







# ENGRAMS

Rome 2011

**Mick Finch**

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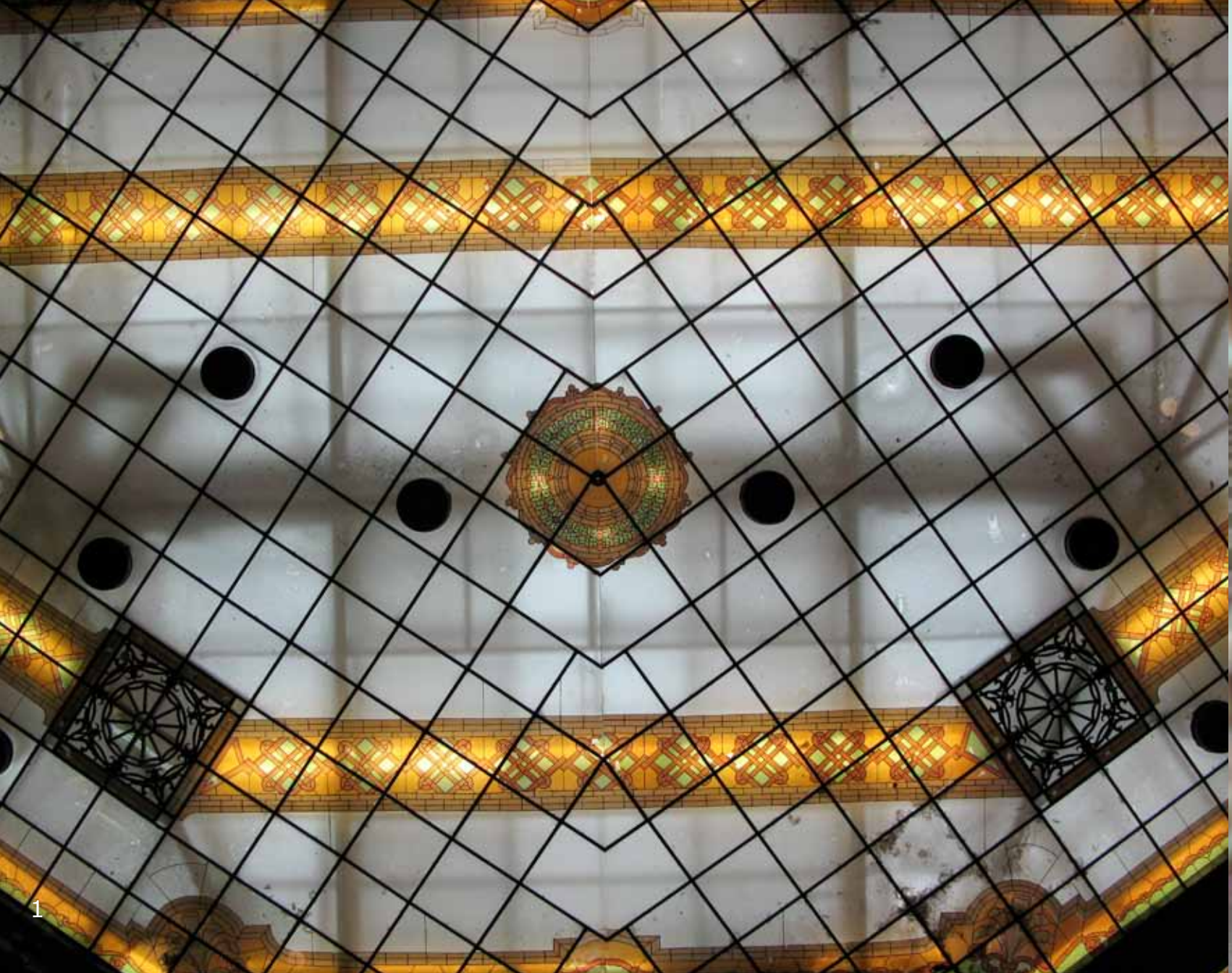
From January to March 2011 I was an Abbey Fellow in Painting at The British School at Rome. This book documents many of the works made during the residency. My intention was to make a series of photo-collages utilising a variation of the relief structure developed in the previous series of works, 'Bare Life' (1). Particular distinctions of the montage/collage relationship of images, and in particular, between the shock with Benjamin and Warburg's continuum, served as the organizing impulse in these works. The relief form served in working layers of places, displacements in time, overlapping histories and the contrasting sensations encountered in Rome into a daily studio practice.

Shock and continuum relate respectively to Walter Benjamin and Aby Warburg's methods in relation to photographic images, and in particular, in the *Pasagenwerk* and the *Mnemosyne Atlas*. The pathos-formula of Warburg's *Atlas* were a device he employed to map the evolution of gestures and signs, Benjamin's *Passagenwerk* similarly used photographic juxtaposition as a means to explore genealogies of the Parisian arcades. There have been many comparisons between these projects in recent years. Benjamin Buchloh's essay about Gerhard Richter's *Atlas* includes a valuable discussion about Warburg and Benjamin (2) but my major reference here is Adi Eyal's remarkable essay Warburg's "Pathos Formula" in *Psychoanalytic and Benjaminian Contexts* (3).

The title of this series, *Engram*, refers to Warburg's appropriation of this biochemical concept that he used as a means to figure memory in relation to images; a form of that Eyal describes as 'memory's "screening" capacity' (4). That this capacity entails qualities of 'trauma' I found to be a material aspect of the images I collected and subsequently integrated into these reliefs in Rome. The notes at the end of this book may shed light on this. They are broad references to the origins of the images and are not intended as explanations or to close readings of them down around synthesized narratives.

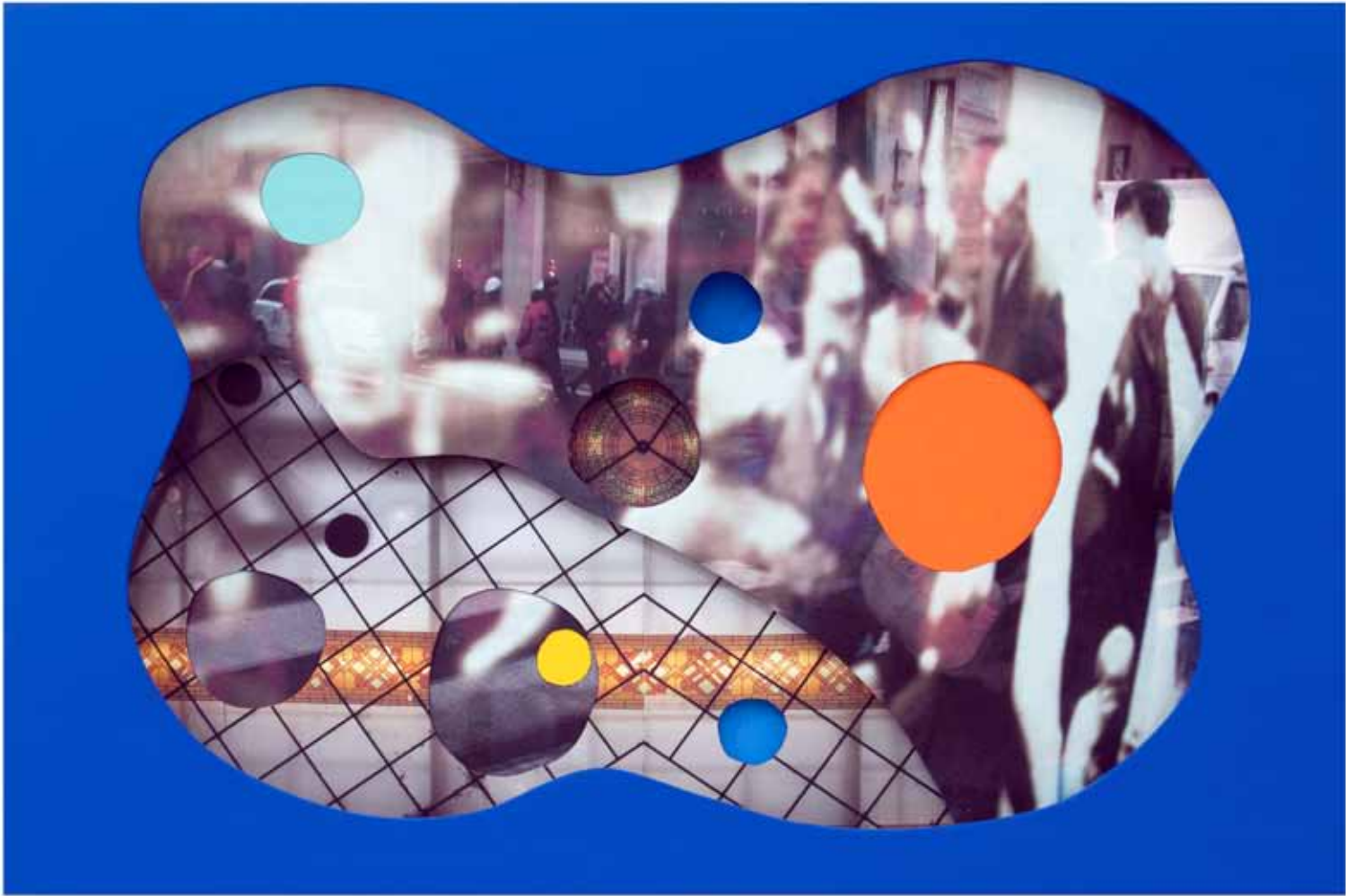
1. See the web archive for these works at <http://www.mickfinch.com/2009/index.html> and <http://mickfinch.com/2010/index.html> .
2. Benjam H.D. Buchloh, Gerhard Richter's Atlas: The Anomic Archive, in Photography and Painting in the work of Gerhard Richter: Four Essays on the Atlas, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2000.
3. Adi Eyal, Warburg's "Pathos Formula" in Psychoanalytic and Benjaminian Contexts. Available as a Pdf download at: <http://arts.tau.ac.il/departments/images/stories/journals/arhistory/Assaph5/13adieyal.pdf>
4. *ibid.*, page 224. She quotes in her discussion Warburg's description of the engram:

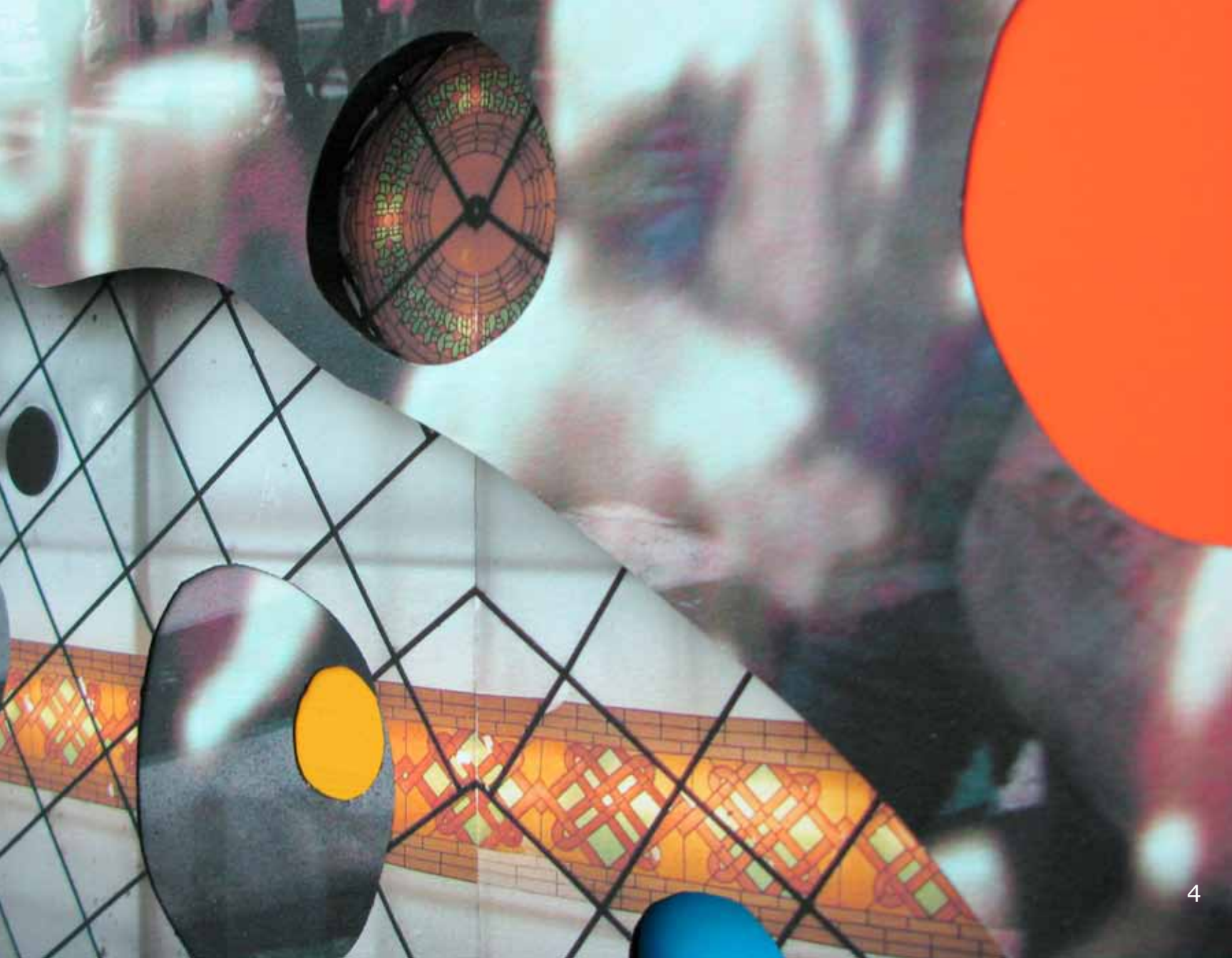
The inherited consciousness of maximalized impressions stamped on the mind (engram) passes them on without taking cognizance of the direction of their emotional charge, simply as an experience of energy tensions; this unpolarized continuum can also function as continuum. The imparting of a new meaning to these energies serves as a protective screen.  
(Aby Warburg, *Journal*, VII, 1929, p. 255).

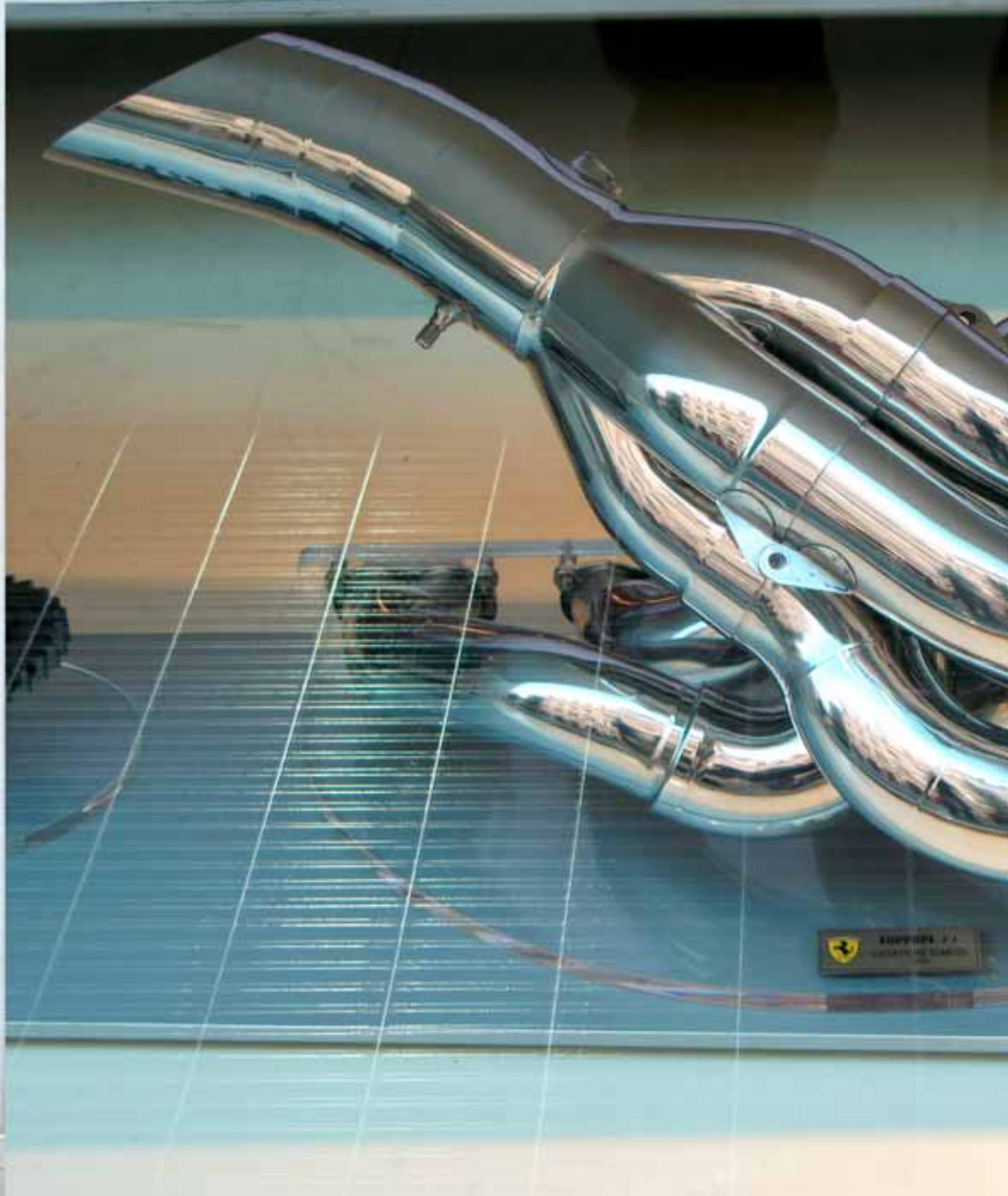




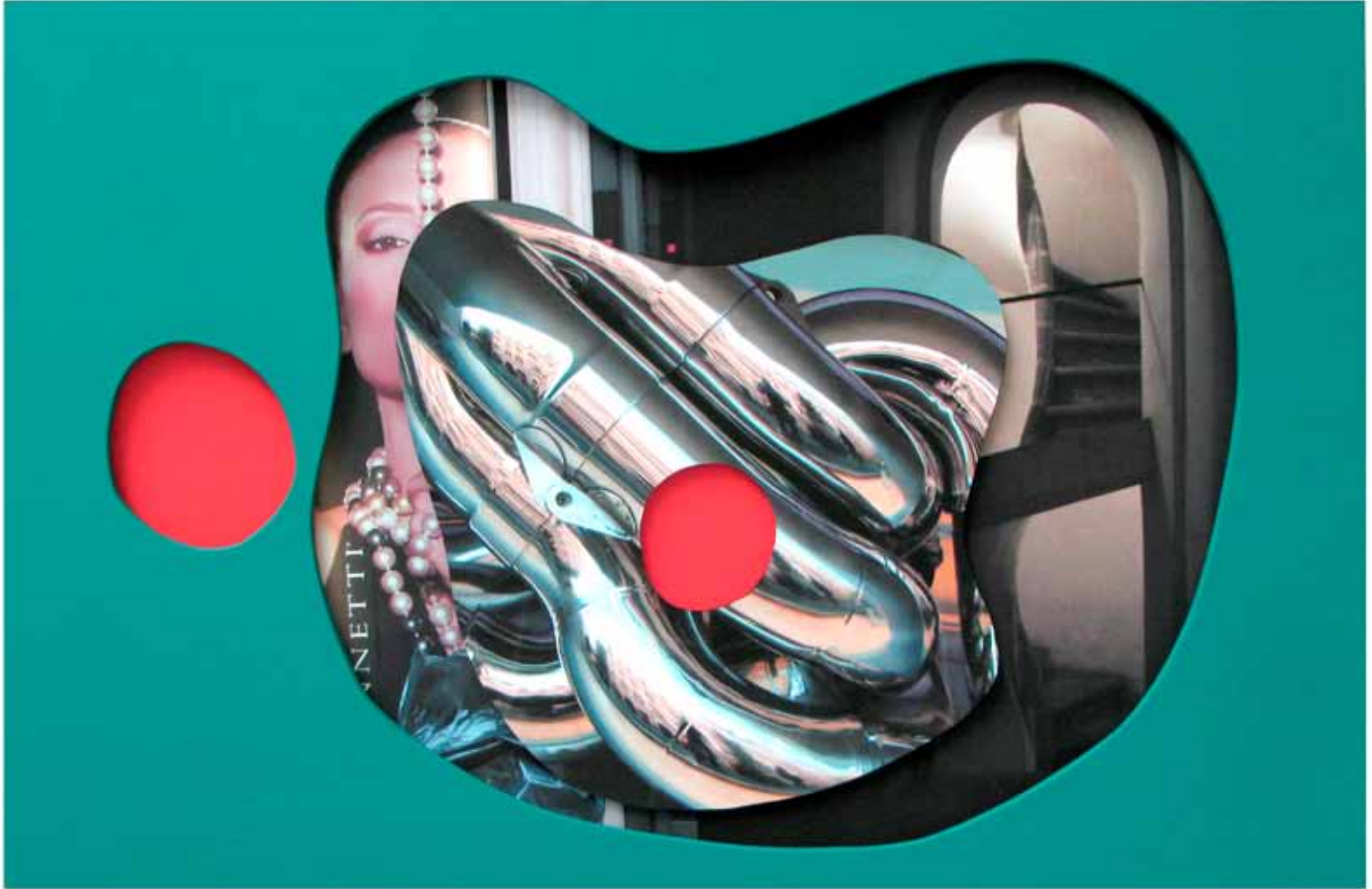












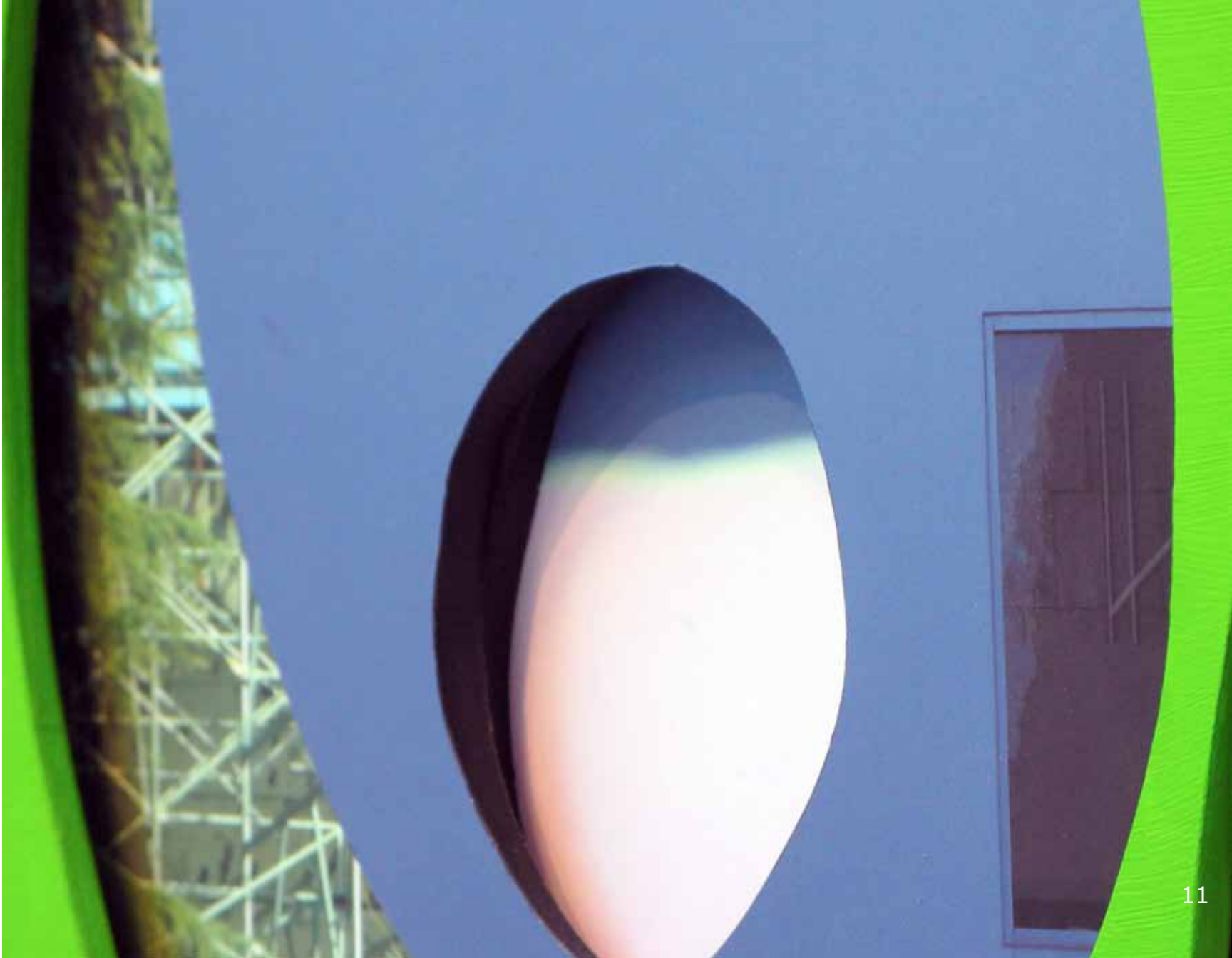


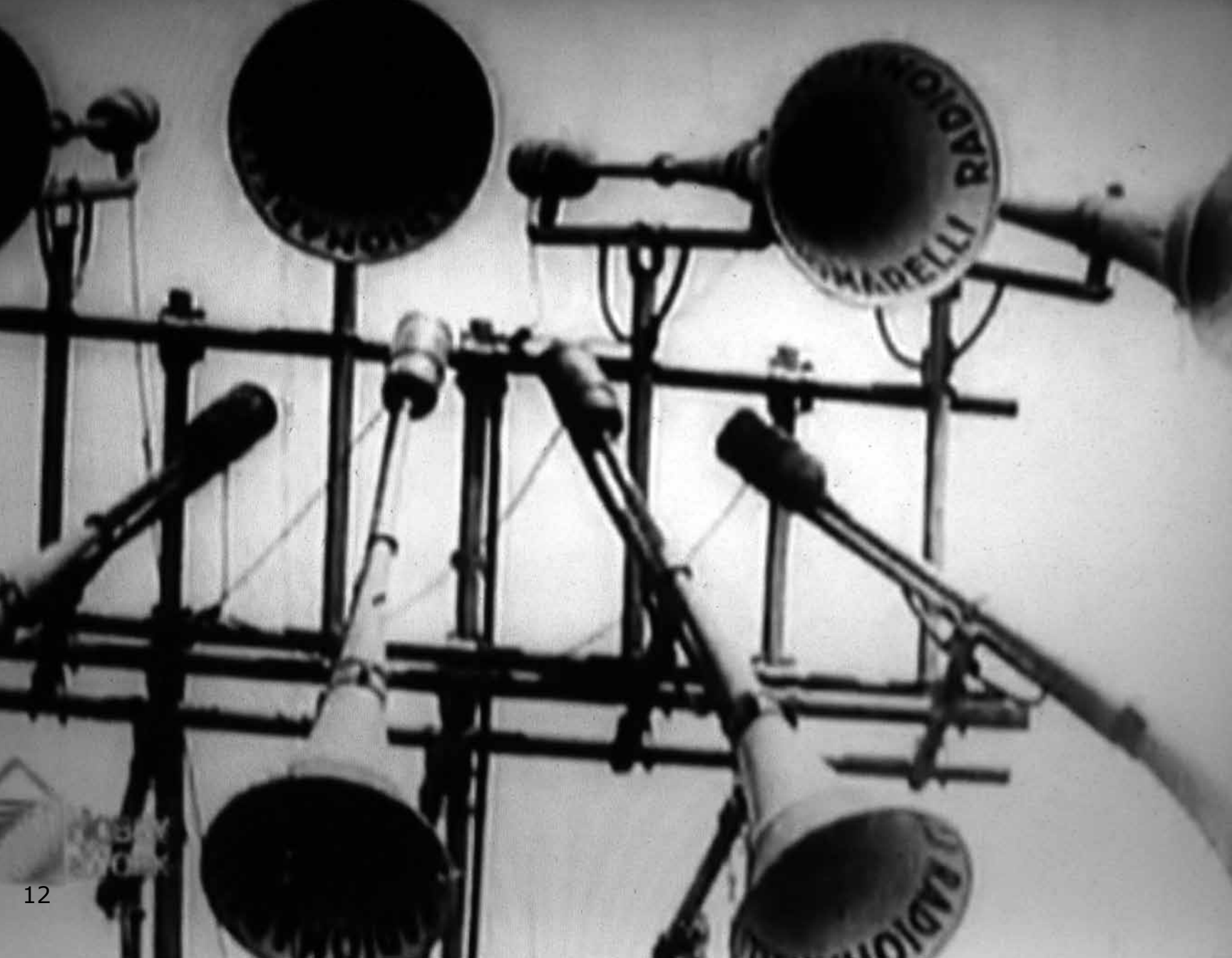








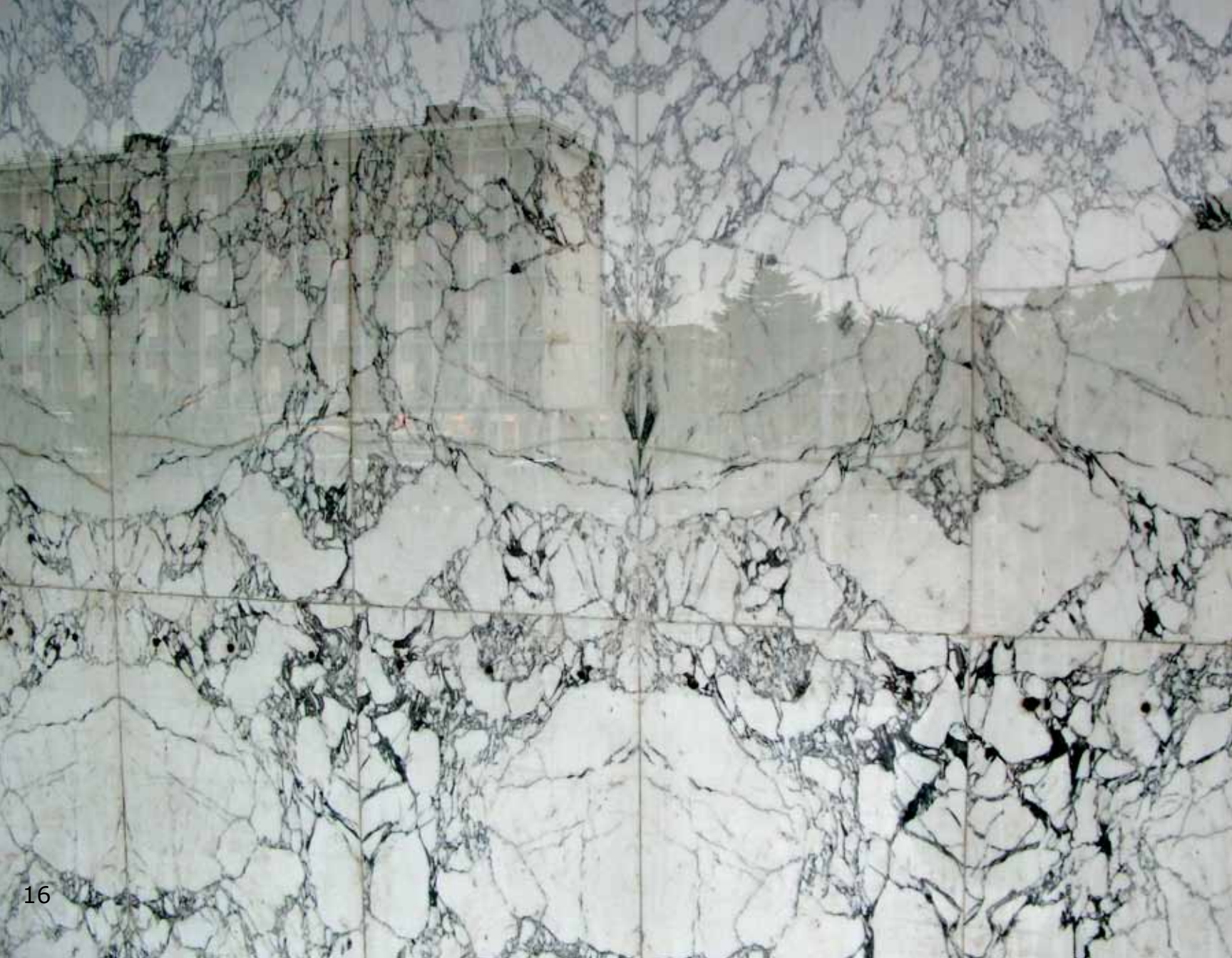






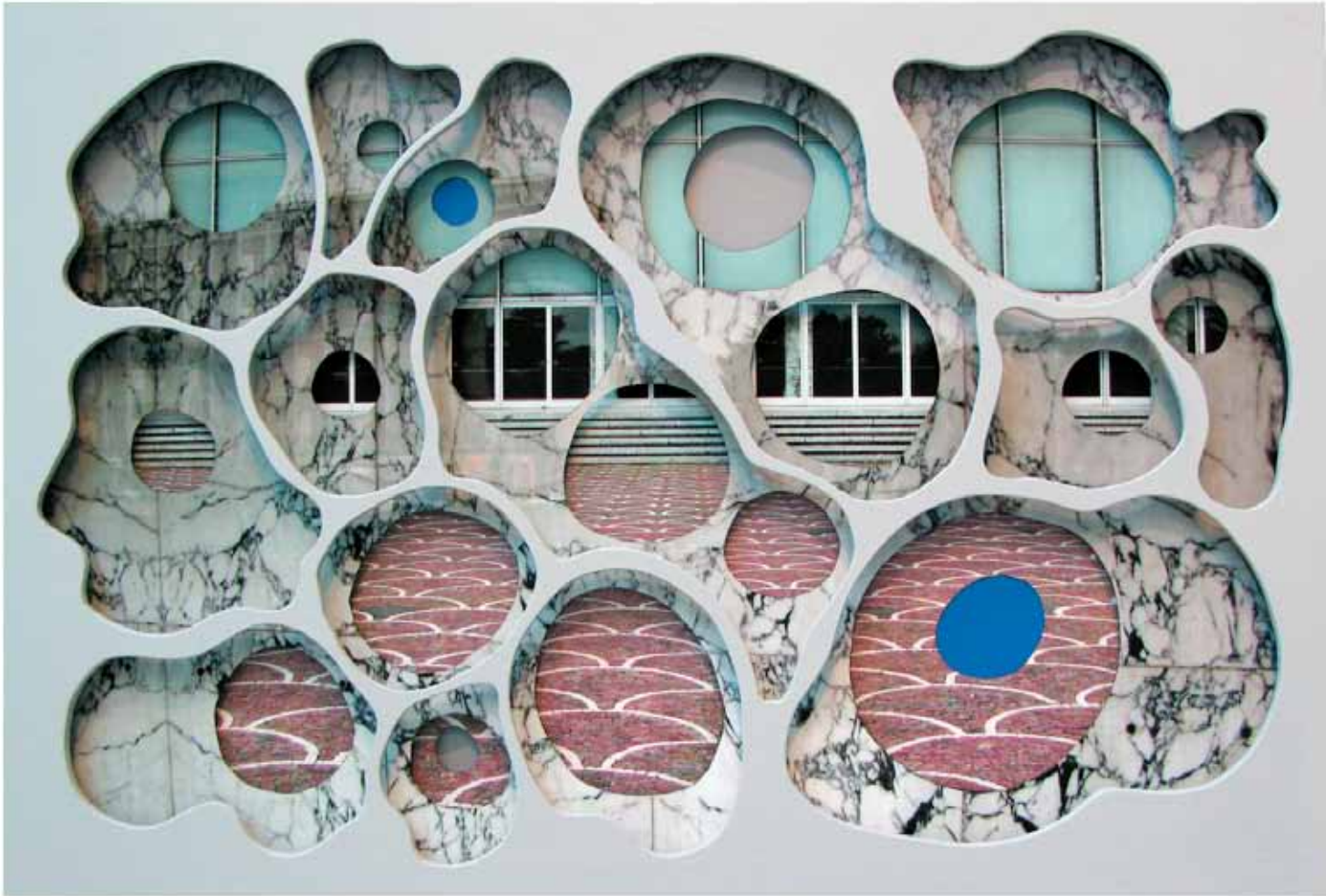






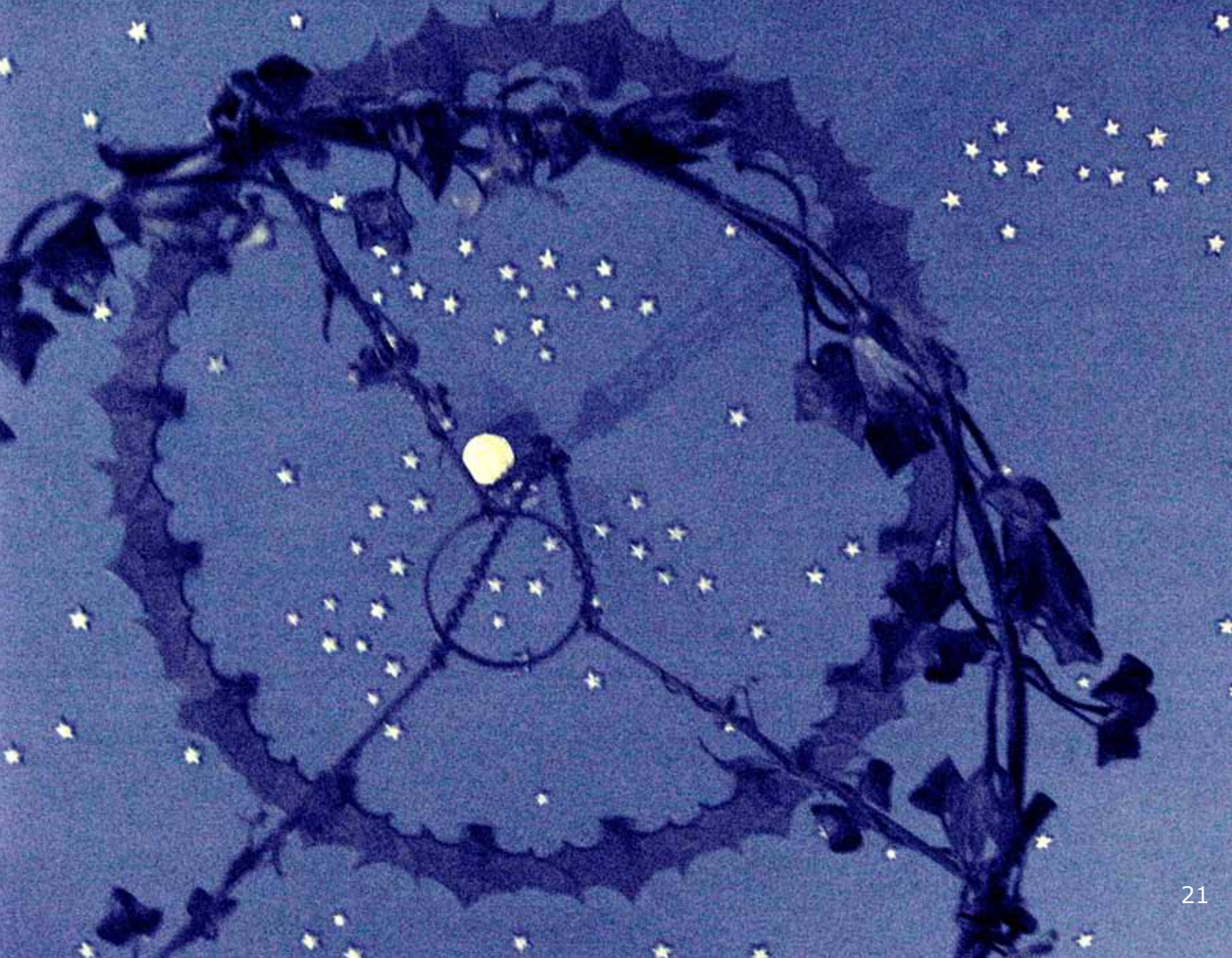


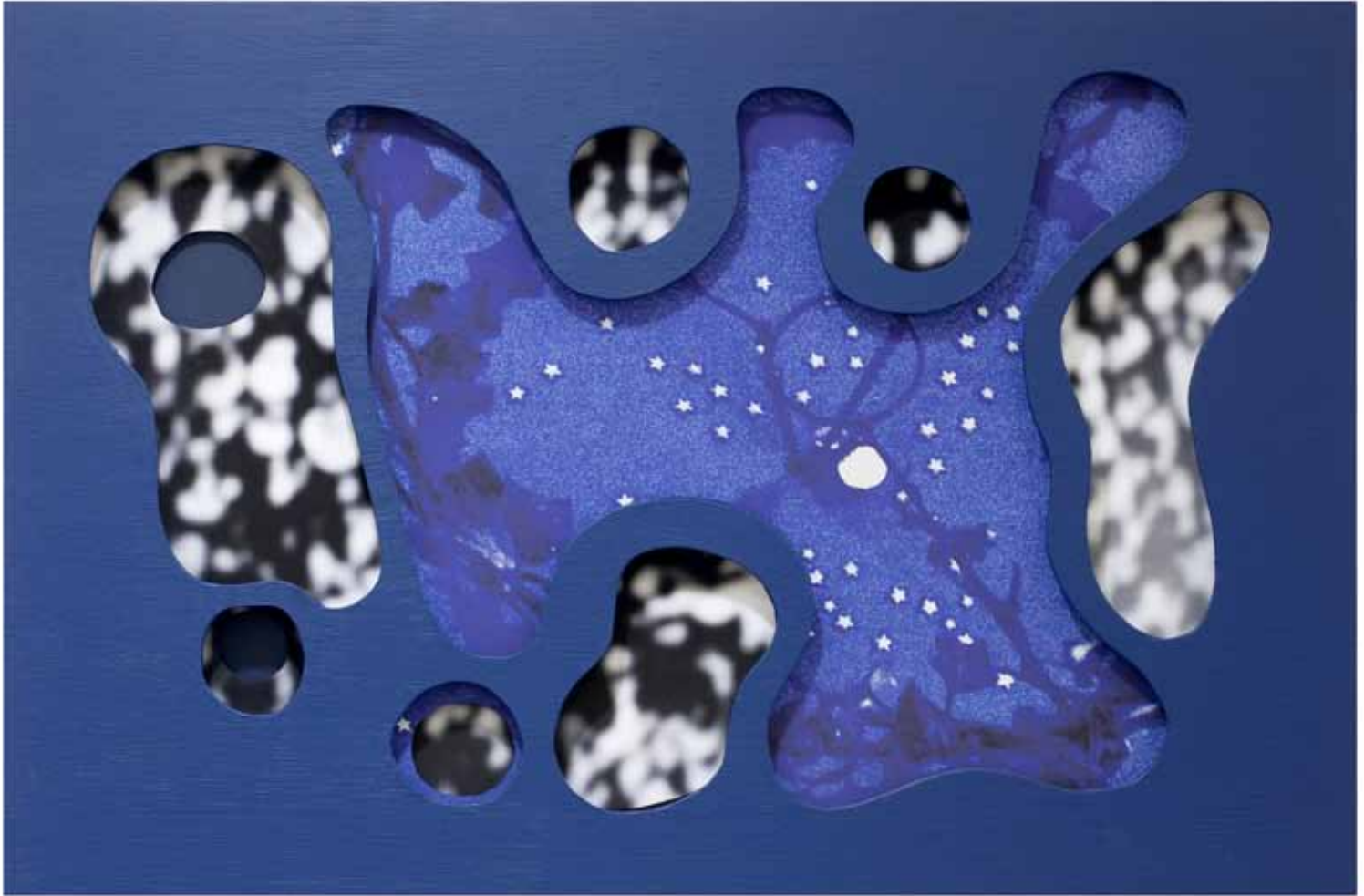




















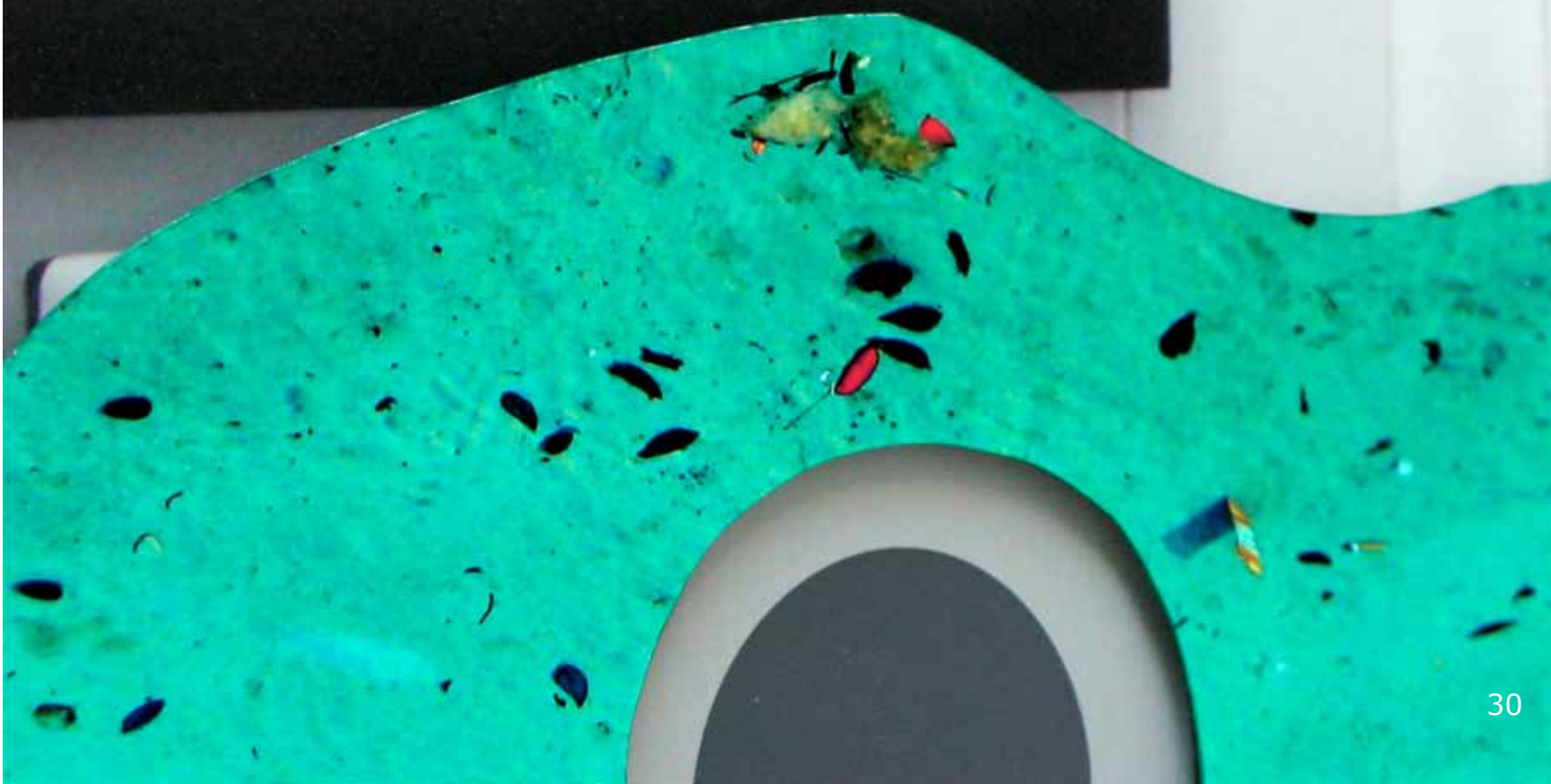






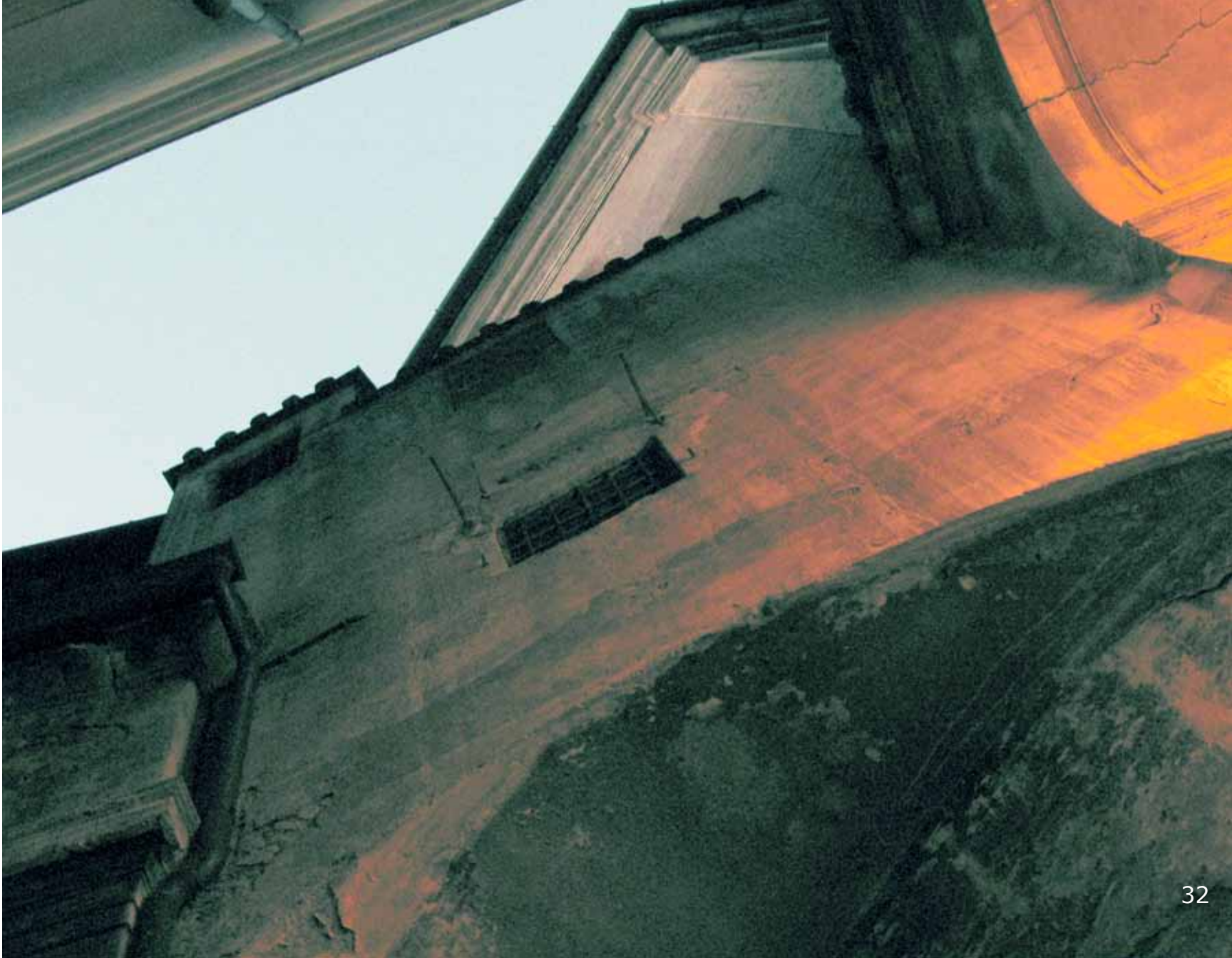












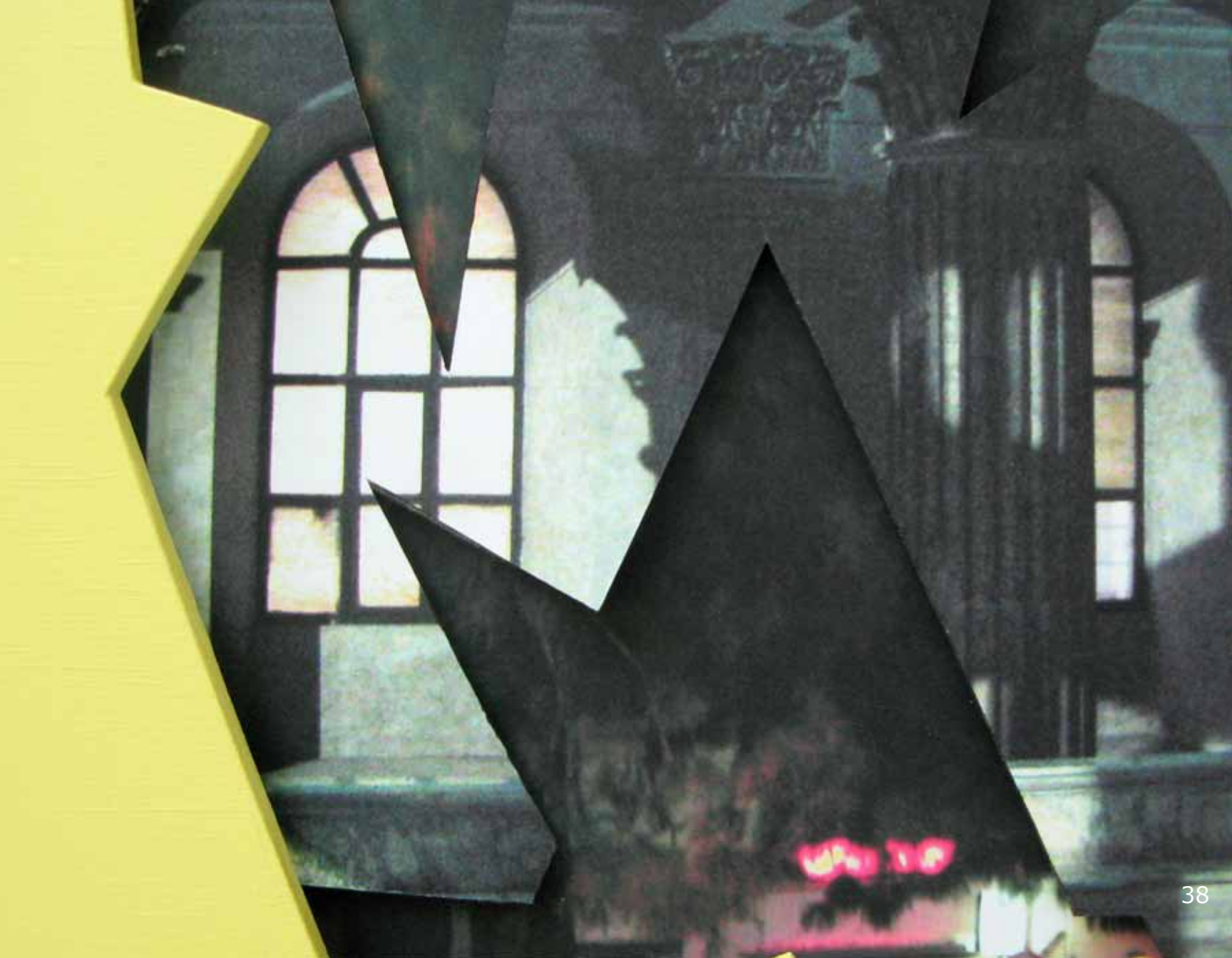






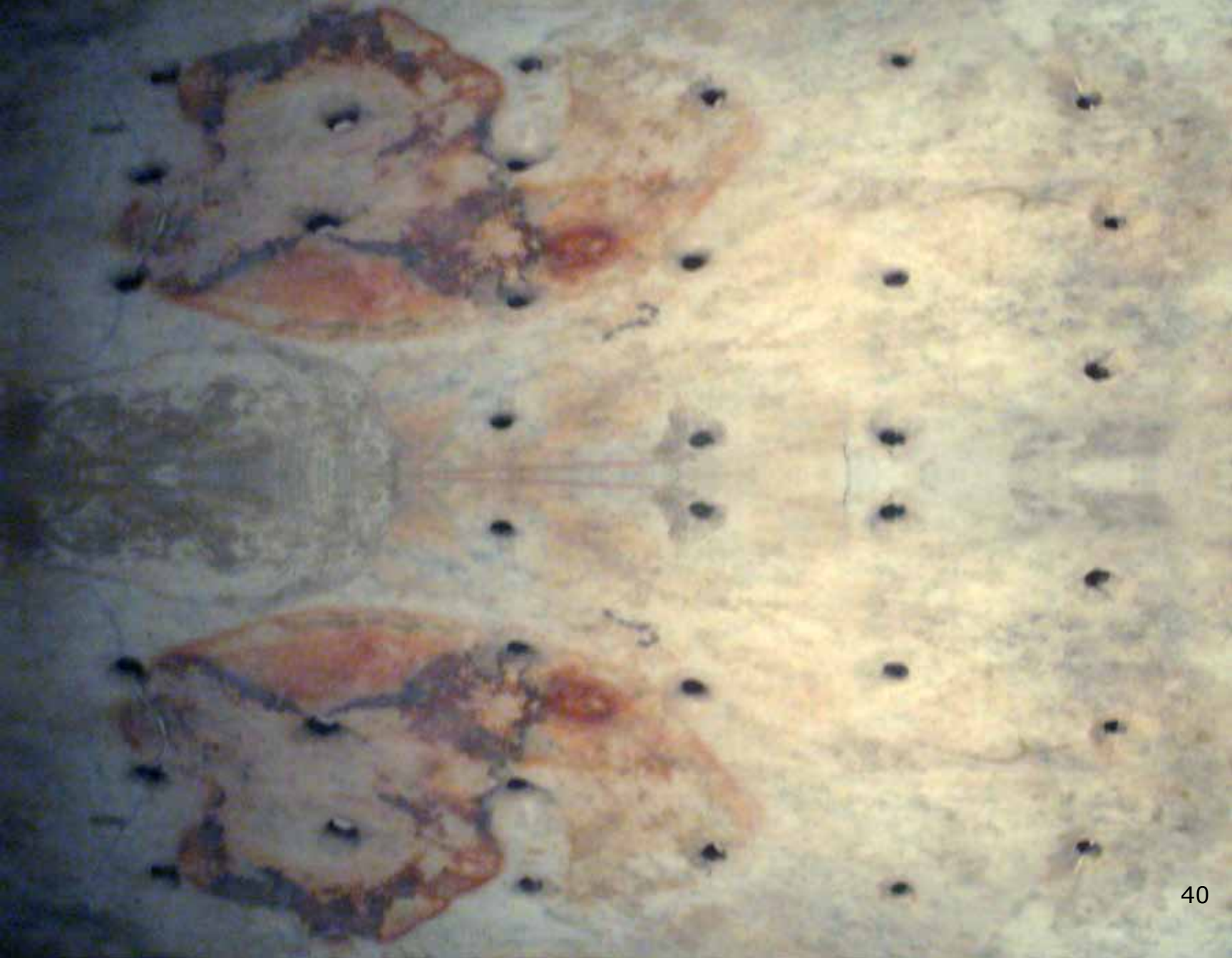




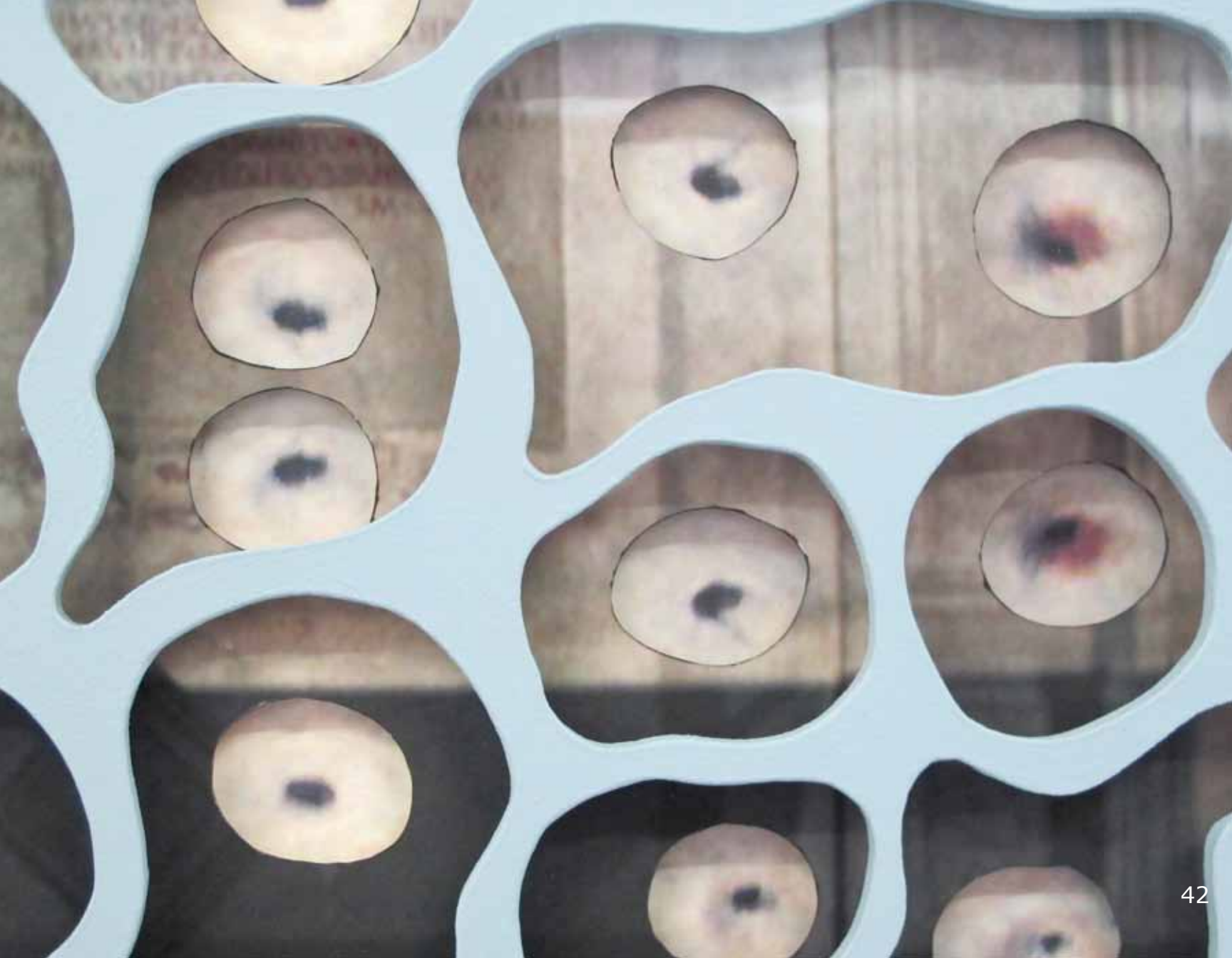














1. The Ceiling of the Galleria Alberto Sordi on Piazza Colonna in Rome.
2. Window of a building of the Parlamento Italiano on the Via del Corso in Rome.
3. Engram 4, 60 x 40 x 4.6 cm, January 2011, digital photo and acrylic on wood.
4. Detail of Engram 4.
5. From left to right:
  1. An advertising image in a shop near the Via del Corso, Rome.
  2. An exhaust assembly from a Formula 1 Ferrari on display in the window of Ferrari's shop near the Corso.
  3. A spiral staircase from Borromini's church San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Rome.
6. Engram 5, 60 x 40 x 3.7 cm, January 2011, digital photo and acrylic on wood.
7. Detail of Engram 5.
8. The Stadio Flaminio, outside the south terrace.
9. Shadow of Chiesa di San Rocco on the Museo dell'Ara Pacis, Rome.
10. Engram 7, 60 x 40 x 3.7 cm, January 2011, digital photo and acrylic on wood.
11. Detail of Engram 7.
12. Public address speakers. Still from news reel archive of a speech made by Mussolini in the Piazza Venezia in the late 1930s.
13. Cracked mirror outside of Mussolini's bedroom in the Villa Torlonia, Via Nomentana, Rome.

14. Engram 8, 60 x 40 x 4 cm, January - February 2011, digital photo and acrylic on wood.
15. Detail of Engram 8.
16. Marble pillar and reflection of the Piazza John Fitzgerald Kennedy through the window of Palazzo dei congressi, EUR, Rome.
17. Piazza John Fitzgerald Kennedy and the Palazzo dei congressi, EUR, Rome.
18. Engram 9, 60 x 40 x 4.5 cm, February 2011, digital photo and acrylic on wood.
19. Detail of Engram 9.
20. Crowd listening to a speech by Mussolini. Still from news reel archive of a speech made by Mussolini in the Piazza Venezia in the late 1930s.
21. Ceiling of Torlonia's bedroom, Casina delle Civette, Via Nomentana, Rome.
22. Engram 10, 60 x 40 x 4 cm, February 2011, digital photo and acrylic on wood.
23. Detail of Engram 10.
24. From left to right:
  1. Ceiling detail in the Oratorio dei Filippini, Rome.
  2. An archive image of the air-raid shelter in the Villa Torlonia, Via Nomentana, Rome.
  3. Detail of a sarcophagus in the Museo Nazionale Romano-Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, Rome.
25. Engram 11, 60 x 40 x 4.4 cm, February 2011, digital photo and acrylic on wood.

26. Detail of Engram 11.

27. Archive photograph of the Piazza Colonna reflected in a mirror in the bathroom of the Arch Bar, Via Antonio Gramsci, Roma.

28. Reflection in the water of a pool in the Parco Borghese, Rome.

29. Engram 12, 60 x 40 x 4 cm, February 2011, digital photo and acrylic on wood.

30. Detail of Engram 12.

31. The via Prenestina, Rome.

32. The alley way between the churches of Santa Maria della Pace and Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome.

33. Engram 13, 60 x 40 x 4 cm, March 2011, digital photo and acrylic on wood.

34. Detail of Engram 13.

35. The Piazzale di San Lorenzo from outside of the Basilica di San Lorenzo fuori le mura, Rome

36. The shadow of the altar on a wall inside the Basilica di San Lorenzo fuori le mura, Rome

37. Engram 14, 60 x 40 x 4 cm, March 2011, digital photo and acrylic on wood.

38. Detail of Engram 14.



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