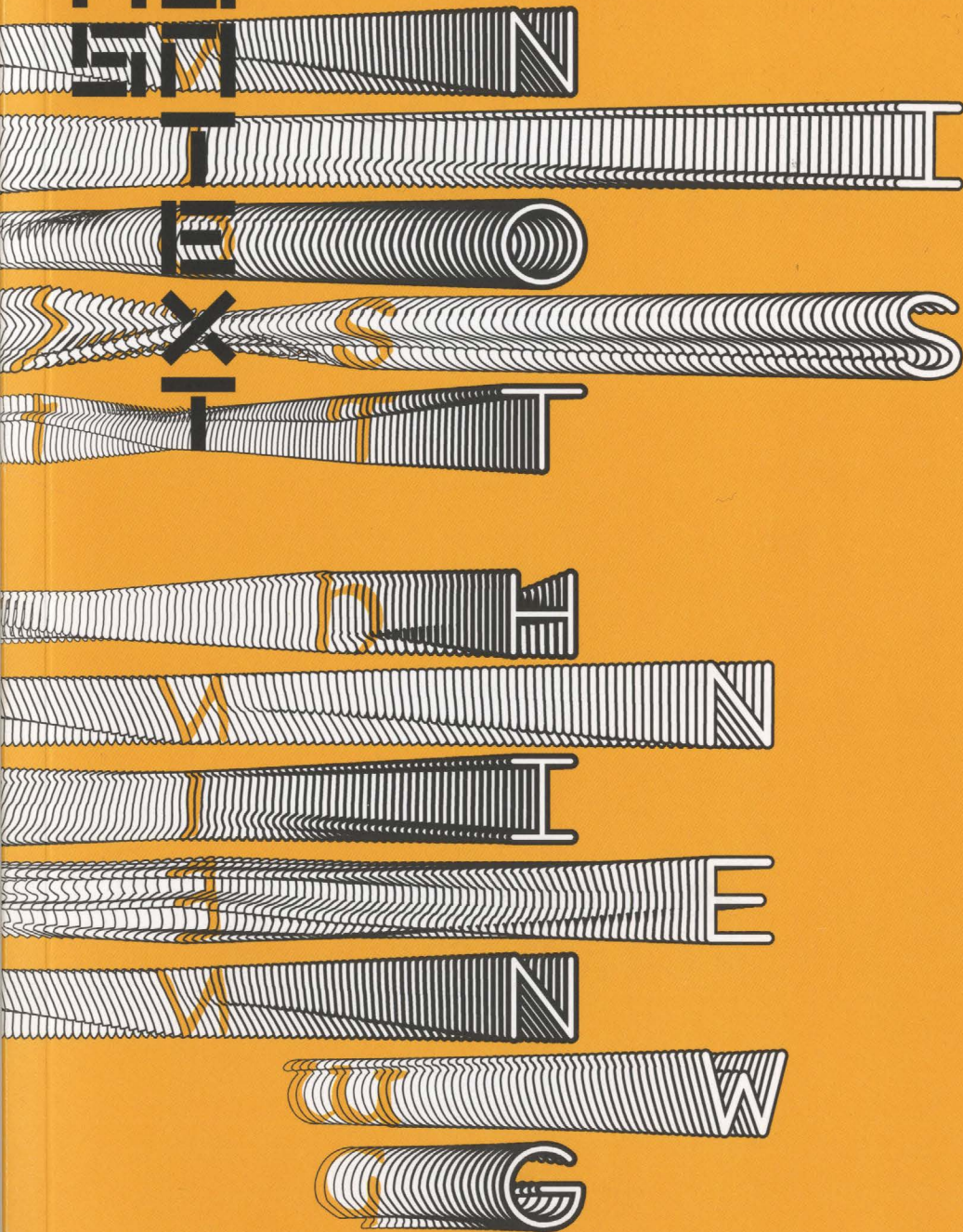


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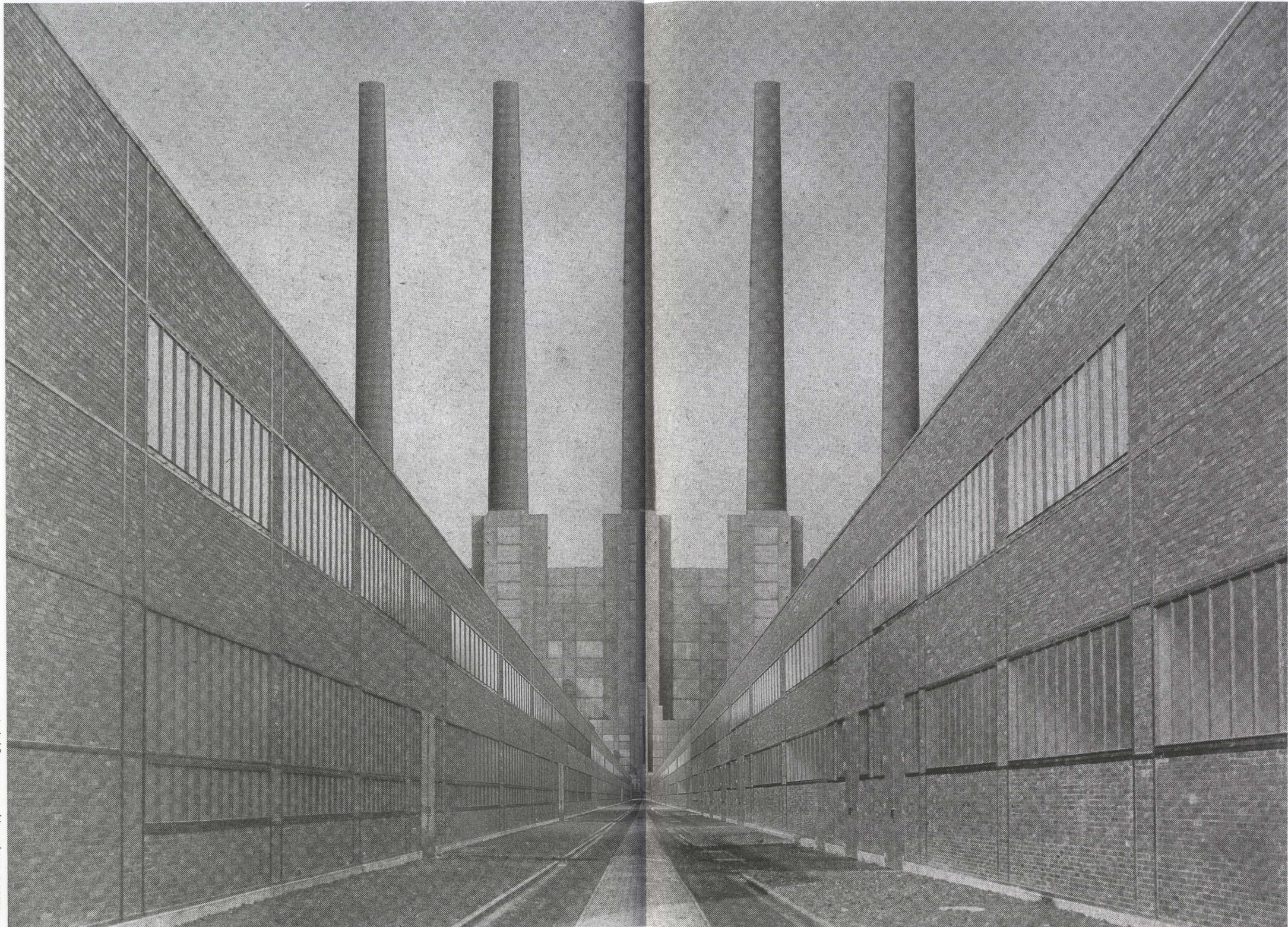
Petrified Traces

Text and images by Michael Hirschbichler

Architecture can be understood as a petrification in a literal sense—the transformation into stone of society systems, worldviews, reigning regimes and historical events. The work series *"Theatrum Orbis Terrarum"* investigates and challenges traces of past events, social and political struggles and various constellations of power that are inscribed into the planned and built environment.

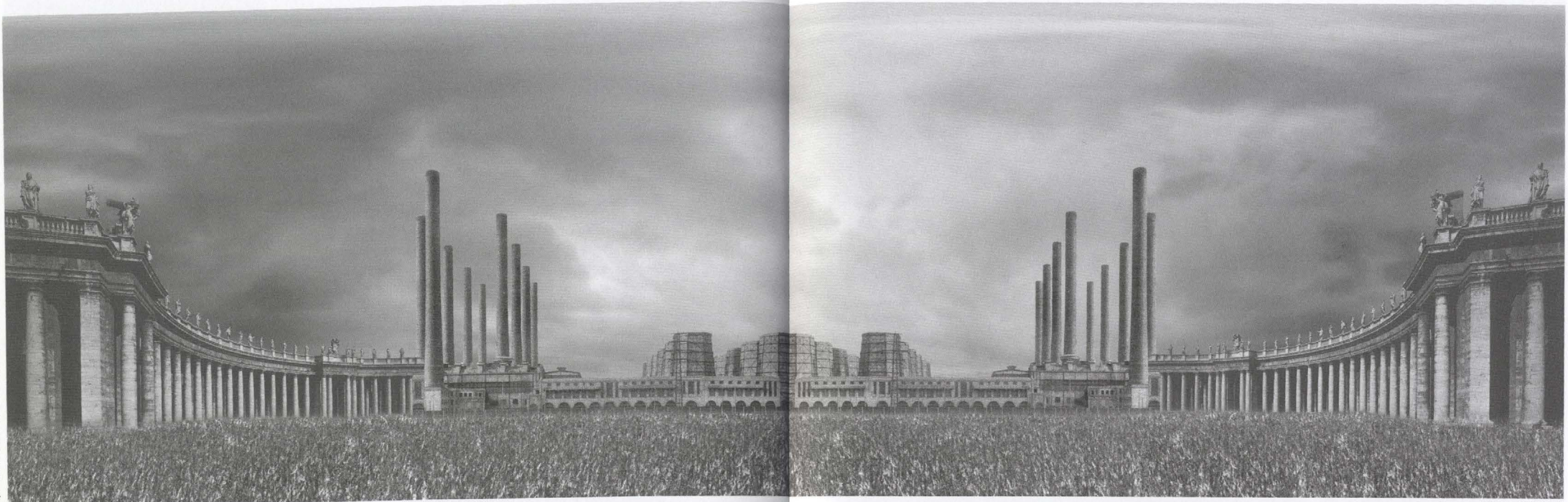
Ideologically drenched architectural manifestations of various historical epochs and political regimes remain as fragmentary traces, leaving complex palimpsests of physical and ideological structures, landscapes of guilt, monuments and ruin fields of past instances: architecturally formulated geographies.

Employing the technique of a "speculative-critical archeology" and relying on the media of the digital collage, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* attempts to investigate and manipulate the traces inherent in spatio-architectonic fragments and to montage them into compositions that, in their exaggeration and seeming absurdity, serve as tools to reflect on contemporary conditions. Mediating the sterility of everyday functional space and the sculptural exuberance of representational buildings, it forges an insight into built reality, uncovering from seeming objectivity the existential drama of choreographed designs and spatial contestation. Endless enfilades unfold in monotonous repetition; abandoned scenery flows between harsh, towering buildings; and men appear lost, dominated by their built environment. Archetypes and palaces, monuments and landmarks, cathedrals and temples, prisons and camps, fortresses, bunkers and superblocks are woven into an architectural phantasmagoria which, though fictional, is formed from and reflects on the existing realities—petrified traces of human action, hope and suffering.

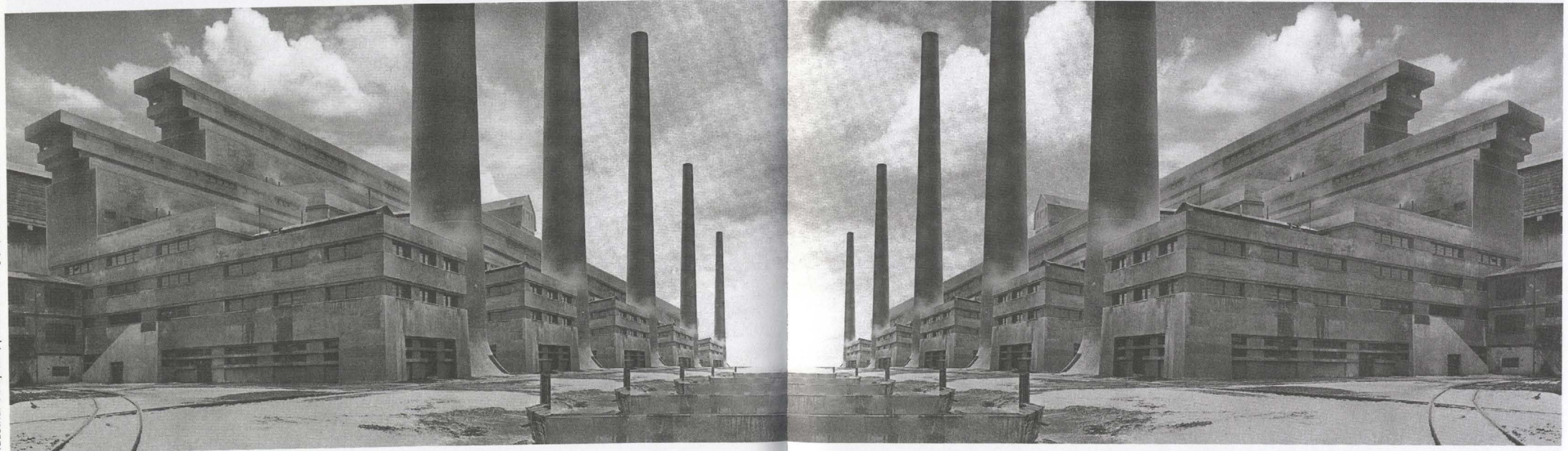


Industrial Complex II, print on drawing paper, 2013 © Michael Hirschbichler

Square III, print on drawing paper, 2013 © Michael Hirschtbichler

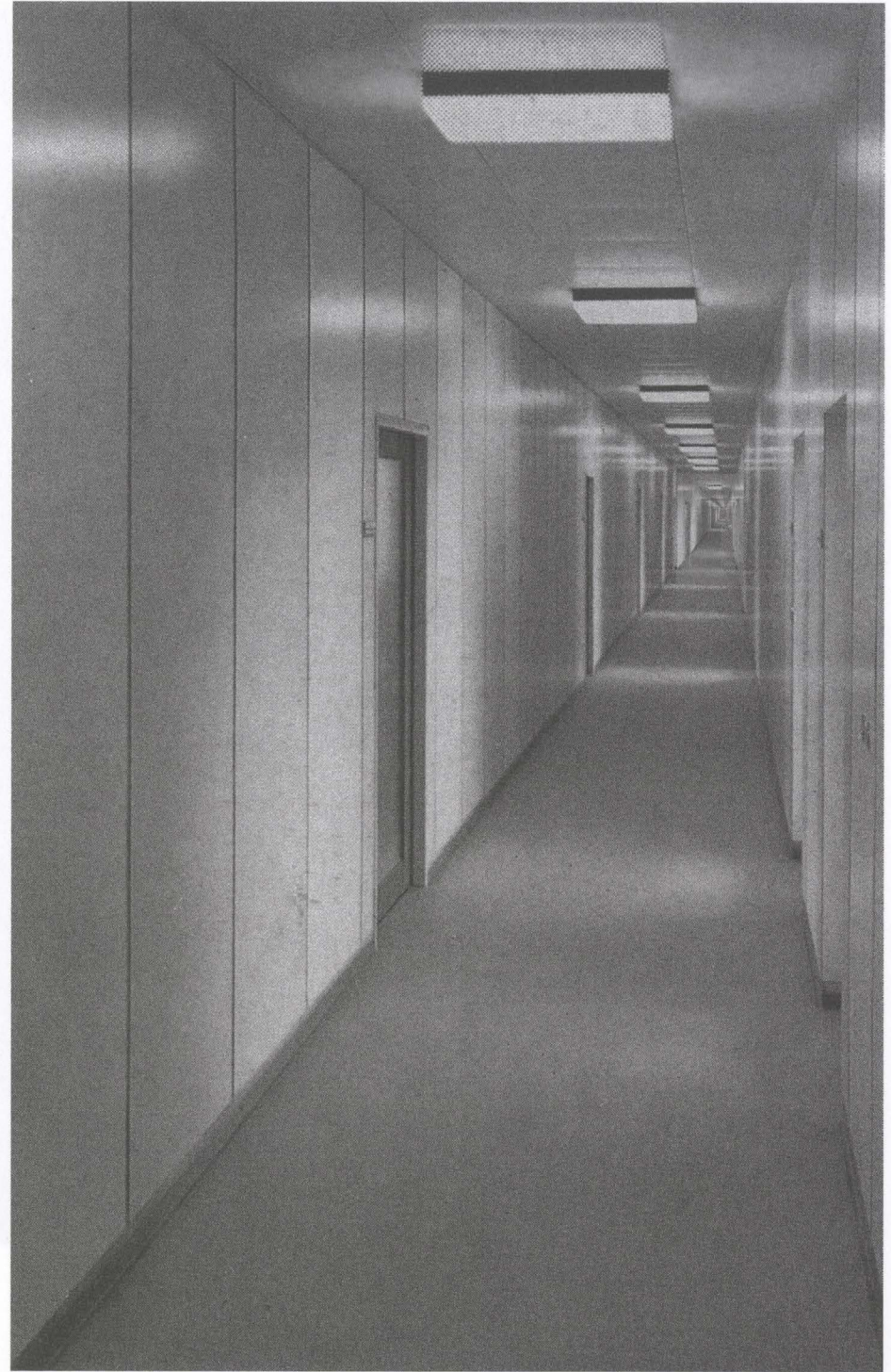


Industrial Complex I, print on drawing paper, 2013 © Michael Hirschtbichler





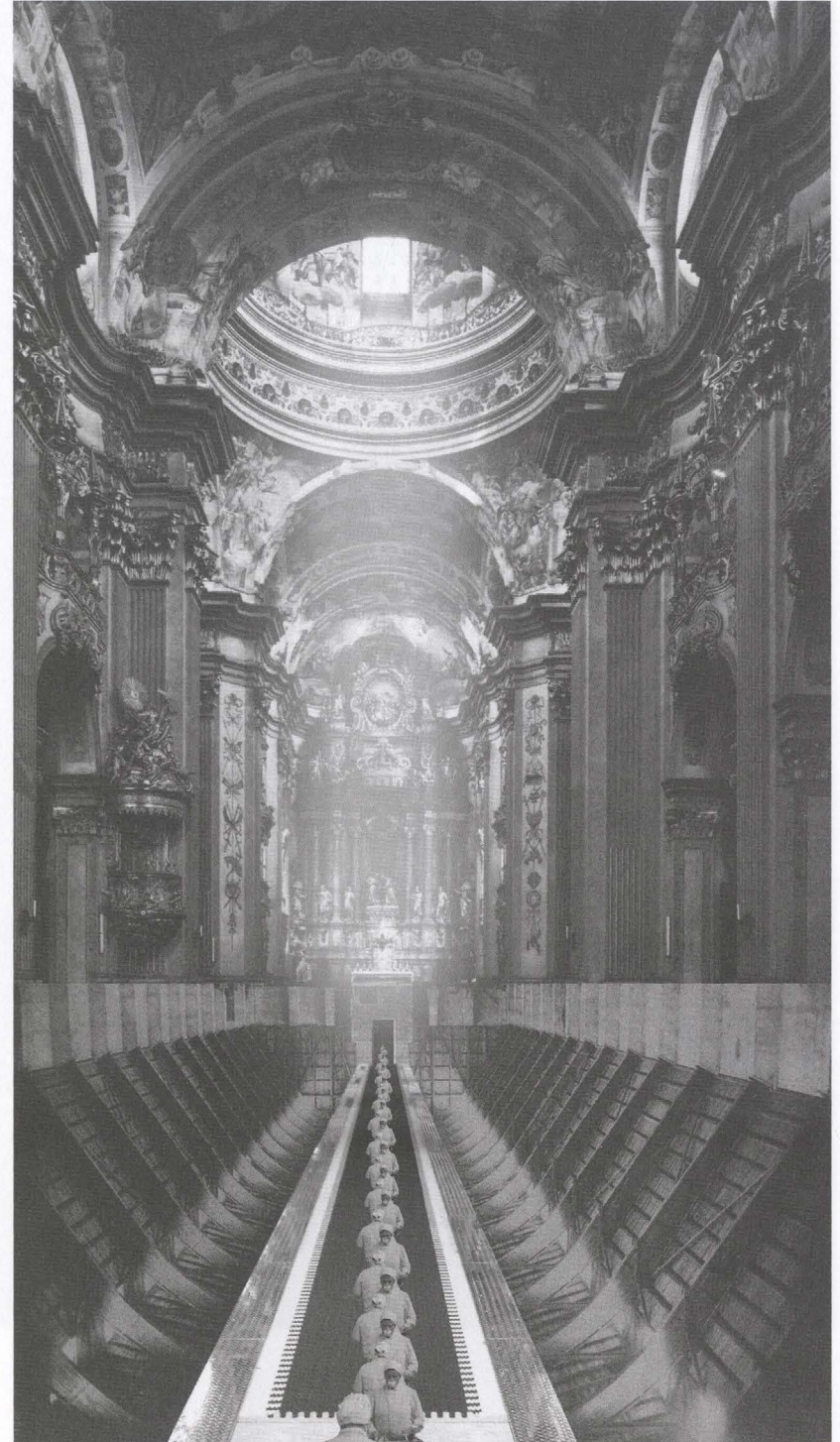
Locker room, print on drawing paper, 2013 © Michael Hirschbichler



Corridor, print on drawing paper, 2013 © Michael Hirschbichler



Hall II, print on drawing paper, 2013 © Michael Hirschbichler



Hall III, print on drawing paper, 2013 © Michael Hirschbichler



Palace II, print on drawing paper, 2013 © Michael Hirschi