A NEW NATURE

9 architectural conditions between liquid and solid

Anders Abraham

> In this condensed world of objects that many people find themselves surrounded by, they will also see a new 'nature' – just as unfair, incomprehensible and merciless as the original nature.
>
> Willy Ørskov[1]

The Ph.D. thesis 'A new nature, 9 architectural conditions between liquid and solid'[2] establishes a way of thinking about architecture as conditions, as opposed to architecture as form and type. An architectural condition is understood as a connection of physical, mental and spatial conditions. Looking at the world as conditions and stages between *liquid* and *solid*, between the homogeneous and the heterogeneous, etc. it is possible to work with the man-made as one substance. The Ph.D. thesis examines this hypothesis and constructs a form-developing process out of nine conditions between liquid and solid.

The thesis establishes a foundation that is fundamentally elementary but in its fluid, combinatory possibilities complex – a complexity that approaches the modern city's diversity of space, materials and structures. The thesis gradually expands the complexity, from introductory *physical experiments*, through the establishment of *architectural conditions* between liquid and solid, to the construction of *architectural sequences* created by conditions, and conclude with the establishment of *narratives* that are combined conditions and sequences[3]. Using the narrative, the condition concept is linked to a specific place where the physical organisation of materials, manufacturing processes, structures and spaces are converted into conditions. The narrative becomes the new context creating a possible future plan for the area.

In connection with the presentation of the thesis, there was an exhibition at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture[4] that featured drawings, sketches and models from preliminary casting experiments; actual conditional drawings of sequences and photomontages, and details in 1:1 from a narrative about the changing of an area south of Copenhagen, Denmark.

The following pages show selected works from this exhibition as well as from the project *A buoy for Copenhagen Harbour*, which is one work out of a number of specific projects that present various nuances of elements of the thesis.

In the winter of 2005, the thesis will be published in an English version entitled *A NEW NATURE – 9 architectural conditions between liquid and solid*[5] by The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture's publishers, Kunstakademiets Arkitektskoles Forlag.

Notes

1. Ørskov, Willy. *The objects – process and condition. Proposal for an object theory.* (in Danish: *Objekterne – proces og tilstand. Forslag til en objektteori*.). Borgens Billigbøger 122. Odense, Denmark 1972, p. 10
2. Thesis was produced at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Michigan, USA and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture.
3. "A sequence is normally taken to mean a sum of events following one after the other; as a unity they seem to have a meaning that cannot be reduced to the sum of the meaning of every single event, on the contrary each of these events constitutes some sort of general meaning". Kasper Nefer Olsen. Maze, Royal Academy of Fine Arts, 1993, p. 20.
4. 5.–28. September 2003 in Meldahls Smedie, Royal Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture.
5. ISBN 87-7830-079-7: Book and exhibition supported by the foundation Margot og Thorvald Dreyers Fond.

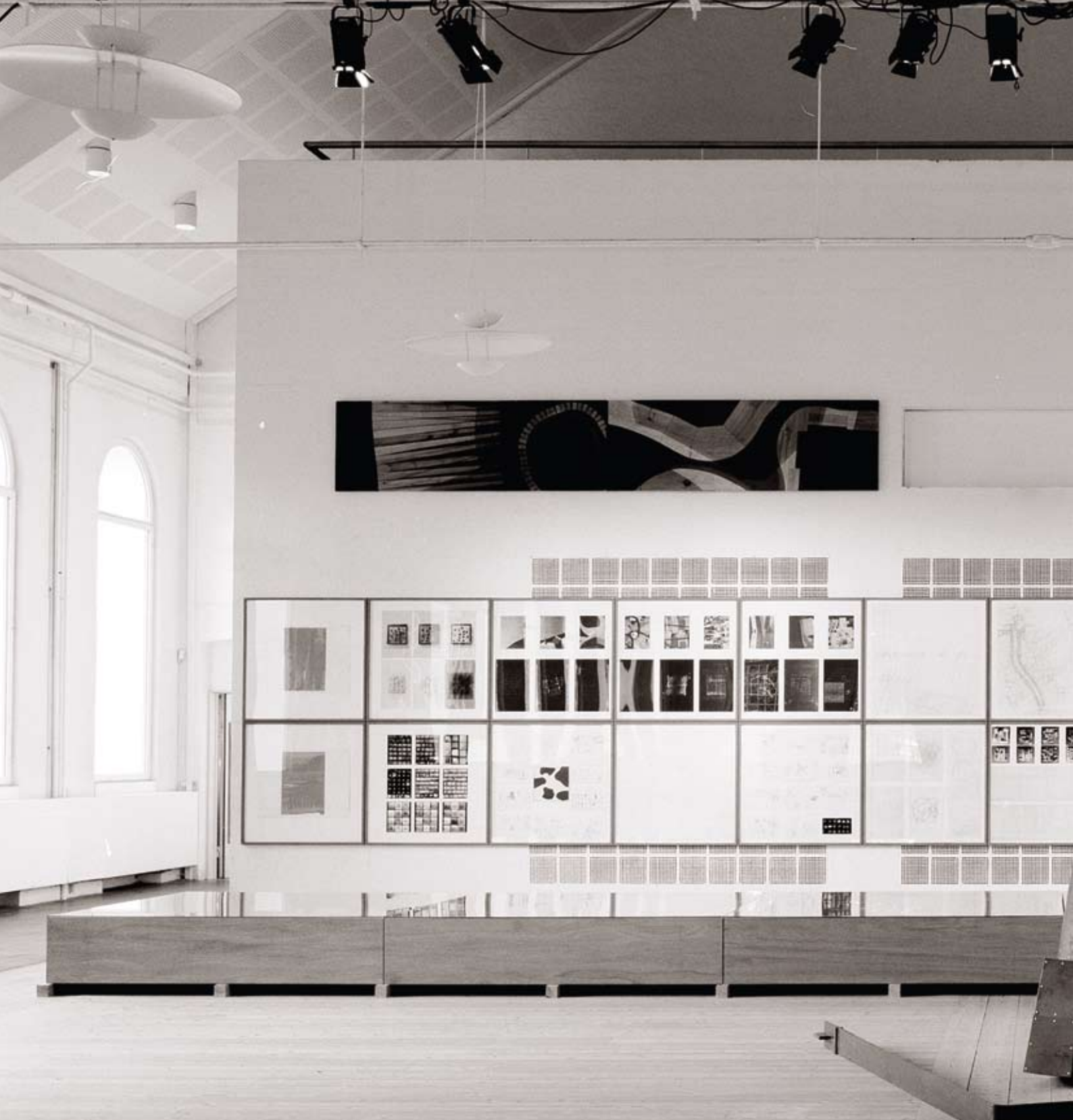
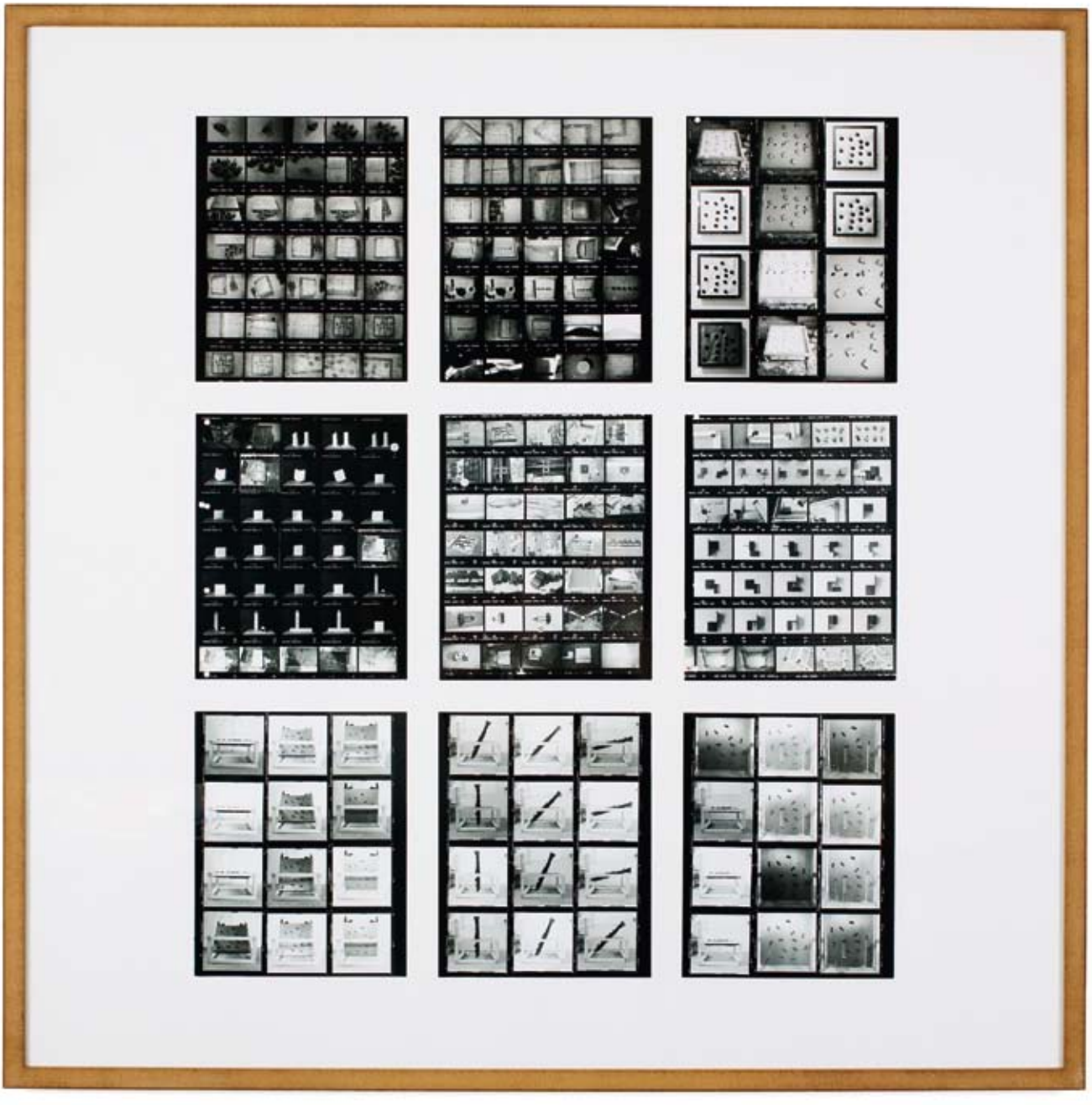


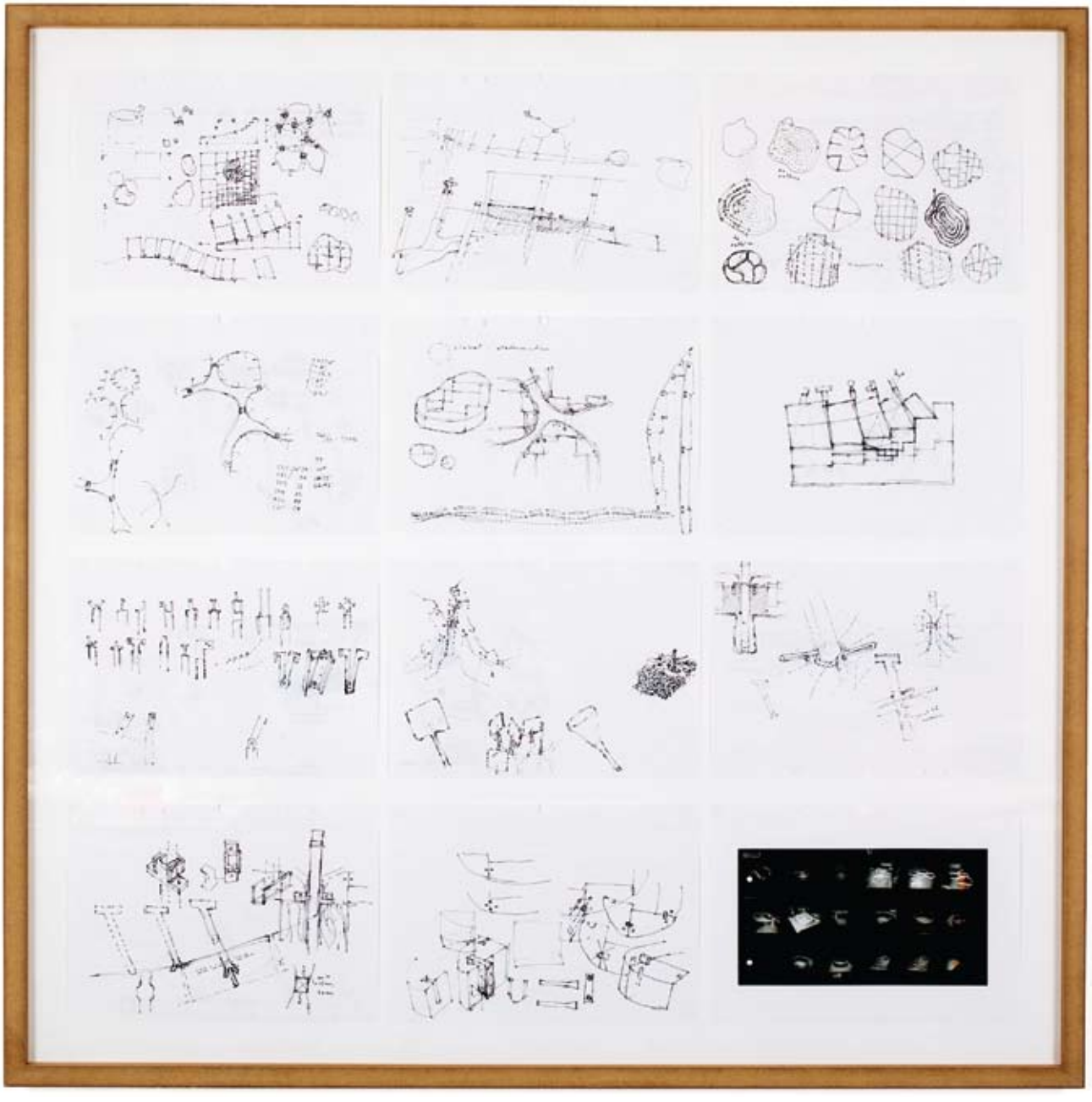
Photo from the exhibition A NEW NATURE in Meldahls Smedie, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture

Experiment: Monochromes (oil painting on paper 35 x 52 cm) From a series of monochromes, produced using a filling knife, either by applying and spreading paint, or by saturating the surface and then scraping the paint off the surface. The monochromes are attempts at creating space without form/motive. The space is translucent and saturated. Being homogeneous, the monochromes are harmonic but also impure – they appear to be clouds of varying viscosities with traces of wear, etc. The activity – extracting material from the paper – creates the space.



Experiment: Casts
Nine contact prints with experiments dealing with making, condition forms, and process.

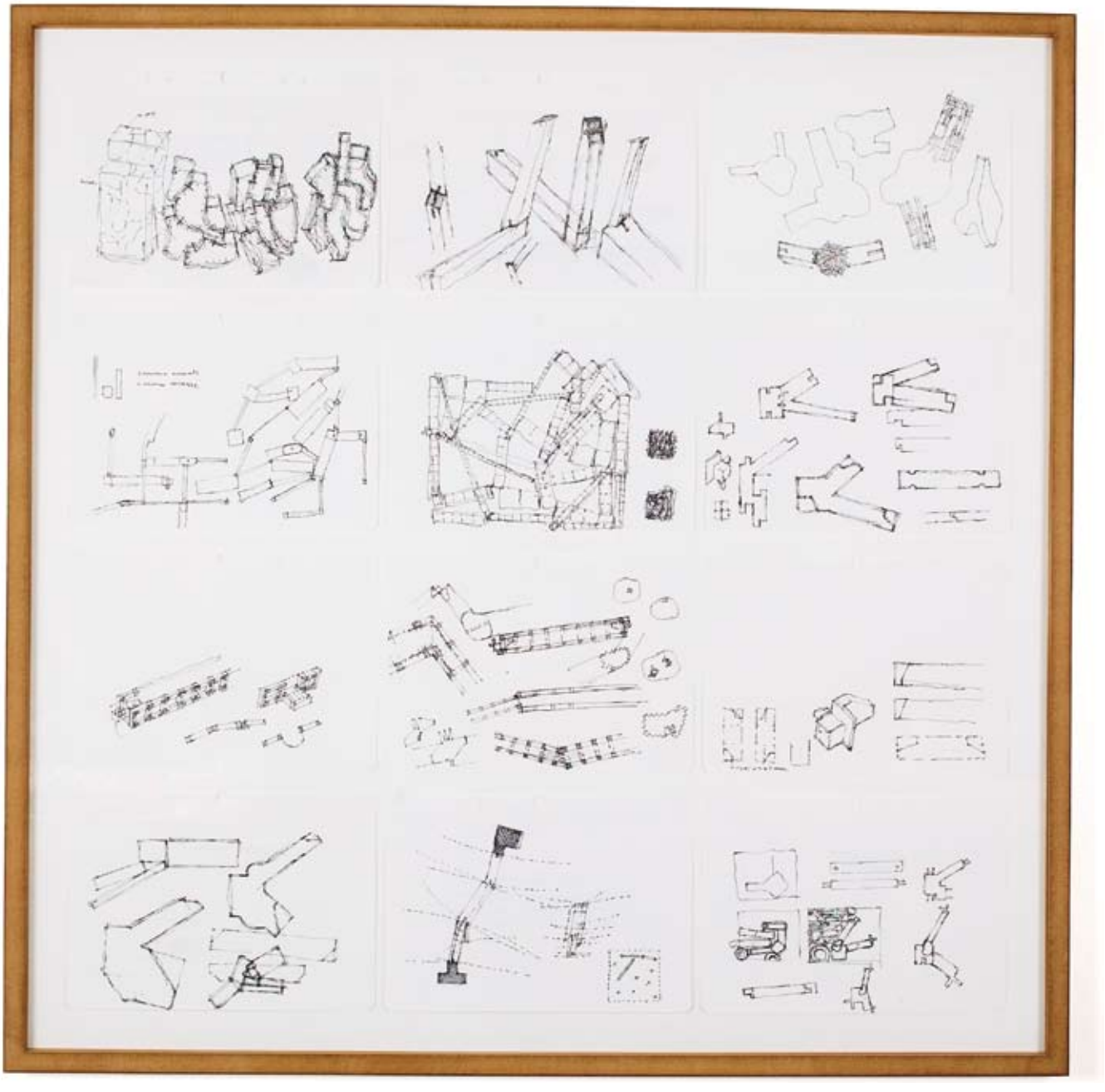
The idea behind the laboratory work was to study the notion of 'creation' in the form of a number of concrete experiments in which the three sub-phenomena that constitute the creation of form – Material, Making and Circumstance – are varied in relation to each other.



Conditions #1–9: Sketches of ties and formworks for condition #3

The conditions create a causal chain of conditions, from a homogeneous liquid mass to a heterogeneous mass that is liquid.
These nine conditions share a number of assumptions:
The liquid material is concrete
Concrete has no form in itself; it achieves a form when meeting a formwork.

Ties of wood and steel
In the simple conditions, the tie is made of wood. It is large, and easily recognizable with coarse and archaic features. In the formwork of the more complex conditions, ties are made of steel. Some are cast, some are forged, and they are very strong – in a concrete as well as a symbolic sense. Symbolically the



Conditions #1–9: Sketches of ties and formworks for condition #7

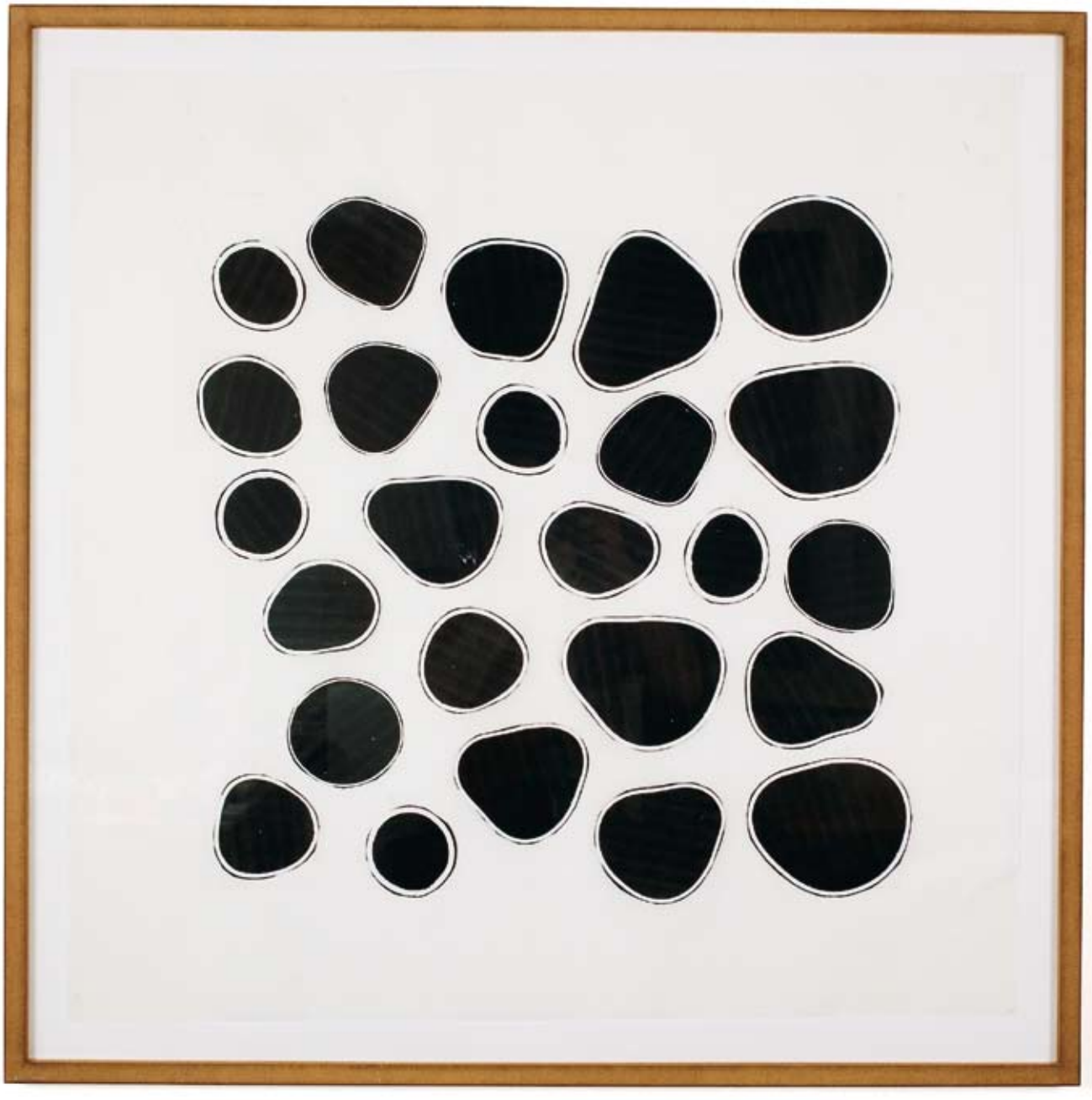
ties are the 'source' of the form.

Formworks of wood

The construction of a formwork depends on the condition. The formwork turns the liquid matter into a condition between liquid and solid. The conditions of formworks range from yielding to stable. Wood has to be subdivided to meet the liquid, and it has to be combined to achieve the solid. The formworks are based on five different sizes of circular rubber cylinders that represent the liquid in its lowest condition.

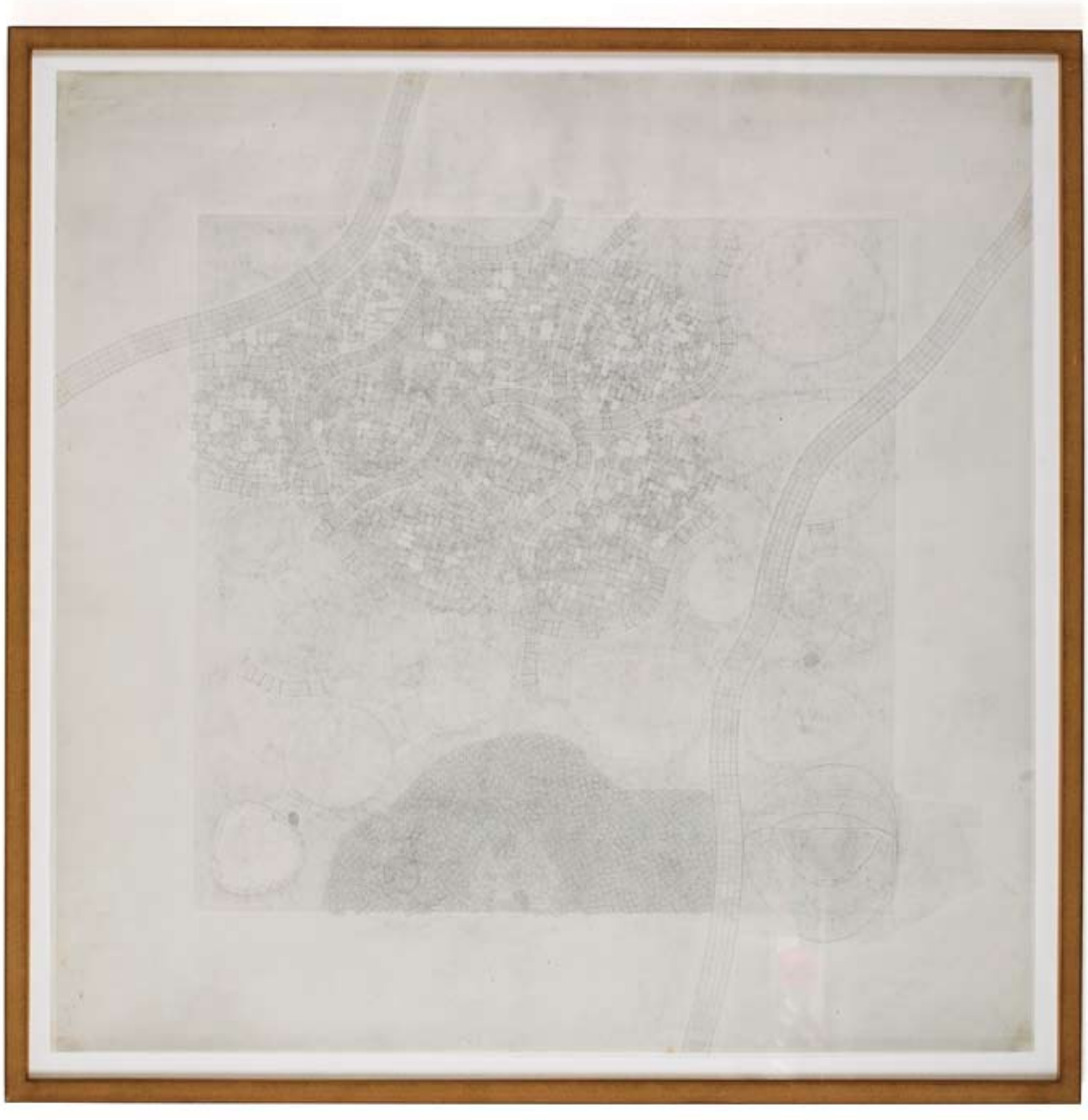
Conditions #1–9: Selected formworks and ties for conditions #1, #2 and #3

Conditions #1–9: Selected formworks and ties for conditions #6 and #7

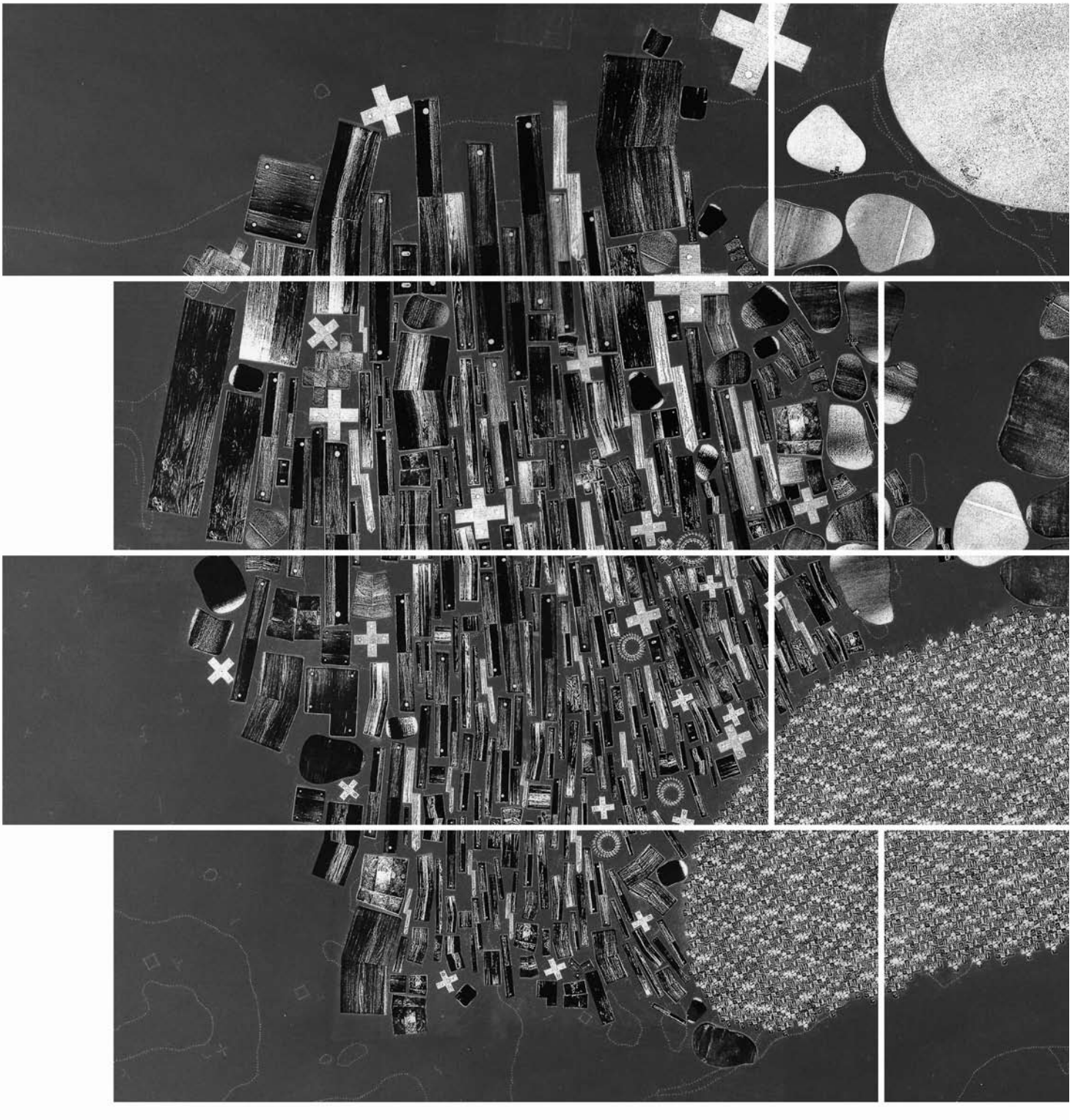


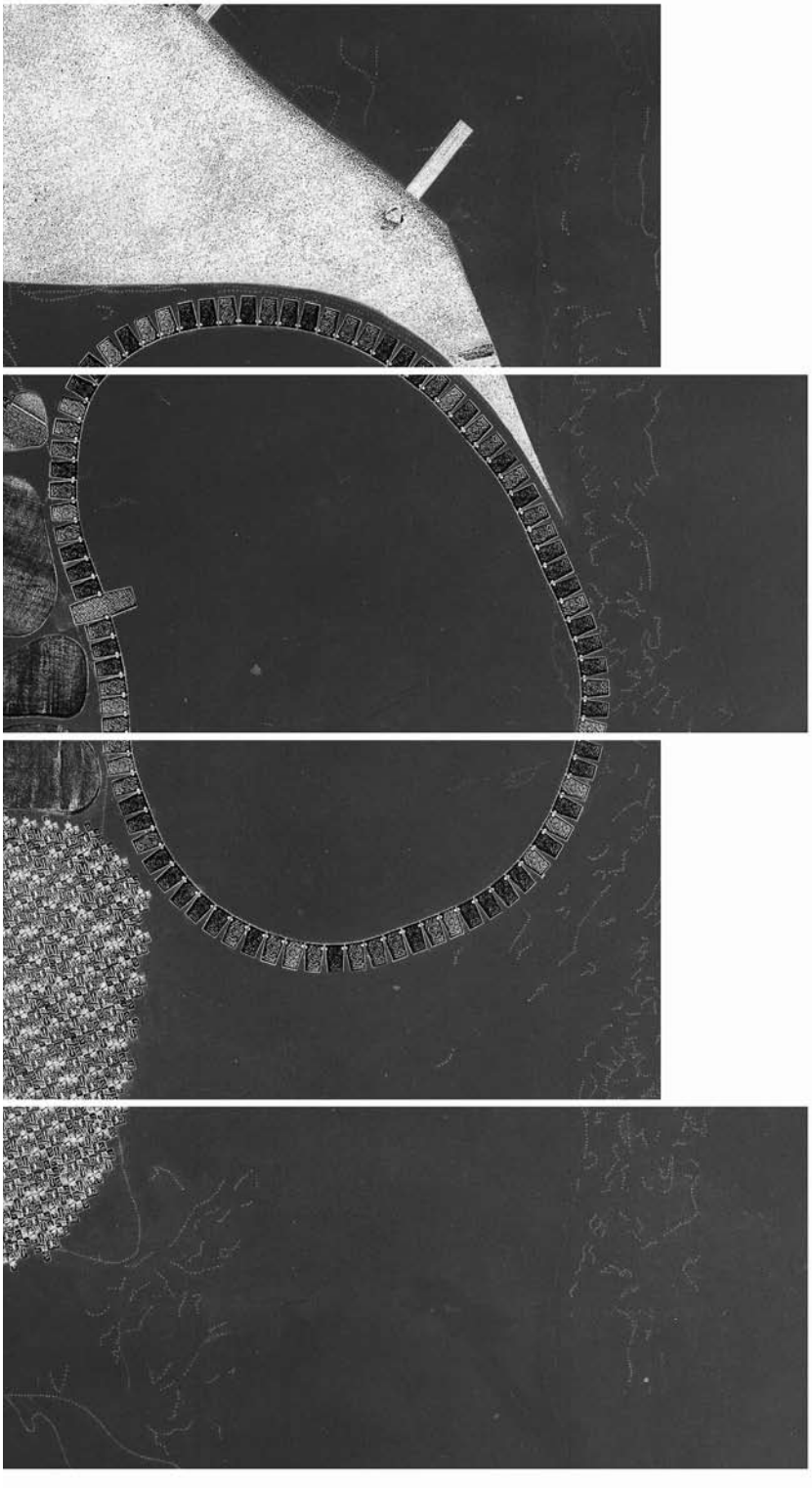
Sequence5; segment of condition #3 and field condition for drawing C

The nine conditions are conditions between liquid and solid. The thesis addresses them from a linear and an individual perspective but they are envisaged as a coherent and combined making and fabrication process. The drawings examine the correlation between the conditions and they also reveal a number of nuances by rendering the transformative properties of the conditions visible.

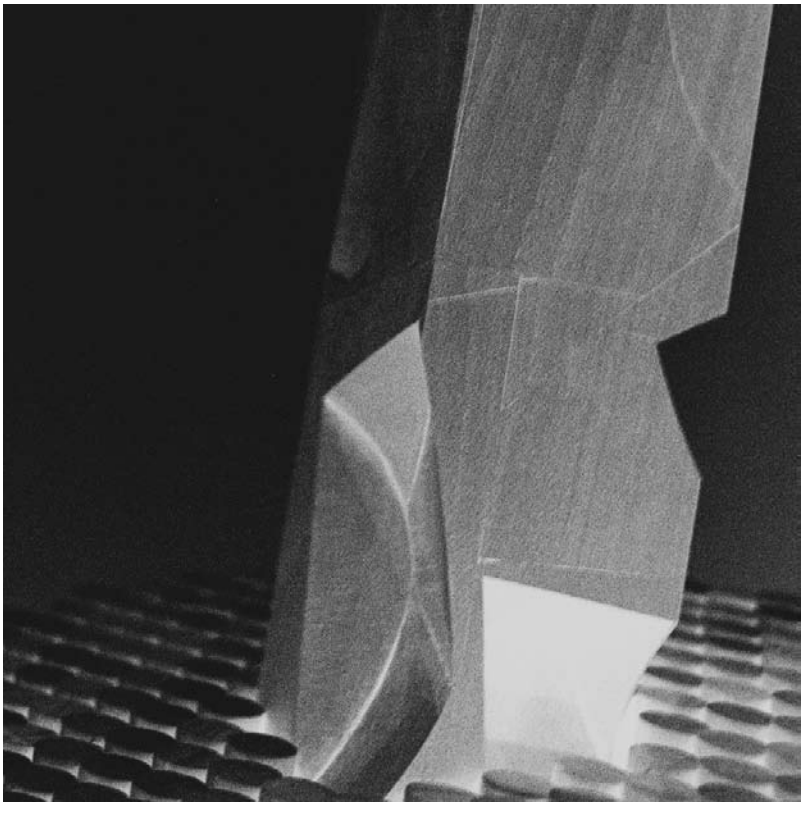


Sequences; drawing C





Narrative: The plan for an area south of Copenhagen, Denmark
The narrative is based on a place 'outside the project', a specific location that comprises a condition combined by physical and spatial forces. Viewing the area as conditions is to see across the form and instead recognize the forces that created and continue to create the area. Conditions 1–9 are used to understand and analyse the combined condition of the area. Following this the area is tied into a new possible narrative. The plan for the area is based on the heroic and extensive process dating back to the 1970s that created a beach park and an urban area. The two dominant processes in connection with the creation of this area was the production of concrete elements and the addition of sand pumped up from the bay. The story 're-exposes' the material in the form of a new architectural condition that combines fabrication processes, material and space.



Title: A BUOY – for a condition

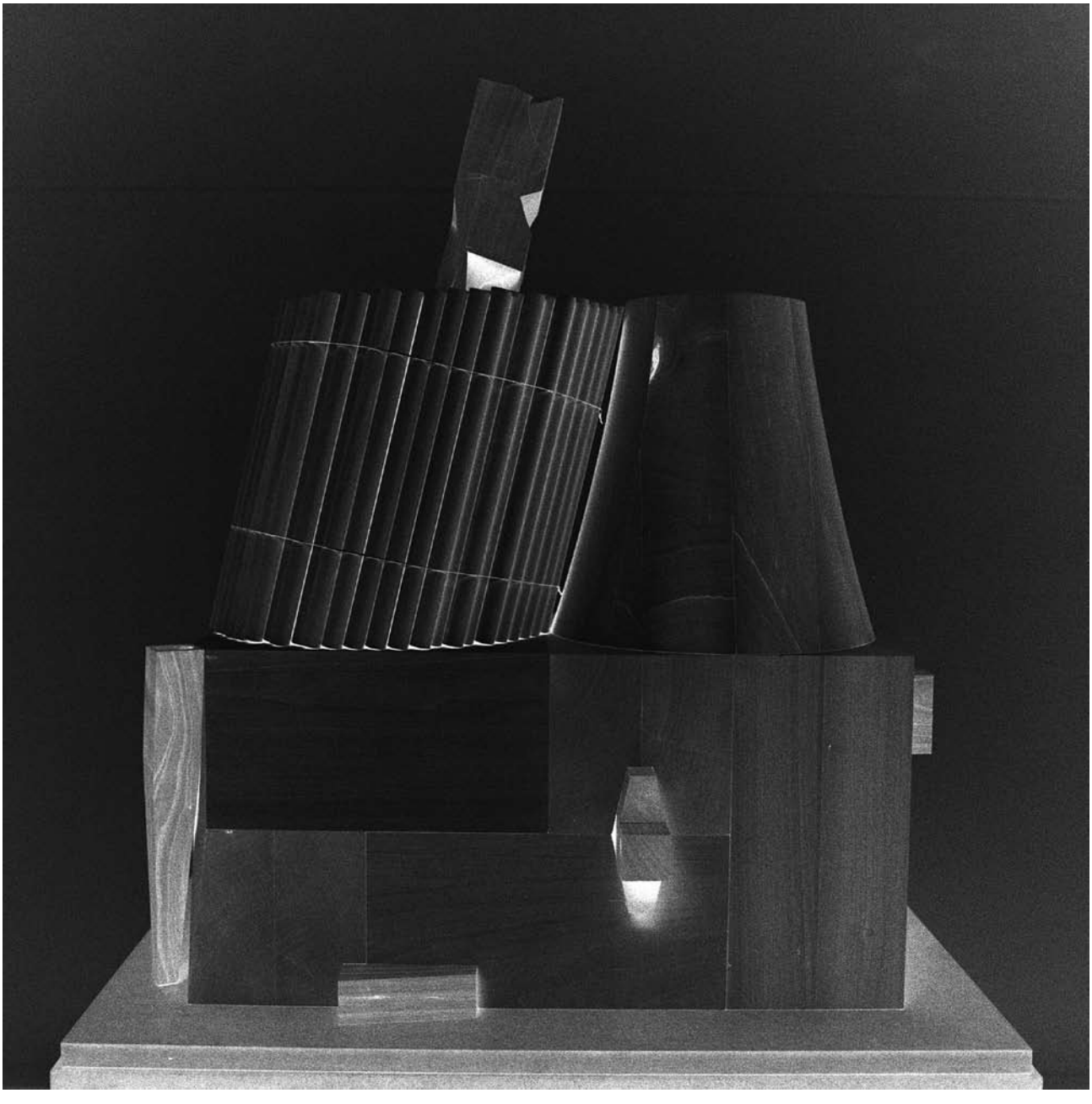
The idea behind the project is to create a buoy that can float in fallow areas of the harbour – areas from which the stories from the recent past about the sea and the city have vanished.

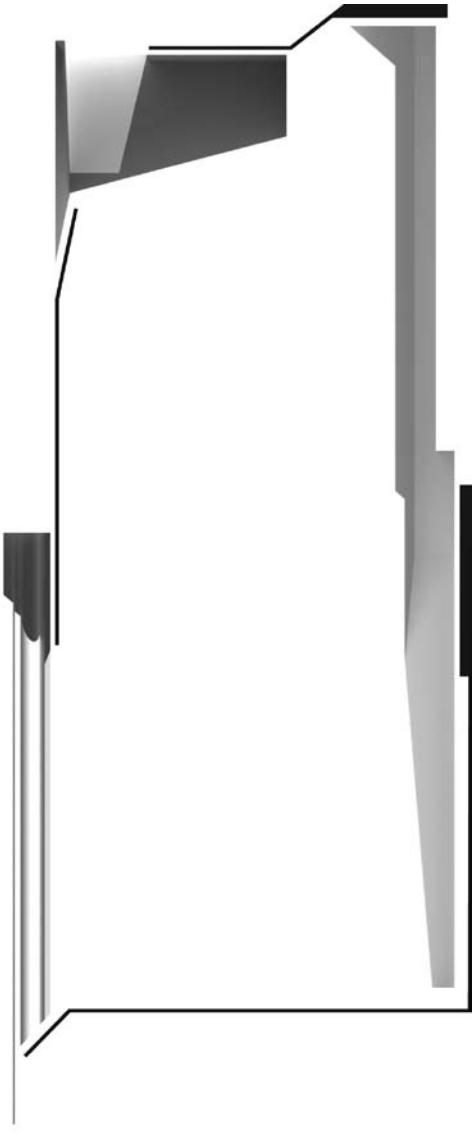
The buoy holds a bell. The ringing of the bell is symbolic of an interwoven network of events and functions that take place in the sea, in the harbour and in the city. The bell rings out to warn about storms, fires and shipwrecks. Bells gather congregations for the rituals between birth and death, and striking the hours the bell measures the work of the day and the length of the punishment. The chimes dissolve the abstract notion of time and create the space for private hours.

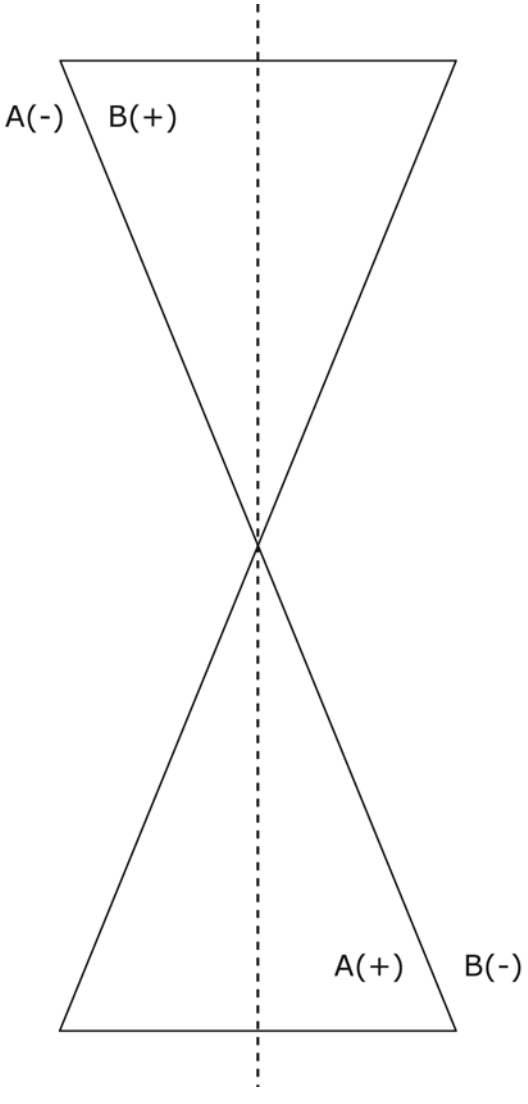
The buoy in the harbour rings to mark all of these times and events. It marks the values that are necessary to think and inhabit the space around the sea.

With its ringing the buoy marks changes in space – *changing conditions*. The buoy is a solid object in a liquid mass – it creates differences, directions and borders in the immeasurable.

Together with the functions of the bell, the shape of the buoy can create the form and the space of the new urban area.



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