

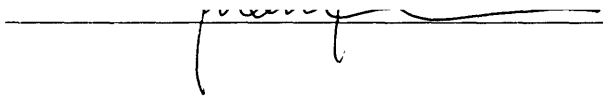
drifting absence :: drafting memory

Submitted to the Department of Architecture in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of **Master of Architecture** at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, August 2006

by Marlene Eva Kuhn

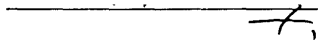
B.A., Art History + Studio Art
Wellesley College, 2000

Signature of Author: _____



Marlene Kuhn
Department of Architecture
August 11, 2006

Certified by: _____



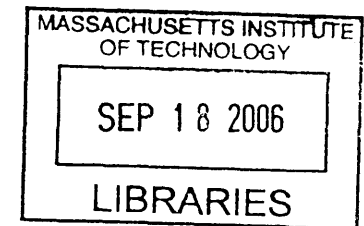
Fernando Domeyko
Senior Lecturer in Architecture
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by: _____



Yung Ho Chang
Professor of Architecture
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abstract

The emotive power of a memorial derives from its ability to engage the viewer in active remembrance. The project considers the limitations of a monumentality which embraces a distinct division between viewer and memorial. Collapsing the traditionally bifurcated relationship between the viewer and object, the memorial becomes inhabitable- unifying the experience of the viewer with the substance and physicality of the memorial. Once the notion of the archetypal memorial is dissolved, the spatial memorial is then open to interpretation with respect to architectural conditions.

The thesis proposes a migratory World War II memorial which inhabits the Pacific Ocean. Bound between the unfathomable sectional depth of the Pacific and the reaches of the sky, the memorial drifts in international waters across the seemingly infinite plane of the ocean. Tracing a peripatetic path across the expanse, the memorial makes manifest the intangible ephemera of memory and silence through the studied manipulation of spatial experience.

*for poppa.
love, sam*

Norman Edward Johnson
1917-2005

CW04
USS Maryland BB-46
Uss Ardent AM-340



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acknowledgements

Many thanks to those that aided and inspired my course through MIT.

Mom, Gram and Greg, for ever supporting me and patiently waiting for me to come home. I love you.

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Fernando, whose perception and patience allowed me to give form to the poetry and silence; Michael for his acuity and perspective, helping me distill and synthesize the experiential with the spatial; Tim for his first hand insights, inspiration and ultimately the bottom line on buoyancy; and Arindam whose questions and bizarre revelations forced me to clarify the larger conceptual framework.

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my multiple generations of MIT friends- you filled these five years with laughter, wit and camaraderie. without you, I never would have been able to stay awake for so long. I will miss you terribly.

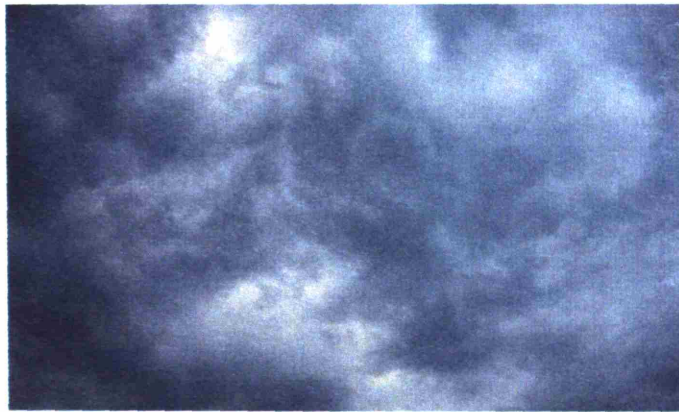
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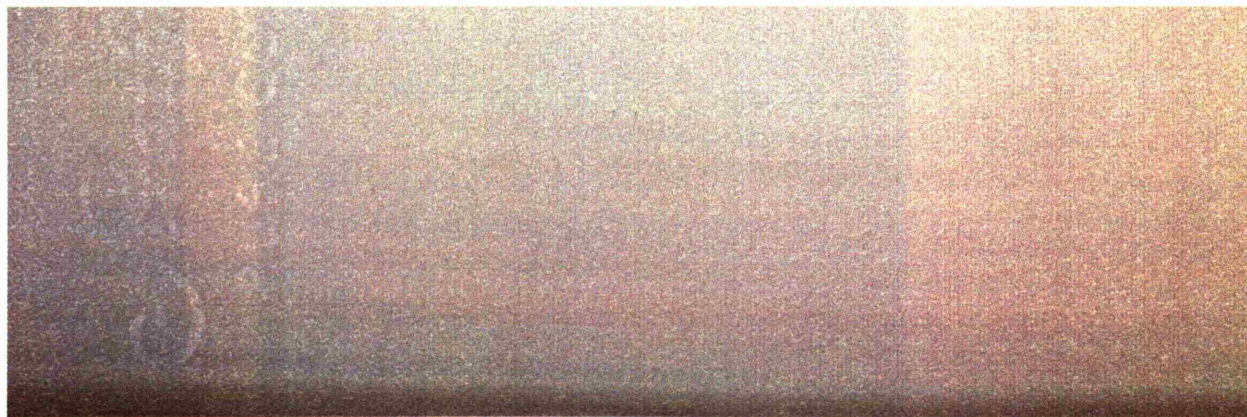
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27	memorial	
73	sequence	
99	process	11
125	precedent/inspiration	
143	bibliography	

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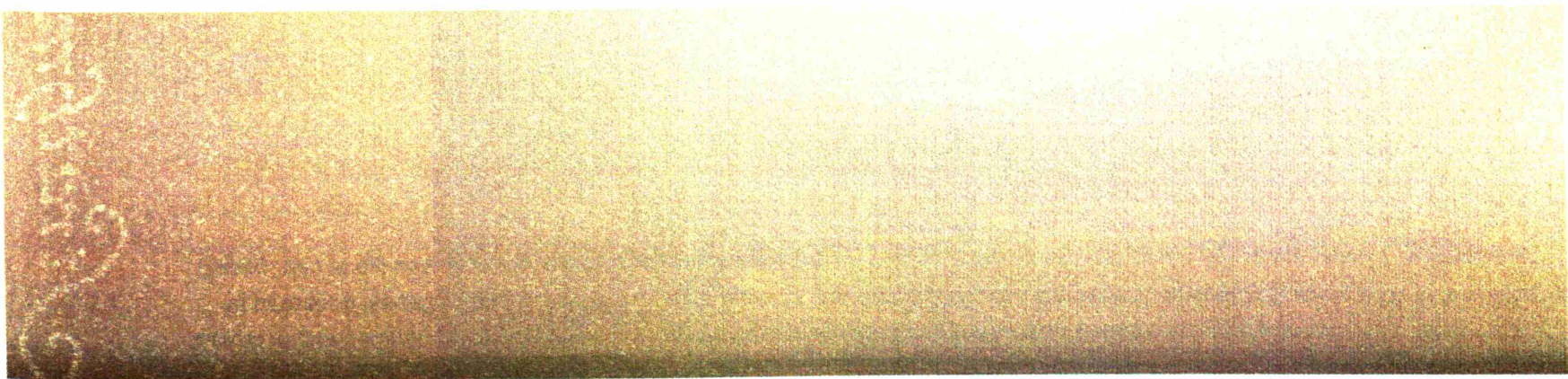
site

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Bound by the infinity above and the impenetrable depth below, the inhabitation of the surface characterizes life at sea. Sliding between sky and water, the horizon acts as the only spatial referent, slipping ever farther afield. This expanse, governed by the weather, fluctuates between tumultuous chaos and monotonous calm; seeming to stretch endlessly at times and at others disappear, enveloped in disorienting uniformity.

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The expanse of the ocean is such that it ceases to function as site, translating instead as abstractions of sky, horizon and water. Locating the memorial amidst a landscape so large as to be without scale, it is necessary that the memorial itself be able to withstand the distortions of scale inherent to such a place. The memorial must function as an emotive spatial environment when inhabited, but it must also operate from afar, as an icon positioned on the horizon. The memorial works to internalize the notion of site, inverting the figure/ground relationship to become its own context. Through its transitory nature the memorial begins to map the ocean, knitting together and making one the expanse of the Pacific. Architecture becomes site, concentrating place within itself, providing a foil for the repetitive sameness of the extensive ocean. ¹

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¹ The operation of the memorial functions in concept much like the *Site/Non-Site* investigations of Robert Smithson. The works become indicators, referencing site which no longer exists or has been transposed. The site dissolves with the resolution and realization of the *Non-Site*. Likewise, the memorial renders the Pacific dissolute, internalizing site- both the emotional and physical, becoming a migratory concentration of place. "One might even say that the place has been absorbed and lost. This is a map that will take you somewhere, but when you get there you won't really know where you are. In a sense the non-site is the center of the system, and the site itself is the fringe or the edge." p. 249 Holt

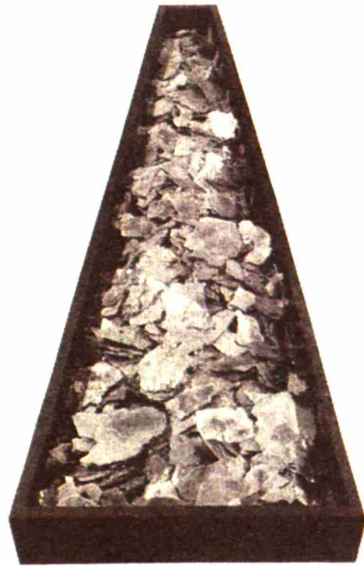


fig. 1 *Smithson Non-Site*





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m e m o r i a l

The war in the Pacific began December 7, 1941 with the Japanese surprise attack on the United States Naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The engagement lasted until 1945 when the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, one on Hiroshima, the other on Nagasaki, resulting in the unconditional surrender of the Japanese forces. Much of the war centered on the strategic possession of islands scattered throughout the Pacific. The nature of this war, fundamentally different than a land based warfare in its movement, tactics and pace, would define the lives of the sailors bound within its dance. The planar surface of the Pacific emerges as the inhabited membrane of the living. In contrast, the sectional depth is only encountered only through tragedy, the bottom topography the realm of the lost and unmarked- an unfathomable depth of the disappeared.

In defining what is appropriate for a World War II Memorial centered on and in the Pacific Ocean, the experience of the sailors and their relationship to the water became paramount. In addition to appropriately dealing with the subject of loss and war, it was necessary to capture the feeling and realities of life at sea in the experience of the memorial.

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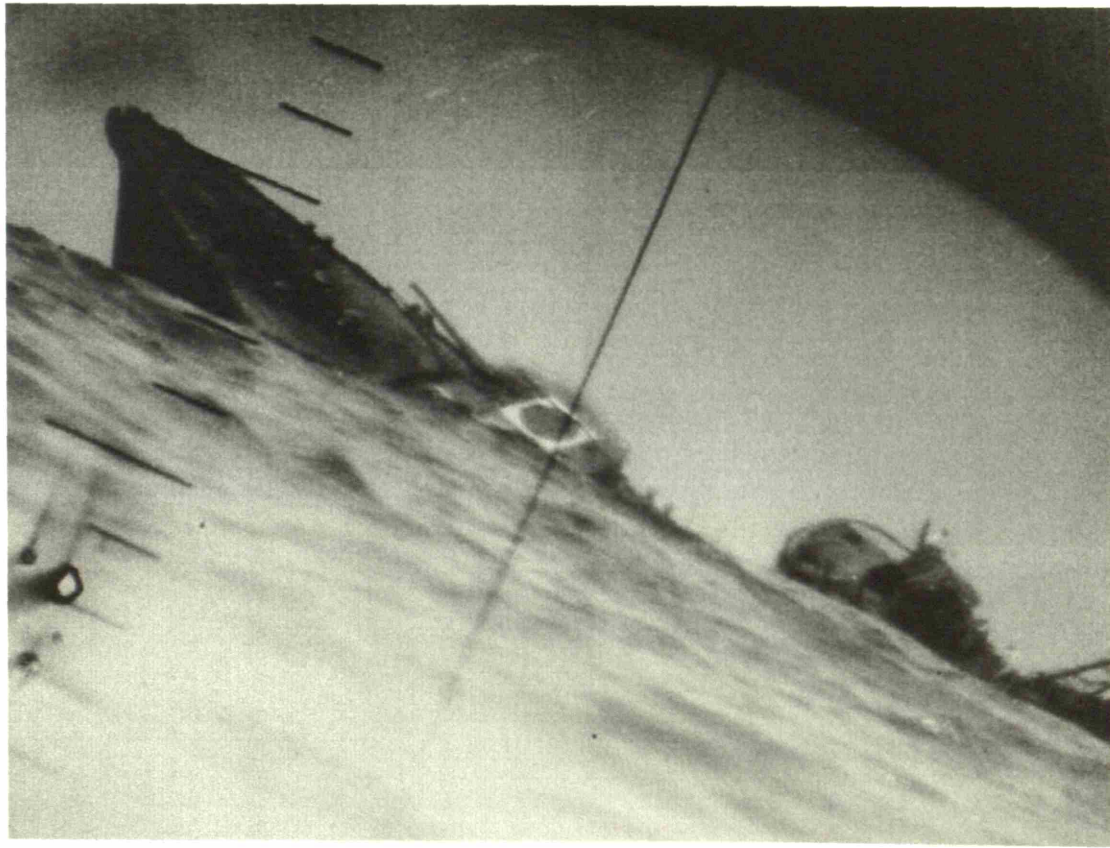
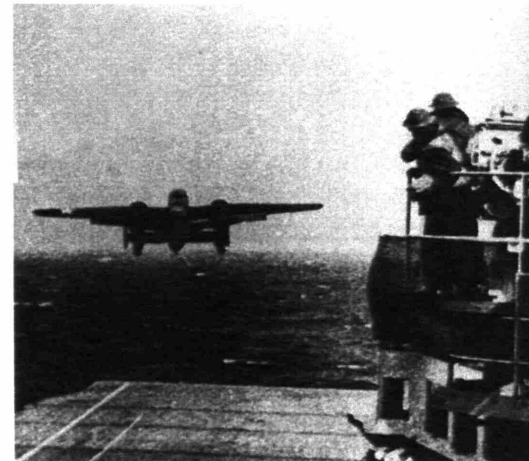


fig. 2



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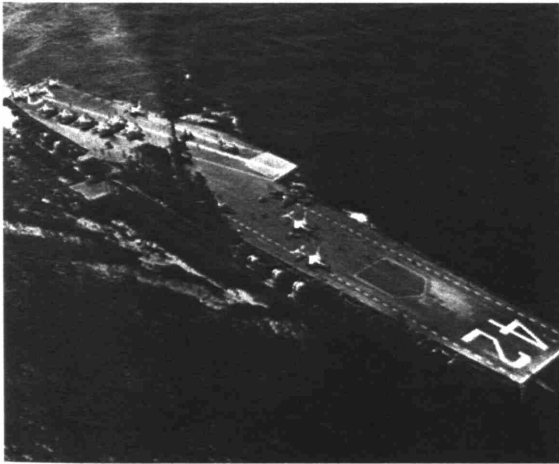
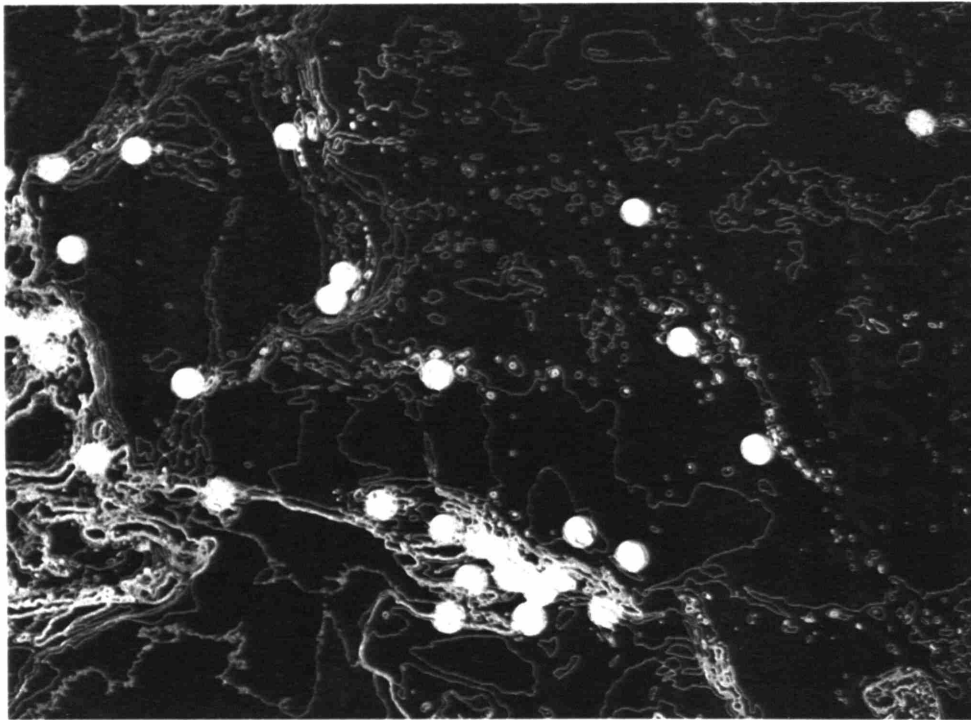
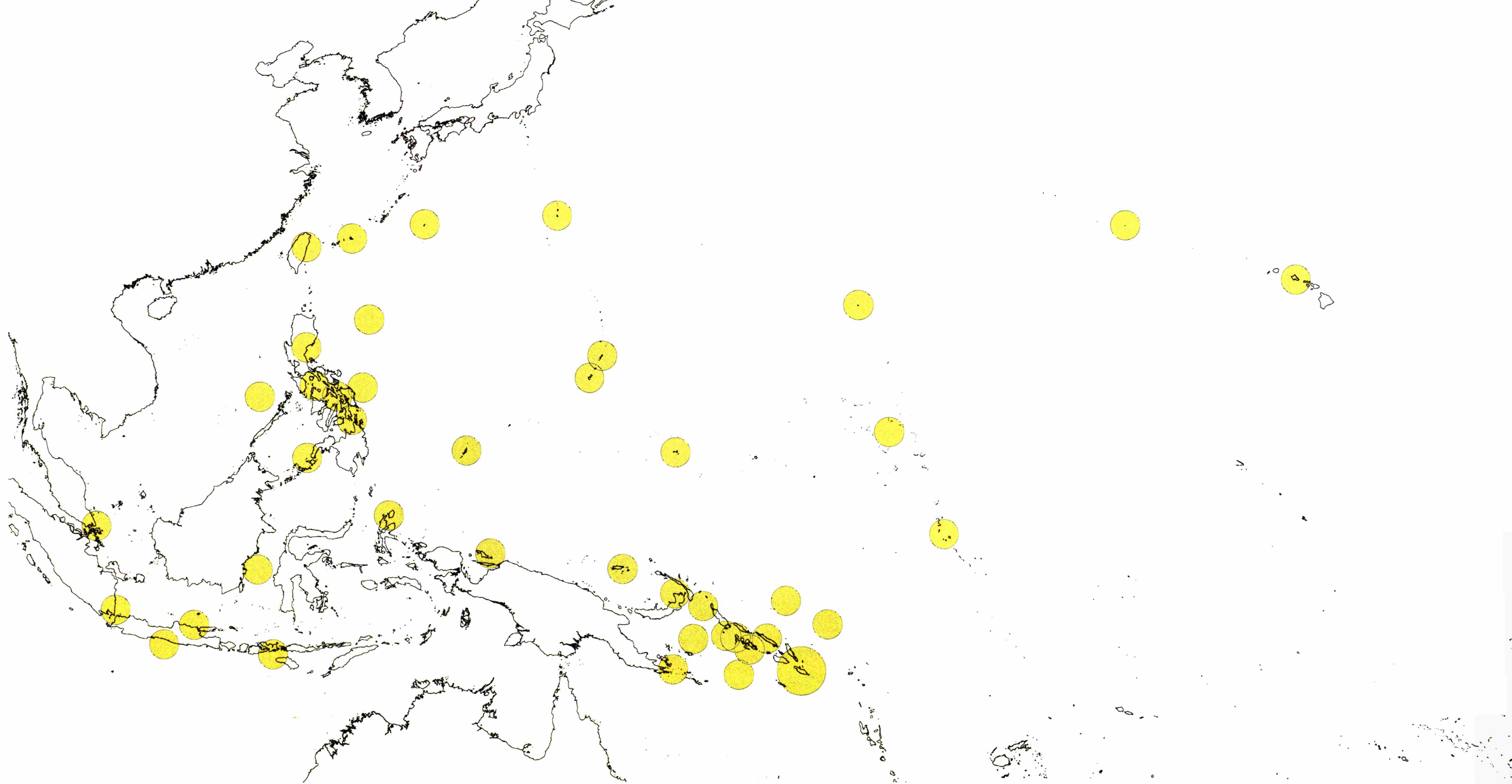
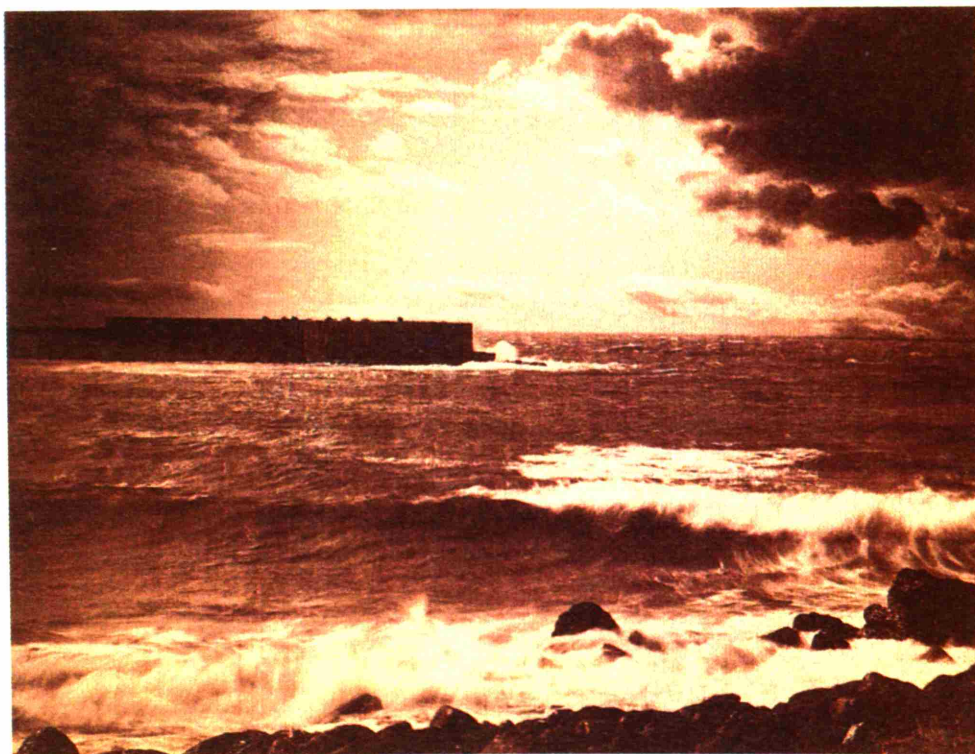


fig. 3-6



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fig. 7

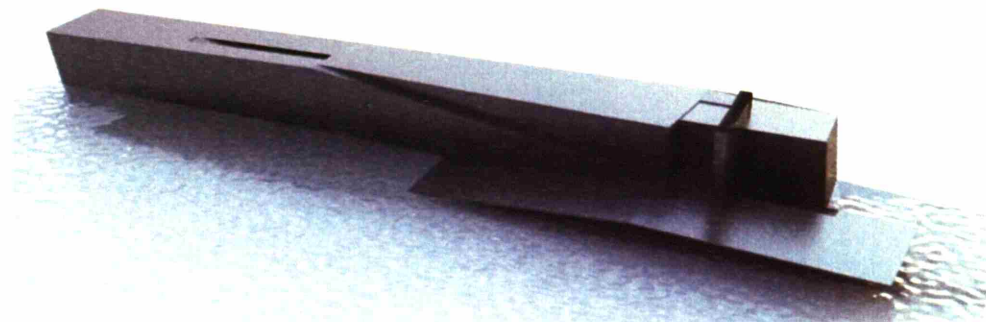
Inherent in the definition and understanding of memorial is memory. It is through the act of memorializing that memory is sustained, perseveres and is preserved. Memorials serve as markers in the greater narrative, monuments to events or peoples however deserving- famous or infamous, for their role in shaping our understanding of the present and past. To memorialize is to place a flag in the visual field of history, demarcating the chosen subject as worthy of note, pause and contemplation for good or ill. As with most human constructions and conceptions each memorial is subject to the time in which it is created, subject to its cultural morays, prejudices, desires and climes. It can therefore be inferred that future generations may not look upon the memorials of the past with the same eyes as their predecessors, having had disparate or continued histories and changed world views. This transitional audience must be taken into account; for, as the histories build, that which engages at the onset can slowly fade into passivity, becoming more silent monument than active memorial, as personal connections and memories fade into the historical record. The nature of an active memorial is elusive as it implies the ability to concentrate and project a universal emotive trigger, immune to the passage of time and able to adapt to the evolution of culture, language and society. This runic formula cannot manifest in a didactic figural facsimile, but perhaps can be found in a spatial attitude and extension of the memorial content beyond inscription. The case of the active versus the passive memorial becomes more acute when viewed in relation to the viewer/object division extant in the traditional memorial typology. As the subject matter fades ever farther into the past- as memories wane, witnesses, participants and celebrants pass away, and society moves beyond a perceived cultural need for awareness, the memorial becomes ever more the object to be viewed, a thing, receptacle, or reliquary of distant and foreign memory. In order to sustain memory, keep it present and tangible, the memorial must remain active and poignant, disallowing the realities of the past to be relegated to the annals of ancestral history; but rather kept close and vibrant within the coffers of contemporary thought, provenance and vernacular.

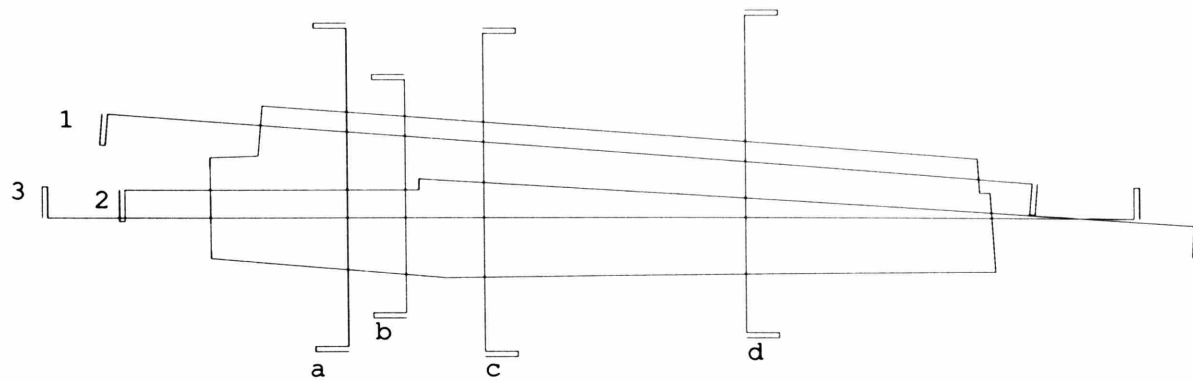


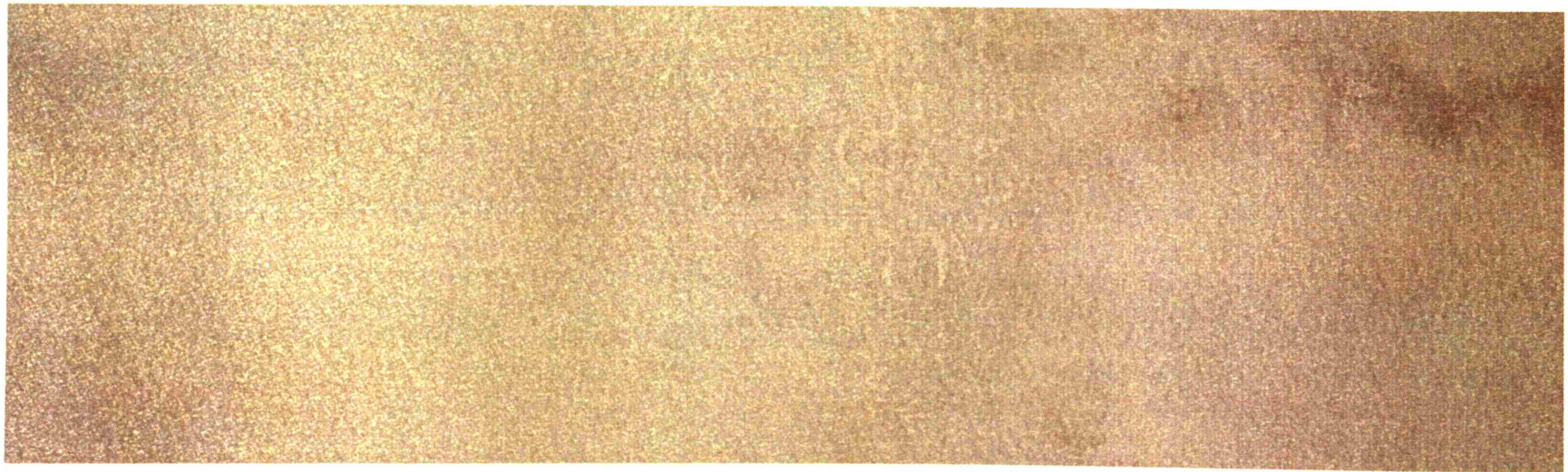
In order to fully attain an emotive, arresting memorial, both in visceral and visual impact, the memorial as monument must envelope the viewer; thereby dissolving any existing spatial or emotional dichotomy. The previously accepted diametric organization of viewer versus object merely fosters a passivity engendered by separation and removal. If removed from the memorialized event, such passive dichotomy widens the experiential rift between the subject of memorial and the personal involvement and investment on the part of the viewer/visitor. The memorial becomes a powerful social and experiential device once this disparate relationship is dissolved; thereby allowing the facility of the memorializing device to extend into architectural definitions, shaping not only the conveyance of the memorial subject, but imbuing this content with spatial agency.



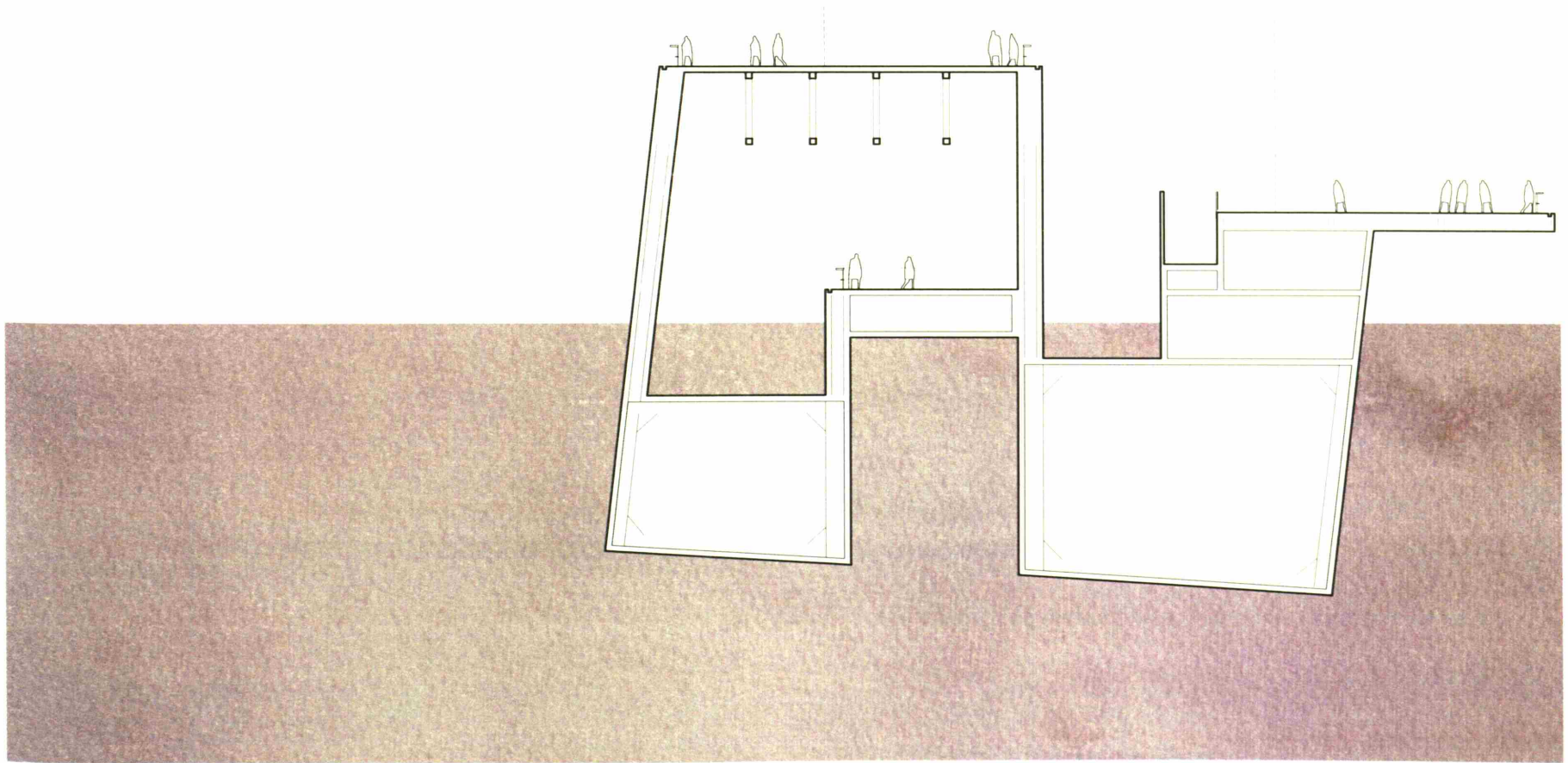
Throughout the memorial the visitor is asked to position themselves with relation to the horizon and waterline. These two elements define the realities at sea and within the memorial, the spaces strive to reorient the visitor with respect to where they are with relation to the water. By redefining the position of the water within the memorial the visitor establishes disparate spatial relationships as they move along the sequence. Part of the aim of the memorial is to convey a sense of the actualities of being on a ship, to provide some echo of the sailor's experience out at sea, waiting for war and looking for battle; traces of monotony, sound, smell, scale and silence all permeate the life of the sailor and become integral parts of the memorial. It is through these realities that the strength of the commemoration finds voice, for the visitor does not just walk through a space dedicated to these men, but as well is enveloped by the same sensory characteristics the sailors met on a daily basis. Designed to be an active memorial, sustaining meaning, memory and poignancy through the passage of time; as it tracks its path across the Pacific, the memorial itself is alive. As it is berated by waves and bathed in weather, the memorial is kept aurally, physically and emotionally by the ever changing elements- present while its presence itself reminds of the past.



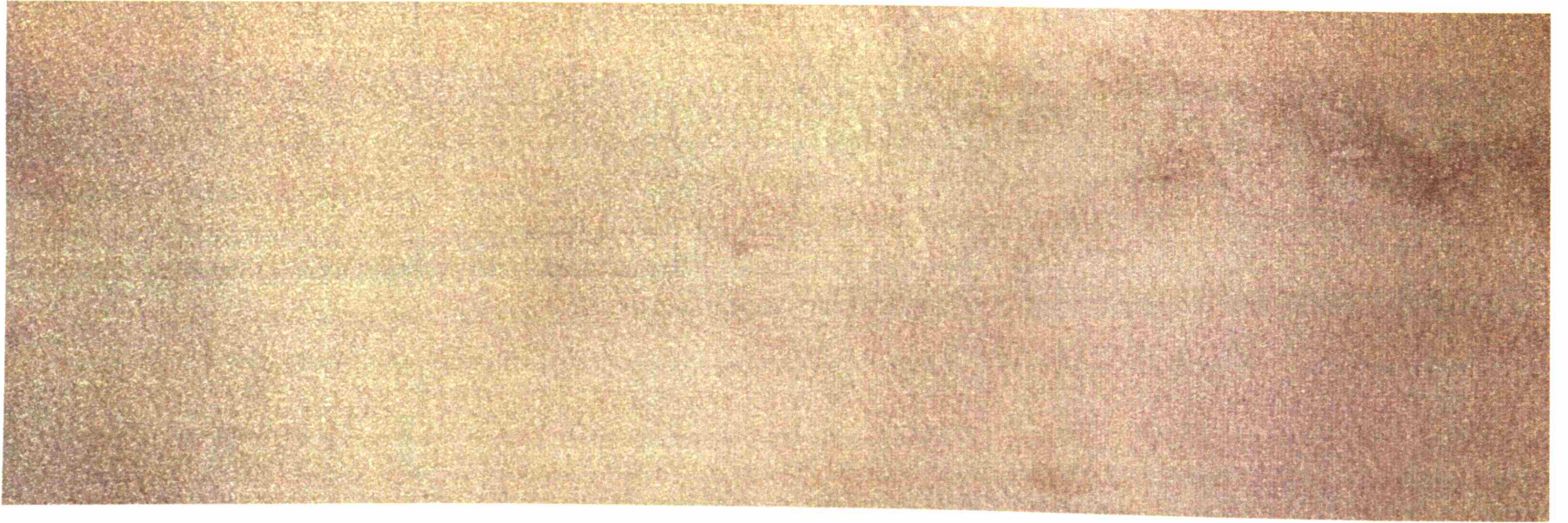




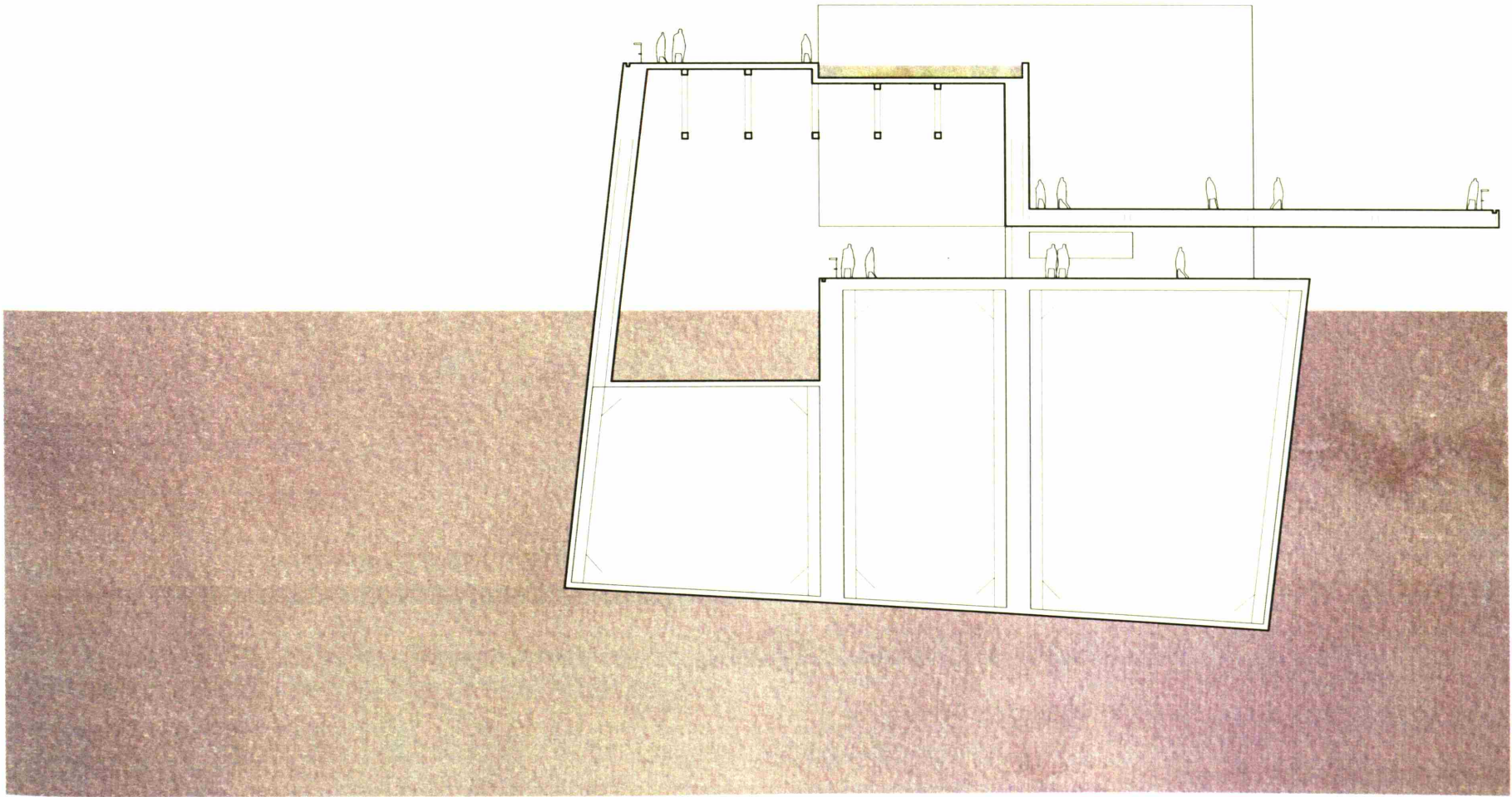
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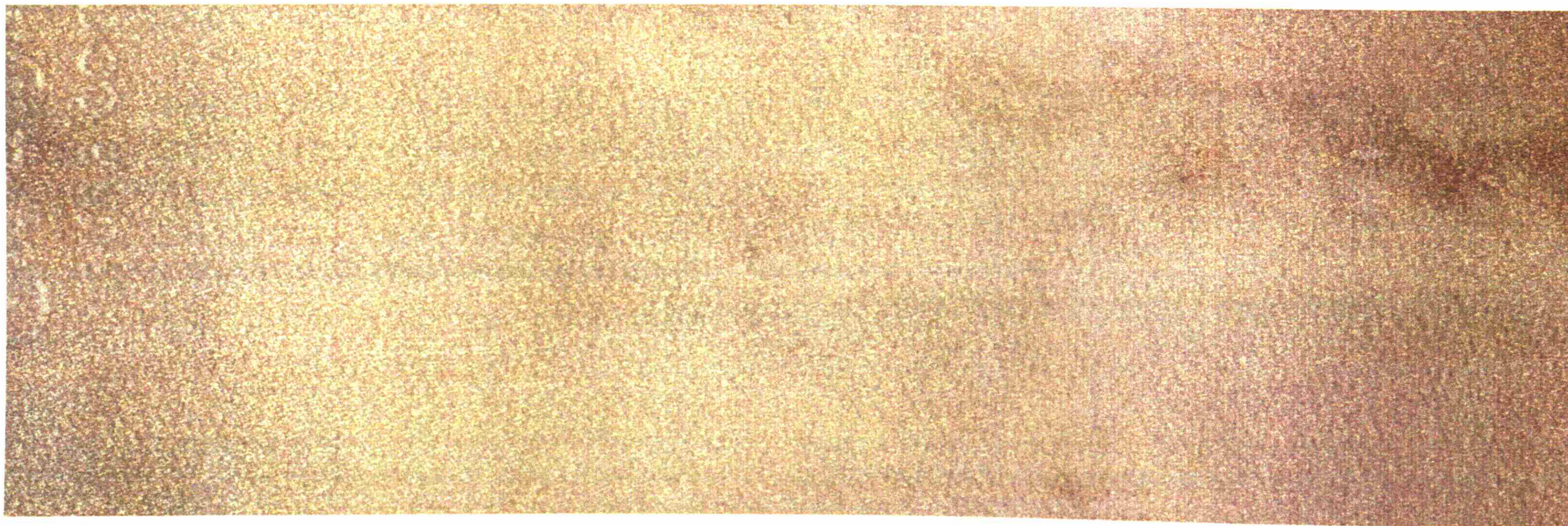
short section a



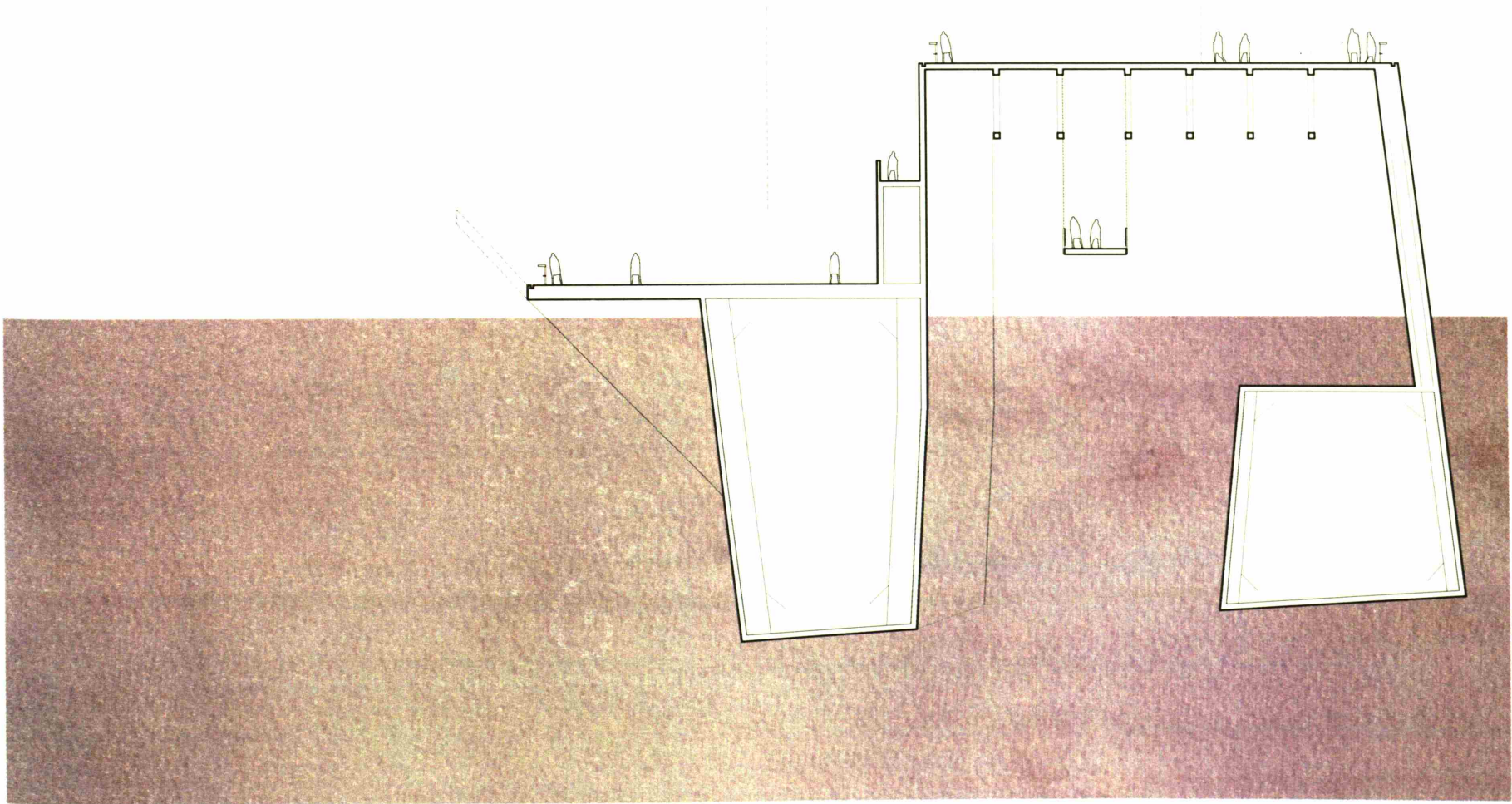
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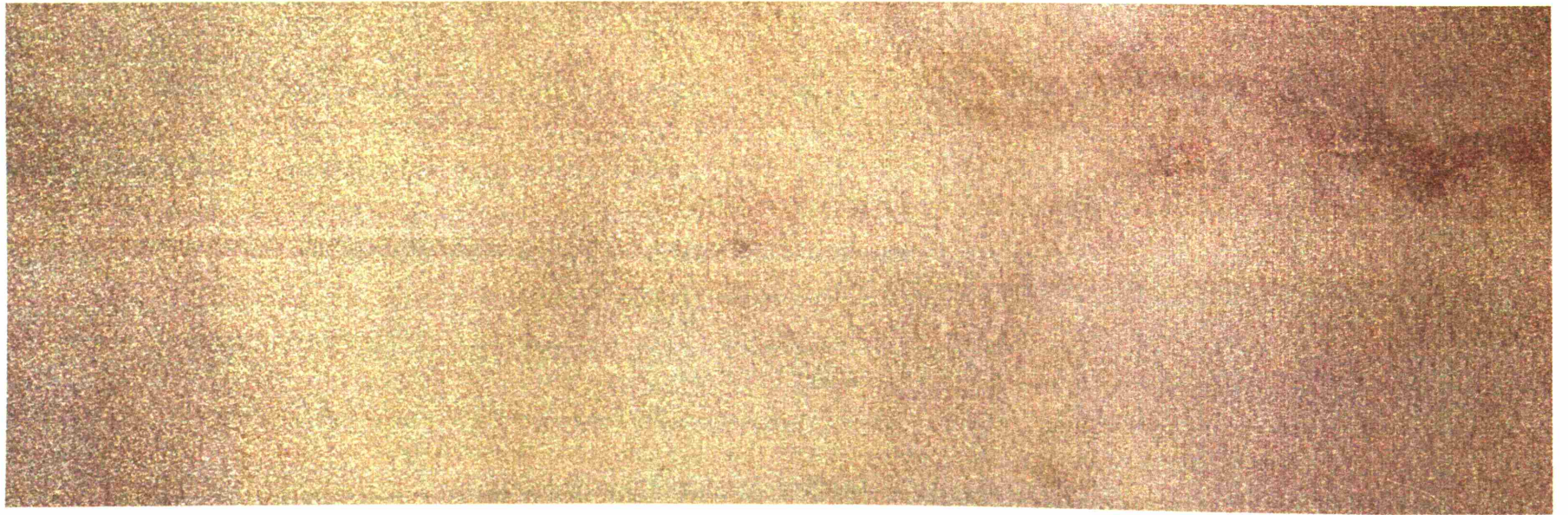
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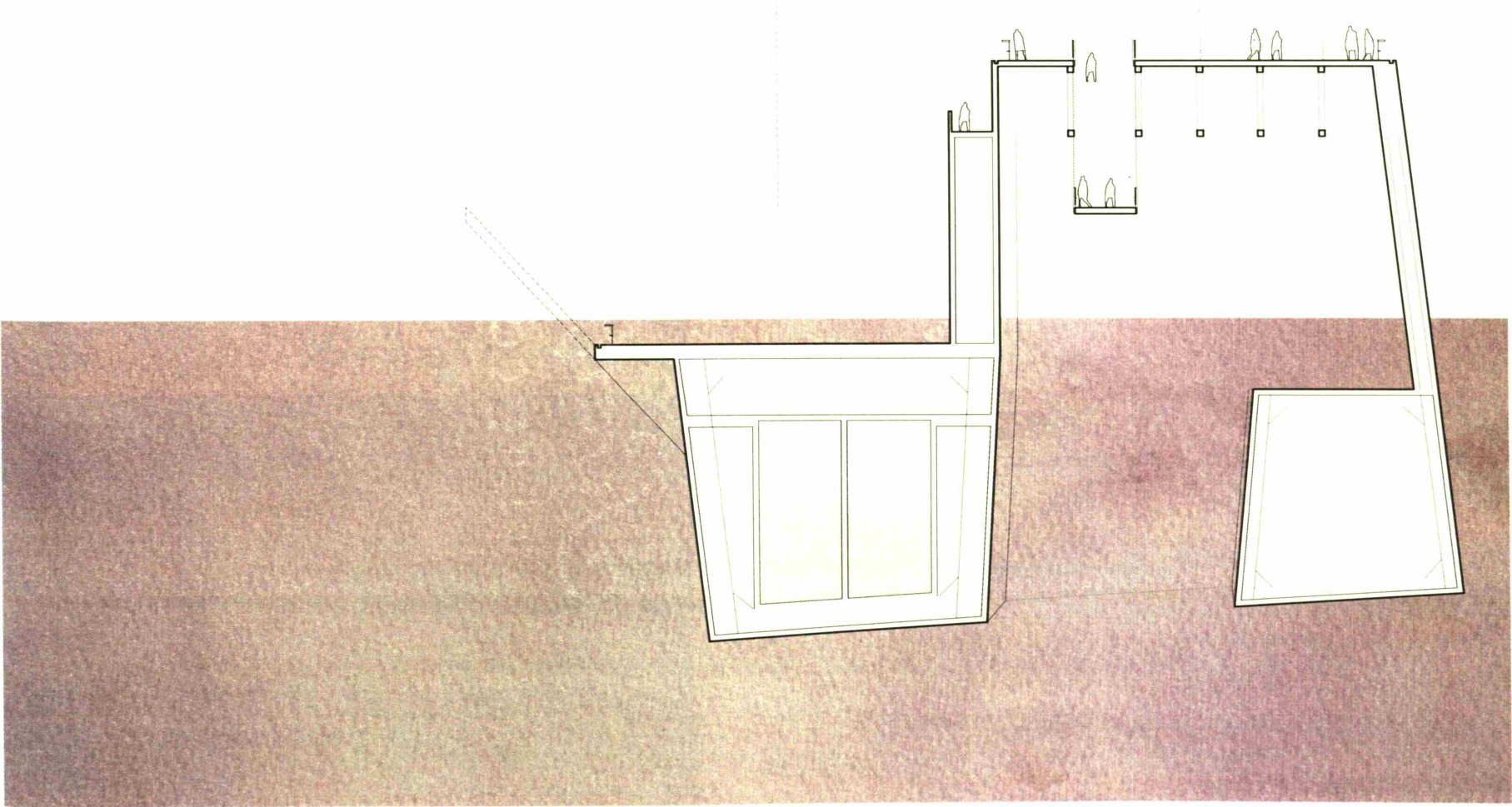
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short section c

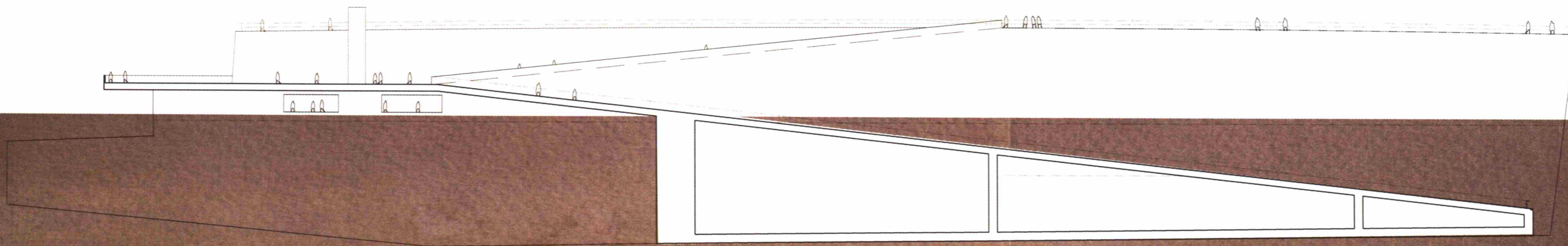


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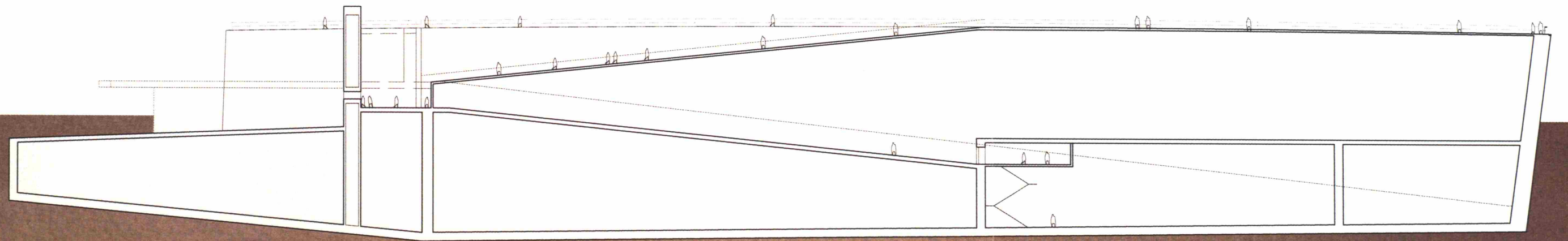


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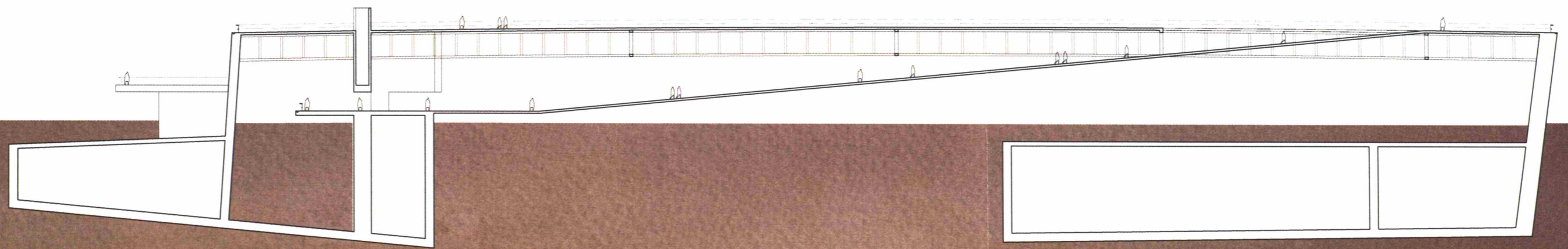
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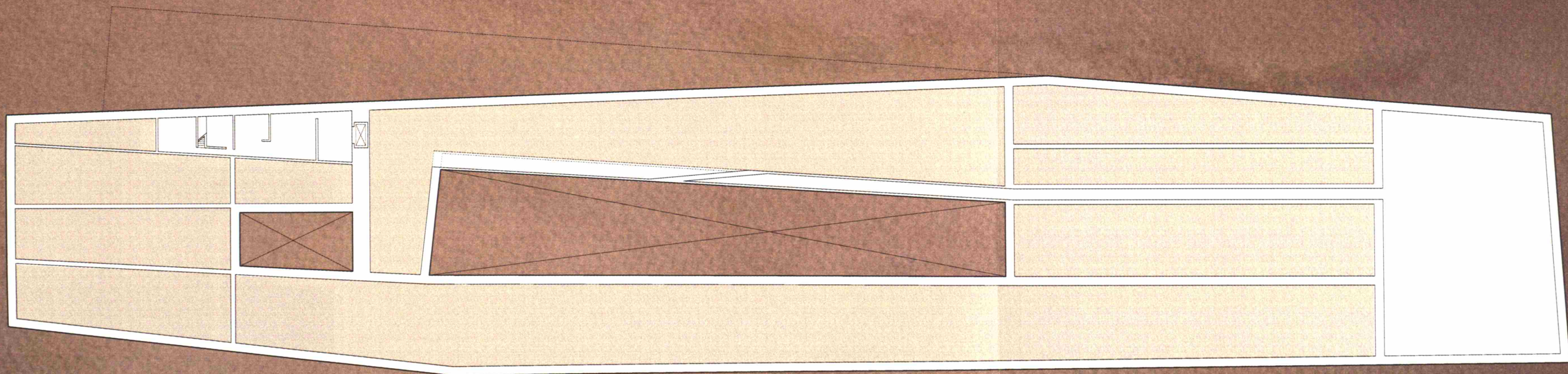
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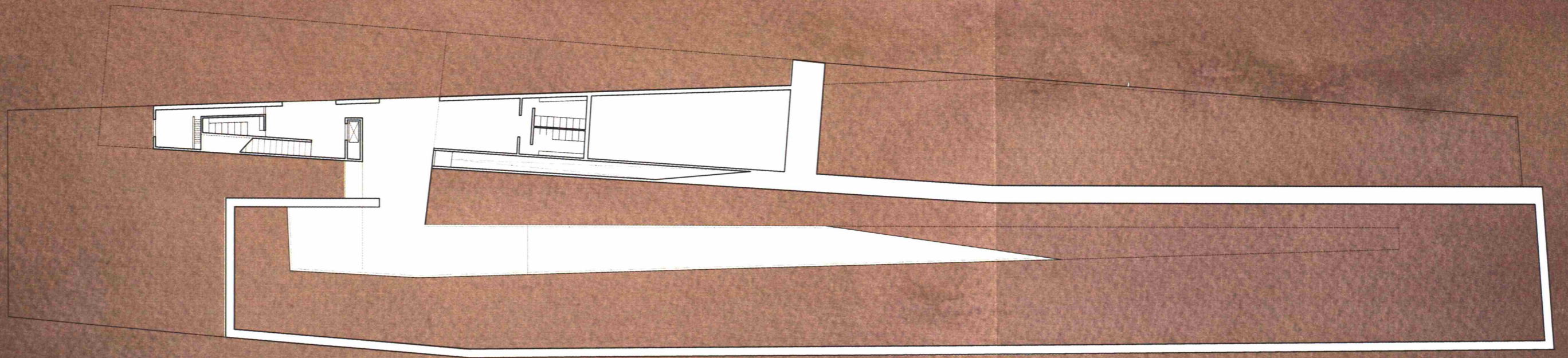
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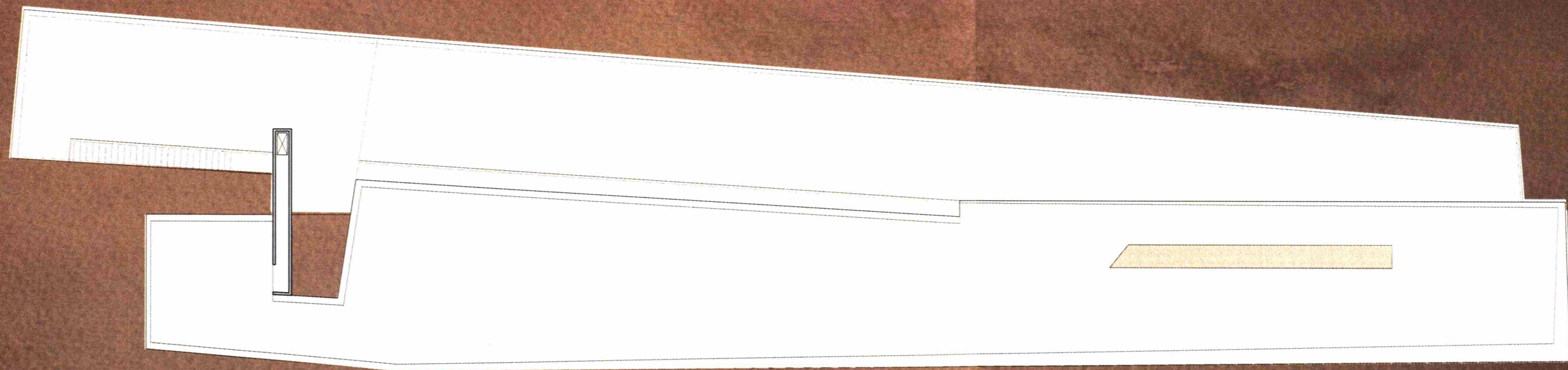
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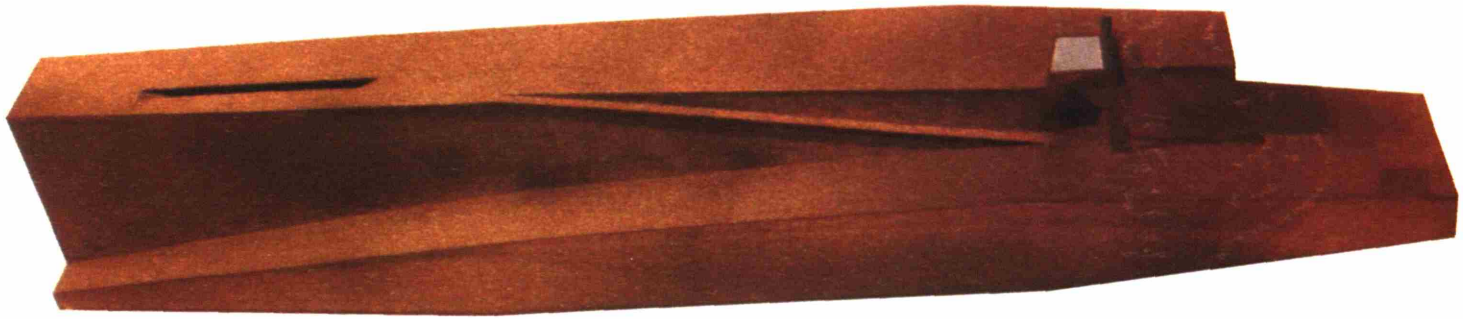
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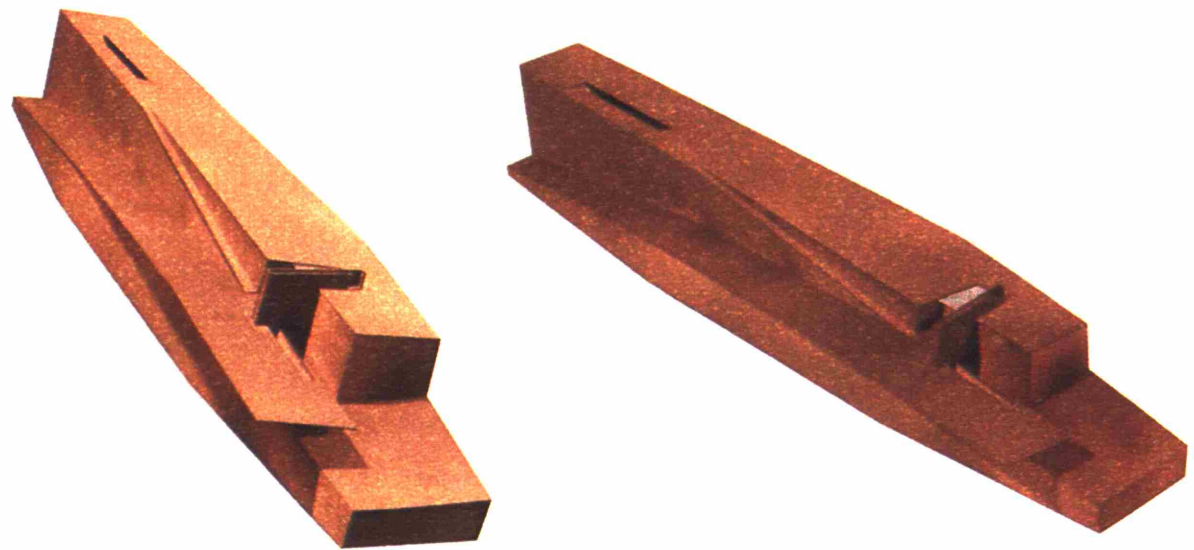


docking level plan

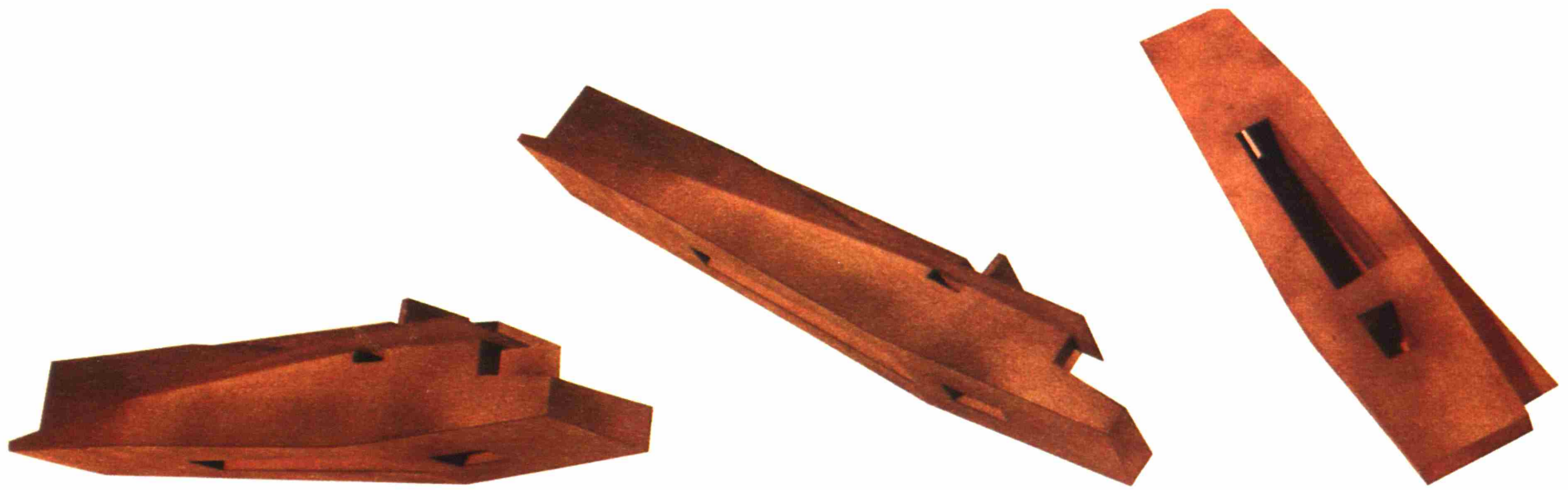


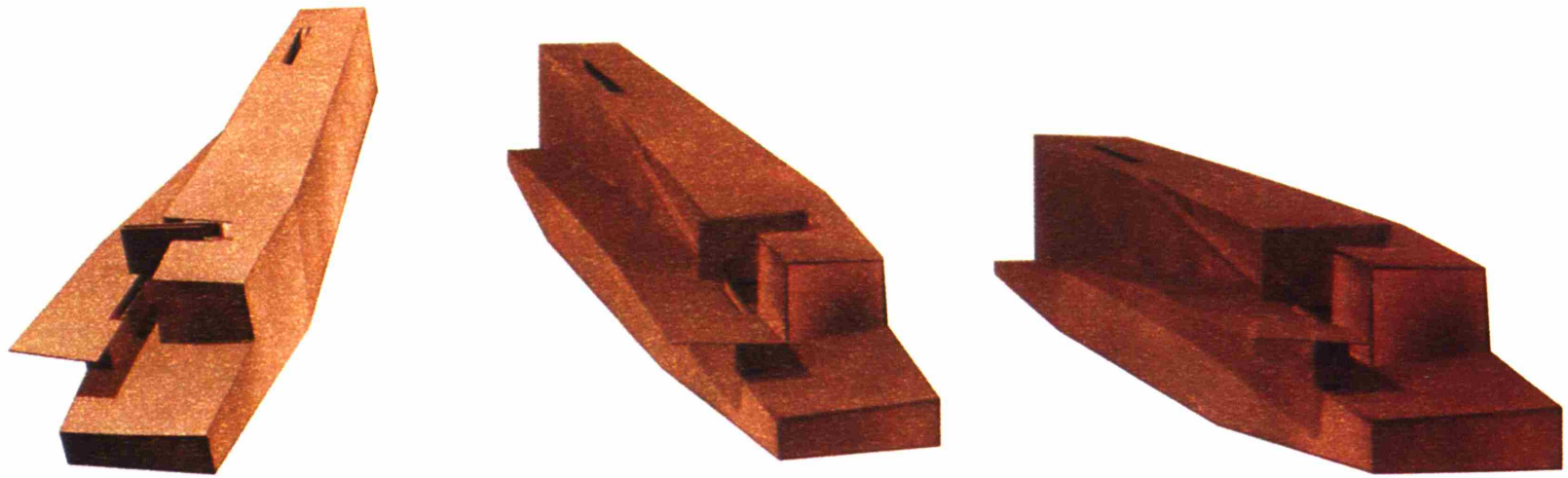
roof plan



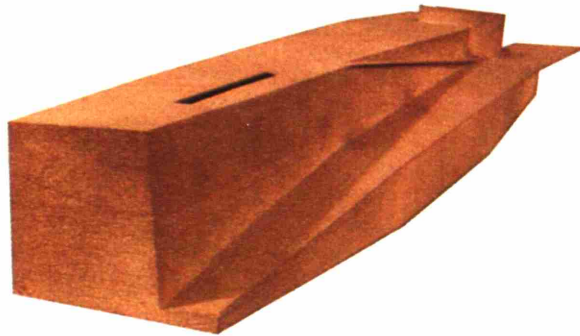
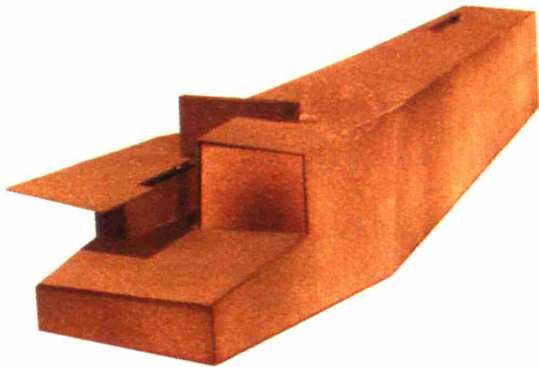


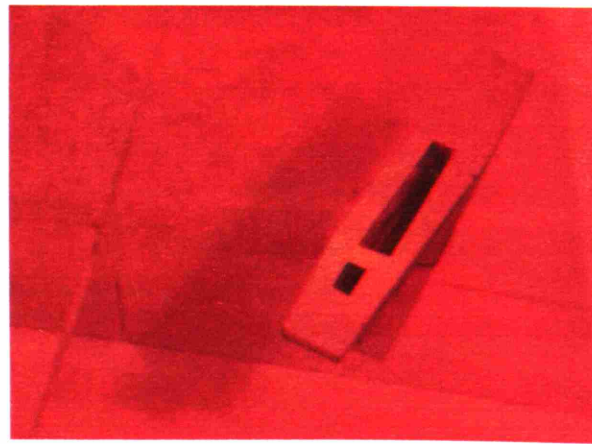
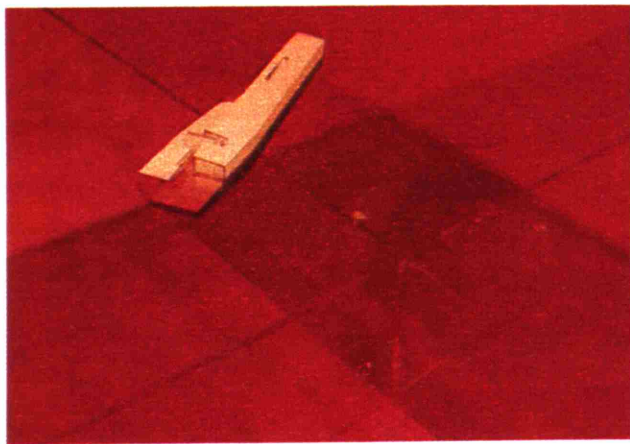
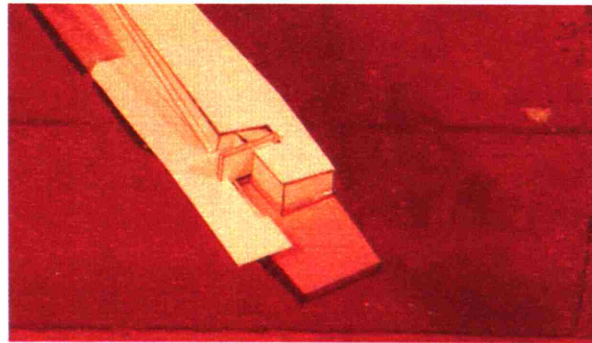
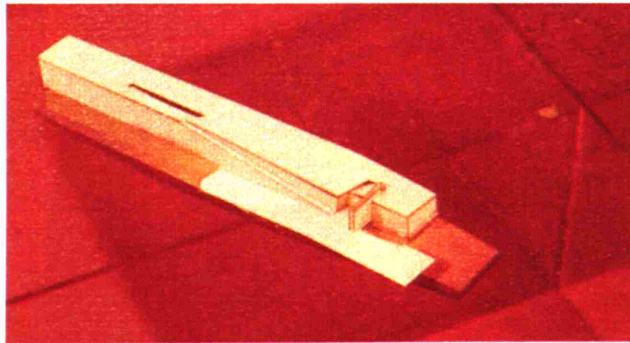
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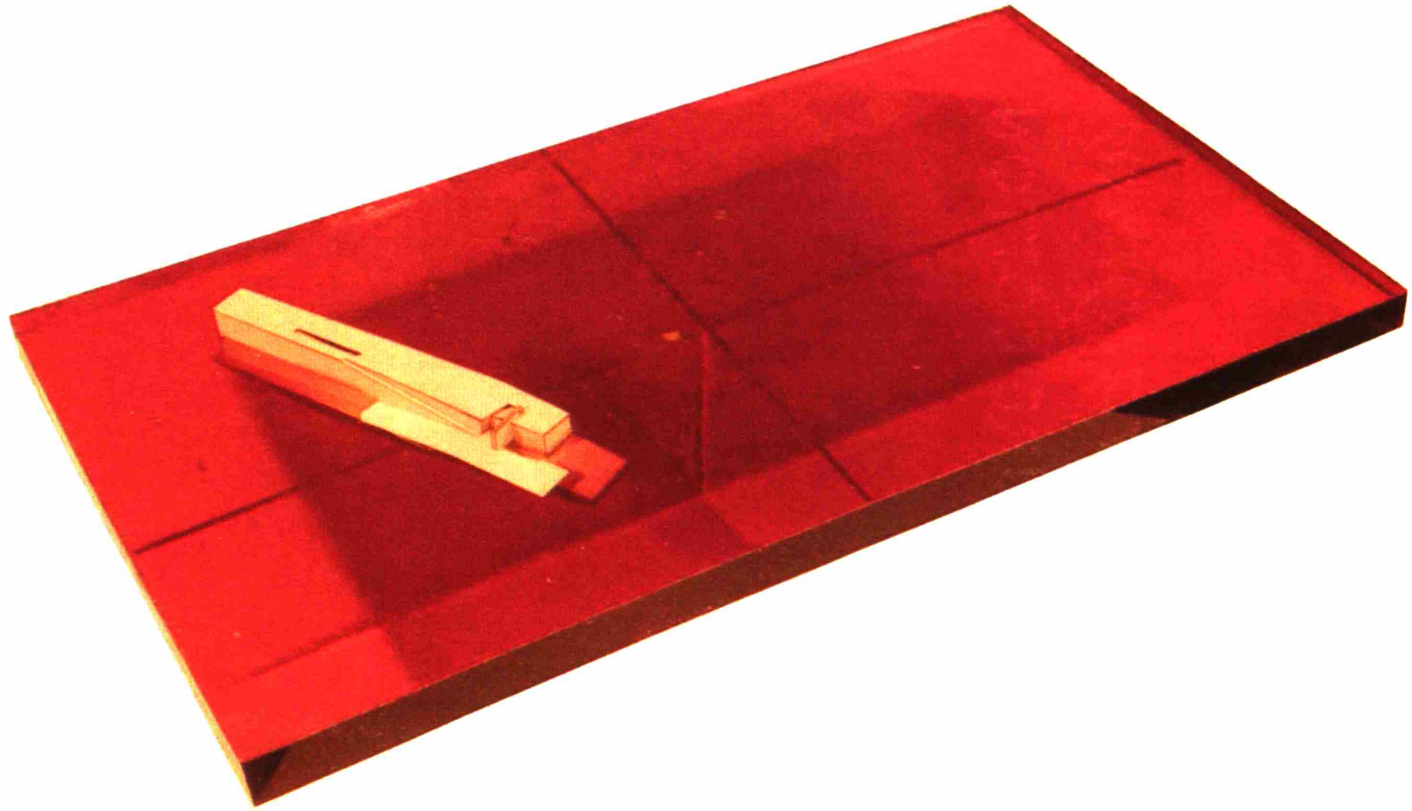
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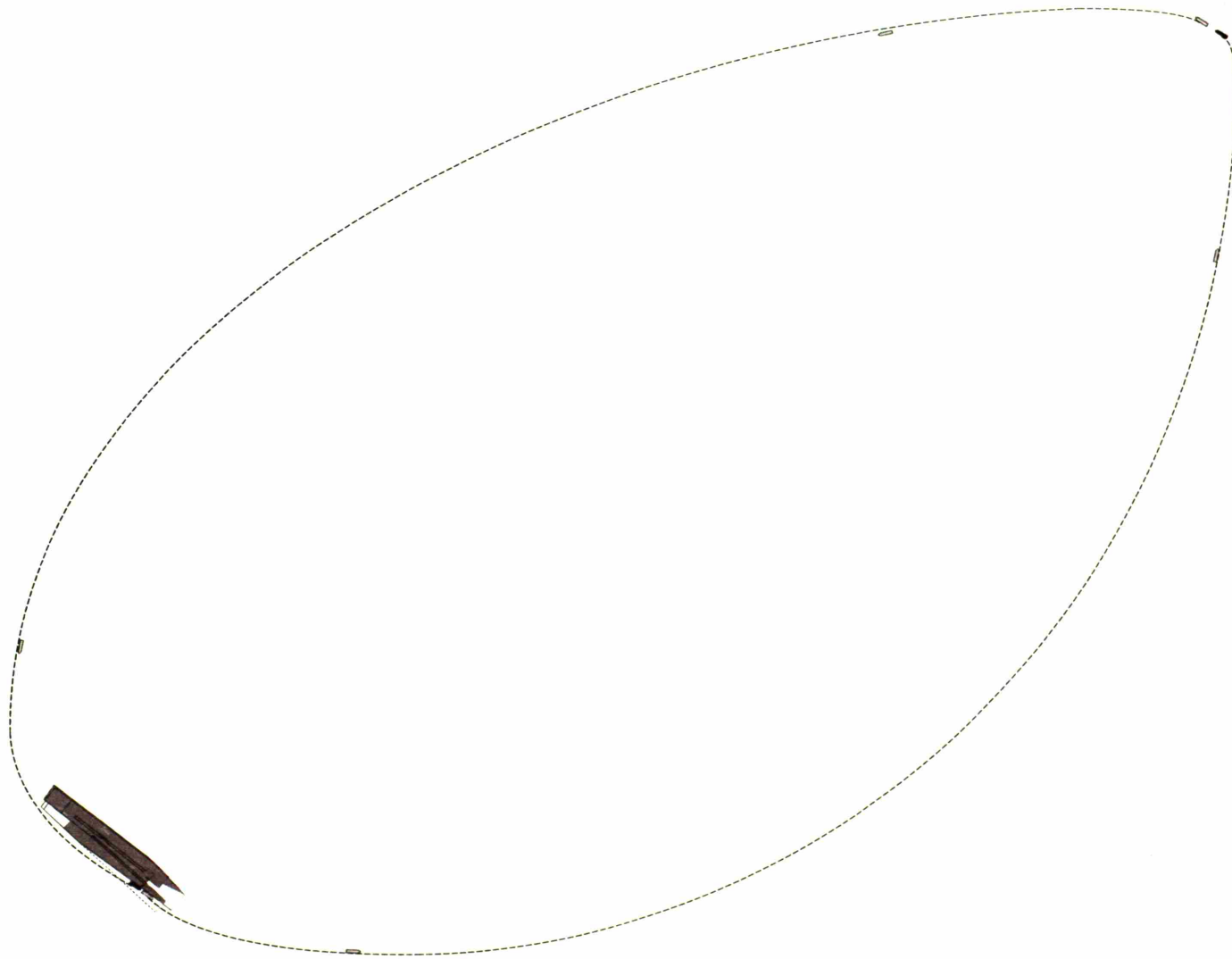
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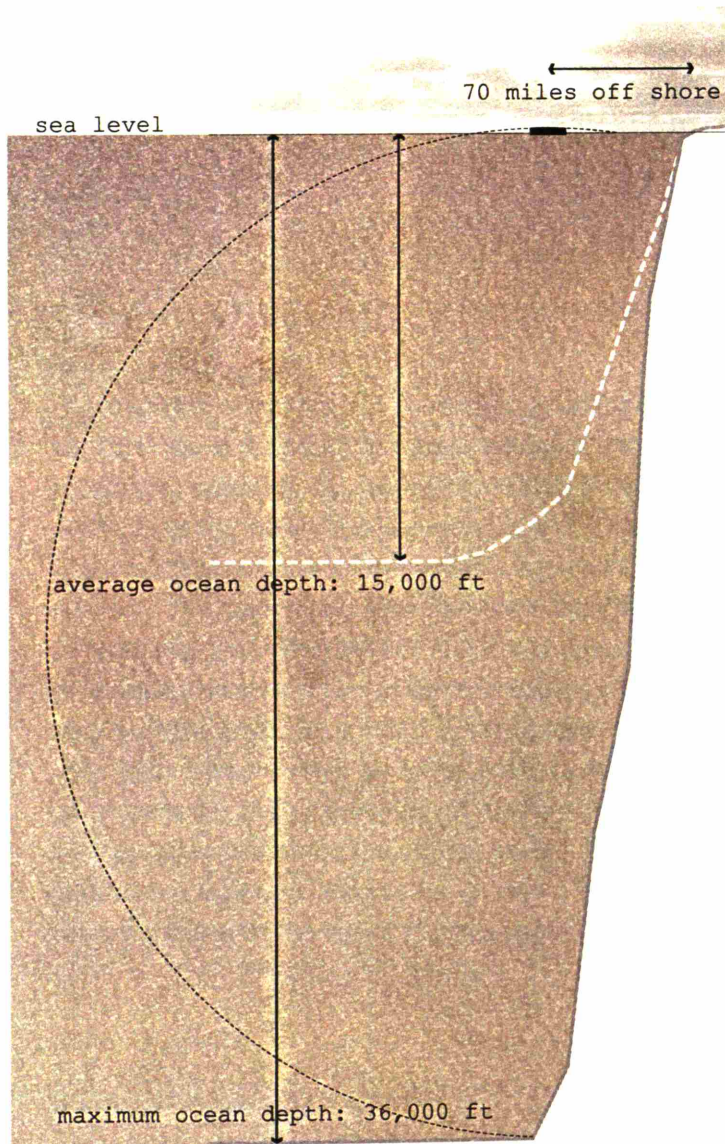


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sequence

The memorial is docked parallel to land providing the visitor with a view of the memorial on the horizon as the boat approaches. This view is important in the experience of the viewer, as the memorial is first understood from afar as a monument/icon, subscribing initially to the canonical tradition of memorial as object to be viewed. The memorial is remote, both physically and psychologically, the silent ship resting offshore, rather than coming to port, lost amongst containers, ferries and yachts. The ferry boat makes a wide sweeping approach, coming to the starboard side of the memorial and docking at the entry aperture. The passengers disembark onto the memorial into the entry chamber. The character of this initial space is dark and compressed, the ceiling heights low with only minor wall sconces to illuminate the space. There are restrooms and a rest area included in this area of the program, providing a transition zone from the exterior, ferry and light into the memorial and the first stages of the sequence which are intentionally dark to provide foil for the exterior world. The visitor then proceeds along the entry corridor towards the interior chamber. There is one primary path of movement from the entry to this main interior space. To the right there is an opening in the wall which frames a view of the horizon bound between the mass of the ship. Water covers the submerged torqued hull, the ghost of the ship visible just below the surface as the plane of water, initiating at the aperture, stretches to the horizon. The sides of the ship stretch upwards, providing a vertical metal frame for the visitor to contemplate the water from within the ship.



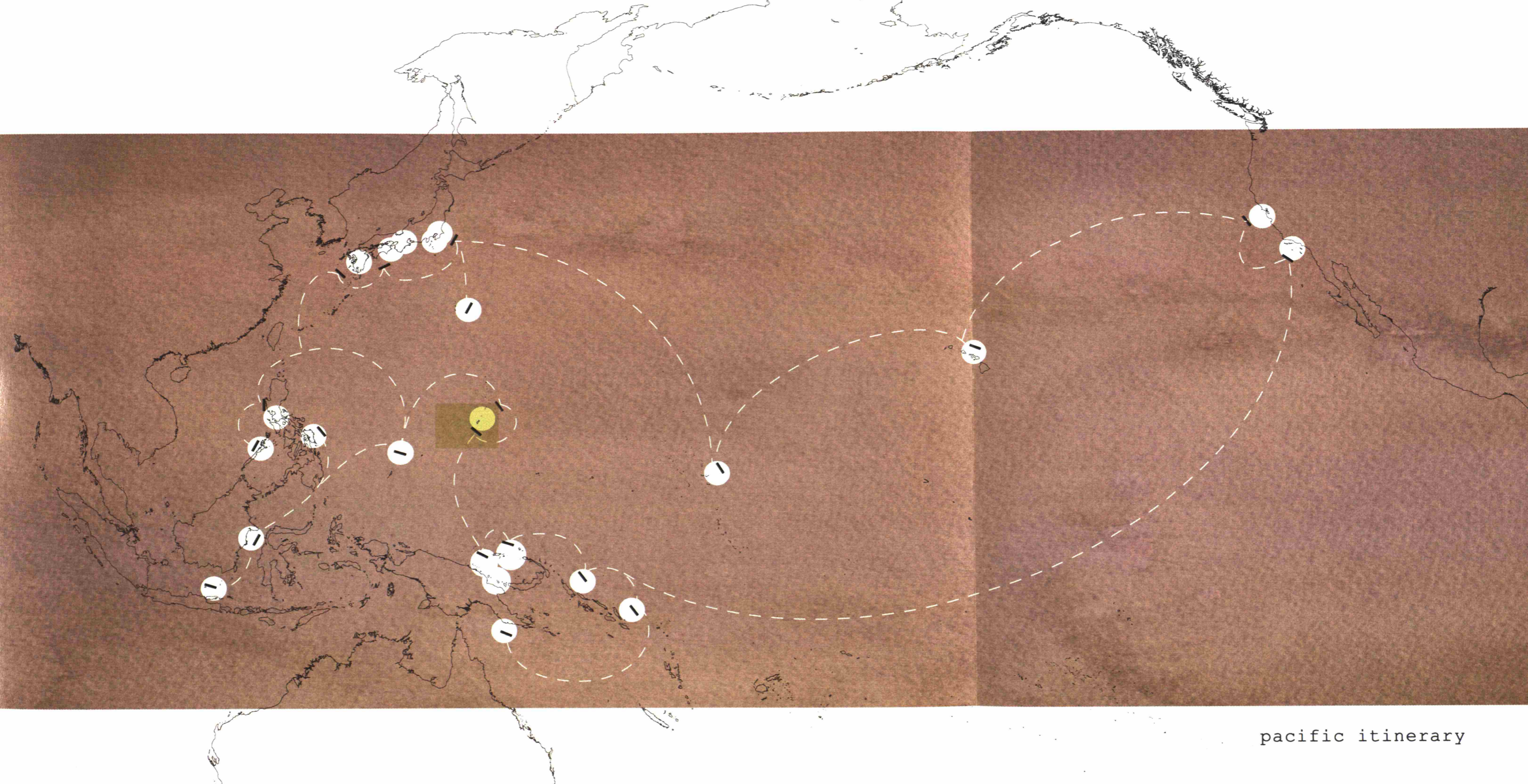


memorial itinerary

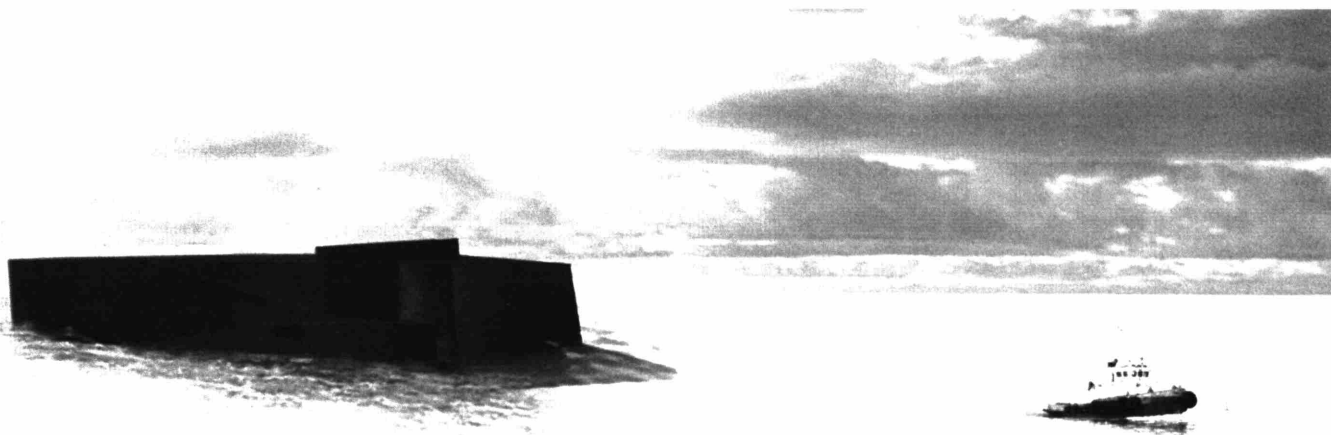
- San Francisco
- Manila
- Tokyo
- Hiroshima
- Nagasaki
- Pearl Harbor
- Arawa (Bouganville)
- Honiara (Guadacanal)
- Port Morsby (Papua New Guinea)
- Madang (Papua New Guinea)
- San Diego
- Lorengau (Admiralty Islands)
- Leyete (Phillippines)
- Majuro (Marshalls)
- Midway
- Java
- Borneo
- Bali
- Iwo Jima
- Porto Princessa (Palawan Phillippines)
- Saipan (Marianas)
- Guam (Marianas)
- Palau

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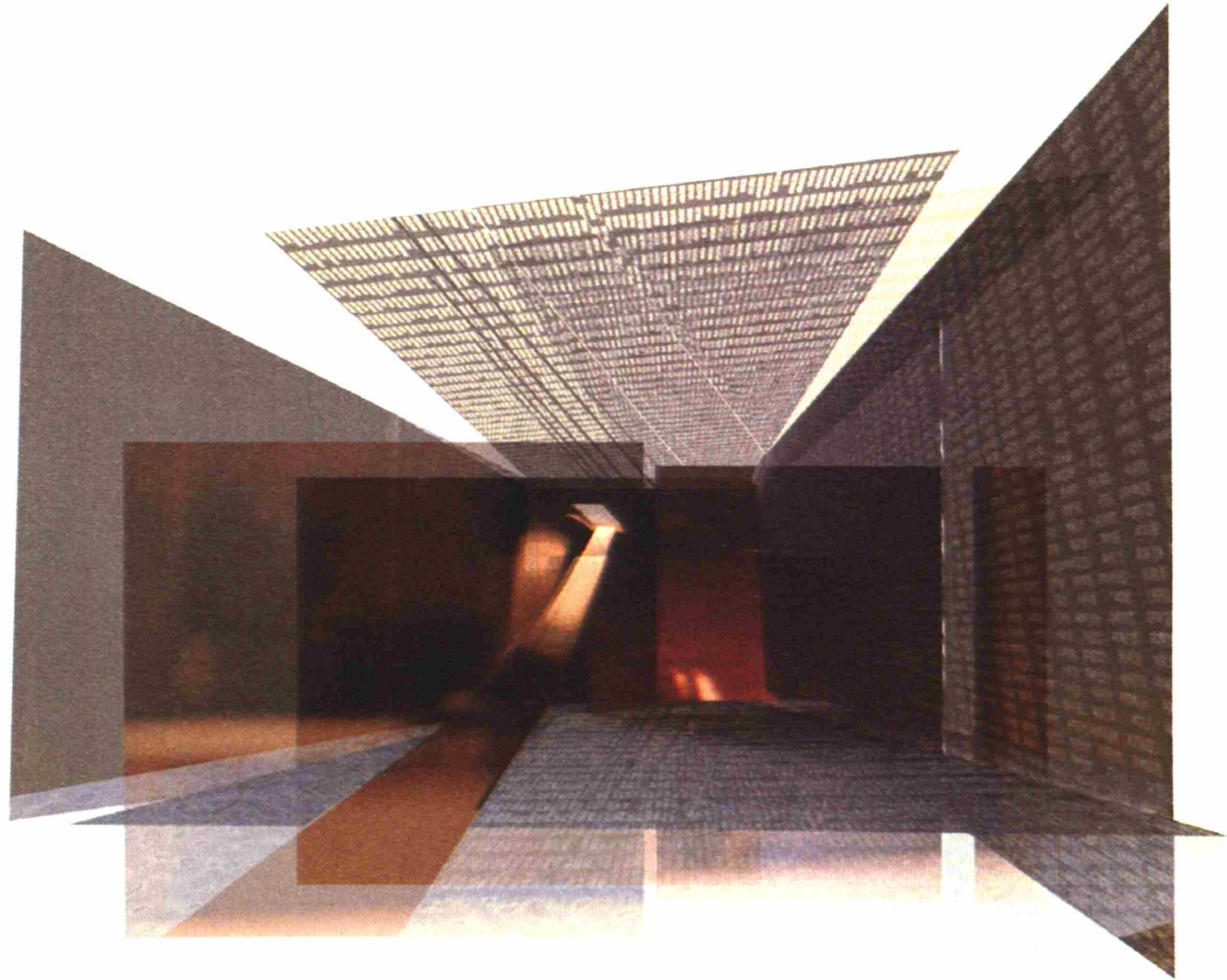
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pacific itinerary

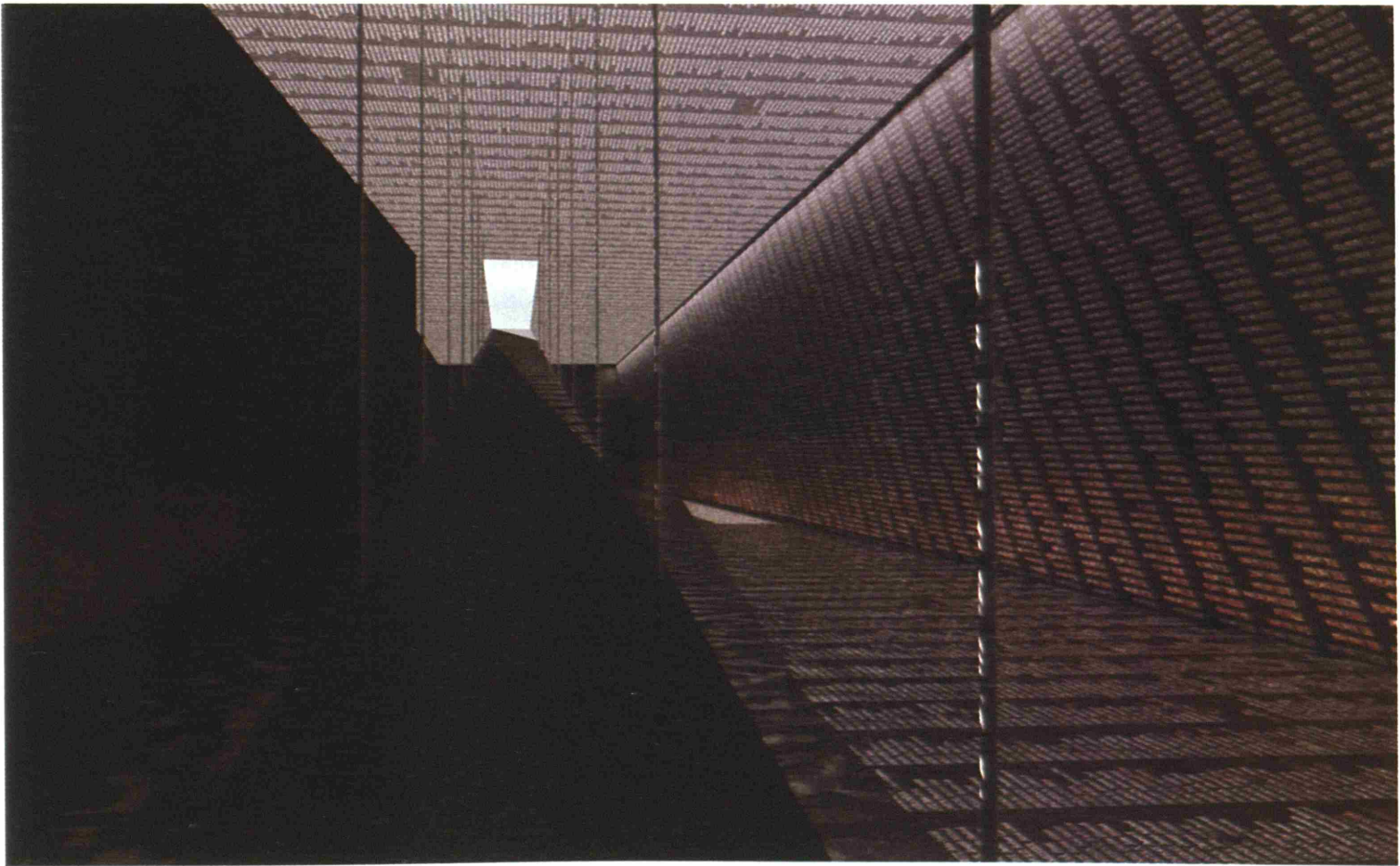


At the end of the entry corridor is the interior chamber. Having moved through the dark compressed space of the corridor, only given a respite through the expansive view out through the prow of the ship, the visitor is brought into a cavernous interior space, the walls rising out of the water and the ceiling broken with light. Directly overhead is a dappled sun, the product of a glass based reflecting pool above. The light filters through the water and into the chamber, casing ephemeral moving shadows on the visitor below, caught between the water above and the water below. The platform extends from the entry corridor out over the water. To the left a gangway leads upward towards the sky. Below the water sinks into darkness, disappearing the bottom of the ship. The center of the chamber is open to the ocean below, allowing the water to find equilibrium within the space. The metal walls of the ship resonate with the constant touch of the water, the space becoming an aural chamber, diffuse with salt and sound. Beyond the entry passage, illuminated by the reflecting pool and its aqueous shadows, the light is given via the names of the soldiers cut into the roof plane. Their names connect the chamber with the sky, casting their names, not in shadow but in light- across first the wall and then the plane of the water. Within this gaping dark space, focused on the depth below, the names lend human scale to the sea, tragedy and memorial. For, as their names move across the walls independent of site, viewer or date, they are yet alive.



In part, it is the names of the sailors which complete and inaugurate the memorial, their daily paths of movement assure that the memorial will never to be static. Each day in the interior chamber will inherently differ from those before or after, location and weather changing the nature, density and pace of the names across wall and water. It is this ephemeral character which imparts life to the memorial. As it moves across the Pacific, disappearing across the horizon, so too the interior captures a vital transient quality in the movement of light. The potential for the memorial to be an enormous hollow shell of lifeless black steel drifting as a ghost vessel on the surface is broken both by the ever changing nature of the illumination across the plate steel and the memorial's transitory track across the Pacific.

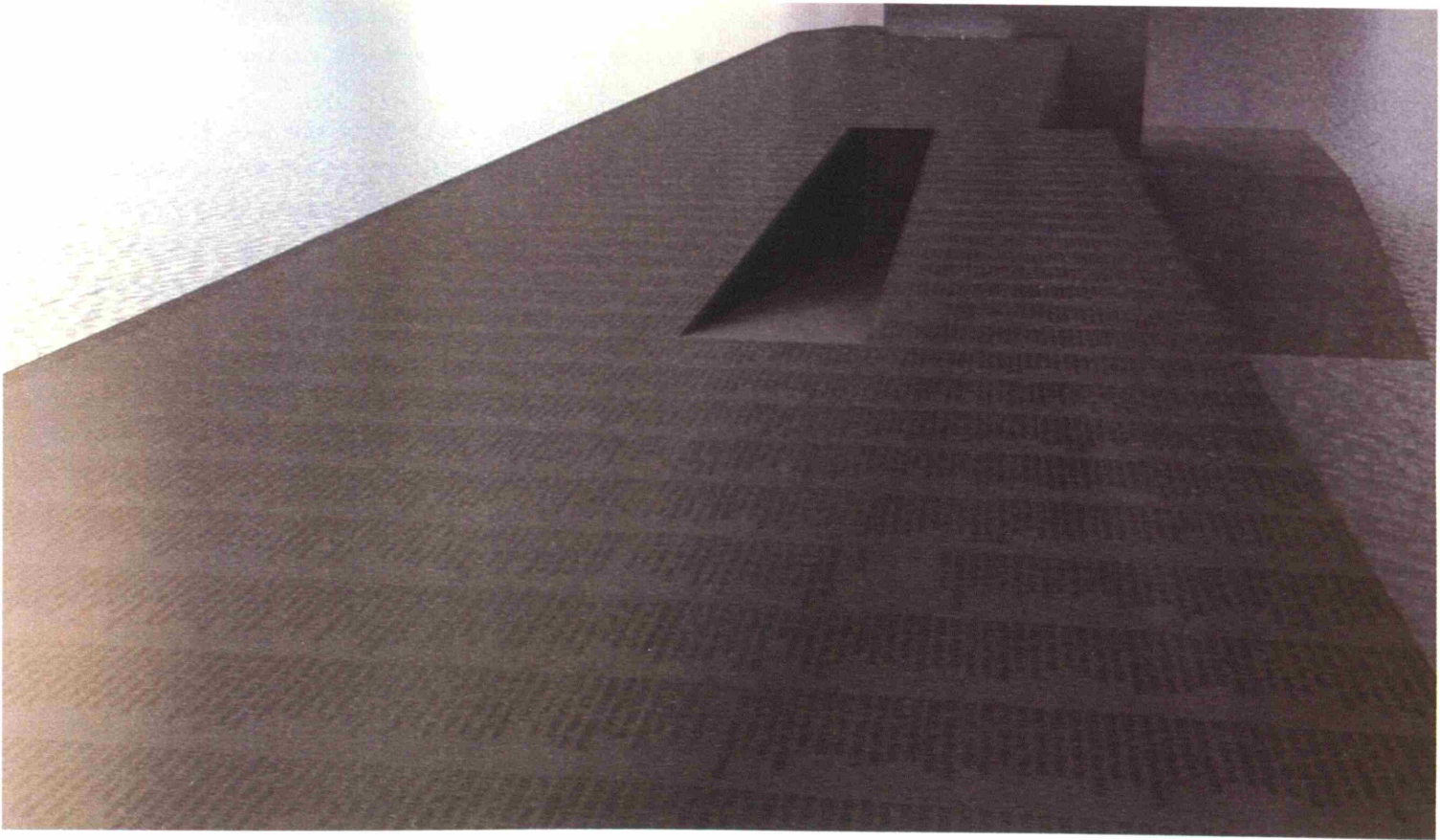
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Moving up the gangway the visitor begins the ascent to the roof plane and the sky above. The ramp is a shallow one, traversing the distance of the interior chamber before meeting the upper plane. The gangway is suspended from the trusses which span parallel to the ramp, leaving the underside unencumbered and open to the ocean below. As the visitor continues, the ramp enters the web of trusses which track across the ceiling of the interior chamber, the primary members along the long span punctured by supporting trusses along the perpendicular axis. The gangway moves up through this spatial layer, following in between two of the long trusses which stretch the length of the memorial. At this level the visitor is able to see the light from the names ricochet through the members of the trusses and begin to discern individual names amongst the carpet of light.

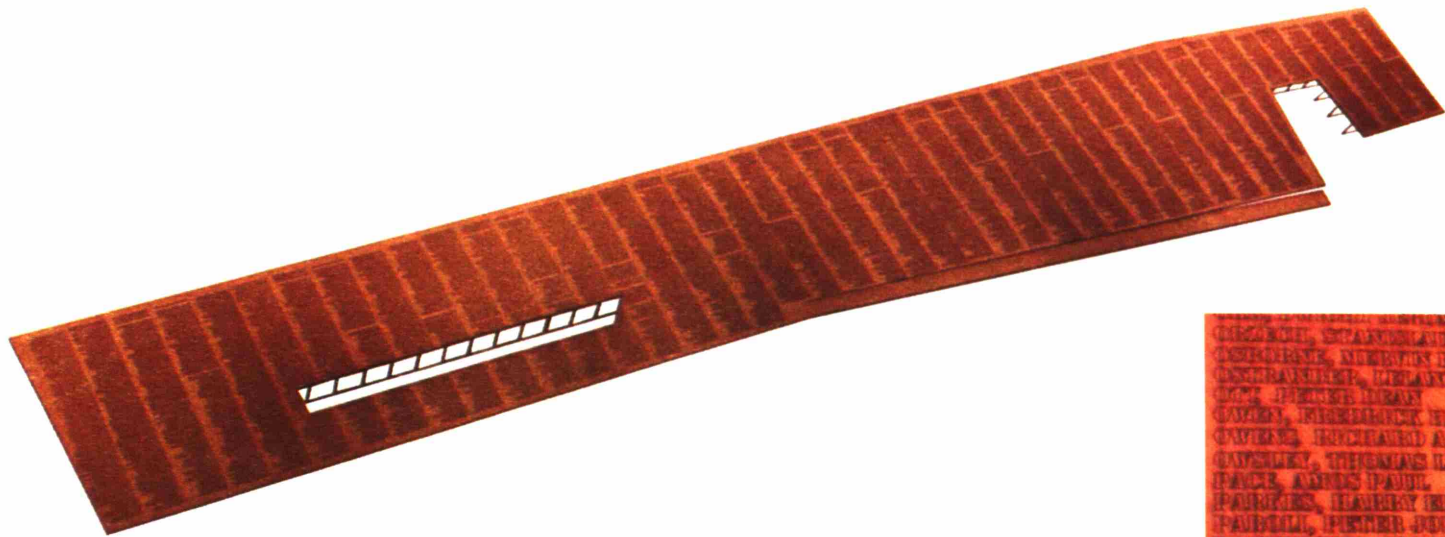
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The pathway ends with the visitor emerging atop the roof plane. Projecting out before the visitor, cut through with names, the roof provides a panoramic view of the horizon. At the far end of the memorial the roof is pierced by the vertical wall which guides the entry corridor. Against this wall is a reflecting pool, capturing the sky along the plane of the deck. It is through this pool that the entry to the interior chamber is lit. The roof plane is ringed with railings, designed to be as unobtrusive as possible, reinforcing the plane of the roof with relation to the plane of the ocean's surface.



Beyond the abstract environment provided by the memorial I perceived that it was necessary to connect the visitor on a more human scale to the individual sailors. The size of the memorial, at 704 feet, and the immensity of the ocean context allow for a distortion of scale- that which appears to be small is actually quite large, and that which is small disappears into the overall grain of the larger canvas- minutia being easily overlooked when confronted by the expanse of the Pacific and the long black metal planes of the memorial. As the memorial addresses the Pacific theater as a whole and the naval phenomenon at large, this personal connection was paramount in guaranteeing the evocative quality necessary to sustain the poignancy of the memorial.

The names of all lost enlisted naval sailors are cut through the top roof plane of the interior chamber. The names are organized by ship in alpha order, American, Japanese, Australian, etc. Beneath the name of the ship is listed all lost men, regardless of rank and origin. Recognizing the relationship the sailors formed with their vessels led to the decision to classify the dead by their ship. For, as the men lived and died by their ship, forging a bond over their tenure of service that echoed of respect and love, the ship too returned their trust, returning them to port or laying down with them when battles were lost. As the memorial has internalized site, inhabiting the expansive surface of the Pacific, so too did the naval vessels become the locus of site for the sailor. When recalling land based conflict, the battles are referred to by location, and oft times the soldier will have a connection to this place, returning years later to remember and mourn the battle. In the case of naval conflagrations often these sites do not exist and the name of the battle is derived from either the nearest land or the prize of the fight. Sailors may return to the site of battle, as is the case with the Pearl Harbor Survivors, which returns to Hawaii to mark the attack on the harbor, but more frequently sailors return to their ships, attending reunions and celebrations which allow the sailors access to their memories, the ship and/or their shipmates. It is these ties which are captured by listing the sailors by ship, for as they lived and fought across her decks, so they died there as well. The roster provides this allegiance to the ship and the fellow sailor, allowing this identity and relationship to persevere through the memorial.



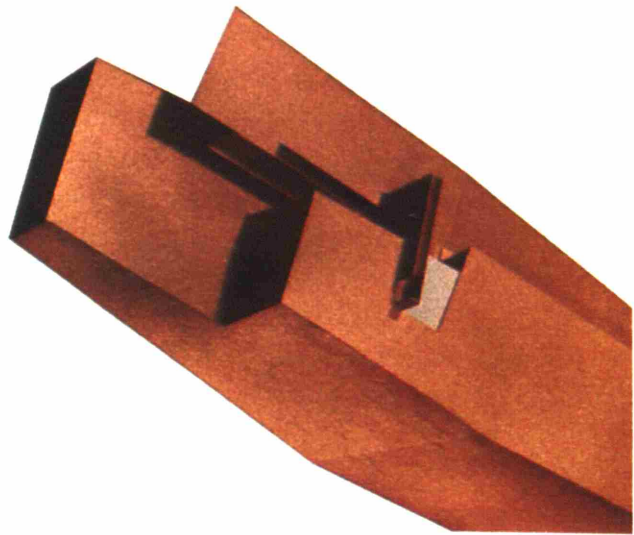
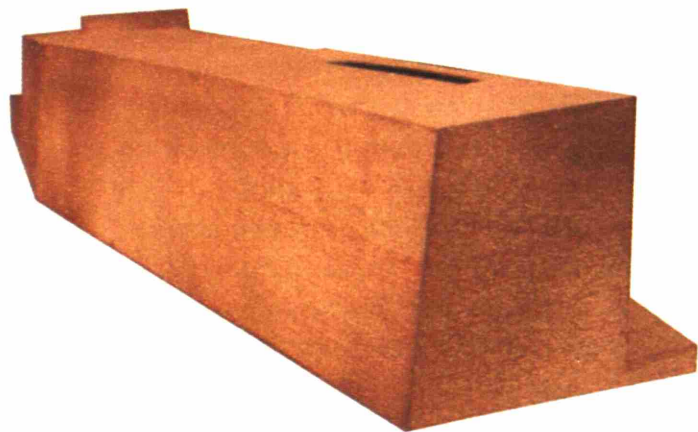
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The names are formed in columns, oriented perpendicular to the long dimension of the memorial. As the visitor emerges from the interior chamber the names stretch out as rays across the deck, reinforcing the perspectival expanse of this topmost plane. To read the names the visitor must turn and place their back to land, facing out across the empty stretch of water as they slowly wend their way through the 500,000 markers.

As the names are waterjet cut through the plate steel it is really the deck which is substance and the name, as placeholder, which is absent. Through the names, the visitor perceives a mottled blackness as they look into the cavern of the interior chamber, open to the ocean below. It is beneath this unfathomable aqueous weight that so many of the lost sailors actually reside. By allowing their names to be void it speaks to their continued absence and loss. From below this is furthered, for within the interior chamber the names provide illumination, raking the metal walls with their ephemeral mark. As visitors above navigate across the deck, the sailors are blacked out, disappeared momentarily much as their corporeal forms are permanently lost below the sea. The names rendered in light across the walls and water are the first contact the visitor has with the roster, etched in light and illegible at a distance, the names act as a unity, conveying the immensity of loss through the vehicle of illumination. Manifest in light, the sailors live still across and through the walls of the memorial, tracking the passage of time, season and weather together, within the memorial. The names serve to unify the interior chamber and the upper plane of the memorial, one focused on the sectional depth of the ocean below and the other with the expanse of the ocean above. The names dissolve this separation, architecturally subverting the impenetrable membrane of the surface to bring together depth and sky via the sailors lost amidst their conflict.

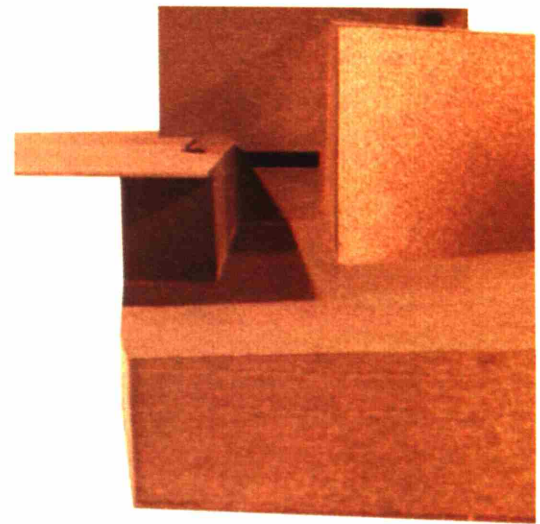
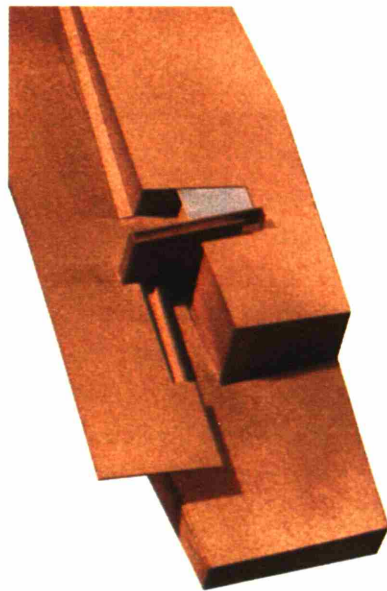
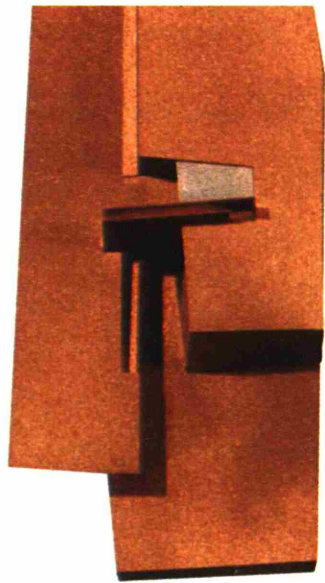


name organization on roof plane



Moving from the roof plane, the visitor descends on a ramp which runs adjacent to the mass of the interior chamber. It is here that the constellation of planes becomes most evident, for as the visitor moves down, the plane adjacent to the ramp slips back into the water, while its other end rises to meet the horizon. The ramp terminates in front of the wall which rises the full height of the memorial. Here, the visitor can either turn to see the surface disappearing into the sea, or to the right, stand on the projecting plane which extends its length to correspond to the reaches of the horizon. At this point the only visible part of the ship is the submerged prow, twisted and askew beneath the waves.

Embedded in this final projection is a passage of stairs which return to the level of entry. The steps end in an exit vestibule, provisioned with bathrooms and a rest area prior to the exit portal. The ferries, upon dropping off passengers to the memorial, move forward to this exit aperture to retrieve the visitors after their visit. This exit lounge and the stairs which descend from the level above are hidden from the entry space by the perpendicular wall. The task was to create an exit which did not also function as an entrance. The desire to separate the visitors upon entry and exit was a priority, as the frame of mind would necessarily be altered after the progression through the memorial. As well, it was necessary to create a quiet space of contemplation for those exiting the memorial- free of the cacophonous din of the new entering passengers. Though there is through access to the exit from the entry, the stairs are not evident. This allows for the entry corridor to be the primary path of travel, thereby reinforcing the sequence of spaces and enabling the fullest possible experience for the visitors.

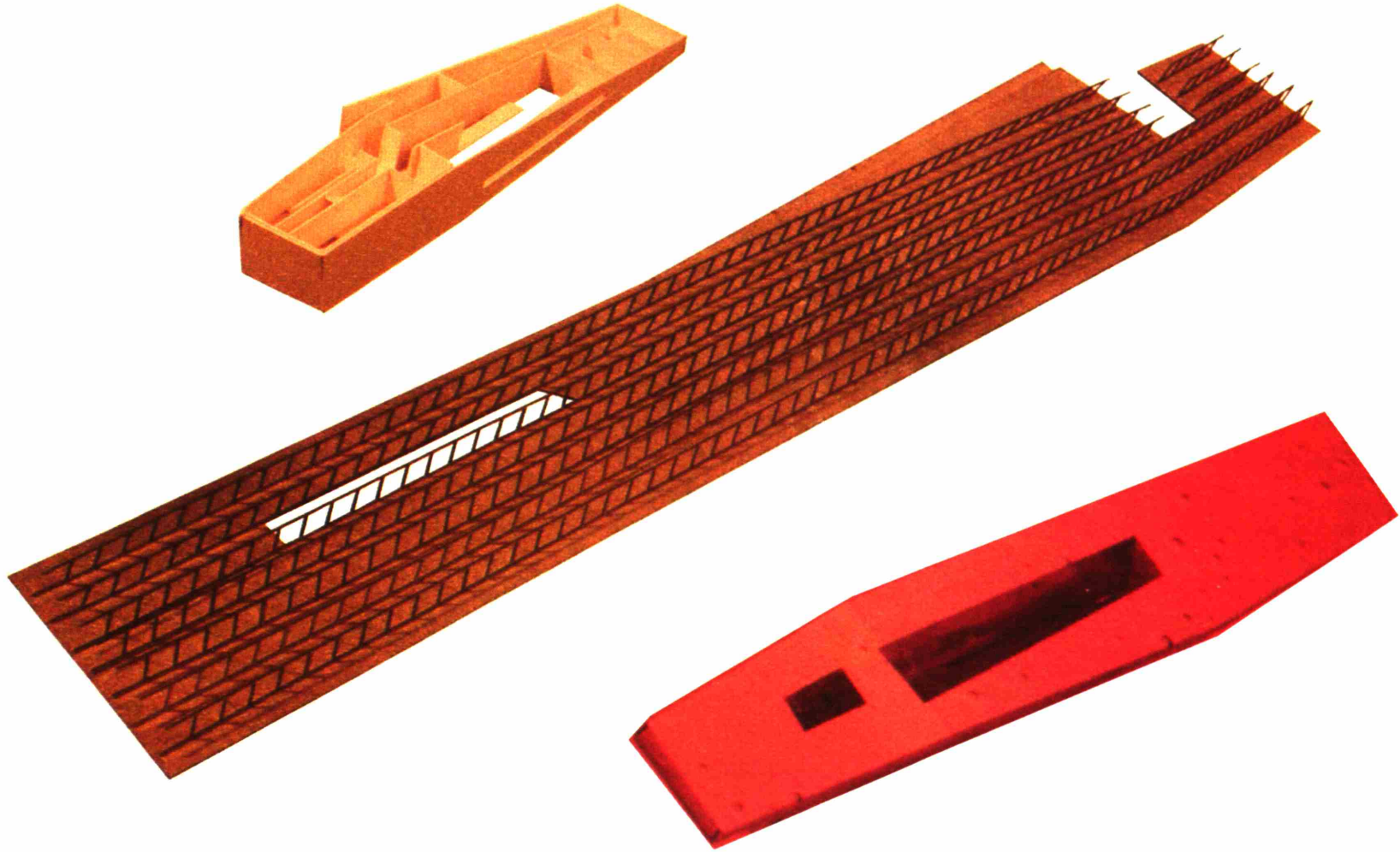


The structural logic for the memorial was derived through careful study of ship construction methodologies. As the memorial functions as a barge, being towed from port to port, the need for efficiency in the water was driven down, allowing for an unconventional design featuring an open hull. The bottom of the memorial is open to the sea below. This is achieved by a bound pontoon system which allows the hull of the memorial to be bifurcated while maintaining structural integrity and buoyancy. The fore and aft portions of the memorial bind the two pontoons together. Rather than taking on a tapered cross section, by eliminating the center portion of the hull the memorial becomes boxed, resembling a barge in profile and cross section.

As the memorial will not be taking fire, the hull construction is single plate over a steel web frame system, providing sufficient rigidity and support for the design. Standard steel ship construction techniques would be used to assemble the memorial. As the memorial does not move under its own power, the support systems are limited to those necessary to host visitors and maintain the caretaker, resulting in a small machine room located in the stern, accessed through a passageway originating in the entry corridor.

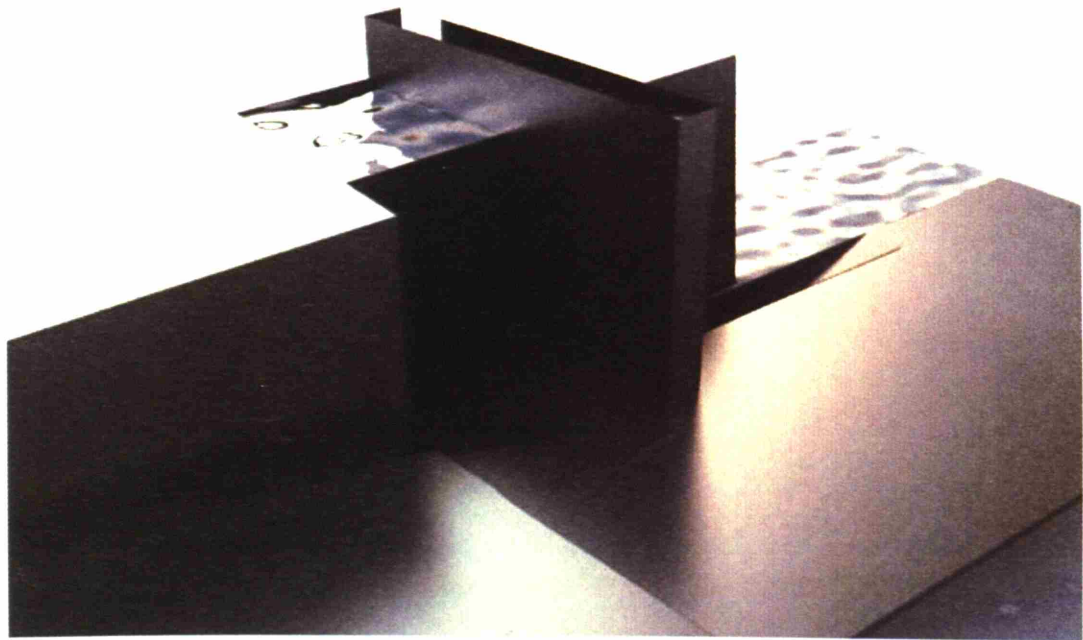
Within the steel hull are a series of ballast tanks which allow the memorial to regulate buoyancy. This feature is necessary as the memorial is traveling across climate zones and therefore encountering water of differing salinities. Further, the tanks would be utilized while the memorial was being transported from port to port. By evacuating the tanks the memorial is raised, minimizing draft and reducing drag. Finally, the ballast tanks serve to maintain stability in the water through inclement weather and high seas.

The primary structure supporting the roof plane is a system of long trusses which run the full length (704') of the memorial. Allowing the longitudinal trusses to be the primary members facilitates a clear path for the gangway which connects the inner chamber with the roof plane. This gangway is suspended from these trusses via cables. The transverse trusses are eliminated in the portion of the interior chamber where the need for headroom and passage conflict with their presence. The grid of trusses supports the waterjet cut plate steel which comprises the roof plane.



The cantilevering deck located at the bow of the memorial sits atop the caretakers residence, which provides the structural support from below. The sweeping plane would be constructed using the same methodologies found in the construction of aircraft carrier decks. Care was taken not to extend this deck so far as to create issue in high seas.

The memorial's services are located in the central core. The wall that formally pins the forward composition also functions structurally. The dual wall system reaches down to the hull, providing lateral support for the pontoon system and anchoring the platform within the interior chamber. The walls provide one demarcation of the interior ballast system. The elevator core is located between the two walls, providing access to all levels of the memorial.



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p r o c e s s

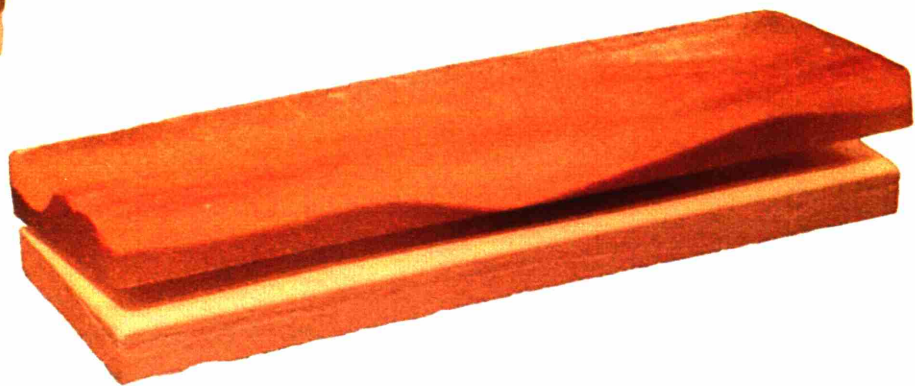
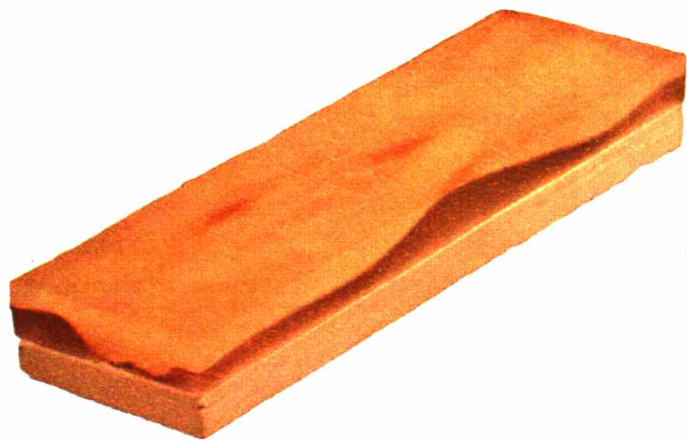
100

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As the site encompasses such an expanse the relationship can be reduced to the plane of intersection, rendering the condition at once devoid of scale. Initial investigations explored the ability for the memorial to mediate between the two seemingly opposed material forces, inhabiting the division between sky and ocean.

drifting absence :: drafting memory

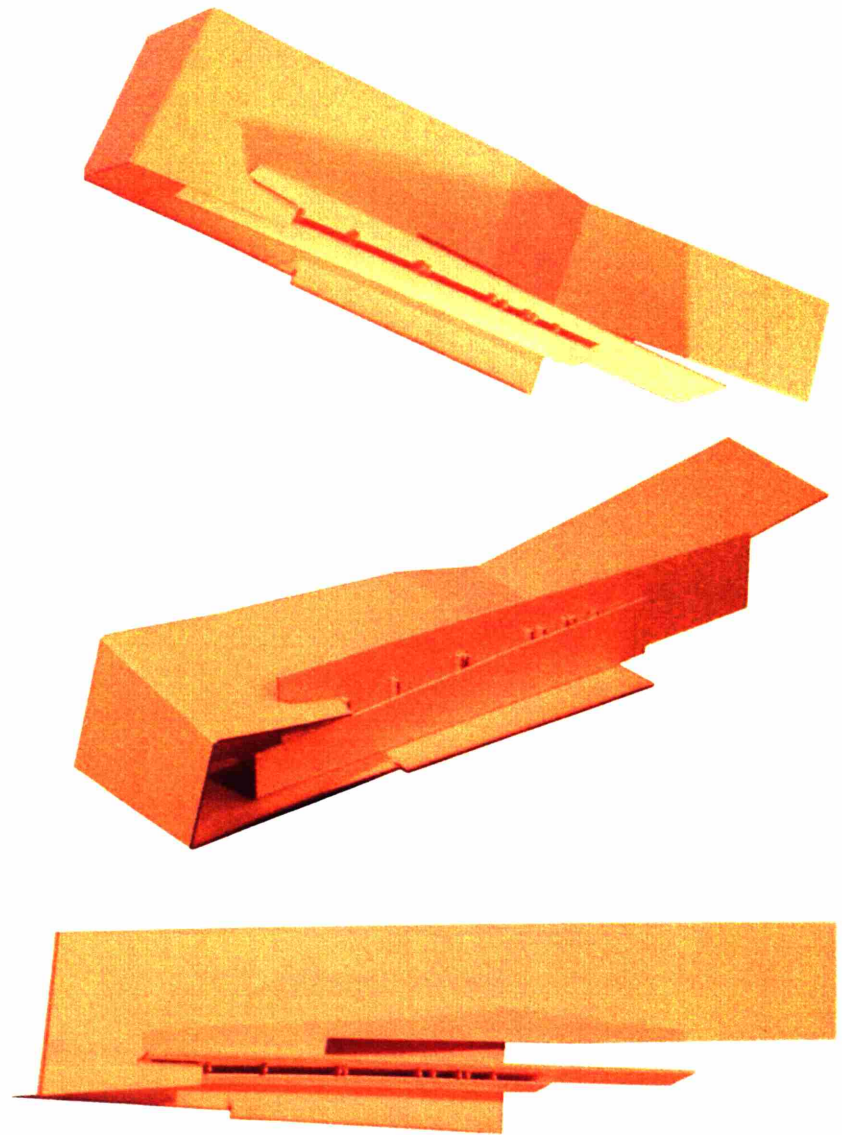


From the study models emerged a repetitive trend towards an organization of planes which would relate to the horizon and the sectional depths below. The models grew gradually more complex, the plane configurations more chaotic, until it became evident that a strong linear organization bound by one element, a pin, allowed for the poetic simplicity necessary for the memorial to become an evocative spatial experience.

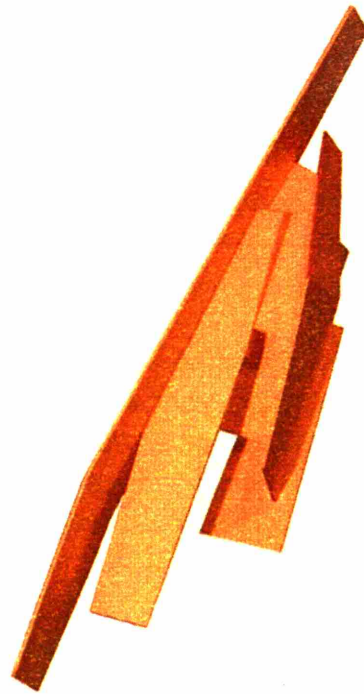
104

Initially the study models focused on developing disparate architectural experiences, moments within the memorial designed to evoke certain spatial or emotional qualities. These models developed these moments or emotive thresholds towards an expected synthesis; however, when integrated, these elements remained conceptually isolated and the experience of the memorial seemed fragmented and broken. In order to achieve a cohesive, comprehensive, powerful memorial, it became clear that the ship could not be a sequence of events/moments, but rather one experience, enriched with different understandings of a core relationship.

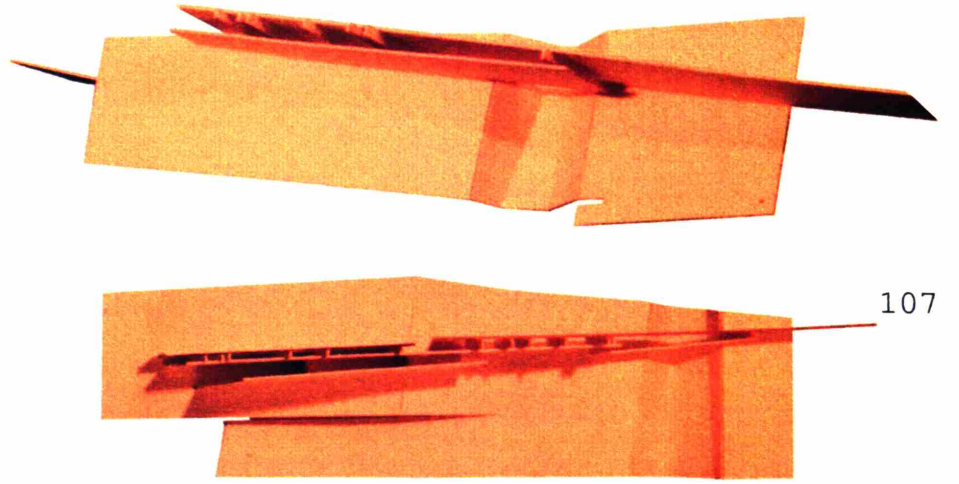
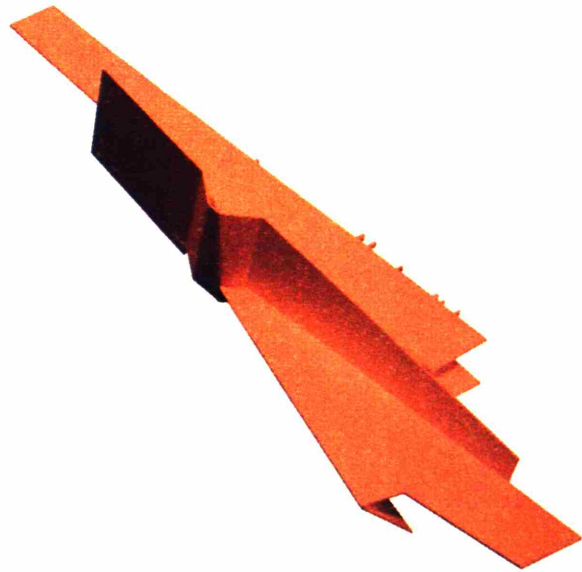
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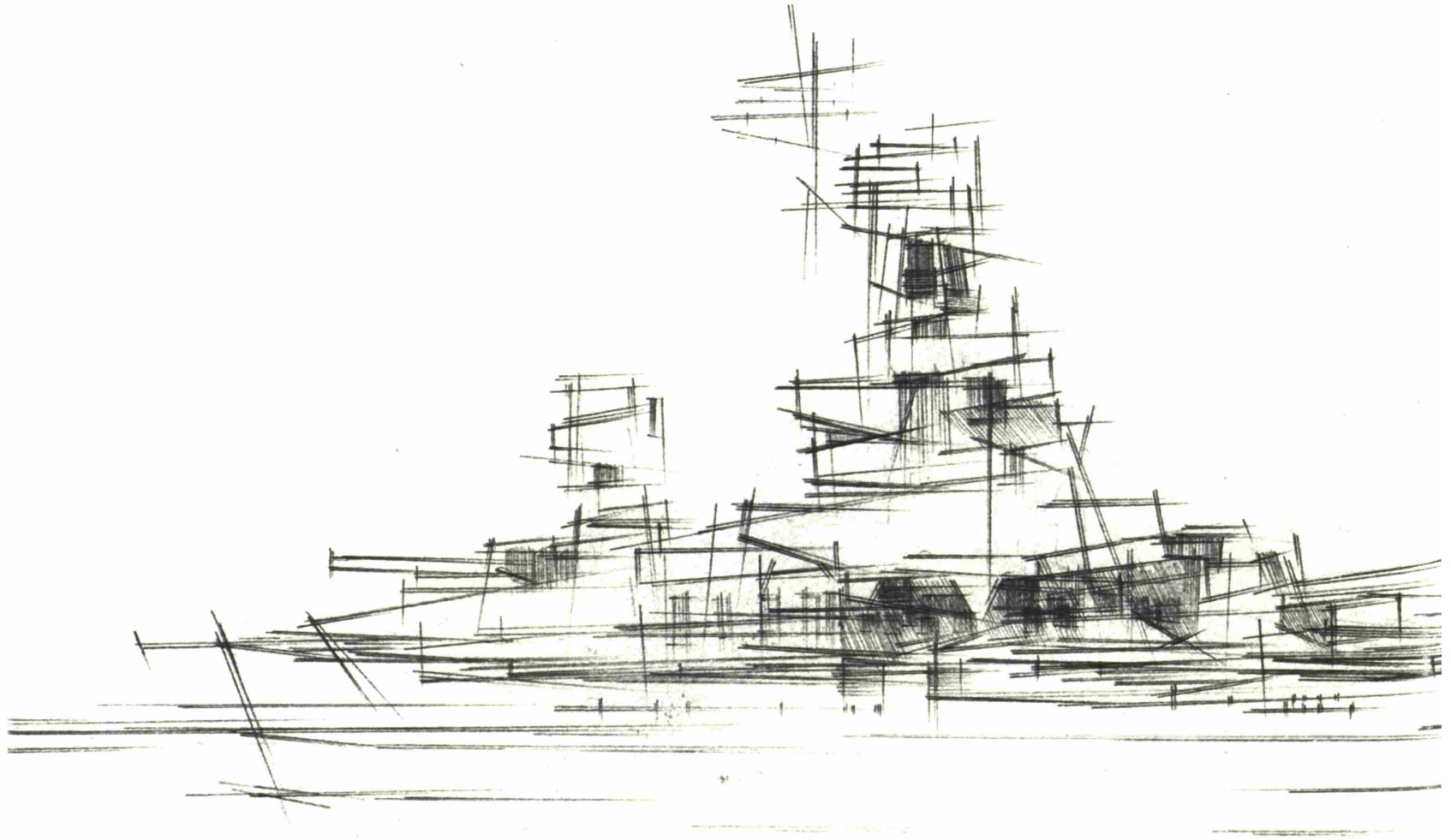


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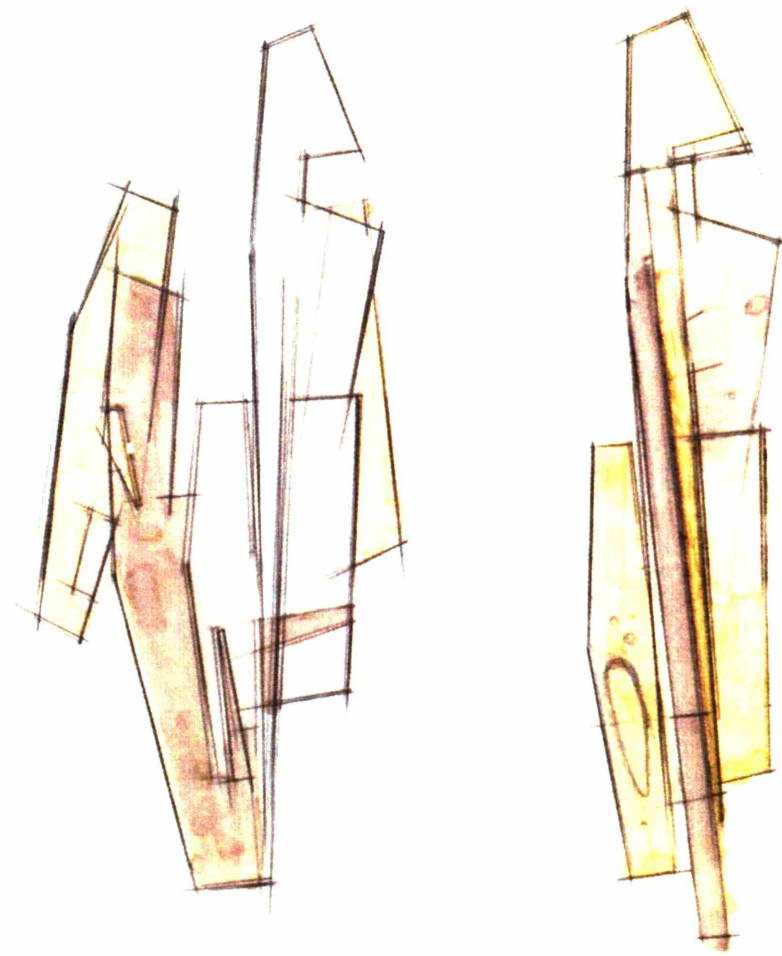


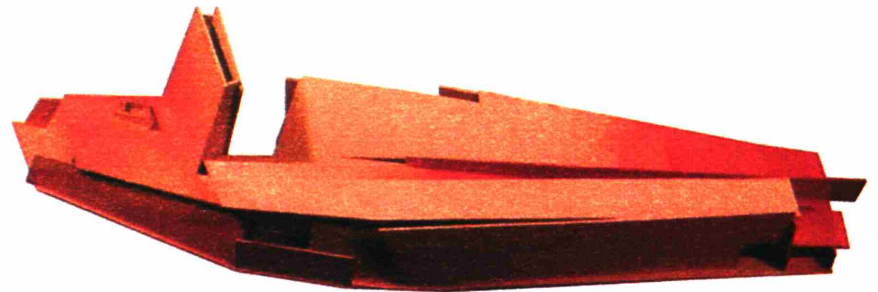
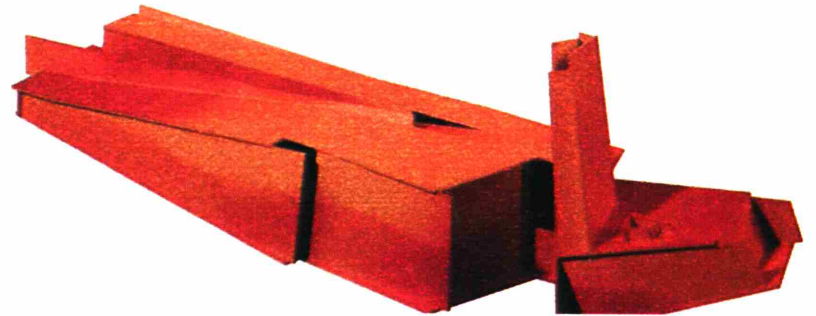
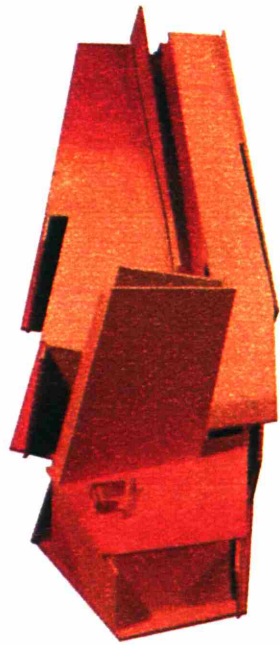
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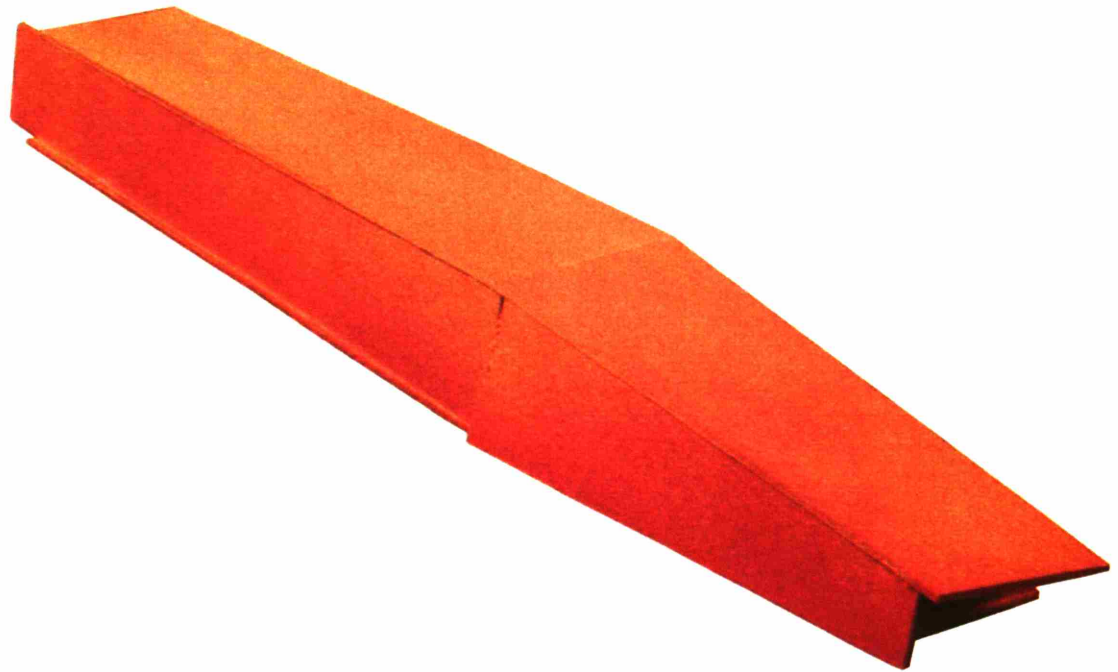


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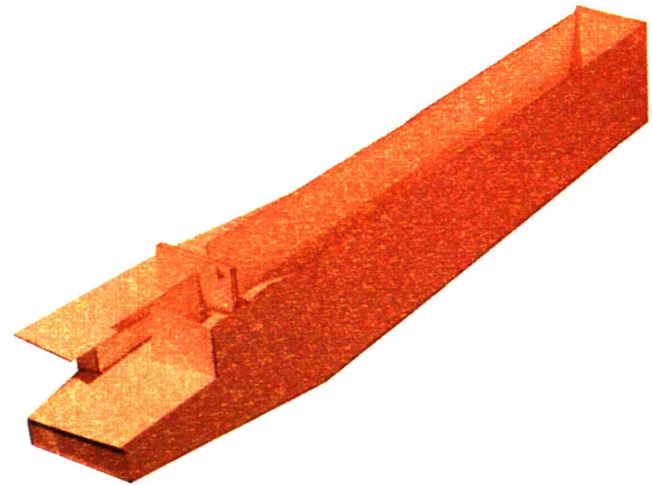
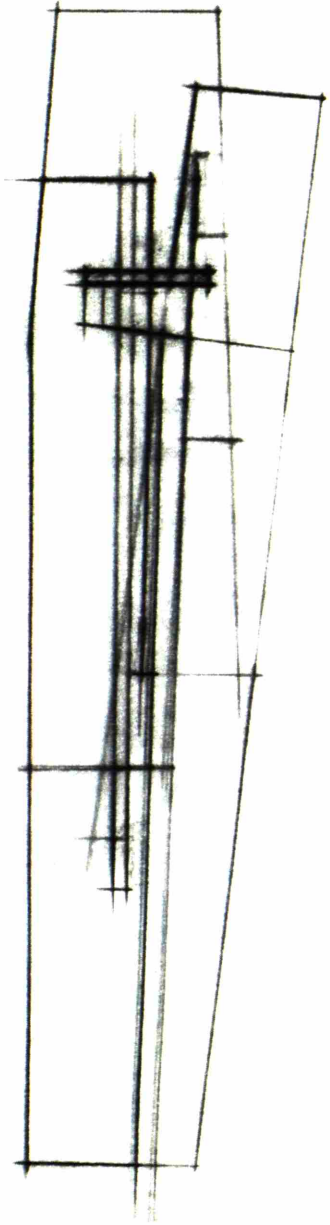




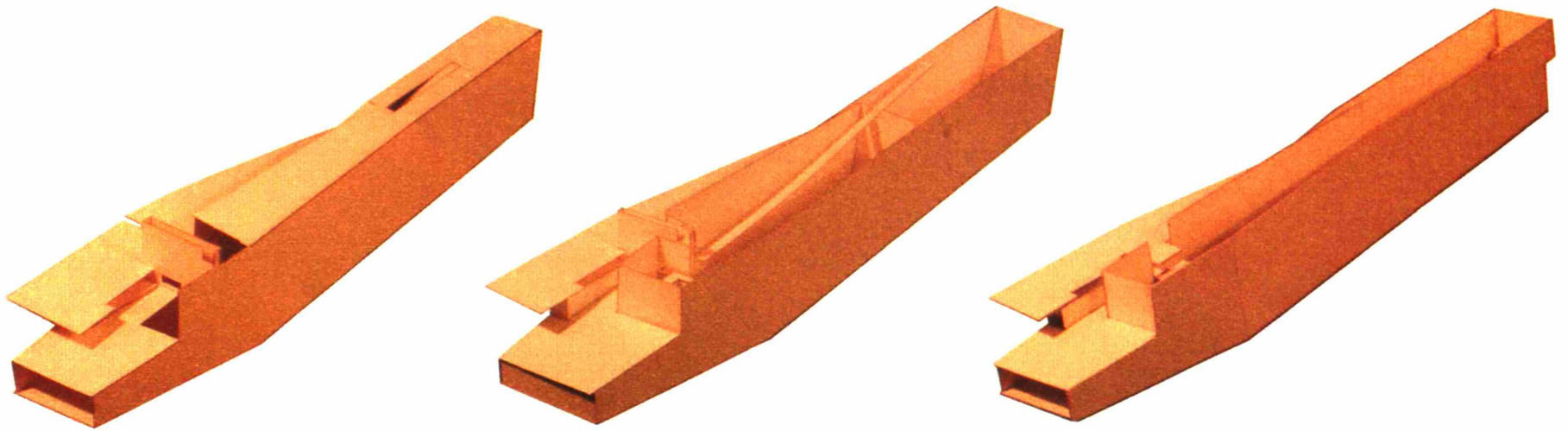
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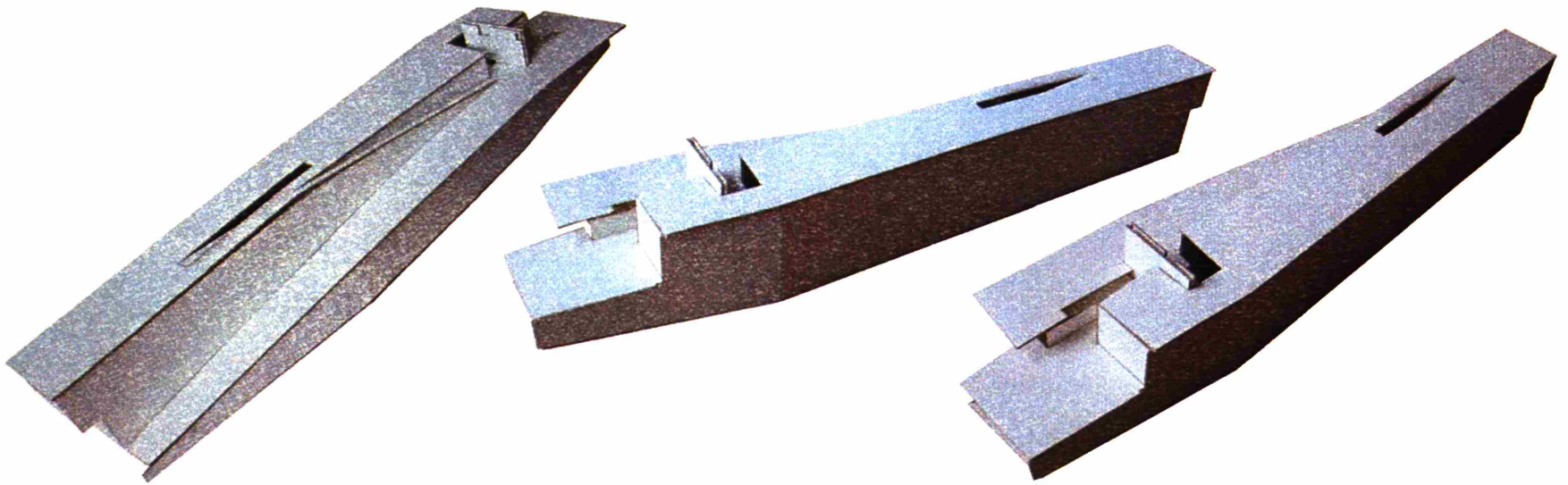
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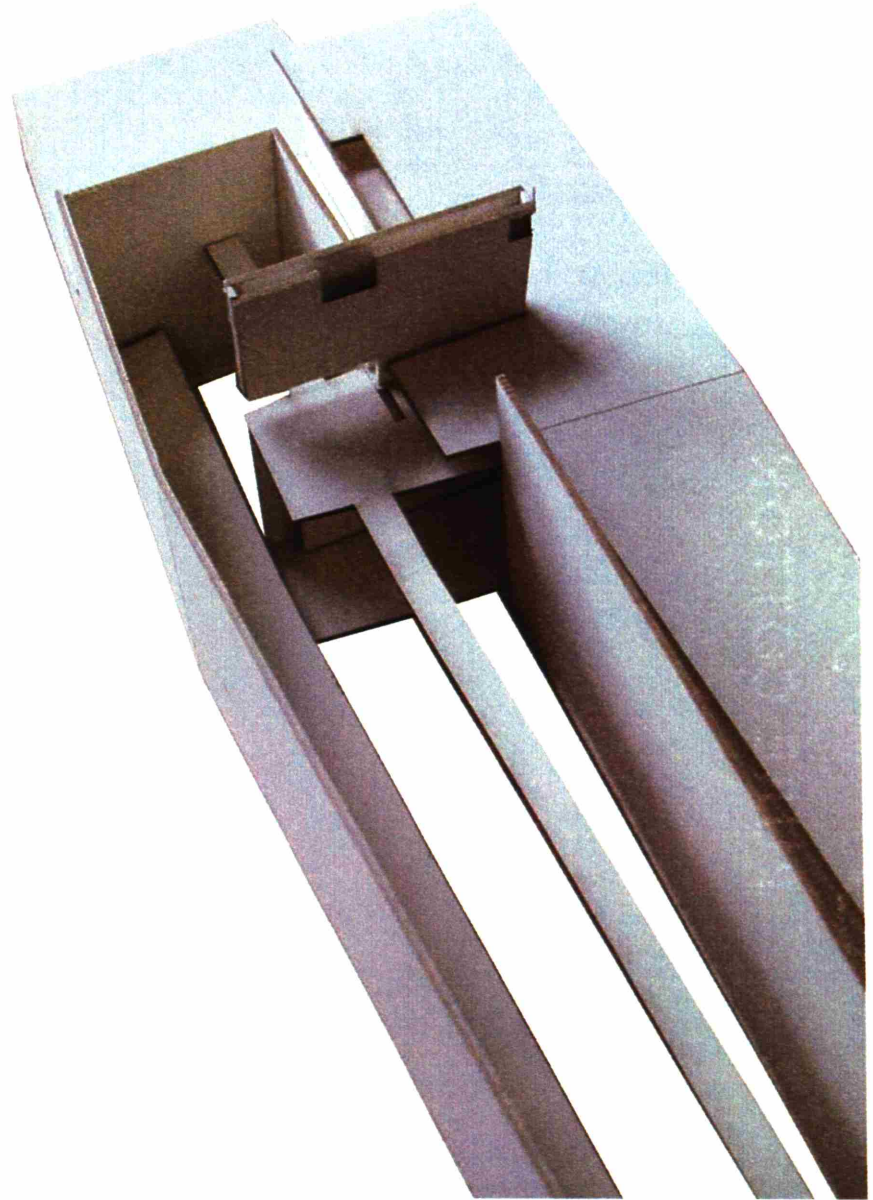
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114



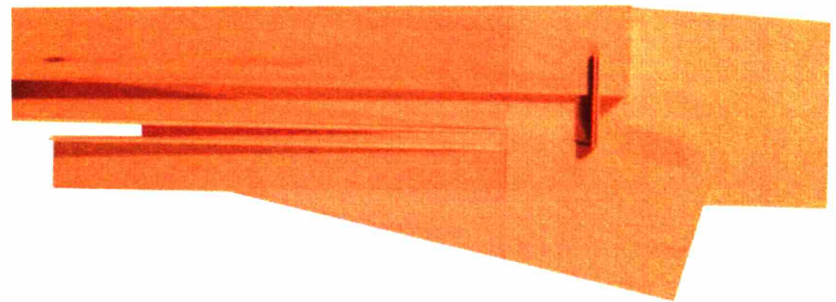
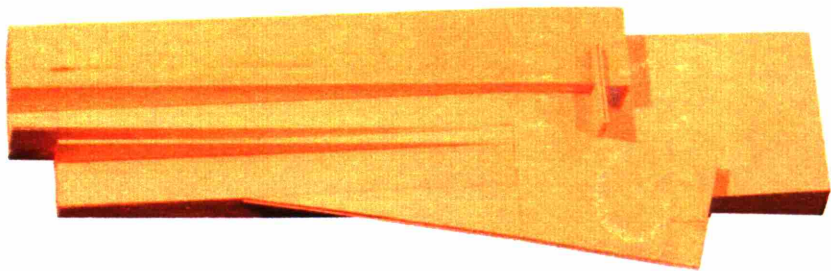
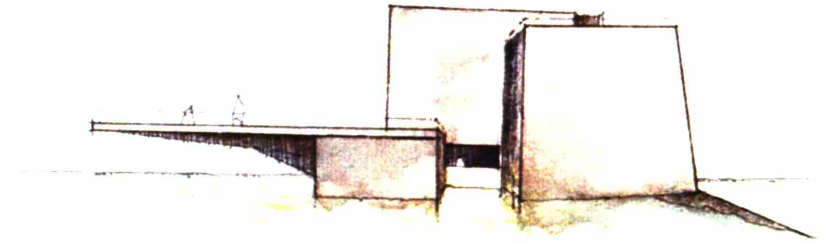
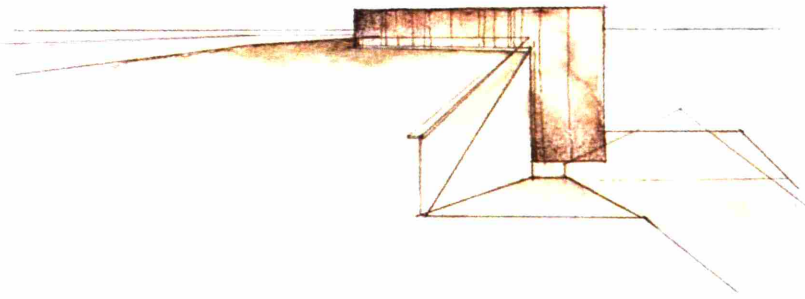
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118 Understanding the cadence, strategy and motion of naval warfare was pivotal in the shaping of the thesis. The direct relationships extant in land based warfare do not exist at sea, which necessarily changes how battles are fought and won. The navigation of the memorial across the Pacific begins to track a meandering course as it finds its way from city to battle site. This erratic motion echoes the patterns of battle and the larger rhythm of the Pacific War.

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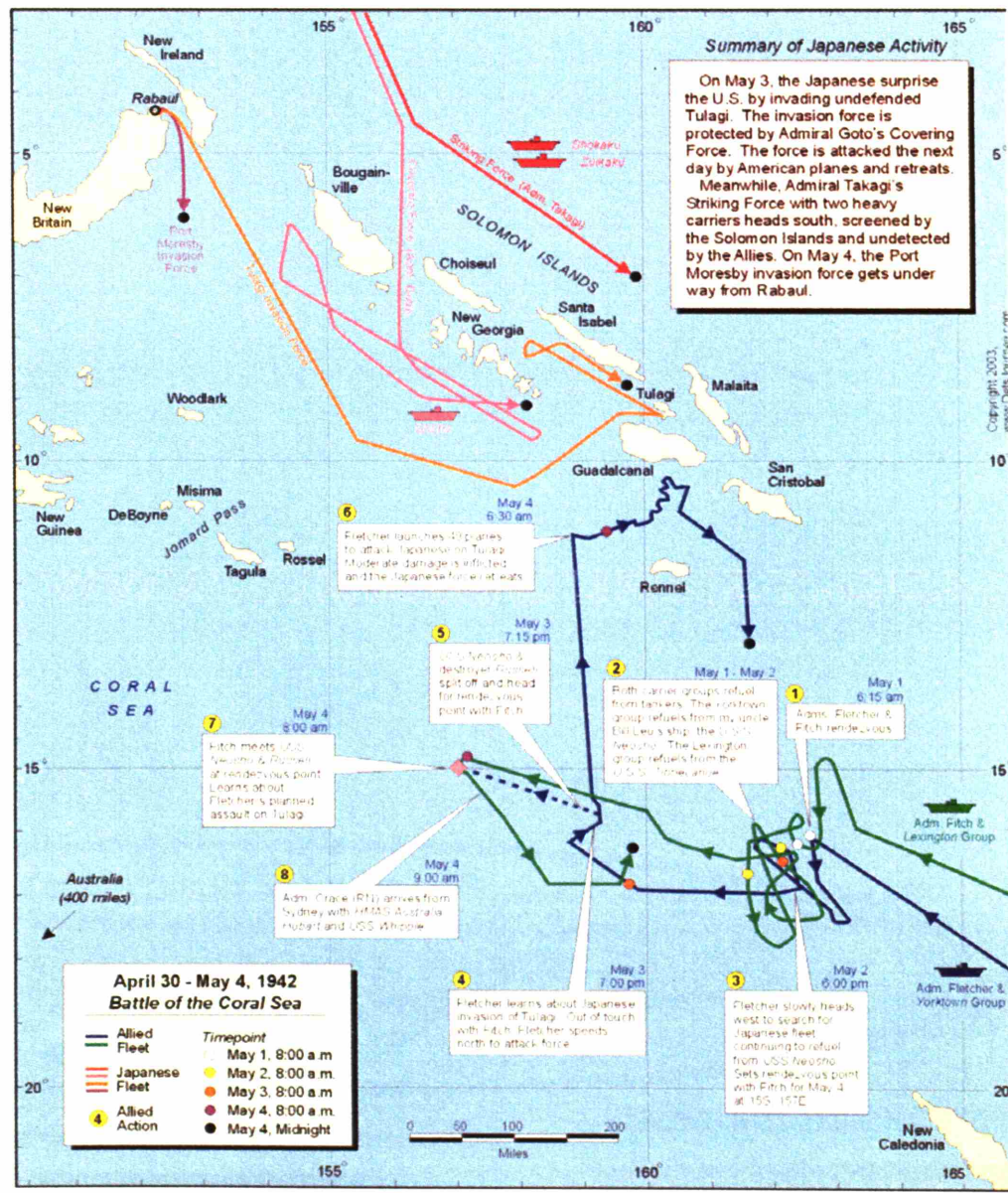
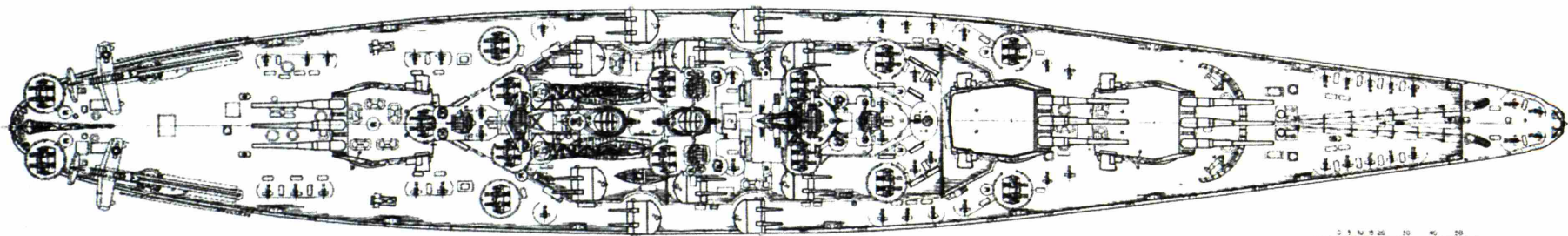


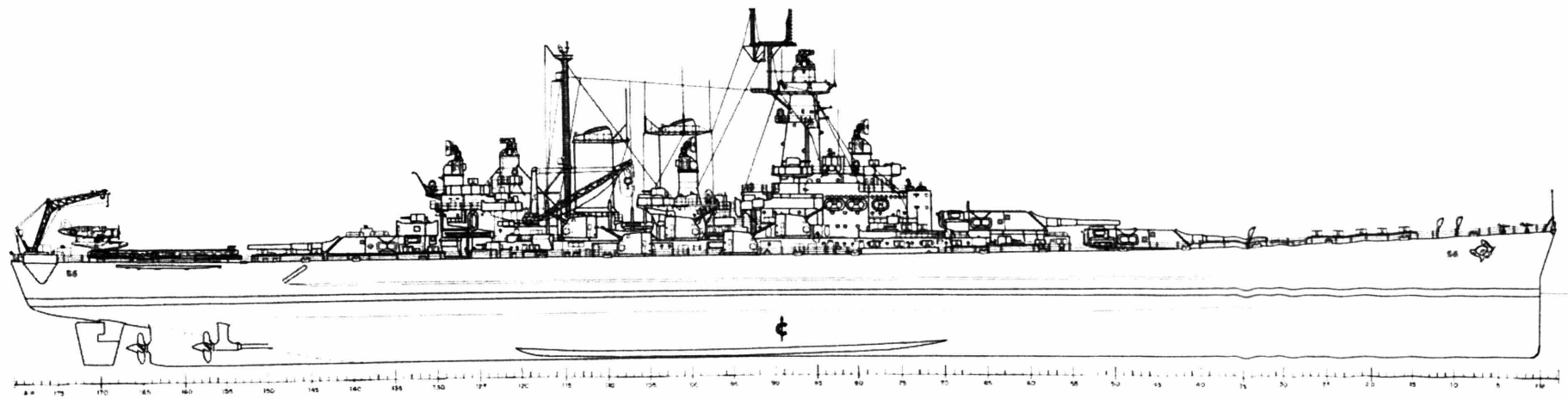
fig. 8

120



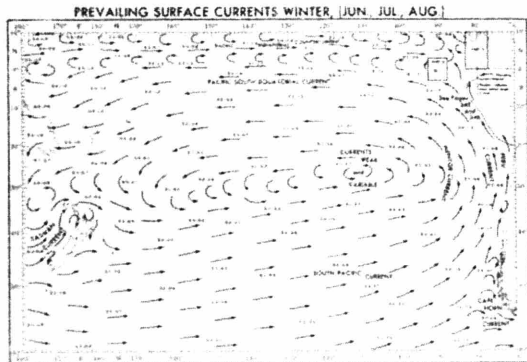
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121

fig. 9



122

Course and itinerary for the memorial was determined after study of the Pacific currents and weather patterns. Utilizing the natural movement of the currents and their modulation over the course of the year, the memorial moves within the existing directionality of the ocean, limiting unnecessary energy expenditure due to a counter current course. The number of stops and time frame for the itinerary was measured based on current patterns and standard transit time using an assumed rate of 8-16 knots.

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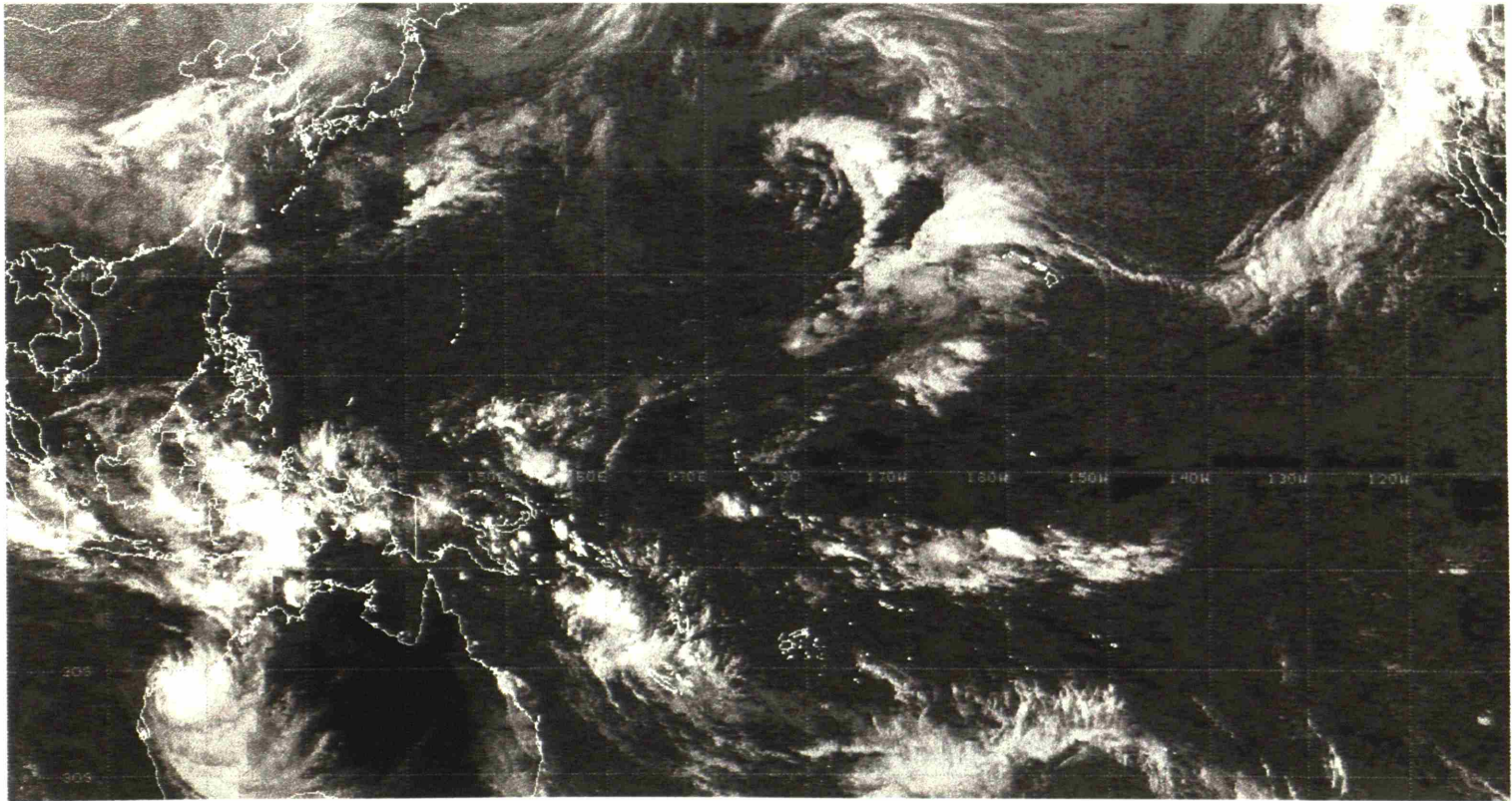


fig. 10-11

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p r e c e d e n t s
i n s p i r a t i o n s

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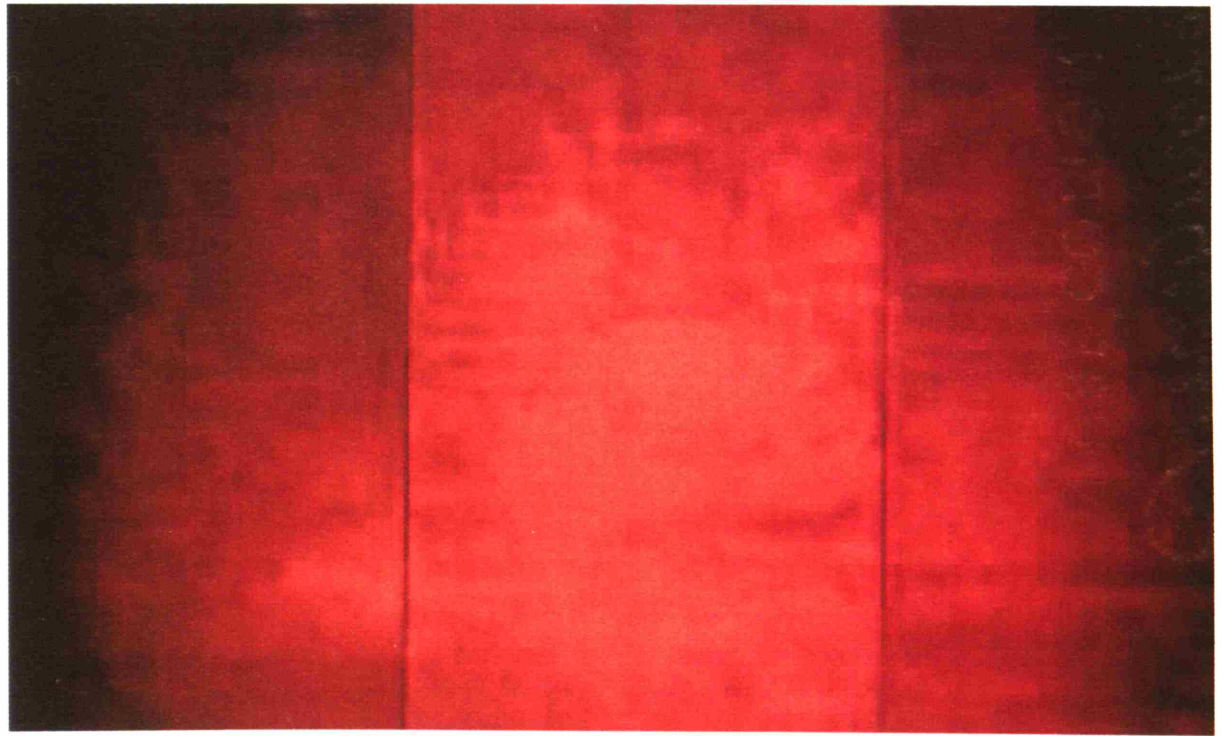
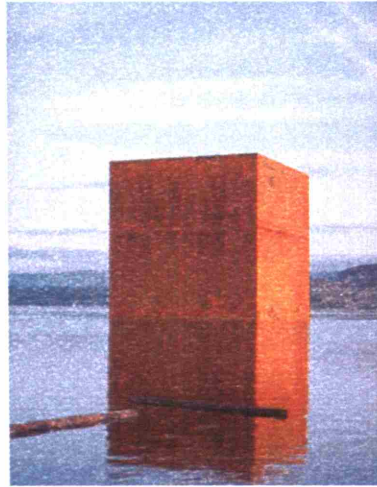


fig. 12-13

132



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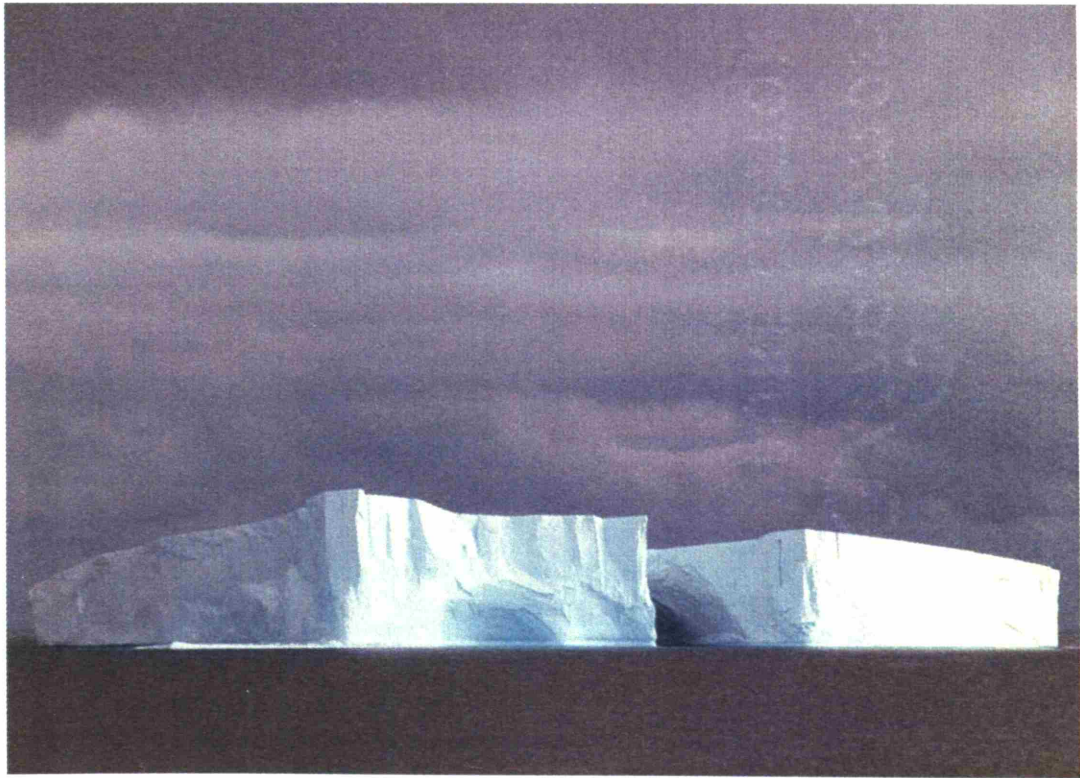


fig. 14-17

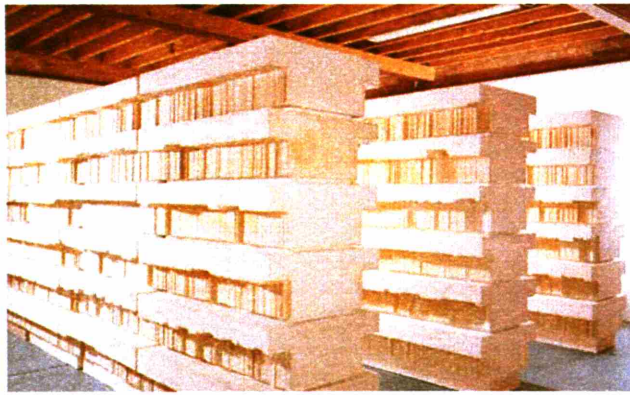
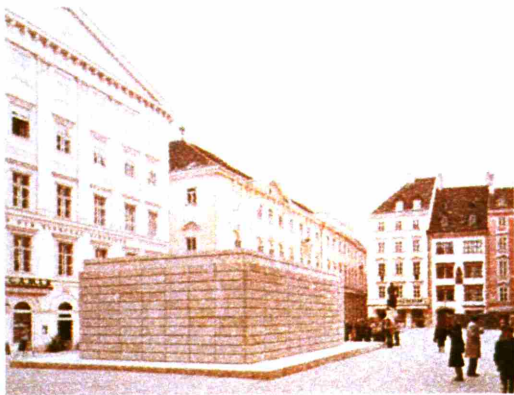


fig. 20-21

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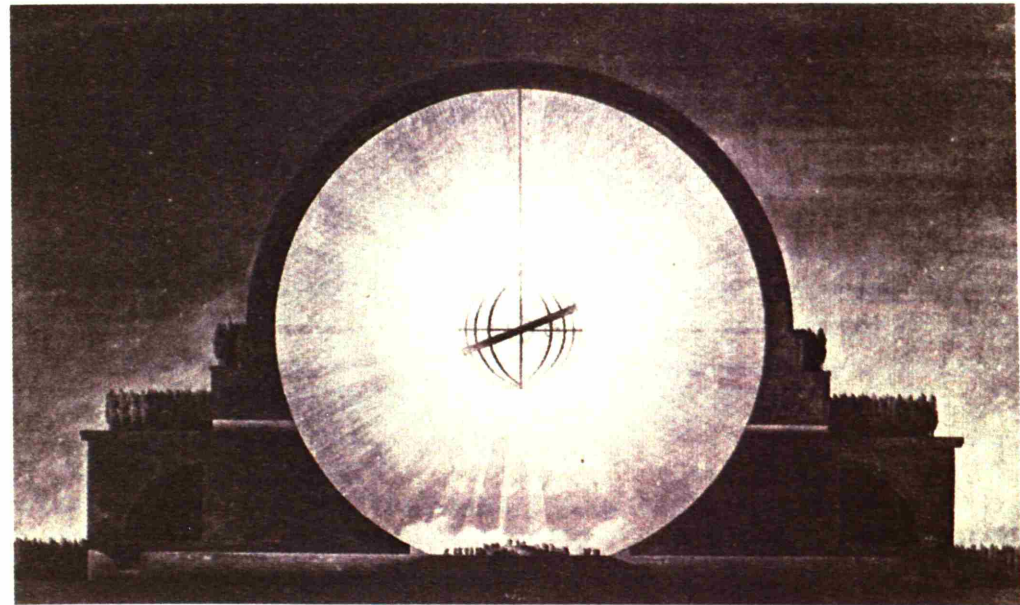
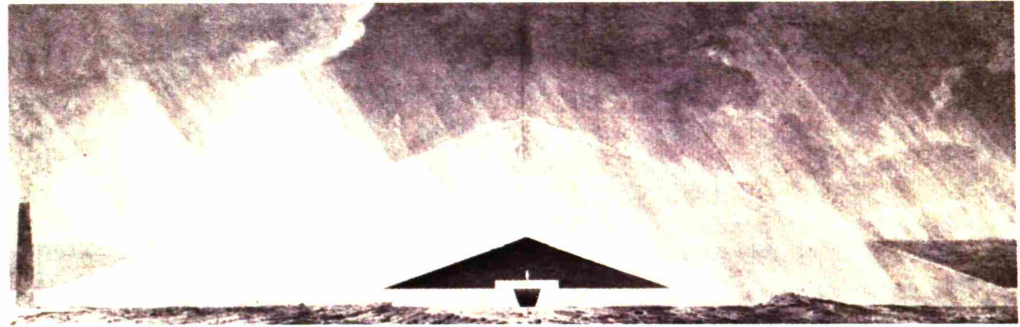


fig. 18-19

memorial as experience: memorial/monument as shadow or shade of event rather than sterile simulacrum or place marker
The experiential nature of the place or time which is being memorialized should be considered, for as locational displacement is common within the cannon of memorial, so is the removal of experiential quality. Granted, some situations are impossible to render without the introduction of falsity and contrivance; however, the sterility of many memorials lessens the impact through homogenization via aesthetic tradition. By following the formulaic path towards the construction and design, specificity of the subject is lost to the canonical body to which the memorial adheres. This is not to suggest that memorial design should become illustrative in the portrayal or representation memorial subjects, but rather that the strength of the memorial would be heightened by the inclusion of experiential resonances. As Maya Lin's Vietnam memorial allows the visitor to see themselves in the roster of dead, beginning to decompose the division between viewer and memorial, so too the addition of a contextual experiential model, such as Eisenman's Holocaust memorial furthers the emotive understanding and overall effect. By unifying the content with the context the memorial facilitates an experiential transcendence- one is no longer observing and appreciating that which is memorialized, but is directly confronting it through personal experience. It is the case that these atmospheric or environmental suggestions should not be didactic, as they will lose poignancy through mimesis. In order to achieve the intended complexity of experience brought about by infusing the memorial with echoes of the original/memorialized environment (be it site, time or thought) it is necessary to abstract key tenants of this condition. These characteristics can then be integrated into the design of the memorial.

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memorial as object:

Inherent in this condition is the separation between the visitor and the piece, an understood division representing that which is on display and that which evaluates the display. Power hierarchies and identity ambiguities can be derived from the manipulation of the content and form of the memorial. From these manipulations, narratives can be constructed which bespeak heroics, tragedy, confusion and loss. The intention of most memorials is that these narratives be clear, identified, absorbed and appreciated- in this sense these memorials rely upon and celebrate the disparate nature of the viewer/viewed, for without this separation the demarcation of that which is to be understood would dissolve. Other memorials begin to use the given separation to deepen the function and impact of the memorial, distorting the traditional narrative to include a psychological component. This can be seen in the Vietnam War Memorial by Maya Lin where the straightforward agenda of the role call of casualties is blurred by the mirrored surface of the granite, allowing the viewer to see their own image superimposed over the names of the dead- placing their own image, and by inference, their own person, within the lost ranks. Lin effectively embeds the viewer into the narrative of the memorial by activating the membrane of the wall via reflectivity, lessening the divide between the dead- that which is being memorialized, and the living- the intended viewer. Inherent in this recasting of the relationship between the viewer/object is the introduction of ambiguity; for, as the memorial justly celebrates the sacrifice of the fallen soldiers, the introduction of the viewer as a participant (however passive) extends the role of the visitor beyond that of the observer. By involving the visitor Lin requests personal investment and perhaps evaluation, as the visitor is no longer to merely appreciate the memorial, remembering the past event or peoples, but is a part of the memorial. By placing the viewer inside the narrative Lin elevates the poignancy of the memorial beyond a past, dead series of events and lost soldiers, she maintains the life in the memorial and through this sustains a social dialogue. The observer, while reading the names of the thousands dead through the eyes of their own reflection is confronted with the reality of the memorial, as there is nothing so powerful as being asked to see yourself within someone else's tragedy. The power of this gesture is such that the memorial is celebrated the world wide for its emotive impact, transforming the passive model of the traditional monument to an investigation of the potential for the active memorial. That said, the Vietnam memorial still retains a distinct division between visitor and memorial, for though Lin works to dissolve the psychological distance between the visitor and memorial, the relationship is still reduced to a simple unidirectional condition of the visitor relating to the wall.

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fig. 23

on site specificity:

Rarely is the memorial coincident with the event being memorialized, therefore it becomes a physical representation of the event, subject or person, while also acting as a remote situational referent. The viewer, if engaged in the memorial, is for all intents and purposes transported to the remembered site. Memorials which reside in-situ often reference a missing body or person and it is therefore the actors which are remote rather than the place. Often seen in war monuments, the memorial is used by a foreign people to mark a battle, event or loss on distant soil. This ostensibly becomes an outpost of that people, a piece of territory dedicated and reserved for the memory of the other. In these cases the memorial is oft times in the design grammar of the memorializing culture rather than the local, which furthers the sense that these memorials and monuments are incongruous with their geographic and cultural locations.

drifting absence :: drafting memory

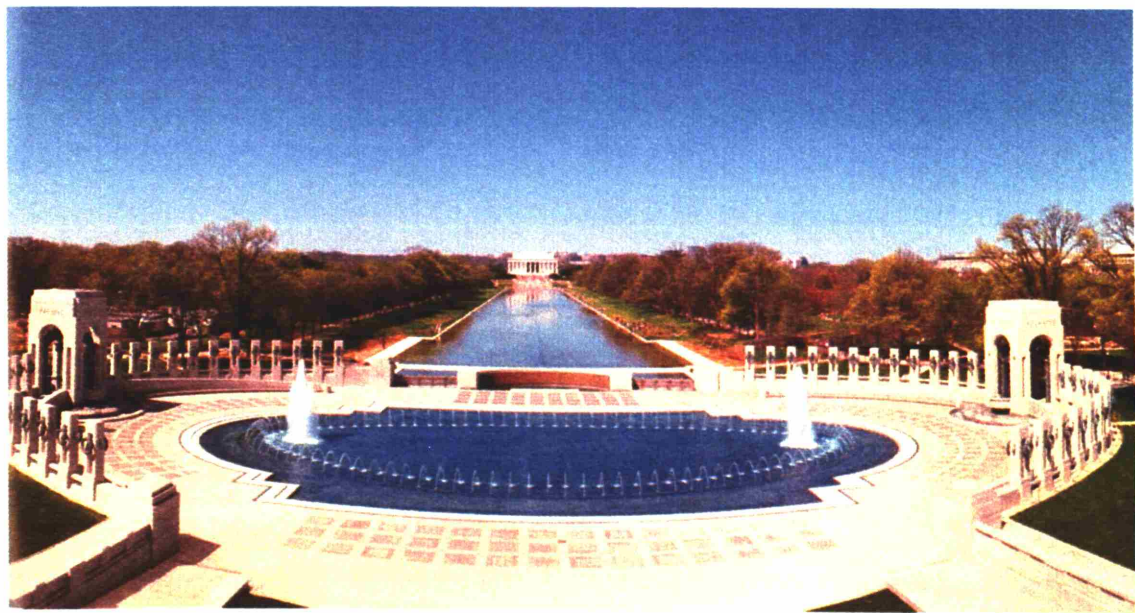
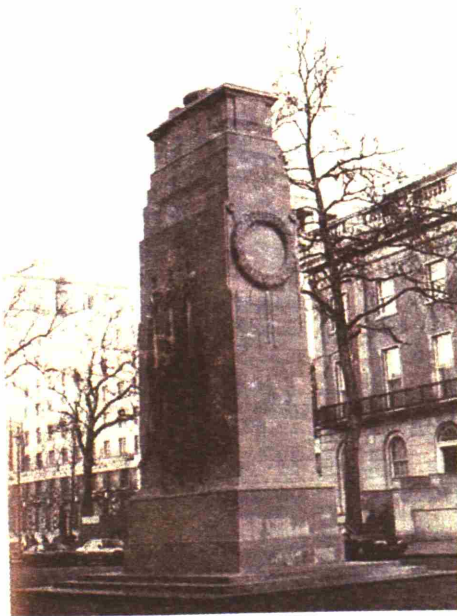


fig. 24-25

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Bruderlin; fig. 15 *Monolith, Murten, Switzerland, 2002, J Nouvel*

cimss.ssec.wisc.edu/tropic/real-time/westpac/images; fig. 11

delsjourney.com/uss_neosho/coral_sea/battle_of_coral_sea/may_05_to_07.htm; fig. 8 Battle of the Coral Sea naval diagram

Etlin; fig. 18 *"Funerary Monument Characterizing the Genre of a Buried Architecture" 1785 Boullee*, fig. 19 *Cenotaph to Sir Issac Newton, View of interior with armillary sphere, 1784, Boullee*

Flam; fig. 1 *Non-Site, 1968 (Mica from Portland, CT) R Smithson*

Grooms; fig. 25 *World War II Memorial, Washington, D.C., 2004, St. Florian*

Harbison; fig 24 Cenotaph, Whitehall, London, Lutyen

Heathcote; fig. 16 *Brion Cemetery, San Vito di Altivole, Italy, 1969-78 C Scarpa*, fig. 23 *Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C., 1984, M lin*

Ivy; fig. 22 *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Berlin, Germany, 2005, P Eisenman*

Le Gray, Gustave. fig. 7: *The Great Wave*, ca. 1856. Albumen silver print from glass negative. Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

meer.org/north-pacific-ocean-winter-currents-800x560-2a.jpg; fig. 10 Pacific Ocean currents

Miller; fig. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 *World War II Documentary Photography*

photolib.noaa.gov/corps/; fig. 17 Antarctic iceberg

Rothko (*The works on canvas*); fig. 12, 13

robertsmithson.com/sculpture/floating_island.htm; fig. 14 *Floating Island, 2005 R Smithson*

Townsend; fig. 20 *Untitled (Book Corridors) 1997-98 R Whiteread*, fig. 21 *Holocaust Memorial, Judenplatz, Vienna 1995-2005 R Whiteread*

usswashington.com/diag.htm; fig. 9 diagram of USS Washington

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Arizona Memorial Commission
<http://www.arizonamemorial.org/locations/american-memorial-park-location.html>

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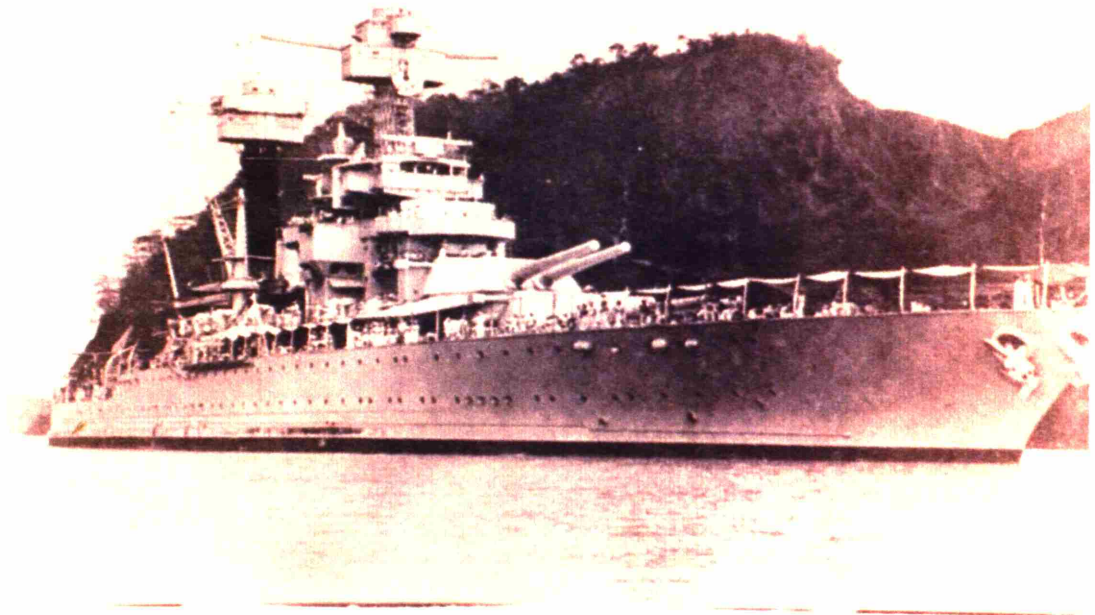
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