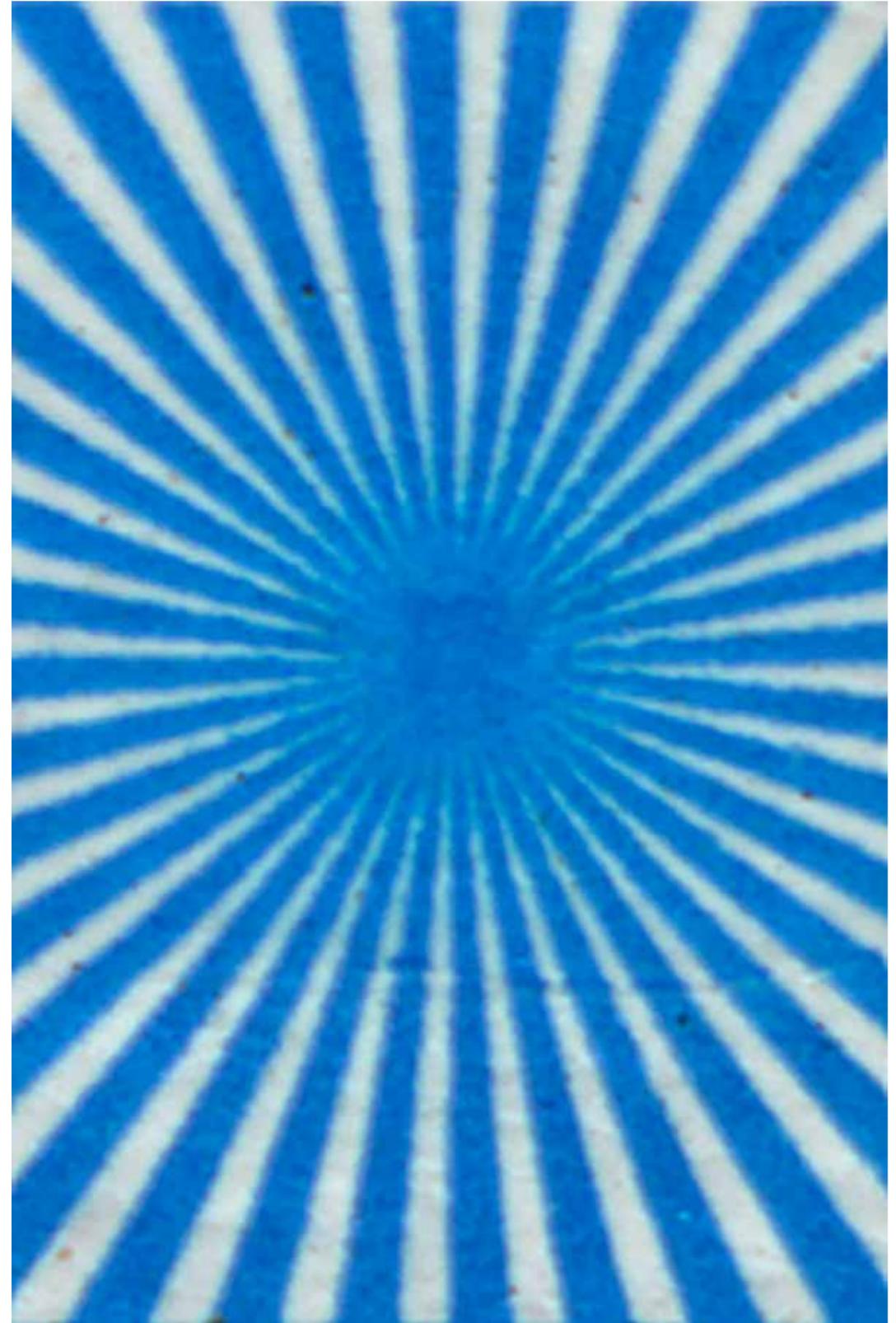
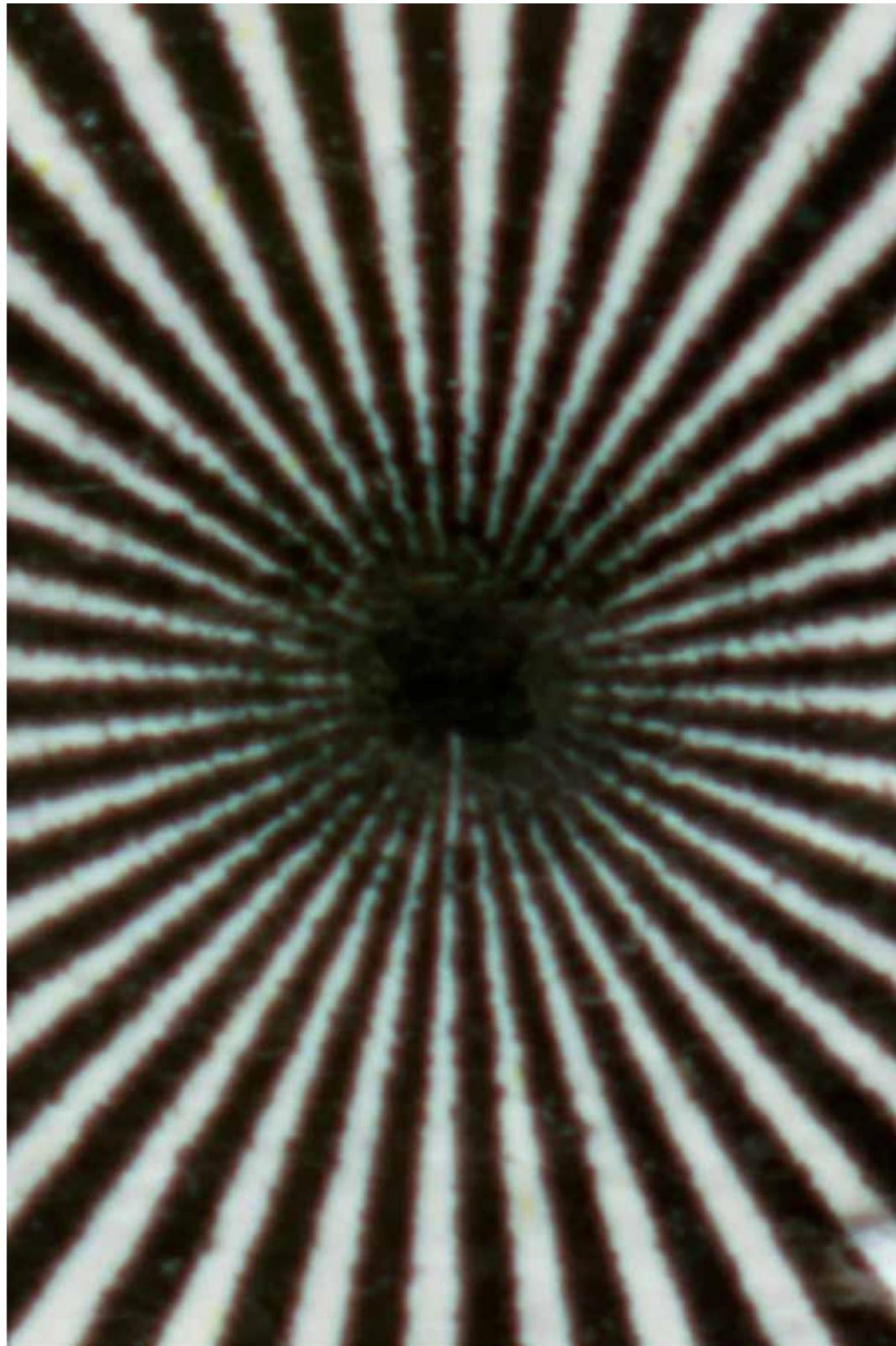
Archival Pigment Prints, 2015–ongoing

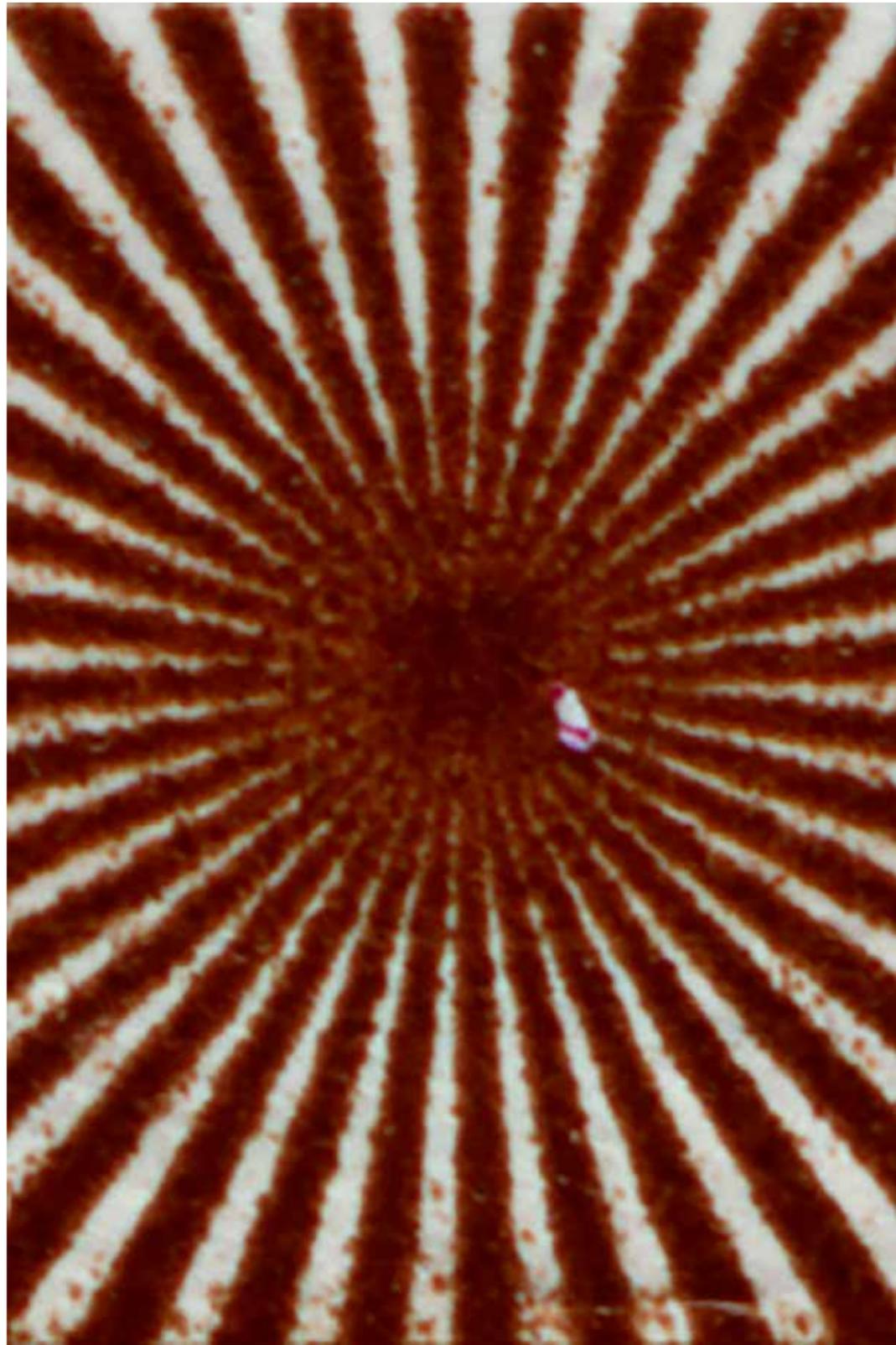


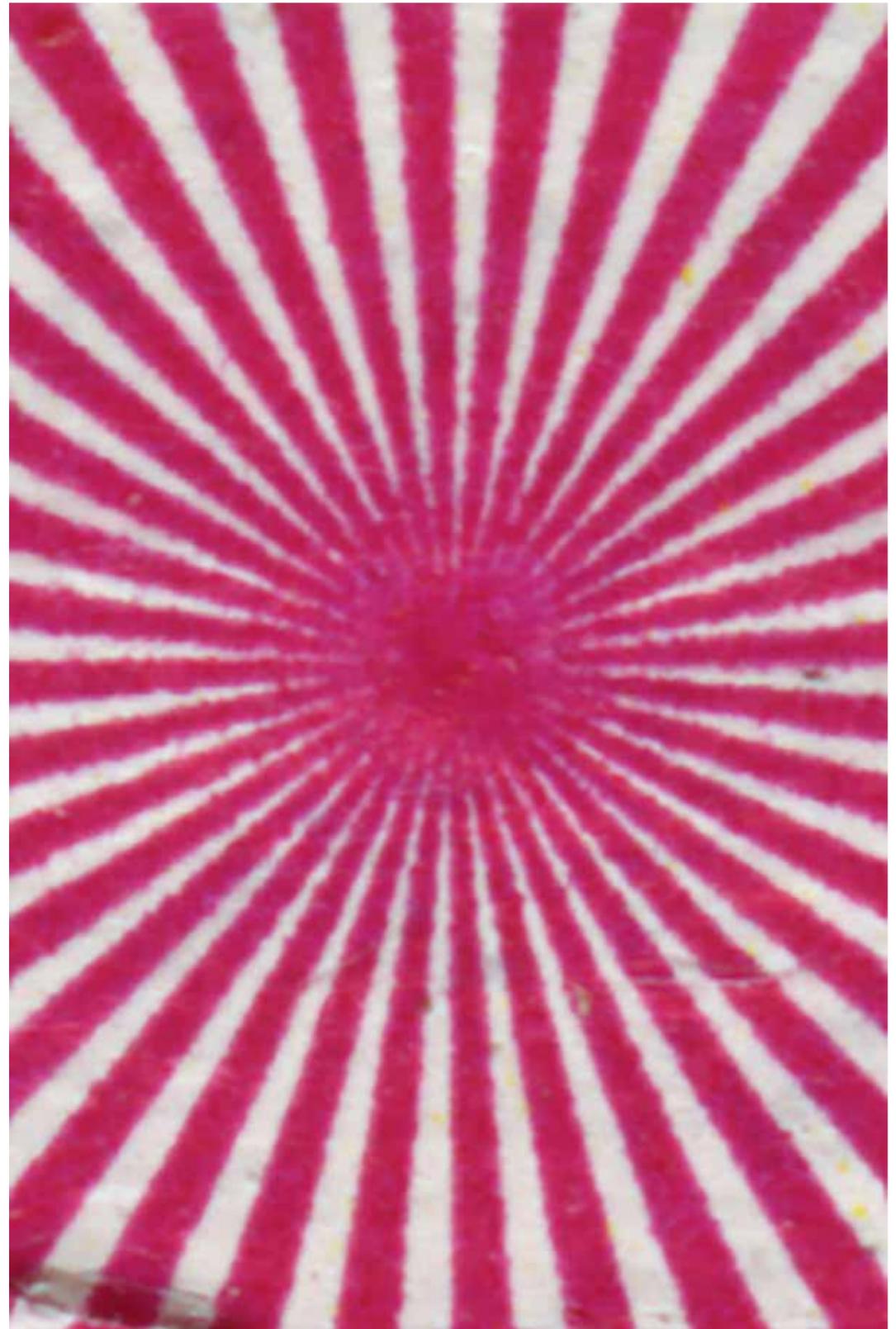
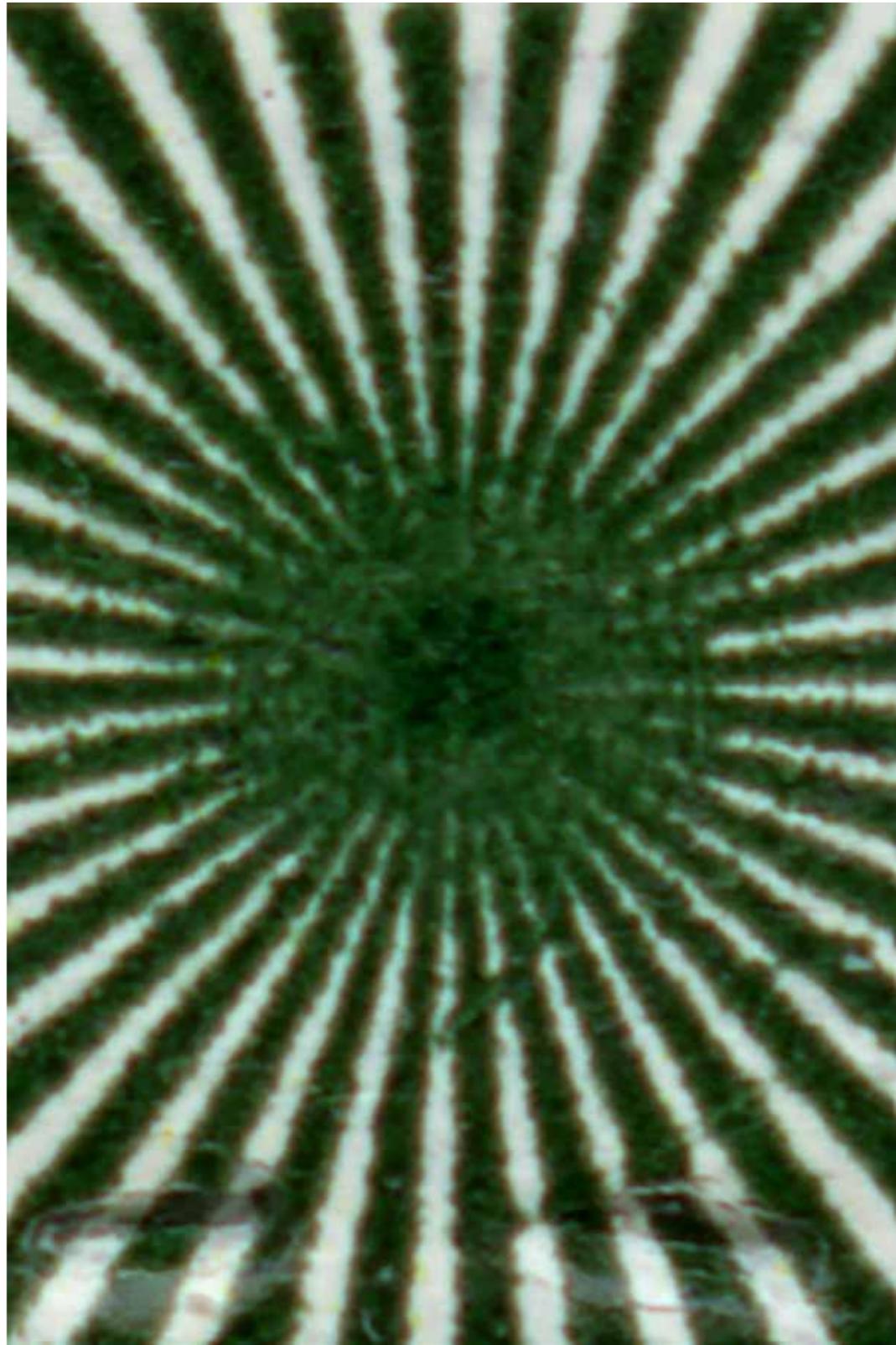


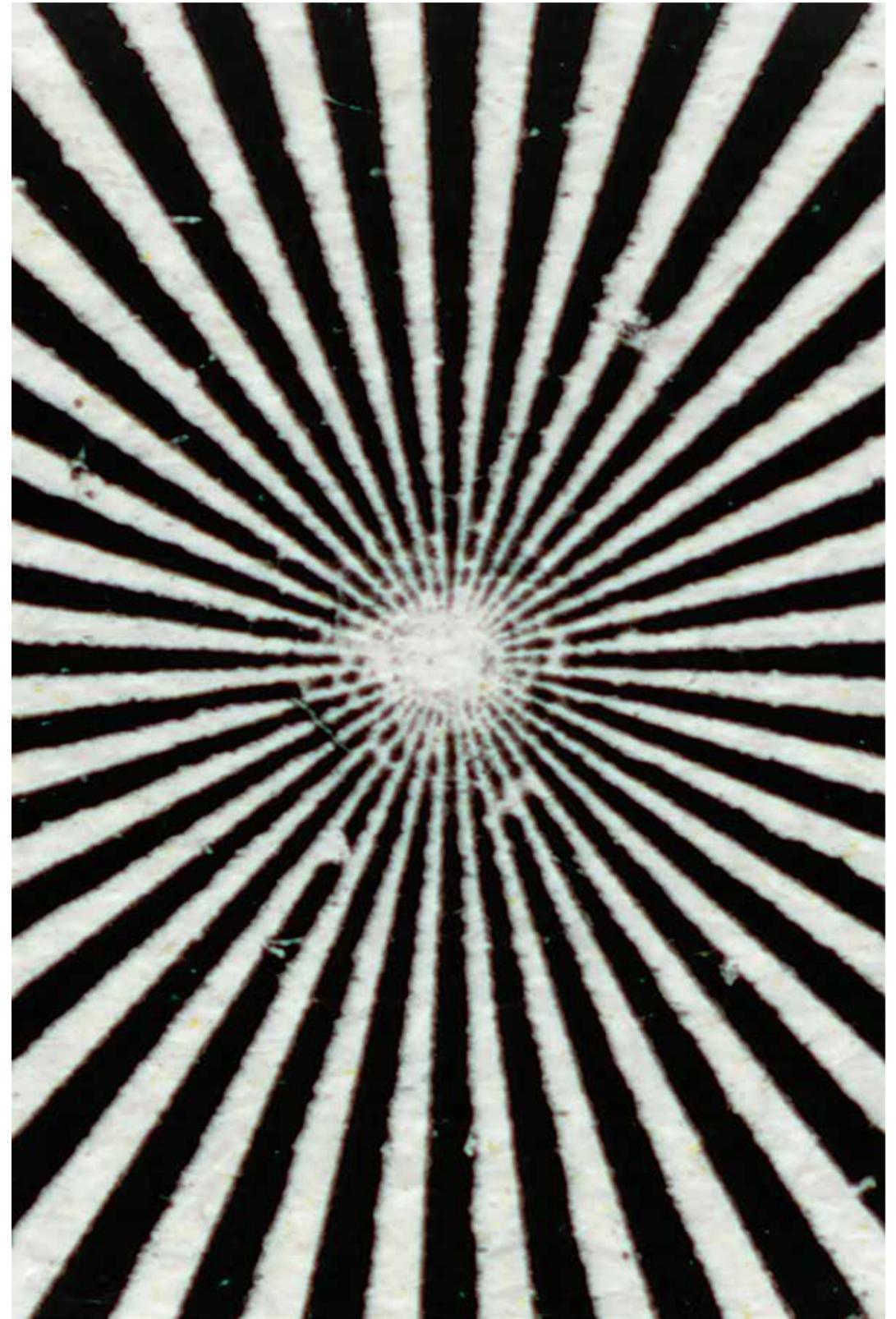
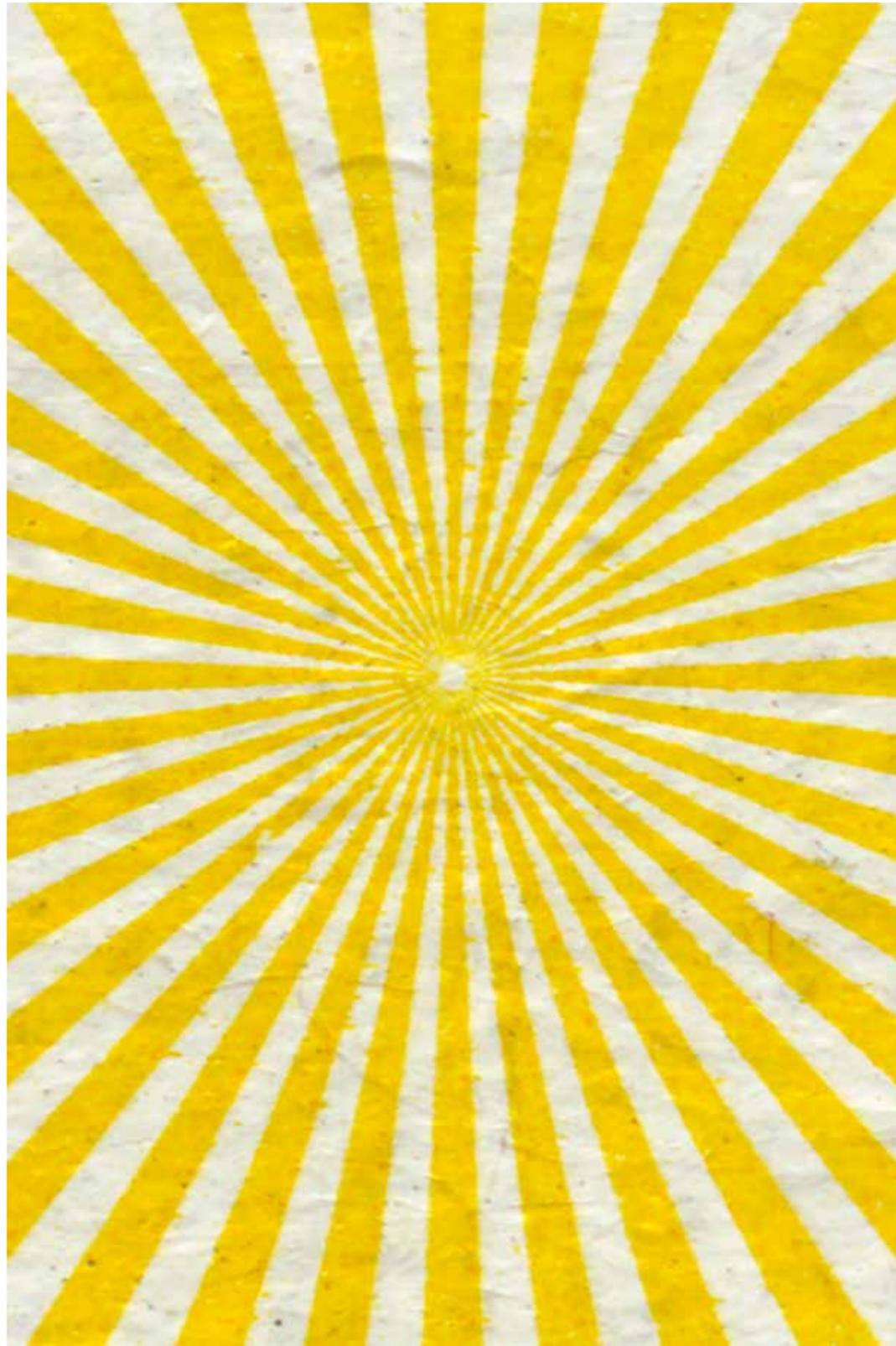


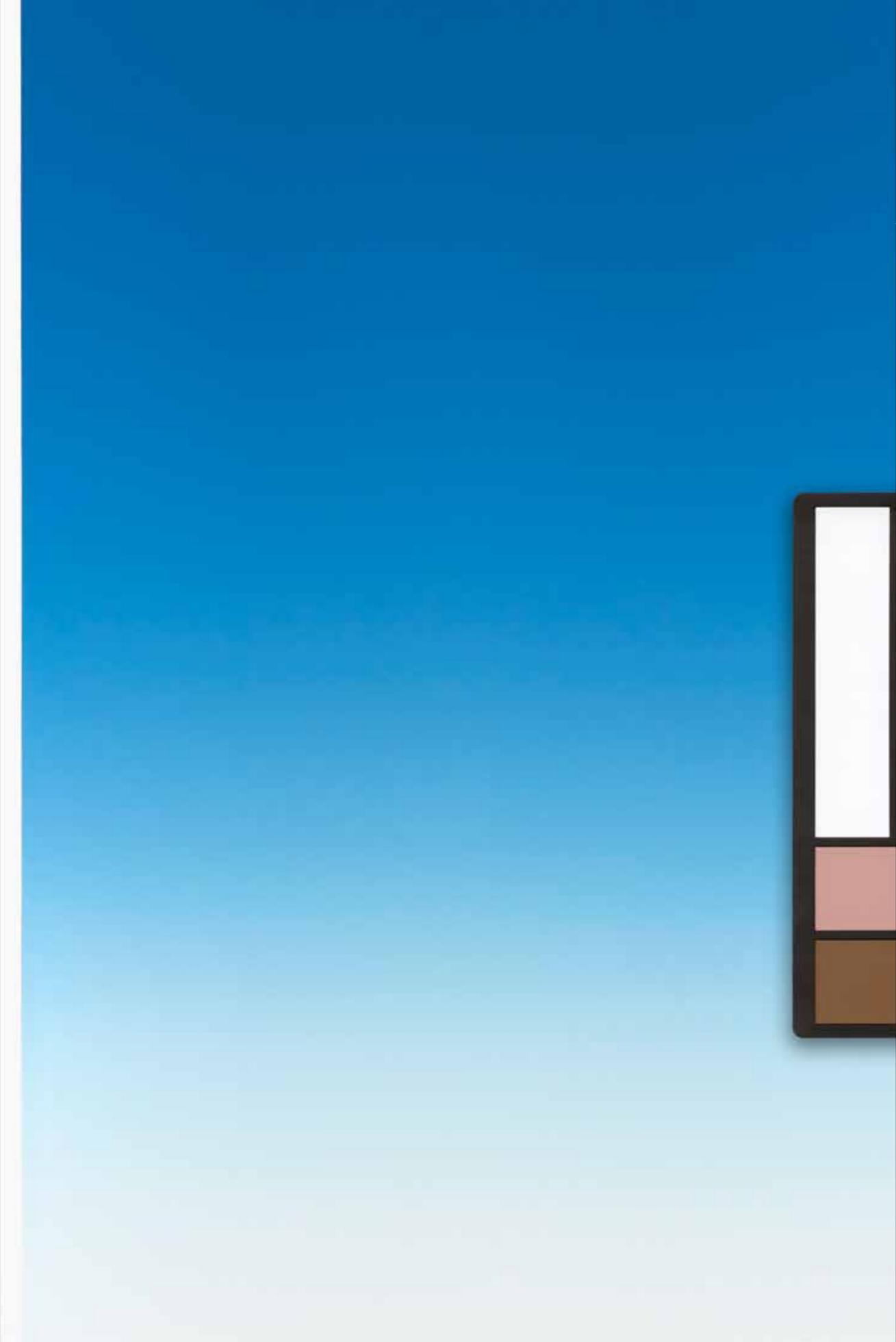












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# Charting Color on Neutral Ground

Archival Pigment Prints, 2016–ongoing









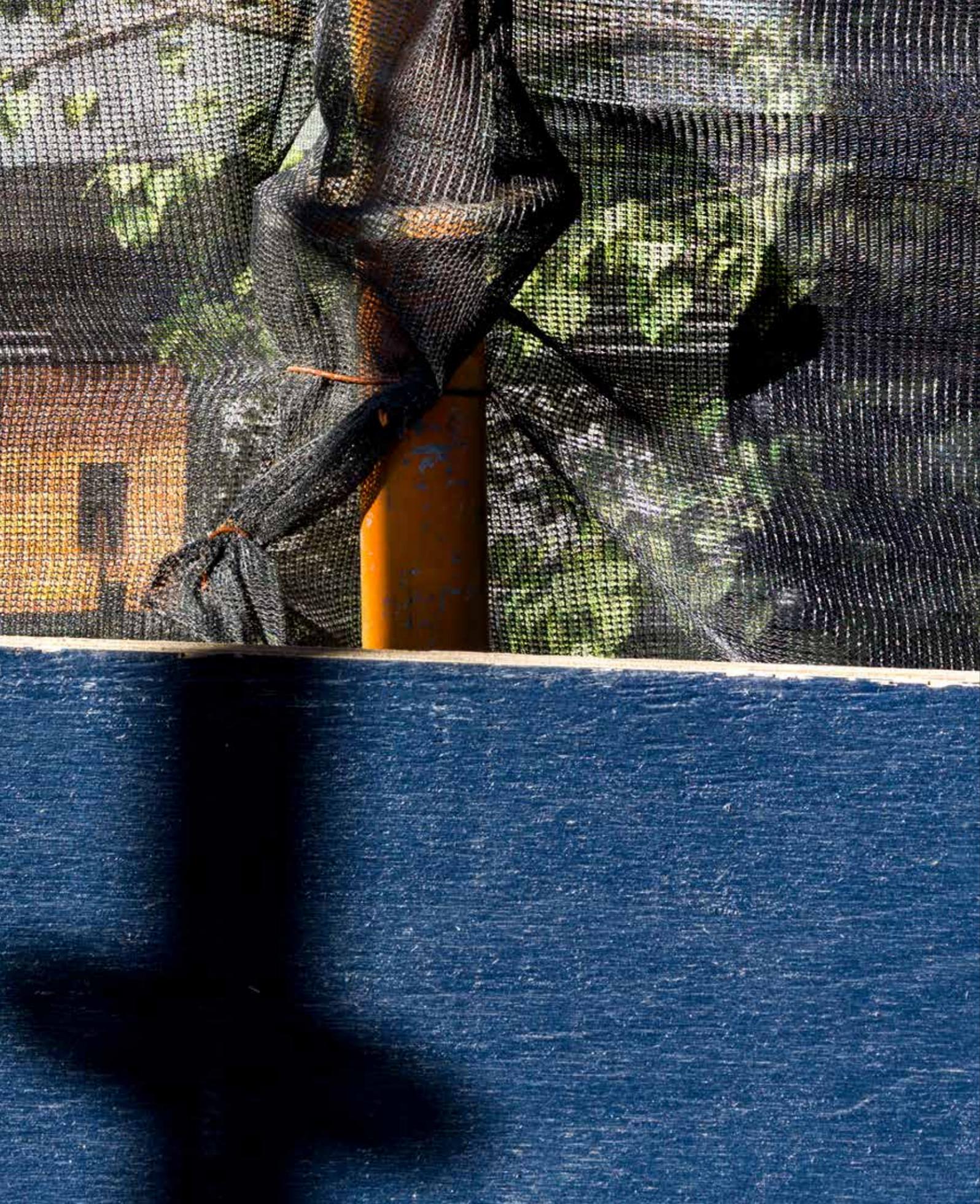


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# Potential of Pixels

Archival Pigment Prints, 2016–ongoing

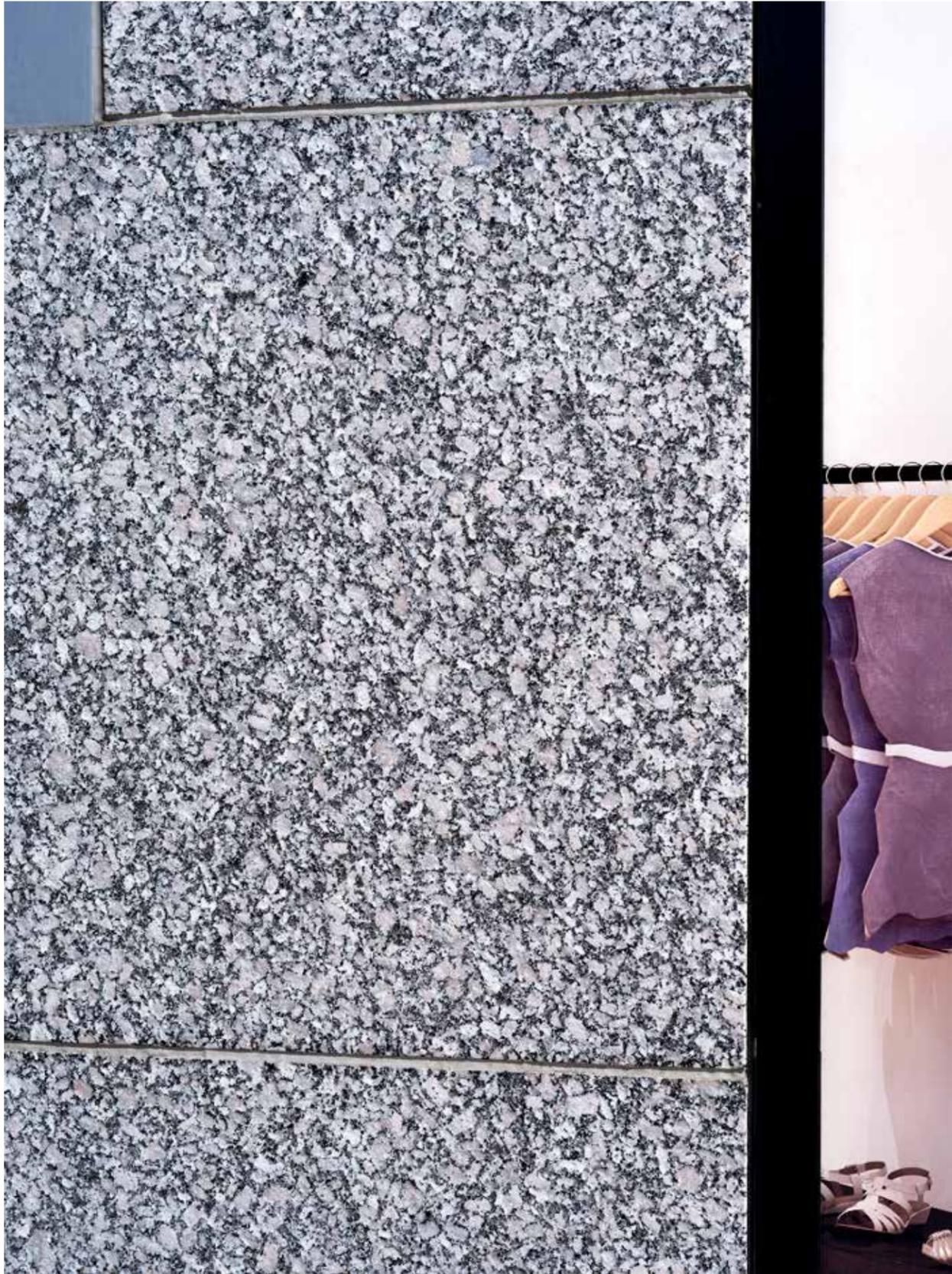


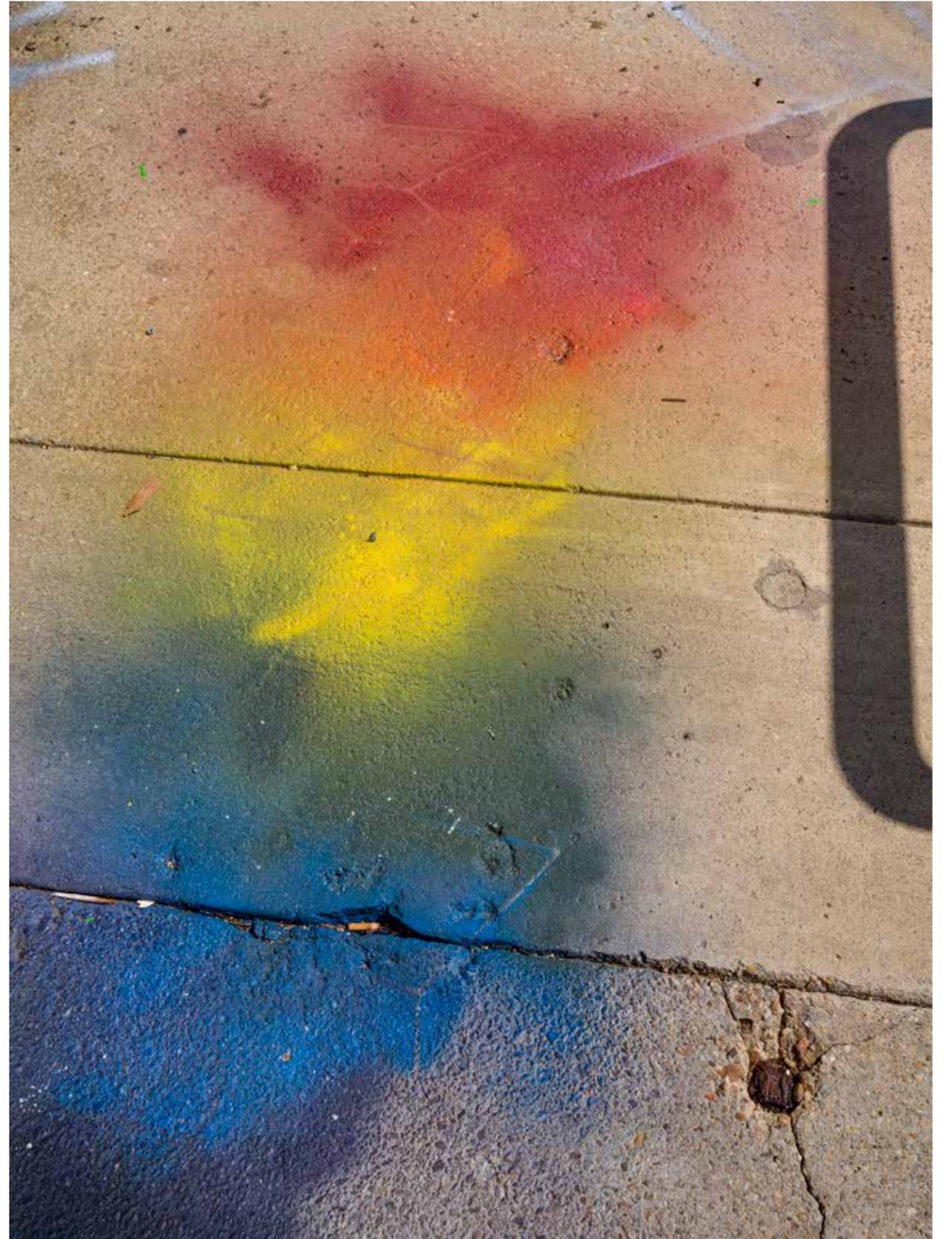


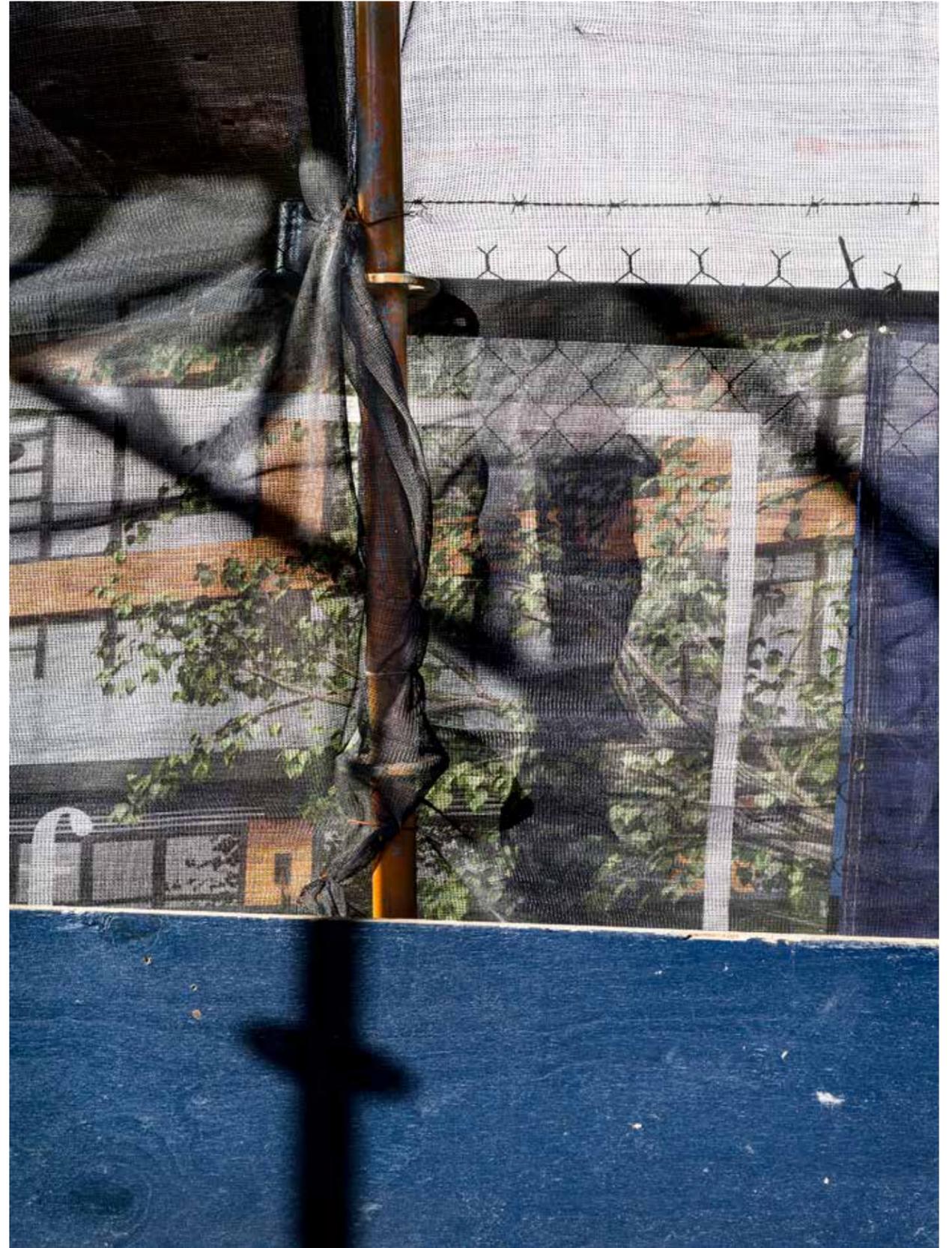
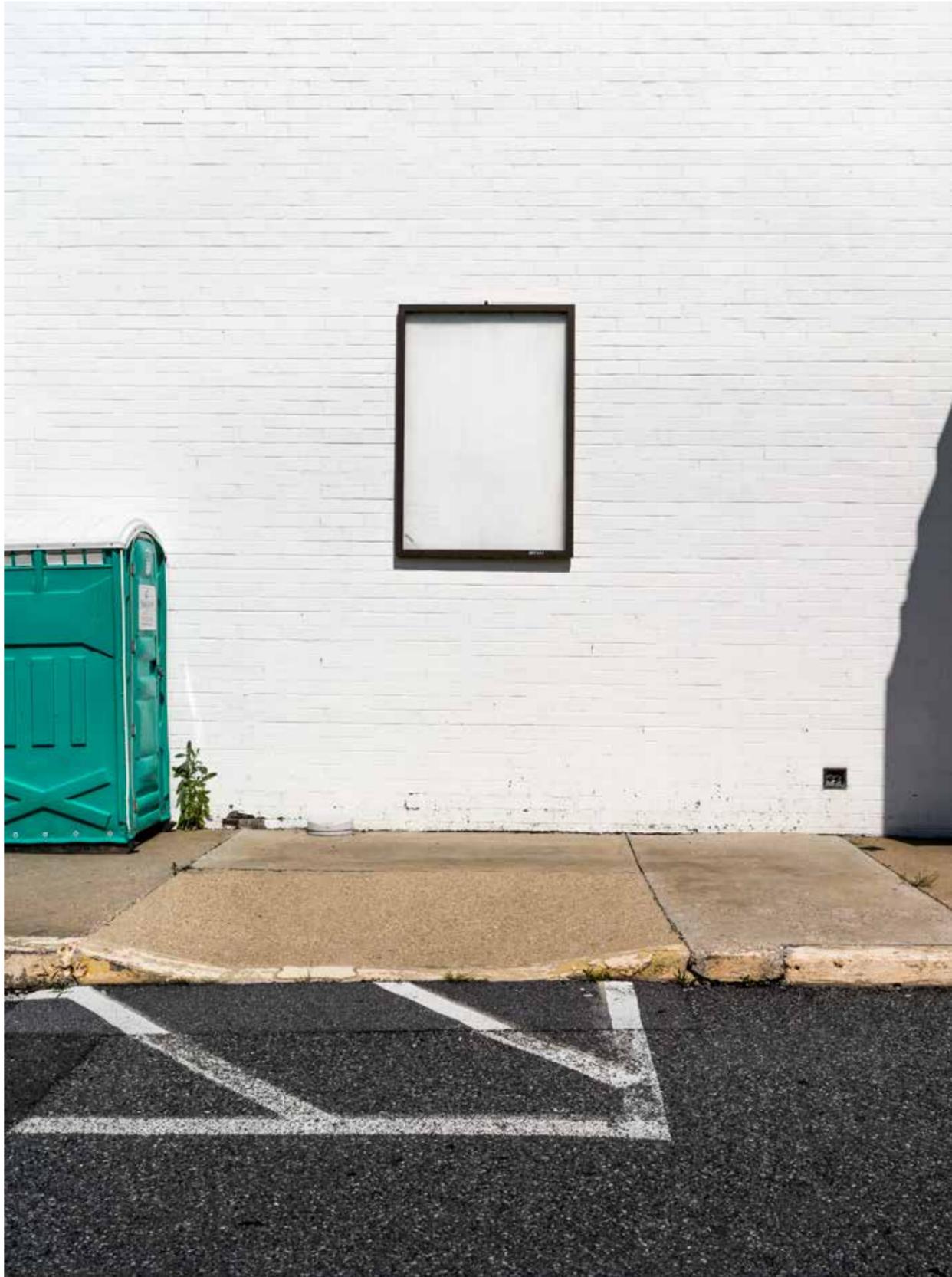
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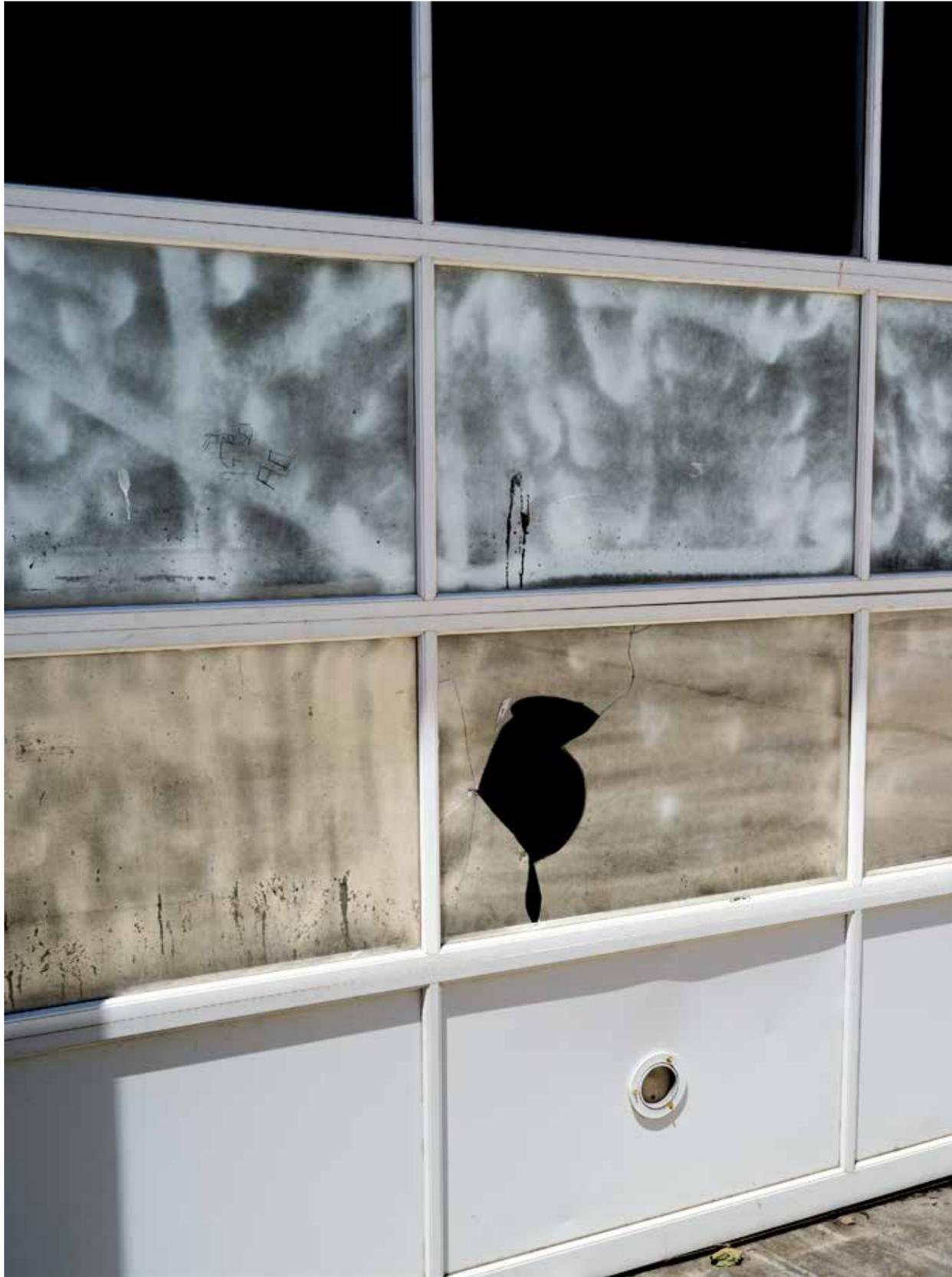
## Meandering with Purpose

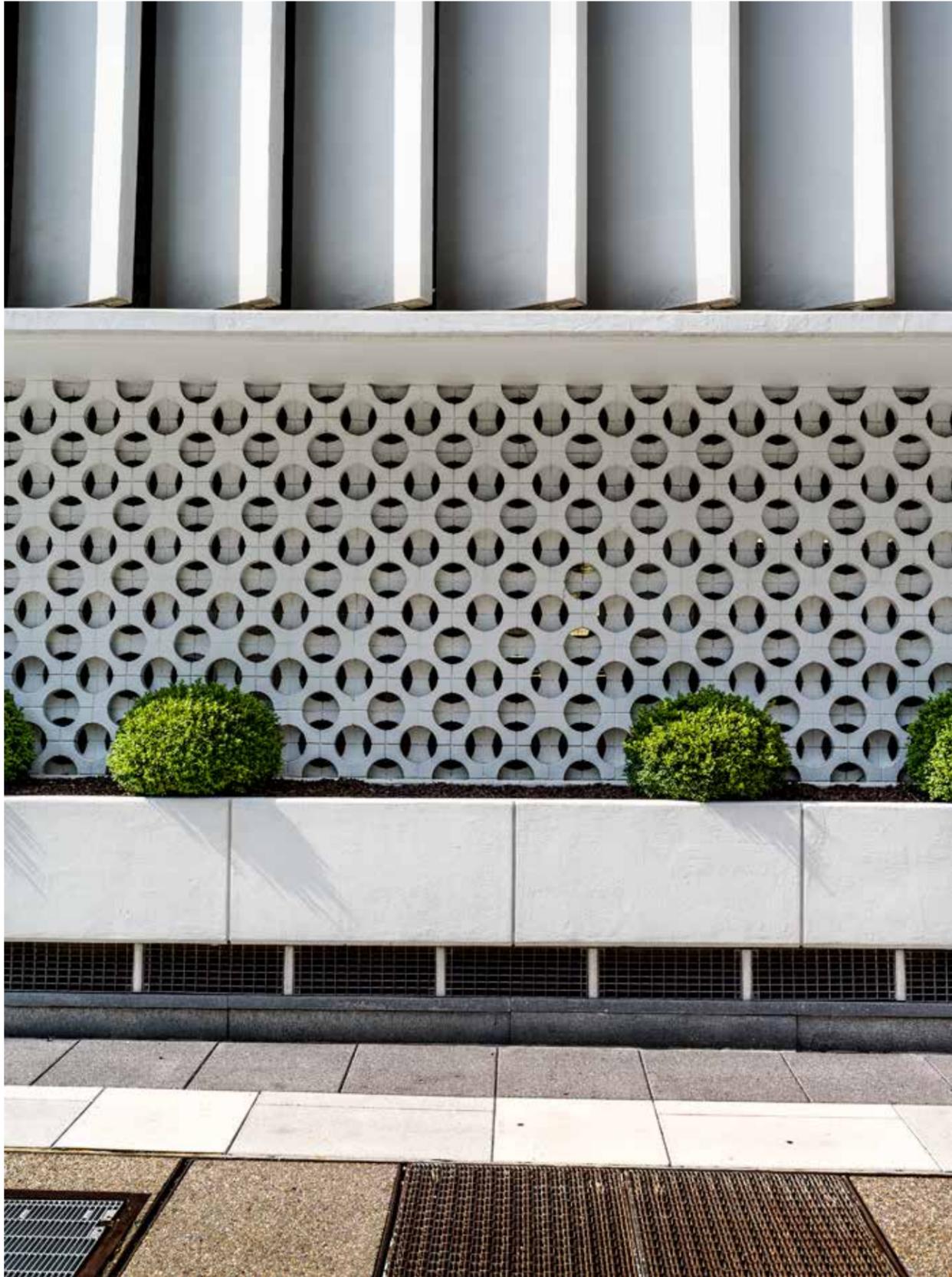
Archival Pigment Prints, 2018–ongoing









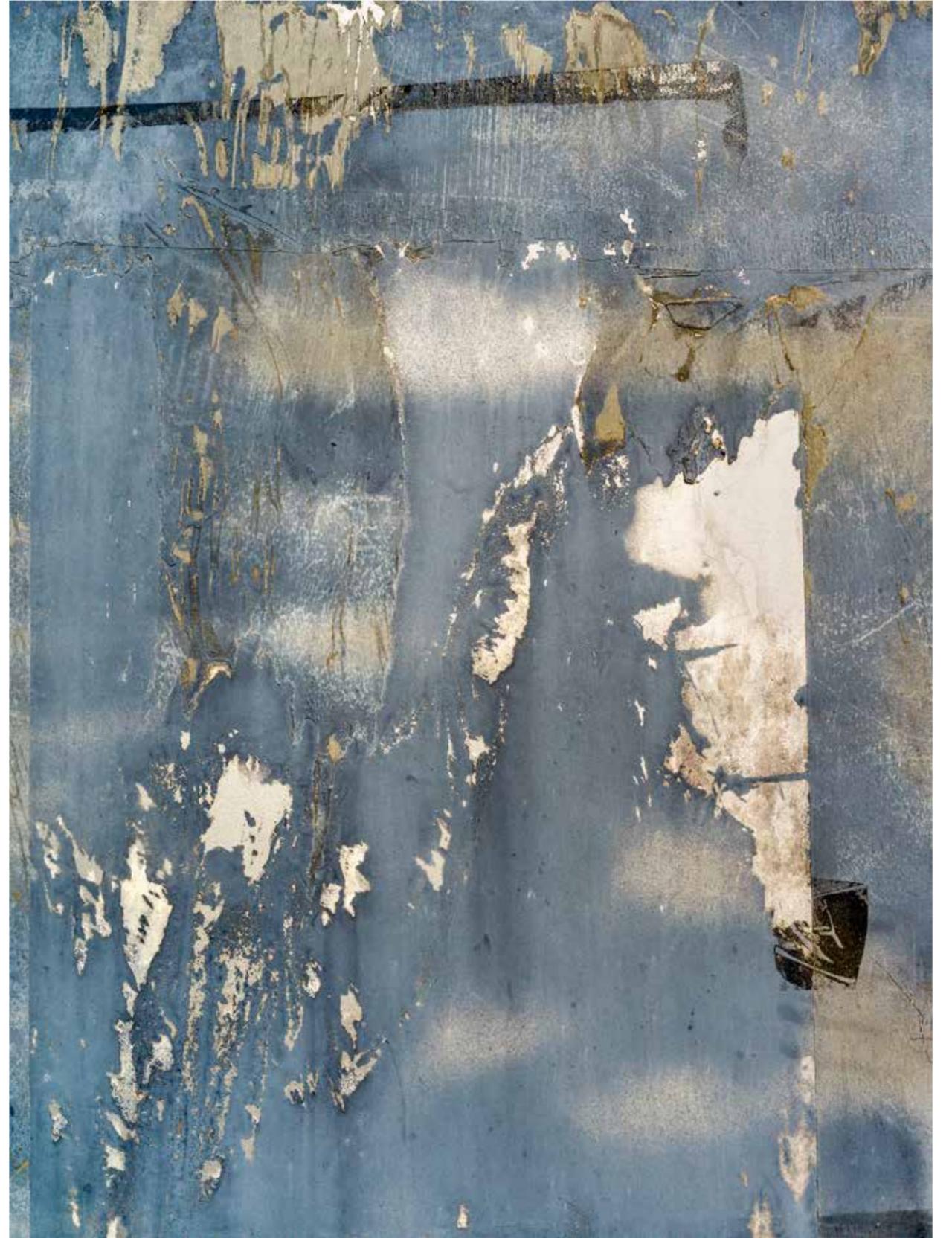
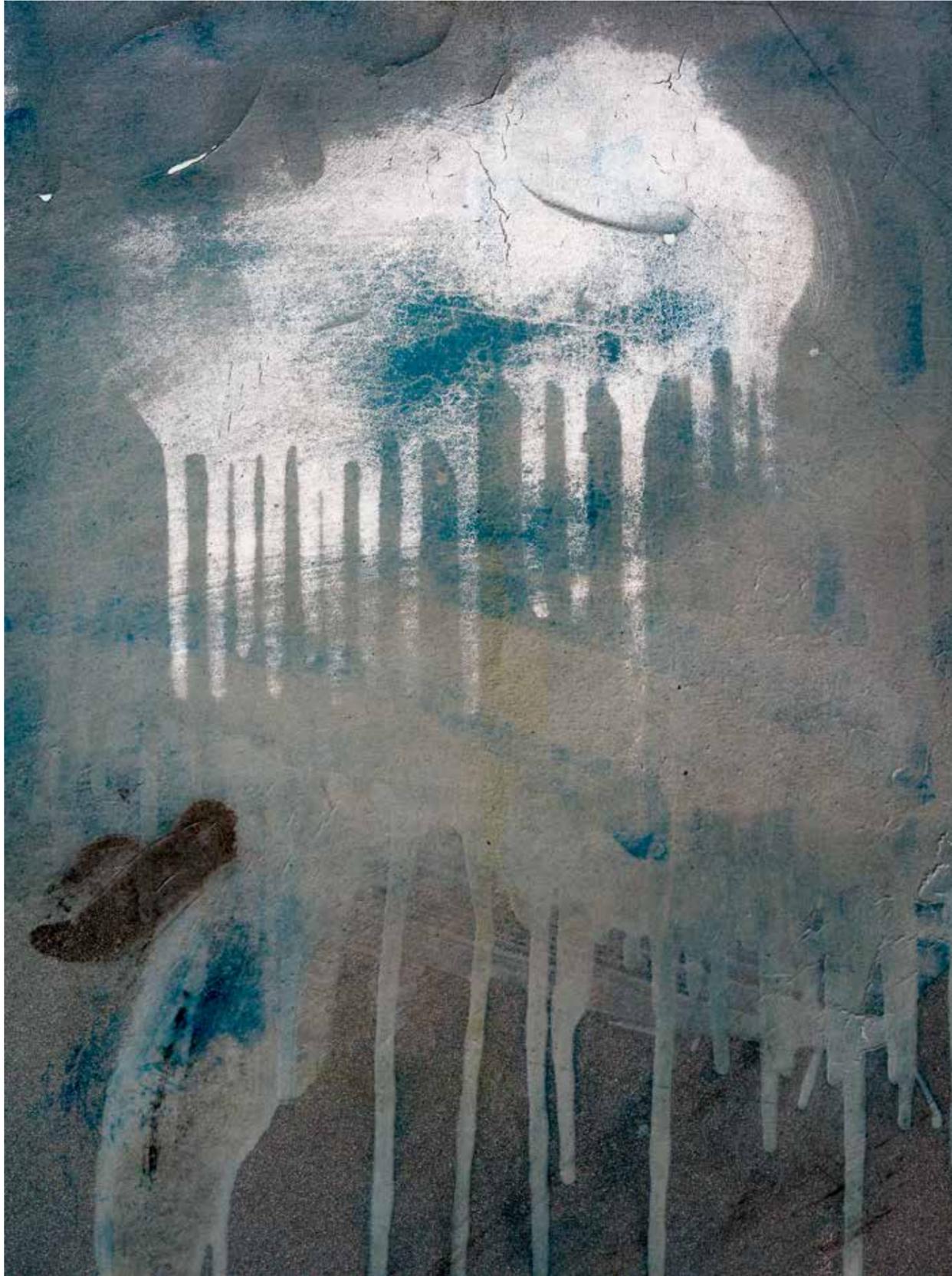


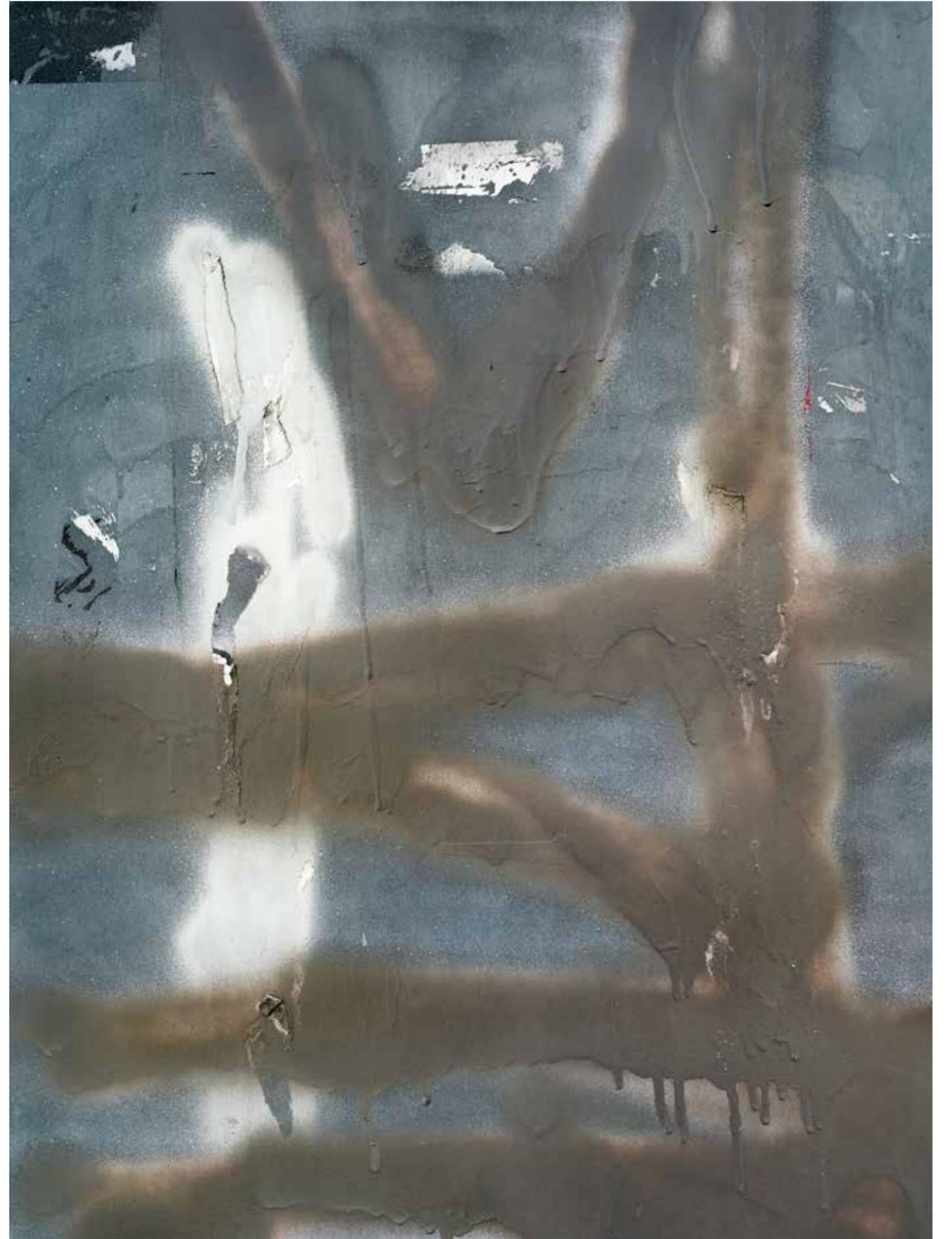


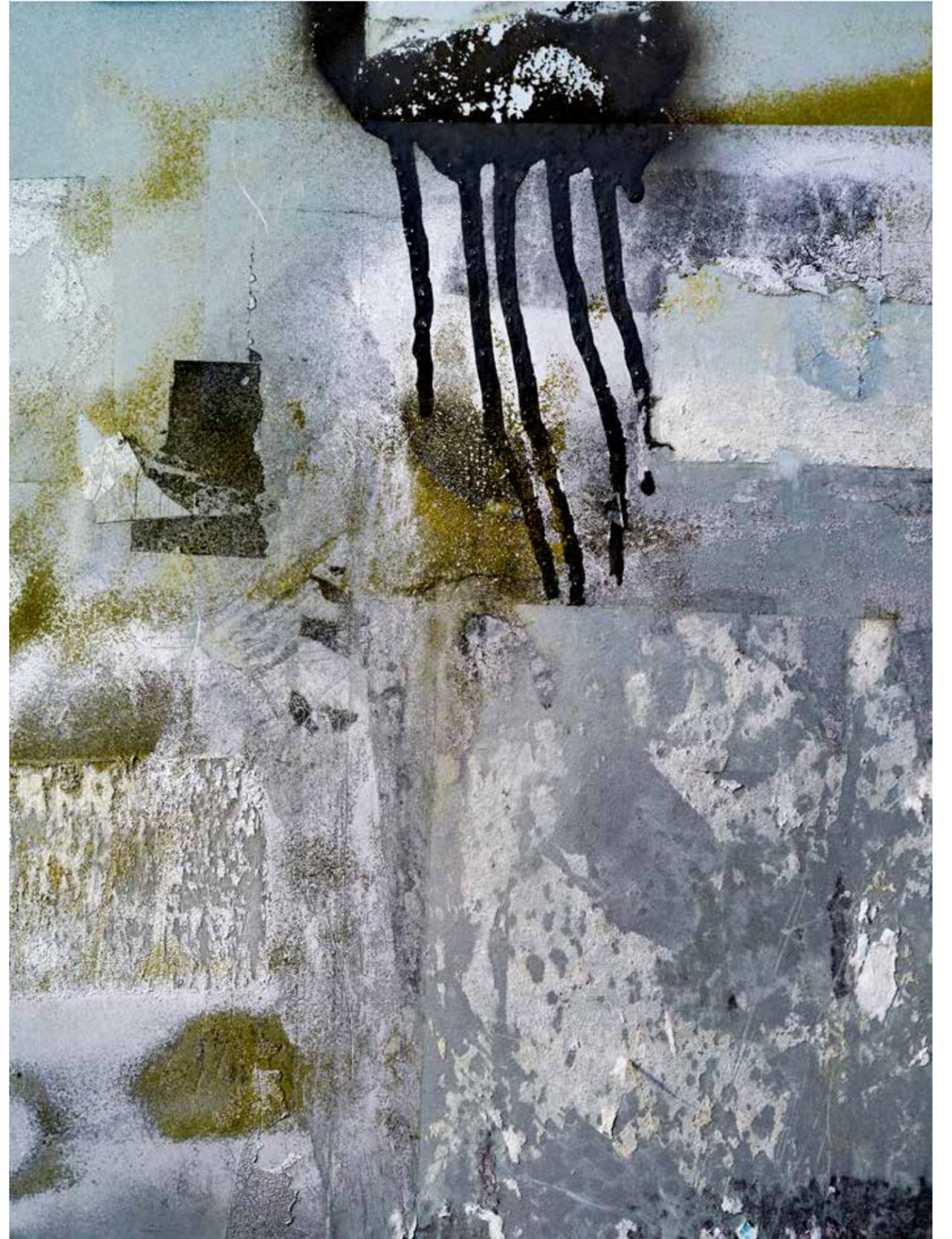
that which is no longer there,  
if it ever was

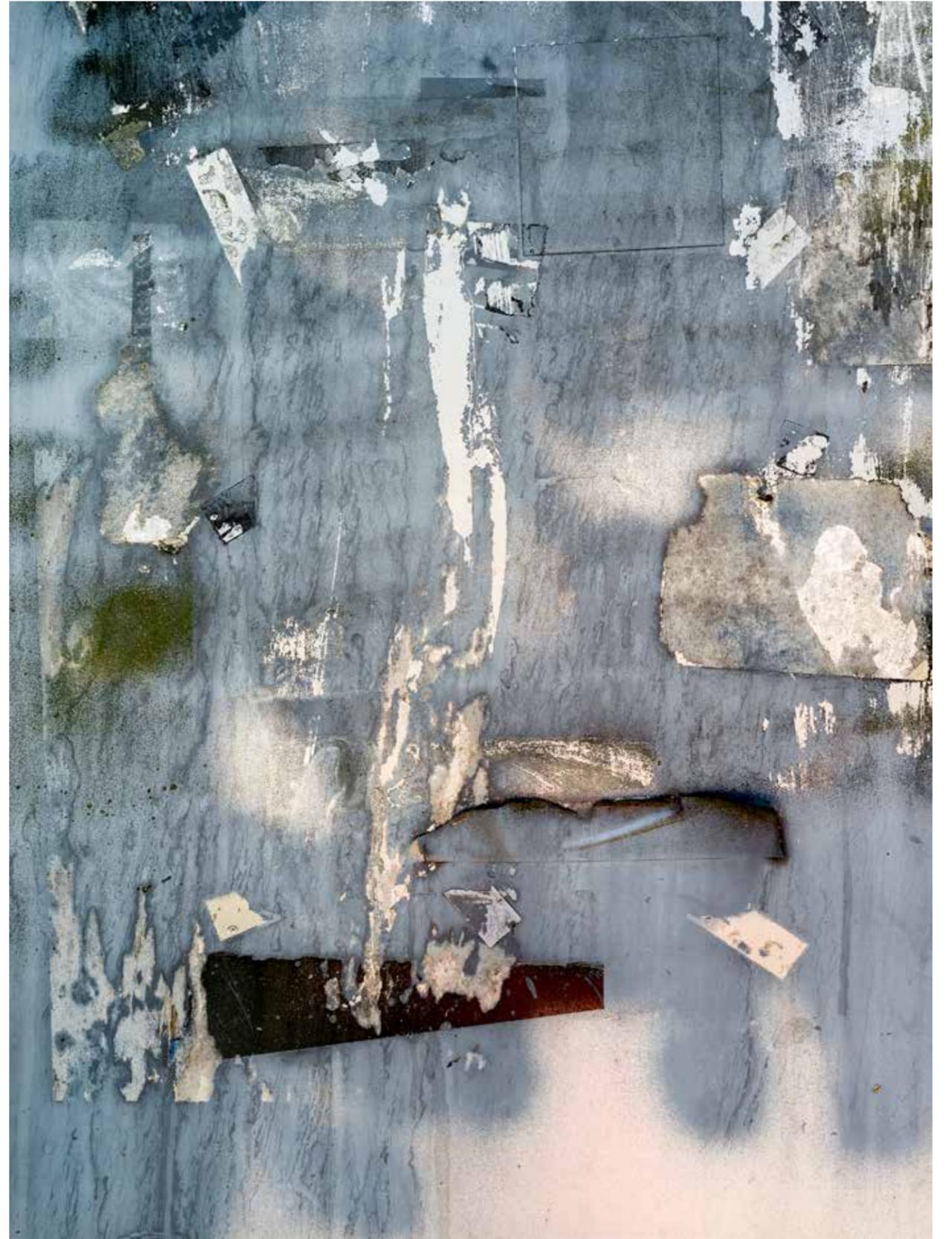
Archival Pigment Prints, 2018–ongoing

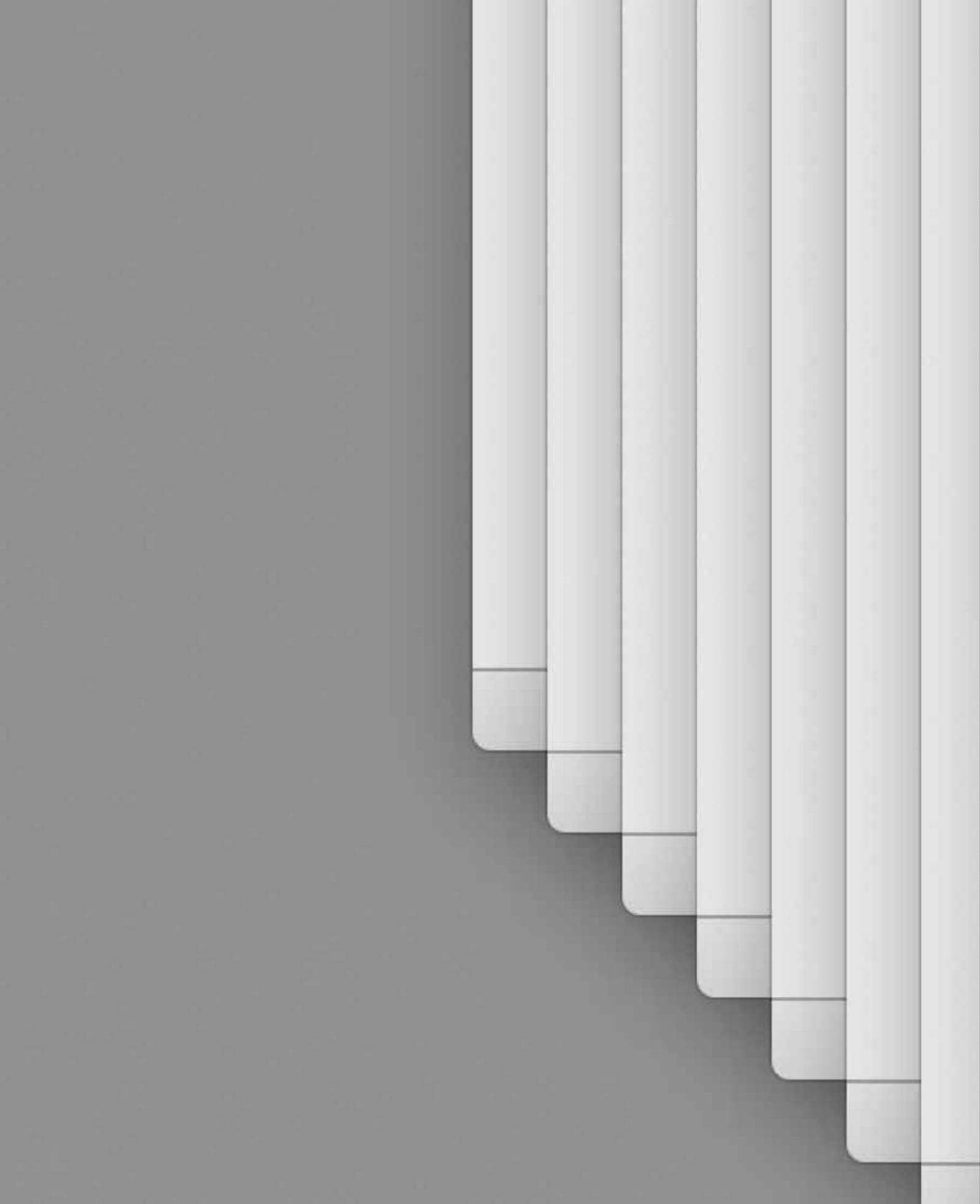








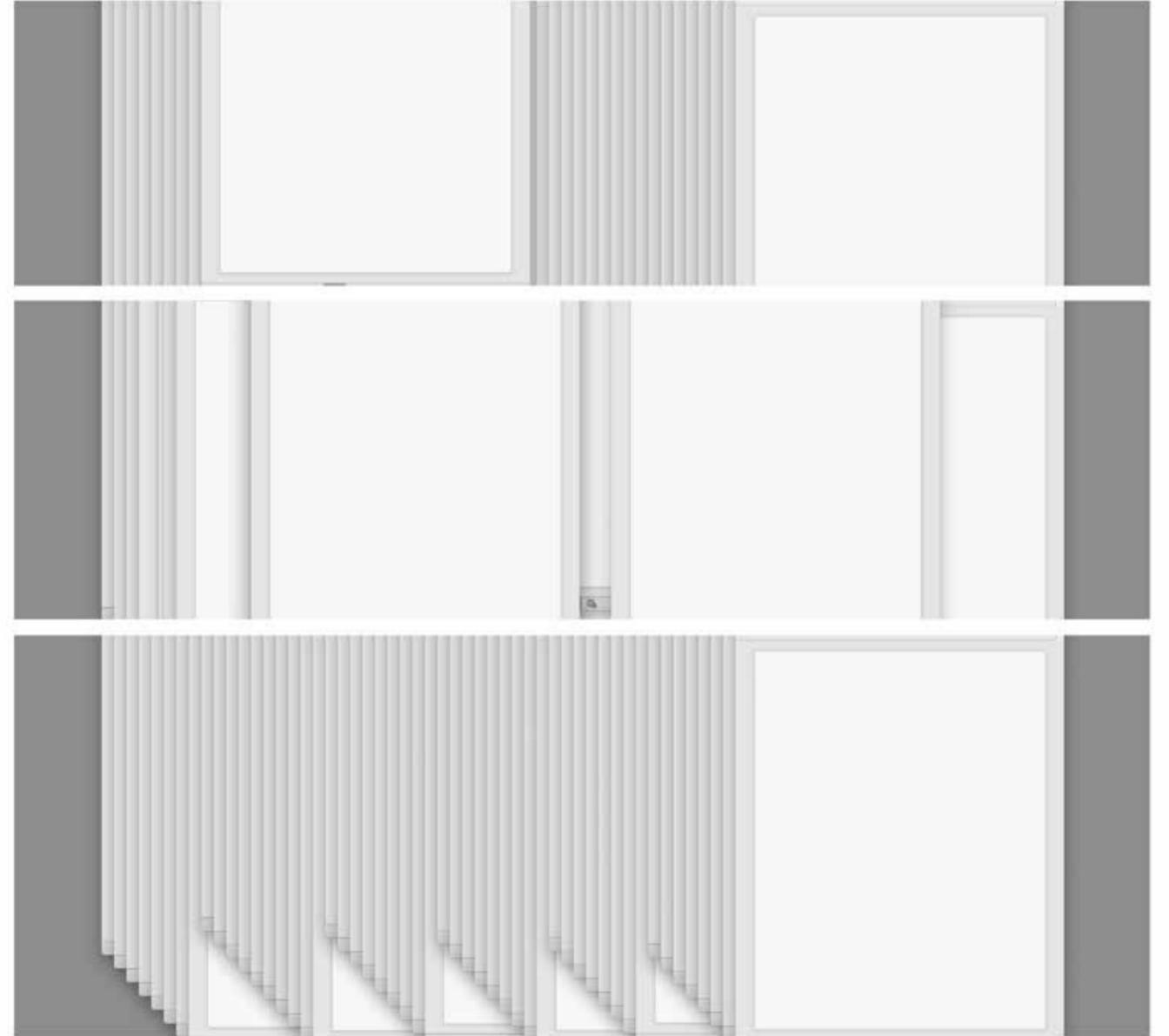


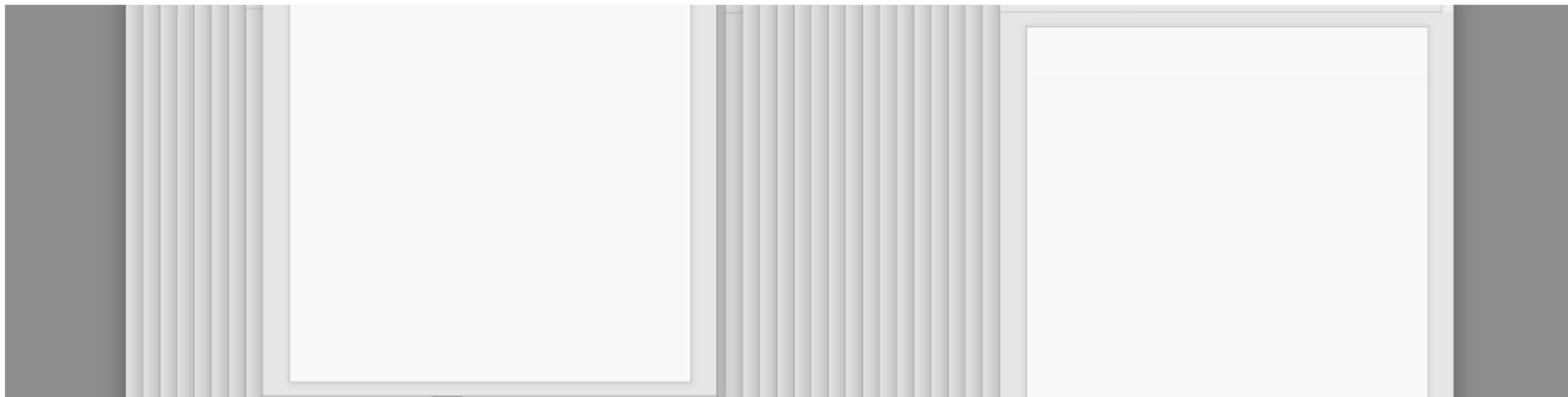


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# A Word a Week

Archival Pigment Prints, 2020









LIST OF WORKS  
IN THE EXHIBITION

**Construction/Destruction**

Silver Gelatin Prints, 1994

Untitled #94-17  
1994  
Silver Gelatin Print  
6 x 7.5 inches  
Page 38

Untitled #94-63  
1994  
Silver Gelatin Print  
6 x 7.5 inches  
Page 39

Untitled #94-104  
1994  
Silver Gelatin Print  
7.5 x 6 inches  
Page 40

Untitled #94-86  
1994  
Silver Gelatin Print  
7.5 x 6 inches  
Page 41

Untitled #94-96  
1994  
6 x 7.5 inches  
Silver Gelatin Print  
Page 42

Untitled #94-78  
1994  
Silver Gelatin Print  
6 x 7.5 inches  
Page 43

Untitled #94-97  
1994  
Silver Gelatin Print  
7.5 x 6 inches  
Page 44

Untitled #94-92  
1994  
Silver Gelatin Print  
7.5 x 6 inches  
Page 45

**Plastic on Paper**

Archival Pigment Prints, 2005

Blockbuster  
2005  
Archival Pigment Print  
34 x 24 inches  
Page 48

Best Buy  
2005  
Archival Pigment Print  
34 x 24 inches  
Page 49

Borders (red)  
2005  
Archival Pigment Print  
34 x 24 inches  
Page 50

**Between Here and There**

Archival Pigment Prints, 2003-2007

Untitled #24  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 54 (left)

Untitled #35  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 54 (right)

Untitled #32  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 55 (left)

Untitled #19  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 55 (right)

Untitled #6  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 56 (left)

Untitled #8  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 56 (right)

Untitled #27  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
2 21/32 x 4 inches  
Page 57 (top)

Untitled #34  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
2 21/32 x 4 inches  
Page 57 (bottom)

Untitled #21  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
2 21/32 x 4 inches  
Page 58 (top)

Untitled #39  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
2 21/32 x 4 inches  
Page 58 (bottom)

Untitled #40  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 59 (left)

Untitled #44  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 59 (right)

Untitled #38  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 60 (left)

Untitled #43  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 60 (right)

Untitled #33  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
2 21/32 x 4 inches  
Page 61 (top)

Untitled #36  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
2 21/32 x 4 inches  
Page 61 (bottom)

Untitled #10  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 62 (left)

Untitled #18  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 62 (right)

Untitled #45  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 63 (left)

Untitled #46  
2003-2007 (printed 2007)  
Archival Pigment Print  
4 x 2 21/32 inches  
Page 63 (right)

**A Year at a Glance**

Archival Pigment Prints, 2007

Artforum (front and back covers)  
2007  
Archival Pigment Prints  
10 7/16 x 10 7/16 inches each  
Pages 66, 67

Frieze (front and back covers)  
2007  
Archival Pigment Prints  
11 3/4 x 9 inches each  
Pages 68, 69

Art in America (front and back covers)  
2007  
Archival Pigment Prints  
10 7/8 x 8 29/32 inches each  
Pages 70, 71

Aperture (front and back covers)  
2007  
Archival Pigment Prints  
11 5/16 x 9 1/2 inches each  
Pages 72, 73

Sculpture (front and back covers)  
2007  
Archival Pigment Prints  
10 13/16 x 8 1/8 inches each  
Pages 74, 75

Modern Painters (front and back covers)  
2007  
Archival Pigment Prints  
13 x 9 15/16 inches each  
Pages 76, 77

**Art as Paper as Potential:  
Giving/Receiving**

Archival Pigment Prints, 2009

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
2009  
365 Archival Pigment Prints in Single Stack  
11 x 8 1/2 inches each  
Page 81

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
(1/01/2009)  
2009  
Archival Pigment Print  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
Page 82

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
(2/01/2009)  
2009  
Archival Pigment Print  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
Page 83

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
(3/01/2009)  
2009  
Archival Pigment Print  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
Page 84

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
(4/01/2009)  
2009  
Archival Pigment Print  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
Page 85

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
(10/01/2009)  
2009  
Archival Pigment Print  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
Page 86 (top left)

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
(12/01/2009)  
2009  
Archival Pigment Print  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
Page 86 (bottom left)

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
(11/01/2009)  
2009  
Archival Pigment Print  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
Page 86 (top right)

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
(5/01/2009)  
2009  
Archival Pigment Print  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
Page 86 (bottom right)

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
(6/01/2009)  
2009  
Archival Pigment Print  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
Page 87 (top left)

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
(8/01/2009)  
2009  
Archival Pigment Print  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
Page 87 (bottom left)

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
(7/01/2009)  
2009  
Archival Pigment Print  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
Page 87 (top right)

Reversing Negatives: Inside/Outside  
(9/01/2009)  
2009  
Archival Pigment Print  
11 x 8 ½ inches  
Page 87 (bottom right)

**Test Strips**

Silver Gelatin Photograms, 2011

Untitled Test Strips (grid of 30 framed prints)  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photograms  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches each  
Pages 90, 91

Untitled #1  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 92

Untitled #2  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 93

Untitled #3  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 94

Untitled #4  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 95

Untitled #12  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 96

Untitled #13  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 97

Untitled #17  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 98

Untitled #18  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 99

Untitled #21  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 100

Untitled #24  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 101

Untitled #25  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 102

Untitled #26  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 103

Untitled #29  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 104

Untitled #30  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 105

Untitled #32  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 106

Untitled #33  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 107

Untitled #38  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 108

Untitled #39  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 109

Untitled #40  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 110

Untitled #41  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 111

Untitled #42  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 112

Untitled #43  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 113

Untitled #44  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 114

Untitled #50  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 115

Untitled #51  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 116

Untitled #53  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 117

Untitled #54  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 118

Untitled #55  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 119

Untitled #57  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 120

Untitled #58  
2011  
Silver Gelatin Photogram  
7 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches  
Page 121

**Details: Utilitarian Abstraction**

Archival Pigment Prints, 2015-ongoing

Details: Utilitarian Abstraction  
(group of 14 prints)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Prints  
31 ½ x 21 inches each  
Pages 124, 125

Detail #20 (Cheerios)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 126

Detail #4 (Green Mountain  
Medium Roast Coffee Half-Caff)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 127

Detail #16 (Donut House Light Roast Coffee)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 128

Detail #15 (Donut House Light Roast Coffee)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 129

Detail #11 (Donut House Light Roast Coffee)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 130

Details #21 (Cheerios)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 131

Detail #1 (Green Mountain  
Medium Roast Coffee Half-Caff)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 132

Detail #14 (Donut House Light Roast Coffee)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 133

Detail #12 (Donut House Light Roast Coffee)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 134

Detail #13 (Donut House Light Roast Coffee)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 135

Detail #5 (Green Mountain  
Medium Roast Coffee Half-Caff)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 136

Detail #2 (Green Mountain  
Medium Roast Coffee Half-Caff)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 137

Detail #24 (Cheerios)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 138

Detail #23 (Cheerios)  
2015-ongoing (printed 2016)  
Archival Pigment Print  
31 ½ x 21 inches  
Page 139

**Charting Color on Neutral Ground**  
Archival Pigment Print, 2016-ongoing

Munsell Color x-rite Kodak Gray Card Plus  
on Flotone #603 on Photoshop 50% Gray  
2016-ongoing (printed 2021)  
Archival Pigment Print  
85 ½ x 60 inches  
Page 143

**Potential of Pixels**  
Archival Pigment Prints, 2016-ongoing

Word Banner Calendar #2  
2016-ongoing (printed 2020)  
Archival Pigment Print  
22 1/2 x 42 3/16 inches  
Pages 146, 147

**Meandering with Purpose**

Archival Pigment Prints, 2018-ongoing

Untitled (582)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 150

Untitled (1159)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 151

Untitled (1265)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
38 x 28 ½ inches  
Page 152

Untitled (1186)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
52 x 39 inches  
Page 153  
Untitled (1175)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
8 x 6 inches  
Page 154

Untitled (195)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 155

Untitled (131)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
8 x 6 inches  
Page 156

Untitled (626)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
38 x 28 ½ inches  
Page 157

Untitled (790)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
8 x 6 inches  
Page 158

Untitled (432)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 159

**that which is no longer there,  
if it ever was**  
Archival Pigment Prints, 2018-ongoing

Untitled (1396)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 162

Untitled (1496)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 163

Untitled (1423)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 164

Untitled (1541)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 165

Untitled (1393)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 166

Untitled (1397)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 167

Untitled (1561)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 168

Untitled (1549)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 169

Untitled (1553)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 170

Untitled (1543)  
2018-ongoing (printed 2018)  
Archival Pigment Print  
18 x 13 ½ inches  
Page 171

**A Word A Week**

Archival Pigment Prints, 2020

A Word A Week (group of 3 prints)  
2020-ongoing (printed 2021)  
Archival Pigment Prints  
Various Sizes  
Page 175

A Word A Week #3  
2020  
Archival Pigment Print  
27 x 108 inches  
Pages 175, 176, 177

A Word A Week #2  
2020  
Archival Pigment Print  
30 1/8 x 108 inches  
Pages 175, 178, 179

A Word A Week #1  
2020  
Archival Pigment Print  
38 x 108 inches  
Pages 175, 180, 181

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# Artist and Curatorial Bios

## DEAN KESSMANN

Dean Kessmann's photographs, alternately made with scanners, cameras, camera-less darkroom processes, and most recently, screenshots from computer monitors, comment on image-making technologies, landscape photography, and contemporary consumer culture. What remains consistent throughout his practice is an intense interest in the relationships between abstraction and representation, physical objects and digital information, compression and expansion. The intuitive impulse is balanced with a critical approach that fuse the lessons learned with the happenstance that is part and parcel of the creative process. Kessmann creates work that is intellectually engaging and visually striking, open to multiple interpretations without being overly ambiguous, smart and challenging without becoming pretentious or abstruse.

Many important institutions have collected Kessmann's work, such as the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Baltimore Museum of Art, Walker Art Center, The Phillips Collection, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, and the Orlando Museum of Art, among others. He has had exhibitions at The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, FL, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME, American University Museum, Washington, DC, The Photographic Resource Center, Boston, MA, Furthermore, Washington, DC, Conner Contemporary Art, Washington, DC, Page Bond Gallery, Richmond, VA, Cerasoli Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, Project Row Houses, Houston, TX, and William Shearburn Gallery, St. Louis, MO, which represents his work. Kessmann's exhibitions have been reviewed in a variety of publications, including *Art Papers*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, and *Artforum*. Work from his project, *Art as Paper as Potential: Giving/Receiving*, was reproduced in *Contact Sheet: The Light Work Annual* after he completed a 2009 residency at Light Work in Syracuse, NY.

For nearly two decades, Kessmann has been an innovative contributor to the worlds of art and education from his base in Washington, DC. Currently Professor of Photography and Head of the Studio Arts Program, Corcoran School of the Arts and Design at The George Washington University, Kessmann began teaching at GWU in 2002, arriving from St. Louis, MO.

## KRISTEN HILEMAN

Baltimore-based independent curator Kristen Hileman has spent over two decades working in museums, first as a curator at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. and then as the Head of the Contemporary Department at The Baltimore Museum of Art. She is currently the Curator-in-Residence at The Delaware Contemporary, Wilmington and the Mentoring Curator at VisArts in Rockville, MD. Her monographic exhibitions have brought new attention to important female artists Anne Truitt, Maren Hassinger, and Jo Smail, and she has realized major commissions with Theresa Chromati, Mary Reid Kelley and Patrick Kelley, Sarah Oppenheimer, Tomás Saraceno and others. Additionally, Hileman has organized exhibitions of the works of John Baldessari, Cai Guo-Qiang, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Lizzie Fitch/Ryan Trecartin, Meleko Mokgosi, John Waters and many more, alongside her work stewarding major collections of contemporary art. She has taught undergraduate and graduate courses at the Corcoran College of Art and Design, George Washington University, and Johns Hopkins University and is a frequent visiting critic and lecturer.

## JOSHUA GAMMA

Joshua Gamma is a curator and designer based in Baltimore, Maryland. His practice lives at the crossroads of art, design, music, history, and activism. Gamma's nomadic childhood as the son of a U.S. Coast Guardsman and his own service in the U.S. Army in Afghanistan inform his multifaceted work, as do his experiences as a community radio DJ, the singer in the Austin punk band The Mole People, and a member of various art and activist collectives. Gamma received a BFA in Design and a BA in Studio Art from The University of Texas at Austin, and an MFA in Curatorial Practice from Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), Baltimore. In addition to being the Emerging Curator in Residence at VisArts in Rockville, MD, Gamma is the Design Director at Current Movements, a Washington, D.C.-based organization connecting activists, artists, and movements around the world using film, art, and technology. Gamma is currently designing a series of artist archive books with Minerva Projects, Pine Plains, NY.

## MOLLY SPRINGFIELD

Molly Springfield makes graphite drawings that use photocopies of printed texts as their source material. Her projects include an interactive archive of marginalia; drawings of photocopies of books on the history of conceptual art; a "translation" of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* in the form of drawings; and investigations into the proto-history of the Internet, Google's patents for book-scanning technology, and the invention of calotype photography in the 1830's. She has had fourteen national and international solo exhibitions, including shows in New York, Washington, DC, San Francisco, Chicago, and Cologne, Germany. Springfield's work is included the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She received her MFA from the University of California, Berkeley in 2004, was a participant at Skowhegan in 2006, and was a MacDowell Fellow in 2016.

