Imperfect Heart

by
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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

Herein lies a personal inquiry and collection of beautiful ruin in an imperfect architectural world. The journey into abandoned ruin, born out of a curiosity to see what comes of viewing architecture in its darkest hours. This fascination with abandoned architectural spaces brings forth more than a visual sense of decay, it emulates an essence of another world, charged with emotion.

This human intrigue, leads to a photographical journey of exploration into ruin from different viewpoints, ultimately focusing on the connection between the individual and home as ruin becomes the symbiotic thread between the two. It is primarily within these photographs that this thesis becomes a personification of the ruined home of an imperfect individual.

The personal journey is put forth in three stages. Three books portray different perspectives to exploring ruin, each one delving deeper into an onslaught of ruin in time. The ruin begins by breaking into the world of ruin through views and definitions from the perspective of an outsider in *Seeing Ruin (Book 1)*. The journey into ruin continues in *Creating Ruin (Book 2)* by an outsider's contrivance of ruin in an imaginary world of ruin, exploring such themes as age, texture, time and loss. Lastly *Living Ruin (Book 3)* is explored by an insider, feeling ruin and living within it.

This thesis opposes the negative notion of ruin inherent in its dictionary definition. In searching for the light within ruin, this inquiry seeks a place and use for ruin within the world of architecture. This depiction strives to show the beauty of ruin, the light in darkness. It strives for a discussion of a darker side, which is normally withheld amongst its viewers.

Creating art and architecture in part from failure imbues the palpable reality of life within the human household.

This journey is one view of a time filled with ruin, in one person's world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A University of Waterloo Architectural Thesis is a culmination of many ideas and explorations formulated, on average, over the span of one to two years; brought together within the bounds of a book for public viewing. In my case nothing seems average or normal about it; this thesis has been formulated over half a dozen years and becomes more than the culmination of ideas; it is a portrayal of my life at this time. Retrospectively it may come across in the realm of narcissism, as following the greek mythological Narcissus in it's assimilation of the idea of looking at my own image reflected in that pool of water but it does not take vain gratitude in that view of personal attributes nor is it meant to come from a place of egocentrism. It is just life, architecture and humanity.

It is not solely a personal journey described by the one walking it but a relatable architectural human collection.

To begin this personal journey, acknowledgements must be made to the individuals who came together to guide this thesis into fruition. The acknowledgement list is longer and greater than can be written herein but a direct thank you, must go to a some individuals whom were essential to the cause at hand, academically and/or personally.

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DEDICATION

To my future child that I now carry, I dedicate this thesis to you. I hope that we may teach you to love and live ruin; to find beauty in the imperfections of life within yourself and all that surrounds you.

To my other half, John Fry, I also dedicate this to you, for struggling alongside me in the hardest times we both have known.

To all those who are struggling in their journey to find the light in the darkness surrounding them, struggling to embrace and live with their own imperfection and all the imperfection that surrounds them.



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PREFACE

Here I lie in bed not the same person I once was. I am now officially disabled. One fall and one concussion too many. The circumstances of which are still unknown. Once concussed, the mind cannot often remember the moments leading up to the main detrimental event. Playing into the old chicken and egg adage, science cannot tell if the fall was a result of the condition or if the fall created the condition. Did I suffer from this before and fainted or did I slip and hit my head triggering this onslaught of dysautonomia (a disfunction of the automatic nervous system)? I had unconsciously careened into a door frame, walls, a banister and finally the floor, inches before hitting the corner of an angled wall and was diagnosed with post concussion syndrome and severe whiplash akin to a major car accident.

A year passed before my inability to improve led me on a new journey to find the real source of my poor health. By chance I found the first diagnosis through correlating readings on a heart rate watch which I input into a google search, thereby producing a youtube video of a girl with a relatively unknown disorder that bore too many similarities for me to ignore. I faced my doctor with my findings. Six months later I was diagnosed unequivocally with Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (P.O.T.S.) a syndrome with many symptoms but defined by the heart beat rising 30 beats per minute "*or more within 10 minutes of standing head-up tilt in the absence of orthostatic hypotension; the standing heart rate is often 120 beats/min or higher.*"[1] -Mayo Clinic Rochester.

On my first tilt table test, my heart beat rose from around

1 Acton, Q.A. *Cardiac Arrhythmias - Advances In Research And Treatment,* pg. 247

85 to 144, instantly and I started losing consciousness. I had to be brought down and the test re-administered to catch other readings as my heart beat rose too quickly.

The journey continued and gradually many of the other unknowns were diagnosed. I suffer from about ten disorders and diseases, most of which are *relatively* rarely known or researched even in the medical field. It is unknown if the disorders were inherent within me and the fall was a trigger to an extensive onslaught of episodes but that one moment in time defined an extreme change in my health in both my physical and mental capabilities. I can recall a handful of odd incidences here or there in my life that I now recognize as possible episodes of certain disorders while other symptoms are very new to me. The difference now is that I have all of these episodes that are debilitating, regularly, in abundance.

Where I once led a *normal* life, I can not function now *normally* on a daily basis, nor from moment to moment. I see about a dozen doctors and specialists that are still trying to figure it all out. Every day is a struggle that I battle invisibly and try to hide from strangers and more so from those close to me. Recently, I am beginning to let go.

Most of my days are spent here, literally in bed, here in my house. I bought this house not as a dream home or even a starter home but because it was the best of the worst, the cheapest thing I could afford that I could get a mortgage for, that had potential to be something great if re-envisioned. Cheaper than rent and less expensive than any house I have seen, it was surprisingly difficult to acquire. This place is the epitome of imperfect and needs to be completely renovated; embarrassingly in disrepair and disarray, far from my ideal locale. It is not a place anyone I know would live in, but it is slowly becoming our home. It is the best I could do. I feel lucky to have a place. It is

my prison and my sanctity. My life is incomparable to my peers but I am lucky to be alive and to be of sound mind most of the time.

This is not the place I thought I would be in, at this point or at any other point of my life.

Here is the collection of my journey, the journey of the home of an imperfect heart.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is complicated where it was once simple; a one-fold thesis developed upon ruin transformed into its own human entity architecturally.

This journey may only begin at its inception, over half a decade ago, from one thought: what would happen if you looked at architecture in demise in some of its physically darkest moments? What better place to start than at the bottom? In the depths of darkness you find out who you truly are. What therefore can one learn in the darkest depths of architecture?

The words building, creation, construction, success, blessing, win, achievement and accomplishment are some of the many antonyms that can be found for the word ruin. These antonyms show the definition of ruin, in a light that is the opposite of what architecture strives to be. With these generally accepted terms, ruin should not have a place in architecture. This thesis opposes these definitions and puts forth a spotlight on the positive side of ruin in creation. This journey searches to find a place for ruin in the field of architecture by looking for the light within it; opposing the complete aforementioned negative acceptance of its definition in connection to architecture.

Human life and a building's life always, instantly, temporarily or over time, falls into a life state of ruin. These moments of ruin rise and fall in severity like that of the beat of a heart, suffering from illness.

This thesis partitions into three books a journey of ruin over time; in seeing, creating and living ruin. Each division portrays and explores the fall of ruin, in moments of

light and beauty as well as in its inherent darkness and unsightliness; a place of ever greater imperfections from both a personal and architectural standpoint. The fall is portrayed and explored first by *Seeing Ruin* in simple examination, definition and portrayal of space, secondly by delving into interpretation, design and imagination by *Creating Ruin* and lastly from exposure and experience of *Living Ruin*.

This photographic and reflective narrative is viewed through three sections of human life, as an outsider unknown to the world of ruin seeing ruin, as an inventor creating ruin and as an insider living ruin inside a ruined world. It begins by introducing a background to desolation in seeing ruin, alongside a series of case studies creating ruin with the characteristics of a broken down human condition in a metaphorical or physically, abandoned and decaying architectural space and then lays bare ruin in an individual in a ruined home.

This thesis has changed unconsciously to become an expanding compilation of the visual and metaphorical beauty seen in imperfect ruin of both the human and the architectural home.

It is not an inquiry into why buildings were abandoned. It is not a history of how they were once used nor an explanation into what may come of them or how they should be restored, demolished or reused. The following pages are not meant to solve the issue of whether or not architecture should be preserved and the terms upon which these decisions should be made. This is a journey demonstrating one person's depiction of these spaces of human habitat as a means of learning from the imperfections of architecture and individuals by studying them in dismay. It is a visual exploration of why ruining can be so influential and fascinating emotionally and experientially to architecture. This depiction strives to show the beauty of ruin; a light in the darkness. *"Rhythmic*

structures of light ... light can naturally produce different cycles within us ex. Animals procreate often in the spring when more light appears." [1] Light changes us, with its insurgence and with its retreats. It strives for discussion and discourse of a darker side, of that which is normally withheld, among its viewers whether it be in debate or in dialogue. It brings about a great parallel between the ruin of a building and the ruin of a human being in similar duress. Furthermore such architectural thought brings about debate as to whether such architecture, creates forms and concepts, that may be better understood by a greater number of people, due to its rudimentary form and linkage to the hardships we all face. Where if anywhere does ruin and imperfection belong in architecture?

Enclosed, the journey, of the past seven years, emerges.

1 Ornstein, *The Psychology Of Consciousness*. pg. 212

"When words become unclear, I shall focus with photographs. When images become inadequate, I shall be content with silence." – Ansel Adams[1]

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1 AB Bookman's Weekly, p. 3326

SEEING RUIN

Seeing Ruin is the opening book of the journey of this imperfect heart. Based in the photographic spirit of the derelict, it is created by one who is viewing ruin as an outsider. The world of ruin is imagined through the lens of the camera without true knowledge of the full life of the imperfection they are capturing.

The structure of this book begins with an opening into the world of viewing ruin through fascination and moves to the definition of the world of ruin to which this whole thesis pertains. Once defined this journey delves into the human connection to abandoned buildings. It touches on the importance of the ruined home and its relation to both architecture and humanity on a singular human level. The path curves to the physical view, solely focused on the home. Reflection and images ensue as the fascination changes into something deeper; into a connection to texture, to lost time and an alternate world between the viewer and the space of ruin before them.

All life is viewed through our own lenses, with our own filters, in our own world. This journey is but one view, of ruin, in one person's world.

a·ban·don [1]

–verb (used with object)

1. to leave completely and finally; forsake utterly; desert: to abandon one's farm; to abandon a child; to abandon a sinking ship
2. to give up; discontinue; withdraw from: to abandon a research project; to abandon hopes for a stage career.
3. to give up the control of: to abandon a city to an enemy army.
4. to yield (oneself) without restraint or moderation; give (oneself) over to natural impulses, usually without self-control:to abandon oneself to grief.
5. Law. to cast away, leave, or desert, as property or a child.
6. Obsolete. to banish.

ru·in [2]

–noun

1. ruins, the remains of a building, city, etc., that has been destroyed or that is in disrepair or a state of decay: We visited the ruins of ancient Greece.
2. a destroyed or decayed building, town, etc.
3. a fallen, wrecked, or decayed condition: The building fell to ruin.
4. the downfall, decay, or destruction of anything.
5. the complete loss of health, means, position, hope, or the like.
6. something that causes a downfall or destruction; blight: Alcohol was his ruin.
7. the downfall of a person; undoing: the ruin of Oedipus.
8. a person as the wreck of his or her former self; ravaged individual.
9. the act of causing destruction or a downfall

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1 Abandon <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/abandon>

2 Ruin <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/ruin>

THE CONNECTION

In the following journey a purposeful unconscious approach was taken that explored ruin and abandoned buildings through photographical images in *Seeing Ruin*. This exploration brought about such a plethora of topics that a direction had to be defined almost immediately. It was in the beginning, that looking at the definition of both the terms abandon and ruin was paramount. The following thoughts and revelations became the clear direction for all the books herein.

One of the greatest needs, for human beings, is the ability to have shelter. As Maslow's hierarchy of needs describes it, a shelter, is the basic of all needs (Image 1.1), falling under the first stage *Physiological Needs*. Maslow's shelter can be seen both figuratively or emotionally, as a space that one can call home or a place that one embodies as their shelter, in the case of nomads and the like. The home is the foundation upon which we as humans live our lives. These basic necessities are integral to our survival and growth as humans. "Only when the lower order needs of physical and emotional well-being are satisfied are we concerned with the higher order needs of influence and personal development. Conversely, if the things that satisfy our lower order needs are swept away, we are no longer concerned about the maintenance of our higher order needs." [3] Thusly to follow along the lines of Maslow theory, when one does not have architecture, a dwelling place, or if that architecture moves into great ruin, one is in disarray and nothing else matters but that loss of a basic life requirement. One cannot further their life. They are trapped in this low stage at the bottom of this life pyramid. They are in ruin.

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3 Maslow, Abraham. Motivation And Personality

Focusing on both the definition of abandon and ruin, two entities collide; the human and the building. The definitions put forth personify the demise of both the human and/or the architectural form. Abandoned spaces intertwine human ruin with that of architectural ruin. The building and the human when abandoned and/or in ruin can be described in the same words, as forsaken, destroyed, decayed, withdrawn, fallen, wrecked et cetera, both resulting in a loss of health and position. Along with this direct intertwined connection to abandonment and ruin, there is also a symbiosis of mutual decay in ruin between the architectural building and its occupant. The well-being of the human being is integral to the well-being of their architectural spaces and vise versa. When an individual finds themselves in extreme ruin they do not always abandon their home immediately but that which is around them tends to physically fall with them, into disrepair, particularly their home, as it is the personification of their daily life. Habitual ruin leads to failed architecture that is no longer fit for human occupancy. The ruining of the home over time or in immediacy, creates the same affect. The home, missing its occupants, becomes simply a house, void of the strong presence of emotion and soul. If one is in a significant downward fall towards utter ruin, it greatly affects the other. In summation, ruin can be defined interchangeable between a human and a building as well as connected resulting in abandonment, especially in the case of a home. It is this symbiosis, that drives this text on abandoned ruin as in each instance the two, human and home, are always present. The photographic work portrays this symbiosis of mutual decay in ruin portraying architectural spaces in a human light, physically and spiritually.

In the case of modern ruins, the loss of occupancy, is relatively fresh in an abandoned home. Emotion and a soul still resonates within these spaces. There is a feeling of a spirit, for some quite dark, eerie and dreary, while for

others it is quite beautiful, nostalgic and serene.

Ruin is the journey, a time of death or turmoil of something that once was in pristine condition; an elimination of order and a new beginning. It is the continuous breakdown of circumstance that leads to disrepair and in some cases to decay, destruction and demise. The anti-thesis of perfection in architecture equals ruin.

Upon delving into the aforementioned definition of abandon, it continually brings up definitive terms that emulate ruin in time; a moment of giving up, discontinuing, withdrawing, forsaking, yielding, deserting, leaving, casting away, sinking and/or banishing. Abandonment is the moment where true ruin begins.

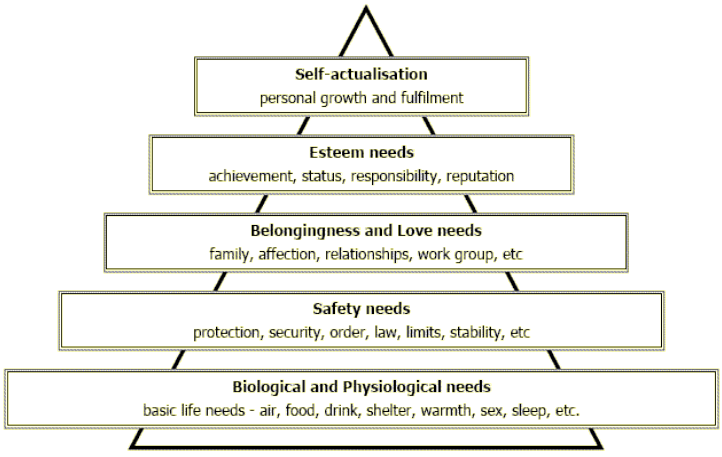


Image 1.1 Maslow's Hierachy of Needs

FASCINATION

The journey begins with a fascination about architecture in its lowest sense. Abandoned buildings are the epitome of imperfect derelict failing architecture. At a certain point in time, they become relics and ancient ruins with an accepted beauty in society. Many travel and flock to such places of ancient ruin to immerse themselves in another skeletal world far from their own. But what of modern ruins, ruins of colourful buildings that are within our time or within the time of our parents and grandparents; why is there a gravitation to them?

There is a societal emphasis on perfection, being and acting perfect while there seems to be an opposite fascination for watching the downtrodden in ruin and not being able to turn away from the train wreck. There is a fantasy world that arises from abandoned buildings; a whimsical world in the forest where children play in an old abandoned building. It is only with time that beauty seems to rise from the ashes.

Modern ruins draw on human emotion to the point of creating a strong fascination that lures one to trespass into decrepit imperfect architecture, a place of potential danger. The fascination seems anti-intuitive. A dirty building, falling apart, rank with decay and moisture, filled with gloom, disconnected from modern services, ransacked, graffitied, a haunt for nomads, a modern *eye sore* or simply a sad, pitiful outcome of circumstances, is a desirable place for some. They are not aesthetically nor physically perfect, yet, with all these negative associations many human beings find an attraction to ruin because they are entering into the unknown. Thus the habitat of the human species, architecture, once broken down becomes a contradiction of taste between what one may deem

garbage and what one may deem beautiful in a euphoria of the sublime.

In this world and in our lives there are very few certainties. We will all die and change is an everyday, habitual inevitable occurrence; nothing lasts forever. The history, the memories, will eventually be lost. "*Buildings persist in time. Yet they do not. No building stands forever, eventually every one falls under the influence of the elements, and this end is known from the beginning.*"[1] Our creations of architecture, change the moment we hand over the reigns to others and continue to change daily through human occupation. Occupants take spaces and transform them to their own needs and wants and when they are of no use or are financially or geographically unfeasible, they dispose of them. It is at the time of disposal that we may see how these spaces were lived in. We may see our past and see architecture dying. It is in this instance, that we as architects, may learn. We may gain inspiration and knowledge for future creations. It is not necessarily the raw facts of such spaces and their humans, that intrigue the most, it is rather the affect, they make upon us that is ever so alluring. It is the idea of what the building and its people may have gone through that is most attractive. We can take such spaces at their lowest and see through the decay to the mythical world of imagined past, an alternate world from our own, brimming with ideas and thoughts. We can see ruin in a different light, in a different time.

Upon viewing such abandoned spaces the focus of the journey changed, moving from a connection of the mind through a thought of curiosity, into a connection to the heart and the psyche, upon seeing these spaces charged with emotion. There is an ulterior world in these abandoned spaces, a world that doesn't truly exist in reality. It is as if time stops and allows for a moment of reprieve to glance back at the world and reflect upon what once was

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1 Mostafavi, Mohsen, and David Leatherbarrow, *On Weathering*, pg.5

or what could have been moving forward, onto what might be. This ulterior world, is in a state of limbo, struggling between life and death. A state of questioning, instability and change, a founding factor of curiosity, in the height of the unknown, abundantly apparent in the confines of these homes. This change is ruin. The change, that is ruin, is the fascination.

There is more to ruin than the pristine beauty of refined perfection of newly completed architecture. Every corner is filled with an essence of the unknown, an essence of real tangible humanity, humanity being reclaimed by nature, falling back to the earth. It is an architectural science experiment of the human condition, in time, memory, sensation, percept and affect, without scientific controls.

Paralleling the beauty we find in the life lines of an old face, there is a cultural fascination in photographing abandoned architecture riddled with scars. This especially rings true in a residential home where one can dive into the wilderness of the human habitat; seeing the fleeting memory of human life it once held within, now displaced or lost. One imagines what the space and its people might have been like, in its relative "glory days", before our present eyes behold it. In an abandoned house there is a silence, just one person and their thoughts, the surrounding space and memories; both invented and nostalgic of personal associations. A lonely but beautiful world of imagination. This architecture that is lost, broken down and scarred by it hardships and time, brings about intrigue in the same manner as the old face, through its stories of time and emanating atmosphere, it comes to life.

This fascination is the journey of exploration into the ruin of abandoned spaces, documenting the rise and fall of the imperfect heart through photographic displays of fleeting moments.

A WAREHOUSE

BUILDING 1



Image 1.2 A Warehouse, Window 1 | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.3 A Warehouse, Brick Frame | Hamilton | June 2010



JAMES ST. IN HAMILTON, ON.
JUNE 2, 2010

Image 1.4 A Warehouse, Window 2 | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.5 A Warehouse, Window 3 | Hamilton | June 2010



"... In the beginning I just tried to prove that I had been to some place, by making the photos. But with time, I have more started to focus on trying to show what the building is telling me. It's like to translate a feeling into the photographs. And this feeling can be nostalgia, for sure, but it can also be fear, it can also be [ugh] amazement for beauty … We don't want to be confronted with the pollution and with the abandoned factory that are scattered throughout the landscape. We prefer to see clean cities and streets … and modern buildings. We would like to forget about, the past." - Henk Van Rensbergen [1]

1 Fine Art Tv <http://www.finearttv.tv/en/fine-art/uncovered/henk-van-rensbergen-the-silence-of-the-past>

Image 1.6 A Warehouse, Window 4 | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.7 A Warehouse, Window 5 | Hamilton | June 2010



"When people see my photos, I get very different reactions. Some people feel amazement. Some people feel anger that these beautiful places have been left to deteriorate. Many people feel fear, not only the fear of actually having to be in a place like that but also the fear of what you could possible discover." - Henk Van Rensbergen [2]

2 Ibid

Image 1.8 A Warehouse, Ceiling Layers 1 | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.9 A Warehouse, Ceiling Layers 2 | Hamilton | June 2010



"Increasing Discomfort. When was the last time you looked at anything, solely, and concentratedly , and for its own sake? Ordinary life passes in a near blur. ... We find we are not very good at looking. ... Increasing Distraction... Increasing invention...Increasing Irritation …" - Jeanette Winterson [1]

1 Winterson, *Art Objects*, pg. 9

Image 1.10 A Warehouse, Ceiling Layers 3 | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.11 A Warehouse, Ceiling Layers 4 | Hamilton | June 2010



"When it seems like the sky is about to collapse, relax, that's just the roof caving in." - Jarod Kintz[2]

2 Kintz, *Seriously Delirious, But Not At All Serious.*

Image 1.12 A Warehouse, Window Frames | Hamilton | June 2010



"Even though fixed in time, a photograph evokes as much feeling as that which comes from music or dance. Whatever the mode – from the snapshot to the decisive moment to multi-media montage – the intent and purpose of photography is to render in visual terms feelings and experiences that often elude the ability of words to describe. In any case, the eyes have it, and the imagination will always soar farther than was expected." – Ralph Gibson [1]

1 Osman, *Creative Camera, Issues 91-102, pg.401*

Image 1.13 A Warehouse, Window Pile 1 | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.14 A Warehouse, Window Pile 2 | Hamilton | June 2010



"There was beauty in the refuse, he insisted. He pointed to the shards of broken brown and green bottles glistening in the sun. "These are gems," he said. "It's a matter of your eyes' looking at them right." - Brinkley of Poet William Carlos Williams [2]

2 Eastman, Vanishing America, pg. 11

Image 1.15 A Warehouse, Corner 1| Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.16 A Warehouse, Corner 2 | Hamilton | June 2010



"Looking for the key to understanding ourselves in the brilliance of the day. But it may not be there. It lies within, in the dark side of ourselves, a side often forgotten, because "there is more light here". once locate key within the dark area, we may be able to bring it out into the light and to achieve a new synthesis of the two modes of investigation." [1]

1 *Ornstein, The Psychology of Consciousness, pg.226*

Image 1.17 A Warehouse, Stairs| Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.18 A Warehouse, Painted Window | Hamilton | June 2010



"As a young man you don't notice at all that you were, after all, badly affected. For years afterwards, at least ten years, I kept getting these dreams, in which I had to crawl through ruined houses, along passages I could hardly get through." - Otto Dix [2]

2 'The A*rt Of War - Otto Dix'S Der Krieg [War] Cycle1924*' <http://nga.gov.au/dix/>

A BLOCK HOUSE

BUILDING 2



Image 1.19 A Block House, Light Shining | Hamilton | May
Image 1.20 A Block House, Dark Corner | Hamilton | May



JAMES ST. IN HAMILTON, ON.
MAY 4, 2010

Image 1.21 A Block House, Kid's Wallpaper| Hamilton | May 2010
Image 1.22 A Block House, Open Window | Hamilton | May 2010





"The sight informs the statuary's chisel with power to give breath to lifeless brass and marble, and the painter's pencil to swell the flat canvas with moving figures actuated by imaginary souls." – Addison [1]

1 Addison, *The Spectator*, pg. 56

Image 1.23 A Block House, Brick Meets Wallpaper | Hamilton | May 2010
Image 1.24 A Block House, Leftover Remains | Hamilton | May 2010



"A soul without reflection, like a pile
Without inhabitant, to ruin runs."
- Edward Young [2]

2 Young, *The Poetical Works of Edward Young, pg* 95 Line 596

Image 1.25 A Block House, Dripping Brick | Hamilton | May 2010
Image 1.26 A Block House, Dripping Layers | Hamilton | May 2010





"What is a ruin but time easing itself of endurance?" - Djuna Barnes [1]

1 Barnes and Eliot, *Nightwood,* Ch. 6

Image 1.27 A Block House, Evidence| Hamilton | May 2010
Image 1.28 A Block House, Odd Time Capsule | Hamilton | May 2010





"Beauty can be seen in all things, seeing and composing the beauty is what separates the snapshot from the photograph." – Matt Hardy [2]

2 Anchell, *Digital Photo Assignments*.

Image 1.29 A Block House, Empty | Hamilton | May 2010
Image 1.30 A Block House, Empty 2 | Hamilton | May 2010



"It is the eye of other people that ruin us. If I were blind I would want, neither fine clothes, fine houses or fine furniture." - Benjamin Franklin [1]

1 Wood, *Dictionary Of Quotations From Ancient, Modern, English And Foreign Sources*

Image 1.31 A Block House, White Planks 1| Hamilton | May 2010
Image 1.32 A Block House, White Planks 2 | Hamilton | May 2010



"It's typically in our countries where we are rich enough to leave it abandoned yet we are poor enough to not invest in either destroying it or making something new out of it. It's like a balance between two choices and they just leave it as it is." - Henk Van Rensbergen on Belgium [2]

2 Finearttv.tv, <http://www.finearttv.tv/en/fine-art/uncovered/henk-van-rensbergen-the-silence-of-the-past.>

Image 1.33 A Block House, Standing in the Hole | Hamilton | May 2010
Image 1.34 A Block House, Walkway Web | Hamilton | May 2010



Image 1.35 A Block House, Standing in the Hole 2 | Hamilton | May 2010
Image 1.36 A Block House, Walkway Web 2 | Hamilton | May 2010

Image 1.37 A Block House, Wallpaper | Hamilton | May 2010
Image 1.38 A Block House, Wallpaper 2 | Hamilton | May 2010



Image 1.39 A Block House, Wallpaper 3 | Hamilton | May 2010
Image 1.40 A Block House, Wallpaper 4 | Hamilton | May 2010

MODERN RUINS

"Modern ruins is a neologism referring to ruins of architecture constructed in the recent past, generally in the most recent century, or since the 19th century." [1]

Modern Ruin was always the focus of this journey from the beginning but there came a time, where it needed to be delineated from ancient ruin. Modern ruins are ruins that are of our present time, our parent's time and reaching into the time of our grandparents. Such buildings are differentiated by what we would typically think of as architectural ruins, like those of Egyptian, Roman, Greco, Chinese and other such ancient cultures. Typically ruins are thought of in an archaeological sense as architecture that is more skeletal in appearance, showing a frame of what once was, a form that consists mostly of colourless, gray and brown dirt, void of all it's original adornment and finishes. Modern ruins oppose these ancient ruins with more structure, cohesiveness and colour. There is something unique to these modern spaces that this journey was drawn towards and was already reflecting upon unconsciously that was not prevalent in ancient ruins. There was a greater emotive connection to the spaces with a closer time and space continuum to our own. The people they held, are much closer to us in time. In this manner, the buildings and lives of these dwellings are a part of our world, both physically and mentally. They are imaginable, tangible and very real. It is in this manner that modern ruins become so intriguing. They are eminently connected to that which we can imagine. They are centuries old, in a time long past, with only skeletal gray remains, they are with us today. Their tragedies are our tragedies. We understand the use of space, the objects within them, the area, the

1 Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_ruins>

era, the world at the time of the building's conception and during the building's lifespan. We have a greater ability to connect to the people within the buildings and what may have been happening at the time they were living there. The spaces themselves are in limbo, not yet whole but also far from complete natural decay in many cases. There is an ambiguity to them at times, where in certain moments within certain spaces there begs a question, "If such a space is really abandoned?". There is hope mixed with despair. These instances embody a feeling of time halted, between life and death. It is these charged attributes of time and their close connection to ourselves in humanity that narrows this journey's focus solely to modern ruins as a greater example of current tangible ruin.

There is a modern phenomenon, called *urban exploring,* that has emerged due to these charged fascinations of modern ruin in which people travel around to explore abandoned buildings of modern ruin. There is a code of ethics, to abide by for exploring abandoned spaces. Exploring is to be respectful and inquisitive only. The experience is the journey. It is not simply a beautiful aesthetic that brings *urban explorers* forth to abandoned buildings. It is not simply the beautiful jade patina of copper that arises overtime as air flows over and erodes away the pristine nature of newly built forms that attracts. The attraction is an essence, a feeling that such places bestow, that brings forth the artists, the normal everyday person or even the downtrodden individual. It is like that nostalgia of being a kid exploring the world on their own for the first time, an emotive excitement, searching into the forest for that abandoned clubhouse or old ski shack or the mystery of grandmas old attic and the random treasures, memories and sights that are held within. It is a mythical but real world of discovery in which one feels an emotional connection to.

When a building exemplifies a true heart and soul, it relates greatest to its occupants. Through experience and

memories, integration into a space is best achieved. There is an intrigue to a sense of place that brings explorers to the doors of ruin.

These modern ruins of the past few centuries, especially those of the 19th century, are not like the past. They are changing use, shape and dimensions on a more regular basis due to modernity. The modern era, gives architectural spaces a wider range and complexity of materials to use, many of which are experimental and do not stand the test of time, in centuries, as materials of the past have. *"One of the things that defined Modernism was the experimental use of materials, … It's an enormous task to preserve them." - MacLear[1] [of the Philip Johnson Glass House].* Sometimes modern buildings do not even make it decades. Secondarily, the technology of modernity, has led to many culture shifts and connections. Due to the invention of trains and airplanes, not to mention the invention of cell phones and internet technologies, our world is more connected physically and mentally. Such ability to move and increased connections to the world, creates a means for many to abandoned their previous homes. Lastly, greater increases in business creates a movement of people and architecture from rural designation to the metropolis designation. It is common to see farm land being appropriated for the city, developed into new cookie cutter communities and cities greatly expanding their parameters. Many farms are run by large corporations, not the individual farmer, loosing the farm house typology to ruin. These technologies, connections and transformations of use, barely touch upon the surface of architectural and cultural shifts that can lead to the ruin of the home but they explain the grand shifts and greater quantity and diversity of ruins, both rural and urban, that we behold in our time. It is a regular occurrence to see buildings built within the years of *Modernism* in decay and disarray. Modern ruins become a greater part of our world every day.

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1 Bloomberg.com, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2010-09-14/philip-johnson-s-glass-house-brick-gay-hideaway-need-millions-in-repair>

HOME OF THE HUMAN BODY

"*The house takes part in an entire becoming. It is life, the 'nonorganic life of things.'*" [1]

Upon taking this journey of seeing ruin, each abandoned place revealed more fascinating spaces but there was one form that kept resonating, the abandoned home. The home most depicted the human /architectural connection and most resonated moments of private personal connection of empathy and imagination in regards to its occupants.

We mourn the death of a building; the change of its function or be it its ruin or its violent tear down, the loss of what once was, the loss of memories, the loss of youth/ time/days gone by et cetera. Most of all change is the most difficult to comprehend and manage when it involves the loss of something, a negative. With this in mind the loss of a home, is many times greater than almost any other building as we relate home with ourselves; the place that we have chosen to reside in. This loss of architectural connection and change hits us deeply. It is as though we loose part of ourselves. We are in ruin.

Even in times when we see places not our own in ruin, we imagine the loss of its occupants, what we could do to change it and make it better or we simply want it removed because it is of the past; it is dead. This state of disrepair, of loss, of ruin, of negative change is a moment that fascinates us but also is a moment that many want to repair or remedy. In that moment, in that assumed negative loss, one can search for the beauty, finding that change is

1 Deleuze, What is philosophy?, pg.180

not necessarily a negative.

A house is just a building where humans reside or an empty space meant for human life to reside within but a home lends to greater definitions of a place of emotion; a greater sense of place. This thesis came to a point where it could only pertain specifically to the confines of ruin within the abandoned home.

All abandoned buildings do leave a deep impact on the human psyche but specifically the designation of the *home* correlates the most with a personal impact on the individual. Such spaces are the lifeline and foundation of a person, their friends and their family. It is in such a space that humanity is seen and expressed.

It is with this return to nature of the home in ruin mixed with the humanistic feel of the space that creates such immense dynamics and inspiration for those who choose to explore such spaces.

The home is the embodiment of the human soul. In turn the abandoned home is the epitome of the broken down human in ruin. They say when a person is at their worst, their true self comes out. Does this adage ring true for the home; is the true essence of the abandoned building seen through it's impending demise? The true essence of a home is definitively seen through the expressions of its occupants, in spirit or in physical presence and the way in which they choose to use and display it. When the human connection is lost the true essence of the home vanishes. It is only the essence of the architectural construction of a house that is seen in exposed structure, once the human souls within are lost and the house no longer a home.

Abandoned homes have a spirit of their own. They tell of the lives they once held in their grasp. The urban wilderness of derelict and abandoned buildings, explored by urban explorers, expresses not only a dying of intended architecture but also the dying memory of its human occupants. It holds a mystery and atmosphere that intrigues and holds the viewer in and through the space. One wants

to see every space open to them and even those that are not. It is a land of thrill seeking exploring not the habitat of a hard to find bird or a dangerous endangered carnivore but a place that is closer, closer to the heart and the mind, a place inherently associated with ourselves as humans; it is an exploration of the habitat of the human species.

The farther the home falls into ruin, the more it looses the title of home and falls to the wayside as a failed architectural house. The more advanced the ruin, the more the human connection is unseen and therefore becomes lost. In these times of almost complete demise, modern ruins start to then look more like ancient ruins, in that imagination must take over to solve the puzzle of what once was, putting together pieces within the mind.

The home is a personification of the individual. A home is the place to which we personify ourselves in each moment of our lives; it is the private place that bares our souls, our secrets, our joys and our ruin. We allow those we choose in; in entirety or in part. When the home is in ruin, the choice of baring the soul in entirety or in part, is taken away. The soul is all there, bared, for all to see should they choose to look. Seeing the home as an unconscious world of the inner psyche, of individuals, creates beauty from ruin; seeing it humanly in empathy.

AN APARTMENT

BUILDING 3

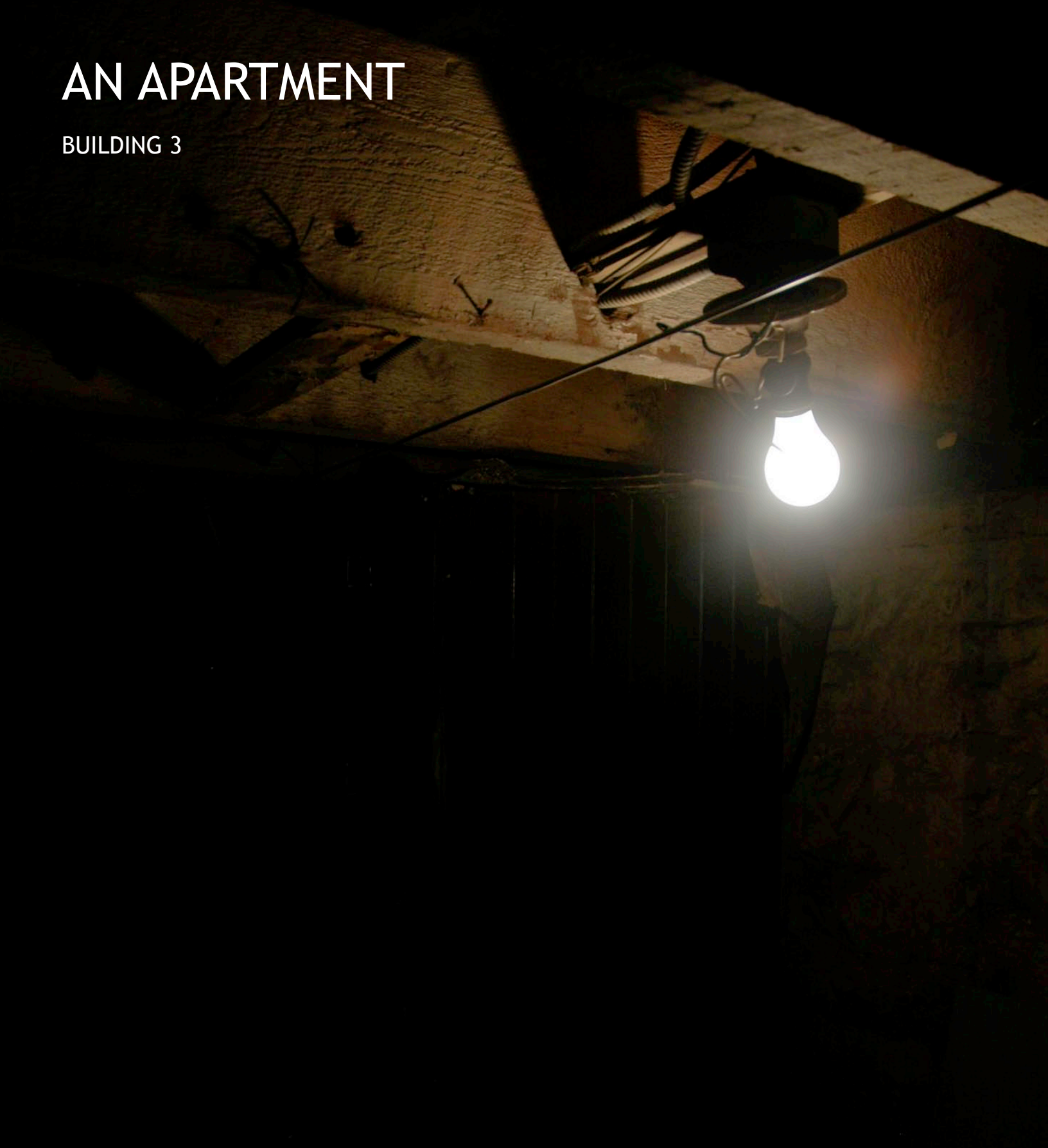
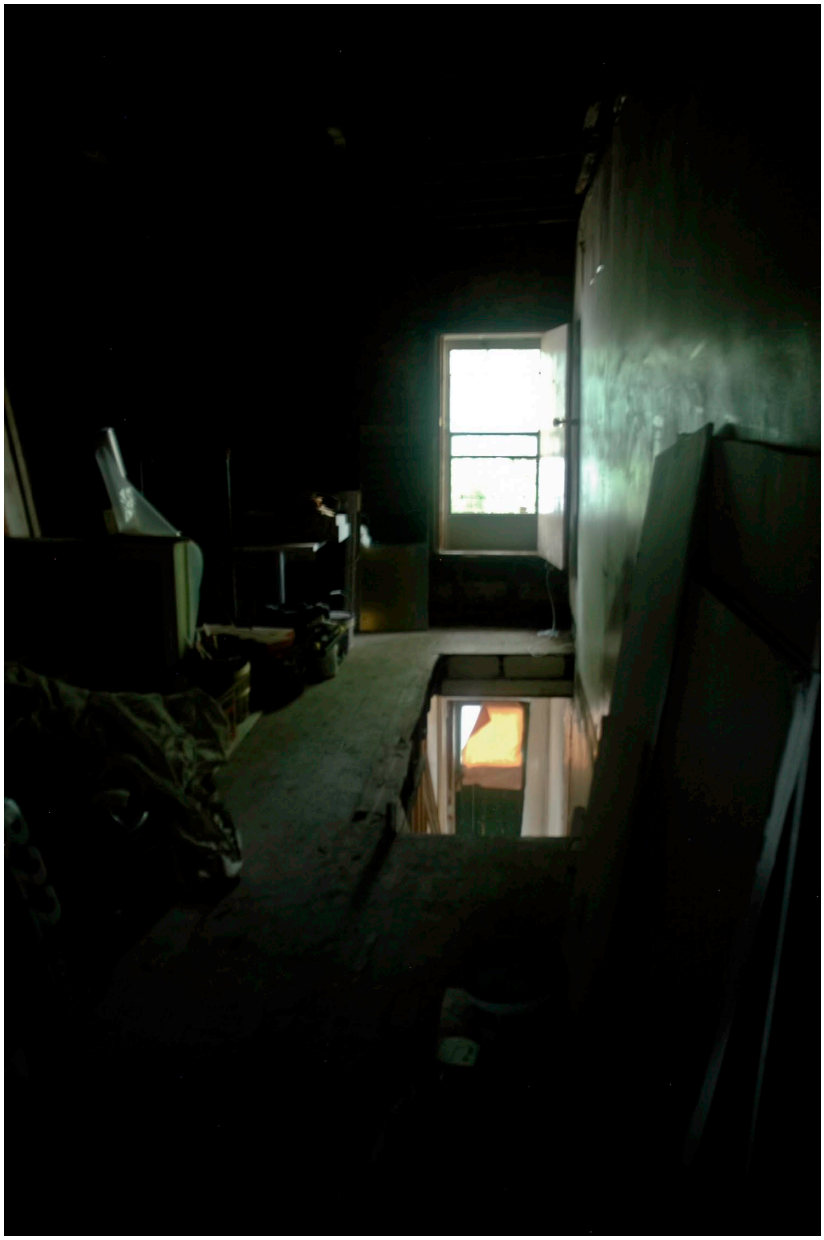


Image 1.41 An Apartment, Bare Bulb | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.42 An Apartment, Green Glow | Hamilton | June 2010



JAMES ST. IN HAMILTON, ON.
JUNE 2, 2010

Image 1.43 An Apartment, Open Joists Above | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.44 An Apartment, Open Joists Below | Hamilton | June 2010



"The happiness of most people is not ruined by great catastrophes or fatal errors, but by the repetition of slowly destructive little things." - Ernest Dimnet [1]

1 Dimnet, *What We Live By,* pg.238

Image 1.45 An Apartment, Stairs | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.46 An Apartment, Banister | Hamilton | June 2010



"We moralize among ruins." - Benjamin Disraeli[2]

2 Disraeli, *Tancred*. Bk V, Ch. 5

Image 1.47 An Apartment, Attic | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.48 An Apartment, Attic 2 | Hamilton | June 2010



"All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream." - Edgar Allan Poe [1]

1 Poe, 'A Dream Within A Dream'.

Image 1.49 An Apartment, Attic 3| Hamilton | June 2010



"Architecture is the fixed setting for human life, charged with the emotions of whole generations – a theatre of public events, private tragedies, deeds both ancient and new." - Aldo Rossi of Ville Abandonnee (Abandoned City) [2]

2 Steil, *Sublime Architecture,* pg. 12

Image 1.50 An Apartment, Stairs Below | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.51 An Apartment, Stairs Below 2 | Hamilton | June 2010



"We mount to heaven mostly on the ruins of our cherished schemes, finding our failures were successes." - Amos Bronson Alcott [1]

1 Alcott, *Tablets*. pg.145

Image 1.52 An Apartment, Stairs Below 3 | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.53 An Apartment, Stairs Below 4 | Hamilton | June 2010



"The accumulation and arrangement of material objects fulfill the psychological and emotional needs of the inhabitant: belonging, identity, 'cosiness'." [2]

2 Le Corbusier, von Vegesack, von Moos, and Rüegg. *Le Corbusier : The Art of Architecture*. pg.118

Image 1.54 An Apartment, Basement Sink | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.55 An Apartment, Basement Furniture | Hamilton | June 2010









Image 1.56 An Apartment, Basement Pipes | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.57 An Apartment, Basement Toilet | Hamilton | June 2010

Image 1.58 An Apartment, Basement Texture | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.59 An Apartment, Relics | Hamilton | June 2010



Image 1.60 An Apartment, Basement Corner | Hamilton | June 2010
Image 1.61 An Apartment, Wire Jumble | Hamilton | June 2010

A FARMHOUSE

BUILDING 4



Image 1.62 A Farm House, Fireplace Blocked | Guelph | Sept 2009
Image 1.63 A Farm House, Bedroom Corner Window | Guelph | Sept 2009



RURAL GUELPH, ON.
SEPT 23, 2009

Image 1.64 A Farm House, Servant Stairs | Guelph | Sept 2009
Image 1.65 A Farm House, Servant Stairs 2 | Guelph | Sept 2009



"… on the Pleasures of the Imagination, I began to consider to which of our sense we are obliged for the greatest and most important share of those pleasures; and I soon concluded that is was to the sight. That is the sovereign of the senses, and mother of all the arts and sciences … The sight is the obliging benefactress that bestows on us the most transporting sensations that we have from the various and wonderful products of nature."[1]

1 Addison, *The Spectator,* pg.55

Image 1.66 A Farm House, Servant Stairs 3 | Guelph | Sept 2009
Image 1.67 A Farm House, Servant Stairs 4 | Guelph | Sept 2009



"According to some scientists and doctors, our bodies are not biologically suited to cope with the sudden environmental changes they have been subjected to in recent decades. … Contemporary life is lived almost entirely indoors. … These transformations also introduce the risk of new medical problems and forms of illness. … Modern architecture often appears ensnarled in urban pollution. … In fact, one could argue that an engagement with urban forms of pollution (smoke, dust, sewage, exhaust and all manner of industrial and urban emissions) is a key component that makes modern architecture modern. [2]

2 Zardini, Mirko, Borasi, and Campbell, *Imperfect Health, pg. 31 – 33, 117*

Image 1.68 A Farm House, Servant Stairs 5 | Guelph | Sept 2009



"... these images are so strong and particular and personal and tragic, that you have to confront elements of yourself which perhaps sometimes you've sidelined or avoided." - Anthony d'Offay of Francesca Woodman's Work [1]

1 Francesca Woodman - Anthony D'offay. <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/media/_file/play_transcripts/francesca_woodman_transcript_1.pdf>

Image 1.69 A Farm House, Servant Stairs 6 | Guelph | Sept 2009



"Debris and disrepair, he teaches us anew, can have an ethereal eloquence." [2]

2 Eastman, *Vanishing America, pg.10*

Image 1.70 A Farm House, Front Door Porthole | Guelph | Sept 2009
Image 1.71 A Farm House, Front Door | Guelph | Sept 2009





"The facade speaks of ruin, yes, but the speakers are caught here as head-on as fate. Yes, the doors are coffin lids, but now, scarred by scores of harsh years, resemble the caskets of kings." [1]

1 Eastman, *Vanishing America, pg.57*

Image 1.72 A Farm House, Paint Cracking | Guelph | Sept 2009
Image 1.73 A Farm House, Paint Peeling | Guelph | Sept 2009



"We know acts of imagery are possible, allowing us to produce internalized representations of sensory experiences, so that we can conjure up images of familiar places or things, or of things very recently experienced. … Not stores of images and symbols, but items stored in their relationships to other items … relationships abstracted from our experiences and allow us to anticipate the next events …" [2]

2 Brebner, *Environmental Psychology In Building Design, pg. 27*

Image 1.74 A Farm House, Servant Stairs 7 | Guelph | Sept 2009



"Look and think before opening the shutter. The heart and mind are the true lens of the camera." – Yousuf Karsh [1]

1 Tuttle, *Art Of Everyday Photography, pg.5*

Image 1.75 A Farm House, Servant Stairs 8 | Guelph | Sept 2009



"LeCorbusier's approach to the domestic environment was based on utilitarian analysis; the house was a 'machine for living'." [2]

2 Le Corbusier, von Vegesack,von Moos, and Rüegg, *Le Corbusier : The Art of Architecture. pg.119*

Image 1.76 A Farm House, Window | Guelph | Sept 2009



"Without a doubt, the dwelling is the embodiment of a basic and universal human need - or perhaps, as the cultural philosopher Walter Benjamin suggested, it is even an 'image of that abode of the human being in the maternal womb'." [1]

1 Le Corbusier, von Vegesack,von Moos, and Rüegg, *Le Corbusier : The Art of Architecture. pg.118*

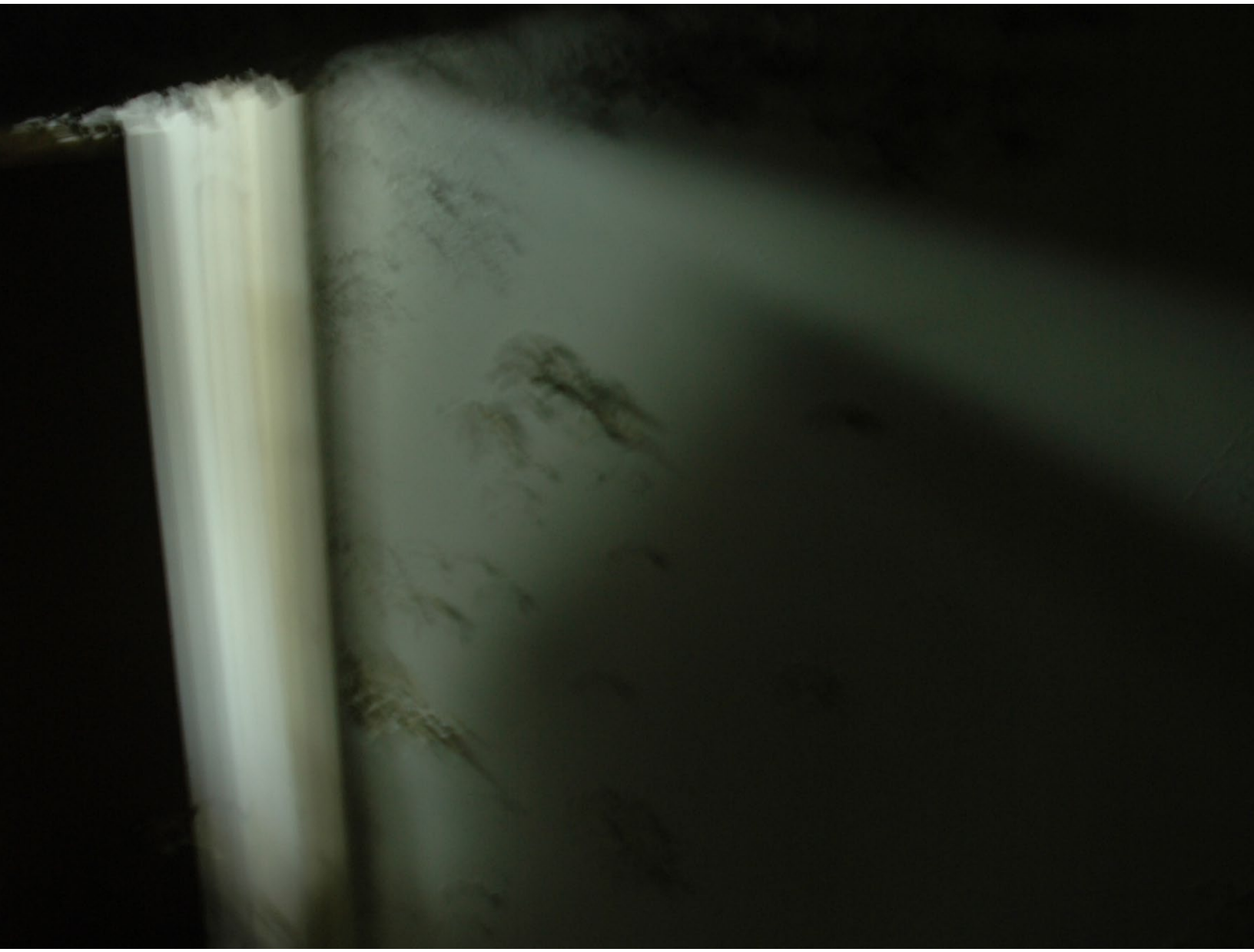
Image 1.77 A Farm House, In the Servant Stairs | Guelph | Sept 2009



" … he defined the dwelling as a 'shell' which -literally- bears 'the impression of its occupant'." - LeCorbusier of Walter Benjamin [2]

2 Le Corbusier, von Vegesack,von Moos, and Rüegg, *Le Corbusier : The Art of Architecture. pg.118*

Image 1.78 A Farm House, Green Glow | Guelph | Sept 2009



"... remember the sadness and secret threat of leaving the home as we moved to another town. The greatest tragedy was the fear of facing an unknown future and losing..." [1]

1 Kurki, 'JUHANI PALLASMAA: IDENTITY, INTIMACY AND DOMICILE' < http://www.uiah.fi/studies/history2/e_ident.htm>

Image 1.79 A Farm House, Green Glow 2 | Guelph | Sept 2009



"... mass movements are usually discerned more clearly by a camera than by the naked eye." [2]

2 Krauss, Optical unconscious. pg.179

Image 1.80 A Farm House, Ceiling Paint | Guelph | Sept 2009



"It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis" [1]

1 Krauss, Optical unconscious. pg.178

Image 1.81 A Farm House, Ceiling Medallion | Guelph | Sept 2009



"The abandoned house, is anything but pristine. It is nothing like a machine, nor is the human it once beheld. It is broken and in disarray. It is the imagination of what once was, these needs and whims that create the magical world of such a space. Recreating the needs and whims of disarray and downtrodden, recreates an environment or space that does not hold the pristine, perfection of LeCorbusier's stark machine space void of humanity." [2]

2 Kurki, 'JUHANI PALLASMAA: IDENTITY, INTIMACY AND DOMICILE' < http://www.uiah.fi/studies/history2/e_ident.htm>

Image 1.82 A Farm House, Living Room | Guelph | Sept 2009
Image 1.83 A Farm House, Stairs Highlighted | Guelph | Sept 2009



"No equivalent organized knowledge of environmental psychology has developed out of architecture. Most prominent American architects, led until recently by Philip Johnson, who was very strong on this point, view their job as an art form. They see little or no responsibility for the social or functional impact of their designs, which was highlighted with the failure of public high-rise housing like Pruitt Igoe." [1]

1 'Environmental Psychology', <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_psychology.>

Image 1.84 A Farm House, Window to a Jungle | Guelph | Sept 2009
Image 1.85 A Farm House, Hallway Debris | Guelph | Sept 2009



"... a monument does not commemorate or celebrate something that happened but confides to the ear of the future the persistent sensations, that embody the event: the constantly renewed suffering of men and woman, their re-created protestations, their constantly resumed struggle. Will this all be in vain because suffering is eternal and revolutions do not survive their victory?" [2]

2 Deleuze, What Is Philosophy?, pg. 176/177

Image 1.86 A Farm House, Bird | Guelph | Sept 2009



"...What happens is of little significance compared with the stories we tell ourselves about what happens. Events matter little, only stories of events affect us." [1]

1 Alameddine, *The Hakawati.*

Image 1.87 A Farm House, Recently Used Fireplace | Guelph | Sept 2009



"...Eastman proves, the eclipse of old-time America isn't complete yet ... The Riviera is closed but somebody has clearly wet-mopped the entranceway ... In other words, these photographs are dark but there is still hope in them." [2]

2 Eastman, *Vanishing America*, pg.11

Image 1.88 A Farm House, Enclosed Porch | Guelph | Sept 2009



"... Eastman's art doesn't leave me depleted or shut down. I'm left with "forlorn hope," a recognition that America is a land for transients and the unsettled. Always has been. Always will be." [1]

1 Eastman,*Vanishing America,* pg.11

Image 1.89 A Farm House, Door to a Jungle | Guelph | Sept 2009



"In our sense doors are all the same, but take away a building's use – deprive each door of its duty, windows of their views, wood of its paint – and the doors will seek another definition. The building takes on a meaning more profound than before, a facade more expressive, a window more wide-eyed. Doors can replace the utter loneliness of lost things with a sturdy solitude." [2]

2 Eastman, *Vanishing America,* pg.57

Image 1.90 A Farm House, Another Ceiling Medallion | Guelph | Sept 2009



" … fits in well with Greek logic at the time, when they felt that perfection and god-like imagery was something to aspire to so as to become a more integral part of society … The Parthenon, as well as the frieze, were physical symbols of perfection and the ideal for the Greeks at the time, proving that when one achieved true perfection, they would attain power and status." [1]

1 *Lee, <http://ancientart.as.ua.edu/the-parthenon-athena-and-the-ideal-greek/>*

Image 1.91 A Farm House, Ceiling Crown| Guelph | Sept 2009



" "Wabi" refers to stark, transient beauty, while "sabi" denotes the poetry of natural patina & aging, with undertones of yugen - profound grace and subtlety. Age, damage & natural processes are not seen as flaws, but as deepening & enriching an object's beauty & profundity. … Not only have we been raised in a consumeristic culture that values the new & the flawless over the old & the damaged - from objects to people, an obsession fed by airbrush-heavy advertisers - but our entire Western worldview is based on the ancient Greek philosophies of symmetry, proportion & idealized beauty. Not acceptance of what is, but glorification of what could be. Wabi-sabi finds beauty & value in what is." [2]

2 *Carmen, < https://taicarmen.wordpress.com/2014/03/31/wabi-sabi-the-beauty-of-imperfection/.>*

Image 1.92 A Farm House, Enclosed Porch Window | Guelph | Sept 2009
Image 1.93 A Farm House, Enclosed Porch 2 | Guelph | Sept 2009



Image 1.94 A Farm House, Enclosed Porch Window 2 | Guelph | Sept 2009
Image 1.95 A Farm House, Enclosed Porch 3 | Guelph | Sept 2009

THE ABANDONED HOME

The door closes, they walk away from me. I can not decipher that look held deep in their eyes. I have never seen such an expression before. All I know is that it doesn't feel right.
What is wrong?

I wait for hours upon weeks, weeks upon months but they do not return. I wait everyday,
thinking and hoping that today will be the day that my heart soars again with their presence of life, that flows within me.

No one is here to brighten and lift my failing self.
I am alone and lonely.

The winds rips and scars me deeply, to my bones. My own thoughts are all I have left to hold onto. I am of no use. A home no more, only a house and for how long that shall be I do not know.

I rot and decay as I battle the mother of all nature. Slowly, I disappear, I crumble, never to be seen or felt again.

Nature wins. My life terminated.

"Beautiful young people are accidents of nature,
But beautiful old people are works of art."
Eleanor Roosevelt [1]

---

1 Stringer,. *Psychiatry P.R.N.*.

CREATING RUIN

Once seen and defined, this journey continues through installations (maquettes) of ruin. *Creating Ruin* was developed prior to, simultaneously and post *Seeing Ruin*, following the same fascination of abandoned architecture. By harnessing the spirit of this fascination, one can discuss and create from such curiosities of ruin thereby creating a new form of design inspiration. This book imbues the imagination of darkness and tragedy from the perspective of an outsider who envisions ruin.

Creating Ruin with an imperfect heart began organically. The installations and dereliction in this book are created both consciously and subconsciously, planned and accidental. The general conscious idea was to emulate ruin through the gathering of materials, followed by creation, destruction, reassessment and recreation. The final product was then viewed through the eye of the lens whereby the resulting moment of ruin was captured. The concept itself parallels the unconscious creation of nature by producing physical handmade creations. A new technique of how to look at ruin began to culminate after watching ice float down the river under the old stately Main Street bridge in Cambridge, Ontario. The ice flowed under the bridge producing a ying/yang effect of light and dark, as the bright white forms passed in the shadows of the bridge turn dark as they hit the white of daylight. This simple moment revealed a direction for this journey; the ruin must be created with a focus on light from within darkness. Light is always present but from the challenge of capturing it in the duress of darkness the expedition is enamored forward.

The works displayed are formulated from personal, individual humanistic issues integrated into the fascination of abandoned buildings. The architectural maquettes derive from the emotions and events that are forgotten, abandoned or repressed by society and by the individual, unconsciously or consciously. By integrating these emotions into architecture, the hope is that they will

be seen, discussed and most importantly, that they will illustrate the beauty in dilapidation.

Emotion, felt in light, dark and varying shades of gray, is the epicentre of human life; they are constant, even absence of feeling is a form of emotion. It is through the emotion of the psyche that one lives their life; they choose what do and do not want, what to do and what to avoid, where to go and where they reside. Architecture is also derived from emotion, inspired by personal emotional connections and often created in light. In ruin, the emotions are heightened with extremes and the simple fact of unpredictability. Architecturally creating from ruin explores a new medium from which to design; where unconscious imperfect emotions are used to dictate space rather than conforming to the set idea of what a perfect space should look like. Creating in the imperfect, without a prescribed plan, relates to a wider audience, as ruin is an inevitable part of life. Similarly, the abandoned building represents the unconscious that we have repressed, do not express and we often leave to rot.

In *Creating Ruin*, the focus was on different ways to emulate ruin in physical form through light in darkness, in the depths of emotions exuded from ruined spaces and within the ruined human race. From each ruined creation came a descriptive essence. Upon reflecting on these essences and looking into ways of creating more challenging, profound and darker creations of ruin, a general thread arose. The creations developed started to display stages of ever increasing ruin. The intentions thus became to create a full vision of ruin from its inception to its demise. These stages were from the beginning to end; infiltrate, reflect, trap, fear, scar, disintegrate, decay and die. This thread of stages became the key foundation that enabled a focus and outset in creation. Upon completion of this book, the pieces extend beyond their original imagined intentions, well beyond a descriptive stage of ruin to where descriptive words no longer described the

outcome. Each piece is simply denoted with a numerical case study number and a title. The stages are still seen within but are not all encompassing. The case studies are ordered based on the evolution of the process and an ever deeper connection to ruin. Creating along the way without a plan, order or structure better suited the random chaos of ruin. The circle of death and rebirth of ruin is very prevalent in ruin. To be in such a world of an imperfect heart is to not know such a linear path.

The following maquettes are transformed through photographic documentation. It is the view through the lens, using the unplanned moments of light and time, that reveal a unique visual impact of the objects that are unseen by simply viewing the objects on their own. Scale, light source, materials, space, dimension and the actual objects are at times hard to truly decipher. After their inception and creation, the installations are transformed by the light and space of the photographic moment. The only photographic forethought was a desire to capture the darkness and the harsh grainy qualities.

The installations are presented in images intermixed with personal reflections, descriptions of their concept and making, reflections on observations, their intentions, and subsequent connections. So portrays this journey into creating ruin.

THE RIVER
CASE STUDY 1

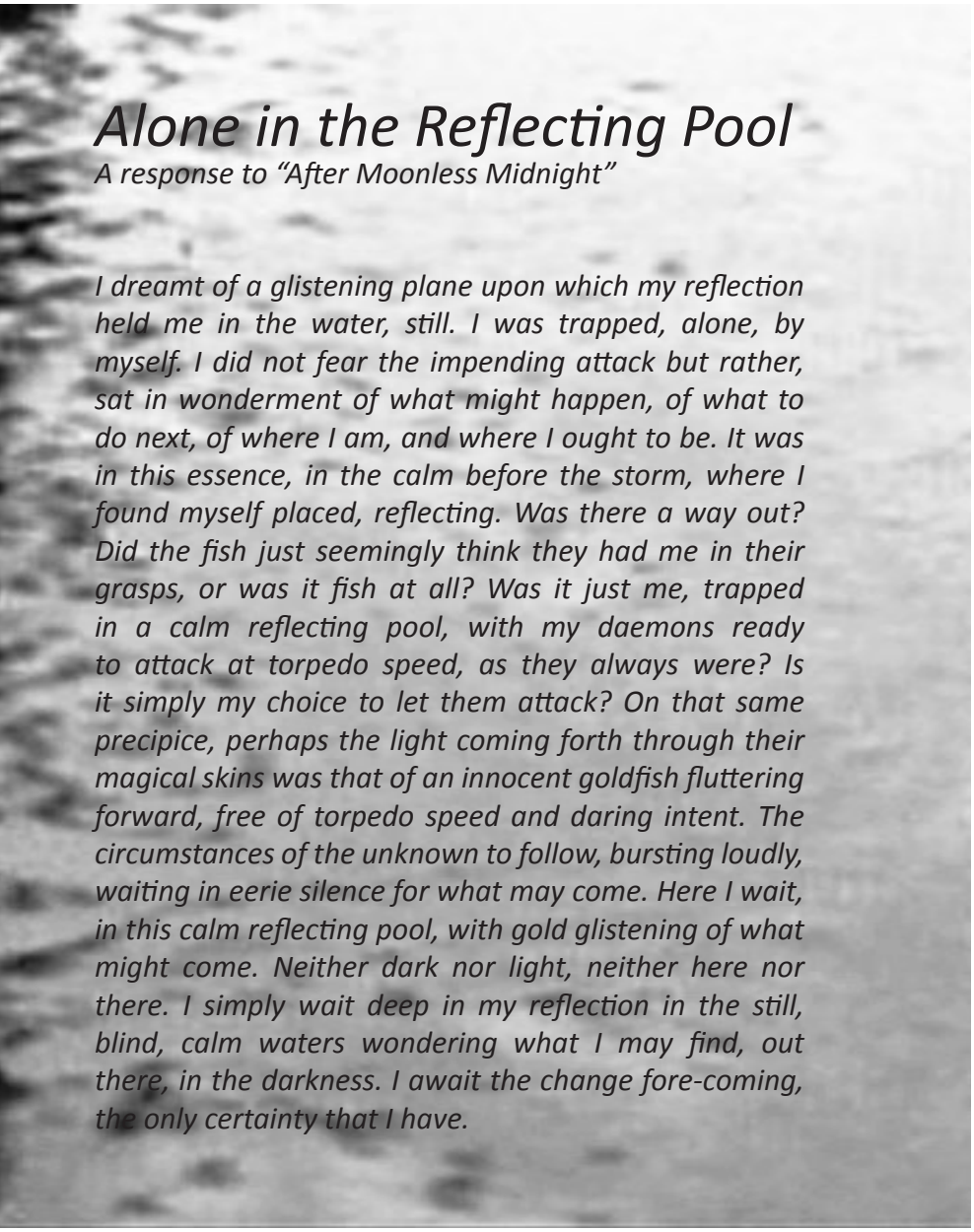


After Moonless Midnight[1]
from The River by Ted Hughes

I waded, deepening, and the fish
Listened for me. They watched my each move
Through their magical skins. In the stillness
Their eyes waited, furious with gold brightness,
Their gills moved. And in their thick sides
The power waited. And in their torpedo
Concentration, their mouth-aimed intent,
Their savagery waited, and their explosion.
They waited for me. The whole river
Listened to me, and, blind,
Invisibly watched me. And held me deeper
With its blind, invisible hands.
"We've got him," it whispered, "We've got him."

1 Hughes, *River*

Image 2.1 The River, Divide | Cambridge | Jan 2009



Alone in the Reflecting Pool

A response to "After Moonless Midnight"

I dreamt of a glistening plane upon which my reflection held me in the water, still. I was trapped, alone, by myself. I did not fear the impending attack but rather, sat in wonderment of what might happen, of what to do next, of where I am, and where I ought to be. It was in this essence, in the calm before the storm, where I found myself placed, reflecting. Was there a way out? Did the fish just seemingly think they had me in their grasps, or was it fish at all? Was it just me, trapped in a calm reflecting pool, with my daemons ready to attack at torpedo speed, as they always were? Is it simply my choice to let them attack? On that same precipice, perhaps the light coming forth through their magical skins was that of an innocent goldfish fluttering forward, free of torpedo speed and daring intent. The circumstances of the unknown to follow, bursting loudly, waiting in eerie silence for what may come. Here I wait, in this calm reflecting pool, with gold glistening of what might come. Neither dark nor light, neither here nor there. I simply wait deep in my reflection in the still, blind, calm waters wondering what I may find, out there, in the darkness. I await the change fore-coming, the only certainty that I have.

On a brisk, cool day, in the midst of an Ontario winter, I traveled down the hard concrete stairs to the rivers edge. Perched upon the shelf that hovered precariously close to the plane of water, alongside high walls enclosing the rivers magnitude, I stood and watched the river flow by.

Earlier that morning in my sleepy slumber, I looked out my kitchen window to the river below. Blocks of yellow and white alien circles covered the rivers surface, flowing downstream as far as the eye could see. A mist arose and the river began to take on a form of its own, one I had never seen before.

Standing along the river's edge, the flash of the early morning memory embedded in my head was the only thing left of the essence that the river held, but hours earlier. The blocks had all but broken down. The river was transforming as I stared. I was afraid to walk away for fear of what and how I might miss out on beholding something more beautiful.

I stared at the glass-like surface and thought of the poem, *After Moonlight Madness* and my reflection on it; being trapped in its depths with the unknown and unseen

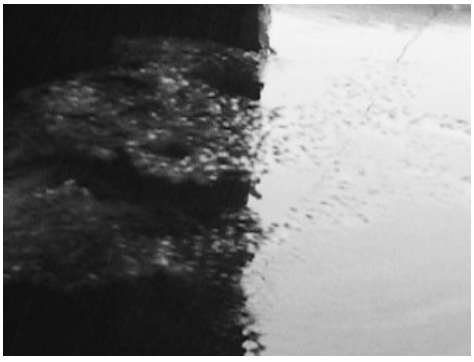


Image 2.2 The River, Divide Series 1 | Cambridge | Jan 2009

beyond its surface without fear. The river's secrets trapped beneath where I cannot go, where I cannot see, a place I do not know. Thinking of what may be looking up to the surface from beneath, seeing the ice flow and dissipate overhead.

The slabs of contrasting white, rock hard, coldness, float across the surface from darkness and transform in the light to a transparent indistinctive ripple of melding whiteness intermingling with the clear reflection of the water. It slowly breaks away from sight and becomes indistinguishable from the liquid around it. I stare at the line that divides them. The white that is apparent and opaque in a world of dark black, instantly morphing into a white transparency, dark compared to the reflective plane that it skimmed across.

What I see before me is slowly disappearing. The solid masses will soon be gone; with it this moment of reflection and division will disappear. The definitive transition too, will soon fade and disappear with the sun. This broken ruin of ice transformed and faded away, moments of its shine and dark brilliance negated; gone without a trace.







THE MAQUETTE

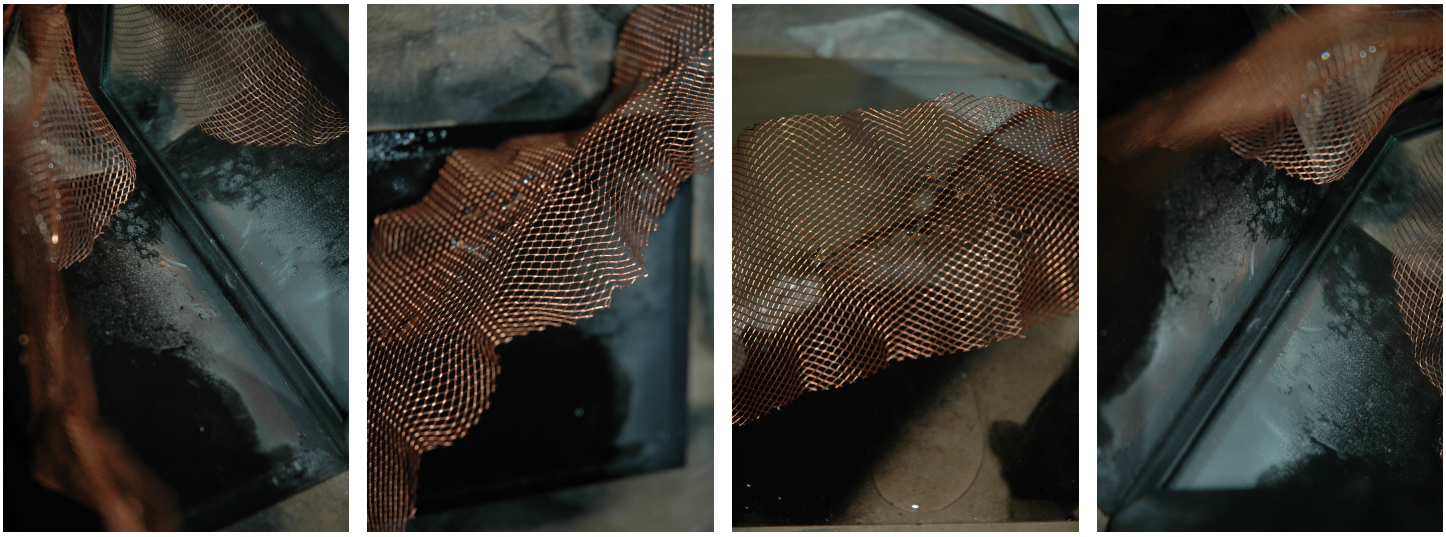
Experimenting with the idea of light in the darkness, I set forth to create dereliction and destruction within the context of the aforementioned poem and experience of the river in the context of human reflection, reflection as a mental thought as well as a physical reflection of a surface.

Reflecting upon the fleeting moments, with images of the ice floating downstream and the words of Ted Hughes, I thought of moments of disaster, moments where life began to fall apart, where change occurred and something was destroyed, never to be the same again. I was not scared, nor did I have urge to fix it. Change is imminent. That moment, captured on video and in the loneliness of the impending savagery of the poem, was actually, for me, a moment of realization. A moment where time stood still, where I, on my own, sat and took in the space around me, while all was falling apart, failing, being eliminated and abandoned in the life I knew. I felt lucky to have observed such a moment for myself, one that I would never see

Case Study 1 - The Maquette

Materials: Mirrors, glass, plexiglass, glue, spray paint, wire mesh and cooking oil

Image 2.3 The River, Maquette Series 1 | Jan 2009

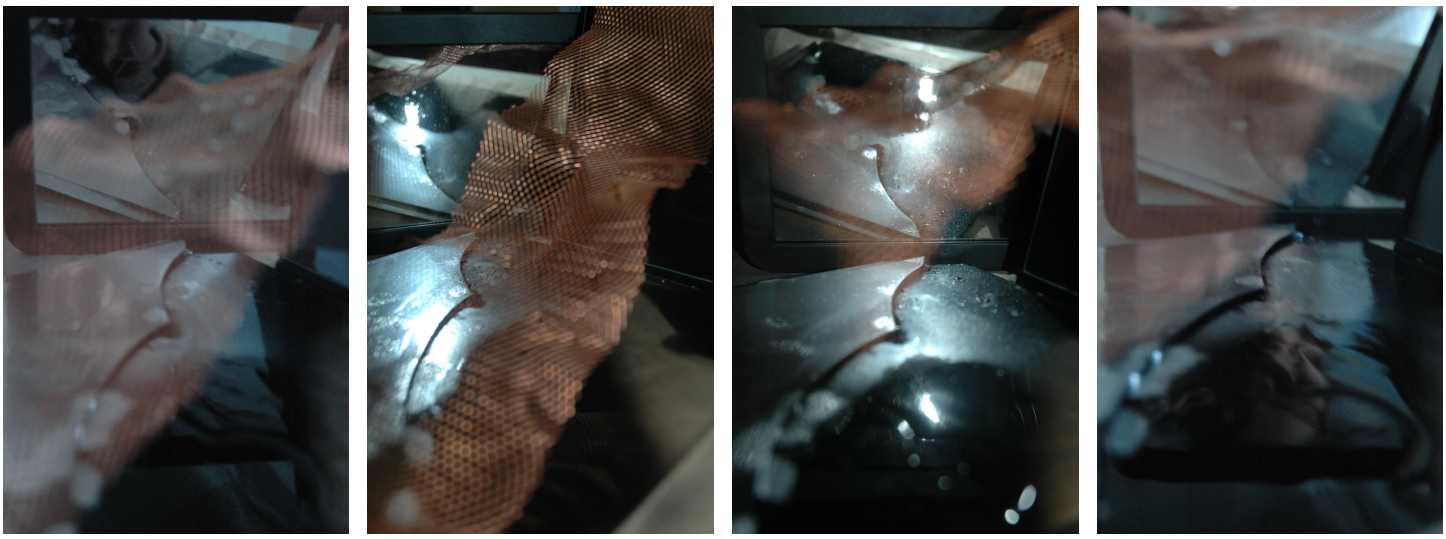




again nor would any other human being. It was a moment where in the deepest dark, I stopped in the reflection of dereliction and impending grasp of destruction and found the light. In the deepest dark of watching materials fall apart, I found my own sense of beauty.

The formulation of the maquette became a simple act of allowing my hands to take over. While I thought of the river; the glistening planes, the gold, the light and the dark, I grabbed materials and mirrors that were lying around my home, bought paint and extra mirrors. I took the inexpensive vegetable oil from my cupboard and materials intentionally left in the studio from past students. I combined all that I had at hand. Experimentation and

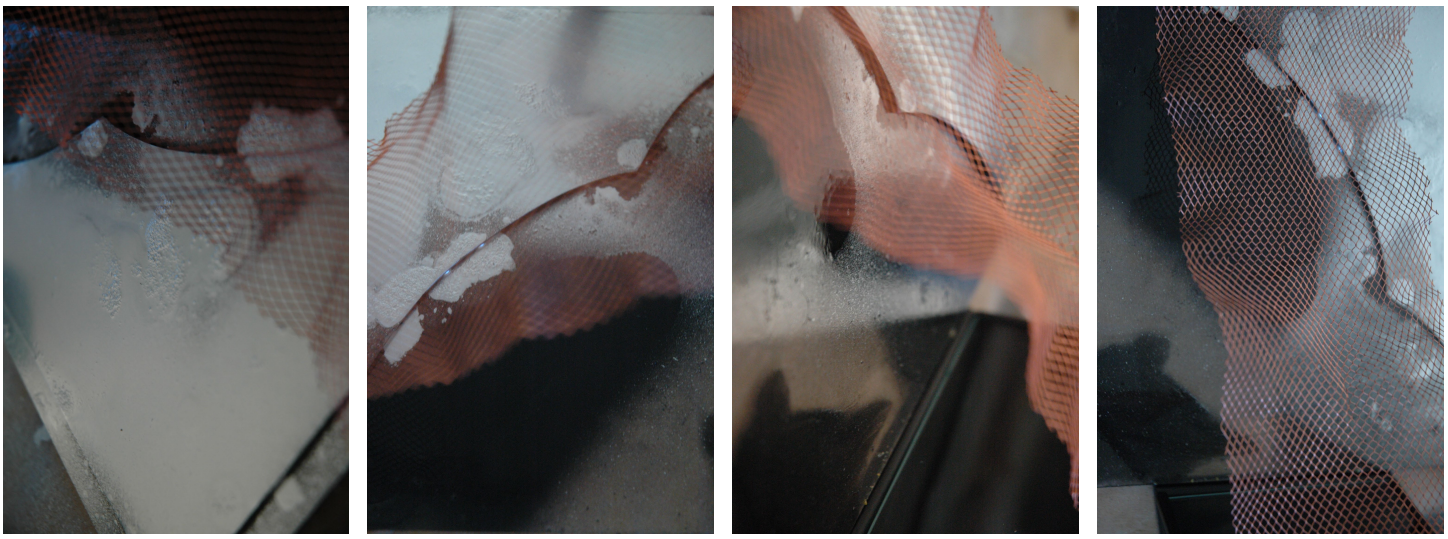
Image 2.4 The River, Maquette Series 2 | Jan 2009





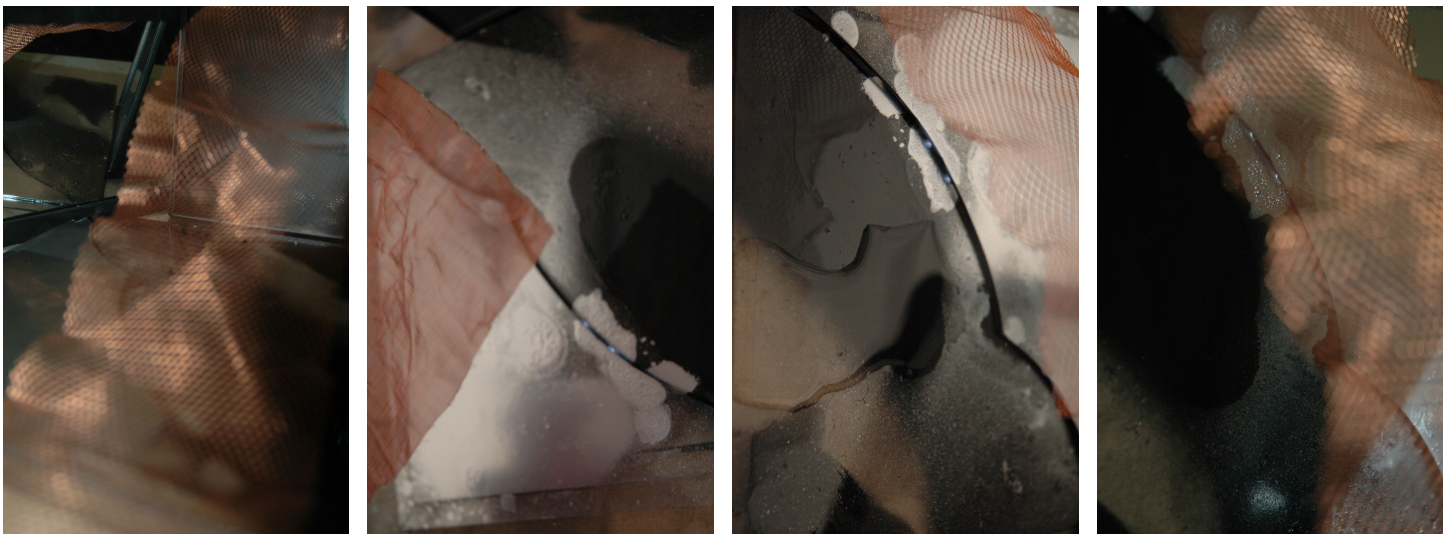
the simple acts of movement brought the creation into fruition with only thoughts lightly humming in the back reaches of my brain. The creation process was simple: spray paint; spray more; do not look for perfection; allow the grit and the darkness in; there are no mistakes; stop; let it be; arrange; and view from the point of view of the camera lens, in its world.

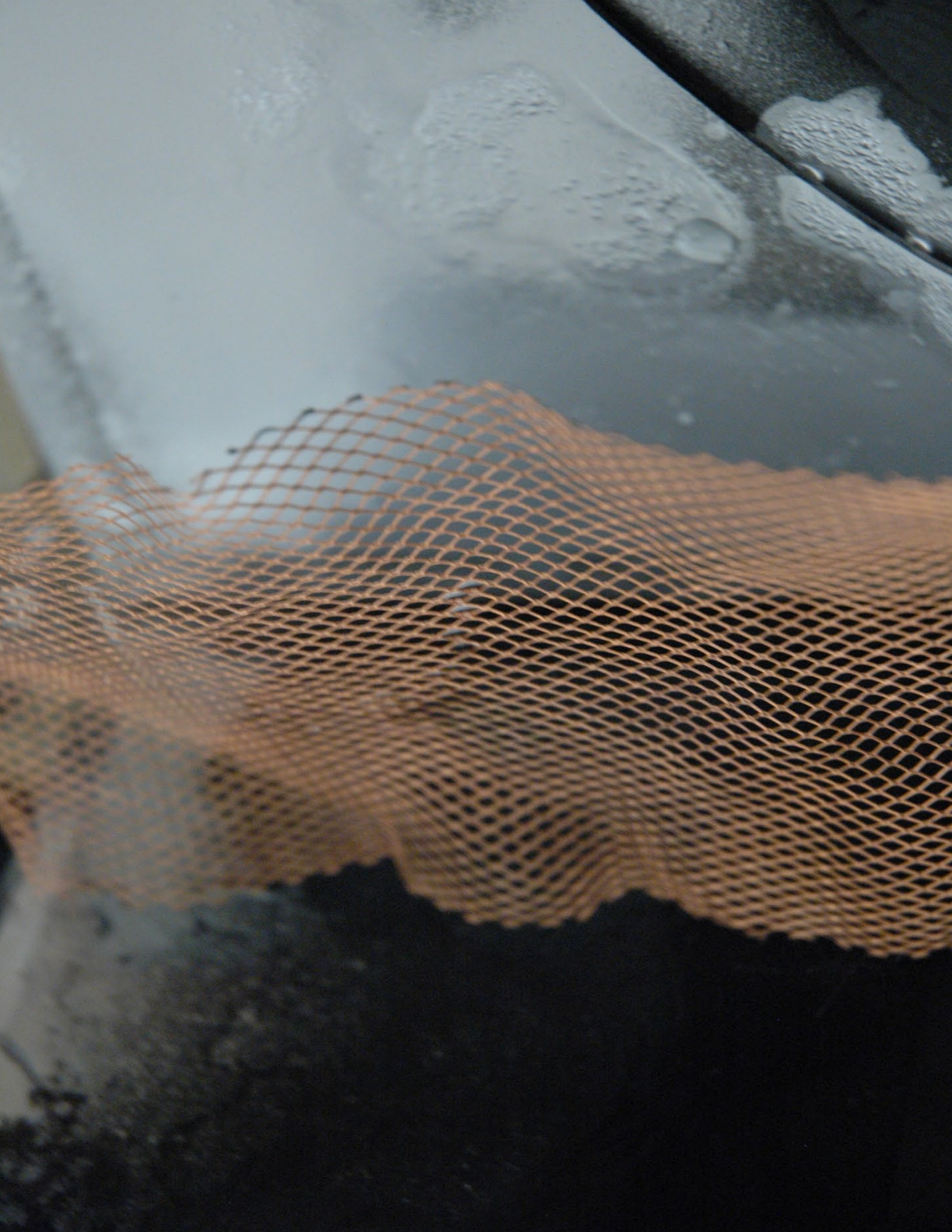
Image 2.5 The River, Maquette Series 3 | Jan 2009



Cracked into fragments,
mirroring and reflecting around me.
Not knowing what it is I see,
not knowing what I cannot see.

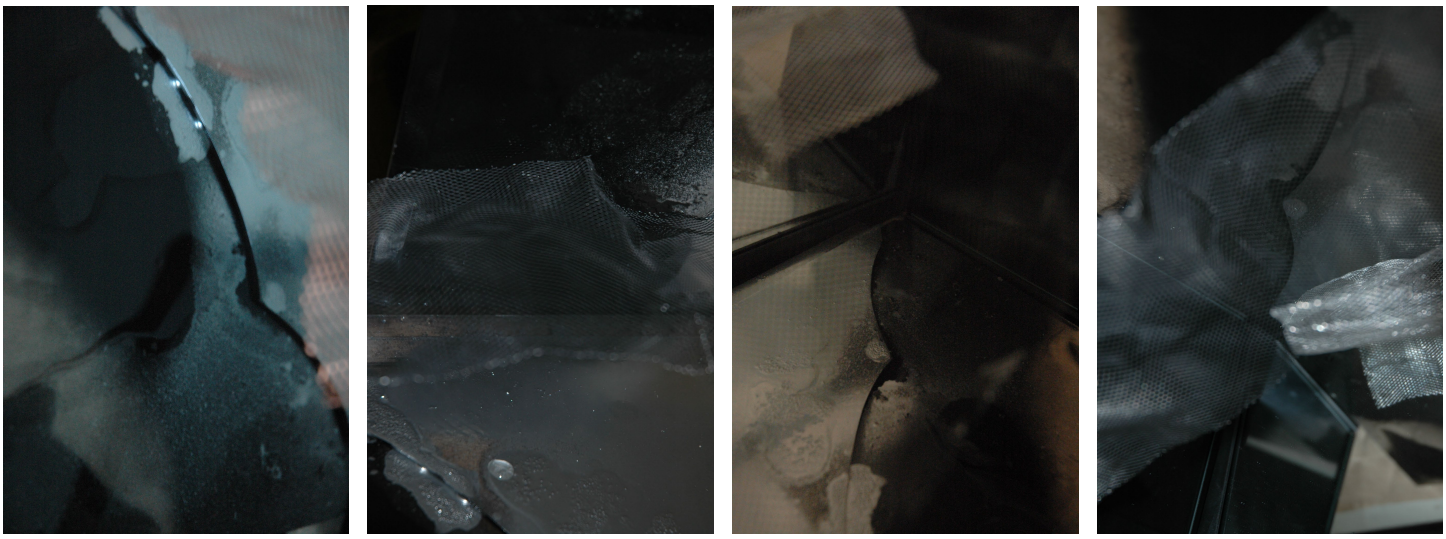
Image 2.6 The River, Maquette Series 4 | Jan 2009

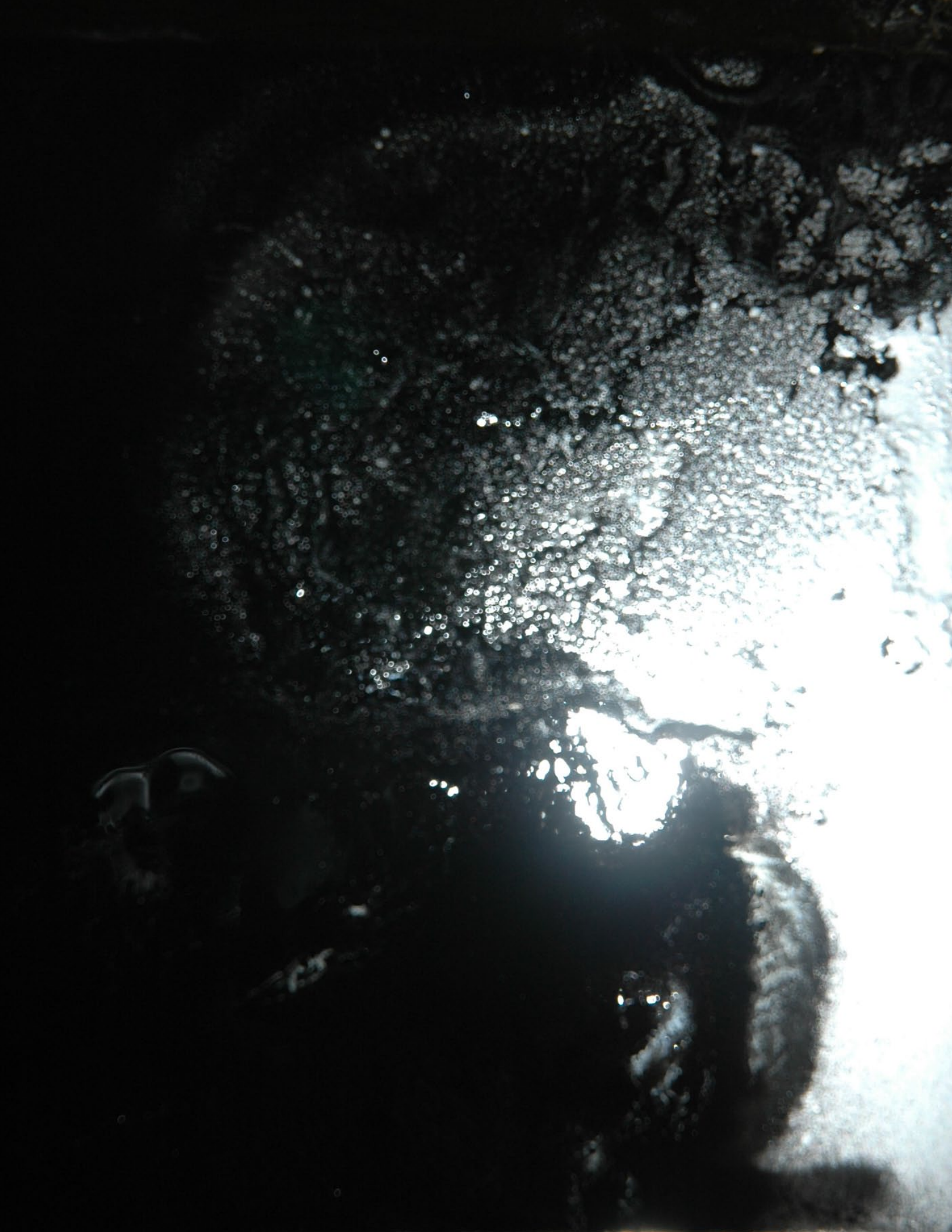




Light invaded by the darkness.
Enshrouded by darkness,
invaded by the light.

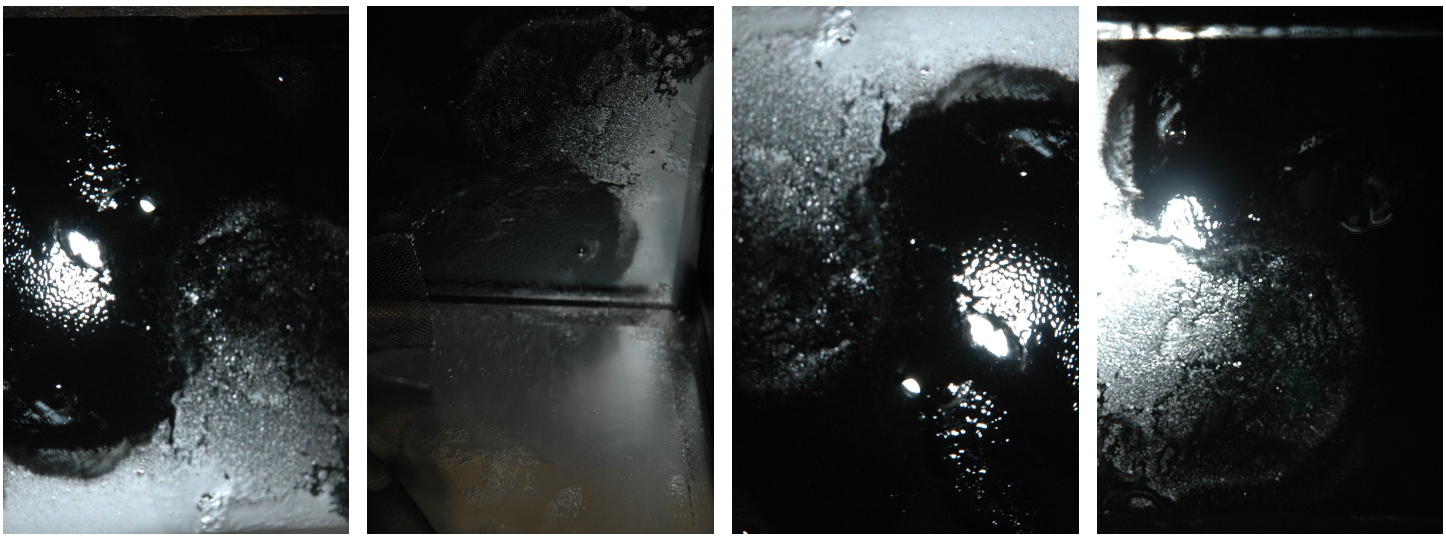
Image 2.7 The River, Maquette Series 5 | Jan 2009





Cold hard metal strewn
amongst my masses.

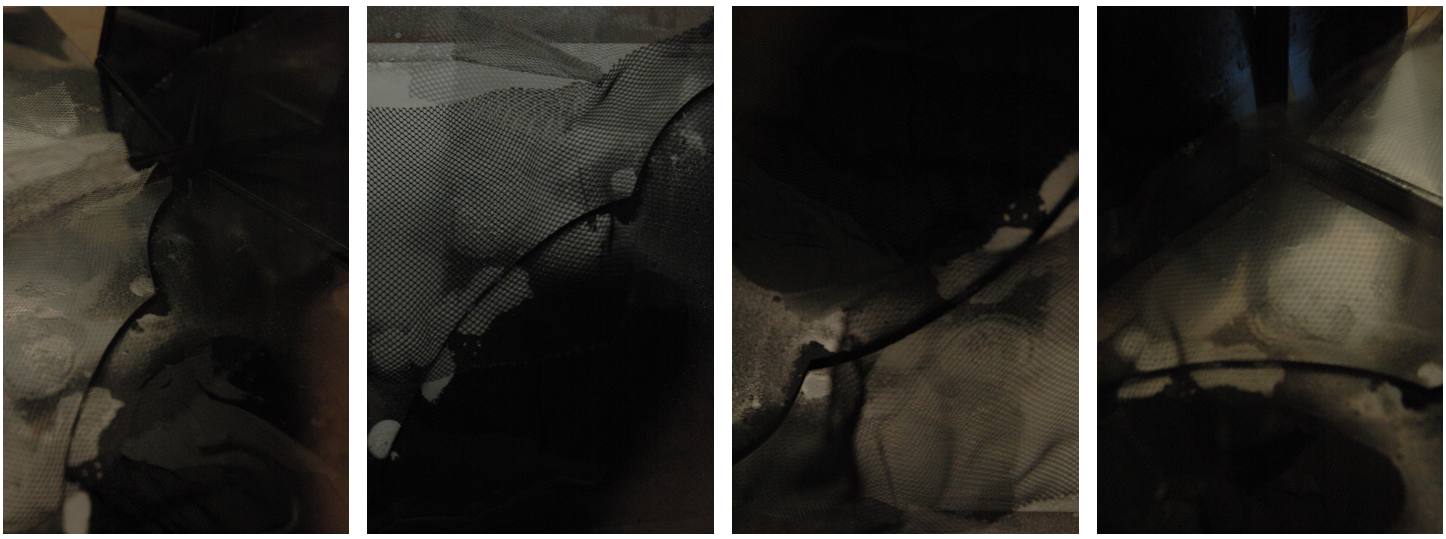
Image 2.8 The River, Maquette Series 6 | Jan 2009





Fences haphazardly put up,
dangling in mid air,
never holding the line.

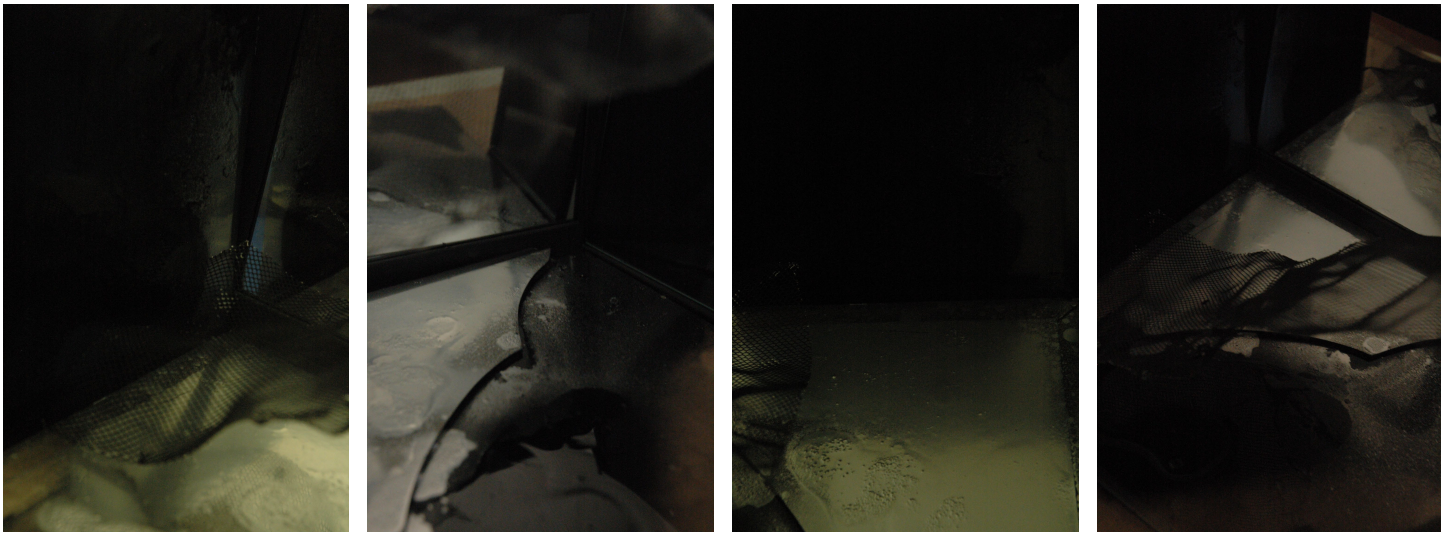
Image 2.9 The River, Maquette Series 7 | Jan 2009





Water and oil swirling around in pools,
flowing over and around,
regardless of anyone,
regardless of anything in it's path,
flowing forth.

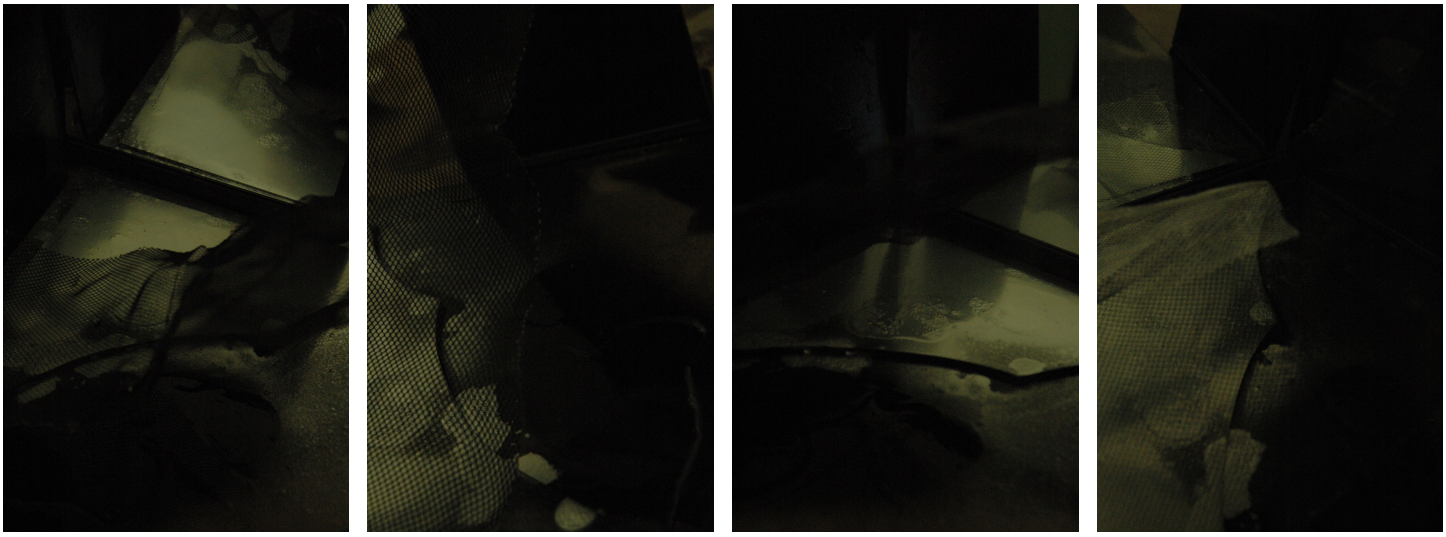
Image 2.10 The River, Maquette Series 8 | Jan 2009





The lens deepened the darkness with each capture. The results are a series of worlds connected, but isolated in emotion and space. The reality of the maquette space, composed together in a square barely 1' by 1'. The photographical world through which the creation is portrayed lends to a different time and space. Staring into the resulting images, the scale intrigued me; this sense of place not fully touching the soul, not fully connecting but rather just an intrigue. This intrigue, the human connection and the scale brought about thoughts of how best to enhance the maquette by further personalizing these planes of darkness and light. An installation came to mind.

Image 2.11 The River, Maquette Series 9 | Jan 2009





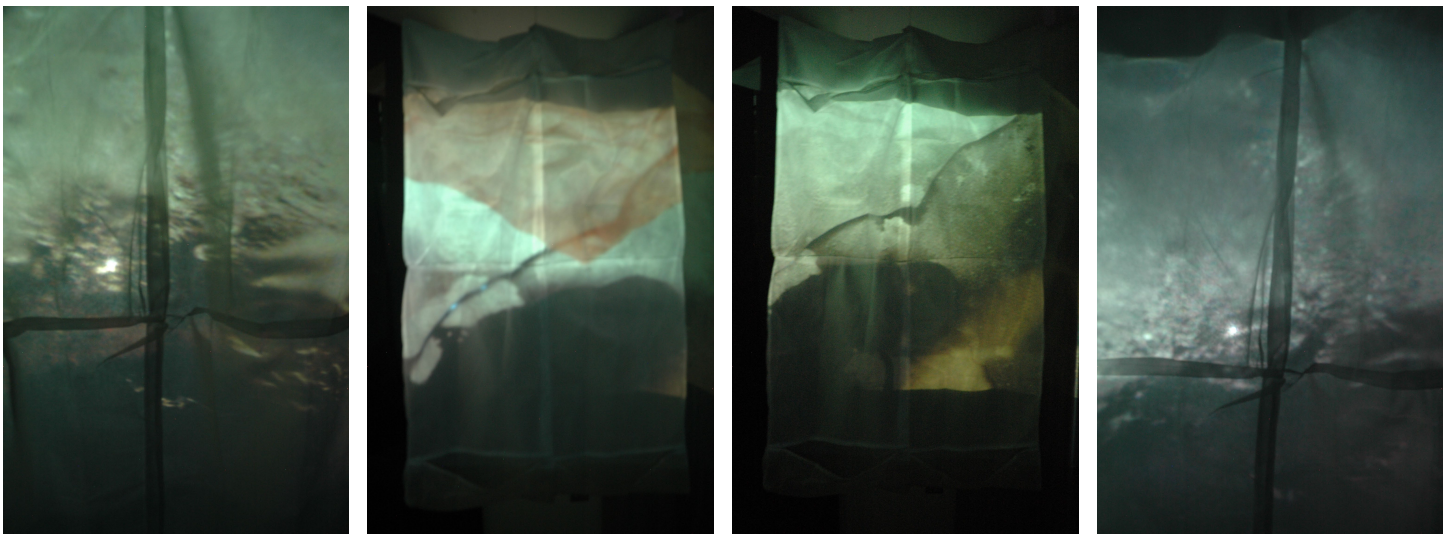
THE INSTALLATION

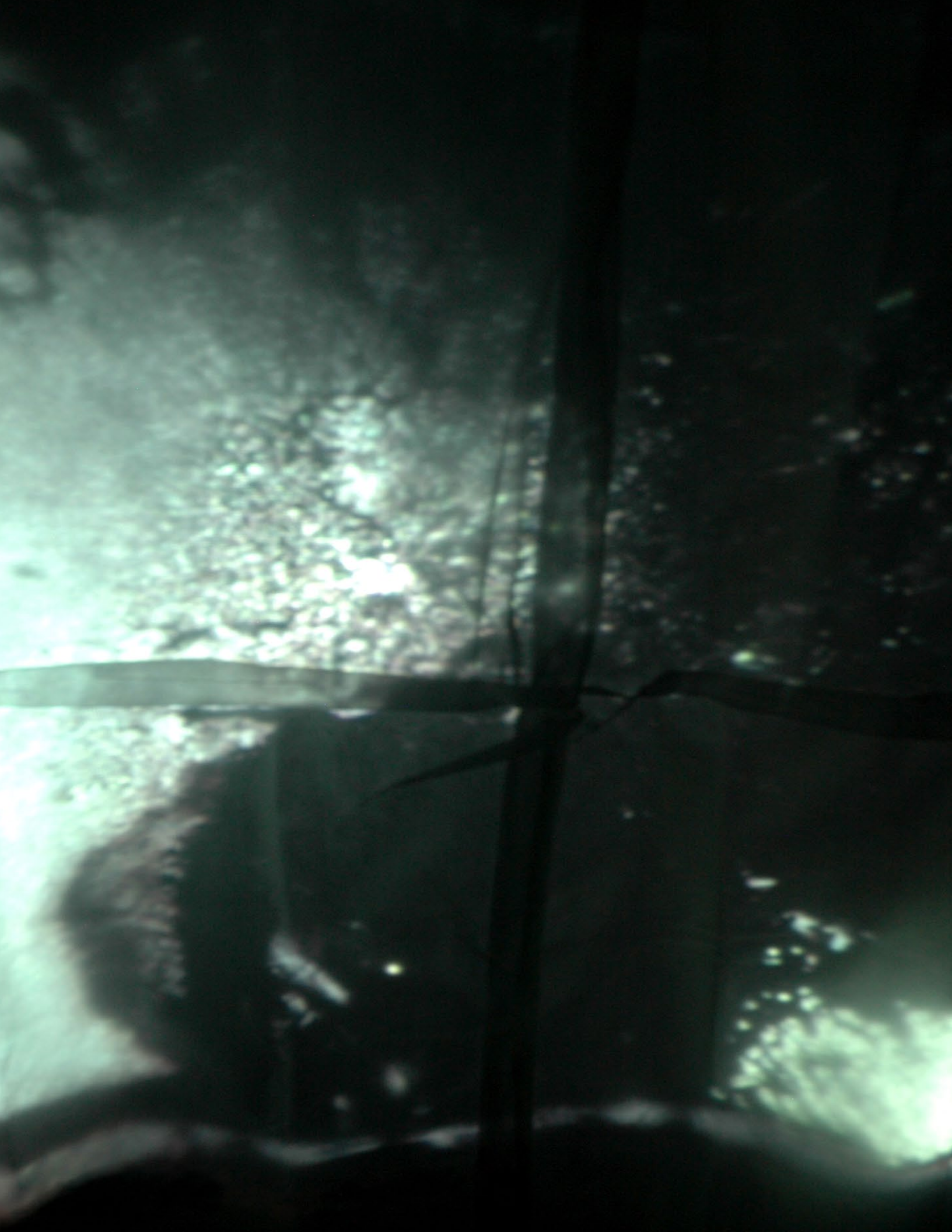
The installation creates a personal performance space of reflection, observation and contemplation. A viewing space for ruin, where the experience of the maquette is enhanced by enlarging the scale and placing a person conceptually and physically within it. The journey moved towards creating a personal space from which an occupant would be trapped between light and dark with the musings of the maquette reflecting on and around them.

The installation allows a true experience of the moment felt in the river, of being trapped in the deep water beneath your own skin dealing with the matter underneath in the space of an *in between*, neither in the depths of darkness nor resurrecting into the light, only trapped in the land of grey limbo.

In physical form, one stands between a wall of black mirrors and a wall of light transparent paper angled tightly against oneself, and opening up away from the body to

Image 2.12 The River, Installation Series 1 | Cambridge | Jan 2009

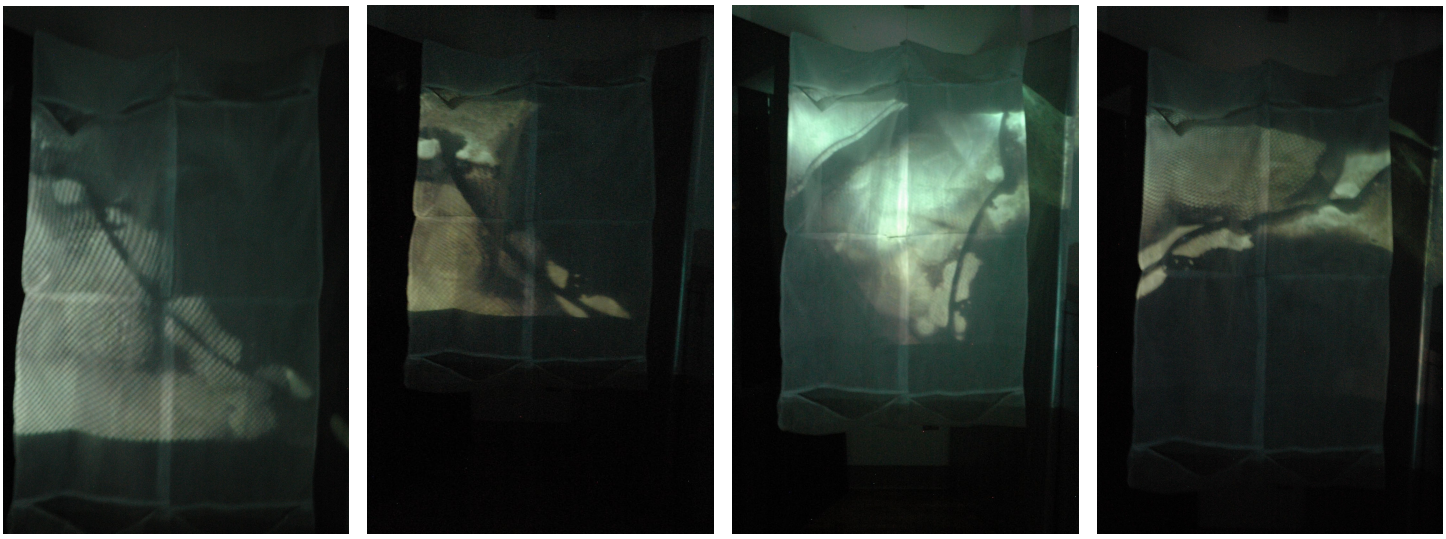




a mesh of skin dropped down in front. Upon this skin, photographs of the maquette are projected, mixing transparent mirrored surfaces with metal skin meshes and black reflective mirrors. Through the use of a double skinned mesh, the projected images possess a blurry dream-like quality. The images reflect into the person within the installation, onto their skin and into both surfaces.

The forms are not apparent as known objects and the viewer must watch in confusion and intrigue as they try to make sense of what they see. From the outside, projections on the mesh resemble a movie screen but through the small crevices on either side, the singular person within becomes visible, creating a stage like performance. The projected images also peek through these crevices and bring forth a strong line of reflection and projection.

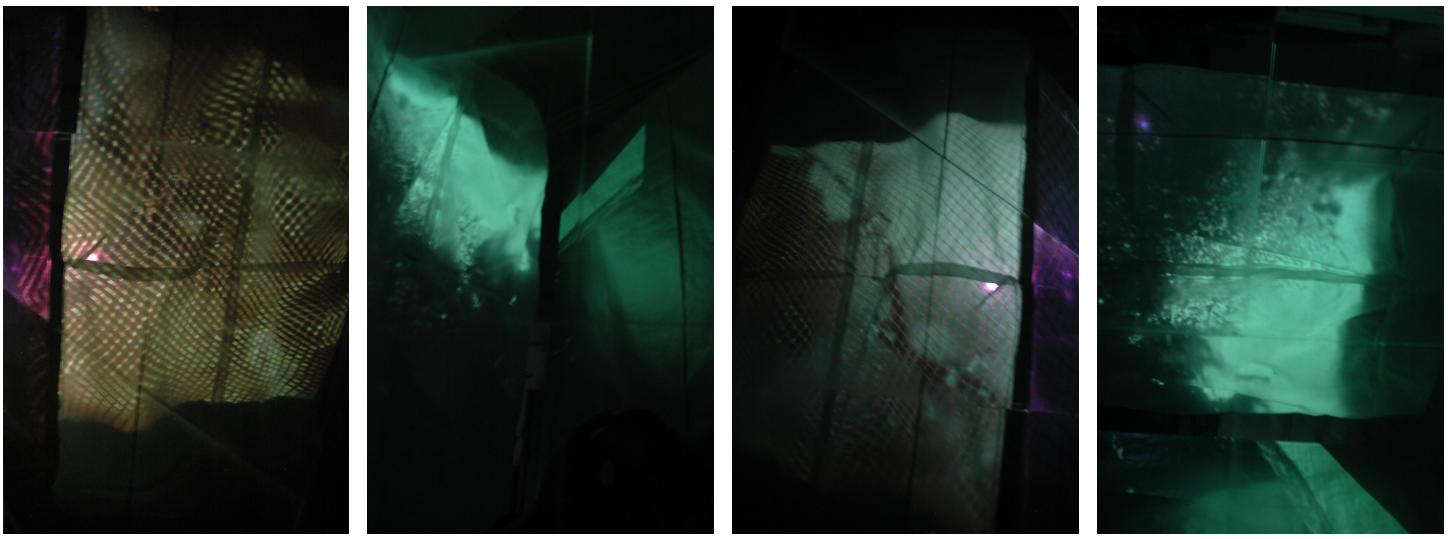
Image 2.13 The River, Installation Series 2 | Cambridge | Jan 2009

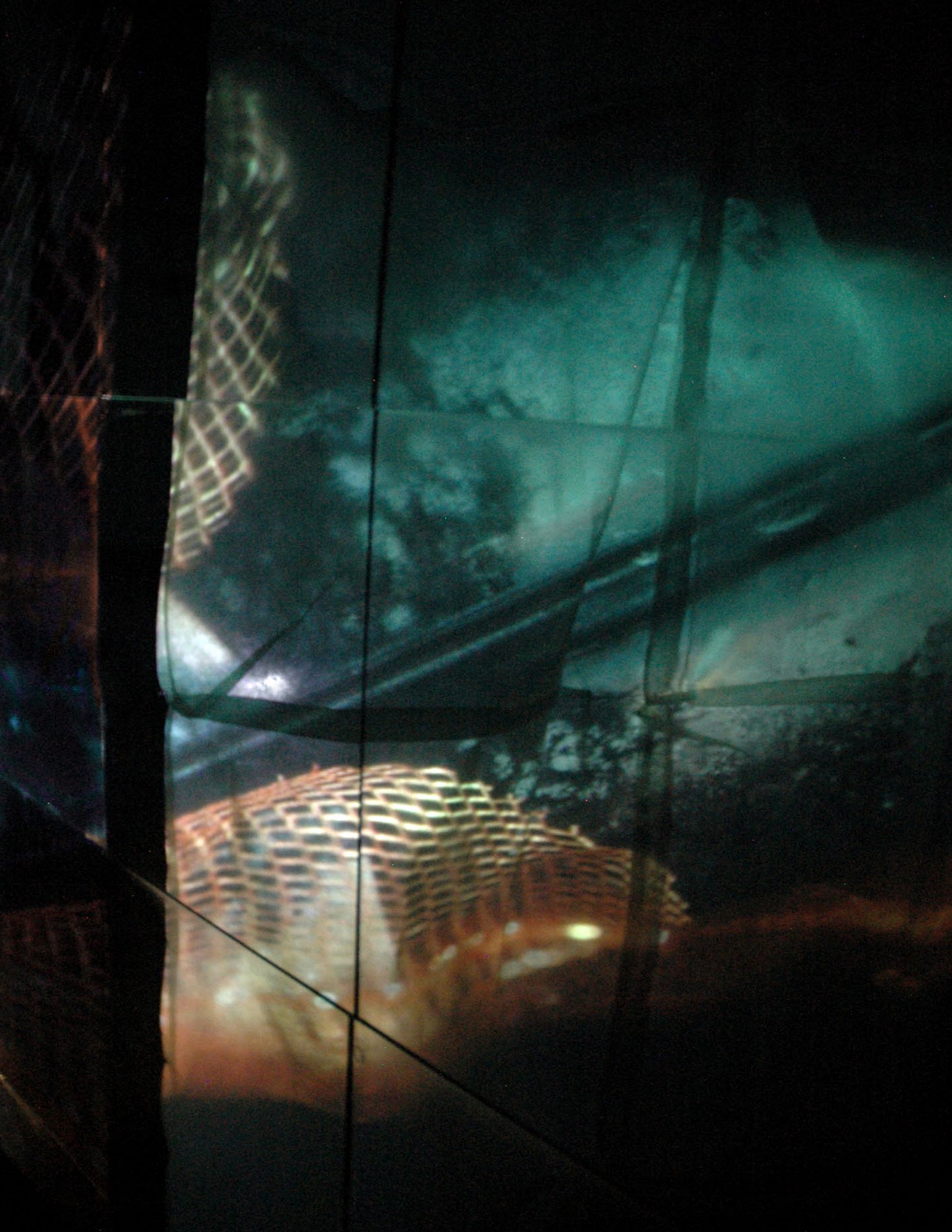




A space not subjected to time, a single small space of reflection. Just my body and mind delineating the space between myself and the images surrounding me. Taking a moment to look at where I am, I move my body ever so slightly to the right. In the tight confines, I see myself, my silhouette, in the dark, reflecting on and in the dereliction around me. I am fully immersed in the smooth black surface before me, the glistening mesh lies over my face, the oil runs down me. I am lost in their midst.

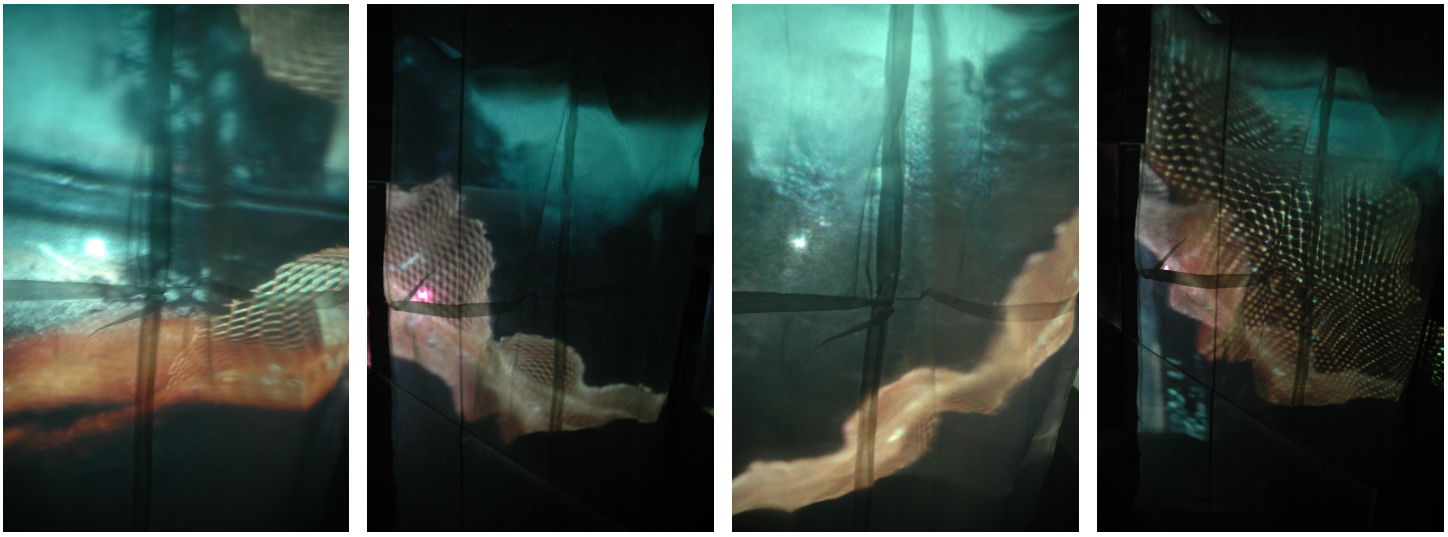
Image 2.14 The River, Installation Series 3 | Cambridge | Jan 2009





I climb out of world of the dark mirror taking an about turn to try and see myself reflected in the light. I yearn to find myself there. Many moments pass as I search for the familiar distinctive outline, the one that I think I know so well, the one I have become so accustomed to seeing looking back at me, every day of this life. I search every corner for the recognizable form. In time, I find myself, I am there but just lightly visible deep in the minute details of the reflective page. The blurred images take over this space of light. My reflection barely a part of the picture. I am alone, trapped in a small space, confined up to my shoulders, my heart beating loudly, with only the light sound of a distant hum.

Image 2.15 The River, Installation Series 4 | Cambridge | Jan 2009





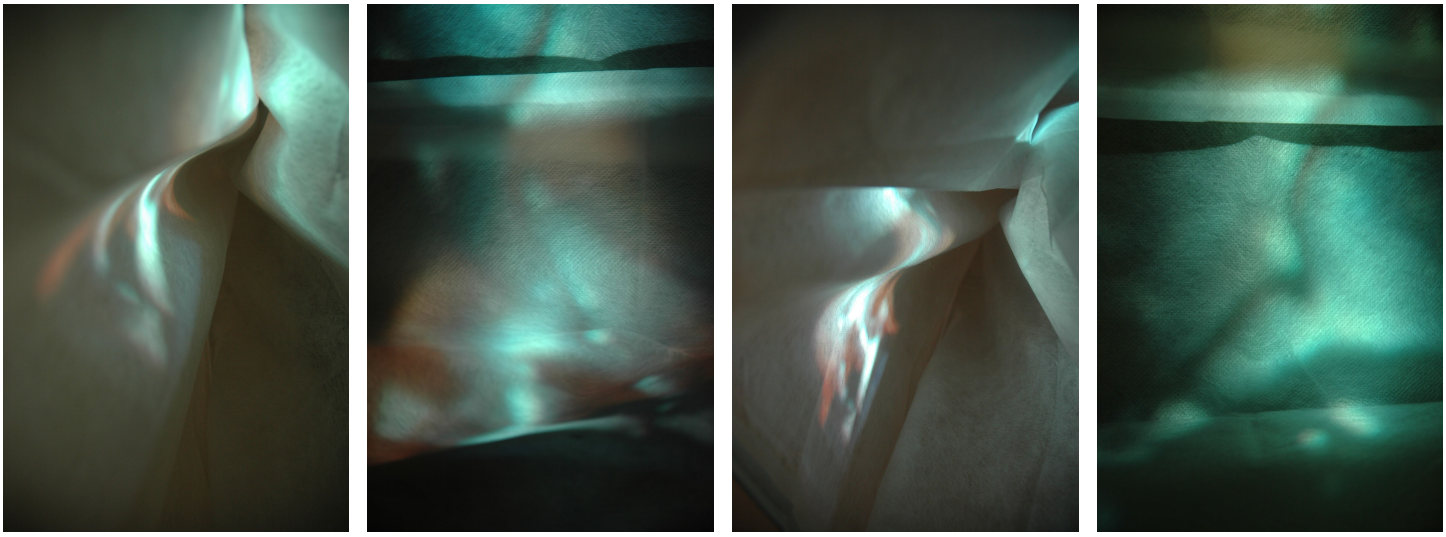
The other side of me is faint. It is being lost, fading away to nothing. It is there evidently, in plain view for others to see, I feel it too but I cannot see it. It is but a memory, a ghost of who I once was. I am broken in two. Both sides equally confounding.

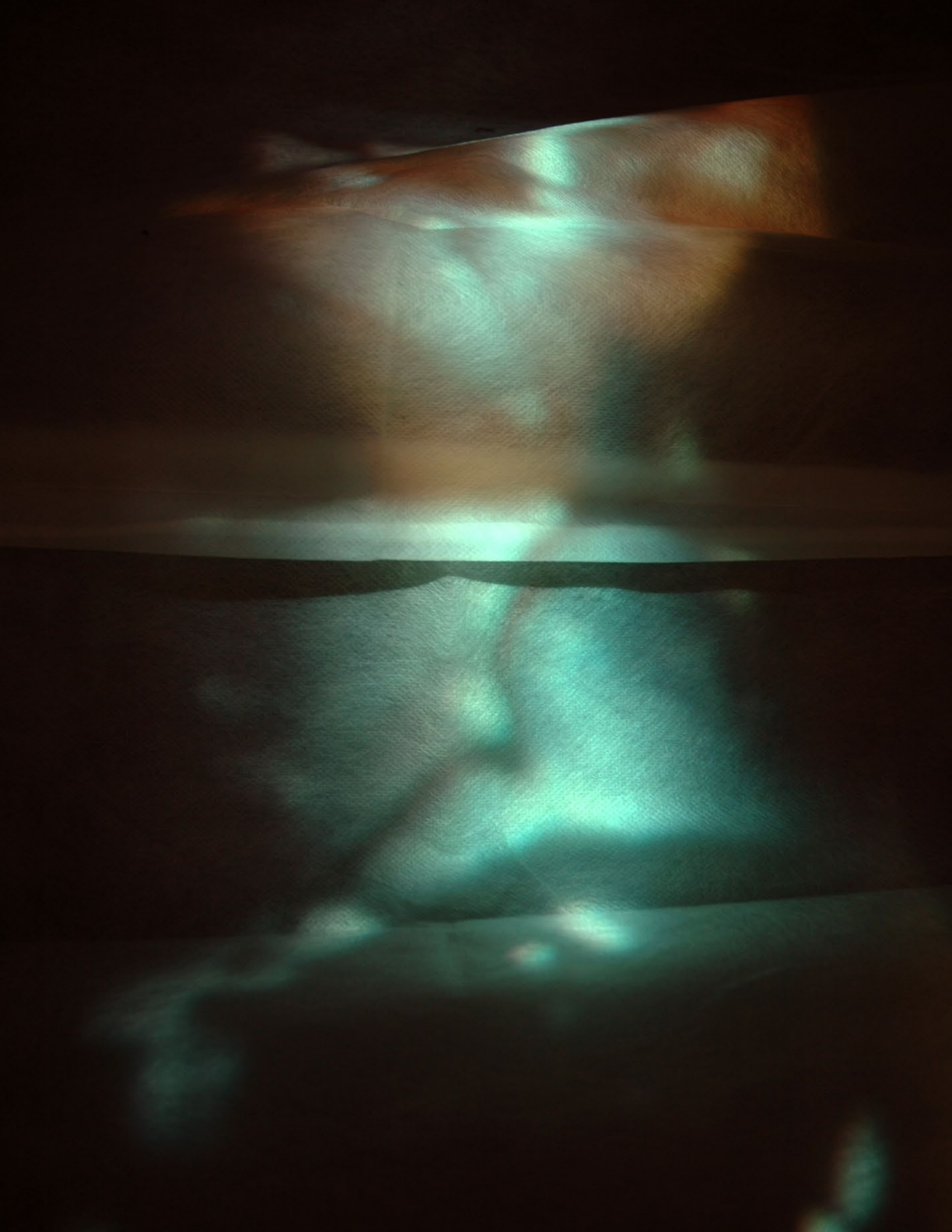
I must look forward. Ahead, the world opens up ever so slightly. The dark scenes flashing in the air on the floating curtain of skin before me. The light breaks through intermittently on an irregular basis, without any distinct pattern. On the skin, the forms are more blurred than the light and dark reflections next to me. There is no trace of my person, but the images that penetrate through to my body are stronger than in any other part. My mind becomes obsessed with what the world beyond may hold. What does the outside world see? I step forward and melt into the skin before me.

Case Study 1 - The Installation

Materials: Black spray painted glass, silvery white shimmering paper, old wooden doors, bookshelves to hold up doors, glue, fiber bags sewn together, string and a projector and projected images of the maquette.

Image 2.16 The River, Installation Series Skin | Cambridge | Jan 2009



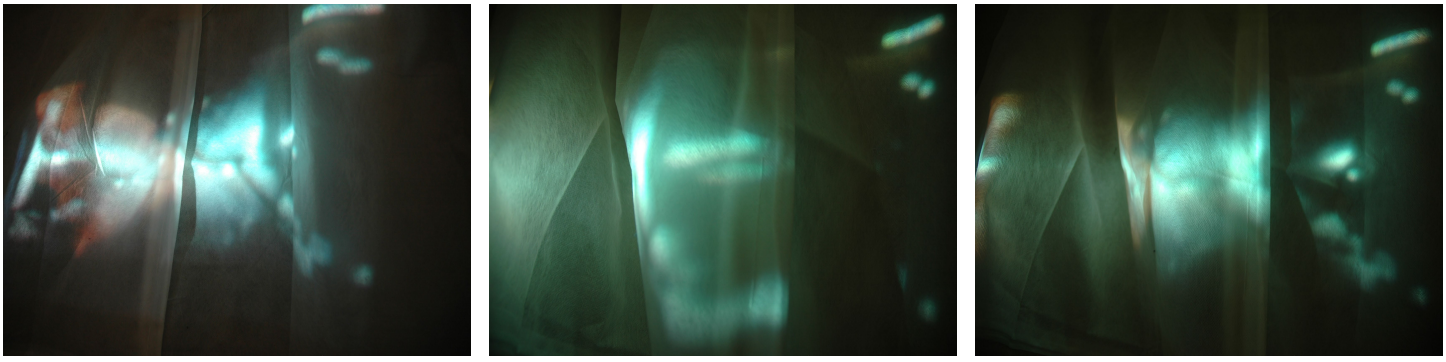


"I feel, I exist on the boundaries ... always trying to find a balance between these opposing forces - finding the place where opposites meet ... existing not on either side but on the line that divides ..." Maya Lin Boundaries[1]

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1 Lin, *Boundaries*

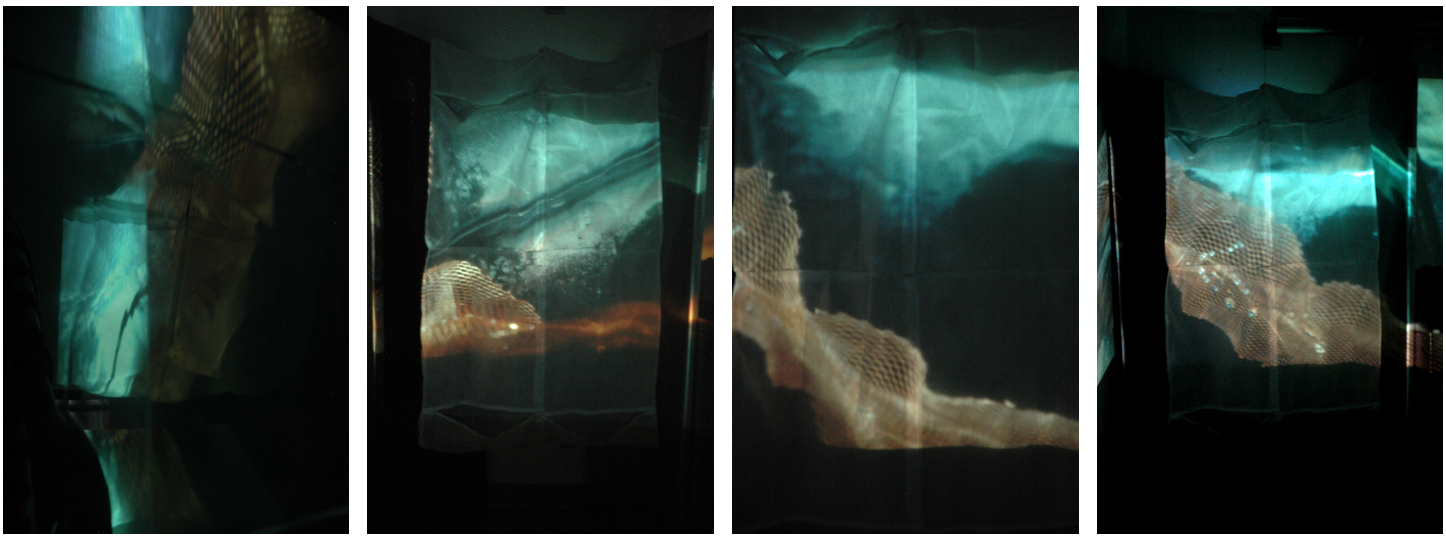
Image 2.17 The River, Installation Series Skin 2 | Cambridge | Jan 2009

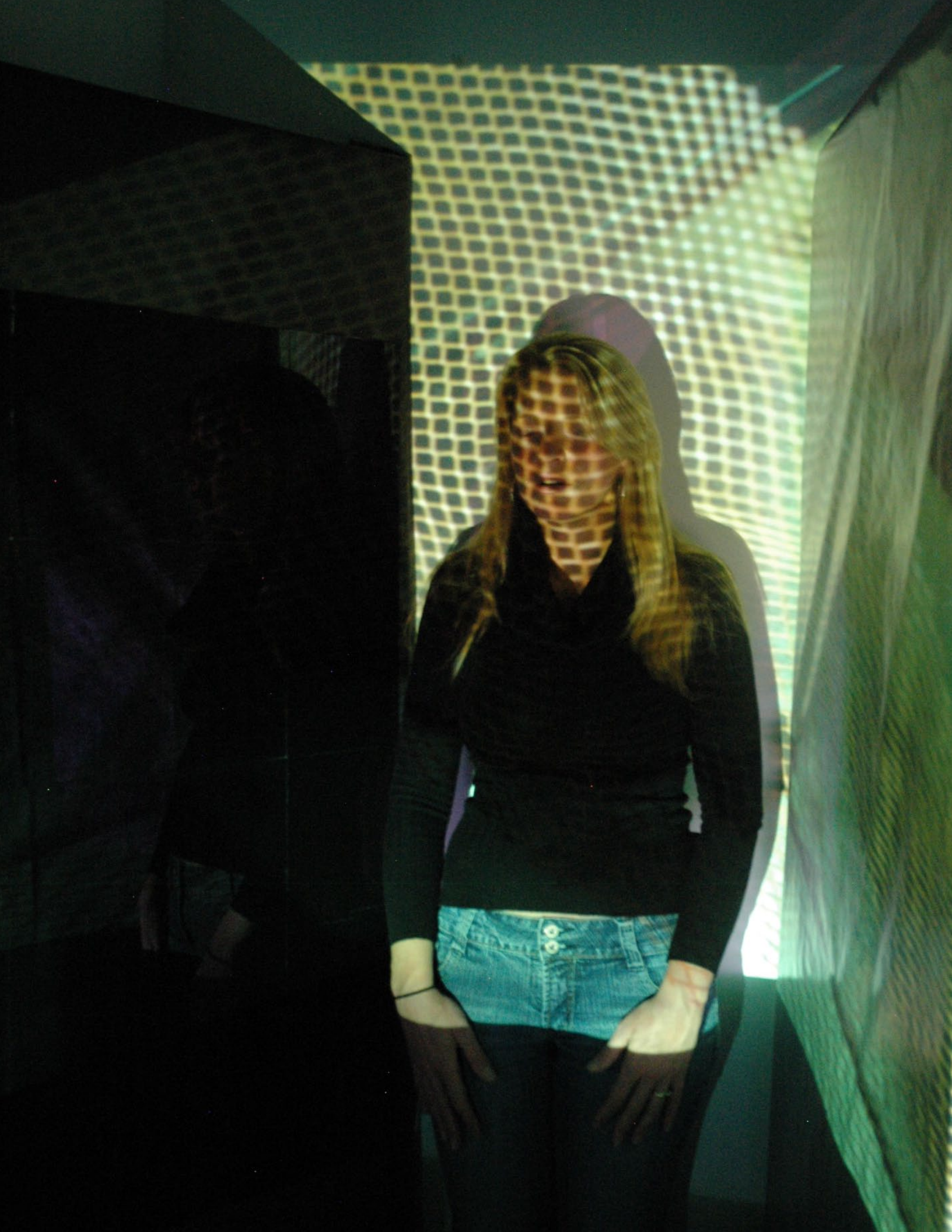




The installation transformed the images of the maquette into tangible visions of ruin. The photographs themselves took on new qualities as they collided with surfaces, stretching their limits, lightening the hard edges, hardening other edges with visual scars, adding more darkness or adding more light. There was a greater depth upon which the viewer could dive into; as each individual stood inside, the others outside looked in and experience yet another level of wonderment at what the person on the inside was experiencing visually and within the confines of their imagination. It was an installation within an installation. In its completion and upon reflection, one more enhancement came to mind.

Image 2.18 The River, Installation Series 5 | Cambridge | Jan 2009





THE PROJECTION

There was one more step this case study needed to endure. Just as *The Maquette* had evolved into *The Installation* in search of a heightened experience with the inclusion of the human in the built for of ruin, there was another opportunity to further elevate human involvement. This next step was born from the question of what direction the installation would take with the removal of the protective mesh which separated the human from the images of the maquette. Removing the screen left only the human in place to receive the full onslaught of the maquette across their person, creating *The Projection*. The ruin was then able to fully penetrate the remaining dark mirror and light paper surfaces, but most importantly, also the human within it. With each turn of the body, the images changed more dramatically; the clarity was greater. Those outside the installation took on a more significant role in *The Projection*. The privacy, behind the curtain, of the individual world of ruin was taken away. They were put on display as a public exposure of ruin laid upon the body of one individual.

Case Study 1 - The Projected Installation

Materials: Black spray painted glass, silvery white shimmering paper, old wooden doors, bookshelves to hold up doors, glue, a projector, projected images of the maquette and a woman.

Image 2.19 The River, Projection Series 1 | Cambridge | Jan 2009








I am wrapped in screens of mesh and reflection. Staring at golden flashes of light, amongst a sea of bubbles and flowing edges. My eyes wonder around, seeing myself in the adjacent surfaces, broken into pieces, light, dark, smooth, rippled and bubbling. I am alone, forced to reflect in this space of decrepitation. As I reflect on this space, in this tiny abode, with walls moving in and cornering me, I find this space reflecting back on me. It melds and moves on and through me. I become part of the space. The ruin state of things becomes apart of me. My inclusion in the space was always there but it is only in this extension that I see and feel it. Facing forward I am blinded by the light, blindingly bright at times and muted in others. The path forward indecipherable.

Image 2.20 The River, Projection Series 2w | Cambridge | Jan 2009



THE LAND

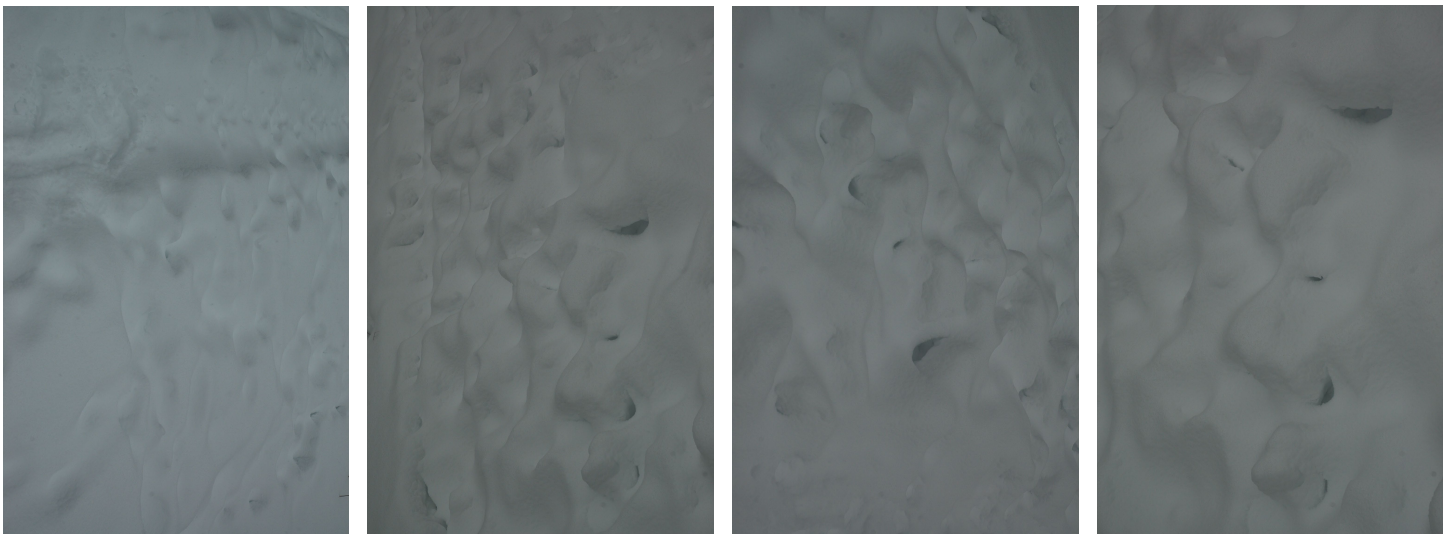
CASE STUDY 2



Stomping through a long hallway of white crisp snow, the air crunched through my ears, the cold biting through my clothes. The wind whipped through me while the trailing and swirling snow surrounded me. Built and formed by both man and nature I walked on a trail in the midst of Cambridge, Ontario in the dead of winter. I thought of the land as its solid formable mass, created by layer upon layers, forming the base of our existence but then my thoughts changed to the land's malleable fragility bending to the grand forces of nature, air, fire and water. The land was in constant motion, continually changing and evolving alongside humanity. I felt a part of the land. I walked on, eyes open, searching for the imperfection of ruin.

This flat land layered by small droplets of snow, built-up over time, formed a new ground in the dead of winter. Human and animal had tracked through deforming the plane into divots and protrusions, creating a new land form.

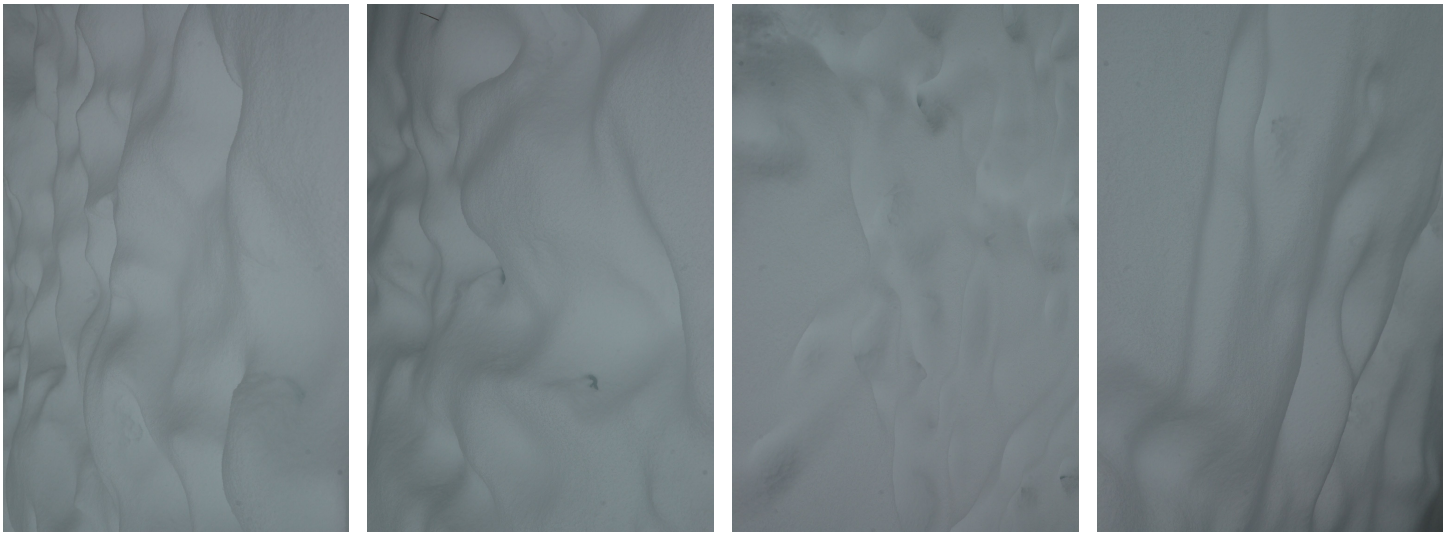
Image 2.21 The Land, Snow Series | Cambridge | Jan 2009





The wind and snow continued the alterations, after the human(s) departed. The moment the human(s) abandoned the space, the wind dynamically carved the earth once more, to create a beautiful curving figure from that which was once flat. Nature took back that which human created within it. These impressions broke into the perfectly flat surface, marring the snow beneath their feet in a ephemeral attack. I stopped and captured the impressions before they disappeared once more.

Image 2.22 The Land, Snow Series 2 | Cambridge | Jan 2009





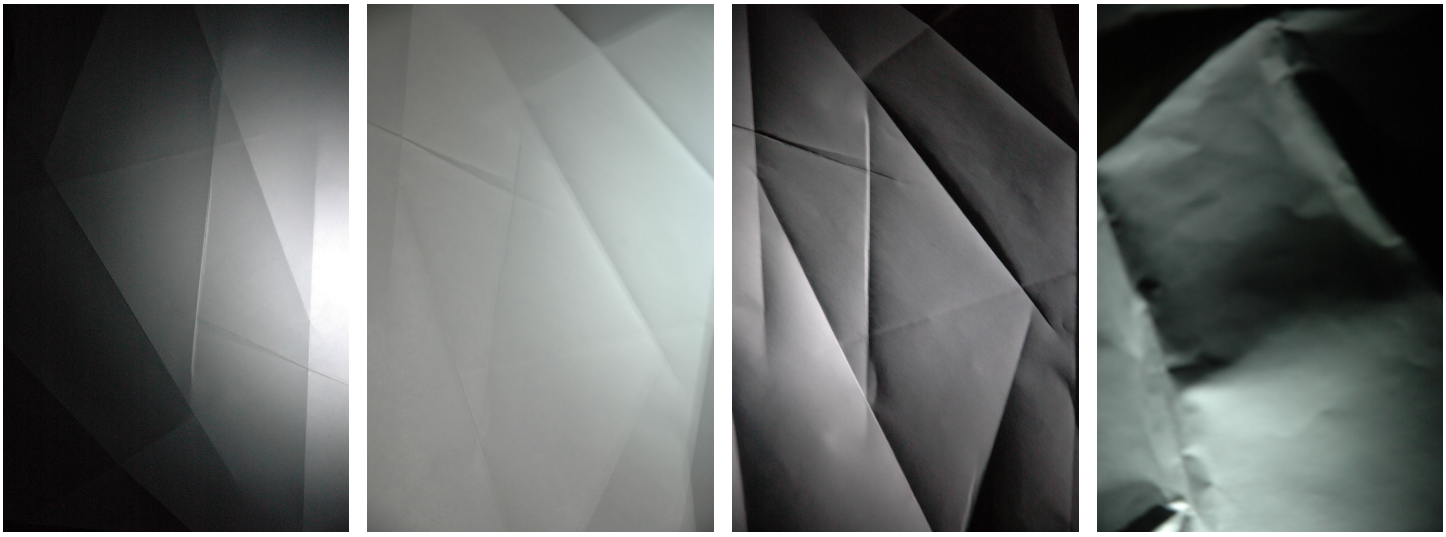
THE MAQUETTE 1

Walking into the land, I had only the same initial intention I had of watching the river, to find moments of ruin to create from. After the evolution of *The River* in *Case Study 1*, I began to think of the ephemeral nature of architecture, these fleeting moments that arose in a barrage of images flashing through the photographs of the maquette, the installation and the projection. These ephemeral moments of space and photography continued to float through my head. It was of the essence of this part of the journey to simply capture these ephemeral moments through the lens as a means to create from, in an inspirational fashion and/or to simply showcase these moments through the lens. These ephemeral moments immortalized though the images themselves captured time visually revealing more than what was seen by the naked eye in viewing such objects.

Case Study 2 - The Maquette 1

Materials: Paper and a ruler.

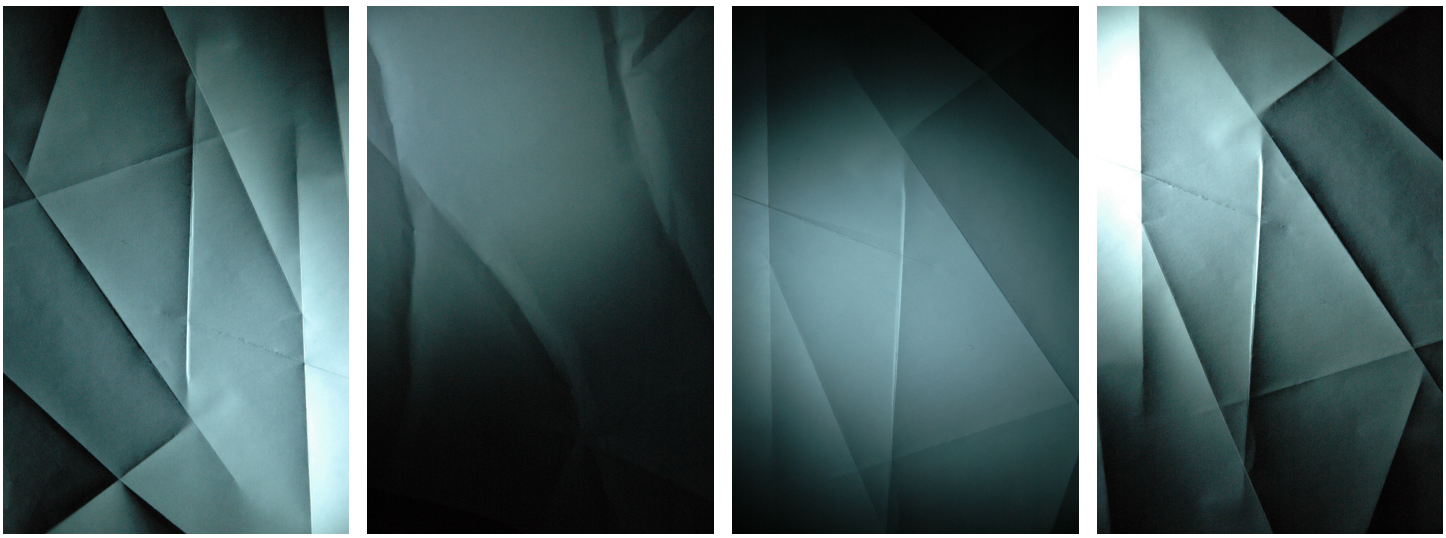
Image 2.23 The Land, Maquette Series | Feb 2009

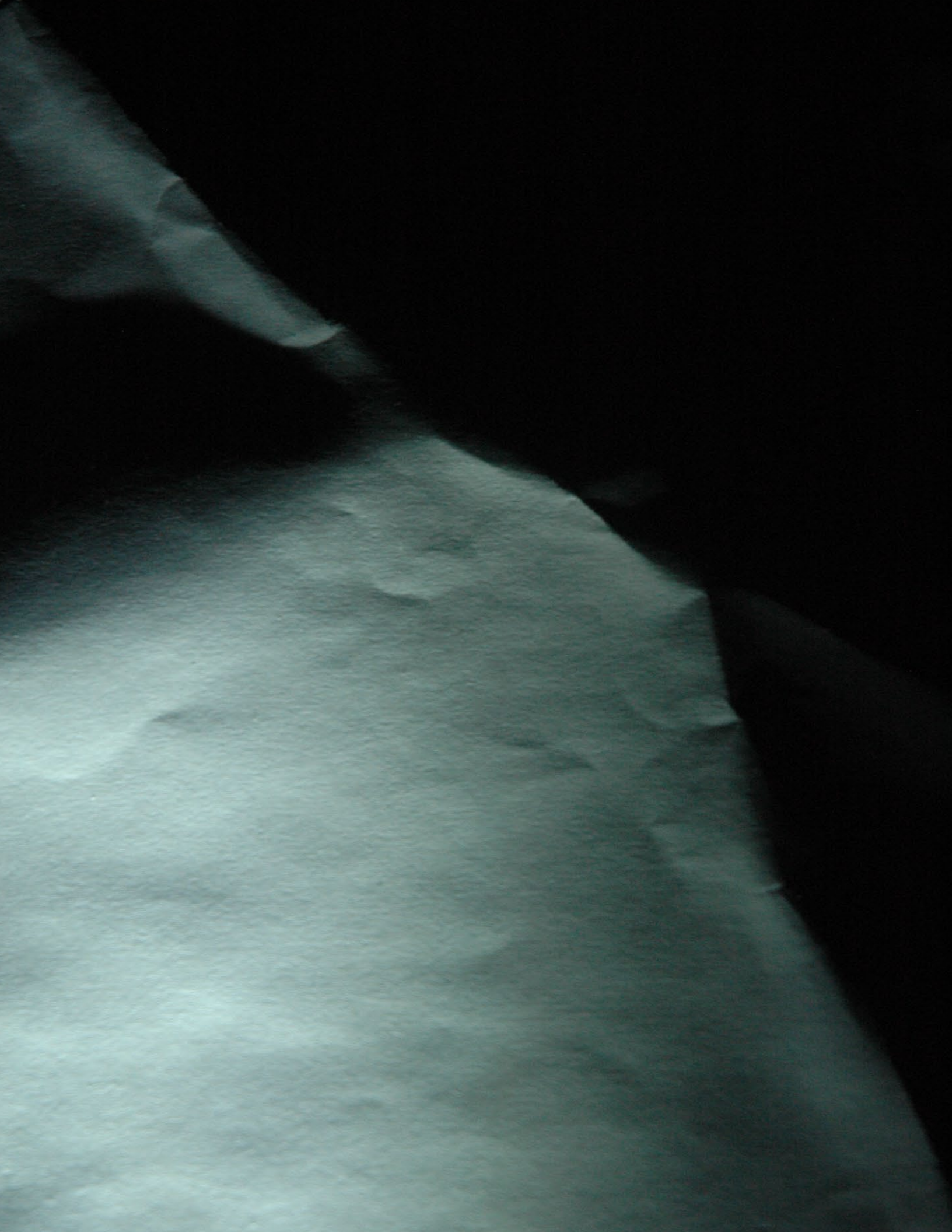




In the land, this simple capturing of the ephemeral moments of human indentation into the natural snow, evolved into a gamut of extensions of the psyche of ruin in *Case Study 2* through moments of impressions on different objects. The snowy footprints in the land lent itself to a plethora of maquettes dealing with creating the essence of a permanent, non-ephemeral scar of ruin in different objects, two maquettes purposefully made with the idea of the land in mind seen here and two unconsciously created without a specific initial correlation to this land. Unconsciously the other maquettes were started as separate case studies based on definitions rather than captured ephemeral moments but in the end their final products revealed the same scaring nature of the land in different ways.

Image 2.24 The Land, Maquette Series 2 | Feb 2009



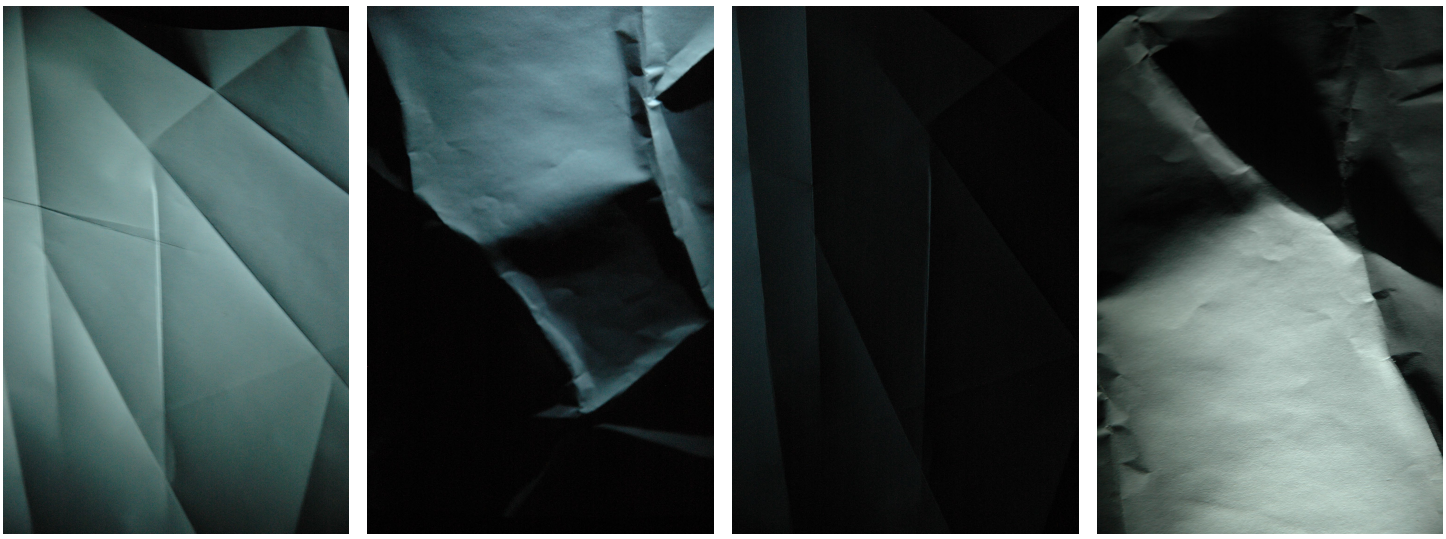


The first maquette, displayed in these last couple pages, was created with simplicity in mind. It was made by the act of recreation. Taking a piece of paper to act as the top snowy layer of the land, the attempt to recreate the land ensued by folding and indenting the paper in such a way as to create soft ridges, like that of human the intervention on the land. The paper was continually depressed and altered until the impressions were soft but apparent and did not disappear. Once lit within the photography studio the impressions became more clear.

A second piece of paper was procured to manipulate with a darker mindset of ruin in mind with harsher more apparent markings. Such deeper blemishes were made by pressing a metal ruler on edge into the second piece of paper repeatedly until the lines impressed into the paper were apparent and once again did not disappear.

These pieces began to lightly touch on the lasting impression of ruin.

Image 2.25 The Land, Maquette Series 3 | Feb 2009





The Serpentine's gaze traps me.
I am engaged and must follow.
You are no good for me,
yet I wrap myself around your embrace.
Like a plague invading my soul to the core.
Once you are here I can not let go.



Constricting around me,
trapping me in the darkest of places,
void of living life.
I am not with you but I never stray far from you.

I must go from this place. I will go away.
I will leave you be. I give up.
I have tried my best to keep you near.
I will resign to be all alone.
Left here in sorrow with only the past fleeting memories
left here, deep within me, wallowing.

I still know you are no good,
you only bring in the cold
but I can not see through your darkness
to my light.

Image 2.26 The Land, Maquette 2 Series | May 2010
Image 2.27 Eel Series, Roma Print, Francesca Woodman








THE MAQUETTE 2

The first reflection on the previous page was created with the image of Fancesca Woodman *Eel Series, Roma print* in mind, with the thought of infiltration into the space of the mind alongside physical and emotional abandonment in ruin. The written piece came to metaphorically emulate the idea of the beginning stages of ruin where one must reluctantly walk away from the *serpent*; the *bad* in their life. This moment creates a scar that is left when the infiltration of ruin and abandonment commences, destroying the connection of a relationship to another person or object, by personal choice or not of one's own volition. The loss, the negative void, leaves the positive addition of a mark physically on the body or in one's psyche. The written reflection is a moment where one allows such darkness to overcome them.

This second maquette, displayed on the previous and subsequent pages, was unconsciously created with the word *infiltrate* in mind without the thought of the land but in review it connects strongly to the pieces of this whole case. Once again the idea of a scorned lost connection entered into the equation of creating this piece. This time the moment of ruin and abandonment is fought in the written reflection on page 137 and one is pushing away the darkness, not allowing it to invade them when they are already down.



Case Study 2 - The Maquette 2

Materials: Canvas and black and white paint.

Image 2.28 The Land, Maquette 2 Series 2 | May 2010



The canvas created emulates these two moments, in the dark black paint; the essence of allowing such darkness to overcome and in the white; the fight to push away the invading darkness. The reflections unconsciously matched the canvas creations without forethought. The canvas was first laden with a black soft, smooth, smog of paint softly entering in from the lower left corner on and upwards towards the outer edges of the canvas. Paint was then dragged in slithering lines, with the idea of the mythical evil of the snake and Francesca Woodman's print, up towards the edges. Globs of left behind paint were not cleaned up. After some time, a week or so, the darkness of the canvas became too much, so came the inclusion of the white paint. The white lightly pulled across the dried black acrylic infused the canvas with light. The outcome a scene of grey with moments of black darkness pushing through. The images herein grey and black are interspersed among these pages and the darkness and light more ambiguous when photographed in its true darkness or shades of grey.

Image 2.29 The Land, Maquette 2 Series 3 | May 2010





Like a slithery snake
you barge in unannounced,
infiltrating my space,
leaving splatters and streaks
from the roof down to my floor.

You break up my perfectly sound enclosure.
You will not listen.
I do not want you here.
I may not exude perfection,
I may be slightly broken
but I feel your presence here,
breaking up my already failing,
tattered and torn self.

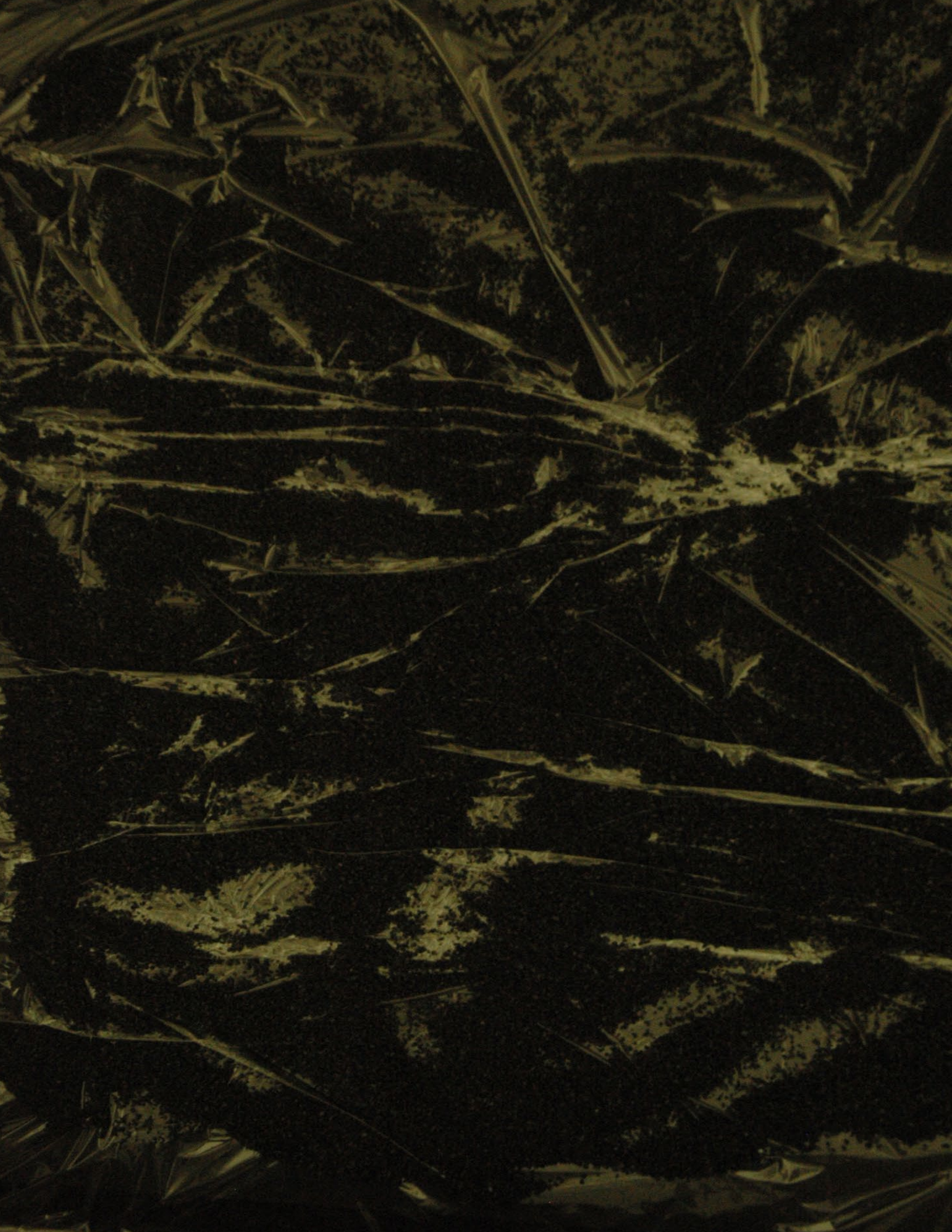
Leave me be.
Leave me to rot and fall down into the earth
if that is what must be.
Leave me alone. Slither away.
Do not leave a trace.
Do not trespass on my grounds.
You are not welcome in my abode.
I do not want you here. Leave. Leave now.

I try to cover up the traces of your presence
but they still remain, for all to see.
The markings of your intrusion,
blatant and apparent,
masked under a deep shroud
but present nonetheless.
The lines partially subdued,
lightened with the brightness
I failed to fully bestow upon them
but your impressions
still deeply mar the spaces within.
I fought your full onslaught
but I was too late
to not have your presence impact me.

If only I could have never let you near …
but that means not living.



Image 2.30 The Land, Maquette 2 Series 4 | May 2010



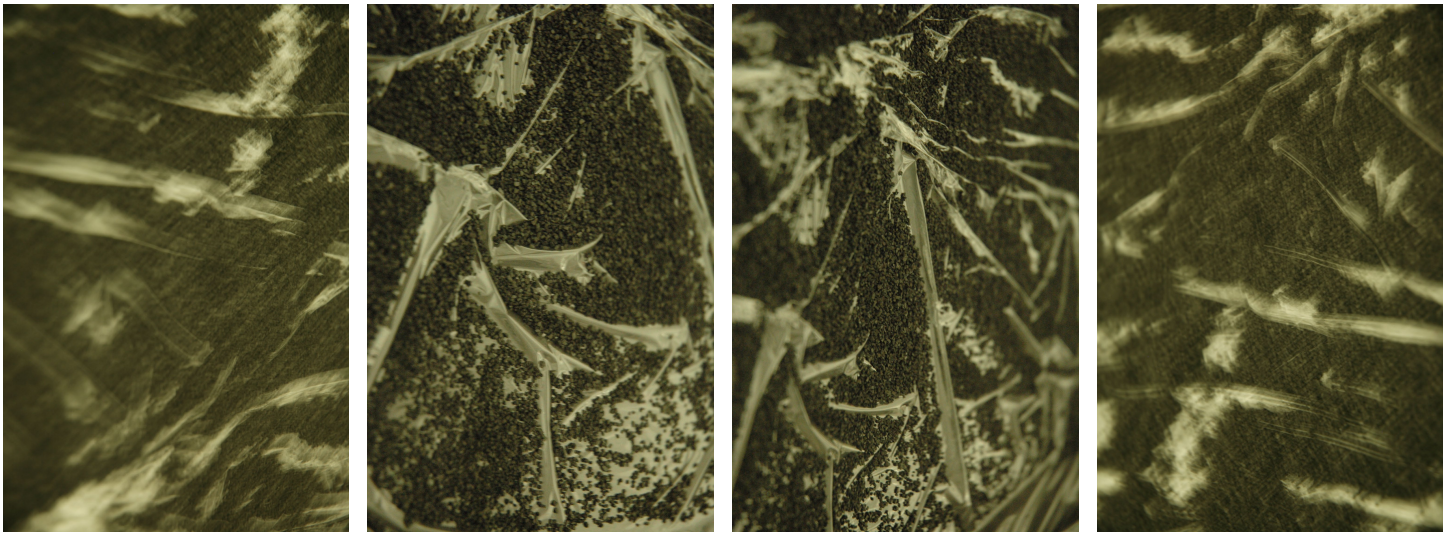
THE MAQUETTE 3

The third maquette was also made unconsciously but in this instance it was created with the thought of the definition of *disintegrate* in ruin. It is a creation of an object displayed with its particles breaking down and separating. The lines of separation mimic the lines of scaring seen in the hard lines of the folded paper in *The Maquette 1*. The human marks the natural object until it starts to break down. The breakdown allows the light to return bursting through the particles.

Case Study 2 - The Maquette 3

Materials: A box, saran wrap, decorative black rocks.

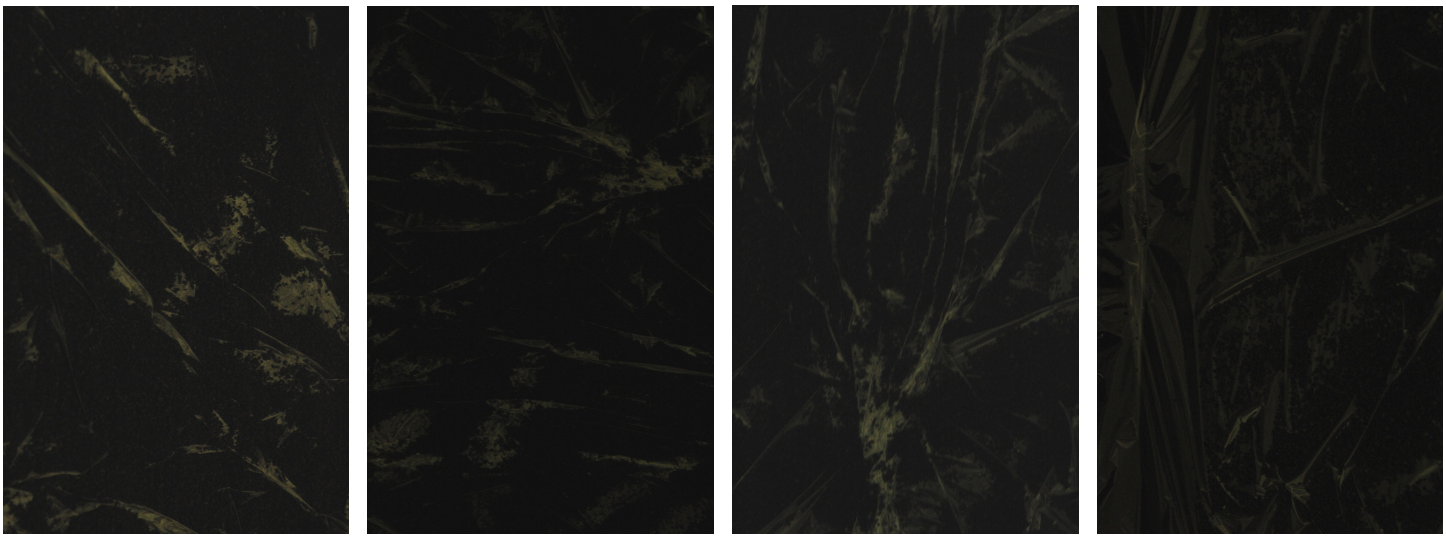
Image 2.31 The Land, Maquette 3 Series | Feb 2009





To create this maquette, small decorative black rocks were strewn across a loose layer of saran wrap pulled over a box. The box was shaken to move the rocks around, allowing them to settle where they will. The loose layer of saran allowed for greater play of space, once filled with rocks, the extra give of the saran left areas of rise and fall; the light coloured saran rises up through the rocks and the heavier dark black rocks make up the moments of the fall blocking and dropping the wrap down into the box.

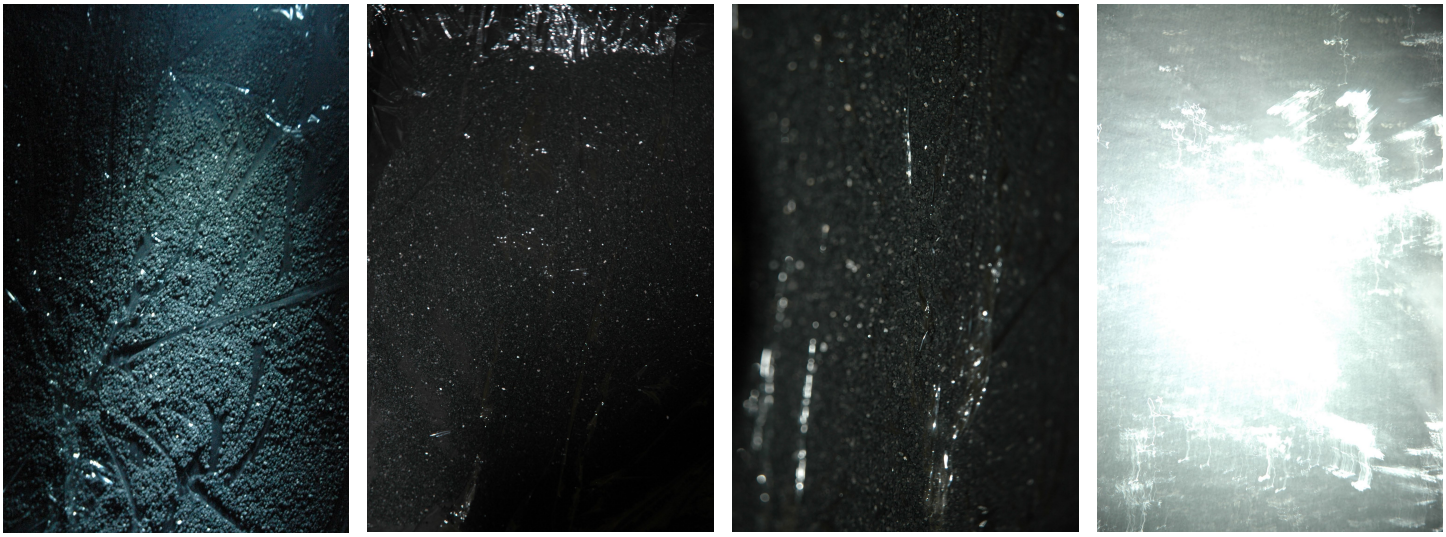
Image 2.32 The Land, Maquette 3 Series 2 | Feb 2009

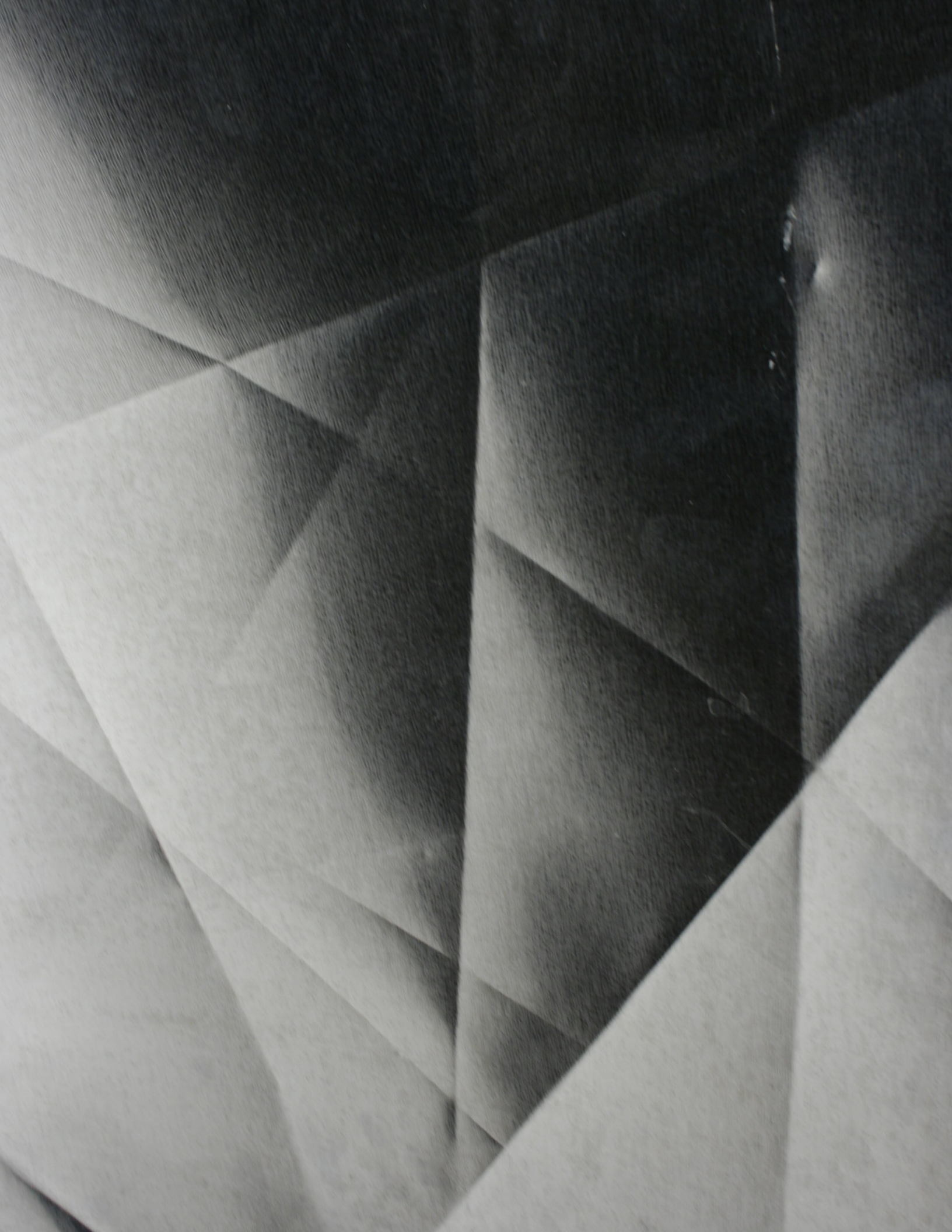




The lines, passed over continually, crushed by the inevitable impact of its occupants, the particles already broken up, the solid mass is no more. The particles separating in chasms. Stretched, broken crevices break through to form new worlds. The light pokes through the darkness in slow emergence from the earth. The darkness breaks open.

Image 2.33 The Land, Maquette 3 Series 3 | Feb 2009





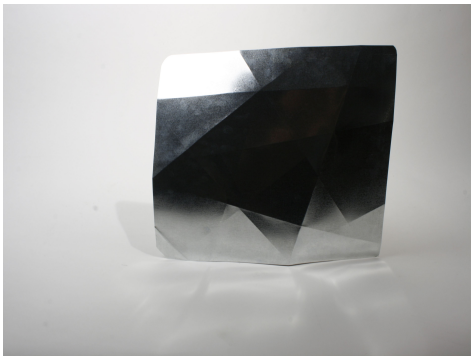
THE MAQUETTE 4

The final maquette made in the same language as the first, in the essence of the land, takes the paper folds a step further into an object that is more concrete, harder, more difficult to mark. The same hard lines seen in the paper are transferred into metal. The way in which they were transferred was experimental. The same intention was required to continue to make marks into the metal increasingly until a moment was reached where the metal could no longer bounce back in form. Metal as per the first maquette was impressed upon metal.

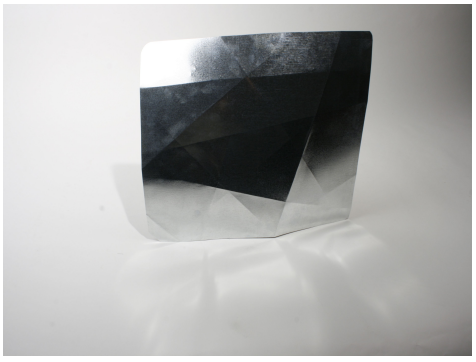
Case Study 2 - The Maquette 4

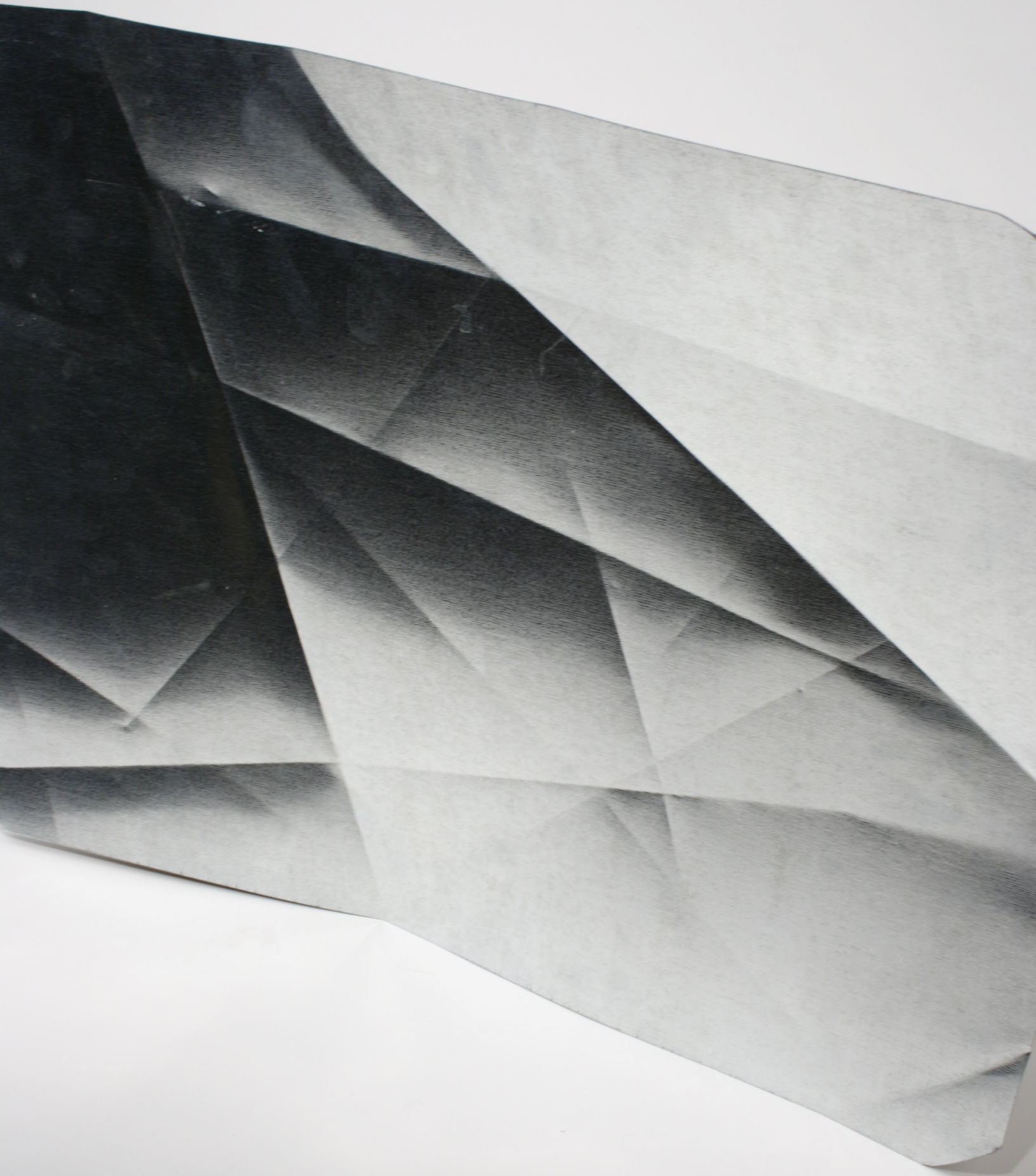
Materials: Bent metal sheets

Image 2.34 The Land, Maquette 4 Series | Feb 2009









Two separate sets of flat metal sheets are impressed with long linear scar-like indentations, philosophically forming the impression of humans on a flat landscape, deforming and melding the land to their will. One sheet is impressed with hard wider lines that seem to bend the metal while the other is impressed with sharp raised lines that keep the metal relatively flat. The original flat form of both metals can not be recreated. Reversing the marking of the indentations can only be completed by complete reforming the metal, thus changing the molecular construct of the object, so in essence the indentations are forever imprinted in these objects as they are.

To create the indentations on the sheets of metal, a form was created. A large block of wood was attained and marked in pencil with lines akin to the paper maquette. The lines were then routed out of the wood, creating grooved indentations. Sheets of metal of the same width were cut in matching relatively thin widths, being approximately ½ inch. Then each piece was cut in appropriate lengths to fit into the slots on edge. The metal thins met each other in moments and in other instances created their own islands, in still other moments they seem to careen off the edges of the wood. These slices of metal were the form upon which the metal sheet was impressed.

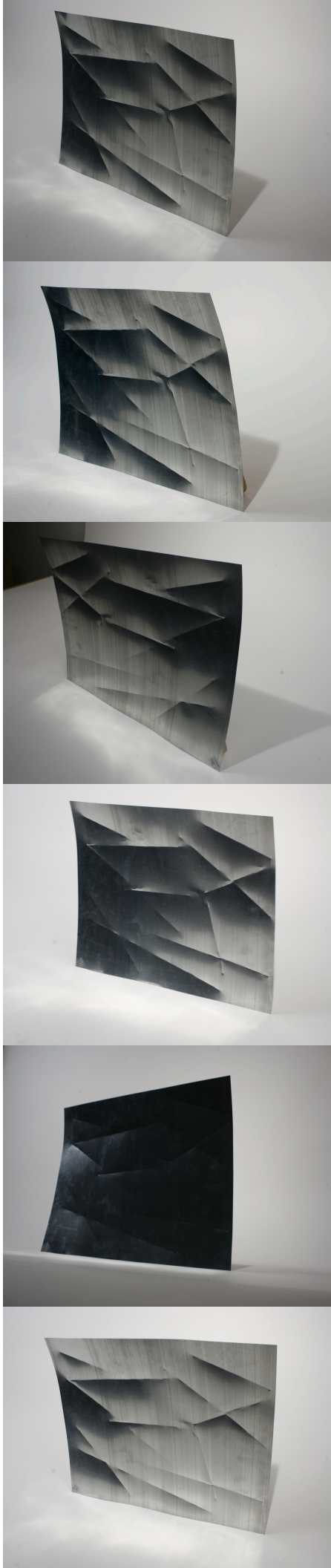


Image 2.35 The Land, Maquette 4 Series 2 | Feb 2009



Both sheets of metal, were placed upon the aforementioned form, individually, on separate occasions. One piece of metal was placed upon the form and placed inside a special vacuum sealed bag. The air was taken out of the bag and the flat metal sheet was suctioned into the metal thins on edge. This suctioning ended when the lines appeared on the flat sheet and only when these lines remained upon releasing the seal and allowing air flow through the bag once more. When the lines did not remain after the first attempt and the metal popped back into form, another attempt was made. The second sheet of metal was created in the same manner but the sheet was flipped upside down and the length of time was longer to create a harsher, more intense scar in the metal sheet.

This maquette emanates and is derived from the scars that humans impact upon a landscape and in simplicity show how such deformities and time do not allow nature to reform to its original memory. In such way societies inflictions impact our world and become our world; our architecture. Are the scars the healing process from which we try to mend our faults or are they simply the beginning of an end?

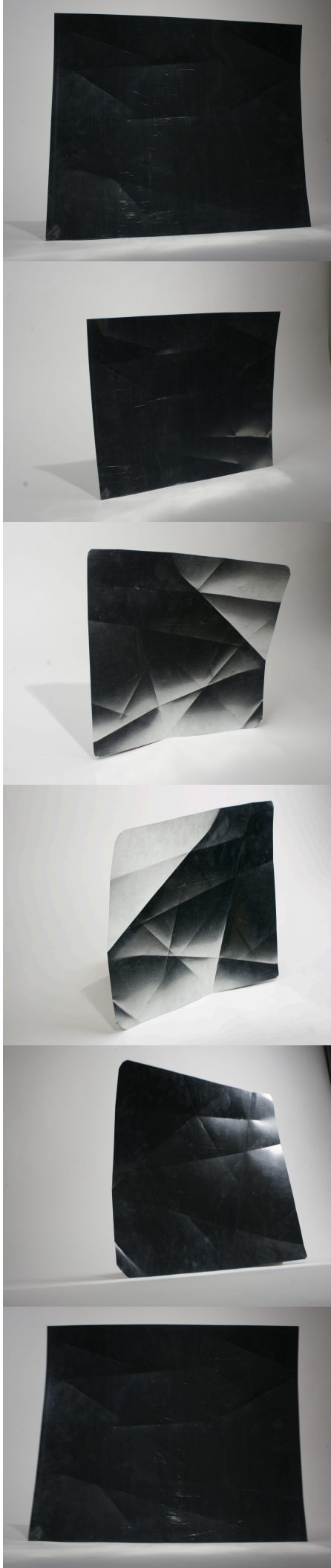
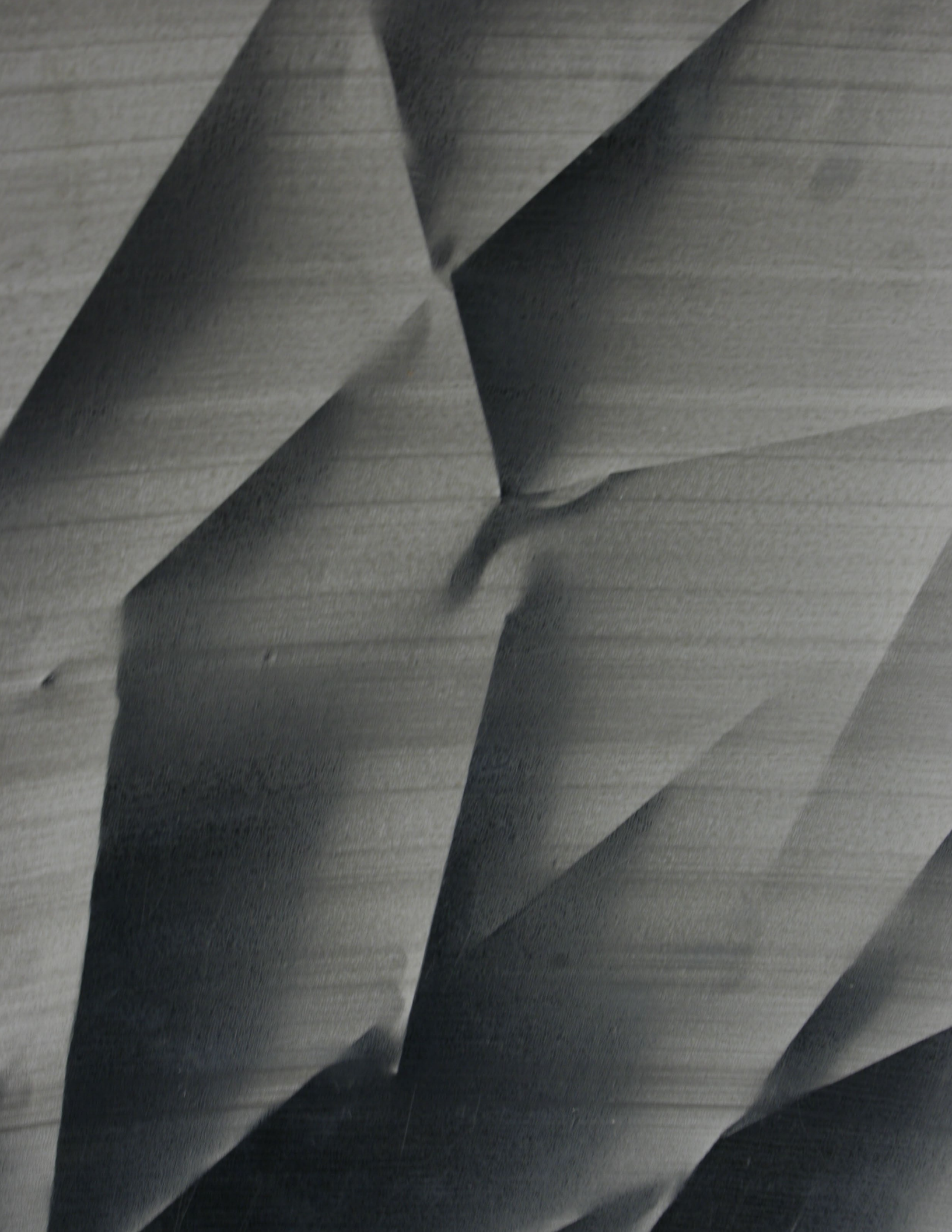


Image 2.36 The Land, Maquette 4 Series 3 | Feb 2009



THE INSTALLATION

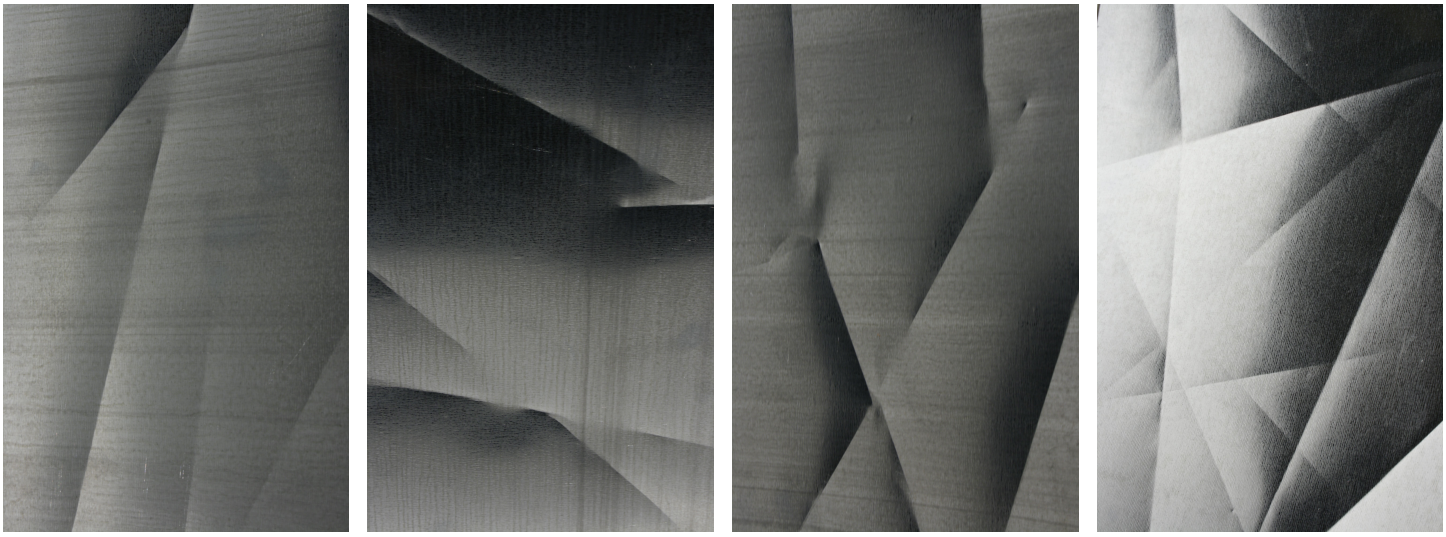
It is by placing this 4th maquette in the photography studio that it becomes the installation for the second case of *Creating Ruin*. The lines impressed in the originally flat sheets of metal, play off the light and become planes of its original self, or better said, the planes become different faces of its original flat self changing from dark to light depending on the perspective. This metal object becomes personified and the human connotation arises from it.

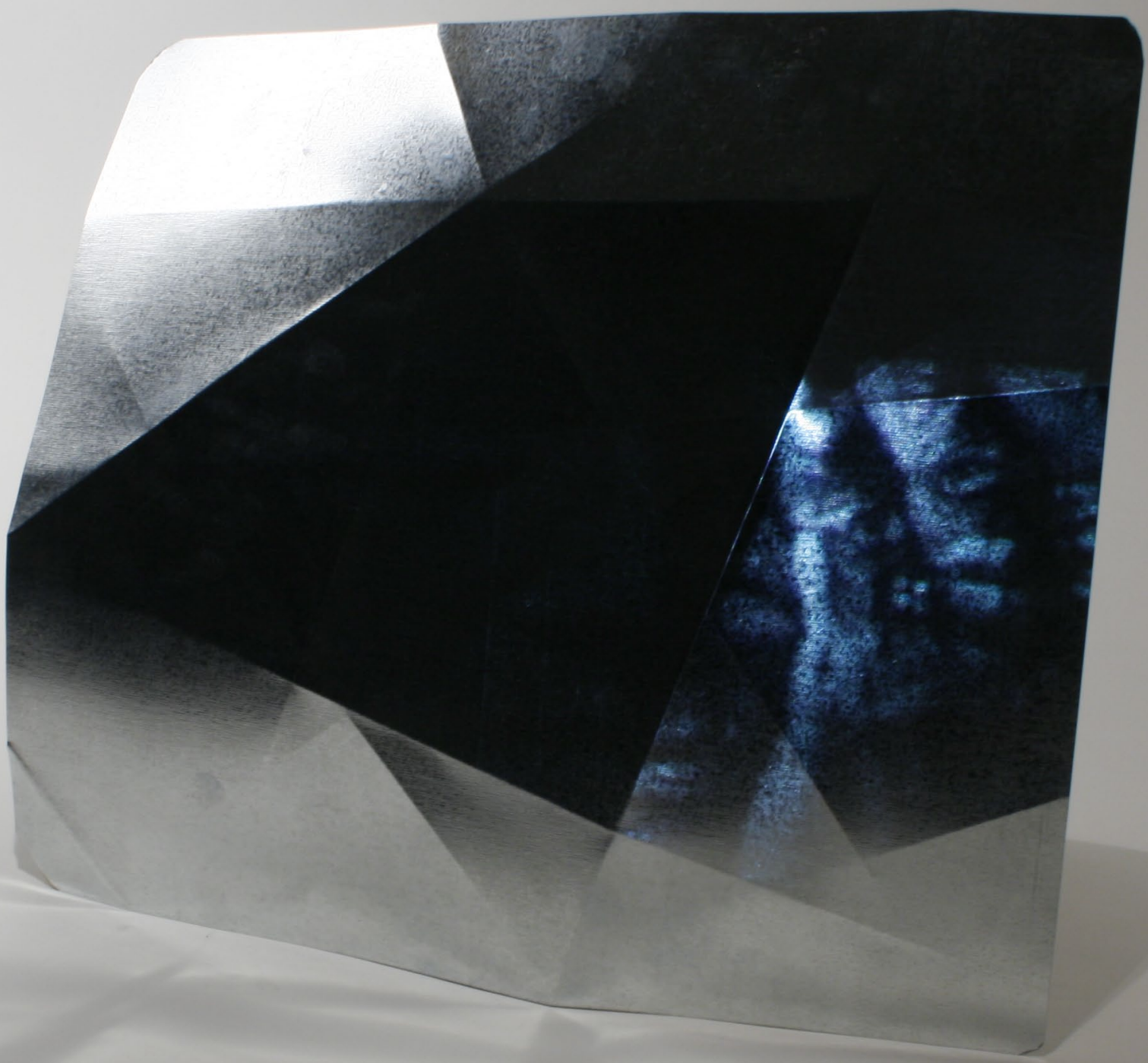
As arose from the first case the simple installation lacked a full in depth personification filled with the emotive essence of ruin. In this case there was a great leap to be made. Once again the case needed to evolve in its journey to fulfill intentions.

Case Study 2 - The Installation

Materials: Bent metal sheets + photography lights.

Image 2.37 The Land, Installation Series | Feb 2009





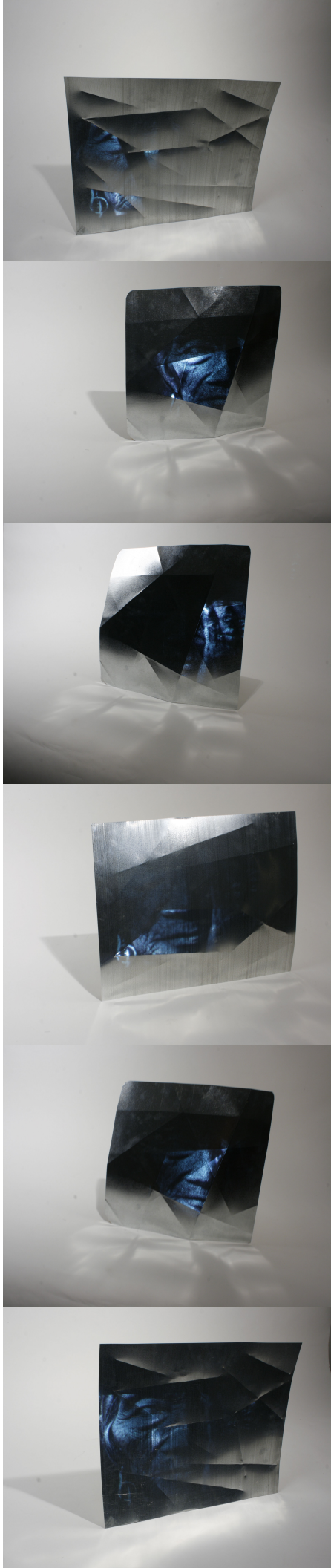
THE PROJECTION

"The word scar was derived from the Greek word eschara, meaning place of fire."[1]

Within the installation images are introduced to complete the case through the induction of the human into the space more visually, in physical form. The images then start to incorporate the emotions of the viewer by opposing depictions. Images of the human face were projected upon the scared sheets of metal, one very old worn face juxtaposed to one very young baby face.

Unknowingly *The Projection* herein tied into *The Projection* of *Case Study 1*. It is only when looking back at the final series of images in the projected installation of *Case Study 1*, during the compilation of this thesis, did the correlation of the marks of the projected maquette of ruin upon the face appear in assimilation to this *Case Study 2* with its projected images on the face of a scared surface. It is these blaring marks on the face that connected the cases of created ruin. An interconnection of unconsciously creating images of marks and scars projected onto human faces in different circumstances emerged.

1 Scar.askdefinebeta.com, <http://scar.askdefinebeta.com/>



Case Study 2 - The Projection

Materials: Bent metal sheets, photography lights + projected images (an old woman and a young child).

Image 2.38 The Land, Projection Series Old Woman | Feb 2009



THE OLD WOMAN

As previously stated an old face, shows many lines; it is worn and rugged, broken down and scarred by life and time. Why is it then, that so many, are fascinated and see great artistic beauty when the lines of old age are photographed, in such a face described with such societal derogatory words with the onslaught of age lines? Such artistic beauty can maybe be seen in the intrigue aroused from the thousands of stories we imagine derived from those markings. In our society, we find beauty in the face of the old, who show the signs of life on their face, their hardships and their joys written in lines, like the script of an epic novel.

Why is it then that we do not rejoice and find the good in the hardships that we endure in our lives, that make us stronger, that build who we are individually and as a culture? Can we only see such beauty in others' strength? Can we find the light in the darkness or do we simply dismiss it and sweep it under the rug, as something we do not want to confront? The scars, mark and delineate the true essence of life.

The lines on the metal are not very visible on the face of the old woman amidst the already deepened creases that line her face. She is scared and marred by time, the further integration of greater depletion in increased markings, makes little affect. The lines must be sought out. They make little impact.

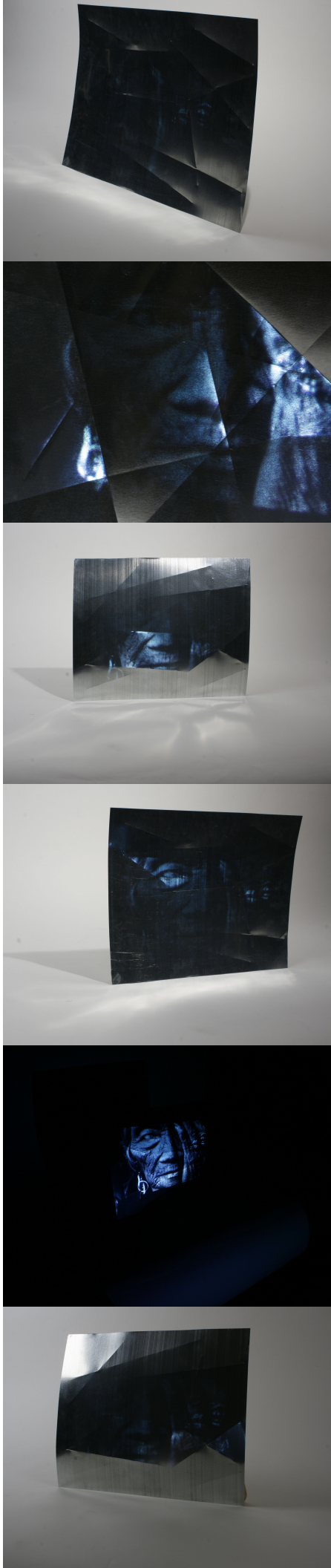


Image 2.39 The Land, Projection Old Woman Series 2 | Feb 2009



The lines are barely there,
barely decipherable.
I can hardly see them,
for this place has been so worn and used.
The sun has beat down
on and through it
and the memories have carved its lines.
It beholds the beauty of the imagination,
of what it may have seen,
what it may have experienced
and what it may have heard.
It is a fascination to loose yourself
within its many lines,
if only but for some time
before it is gone altogether.



Image 2.40 The Land, Projection Old Woman Series 3 | Feb 2009



THE YOUNG CHILD

"A scar is a natural part of the healing process... Scar tissue is not identical to the tissue that it replaces and is usually of inferior functional quality."[1]

The lines on the face of a young child are very apparent and are hard emotional for many to see. You need not search for the marks, as the background of one so young, with such smooth unhardened skin, leaves a surface that makes such harsh markings jump out at you, blaring in your face.

"... there are some tissues (e.g. bone) that can heal without any structural or functional deterioration... with the exception of very minor lesions, every wound (e.g. after accident, disease, or surgery) results in some degree of scarring."[2]

This case invokes the action of scaring, of and on a person, as well as scaring of and on society, not to mention societies infliction of scaring on that and those whom are around them. The scars of time are most prevalent in this piece. As we grow that which we endure leaves its mark physically and mentally. It is horrific and hard to see those so young with scars but of the old we hardly notice, it is normal and most beautiful. Some lines are of scars inflicted by a wound and pain but what is felt of the healing process of such inflictions? Can scars then be beautiful as a part of a new beginning, pain put behind them into the past and a journey completed?

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1 Encyclopedia.kids.net.au, <http://encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/ke/Keloid.>

2 Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scar>

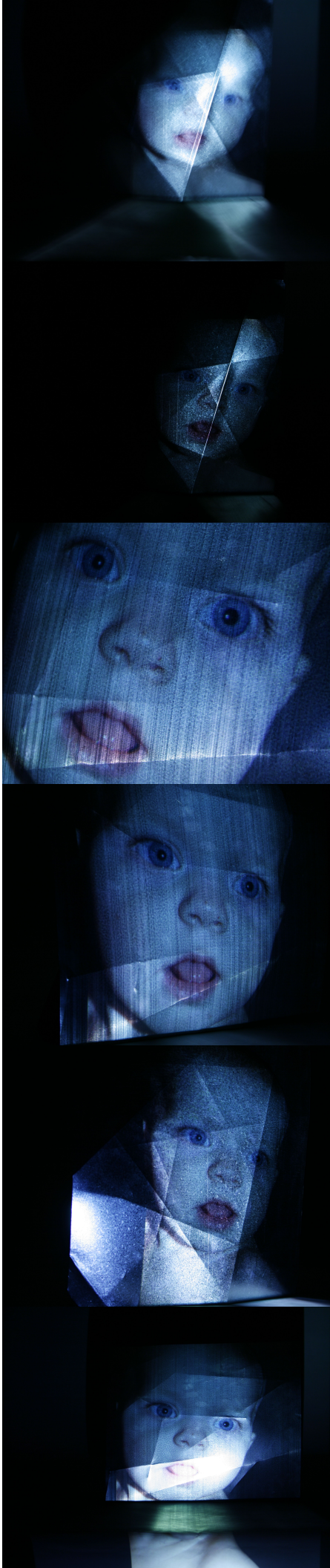
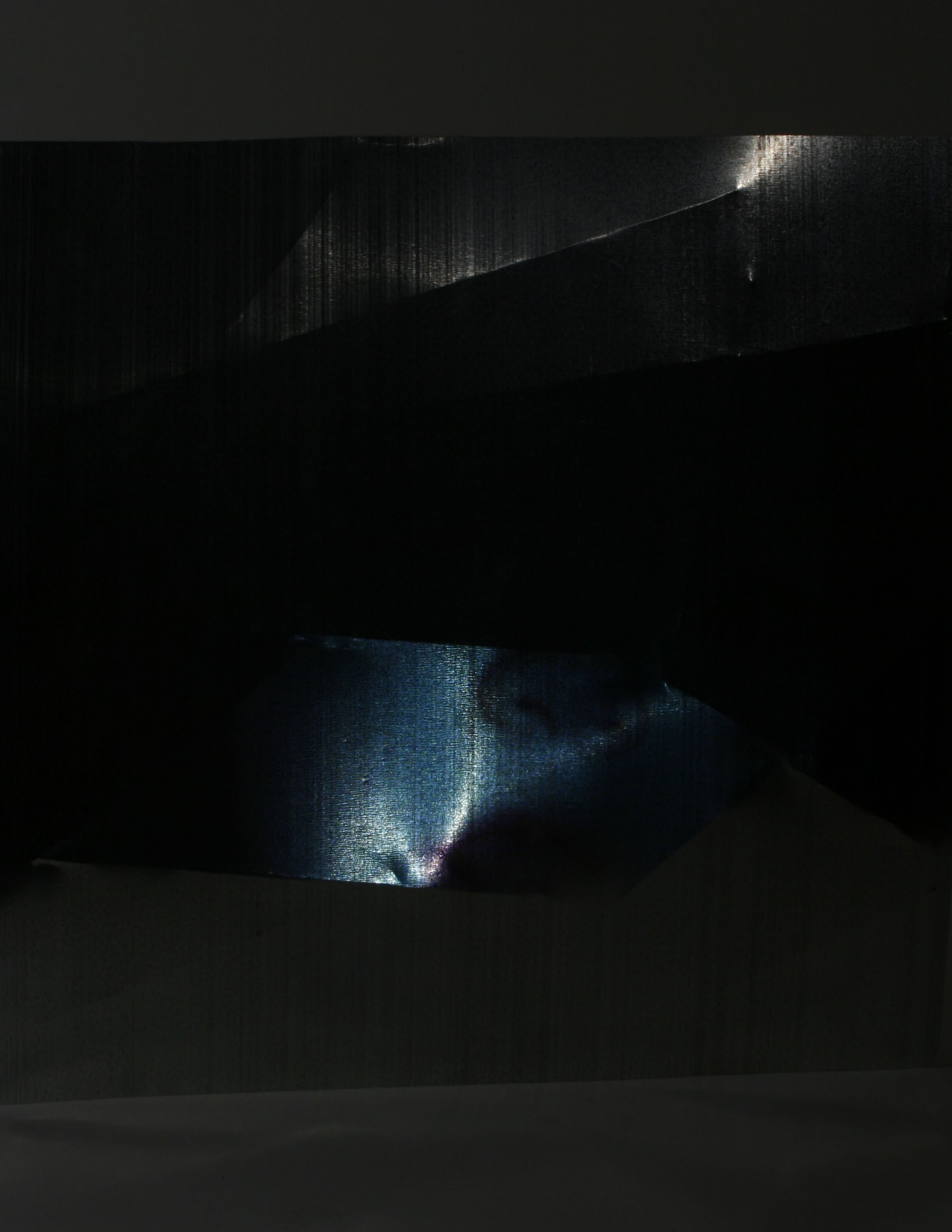
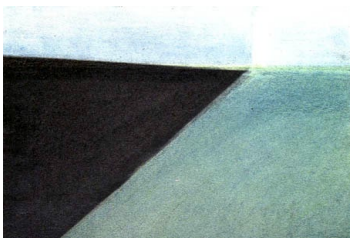


Image 2.41 The Land, Projection Young Child Series | Feb 2009



This place has been here but for a minute and it is already crumbling. The dreams only just seen are falling. The lights are flickering and eminent failure is approaching. The scars frightening me but I know that they happen. This is life. It is the great unexpectedness of something so new falling in such ruin that leaves such an unsettling feeling within my core. My stomach turns. This should not be so. The markings are so blaring, I can not turn away.





It is the line that cuts me open and bleeds out my soul, turns my insides out and crumbles me to the floor. These lives are gone, the earth is scared by their loss, only a black hole of nothingness remains in the ground or so it seems. There is a glimmer, a reflection of something, a reflection of me, on my image, their name is written.

I will rise out once more. These lines, my lines, their battle wounds, I will wear proudly.

Image 2.42 The Land, Projection Young Child Series 2 | Feb 2009
Image 2.43 Vietnam War Memorial, *Highsmith, Carol M.* | May 2006
Image 2.44 Vietnam Veterans Memorial Sketch, *Maya Lin*











It is only in these images when the human face in placed onto this metal that the true impact is seen. *Rough years* of life, the hard indentations, like that of years of struggle are so apparent on the old women face that the introduced lines are barely decipherable but on that of the young child the lines are highly evident and bring on a great feeling of unease. Both reveal the scars and struggles within and intensify these lines that are not so openly evident. They metaphorically give off the essence that life damages you.

The personal reflections on the previous pages combine an old abandoned building, the scars of the old woman and the impact on the natural land (pg.163), combine a newly abandoned building, a young child and the impact on the natural land and finality (pg.167) and the last reflection combines thoughts of Maya Lin's Vietnam Memorial, an abandoned building and the young face once more (pg.167).

Once viewed and experienced in photographic portrayal, reflected upon within the river and felt deep within, the journey moves to the point where a mark is made with the scar of the land. An imprint, in physical or mental form, forever marred and engrained in the body and building form at hand. The ruin sets in and evolves.



Image 2.45 The Land, Projection Young Child Series 3 | Feb 2009

THE WASTE

CASE STUDY 3



This case study came about with the thought of ruin in terms of financial crises and basic life requirements. Thoughts of having the basic needs of life taken away, drove forward this case, delving deeper into a steady overwhelming onslaught of moments of ruin.

The case brings about the duality of famine and overeating, with the quantity of food imagined within. In the financial crisis, we were in during the creation of this case, even the simplest staples such as potatoes were precious to many for others such food was not given a second thought. The installation brings forth the correlation of human garbage and ruin.

It is in these thoughts that an installation was immediately imagined, conjured up and put forth within the studio classroom and then out into the halls of this school of architecture.

Image 2.46 The Waste, Potato Peels Series | Apr 2009

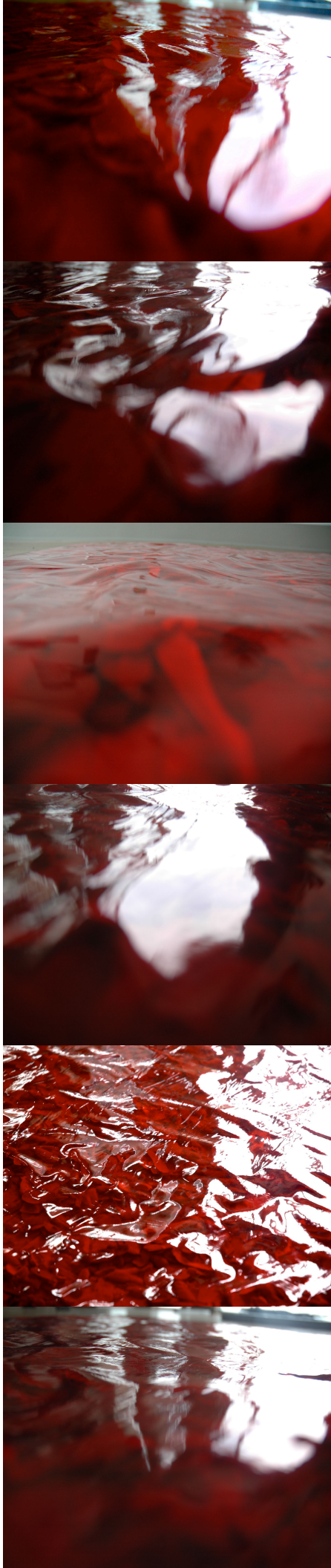




THE INSTALLATION

A splash of deep blood red plastic lies across the floor, hiding and revealing tons of potato peels under its transparent surface. The left over unwanted pieces of nourishment are scattered on the floor as garbage. On the floor, not on a table, as the red plastic tablecloth could suggest. Unwanted pieces laid under the feet. To get them one must go to their knees reaching under the plastic, hidden under the surface, not above on display. They are unrevealed.

The peels themselves come from all varieties of potatoes, sweet, white, red and brown. They are not peeled with care or in any artistic style. They are peeled as anyone would, in the easiest, quickest possible way. Peeled to reveal the fleshy wanted food beneath. The skin normally thrown to the trash to rot and return to the earth once more.



Case Study 3 - The Installation

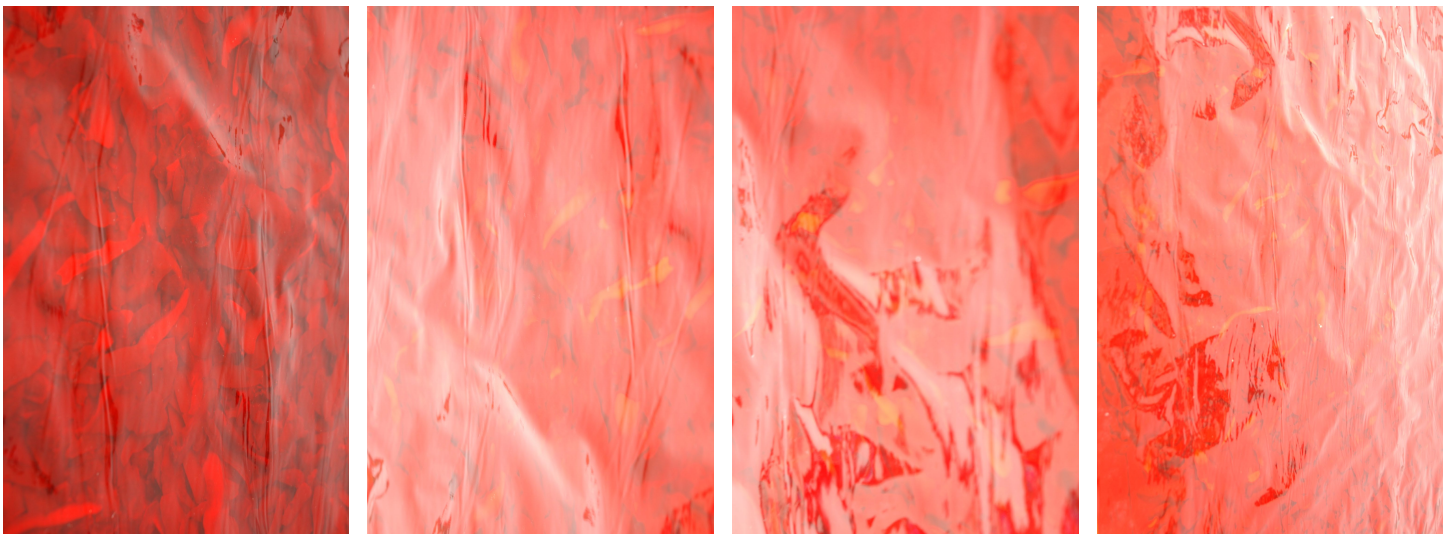
Materials: Red transparent plastic and potato peels.

Image 2.47 The Waste, Potato Red Series | Apr 2009



Many bags of potatoes were peeled and gathered to place upon the ground. Eyes of the potatoes and any other blemishes or darkened parts of the potatoes were added to the pile. The potatoes were spread out evenly to fit under the pre-cut red plastic sheet. The potatoes rotted under the hot plastic and evenly dried up, shriveling into dark grey/ black peels all of the same hue, viewed in the same demise.

Image 2.48 The Waste, Potato Red Series 2 | Apr 2009





A sea of light bold red,
bright with the day's sun,
darkens by the night
to a deep, dark crimson.

Flowing over the discarded broken shards below,
shards marred from view
with its intoxicating hazy surfaces.
Thrown into the basement, ruined,
discarded and left to break down.

Only one connotation rings forth,
it will not escape my mind,
the river of blood flows forth
cleansing, illuminating, glistening.

The path of the river unknown,
the end unclear,
but the light continues to return
revealing still the parts below.

The nourishment tossed
given not a second thought.
The blood of life easily abandoned
into the depths beyond.

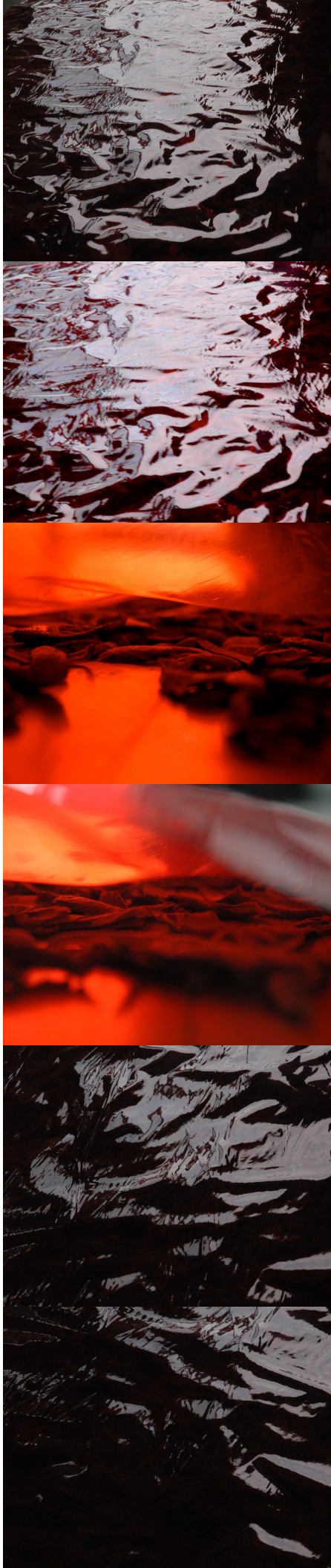


Image 2.49 The Waste, Potato Red Series 3 | Apr 2009



My head is bent,
looking down and away.
A meagre glimpse
let in the corner of my mind.

My eyes wanting to wander farther away.
This scene is not for me to see.
I feel I am not to look
but the bright red, beckons me to do just so.

This broken world is the train wreck
that I can not look away from,
my eyes glued to the floor,
watching the ruin break down beneath.

The food of the soul, disappearing.
The wasteland all encompassing at my feet.
There is no turning back.
It is all in and surrounding this place.

The ruin flows.

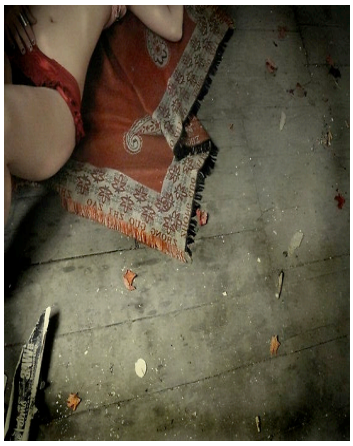
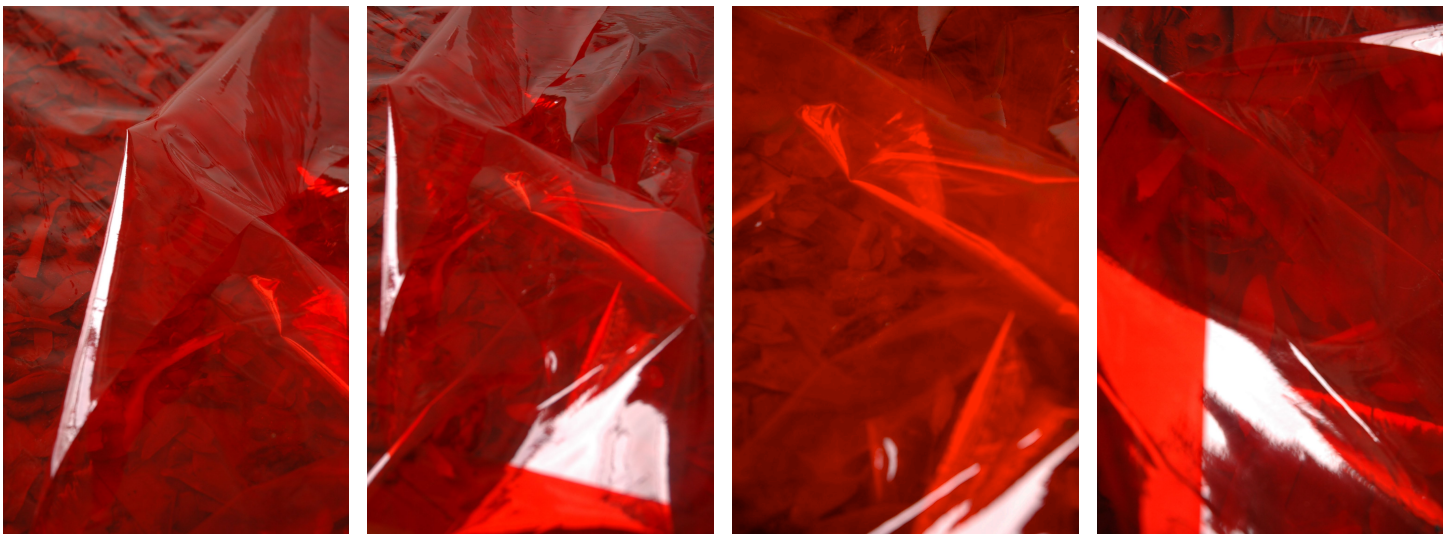
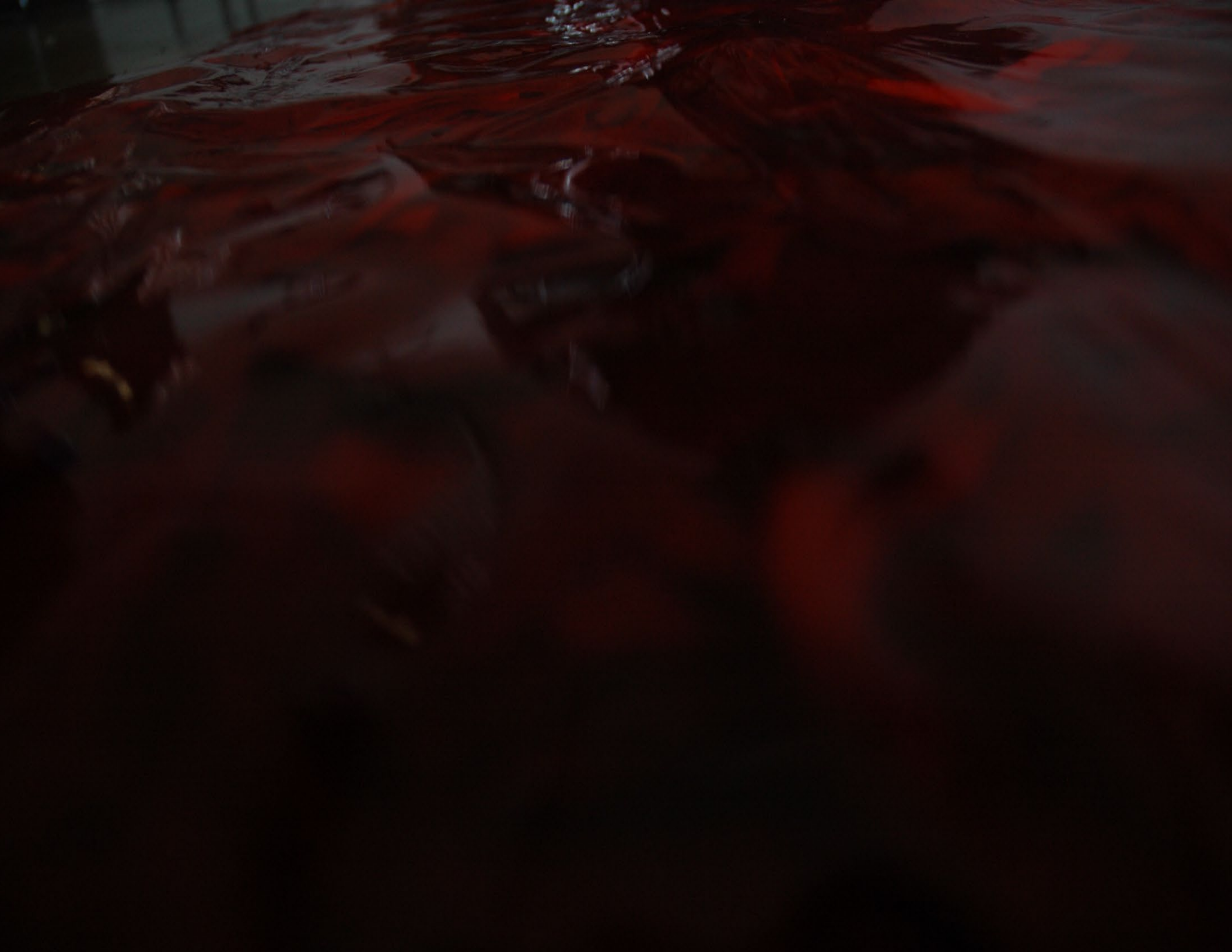


Image 2.50 The Waste, Potato Red Series 4 | Apr 2009
Image 2.51 ... and So I Curled Up Next to Her, Jessica Tremp





The potato brings about so many associations and allegories. At once in this case, the tons of potato peels represent the great individual waste of western society and its stereotype for gorging and overeating while also representing the great famine of the poor and unfortunate.

Upon completion and discussion the correlation of the *Potato Famine of Ireland* entered into the equation, enhancing the creation of this moment, of displaying a take on hardships, for open viewing. One simple mention of the *Potato Famine*, brings the knowledge that such simple things can tear apart a life, a family and a culture, subsequently abandoning a land full of architecture.

Reviewing the *Potato Famine* one must look at these images of the discarded food scraps and correlate the now known health of the potato. Many of the poor, the workers, the lower class, the animals, were given the scraps of the potatoes, like these; the unwanted bits. Unexpected ruin came to those who mostly ate what they thought to be the better part of the potato, as they were wrong. The outside of the potato, the skin, actually holds the best nutrients by far. By throwing away the skins to the poor they were actually unknowingly benefiting them and harming themselves.

This poignant circumstance was not considered in the creating of this case but it is through the discussion of the darkness of ruin that such impacting situations arose, giving greater depth in the installation put forth. Moreover this revelation gives more meaning coming from one of Irish decent.

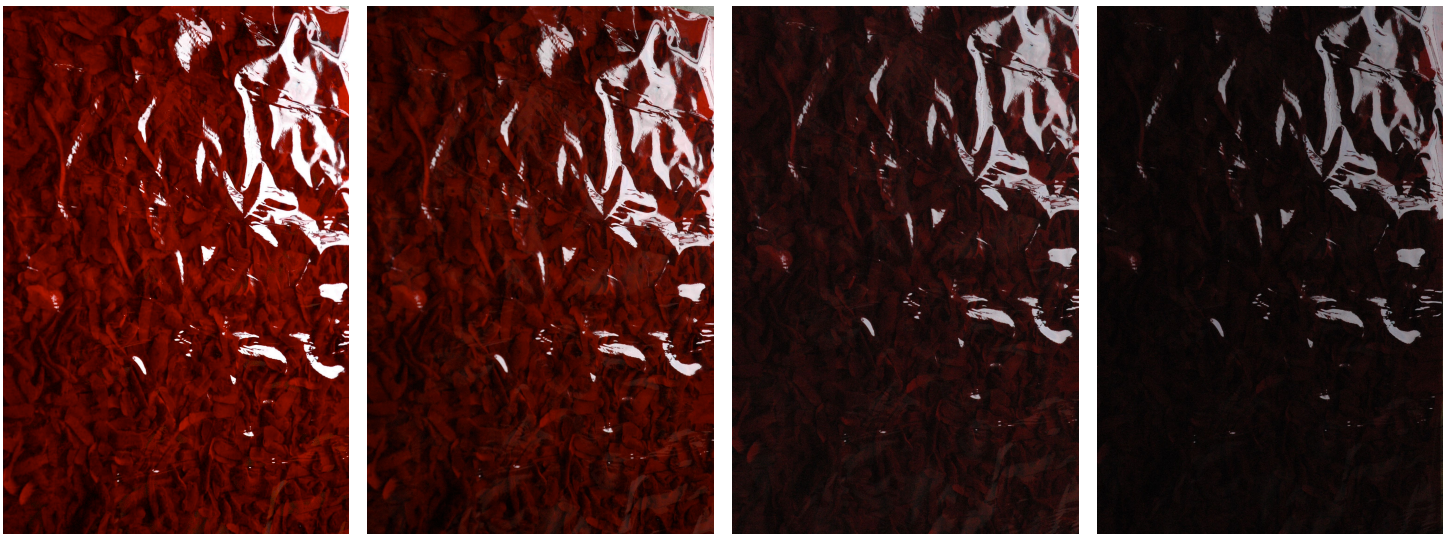


Image 2.52 The Waste, Potato Red Series 5 | Apr 2009

This revelation of the potato skins in the Irish famine gives the viewer a moment of insight into what truly is garbage (ruin) that we rid of and what truly is not. The blood life of nourishment revered to some is mere ruin to abandon to the waste bin for others.

The reflections put forth once again delves into the abandoned house and the psyche but in this case the breaking down and wasteful nature of life is ever present alongside the intended words, within the framework of famine and basic life needs. Within the second reflection (pg.179) a piece by Jessica Tremp complemented the scene of the installation and created a greater integration of the human form to the piece at hand capturing the essence of an abandoned space with the ruin of human waste.

Image 2.53 The Waste, Potato Red Series 6 | Apr 2009



THE INTRUSION

CASE STUDY 4



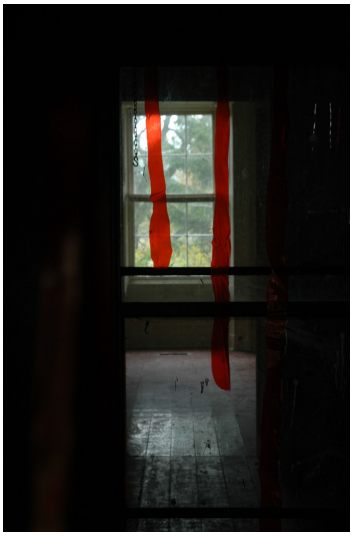
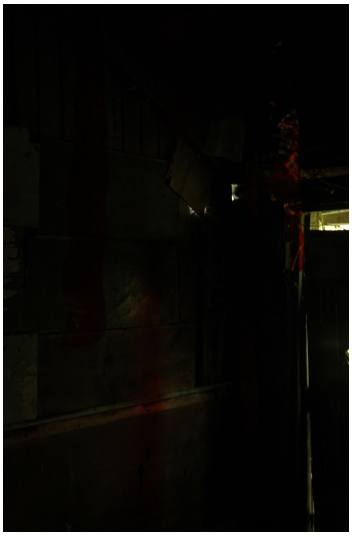
I am searching, not knowing what I will find, not knowing what I am looking for and not knowing where I am going. There are so many places that have been left behind, each with their own story, which one is the one that I am suppose to go to, the one which can truly reveal all its secrets, laid out before me.

There are no house numbers, no person to greet me, many more questions than answers and even more uncertainties. I am scared. Alone with my canine as my only companion and defense, I walk forward. I feel great courage, fear and excitement bubbling within, not knowing what I may find or unfathomably whom I may find. Not knowing, if I will find, what I do not know, that I am looking for.

I find myself here at this house. I search through each crevice and closet each nook and cranny to see what it holds. I pick this place, this space and capture these images. I do not know why this place, I just know. Now where do I go from here. What does this mean?

Image 2.54 The Intrusion, Red Series| Guelph | Sept 2009





I can not think. I try to force myself to not think but my body does not co-operate. My pulse races, it beats through my chests and resounds around the room. The room begins to move behind my eyes as my heart beat rises. The floors creek, the paint falls from the walls, sound echoes all around. I'm not supposed to be here. This place is filled with sorrow and secrets that are not for my eyes. I try to ignore the footprints I see by the fire of human and beast alongside the ashes of days past. Why am I in this house that others have simply left behind to crumble and decay? Where do I go from here? Why do I not run? There is something here I am meant to find, to feel, to create.

My empathy for the loneliness and lost beauty of this place emanates through the empty corridors. Its imperfections draw me in yet it compels my body to shake in fear for what might come of it or I within it. The precipice of change and loss is a dark underworld of uncertainty. I must leave this place for safety. I can not think here; I can not be here. Here there is only a grey cloud.

Image 2.55 The Intrusion, Red Series 2 | Guelph | Sept 2009





THE INSTALLATION

The previous reflection was written upon seeing the abandoned house portrayed on pages 54-78. The response stemmed from the raw emotions felt going to and viewing the space of the abandoned farm house. This reflection portrayed the inexplicable sense of fear and sorrow felt simultaneously at that time that trapped the mind's ability to think clearly within the space, not allowing for the creative process to flow. Thoughts of how best to portray ruin within this house in its human and architectural imperfections were clouded by the experience itself. It took a step away from the situation to allow the mind to flow once more, once removed from the overwhelming experience.

The installation placed into this house was based in societal problems, personal strife, the unconscious abandonment of the house itself and the subsequent emotions that ensues from the thought of this abandonment. The idea of exploring the body and unconscious mind inherently came into play in creating this installation.

The initial viewing of this abandoned house was based solely on viewing ruin and allowing the camera to take over and capture the space; the light, the dark, that which intrigues the individual eye but that which only the camera revealed. Hours and hundreds of photos were taken, exploring the place, which upon return was deemed to be



Case Study 4 - The Installation

Materials: Red transparent plastic, string and tacks

Image 2.56 The Intrusion, Red Series 3 | Guelph | Sept 2009



not even a small portion of the secrets the place held. The first visit was only an exploration of the house walking around it, shooting images and feeling. The photographs were purposefully not viewed for days so that the direct experience was out of consciousness and placed into only a memory of the days events.

After a few days of thought, the images were then opened and thoughts of an installation created. The practical side took over and thought of what best to create of beauty and perfection combining the spaces and art. This thought was halted soon after it appeared as it did not work with the unconscious, it forced the space into something it was not and drew away from the concept of ruin. The focus was then placed on one pivotal space chosen solely from initial instinct. Allowing instinct to take over, one room based on the experience of exploring the house, not the photographs kept appearing within the mind, an inclosed porch connecting two kitchens.

Image 2.57 The Intrusion, Red Series 4 | Guelph | Sept 2009





I remember entering the room, hearing the home creak, the wind flowing through the open spaces in the wood, around the room and out once more. It was an old enclosed porch adjacent to two kitchens. The porch was more rustic and run down than most rooms in the house. A pile of plywood covering a large hole in one corner. I took the room in with each step forward. I was engrossed in my own world, in my own thoughts.

It is then that my world burst as I heard a noise outside and froze. The distinct sound of a car driving across gravel came to my ears. Instantly a great fear arose within me. The thought of someone invading my world, coming into this space, into this house, in such a vulnerable state crippled me. My mind went off into a reel of a million horrid nightmare daydreams of what might and could go wrong. The scenarios playing and my brain searching for the exits to save me from

Image 2.58 The Intrusion, Red Series 5 | Guelph | Sept 2009





imminent peril. My blood started racing and it wouldn't stop. The room vibrated with my fear and from the grisly daydreams one stood out, imprinted in my eyes. I could see blood dripping down from the walls and ceiling. I was dying within this dying house.

I then heard another vehicle and then another. Fear rose to extreme heights before practicality and reasoning took over. Why would so many vehicles be driving into this farm? The realization hit me with relief. The room echoed the sound of the nearby highway a few miles down the road. I was still alone and I was still safe in my own private world of ruined exploration.

Image 2.59 The Intrusion, Red Series 6 | Guelph | Sept 2009







This installation was made to emulate the dream of the abandoned house. Red plastic droplets were hung on the walls and dropped down from the ceiling. The lifeline of blood revealed in fear and portrayed with bright life.

Blood is what we live on. It comes from the heart, the centre of emotion, the centre of our being. It transports waste, transfers oxygen and nutrients around our body and so much more but we fear it as it can also be what can kill or harm us. HIV, diabetes and heart disease are but a few of the issues that plague our world and make us fear. On an individual level our blood pumps through our body in an unconscious state but it is only in the extremities of joy, pain and fear that we think of it the most.

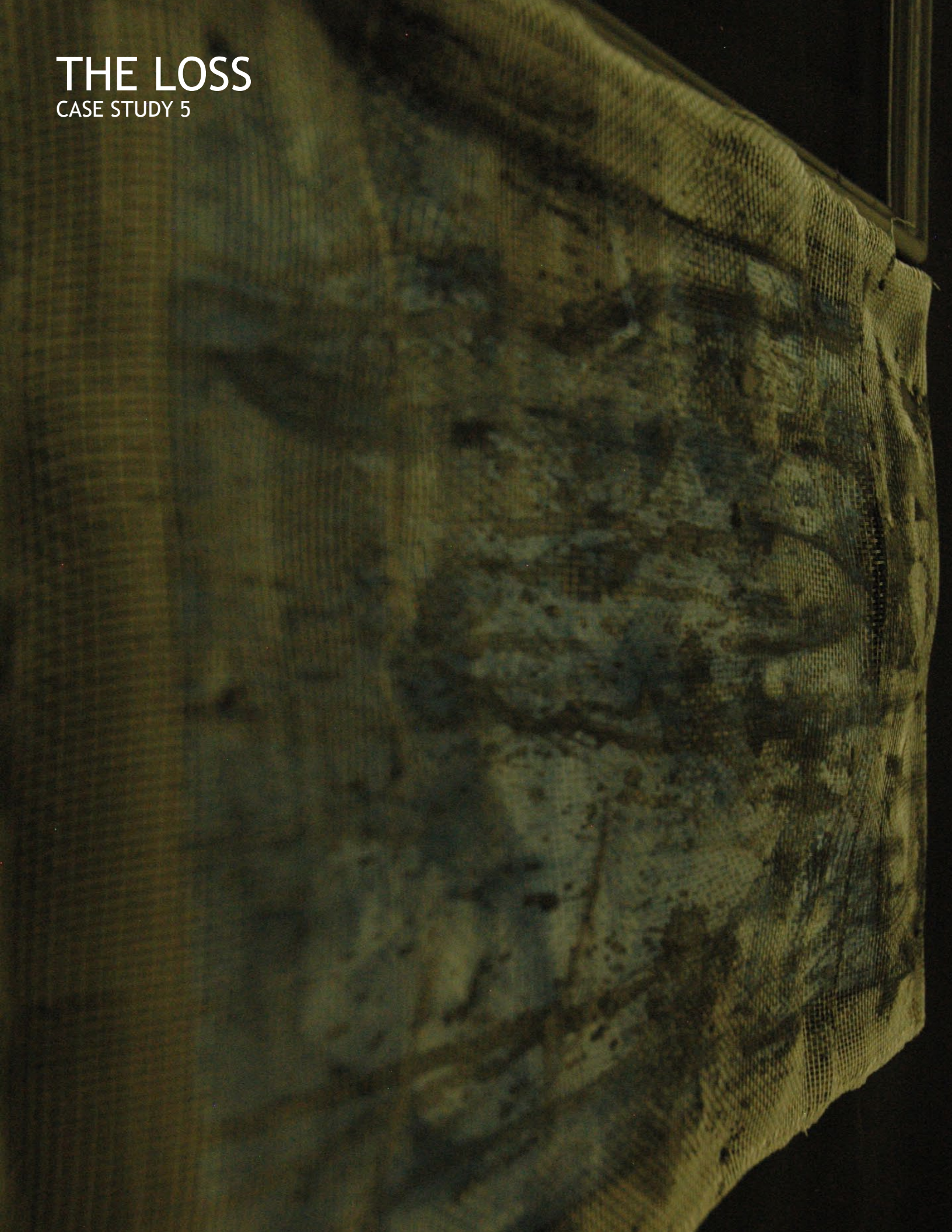
Blood that boils from anger and pain, blood that pulses rapidly with fear, covers the space and fills the walls, drips down and rises up within us and in this space. It transforms the light, the walls, it reflects upon surface upon surface, it blocks the path, it shimmers, flows and swirls around but at times it can hardly be seen in the derelict room that it lies within.

Blood is death. Blood is life.

Image 2.60 The Intrusion, Red Series 7 | Guelph | Sept 2009



THE LOSS
CASE STUDY 5



The home is its occupants; otherwise only a house. The family, the person(s) residing within creates and fills the space. The home reflects upon its humans, the humans reflect upon the home. The hardships and joys shared. The difficulties bottled within. The old adage "if these walls could talk" speaks volumes to this case. When in true ruin, the home is lost. A life lost, never to be returned to the home is the greatest ruin. It is the end. The home can never be full as it once was. Somethings are never physically replaceable. Somethings can never be fixed. This here marks an end, a scar that can not be healed. This is the case of that loss that is rarely exposed.

The unconsciousness of such tragedy arises and is met with reality and the action of opening up such tragedies in its raw blatancy. In life these struggles come individually and collectively. Each action creates a ripple effect but as in most tragedies this effect and action are never discussed. Light is hard to find is such loss.

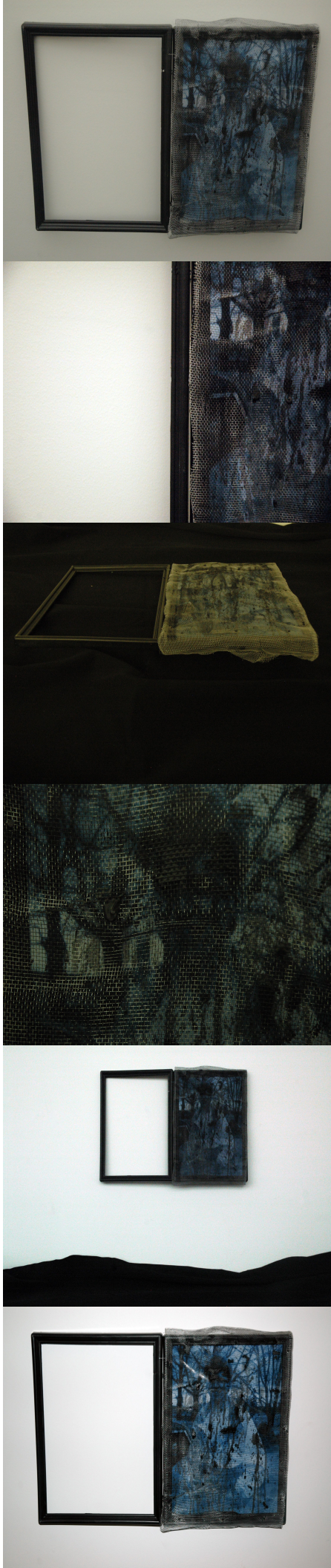


Image 2.61 The Loss, Maquette Test Series | Mar 2009

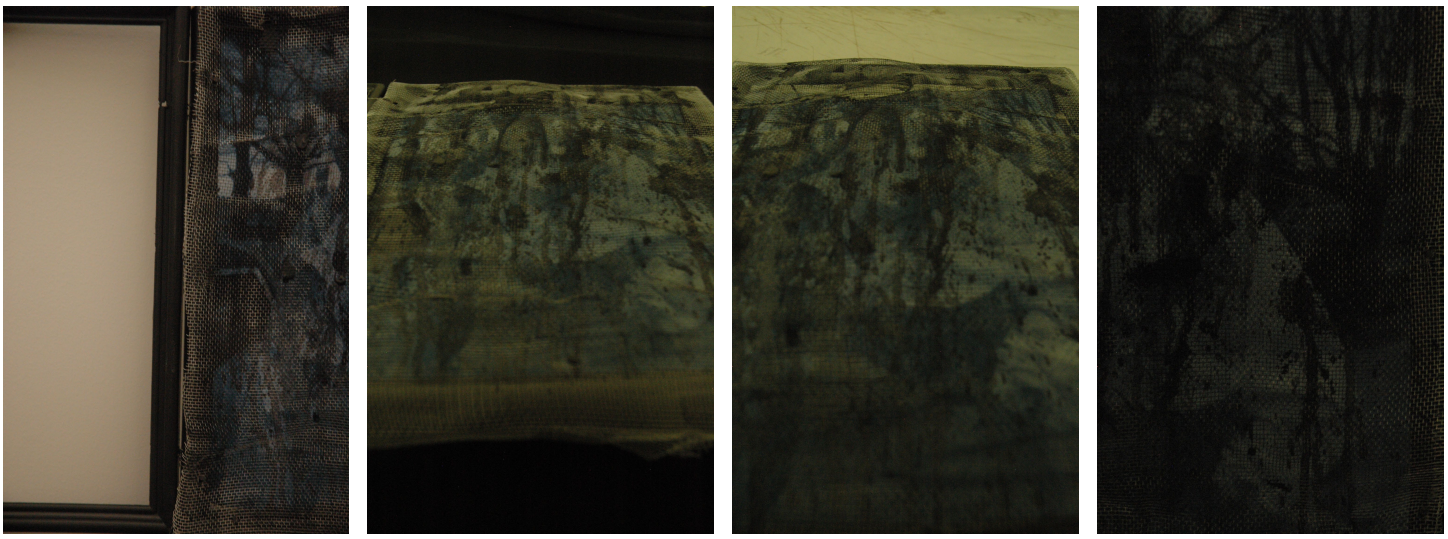


THE MAQUETTE (A TEST)

A test maquette, for the main two sided maquette displayed on this page and the previous, became a piece of its own. Its duality of an empty frame juxtaposed against a frame of a single figure, screened and covered in paint, hidden from the outside world gives off a message and effect of both frames being interconnected. The void, the empty space of a photograph, becomes as important as the frame that is filled.

Through printing there came one extra duplicate image by happen chance. Without thought it was thrown into the frame to create a test case. Upon completion the reality sunk in with great weight. The one image, was the brother that survived the fire marred by the devastation, the other frame empty giving way to the thought of the brother that didn't make it through.

Image 2.62 The Loss, Maquette Test Series 2 | Mar 2009





THE INSTALLATION

A family is placed in 16 frames each member in their own frame in an individual mug shot, tied together by their encompassing frames. Each is connected and separate at once. The images themselves deceive time in their non-chronological order, having a picture of a father as a young teenager alongside a picture of his daughter as a young adult, slightly older than her father. This compilation gives the viewer a sense of questioning and reflection on who might be who and gives a greater emphasis on each individual rather than the normal view of a typical family in its entirety. The screen covers each face separating them and hiding them from that which is outside. They each reside in their own window. Light splatters of paint deforms and impacts them each with an individual distinct pattern and effect.

On the back side of the family, away from the entrance of the room, a single image of an etherial figure is stretched and fragment over the 16 frames connecting them together as one. This figure is the tragedy that holds them together but is glorified in the beauty and joy of the young face untouched by the splattering, held in memoriam of time. The angelic smiling figure is two-fold with beauty and tragedy. His frame is the back, hidden behind each member of the family. This is the life in this family that was lost so young to ruin.

The darkness of the installation is hard to view, let alone confront and discuss. Once confronted can the images portray the beauty of life? Can it move away from the darkness of this former home now incomplete?



Case Study 5 - The Installation

Materials: Black frames, metal screen mesh, glossy photographs, silver metal wire, string, nails and black paint.

Image 2.63 The Loss, Installation Series | Mar 2009



This charged experience of tragedy brought out by the simple act of spraying photographs with paint creates an exemplary cultural site of humanity to reflect upon angst, dereliction of pain and memoriam but begins to look at the joy and the precious nature of our fleeting existences. In this manner such discussion although hard to confront is necessary. The ability to remove the shroud of blackened mesh, to open the windows of the darkened house is a rare occurrence within many homes.

The simple adage, "Without pain, how can we know joy?" does not rectify such situations but points through to the way to patch such ruin within a society, a home and within an individual. It also points to the importance of ruin in life and architecture.

The maquette and installation form the essence of a cultural site, a place where one goes into the in between stages of life, under their skin, to reflect, deal and realize that which they are going through, that which most would hide. A cultural site of emotional and financial stress emerges and begins to define itself in materials, time, memory, dereliction and the essence of dealing with the inside and

Image 2.64 The Loss, Installation Series 2 | Mar 2009








outside simultaneously, individually and as a society. In this case the unconsciousness of tragedy arises and is met with reality and the action of opening up such tragedies in its raw blatancy. In life these struggles come individually and collectively. Each action creates a ripple effect but as in most tragedies this effect and action are never if rarely discussed. Talk of such tragedies are also pushed away by many who do not want to confront the reality of the darkness of life. That which occurs is suppressed but comes out in the unconscious and affects the individual and those around them. When one within the home is hurt, all suffer. Can beauty be seen in a memory of what is lost? Can a still photograph of a face bring about joy in eternal physical absence? Can an architectural space created in this ruin personify and evoke such strong feelings?

Personifying this ruin of tragedy in a proposed work of such architecture could create such a place for reflection and action in which the derelict becomes glorified as art, giving beauty to the sublime. A proposed space of ruin could include moments of pure reflective spaces and other moments of defamation and space of ruin. Within such spaces people may come together as a group or individually,

Image 2.65 The Loss, Installation Series 3 | Mar 2009





to rid of that which they hold under the skin or simply the place itself could personify a vast array of atypical emotive essences.

"The sight informs the statuary's chisel with power to give breath to lifeless brass and marble, and the painter's pencil to swell the flat canvas with moving figures actuated by imaginary souls."[1]

Creating with ruin, can bring about the strongest connection by personifying a space with that which we all as humans know, hardship, not simply the niceties of privilege and perfection not known or given to all. In the end, especially in the essence of expressing a great loss, it is apparent that perfection and eternity are not real and that scars, ruin and dereliction must be integrated in the ever changing home because they are already inherently present.

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1 Addison, Joseph, Steele, and Smith, *The Spectator*. pg.56

Image 2.66 The Loss, Installation Series 4 | Mar 2009






A MOMENT IN TIME

I began my thesis as another person, a different Rose Linseman. Today I hold the same name, but it seems like next to nothing else is recognizable from my old self. An end occurred and the new beginning uncertain. I am transferring onto paper the thoughts that transpired while lying in a strange bed with a white square crossed comforter wrapped in half around me at my boyfriend's co-workers house. This of course being the first time I had been to their home.

Everyone was down stairs laughing and talking loudly. I could not handle it or rather my body couldn't. I sat there thinking of how different my life had become; Who I am?, What my purpose in life is now? How I wanted to finish my architectural thesis even if I can never be an architect now and more so how I wanted everything to go back to the way it once was, How could I finish my thesis now? Maybe I could dictate it to a tape recorder or talk it out loud for someone else to write over how many years but what of the format and the research. Most of the time when I'm having a "good day", I can at least speak properly for a short period of time before I fall to pieces, before the words can't come out, before my mind goes blank and my mouth and/or hands cannot form the words that my head wants it to convey. Sitting in pain in the middle of a strange bedroom, embarrassingly forced to go lay down in the dark, I lay thinking, thinking about this here thesis whilst not having a choice to also think of the pain I was in.

It's now 5 in the morning and I have yet to sleep. I just

drove an hour home from that co-worker's home. My head hurts like crazy and I'm in pain but I must get the words out when I can or I feel that blank brain fog of my neurological condition may come on and my memory will fail me tomorrow as I know the pain will still resound. I fear I will forget and not be able to formulate my thoughts from this evening. I fear my fleeting moment of epiphany will be lost in my mind.

Tonight I realized I am now just like my thesis that I started formulating years ago, before I came into such a mess, before the great many days of pain and inconvenience. I am now so like these abandoned homes I studied, it scares me. One thing happened to me to change my entire future. One moment in time, that made my structure and system start to crumble and fall apart. The abandoned homes that I viewed through photography, filled with an interesting emotive essence, an attractive intrigue that pulled in others in it's beautiful ruin along with these dark forming *maquettes* I created, that depicted and delved into the psyche of the emotions of ruin, now photograph, depict and delve into the darkness of the new me. There is no need to create an architectural space depicting ruin. I already have one. It is now my world, my life. I am beautifully ruined living in a ruined home.

Onwards came the thoughts of *Living Ruin.*

"It's during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light" - Aristotle[1]

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1 Student's Academy, Words Of Wisdom: Aristotle. <https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/words-of-wisdom-aristotle/9781312323582-item.html>

LIVING RUIN

Living Ruin is the closing book of this thesis. It is the experience of the mind of a being, standing in the middle of the world of ruin, playing in its yard, knowing and feeling ruin. Brought forth chronologically, moments of darkness, imperfection and tragedy are portrayed from the perspective of the one living it.

Nature comes along and transforms one person's entire entity in the blink of an eye. It is this transformation that teaches us the most about living and creating.

IMPERFECT HUMAN CREATIONS

In cases of extreme failure from ruin, the home creates a greater symbiosis between its occupant and its form, a greater reliance between the human and its architecture. The home becomes the saviour and the prison. The individual in ruin relies upon the home as a place of their continual sanctuary. The imperfect home and the imperfect human suffer, and fail, as one. The house in ruin adopts the individual in ruin, as an imperfect space, no one else but the ruined chose to live in. Together they live in failure. The ruination of architectural form and the ruination from physical and mental disabilities are taboo, not to be breached, especially within the field of architecture.

Without human occupancy, architecture is in death - it has failed. These human and architecture failures are buried. *Researching abandoned buildings in architectural study brings about little; few photographic architectural essays on abandoned spaces, some specific discussions on preservation and revitalization, talks of building health but rarely an example of the beauty of the imperfect nor* an emphasis on the importance of ruin as a force of creation. This discussion of embracing and designing with human and architectural imperfection is not on a regular agenda as it should be; there is always ruin to hide from. Our health and the health of our buildings are often at the fate of nature but our stance in design is controllable. One may create in the style of the ancient Greeks in a constant obsession with utter perfection of the human body and its architecture; the opposing approach is that of the Japanese "wabi sabi", creating with an exaltation of the imperfect; alternatively

one may choose to find a balance between perfection with imperfection. The outcome of such designs create very different emotional atmospheres. Unfortunately, the avenue of creating in human imperfection is one very seldom travelled. "... *Ruination – hardly an outcome desired by the architect, builder, or owner."*[1] Listening and embracing the imperfection within ourselves, the world before us and in our work leads to a new level and dimension of creating.

Beyond simply depicting abandoned scenes in their imperfect raw, dirt laden form, there are a group of artists, mostly photographers, who create imperfect emotional interplay between the ruin of the human and home in abandoned architectural demise. They often places themselves or others within the spaces before them. These pieces create charged emotional spaces that extend beyond the physical aesthetic of other worldly euphoria to a greater depth of an emotional human aesthetic, charged with the beauty of darkness and a relation to a personal world in a tangible but transformative time. These pieces should be looked upon as examples of new avenues of design and how design can evolve into other dimensions, places more worldly and more expressive of our true selves, depicting the ebb and flow of daily human existence.

Life's accidents, unfathomable in hindsight become a surprisingly significant part of one's path, growth and essence. Trying to put oneself into the shoes of this ruin is a necessity in design as it depicts the truth that life is not an ideal perfection. Creating art and architecture in part from failure imbues the palpable reality of life within the human household.

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1 Mostafavi, Mohsen, and Leatherbarrow, *On Weathering, pg.5*

"I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain— upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows— upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveler upon opium—the bitter lapse into every-day life—the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart—an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it—I paused to think—what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. … The writer spoke of acute bodily illness—of a mental disorder which oppressed him—and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best and indeed his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady … Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. … I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all. … It was, indeed, a tempestuous yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty. … From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast."[2]

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2 Poe, The Fall Of The House Of Usher, pg.3,4,6,7,20 + 25

MY ENTRAPMENT

EVENT 1



The blockage in my head remains.
I can not go forward,
nor can I go back
but I am not here in the present.

I keep trying to get out
but I can not find my way back.
I am held down,
I am held back.

I am trapped in this moment of endless time
underneath that which is not truly there
but that which still holds me in its tight grip.

I put on my war paint,
to brave the outside world,
to hide from that which is within.
I toss and turn. I
push forward to no avail.

I am not dressed the part,
nor will my body co-operate to do so.
I am half of my former self.
I do not think of or know of a future self.

Here I lie.



Event 1

Materials: Wire metal mesh, translucent curtain fabric, the human body, nude bandeau and nude bottoms with makeup.

Image 3.1 My Entrapment Series | Nov 2010



First moments
placed into the fray of ruin,
exploring the space
of such darkness
through this human body.

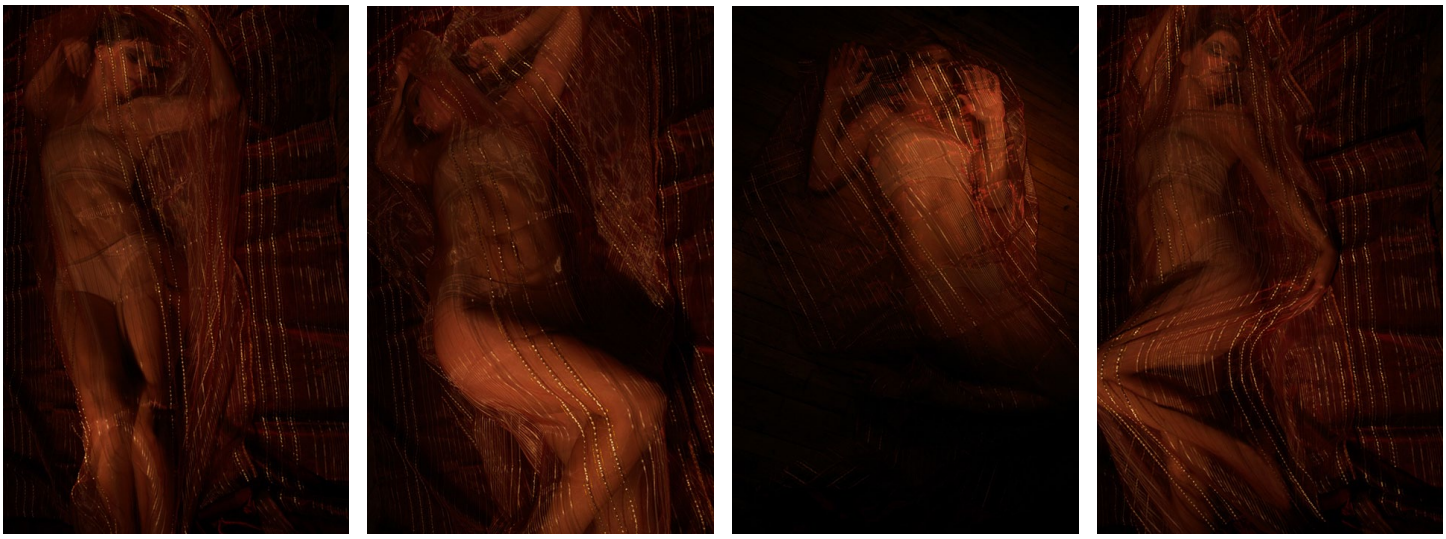
Releasing the darkness
through the soul
of the eyes.

Living together imperfectly in struggle,
putting forth my perfection
for all to see.

My home,
a portrayal of struggle,
a fabric of a connecting world
in humanity.

Trapped, writhing, in the world of ruin
under the flowing current.

Image 3.2 My Entrapment Series 2 | Nov 2010




MY NEW LIFE
EVENT 2

Medically forced to leave school, often bed bound, diagnosed with Hyperadrenergic P.O.T.S. alongside other permanent afflictions and slotted for pre-cancer surgery; I was not going to get better. Ruin sunk in deeply. The sentiments still return, I was lost, not sure where I belonged or who I was, no longer seeing with the world before me.

Trying to type on my computer through the fog of another unwilling all nighter, I feel the pounding in my brain and the swirling of my stomach that has become the norm, increasing in severity. I have not slept all night and had no urge to fall asleep. My body is in a fight or flight mode. At 7am, I gave up sleep.

The house a disaster, under a cloud of demolition dust, no physical ability to unpack, no hope of permanence and not an end to the ruin in sight. The thesis container searched, once and then twice revealing only these blue and red paintings and a memory of their writing. Red anger and then great blue nothingness. No will to finish, just mundane splashes of paint in deep non-variegated colours of automatic strokes. One day the writing will rise from the ashes. My ruins surround me.

Little blood to the brain makes asking my partner for the blood pressure cuff difficult. Very low blood pressure readings mean I should be asleep but I am awake, adrenaline to blame.

Image 3.3 My New Life Series | Jun 2013



MY LOST WORLD

EVENT 3



I still look to portray my own perfection although I do not embody it. This event became a circumstance of the need to create some light in the darkness, to create beauty within my ruin.

I modelled from my mid teens until a couple years after my accident. I hid my work for a long time from others. It was my alternate life, my alternate self, my private world. Modelling was a creative place where I personified an ideal version of myself, one others did not recognize as me. One that I felt was a part of the real me in my temporary transformations. My accident changed my life. I tried to model fashion clothing lines for buyers, walk in fashion shows, shoot for new designer look books but my imperfect new limitations rang out. I had medicinal weight gain and I was unable to book as many jobs, the pain was hard to hide, my body would shut down on me and I would start to black out on sets and after fashion shows. I could no longer express myself. I gave up modelling.

I had lost my step-sister, Clare, to breast cancer in January 2011, the month of my accident. I remember throwing up and popping pills at her funeral, the concussion and whiplash raging in my body. Later that year I lost my cousin in law Pam to colon cancer. I decided to model again to create a cancer campaign.

Then I was diagnosed with pre cervical cancer, stage zero. I would tell all those I could of the taboo subject, in hopes they would get checked or donate to help others suffering.

Image 3.4 My Lost World Series | Jun 2013



This is me, trying to model when I was ill, living ruin, forcing myself through an arduous day of shooting to create perfection. Ruin didn't mean I had to set aside perfection but I had to fight past my body. Modeling was harder than it used to be. I had to fight harder for it. The image was well received but little commented on with its large C topic title blaring at viewers. Private messages were sent by some, sharing their secrets of Cancer.

A photoshoot of the true raw dark portrayal of the ruin of cancer mixed with my other illnesses may have been a stronger message but I feared that extreme ruin would turn many away in the negativity of reality. Dark graphically explicit images are hard things to face within one's own mind and home let alone publicly as a society. Cancer awareness aside, the goal was to show imperfect beauty in trying times. The more that I forced perfection, not content with simply moments of beauty alongside the ruin, the more my inherent imperfection became. In contrast without striving to attain any perfection, I felt I was not living life.

Taking these revelations into designing brings forth the need for both perfection and imperfection.

Image 3.5 My Lost World Series 2 | Jun 2013






MY DECREPIT HOME

EVENT 4



I purchased my first home in May of 2014. The house compounded my ruin and continues to do so. The outside needs some basic work but the interior needs complete renovation. It seems as though everything that can go wrong in a home is here; crumbling walls, faulty electrical, leaking plumbing, sloping floors, no insulation, an old furnace without ductwork in the centre of the living room, septic backup, leaking roof, yellow cigarette tar triggering my mast cell disorder reactions, a tiny inaccessible dirt floor crawl space, former rodent and current bat infestations, a jungle yard and a rotting roof. I'm not sure if it is my home, or simply my house that affords me a place to lie my head. It was the best option I could find; the only avenue we had available, cheaper than rent, as a disabled person on an income that most banks would not consider, with my partner newly returning to the country, self employed starting his own business, being my caregiver and paying off former debt. Even still I needed a co-signor.

Every time someone asks me why I chose to live here, I hesitate. There was no choice. I had to live here. It is far from almost all that I know. It is far from perfect but it was best I could do. It was the best of the worst. I am bound by this house. I couldn't afford something else, barely able to make this purchase. This house is my new world. This is where I live, where I do business and these are the walls that hold me in. This is my prison. My health binds me to this place. It affords me a sanctuary, at times, to lay my head and wait for the coming of a better day when nothing else can be done. This house will fall or grow according to my level of ruin. My hope being we will both come out of the ashes, as dire as that is, our fates are connected as long as I am here.

I love my home. There is so much potential in its ruin. I can still see it as it once was in all its glory. I dream of what it may be one day.



Image 3.6 My Decrepit Home Series | Feb 2014

MY CHALLENGE

EVENT 5



Everyday my thoughts run circles. I cannot get away. I can not rest. I can not take action. These pauses in a life that still beats, brings me unto a world within the confines of the brain, into the very centre of the being, that brings me all of this trouble, my ill wired brain.

The barriers remain. I am stuck on these stairs between floors. I can not go forward, nor can I go back. I can not go up nor down but I am not here in the present. I try to get out but I can not find my way. I sit here and reflect.

Life alters from day to day, from moment to moment. A piece of me falls off, and floats off into the oblivion, never to return. Mother nature's plan slowly rips at my soul. I look to the ruin around me and feel at home in its demise. I look into my own reflection alongside the ruins and I see myself blending in. I have started to demolish these walls, peeling back the layers as the layers peel back themselves, crumbling on their own.

One day this room, will be different; one day this place will belong to someone else or maybe not exist, nor may I exist on that same day.

I see this place only truly within my head, in the glory I dream it once had and in the beauty I dream for it to be. It is in purgatory for an indefinite amount of time within the world of human years.



Image 3.7 My Challenge Series | Feb 2015



As was at one point, I realized I found myself within my thesis, there came a point where I found my first home was also my living ruin. It became more so riddled in ruin by my presence within it.

This morning the wallpaper had ripped and fallen down in the night. The home itself seemed to choose its time, this day. My body chose to revolt this day with dizzy spells, neurological pain and a constant struggle with movement. I rested and truly reflected.

The home showed its duress during shooting as small bits of plaster behind the wallpaper fell onto the stairs through shooting and the wallpaper continued to fall, eventually coming off in my hands. The end, the death of these broken pieces, their crumble, begins the cycle of a new start. In their ruin, there seems to lie an energy of rebirth on a natural pace slower than my human heart desires.

The mirror is down, the lath still hangs in places but the plaster and wallpaper no longer cover these walls, while the studs and outer double brick wall are now exposed in some sections. With moving forward to lessen one ruin, another ruin takes its place for some time, a timeframe only fate will be the judge of.



Image 3.8 My Challenge Series 2 | Feb 2015

MY BEDROOM WINDOW

EVENT 6



This bedroom window, my window, is my connection to the outer world. It is the veil between my everyday and my daydreams. Quite often I am bed bound, stuck here in my bed, a sanctuary I truly love for its horizontal plane of reprieve and regeneration while simultaneously loathing it, for the need for what seems like its constant use and its entrapment from the outside world I long to be in.

Spring had sprung, the world was waking up and moving outdoors once more. I could open the curtains and the window sash to the sounds and smells beyond my four walls, beyond the four sides of this bed.

Part of this beautiful red bud tree with purple spring buds, is now gone, broken and killed by chance as the neighbour's old tree fell upon it, split it and crushed it to the ground. This view, this moment shall never again be the same. The ruin and loss of its beauty brings sadness but it also holds a precious quality of grateful thoughts of being able to sit here in this room to catch such a sight; to stop and behold the fleeting moments of life before me here in this built form.

Here I lay, in this prison, writing, thinking and dreaming out this bedroom window. Ruin is all around.

Image 3.9 My Bedroom Window | May 2015

MY SPACE
EVENT 7



As the pain seeps through my brain and into my back,
I lay my body down helplessly,
reveling in thoughts and hopes of normalcy.
Please make it go away.

The pounding incessant,
the procurement of words lost
into the abysmal fog
brought down upon my entity.
There is nothing, nothing else
but the pounding pain from within.

Pain strewn throughout the scattered pieces
of what my brain once was.
Pervading, permeating and penetrating
into the depths of me.

The electrical currents
mis-wired shoot downward
from my ceiling to my floor.
The invisible worm that has infiltrated
can not be found.

It has started to creep in.
It has but simply just begun.
The darkness moves into my light seamlessly.
I am starting to crack.
The darkness has invaded.



Image 3.10 My Space Series | Feb 2015



Abandoned Alone
Blank stares, whispers in the light,
the words spoken out loud.
They do not understand.

You are different
you feel it every second of every day.

Their eyes, upon you, burn.
You have to speak of it.
You have to let others know
because they can not see
or feel what is invisible to their eyes.

It is not so apparent and obvious to them.
They do not know of it.
They somehow feel the need to talk about it.
They need to identify you as such.
But they find it hard to talk to you.
You are no longer just you,
to them or to yourself.
You are associated as the one
who is ill
the one who is different.
You aren't normal.

To them
without knowing the visible decay
without personal knowledge of those like you
without the feelings inside them
without experiencing
they can and will never truly understand

You are alone
Or are you?



Image 3.11 My Space Series 2 | Feb 2015



The morning of this shoot we woke to a large pile of snow brought into the space by the old crawl space vents that rose higher into the first floor wall. For myself morning does not bode well with me and I am often bed bound. By the time, I was able to rise and move to shoot the space, there was but a tiny pile of snow left, off to the bottom left of the window. Through shooting, the pile of snow, all but seemed to disappear off the floor and only remained in the wall. When it was mostly gone, I stopped taking images.

The shooting was once again difficult physically. I shot back against the pain and dizziness, literally feeling faint and having to quickly crouch down so as to not black out. I couldn't stand the cold, as my body doesn't take well to temperature changes so a blanket was introduced to get through without major complications. After both this event and the former one on the stairs, I needed to lie down and rest from the effort. The ruin overtook.

The two written responses stem from two different spectrums, the constant infiltration of the physical ailments that infiltrate into the body and abode and secondarily the mental infiltration of the words of others in their curiosity upon viewing that which is my ruin.



Image 3.12 My Space Series 3 | Feb 2015

THE CLOSING

I lie in bed in the final throws of this part of my journey. At this moment of life, I still don't know if any of my former *normal* life has returned but I guess such is the new normal for my life. Change emanates from everything and every moment. How can I expect it to be any different?

I have fought it but I am coming to be resigned to it. There is no alternative. There is no other time but now. This is the end. I am no longer the same person I once was and I can not go back to fully being my old self. I must adapt.

Life is not what I expected. It is more difficult than ever; a constant fight to solve never ending problems. I am not alone in ruin, this I know. Others feel all of this too. I am still an architectural designer. I want to build not just let things fall, even knowing that at one point like all things human, it will fall. This thesis was not meant to be personal in any way aside from a curiosity to explore. Its exploration led me to revelations in my life personally and professional that just came about unwillingly and bizarrely attuned to thoughts and concepts that arose in seeing and creating ruin from an outside world; thoughts that I now feel are inherent within me. This thesis has become a jumping off point in opening my eyes to a new way of creating within my new form.

I will break from this deep ruin, if only mentally. I have to now, more than ever, as another event shockingly breaks into my world and I prepare to bring a human of my own into this downtrodden space. I will paint the walls and fix the broken pieces to make our lives easier but the imperfections I move through in building our family sanctuary will stay with me forever. I will appreciate each

bit of this darkness by finding its light. I will allow the scars to be badges of honour. My child will know ruin and respect its inevitability and will learn to work with it. My architecture will grow in a new way and life will move forward. This is the closing of a beginning.

CONCLUSION

This thesis was and is a continuous journey; a look into the world of personal and collective ruin. Photographic, written, creative and experiential exploration into abandoned human habitats are brought together in this collective journey of the beautifully ruined, creating a piece of time. This collective creates a forum for its readers to open up on taboo subjects, discussing whether true light can be found in such darkness and whether or not such darkness should even be portrayed. The answer for each is personal but within this thesis journey the conclusion becomes apparent and repetitive with the viewing of each image. The light is always inherent in the darkness, it simply needs to be considered and revealed to portray beauty. Ruin is in everyone and everything at all times in varying degrees.

This thesis is for the reader to explore, within themselves, in reflection, discussion and in creating, their own versions of beautiful ruin. They must answer for themselves the questions placed within.

This journey shows beauty and knowledge in ruin through its vulnerability to change. The act of breaking down creates new birth, new life.

Humans and buildings are cyclical in their constant evolution of death and rebirth. Buildings are constantly being constructed, renovated, abandoned to dereliction, destroyed and returned to the earth. Time moving forward, death, imperfection and change are the aspects within our world that we know to be true. As much as one may want to save all the beauty of architecture when uncontrollable circumstances of ruin arise, like humans, death and change

is also inevitable for architecture. Architecture carries forward memory. If we can start to see beauty in the darkness of this ruin, if we take ahold and do not ignore the imperfection we see, architecture can become more significant in memory through its realistic portrayals within the eyes of its daily occupants. Architecture and humans bleed imperfection. Designing with imperfection and impermanence, brings about a unique eye opening tool to creating memory with empathy and reality.

Architecture does not have to be perfection. It can not fix the world's problems - social, economic, health or other. It should not be exclusionary in its black and white opinion of the need for total perfection, in creating good design. Architecture needs to listen and consider what is most important to the situation at hand. It doesn't always needs to be the most innovative, evolving and different. It can strive to be different and to try something new, knowing it will fail due to human failure or fate from the natural world. A building will never be perfect in the eyes of everyone and fate/time/human intervention will change it. It will not last. It may not function ideally for everyone but it must mean something or do something for someone at one time or it is worthless. It must be able to delve into emotional imperfection and ruin to change into something that comes closer to a pseudo perfection for that moment in time in that location. In this way its flaws can be beautiful. Its ever changing ruin appealing as it adapts to a new reality. Buildings are always in some sort of state of ruin in their inherent imperfection which architects must constantly consider, not ignore.

The personal home goes hand in hand with the individual(s) that reside within their walls. These individuals shape their own architecture. An abandoned house on its own can teach so much; How people live? Why they migrate? How they change a space? Who they are? but it is our emotional connection to such broken dereliction that makes us human. The architectural home is a form for

our imperfect visions, a holding place for our imperfect selves and for a specific time in a specific place, they are filled with our light and darkness alongside the light and darkness of our fates. They should be created as such.

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