

domus

INDIA

046

LA CITTÀ DELL' UOMO

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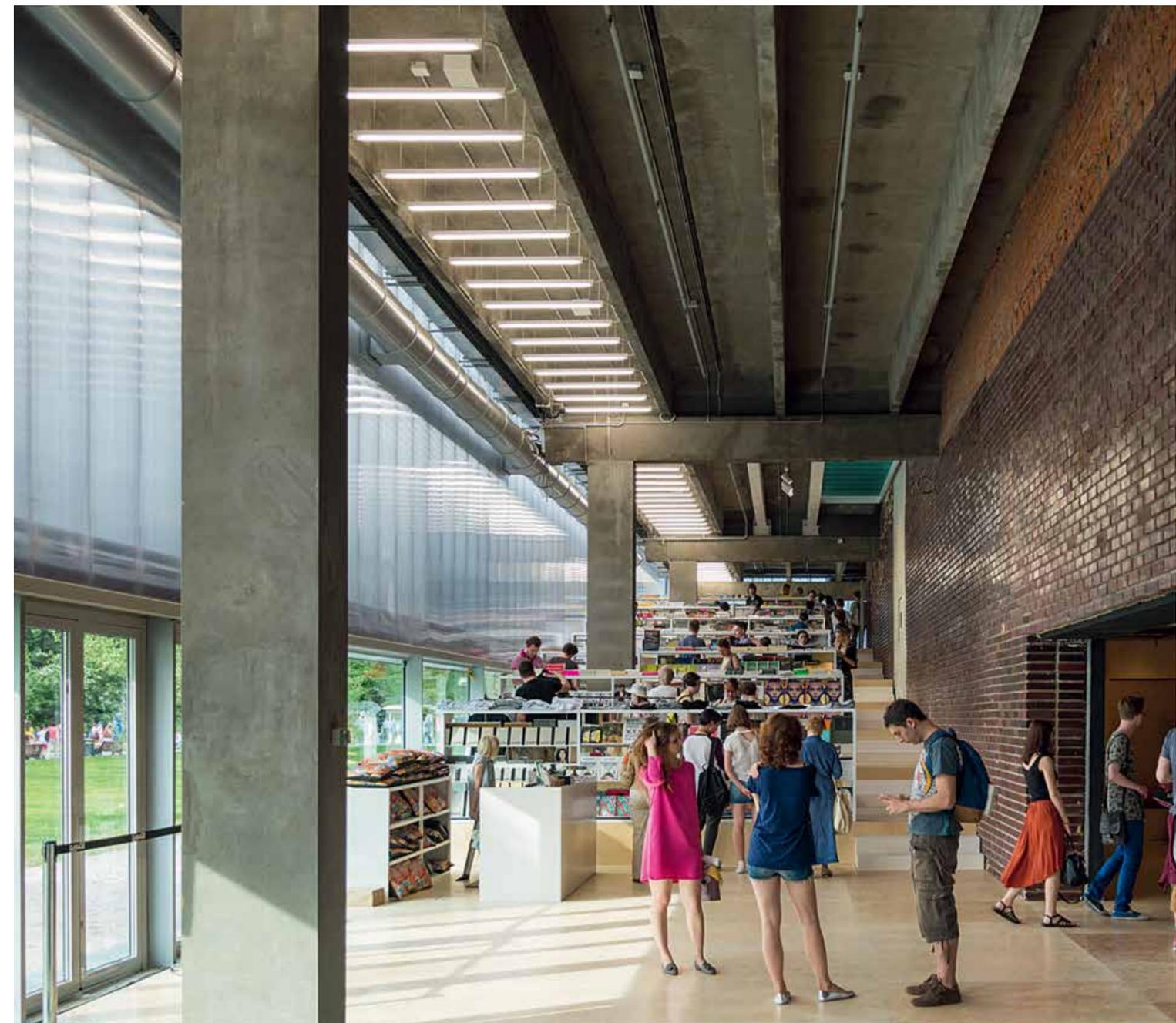
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Cover: The Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Gorky Park, Moscow is a recently completed overhaul by OMA. The design reinterprets a derelict public venue along the lines of a new spatial concept suited to the needs of a lively museum that promotes contemporary artistic culture. Seen here is the wide-open space of the central hall, where structural elements are left exposed. In this issue we also feature the Industrial Complex for Prada in Italy designed by Guido Canali, as well as an interview with the curators of the forthcoming exhibition, 'The State of Architecture' which will be held from January to March, 2016 in Mumbai, India.



The concept-image of the architectural lighting by Collaborative Architecture that has been conceived as foliage which stems from the anchoring element – the central column.



THE STATE OF ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA

OMA IN MOSCOW

PRADA INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, VALVIGNA, ITALY

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THINGS Kaiwan Mehta

What does a magazine do? It reflects its times, and reflects upon the happenings and shape of things in those times. It makes choices, no doubt, but it will be generous to spread wide (though not thin) and incorporate the many practices and ideas that exist. Every choice of inclusion, for a discussion, is developed for multiple reasons – as the magazine is also to indicate the pulse of the profession, its valences as well as its dilemmas. Much is produced in this country, in this region, and it is varied – as varied as the different kinds of shapes of leaves on the earth – in such a scenario to grapple and grasp the many trajectories of existence becomes very important. The magazine, at times, becomes a portfolio of its times, no doubt critically compiled, but yet a portfolio.

In what ways do we understand our times? Do we need time and space to reflect 'on our times'? Or can we stand right inside our times, and take a 360-degree overview? The latter is the need of this day and age; and for anyone who thinks history and theory are important pegs on which practices and philosophies are imagined and produced, this activity of reflecting on our own times will be necessary. It will not be about reflecting on our times from a historical perspective, but it will be reflecting on the 'now' being conscious of its (this time's) own terms and conditions; nothing will stop us from being critical of these terms and conditions though. The self – the practitioner, the architect, the designer, the author – will be the loci through which time-now can be mapped, possibly.

Small interventions, missed ideas, struggling attempts, will be as important as masterpieces, grand visions, bold attempts, and resolved thoughts. The magazine then emerges as a catalogue of entries, an encyclopaedia that is shaped over time, month after month. As architecture grows and groans its life and times will be noted in the pages of one issue after another. As architecture produces the human material world, it builds a sense and shape of time-now and time-to-come; and it does so as much in the misses as much as in the resolved incidents; that different pieces of architecture are the different incidents and instances one is grappling to record and understand.

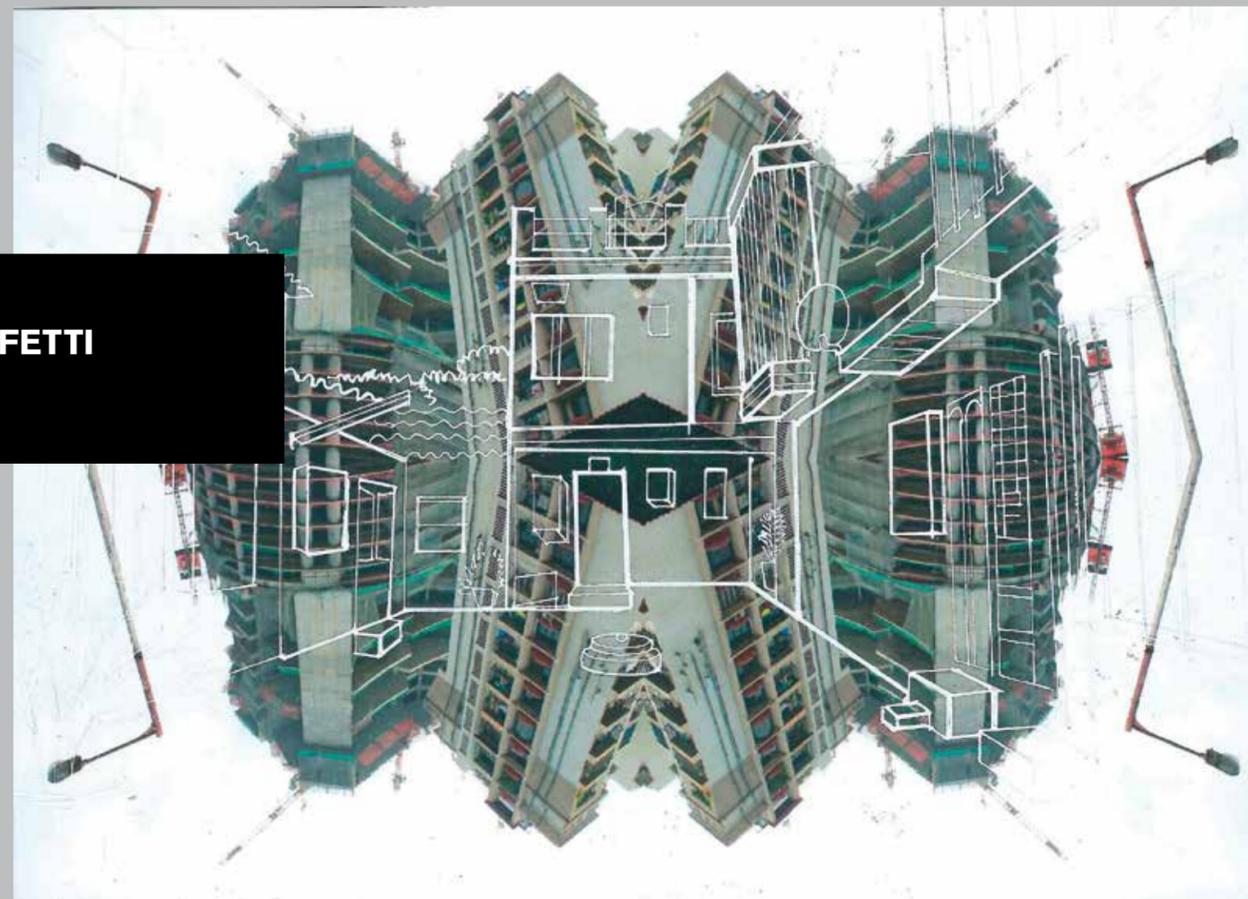
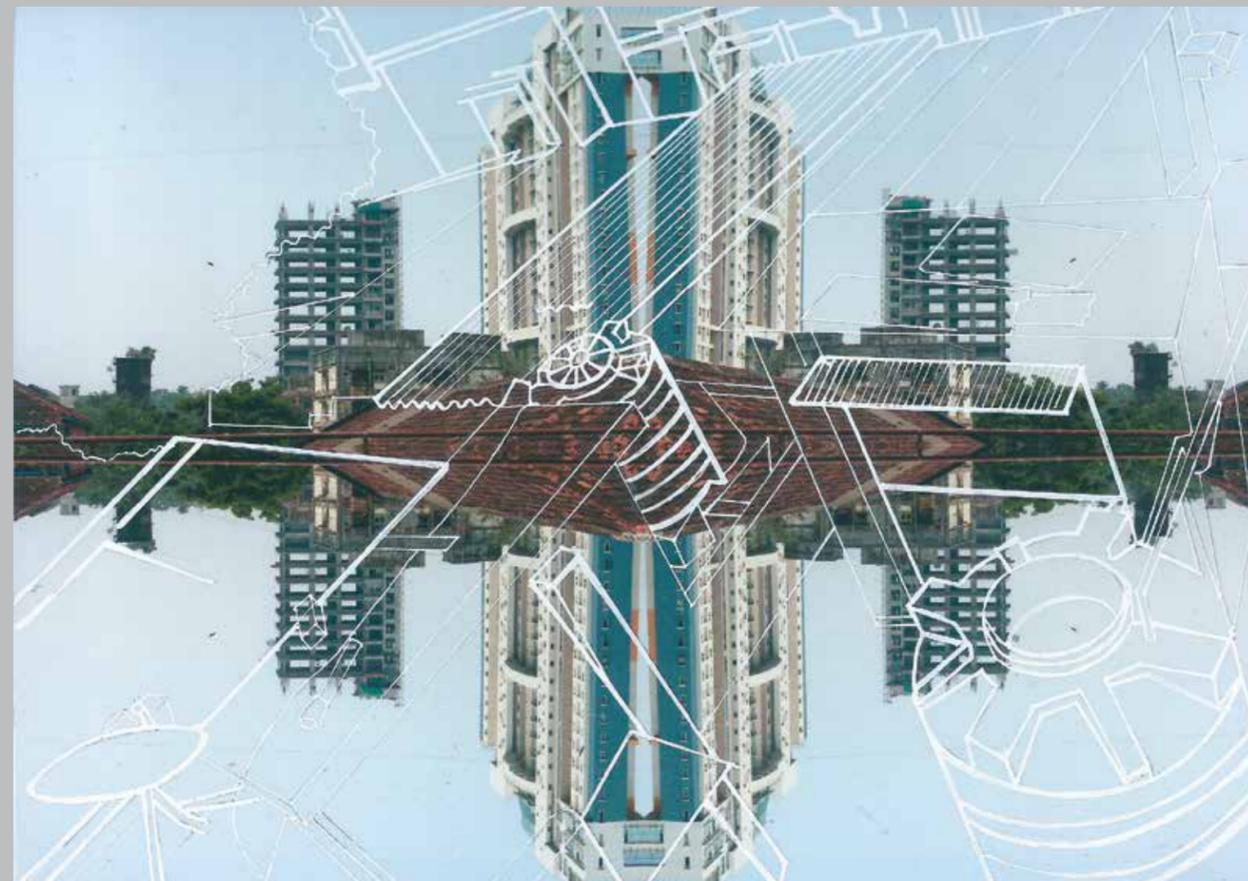
The act of recording is an important one. It may work out systems of classification, orders of organisation – locally applicable than for

any universal application. To decide what object is sitting next to which one, what idea is sharing space with which other idea – produces a thought-scape, one that is reflective but only provisional. A magazine does that issue after issue, connecting between its pages, but at many times across its different volumes and editions. An exhibition does this more spatially, in a geography of objects. Exhibitions are occurrences distributed over time; but they too are collations and reflections. The exhibition has emerged more and more as the active space for thinking, rather than only a space for engaged/disengaged appreciation. An exhibition may tell a story, but it may also ask you to build one for your own self. An exhibition may be introspective, rather than retrospective. One is again, in that sense, thinking through the mode of the exhibition of time-now, the contemporary moment.

The magazine or the exhibition produce models of reflection, not just occasions for review. The reader or the viewer will have to enter not to simply see (review) what is presented but to actively work with what is structured within that organisation of objects and ideas. History and theory are made active in a model of placing objects, even if not obviously presented. The objects will be viewed in their context of other objects and not singular features or exhibits. It is not a bookshelf where you pull out individual books for reference and imagine the organisational model is only for your convenience of searching the right thing at the right hour. The magazine or the exhibition record not as a listing of convenience, but as a listing of thoughts; to produce maps of objects. As we shape one more issue of *Domus India*, and simultaneously move closer to the final shape of the exhibition *The State of Architecture*, co-curated along with Rahul Mehrotra and Ranjit Hoskote, many thoughts are tossing around in one's head. Many ideas as well as many arguments and concerns, or disturbances, that are shaping this exhibition developed under the aegis of the Urban Design Research Institute, and to be showed at the National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai for nearly three months are captured in an interview with the three curators. This issue of the magazine looks at projects that are not monumental, or large and big, but interventions in the landscape of the built

environment we are occupying today. The built environment we live in today is a new form and shape, it has its own self-image and many architectural jobs are about making sense of this new emerging landscape. As we recede from the bird's-eye view to the workings inside corners of the built world, we try and understand what objects are shaping our time, and in what ways do these objects meet our everyday lives. As we look at aerial photography and its ways of projecting the big picture, the new objects of intervention at the urban scale such as the flyovers and clover-leaf junctions become obvious, but then we also see the urban reality as a kaleidoscope of juxtaposed impressions, as superimposed images, again from within which very clear details will emerge; very material everyday living details will distill out of these kaleidoscopic pools. Do these details have a further reality? We look at a few designed details – details of spaces that do not stand bold and tall in the public sphere but are interventions in the urban geography of things. Some details shape under pressures of time and place, conditions of the everyday life and politics design them – the Sintex-tank landscape or the blue tarpaulin facade, or the corrugated sheet ground-plane. However, the world of design has also developed materials and expertise to manufacture the 'design of corners' – miniature parts of the mega world we live in, they are crafted and shaped with use of high-end technology, industrially manufactured special quality materials, using all principles of 'form, space, order' and many existing 'pattern language(s)'. Design engages in the production of corners – fine development of a 'species of spaces' that are indeed shaping the contemporary environment of living and action. We begin to address these 'species of spaces' from this issue on in a more conscious way. This geography of spaces and design (designed objects, material-elements, composition of detailing) is an important emergence in the times of urban pressure and development, where economies are producing terrains and corners of varying kinds and intensities.

The magazine, the exhibitions, map these terrains and geography of things, these 'species of spaces' which are the new 'corners of design' making for the 'design of corners!' **km**

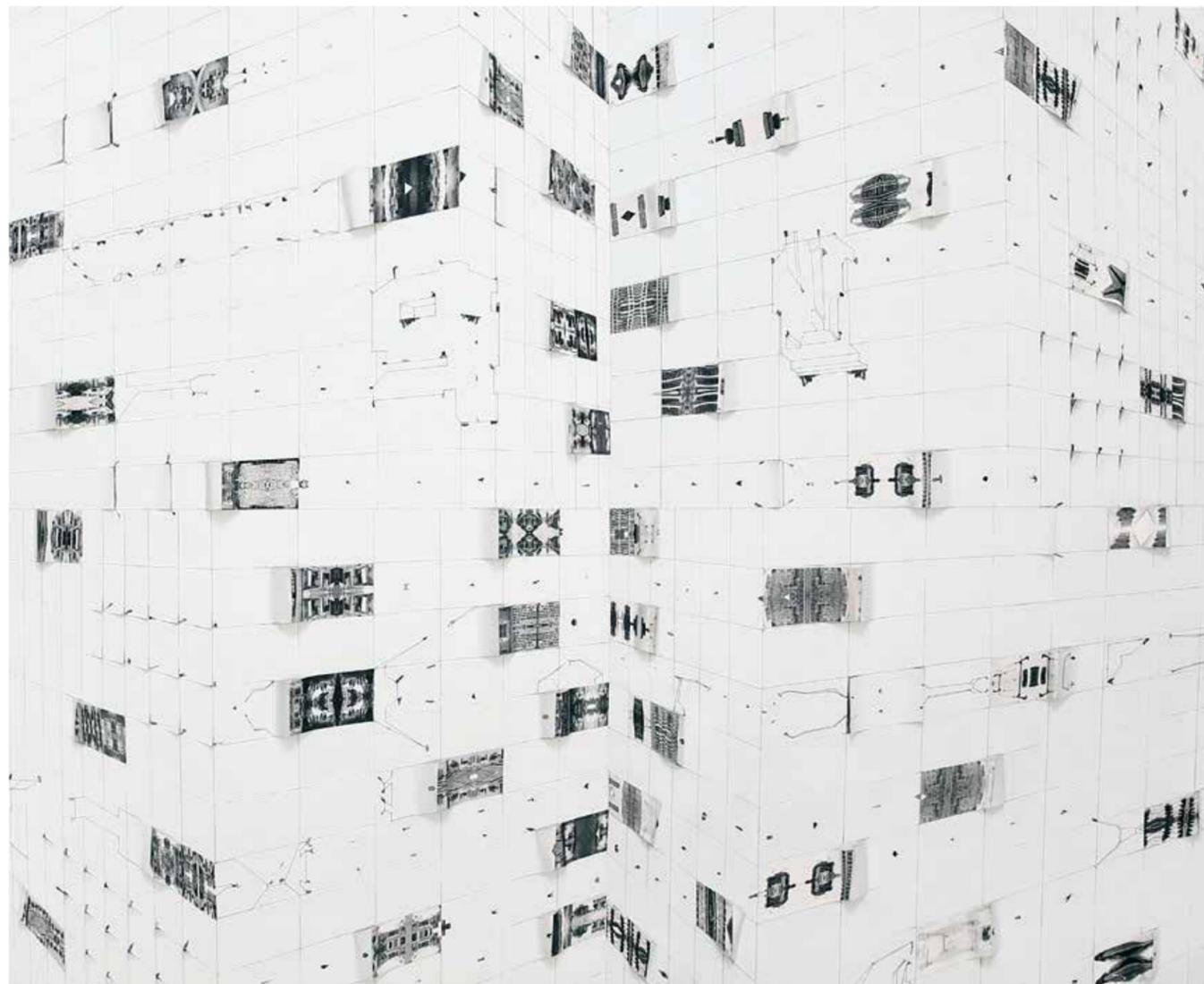


CONFETTI

THE SENSE OF DISTANCE WE ADOPT TOWARDS OUR EVERYDAY LIVING

Showcasing the changing geographies of urban spaces, the exhibition of intricate paper works delves into issues of contemporary urban environment. Using architectural drawings, juxtaposed with several other media, the images reveal delirious worlds of urbanscapes constantly evolving, producing realms of near-fictional domains

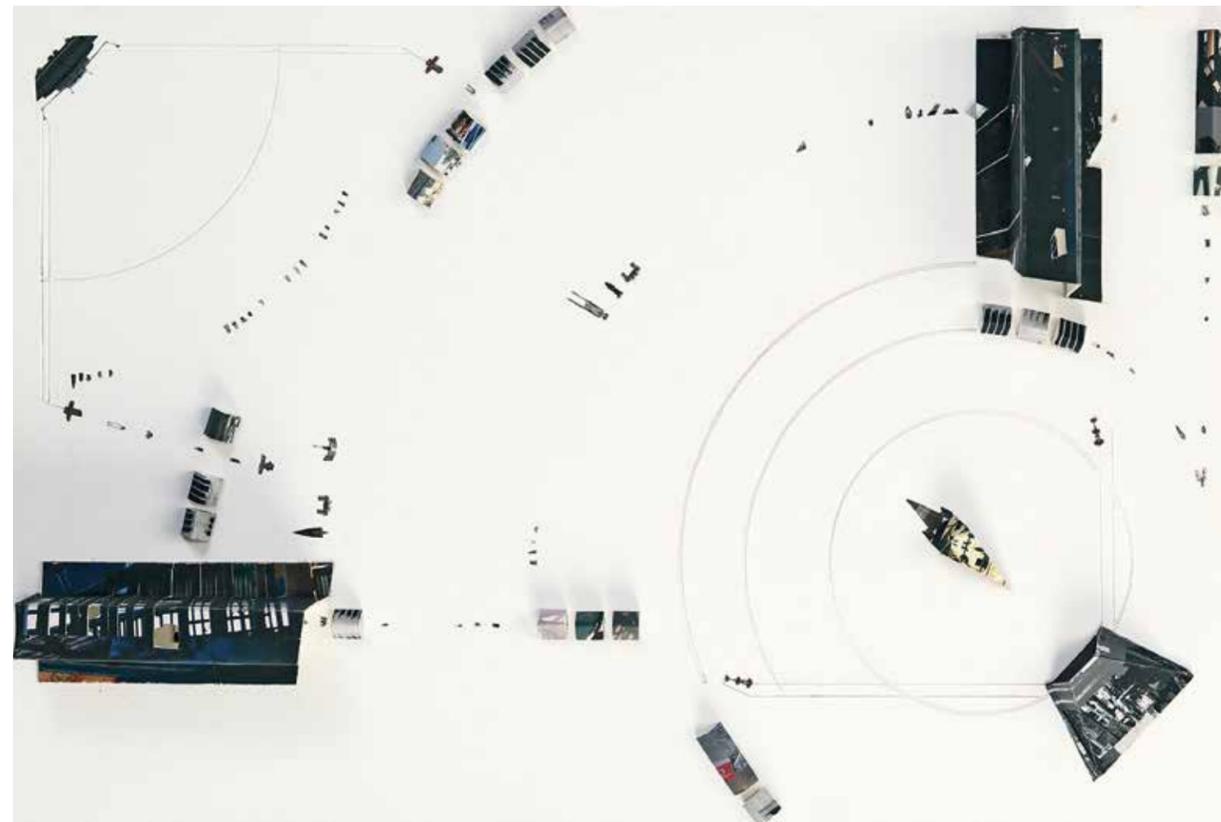
Kaiwan Mehta

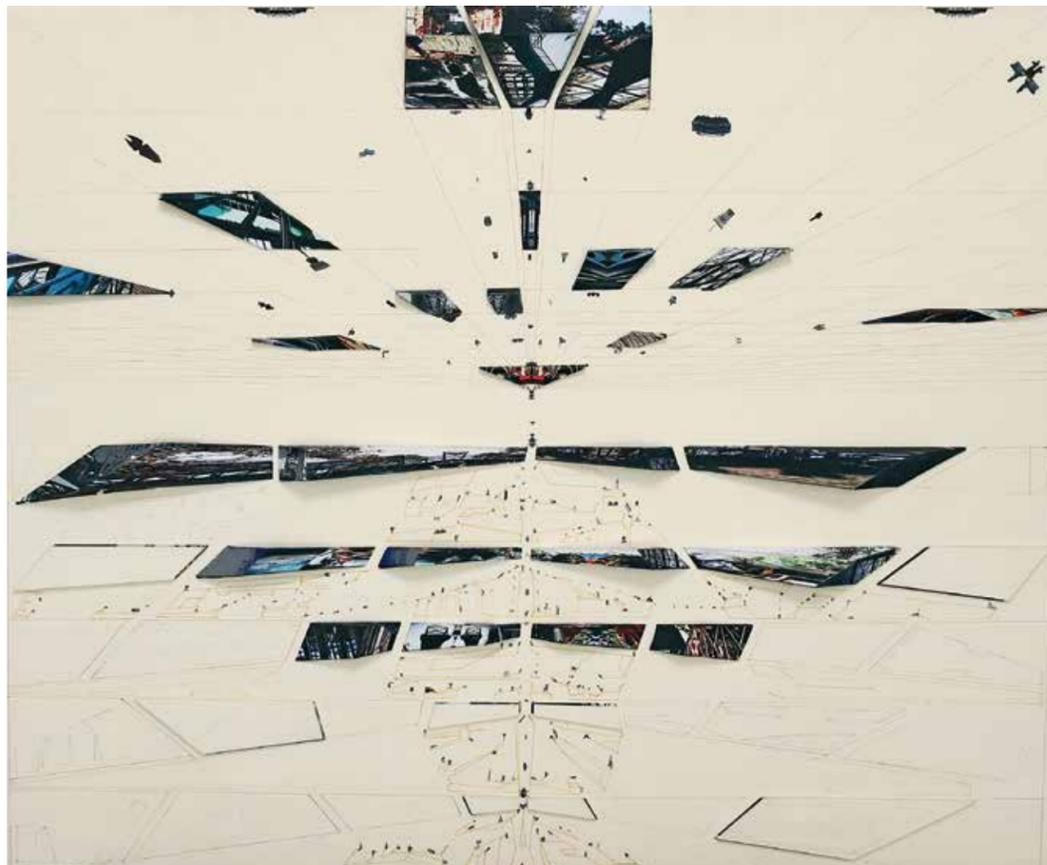


The urban is evidently present in the work of Pratap Morey; but also, in a certain way, his works try to escape the urban, and literally produce fantasy landscapes where the urban is a mere picture-play or it is the miniaturised detail making the urban landscape into a fantasy object. His urban landscapes seem to disappear as if after a catastrophic calamity, a devastating flood or earthquake maybe – where all civilisation has disappeared, submerged underneath the firm ground that only a while ago rocked feverishly; what remains are but a few fine traces or urban visions – and in fact the ground cleaned-up of urbanity has now displayed a sense of fine crafted

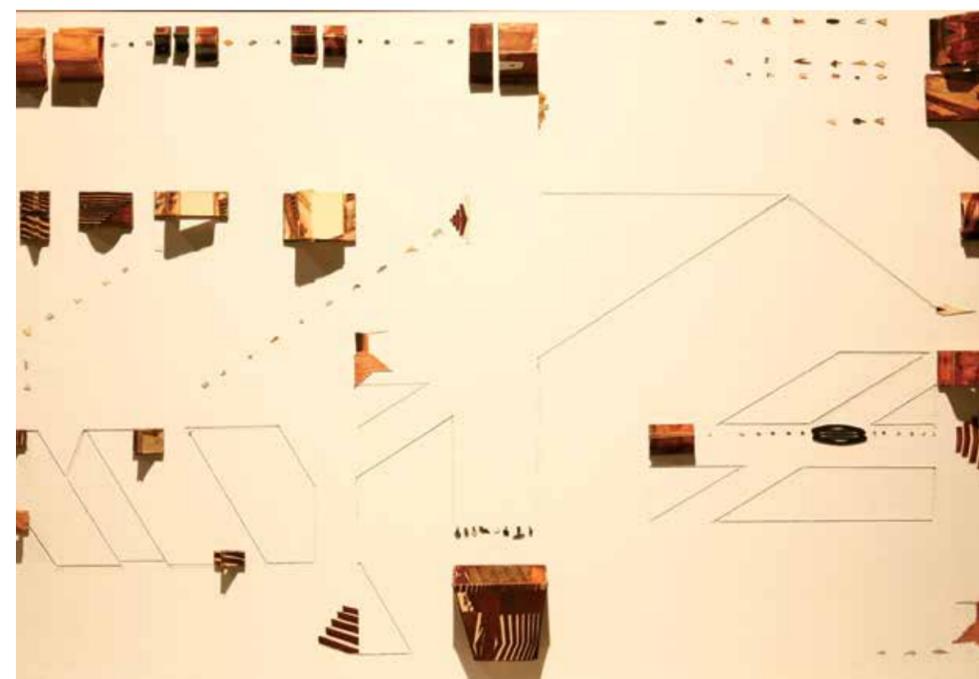
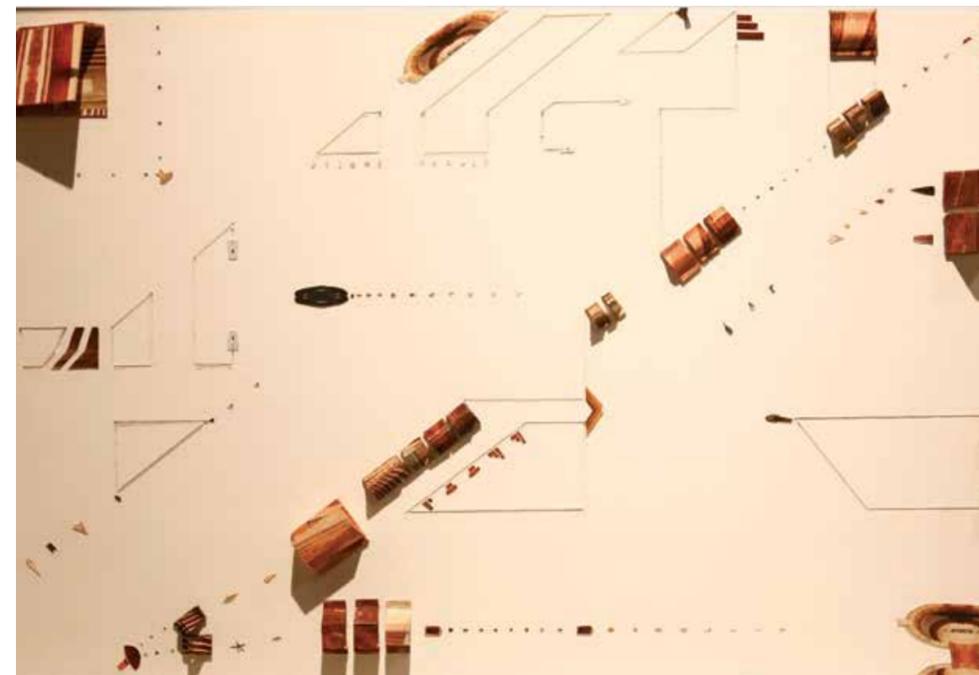
geometry, as if it craved for that ordered drawing on its ownself. Morey's landscapes on another level are like the child's playground – planned and ordered, cut into shapes and sizes, with a few images from the 'real' world added in to excite the child's play. A playground or a game board – these landscapes appear not-permanent but only temporarily frozen, only to metamorphose into some other landscape diagram soon. Morey has cut up the urban landscape into fine pieces of geometry shaping a Rubik's landscape of sorts, that through some divine trigger will metamorphose into a new arrangement of cuts and pieces every destined moment.

This page top: *Gap in the Mind — III*, 2015. Archival prints, drawings and engravings on archival board, 29.6 x 36.2 inches. **Opposite page top:** *Run Way — I*, 2015. Archival prints on archival board, 12 x 18 inches. **Below:** *Run Way — II*, 2015. Archival prints on archival board, 12 x 18 inches





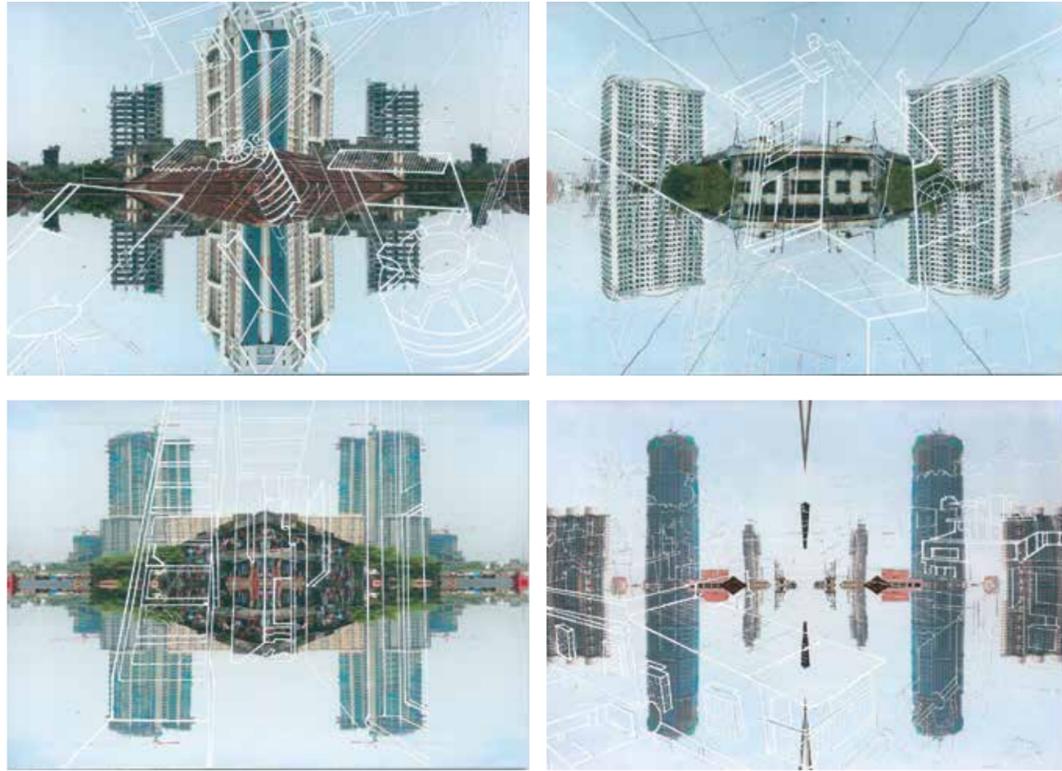
This page top: **A Tension**, 2015. Archival prints and acrylic colours on archival board, 30 x 36 inches. **Left (and centre): Inverse Proportion**, 2015. Archival prints on archival board, 15 x 40 inches (each)



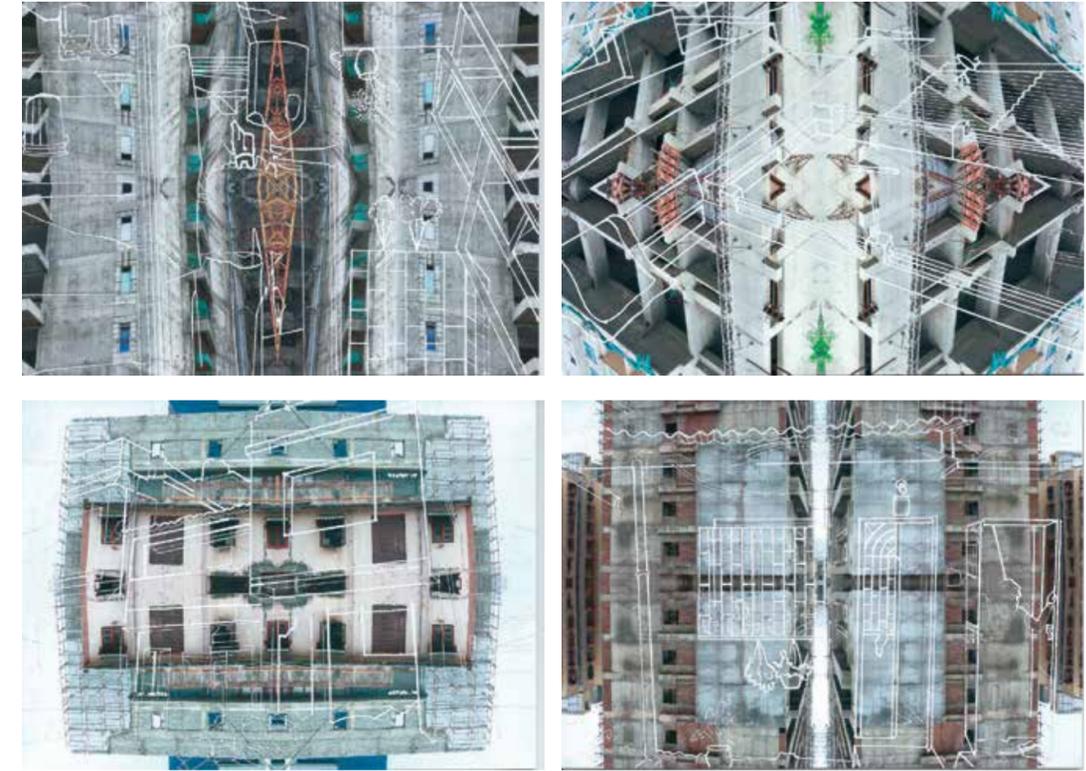
This page top: **Lost Right Angles — I**, 2015. Archival prints and engravings on archival board, 12 x 18 inches. **Left: Lost Right Angles — II**, 2015. Archival prints and engravings on archival board, 12 x 18 inches

Ephemeral, magical, at times out of a science fiction spatial arrangement, these landscapes work between the impressions of the schematic and the details of the personal-picture. The urban exists within monumental imaginations drawn out as diagrams on paper as well as the earth – the planner's tools can draw perfect straight lines and meticulous curves on paper as well as the surface of the earth. But the urban is also fleshed out in its everyday images of streets and buildings, roofs and balconies – where Sintex tanks and Dish TV antennae punctuate a grey-blue sky outlined by concrete blocks of apartments where people are trying to dry clothes and make a living, while newer and higher apartment blocks are being built every day, covered with blue tarpaulin sheets during construction, and often, after that too. Where does the geometry of spatial landscapes, chalked out in our, or a planner's, or a politician's,

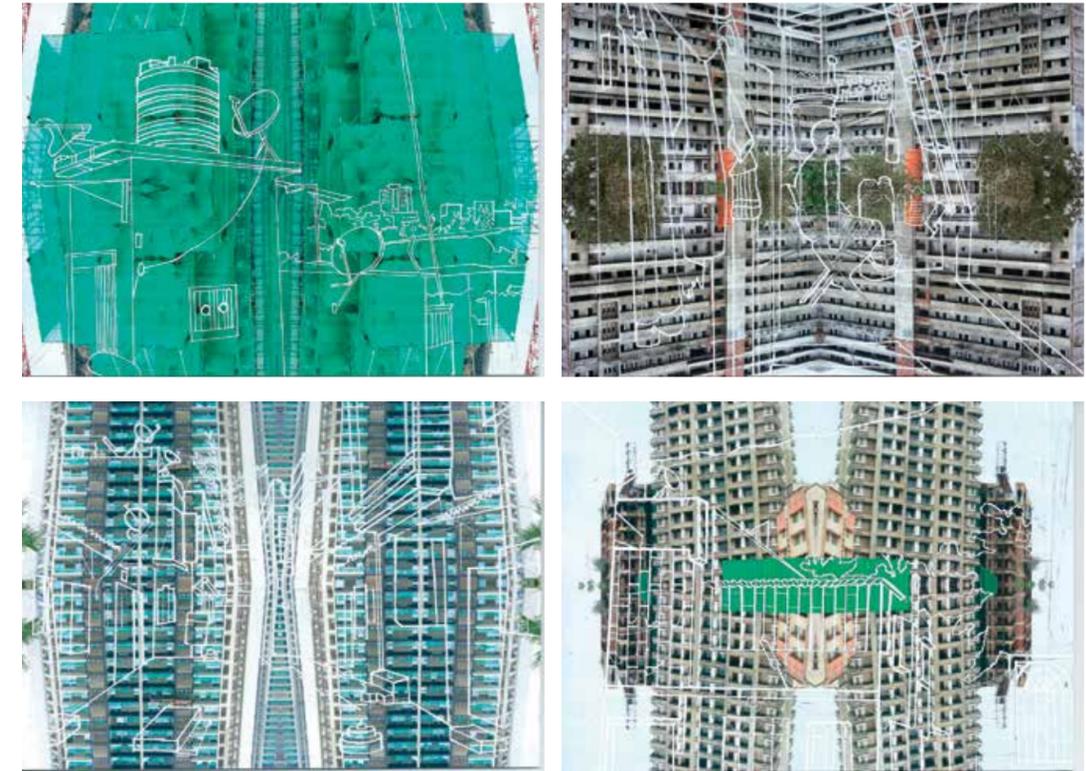
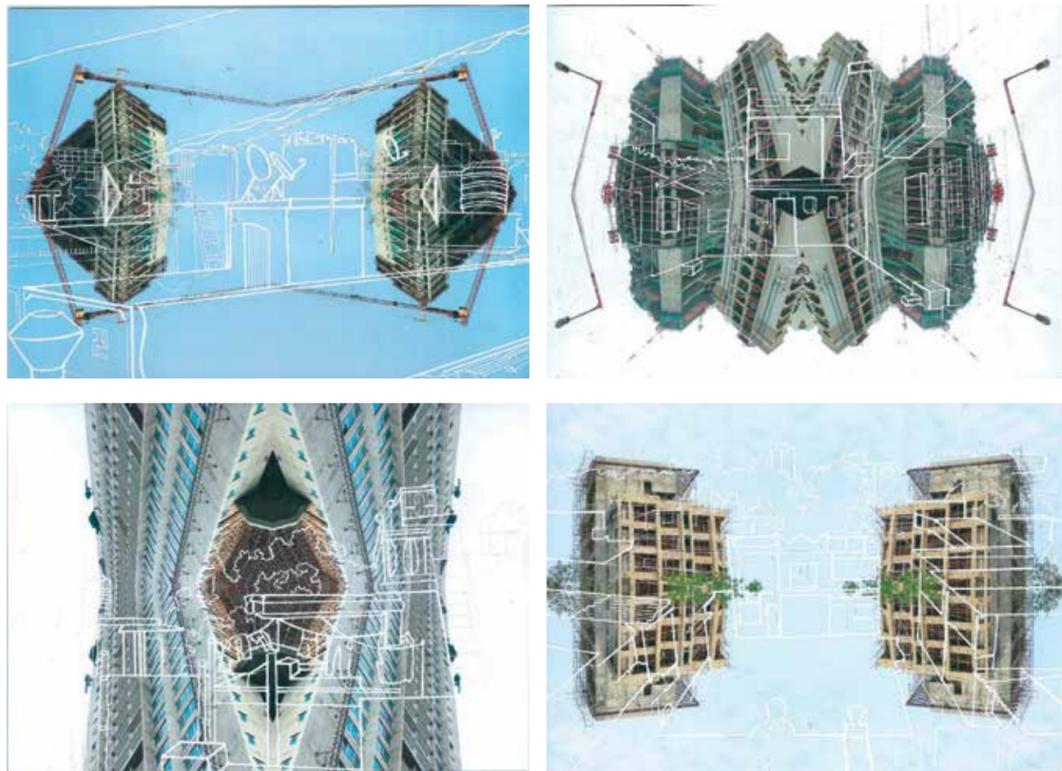
or Vishnu's dream meet the stuff of everyday life? The root of the word 'to measure' is the same as the root of the word 'to dream' – maya – 'ma' in Sanskrit. The stuff of everyday life – Sintex tanks, Mild Steel grilles, and tarpaulin water-shades over balconies – is indeed the everyday 'art of living' – and that is what Vishnu's dream is made up of – the living of everyday life. Vishnu draws out the terrain of life in his dream, detail by detail, material by material, one object after another, one life along with another, a near doll-world with everything in it – it opens, and unfolds like the Kaavad house-landscape. Then what magical hand draws out the fine measured diagram-landscape, the kaleidoscope-field, the Rubik's-terrain, into a set of measured pictures, measured picture-worlds? Morey's landscapes work with the picture as well as the drawing; the pictures are themselves

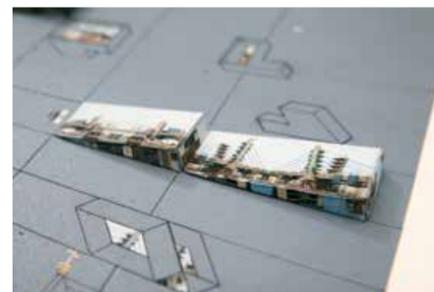
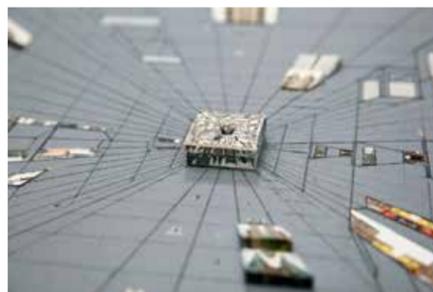
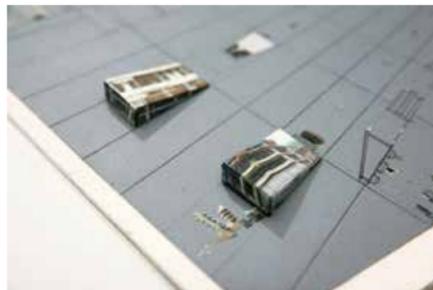
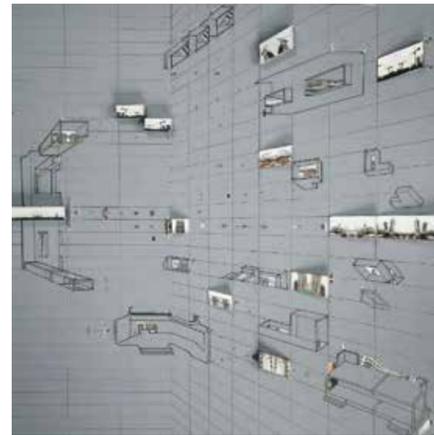
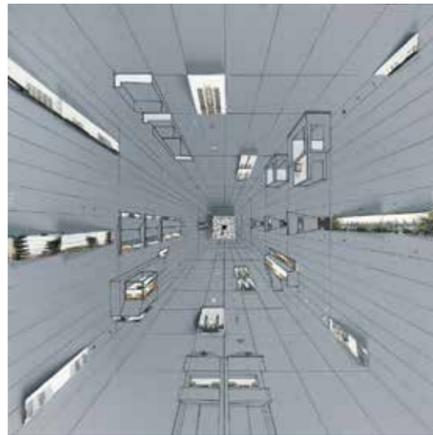
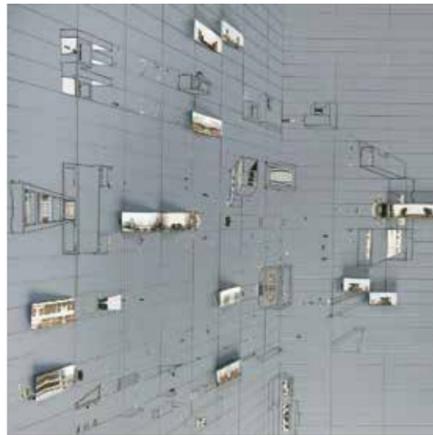


Above:
Superimpose —
I, 2015. Below:
Superimpose —
II, 2015



Above: Superimpose
— IV, 2015. Below:
Superimpose — V, 2015.
Watercolour and digital
print on paper, 6 x 8.5
inches (each)

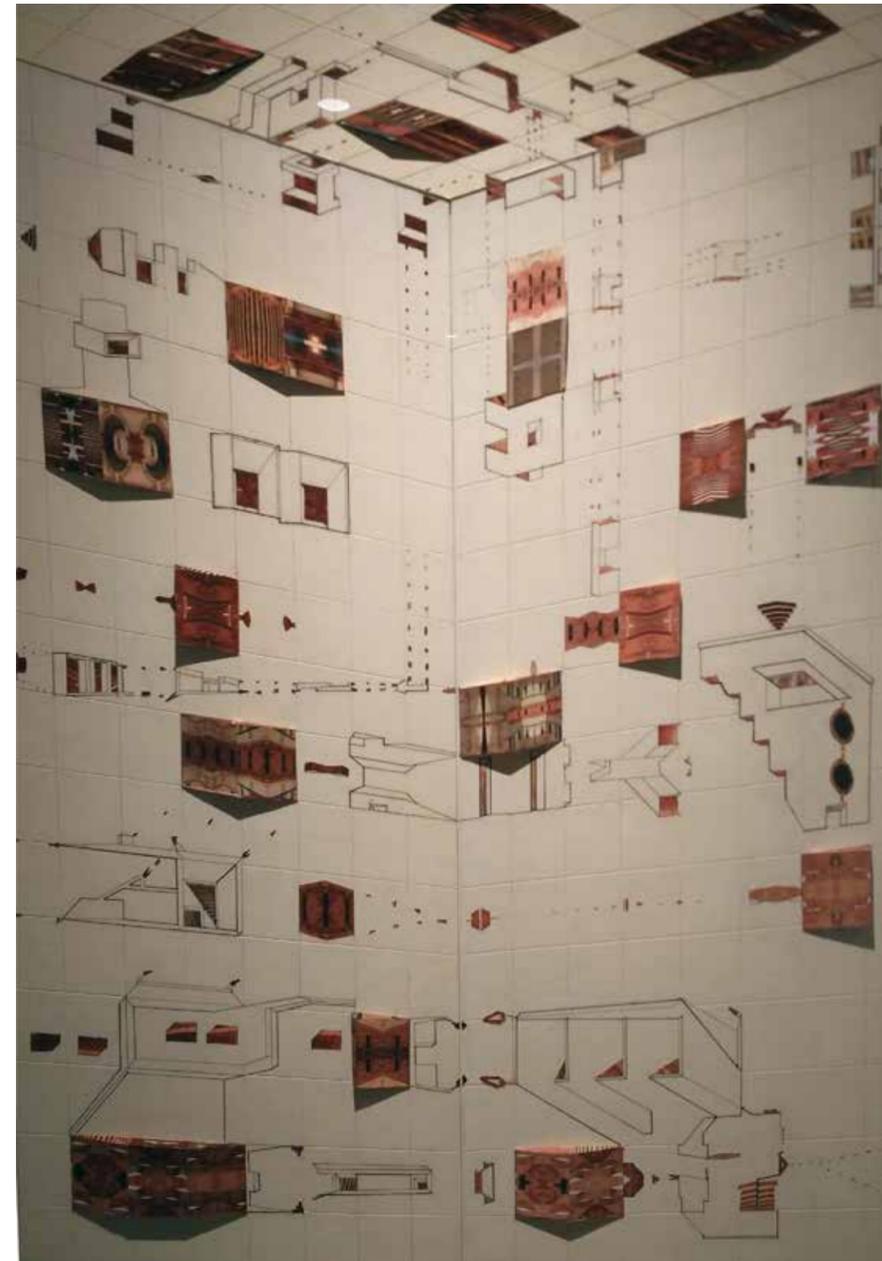




landscapes at different scales, while the drawings are measured networks of lines and diagrams. The architect's system of drawing landscapes in perspectival construction as well as orthogonal projection is a canonised system through which the built landscape gets built, produced, and sold all the time. It is the system of projection and representation through which the existing world, as well as imaginary projections into the future are drawn out; it in fact is often more the reality than a representation of some matter and presence. The language of technical drawings – measuring and representing the world of 'real-stuff' is a process of deciphering the hidden codes behind the stuff of real worlds; every line produces a meaning of the landscape it draws, and draws out. From the modus of technical language that conveys a direct set of informations, notes, and notifications, drawings also at times transform to realms of reality – the drawing itself produces a reality or reveals the hidden sides of some. As much as pictures document, and even bring to life a certain sense of the 'seen' world, drawings draw upon an understanding of how

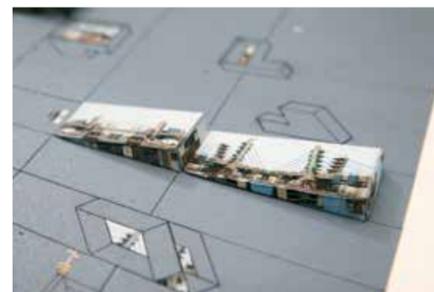
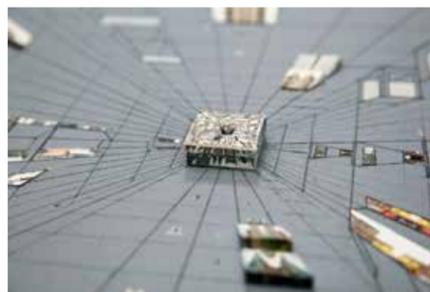
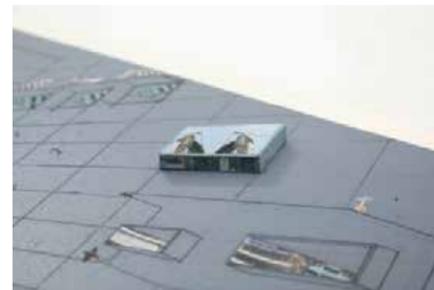
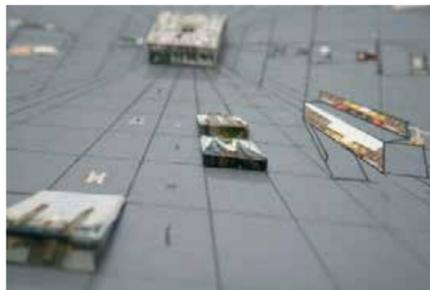
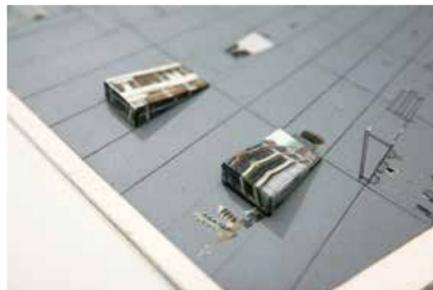
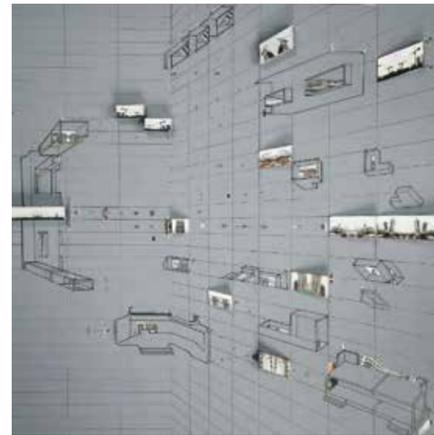
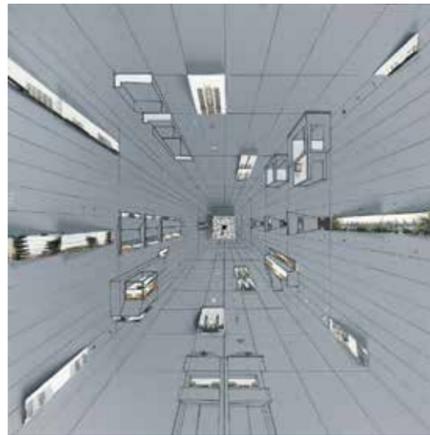
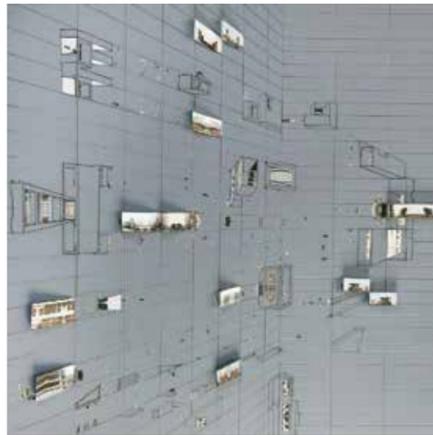
we see – the sensibility to breakdown every image into its elements and parts, to decide on their nearness or disappearing distance, to cull out an essential form and hence its basic entity, to regroup elements and objects into a cluster or landscape, arranged to make a picture, and tell a story. The actions of deconstructing and reconstructing-redrawing is an intellectual activity as much as it is a mechanical process; the actions of drawing – the life of that process – can, if encouraged and allowed, dwell on the sensibility and reality of objects and terrains that are being drawn. That dwelling on the sensibility and reality of objects and terrains being drawn – allows for a realisation, an awareness, of the objects 'seen' and lived along with – in ways that may rewrite the sensibilities and perceptions with which we began the journey of 'seeing' and 'drawing'. As pictures are mirrored/reflection-ed, cut up into details or miniatures, and arranged within a geometricised landscape, they regroup into a dream sequence of reality; the drawing of perspectival or orthographic material-topography over it begins to generate a dream-meaning sequence, a set of scenarios that

Top: City Escape, 2015. Archival prints on archival board, 25 x 25.5 inches (each). Above: detail of City Escape



Above: A Part, 2015. Archival prints, engravings and acrylic colours on archival board, 30 x 40 inches

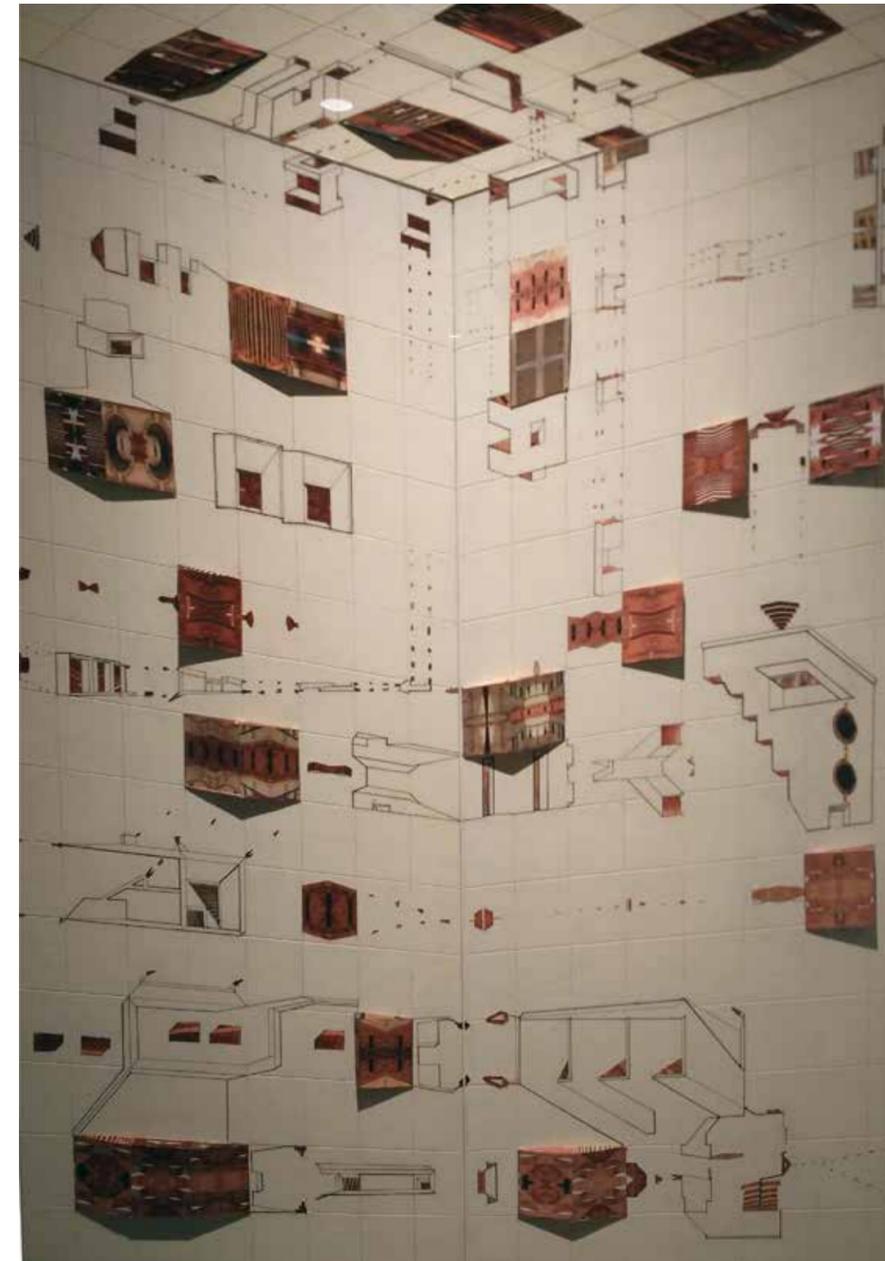
jostle within the simultaneity of dream-production and meaning-making. As much as the drawings consider the stuff of reality as their basis, and are then actually superimposed over pictures and photos of that reality, they seem to in fact produce a world that primarily exists within the drawn projection – the drawing is the reality while the photos underneath, morphed and mirrored, create some sense of an intoxicated reality no longer real. The reality of photos, and the material recognition of that landscape, and all in life that goes along with it produces a certain surreal 'lost-landscape of reality' – a reality so real that one finds it intoxicating, an almost a new parallel to reality but not real. The reality that is more recognisable now actually comes up and exists in the drawings – the fields of lines and forms, abstracted to their minimum representation, their materiality only expressed through clustering of lines. This reversal of representation and reality produces a measure of the urban that is palpable but not always evident – the roles of reality and representation – not as concepts, but as material worlds. The existing material world of grille-boxed windows, corrugated ground-planes, plastic-clad walls, water pipelines, and all is real. But at the rate this reality is produced – under conditions of pressure and skewed politics – its emphatic and obsessive-presence (which is then pictured, seen, photographed, lived) makes this existence surreal (and so is its representation) – especially when it is the everyday life of millions of humans. In what ways does this surreal materiality exist alongside the diagrammatic imagination of cities drawn and chalked in clear shapes and forms, with ideal dreamworlds as projections towards a future that is soaring towards cleaner skies, rushing away from the muddy and muddled ground, and closer to the stars above than the clutter of Sintex tanks and dish TV antennae? The absurdity of the gap between the real and the projected is played out as drawings sit on photographs, measuring and deciphering a reality that is every day and there, yet not acknowledged, recognisable but never accounted, never drawn out as a documentation of the life and cities we occupy – making reality – unreal. As the real and unreal, material and surreal, shape our spaces of existence and living, the non-architectural architecture that shapes the city emerges in the concreteness of architectural drawings. The sense of distance we adopt towards our everyday living, finding refuge in landscapes of dream-trajectories, produces cities that exist (only) in the realms of near-fictional domains and topographies, while the everyday material world, with its material-reality gets relegated to a topography of denial, the urgent wish to de-recognise it out of some sense of shame or refutation. This space we exist (and live) in between insistent occupation of a projected fantasy and the hurried denial of the everyday reality produces citizens that have lost a sense of measure – the measure of what it means to participate in human worlds, life and death, reflections and arguments, files and books, sleepwalking and reading – we start living in delirious worlds! Morey's landscapes are an attempt to decipher these delirious worlds and cities we are all living in. @



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