

Carsten Nicolai [diary #03](#)

FACTS & ARTIL-FACTS

Gianni Romano Carsten Nicolai

At the beginning of your career when you were still living in Chemnitz, something notable in your work was the importance that the Internet had as an active laboratory. Back then, the Web really functioned as an alternative framework for musical experimentation, though — to broaden the context — we can't say the same for the visual arts, not even in terms of informational support (with the exception of Net-Art, which anyway remains an isolated case).

In 1995 when I founded the record label "noton" and was collaborating with Olaf Bender and Frank Bretschneider from "raster music", we found ourselves at a point where our music wasn't generating a lot of interest from the record companies and so we also used the Internet as a channel for the distribution of CDs and informational material. The Internet quickly became an important tool for distributing information from a tiny city like Chemnitz. So it wasn't only meant as a base upon

which we could develop productive aspects, or as a political or ideological instrument, but as a real instrument for the distribution of small realities. In general, you know that I'm interested in the dynamics of auto-generating processes, and the Internet records a lot of that dynamic. We didn't put products on the Web that were identifiable geographically or ideologically; the information was reduced to the absolute minimum. Remember that the first CDs didn't even have covers, only the album titles and the tracks. Yet, despite the low quantity, they were manufactured by German, American, Icelandic, or Japanese musicians and you could even find our CDs in Paris, San Francisco, or Tokyo as well.

Therefore, it was thanks to the computer and the Web that Chemnitz became an active production center and your label a framework within which diverse people from different areas could interact.

There's that wonderful saying of Buckminster Fuller's — "think global, act local" — that describes the climate of that period very well.

You often refer to Buckminster Fuller; you also recently mentioned him as one of the figures that most influenced the art of today. I'd like to know if there are connections in your work.

Buckminster Fuller is an important figure to me because he did not recognize boundaries. He was an architect, researcher, artist, designer, and a humanist. His viewpoint was very universal, global, but he could concentrate on local problems. I see connections between his work and my work in terms of interdisciplinary thinking, in terms of not becoming trapped in one specific field, but entertaining research as part of the creative process.

In comparison to music, I imagine that in art it's difficult to create collaborative platforms.

Yes, it's very difficult to make artists work together; I don't know if it has to do with the market or with competing egos. Among musicians, on the other hand, the opportunities for getting together are always considered. I'd love to create a team of people — artists and scientists — but it's very difficult.

It's true that with music you see different kinds of collaboration much more often, whether in the studio or in live performances. Perhaps it's because music, in its creative process, implies the idea of choral participation, while with art artists almost always remain alone until the moment that their work is to be viewed or exhibited.

Artistic collaborations or artist groups do not last long; they are short-lived. The artist's nature tends towards solitude, and

we assume that it's connected to seclusion and introspection. It is individualistic, but the public loves to observe the individual. The highest results in art are reached through one artist's solitary journey. With music, the highest results are often achieved by musicians who play together. Musicians have always played together. I feel this collaborative approach will become more developed and respected and, therefore, more important in the future.

And Berlin?

At a certain point, the move became obligatory. As the interest in my artistic work grew, many curators and critics asked me to meet them in Berlin. So I was obliged to go there often, or else refuse to go there. A few even asked me if I could bring some of my work with me... In the end I decided to move, to leave the isolation typical of East Germany in that period.

The isolation typical to that part of Germany probably engendered in you a very reserved, judicious, character, but I wonder if it also influenced your art. For example, does the minimalism typical of your music and your images have something to do with a certain desire to maintain some distance from the idea of overproduction?

For me one thing was always very clear from the beginning, that my work should not indicate any political terms, because I grew up in an atmosphere where everything was propaganda, everything was used for political ends. Therefore, I always kept distant from any ideological dimension, also because I quickly understood that this would have suggested all-too-facile conclusions, the common idea of the artist that comes from the East, etc. I think that art doesn't have to have political implications, but then they tell me that my attitude is political because I have my own label, I produce music, and whatever

else; that's acceptable, but the greatest freedom that I've discovered in art is the possibility of acting without having political labels stuck to you.

There are always dichotomies in your work, east/west, tone/no-tone...

They're not dichotomies, they are polarities. It's very different to the opposition suggested by the idea of a dichotomy because often it's different elements that contribute to the creation or development of a phenomenon. The same idea of a laboratory suggests a place of continual change within which one can experiment, combining and overlaying different elements. Also at a personal level, I have the tendency to identify myself with conflict, crisis, more than with an idea of unity. The reality is always hidden between the lines, somehow, I like to reassemble the pieces, recombine them, try out new processes.

Perhaps it has something to do with the characteristic eclecticism of you and your work. If you do a search on the Internet, most of the pages bring up Nicolai the musician and performer, concert dates, musical webzine ... some others, though, find out the Carsten Nicolai installations—like in Venice in 2001—to only then discover that the same artist has made paintings. One almost has the impression that they are all about different artists, that it's simply a case of homonymy ...

I never wanted to box myself into a single, specific role; I studied landscape architecture in Dresden, then I got interested in music, in art ... the problem is that everybody specializes in something, but then there should be a way that all these specialists communicate. Sometimes I don't even like to define myself as an artist, there are projects in which I feel closer to being a scientist or a musician, therefore I would have difficulty in defining myself as a musician.

And how do you explain to a musician that you're not a musician?

These are only problems of definition; someone's need to label you. I don't have to tell myself what I am; I know what interests me. If I were literally constrained to answer to that kind of question, I would say that I was somebody that was interested in electronic frequencies. Polarity interests me, confronting contradictions, developing processes that work on different dynamics and create dialogic contexts. Another motivation is that every one of these disciplines has a different relationship to time: painting is a static medium that freezes time; sound for me is a spatial phenomenon; and with an interactive installation, rather, you approach an auto-reproductive mechanism that can continue infinitely.

Could the concept of "frequency" be a metaphor for your work?

It's not a metaphor, but should be taken literally. I've been very influenced by Nicola Tesla, the Croatian scientist that first made use of alternating currents. For me, frequencies can connect with the visual artwork in terms of light, color, and, naturally, in sound works. It also resonates in different areas such as communication systems, in that we are not always sure how frequencies are affecting us, both physiologically and psychologically. I'm talking mainly about non-material mediums.

Sometimes these polarities are addressed thanks to various disciplines. For example, on the one hand, you decry painting as an instrument that freezes time, while on the other you use photography exactly because it is capable of freezing time. It's not by chance, then, that you photograph phenomena in motion: clouds, waves. Anyway, ever since I've known you, your pictorial approach always interested me and I see your painting as being in perfect balance with the rest of your activ-

ity. It's painting influenced by your music and your projects, a kind of work in which the picture's construction brought you to substitute painting-matter with material-matter. Inasmuch as painting can be static, some of yours seem to be preparatory sketchbooks of performative actions, an empty surface used for the preparation of something to come. Perhaps it's this exact mental aspect that brings you close to Japanese culture and that makes you popular in that country.

I never thought about it in those terms before, but what you're saying is absolutely significant with respect to my approach. As far as Japan is concerned, I don't know how to explain it, but it's undeniable that there's a certain understanding.

The idea of landscape often returns in your work. Aside from your studies, did the fact that you worked for a year as a gardener affect you?

I don't know. I did that job to earn something and because I realized that for twenty-four years I had been stuck in a classroom studying. A garden is also a fantastic metaphor for time, for how nature regulates time and how we humans try to regulate nature, to design it in a certain way, in a certain style. In a garden you have two basic components: the seed and time, and time is my obsession.

Time is also the concern that brought you to be interested in music.

Absolutely. After university I drew a lot and I collected oscillators that I found at university, I didn't know what I wanted to do yet but I was certainly committed to a pictorial theme, to which I felt a certain dissatisfaction; I was suffering from the static quality of painting. Sound represented an escape route; it's a fantastic, undisciplined medium, yet totally bound

to time. It's unstable, but you can package it on a CD. Yet I wouldn't ever say that it's my preferred medium.

There are characteristics in your music that are also typical of your visual work: the concept of the loop, and that of the remix...

Actually the idea of the "loop" came to me from the painting I was doing at university, even if it seem the contrary. "Loop" is one of the key words in my work—the others are "nucleus" and "polarity." Anyway, the idea of the "loop," or rotation, today is mostly tied to my musical production.

How do you decide, then, in which manner you are going to formalize a work?

For me the content comes first, then, gradually, naturally, I think about how I'm going to realize the work. The fact that I

can experiment in different ways isn't a problem or a limit for me, rather, it's yet another possibility because I have a certain flexibility that allows me to choose different polarities according to the project's requirements.

There are projects like Modular re.strukt that actually contain opposites within them: in this case the rigidity of modules, the grid, and the possibility of the public's interaction (random and unexpected).

Yes, of course, the individual rebuilds a surface with models and chance shapes, although inside there is a predefined grid.

It seems to be a revolt against the machines, but actually it confirms that the problems of standardization have to do with the psyche more that the means. And it's made by hand, not by technology, thus denying the image of the hi-tech artist.

For me the content comes first ...

Enclosing clouds in space or seeing snow melting in slow motion, the jellyfish in *Water-aurelia aurita* ... have you ever worried that one of your installations would be viewed as romantic?

No. They have a romantic quality, but I think there is too much limitation for the subject to be truly romantic. Perhaps my work functions a bit like a Japanese garden; modifications are made to natural surroundings. It is possible, therefore, to enjoy nature by limiting nature.

Some of the content is very clear to us, like the fact that clouds exist (but not that they can be enclosed in a room) or other climatic factors ... for example, the snow-like effect that negates the image on TV (snow noise) that you re-suggest literally,

making us enter into a laboratory to witness its disintegration. It must be true that everything began from a mistake and a lot of your works recreate this condition in a metaphoric way, as if it were only through a virus, a crisis, a loss, that we can recreate life (and art). Does the idea of the laboratory, the archive, perhaps define you as a kind of art-producer that produces his things, but that fundamentally proposes open structures in which facts and artifacts can be inserted?

The idea is that of having an open archive, far off from the idea of conservation in a museum, an anti-space, alive. On the one hand there is the idea of the archive as distribution, more than conservation. When you finish a series of musical pieces you have to archive them, tape them, and render them available to the public. In effect, there doesn't exist an archive aside from the realized work, which often you have to struggle with to describe in objective terms because they remain open frame-

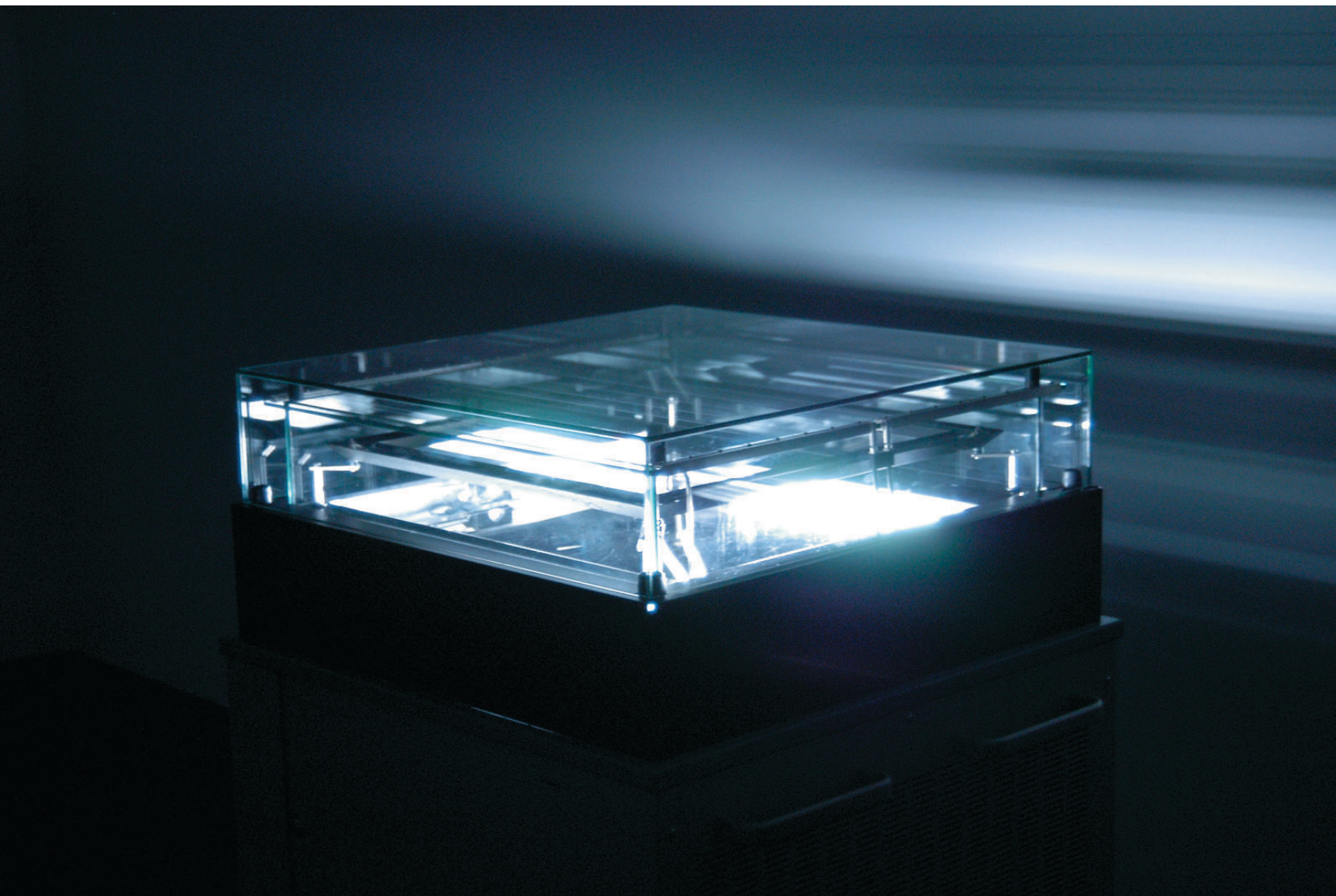
works, a platform within the interior of which I'm trying to make a process visible, rules and models, strategies and plans, order and coincidence.

Did the "Laboratory with Children" that was held at the Watari Museum in Tokyo in 2002 also obey the same rule? Did it make order and coincidence visible?

I saw the workshop as a metaphor for a chaotic system within a logic system. Fifteen children and, therefore, fifteen individual processes within an ordered system.

It's true that computers help us to archive better, but actually it's paradoxical that we don't want to archive things—more often we like to remember them. The archive gives us the feeling that we might be able to remember better but ...

...it's not true, once something is archived it's easier to forget it. We relegate the possibility of remembering to the computer, but they don't have any other way of remembering than saving the files, than archiving them. The harder task—that of remembering—is up to us.









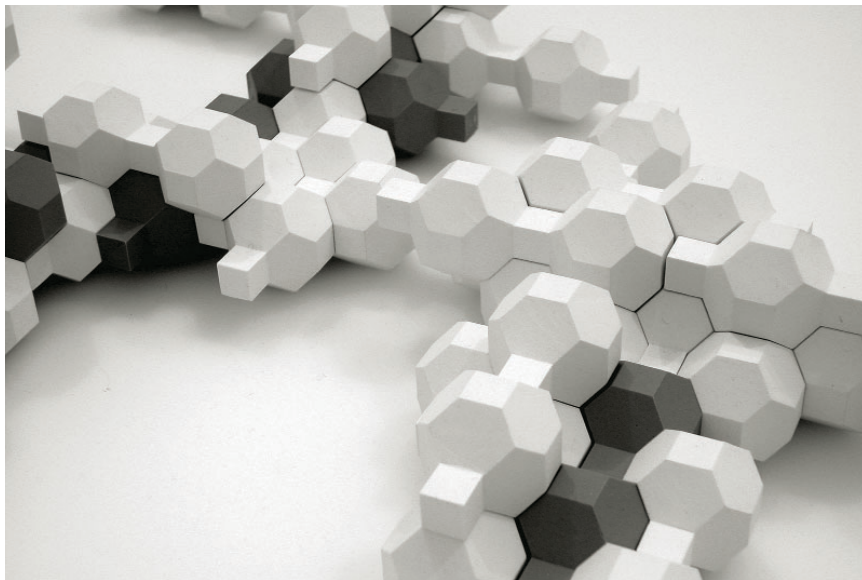




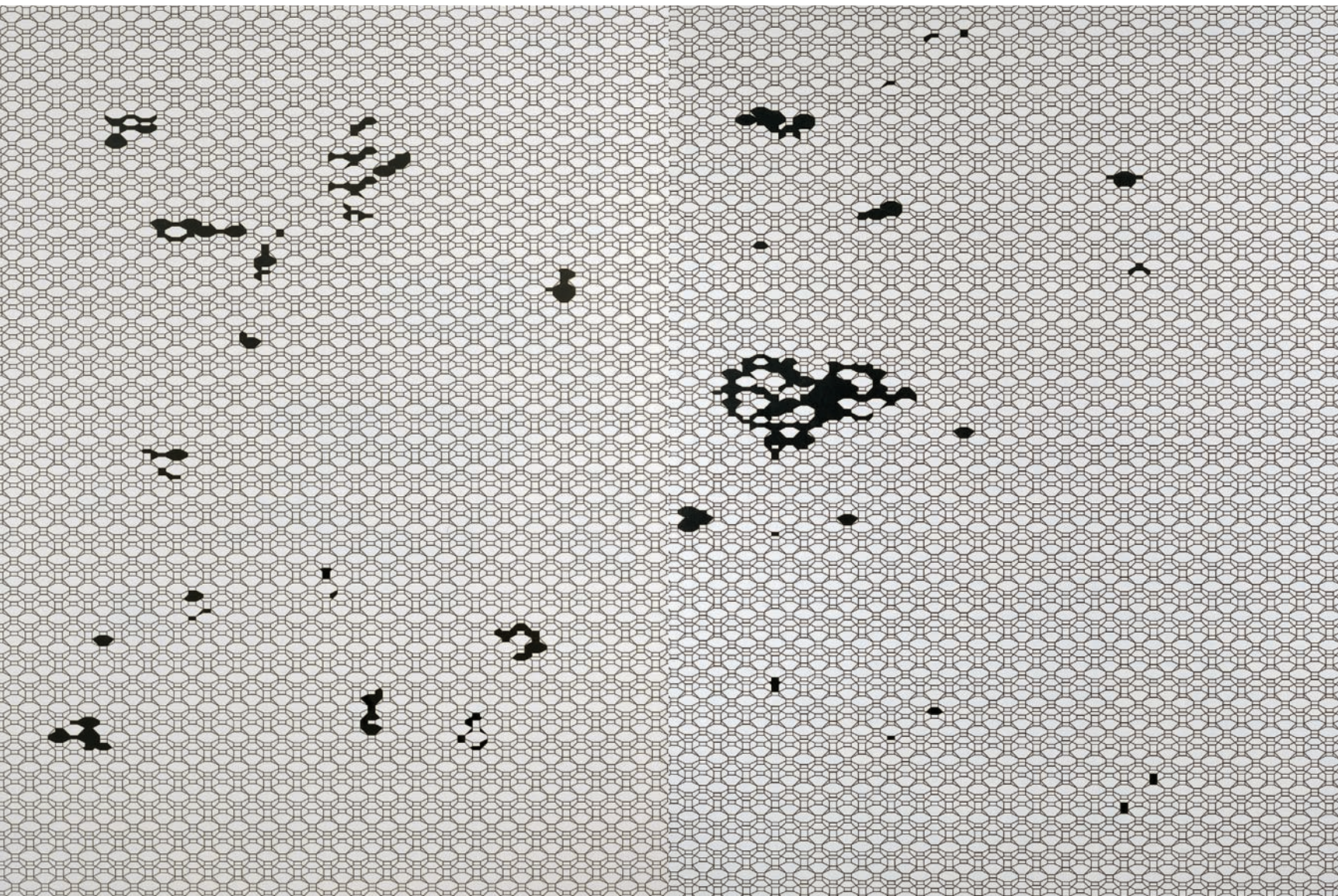


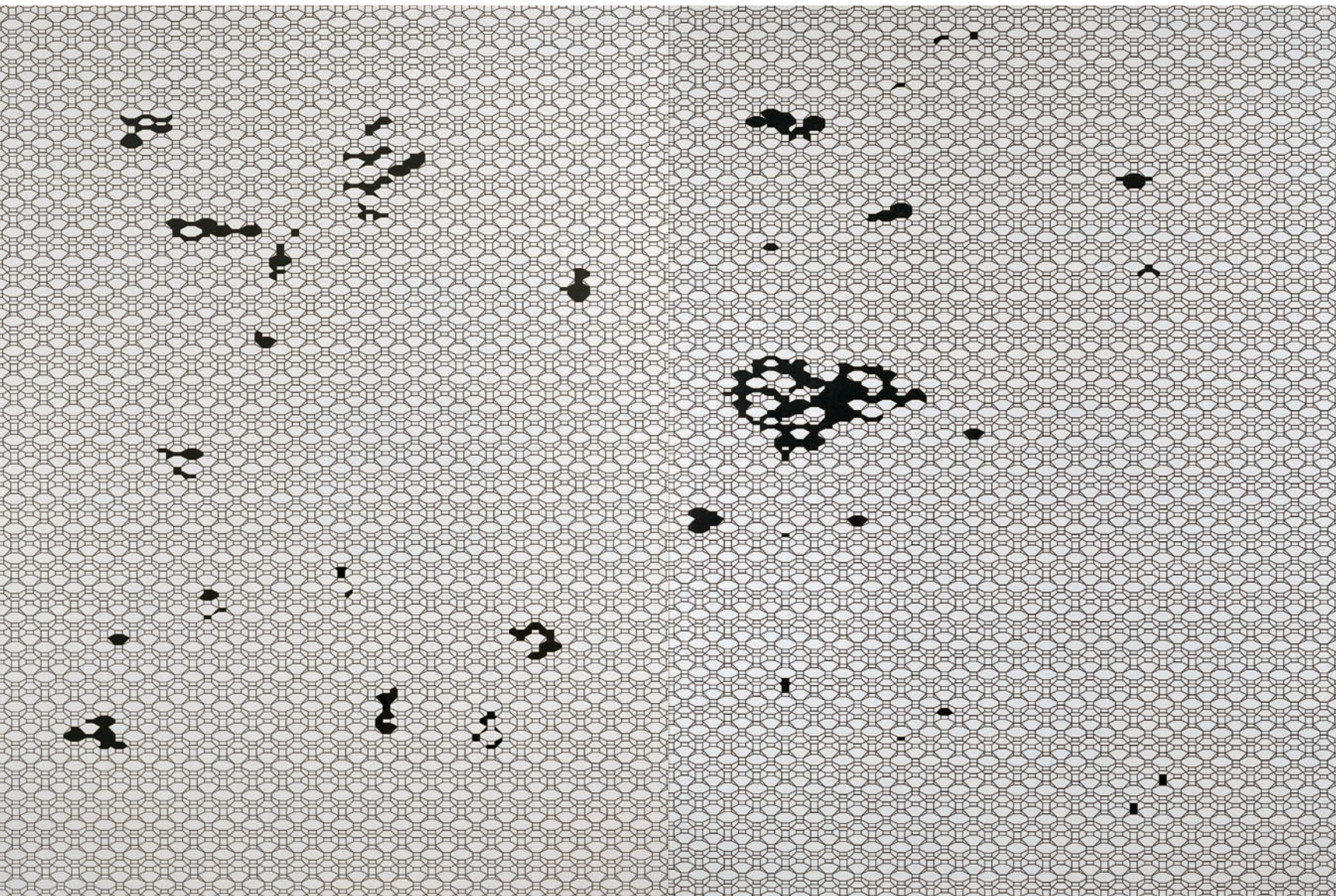


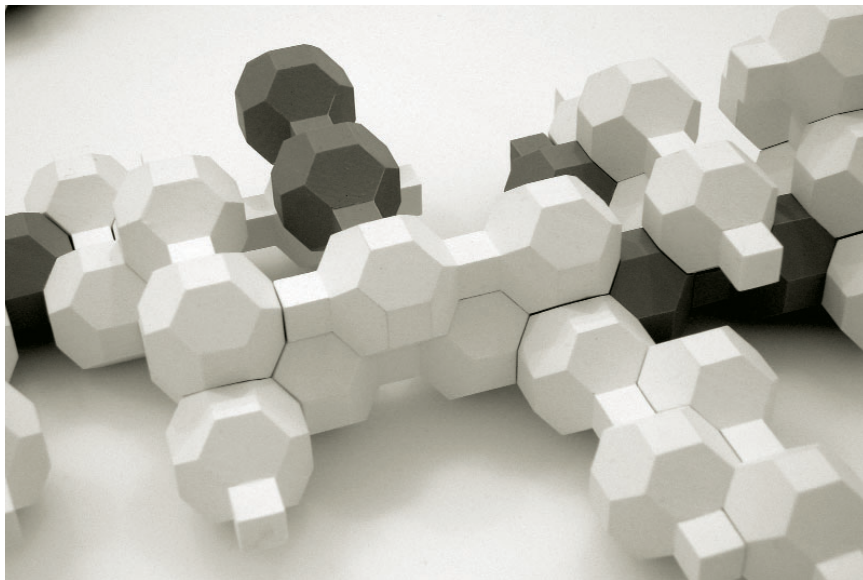


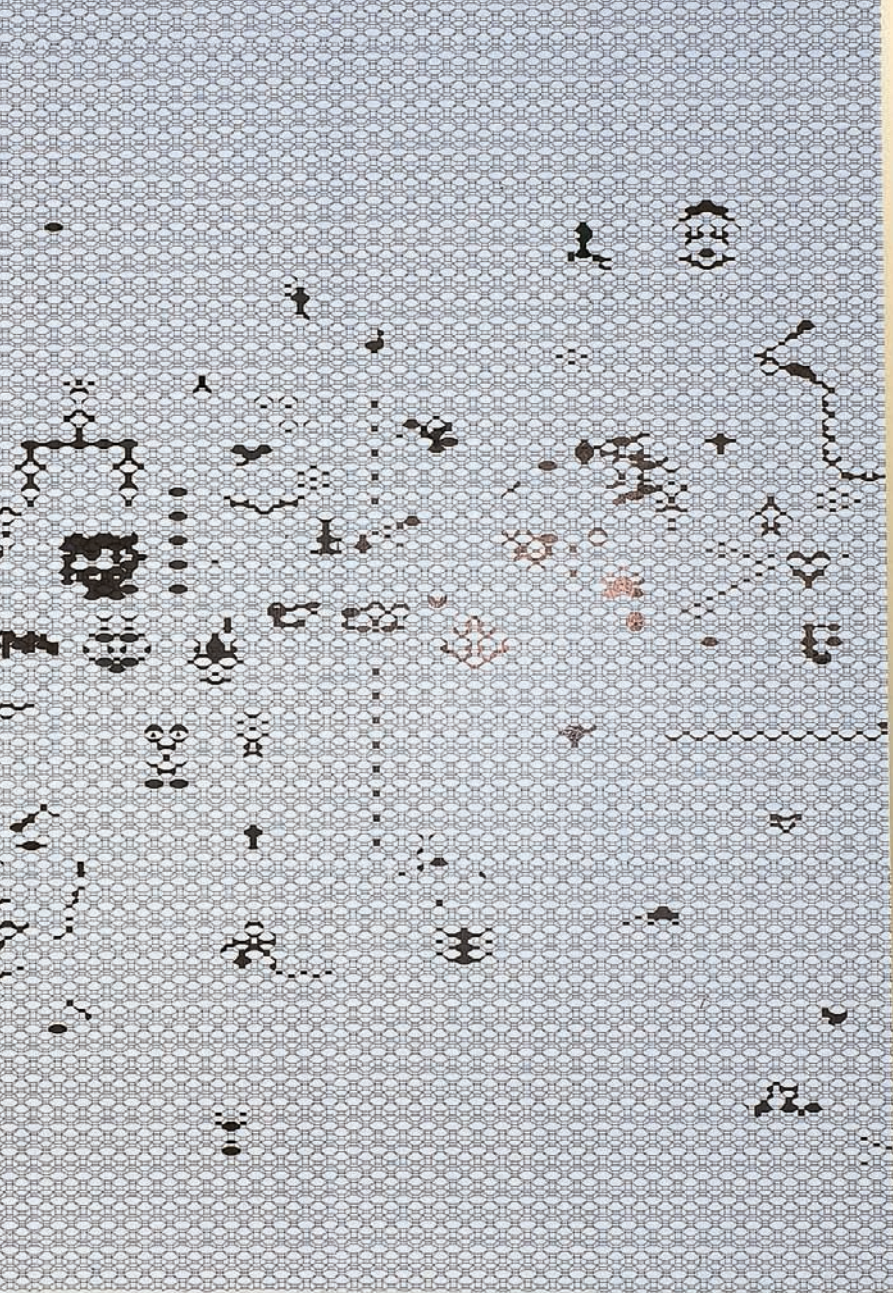










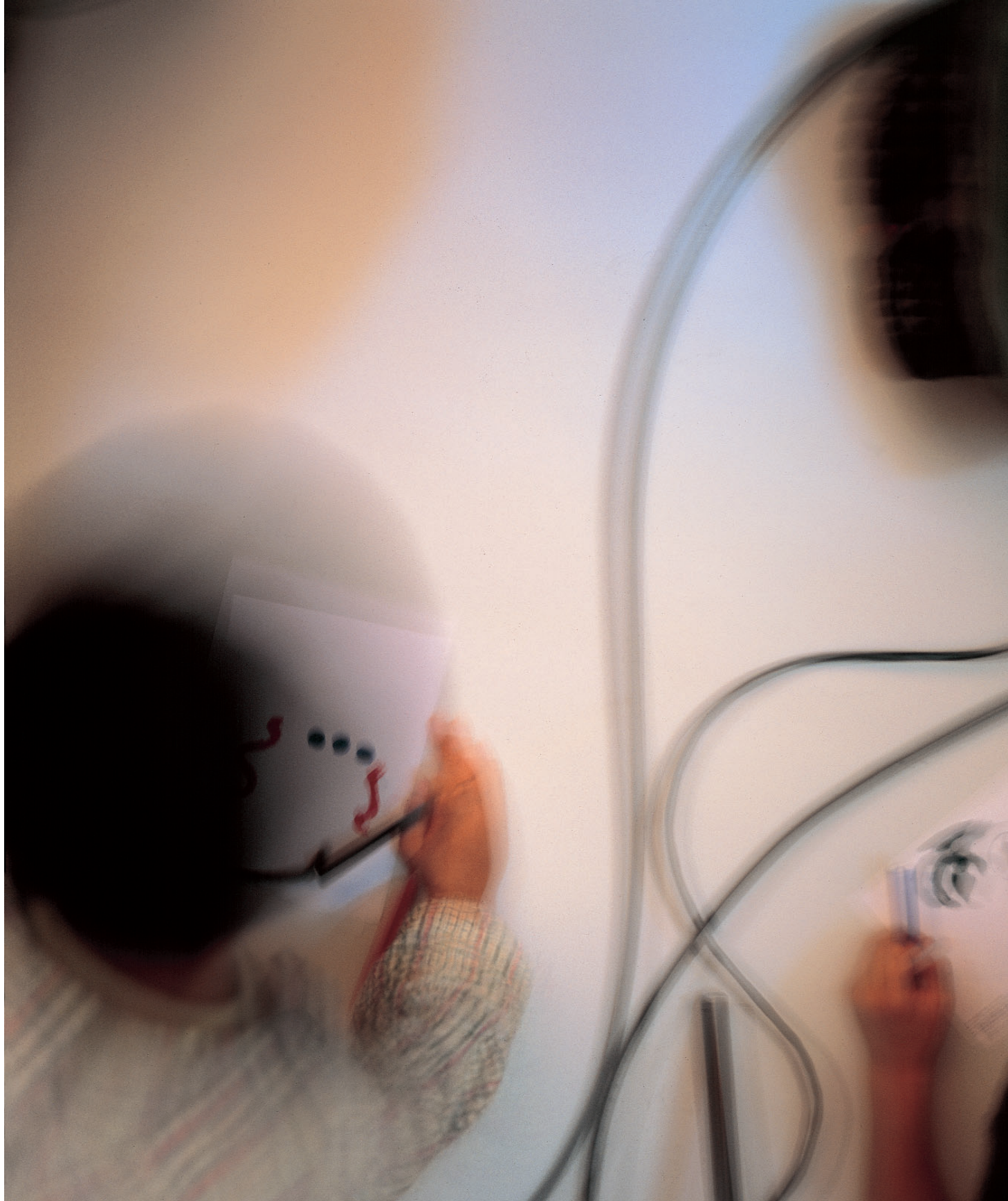














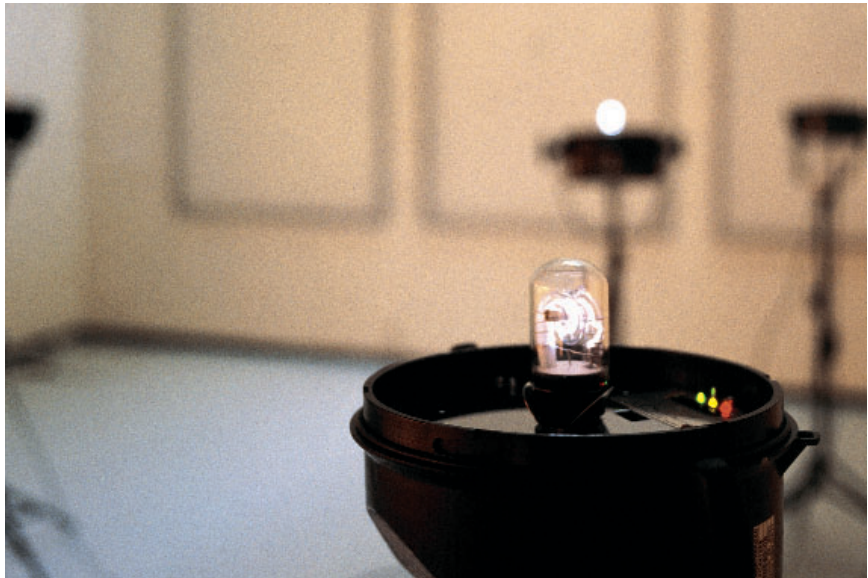




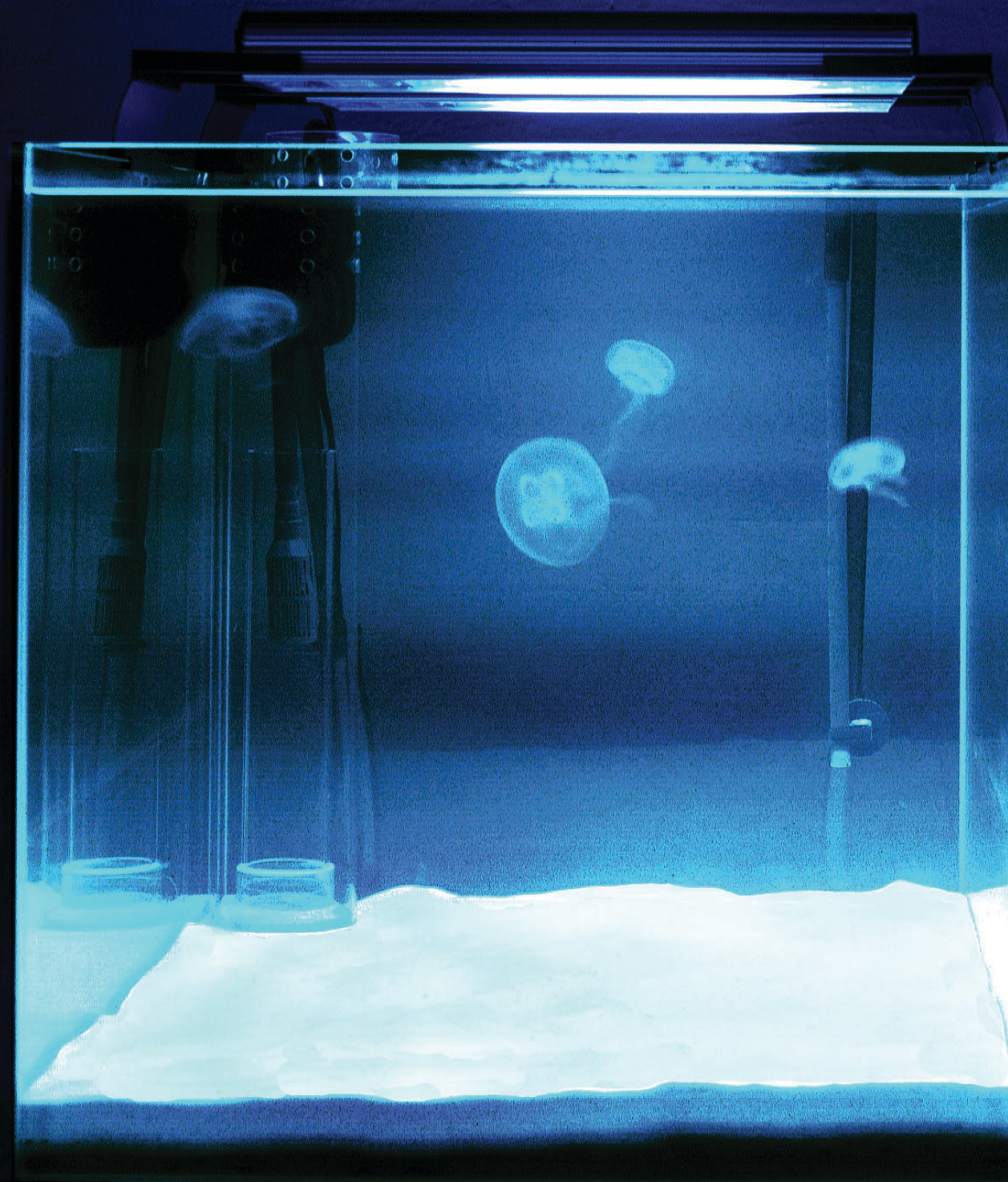






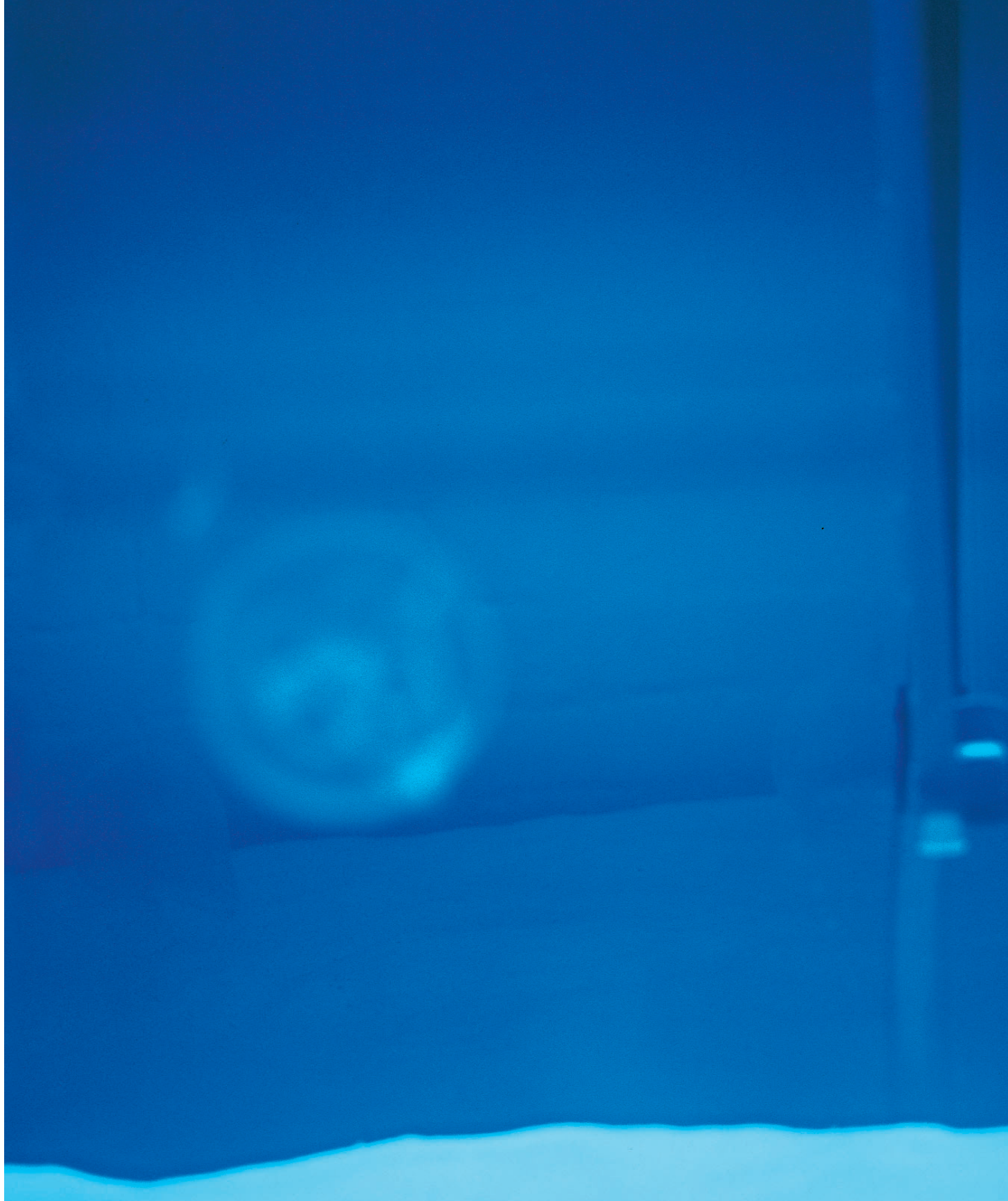








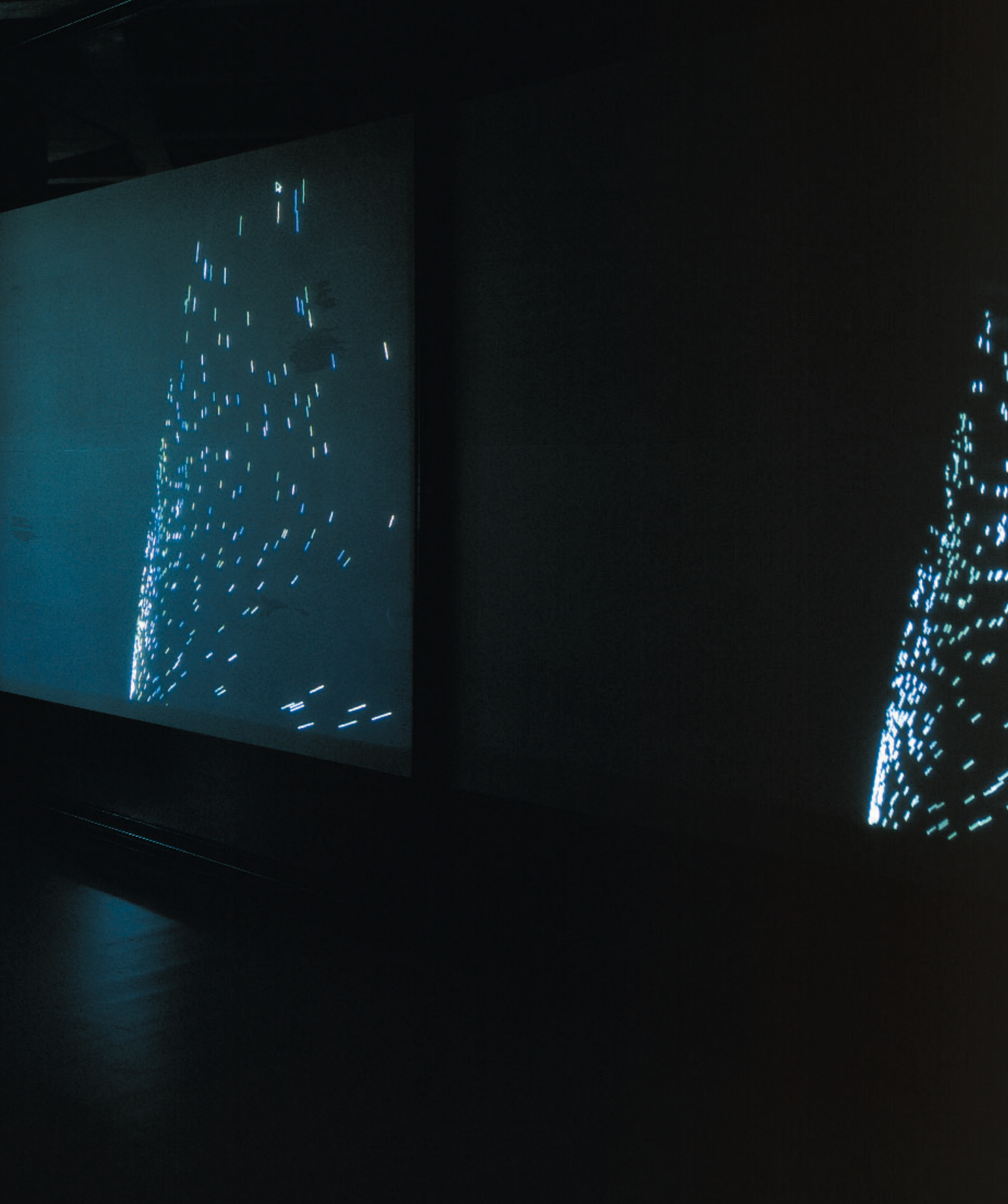


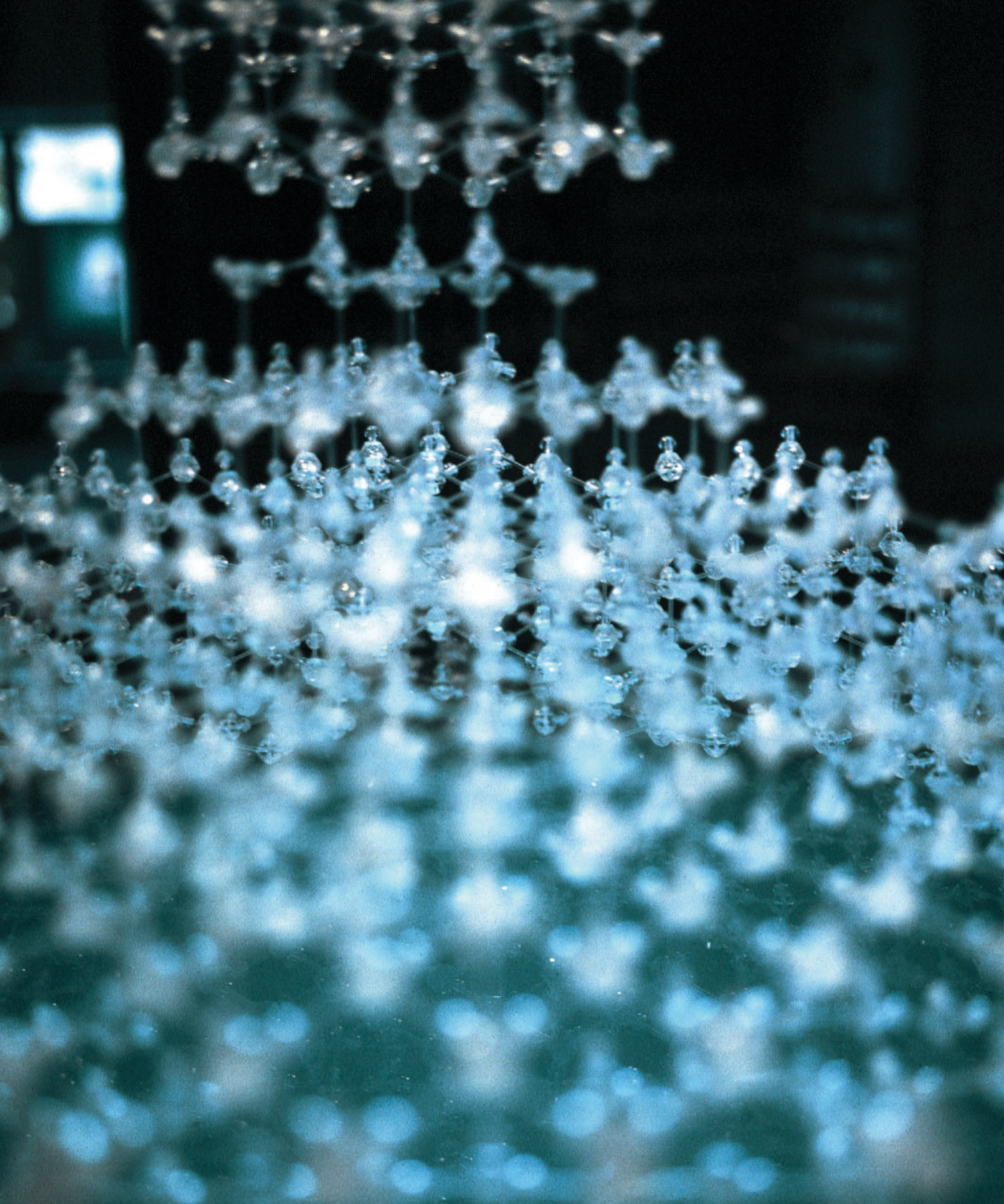


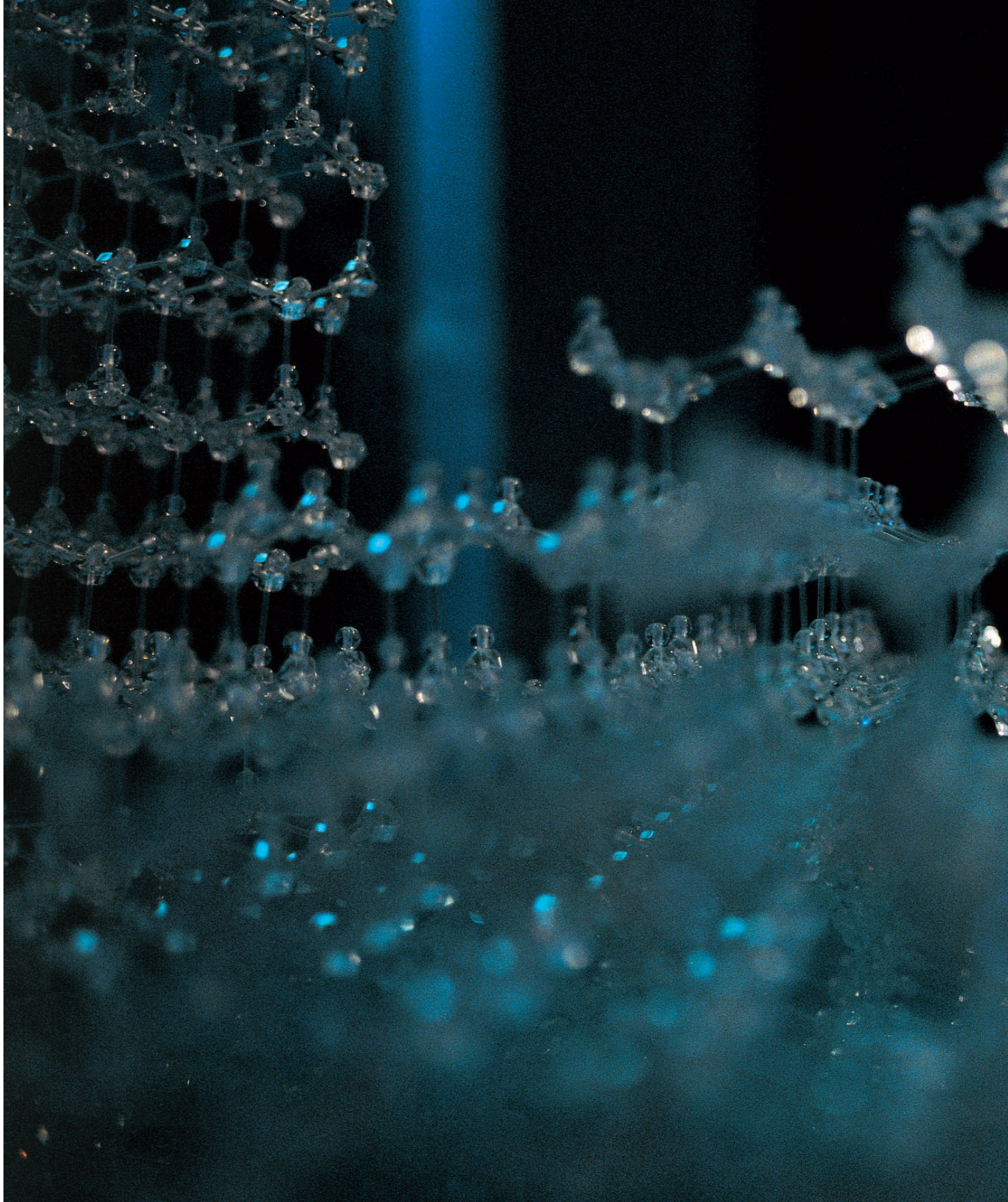


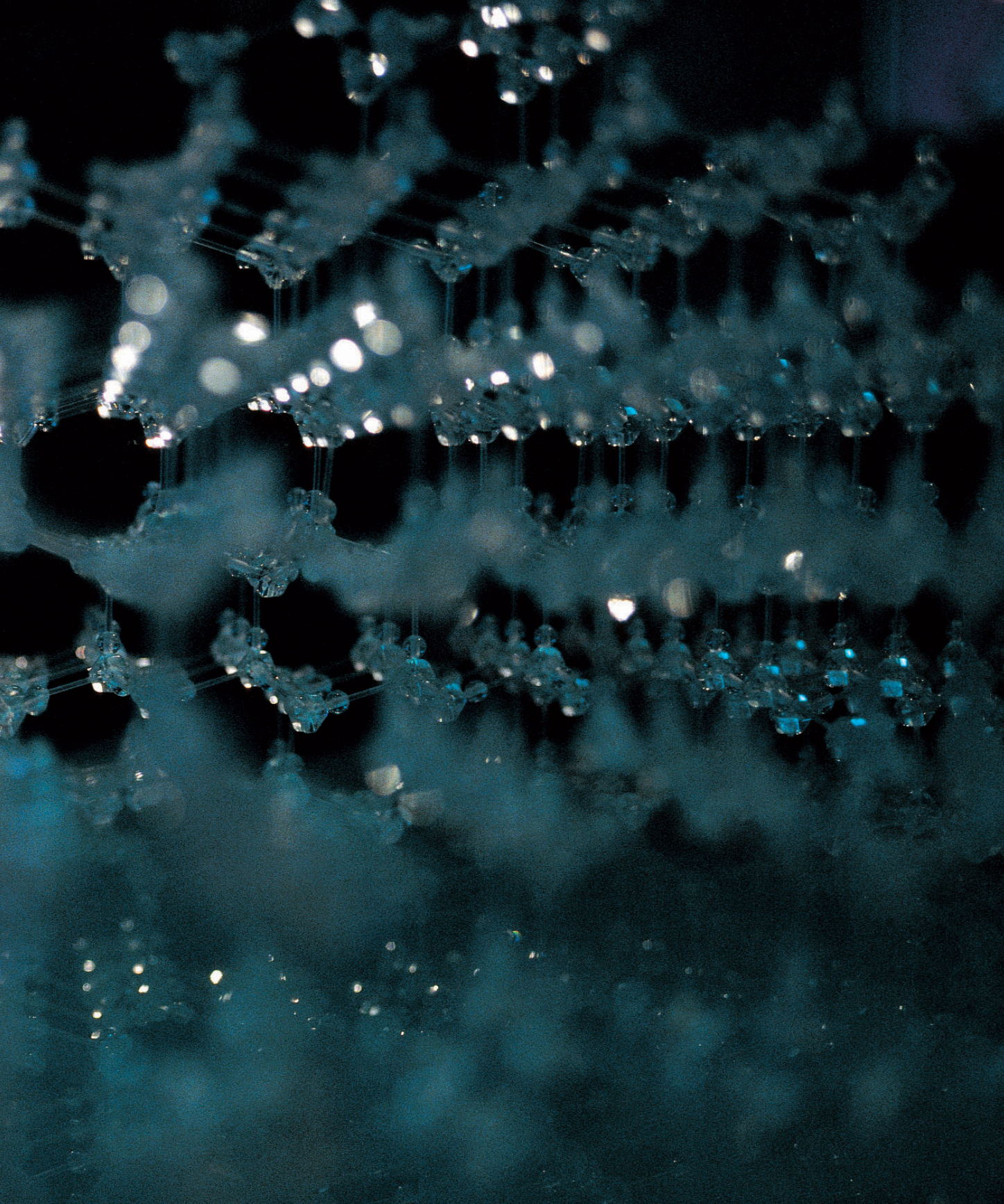


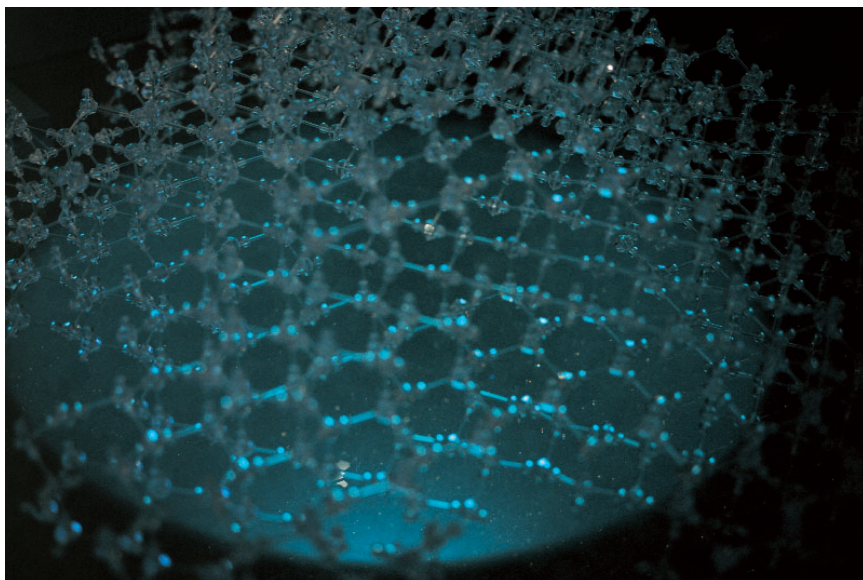


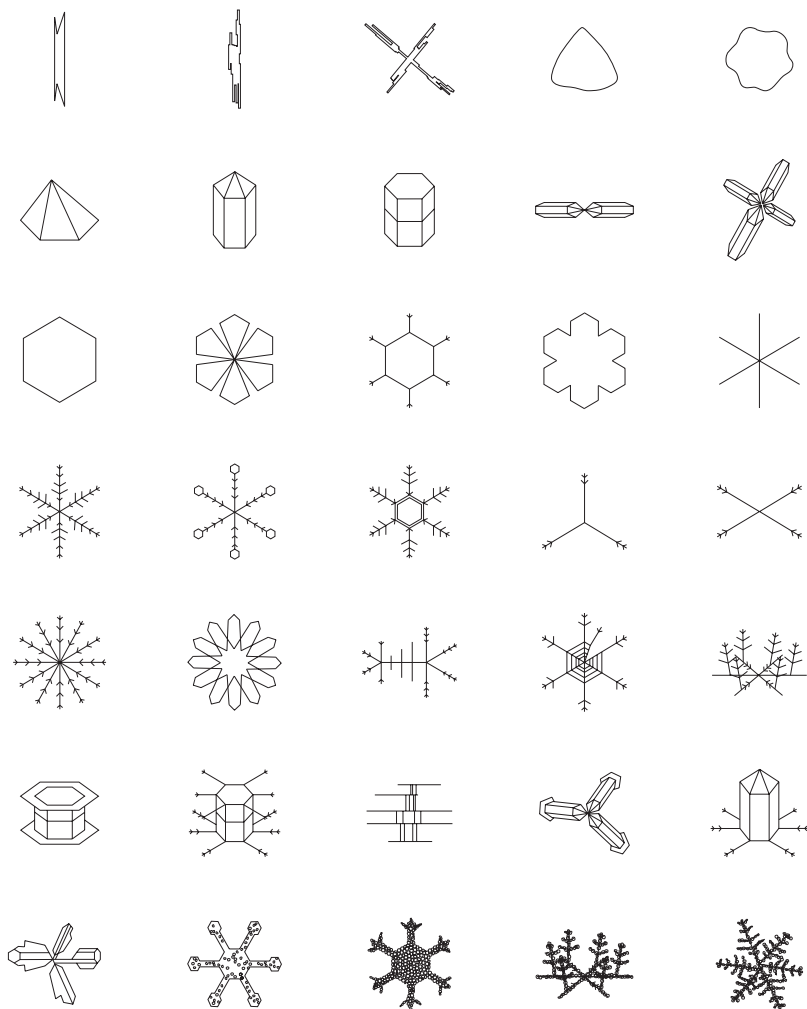


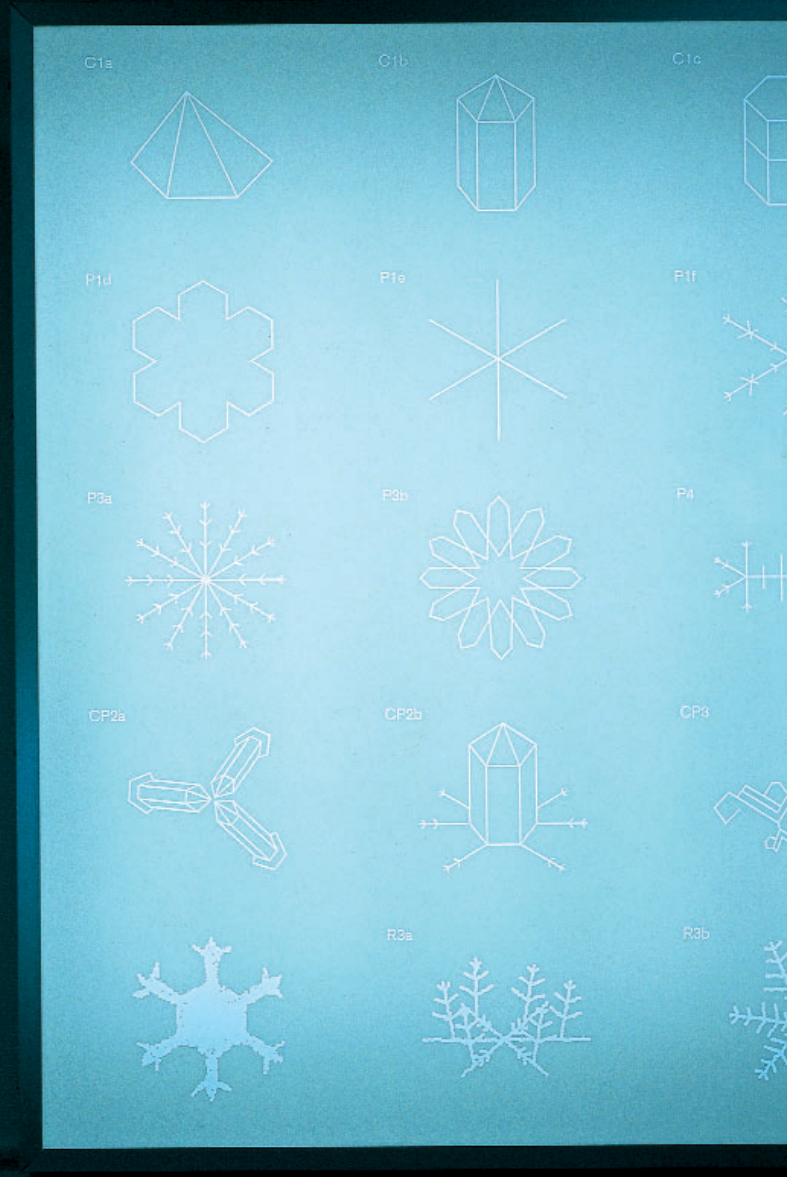














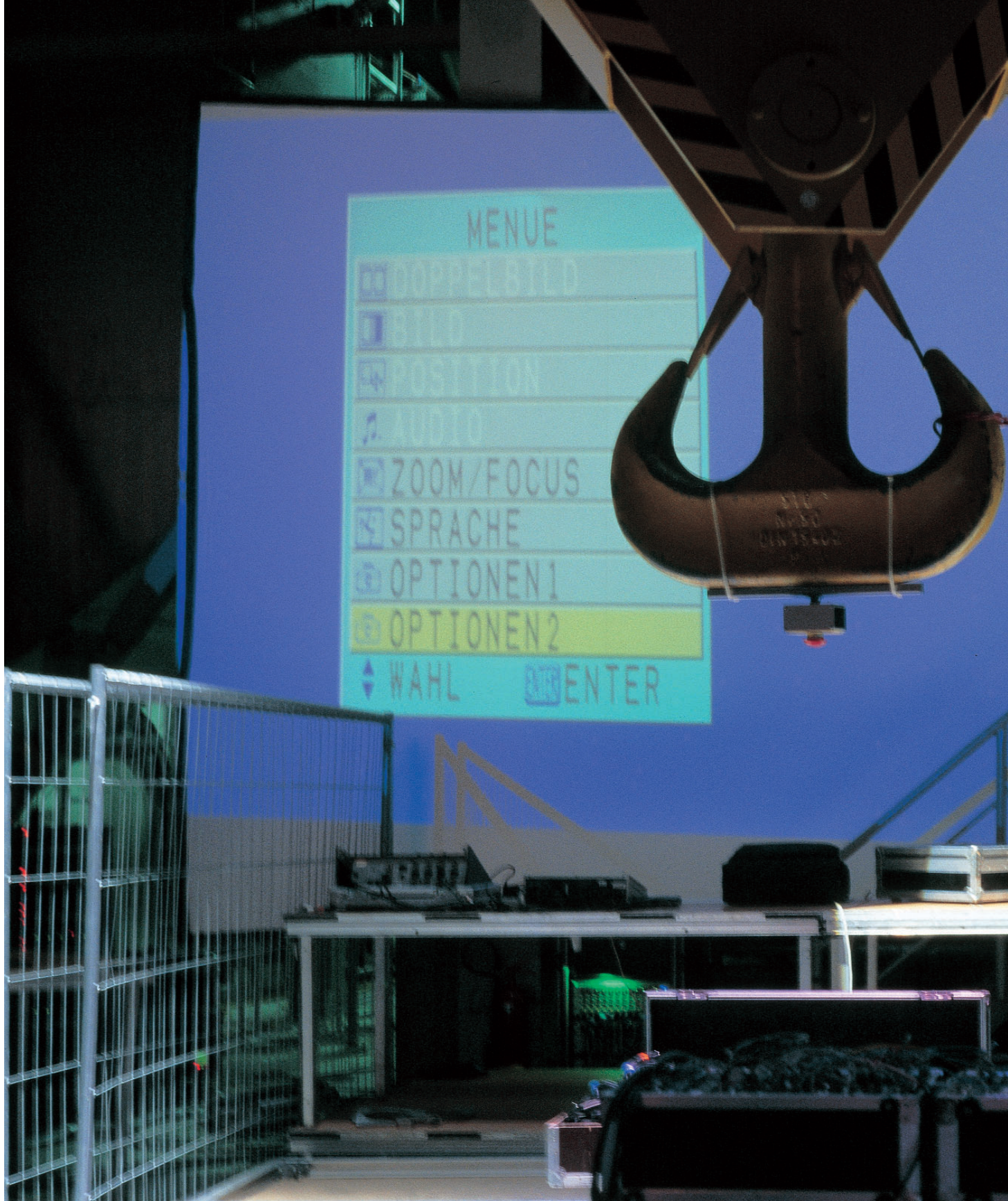








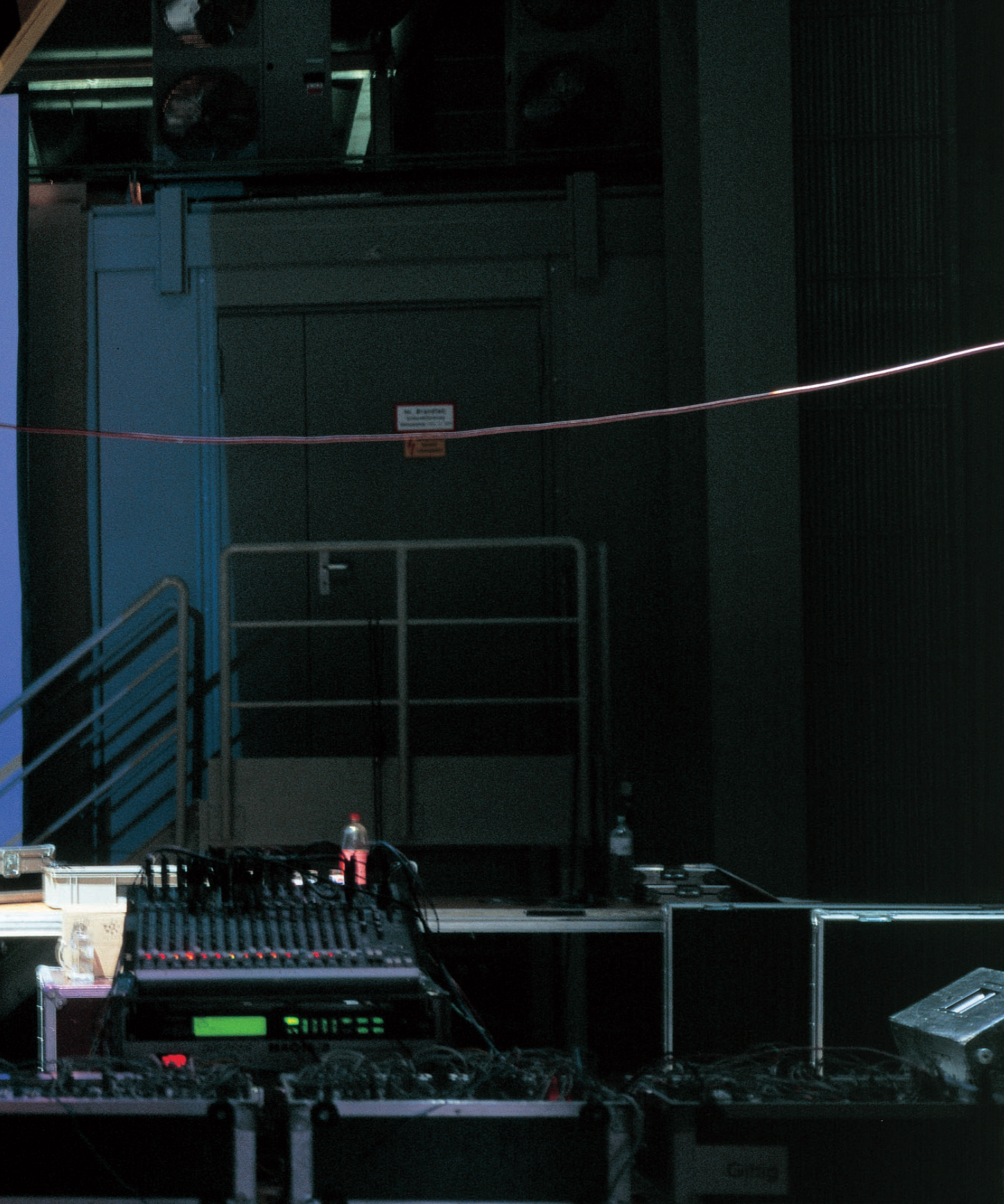


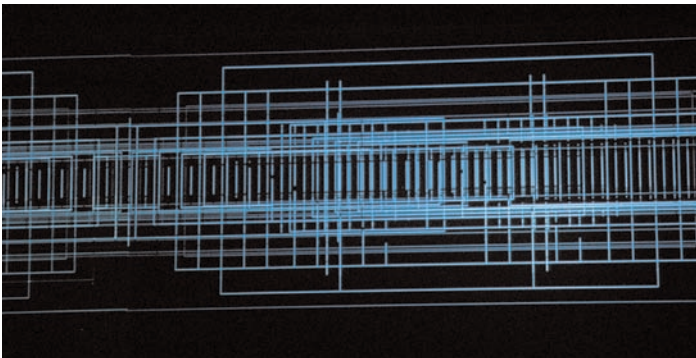
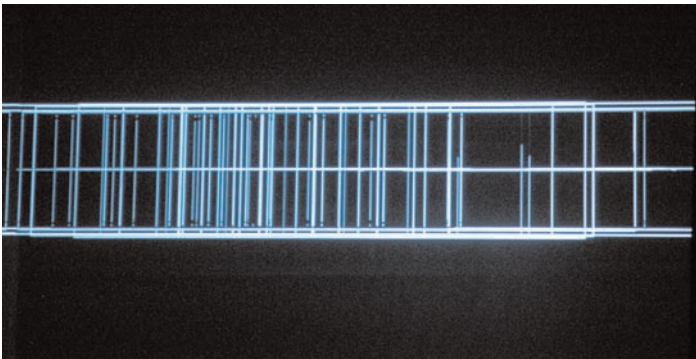
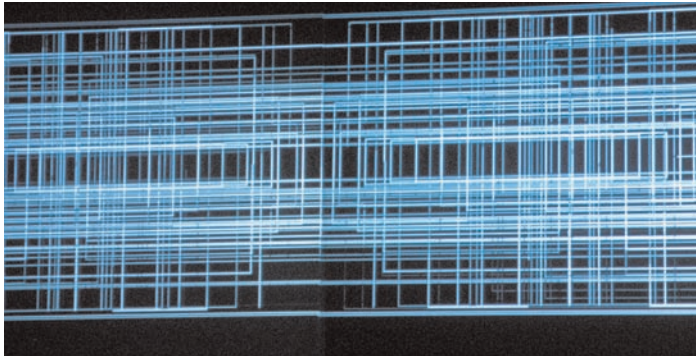


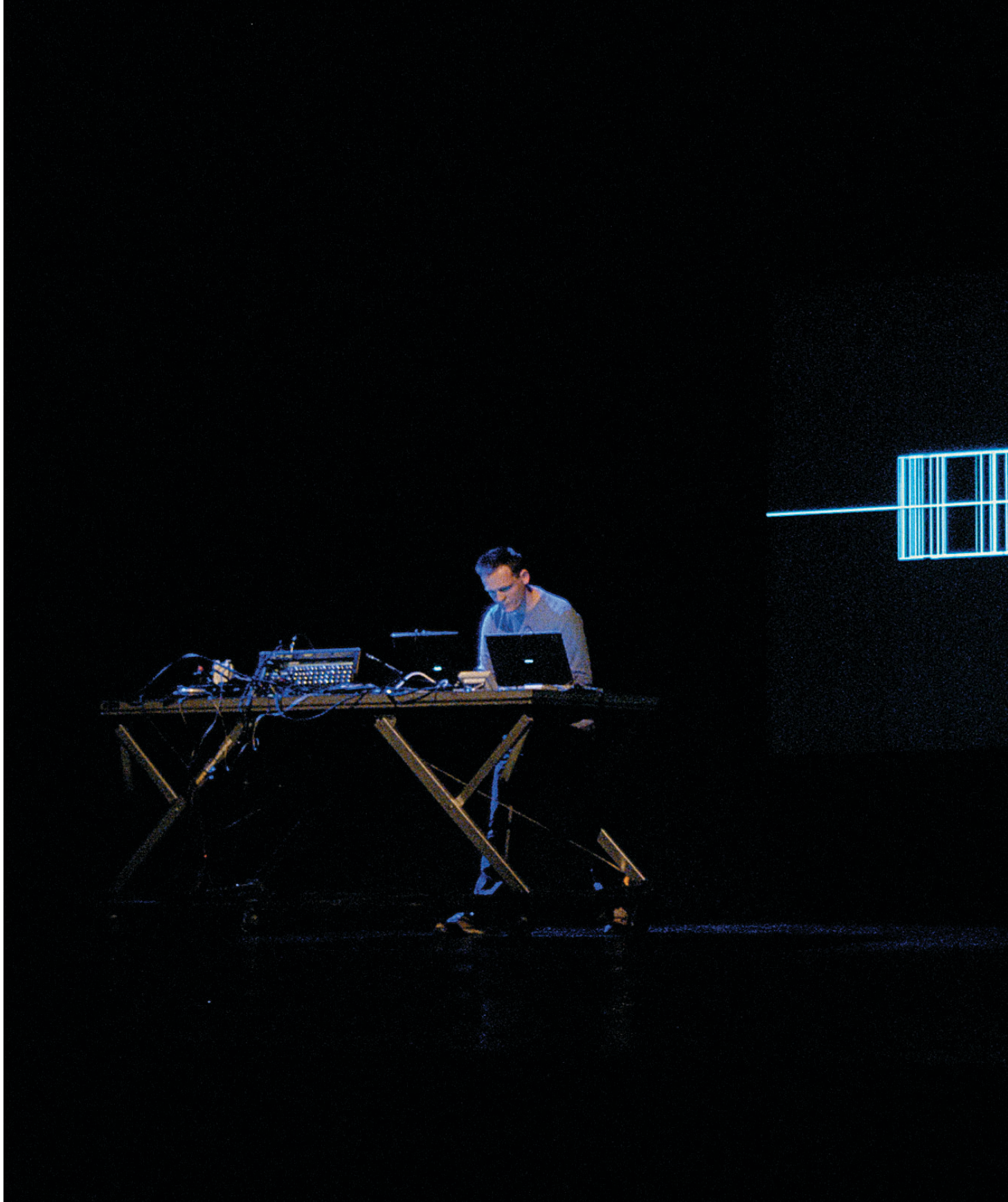
MENUE

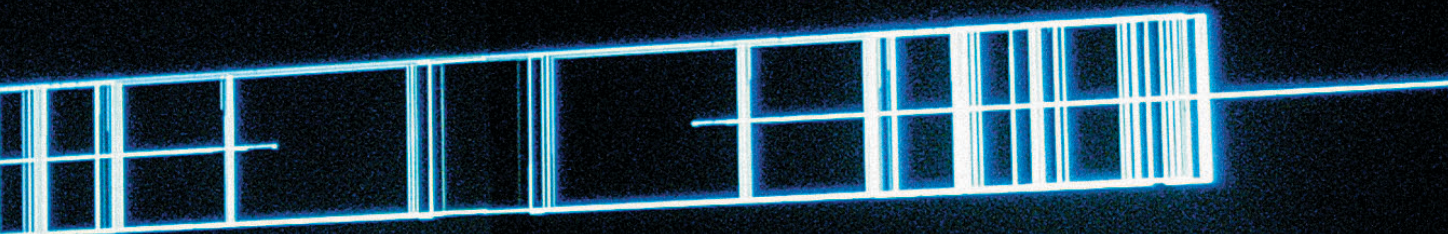
- ☐ DOPPELBILD
- ☐ BILD
- ☐ POSITION
- 🔊 AUDIO
- ☐ ZOOM/FOCUS
- ☐ SPRACHE
- ③ OPTIONEN1
- ⑤ OPTIONEN2

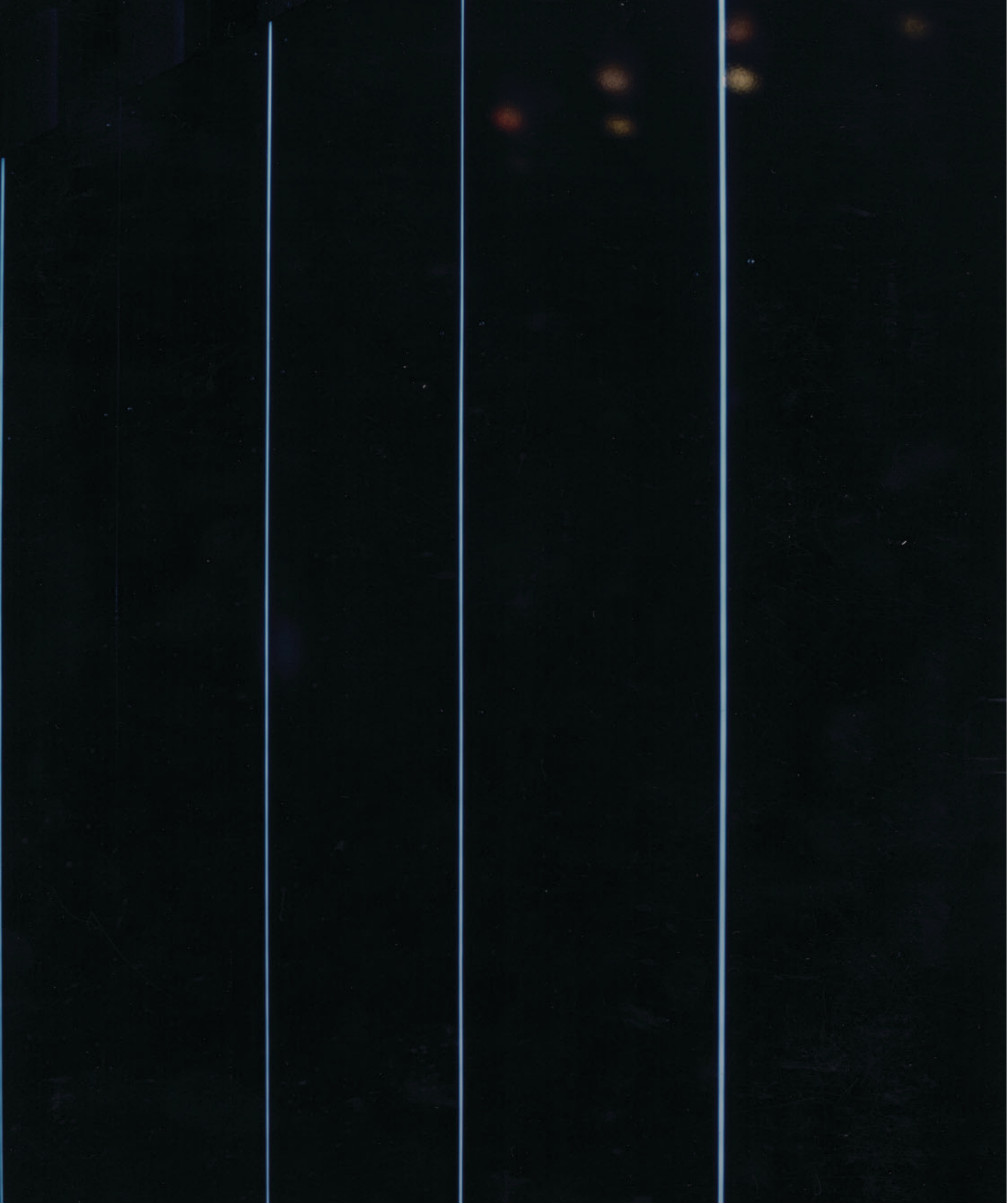
⬆ WAHL ⬆ ENTER





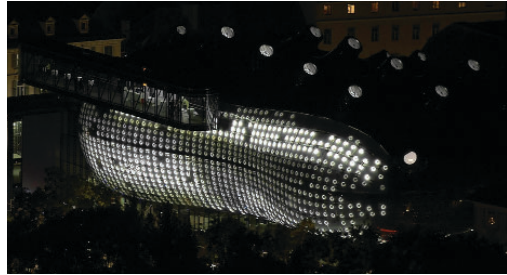


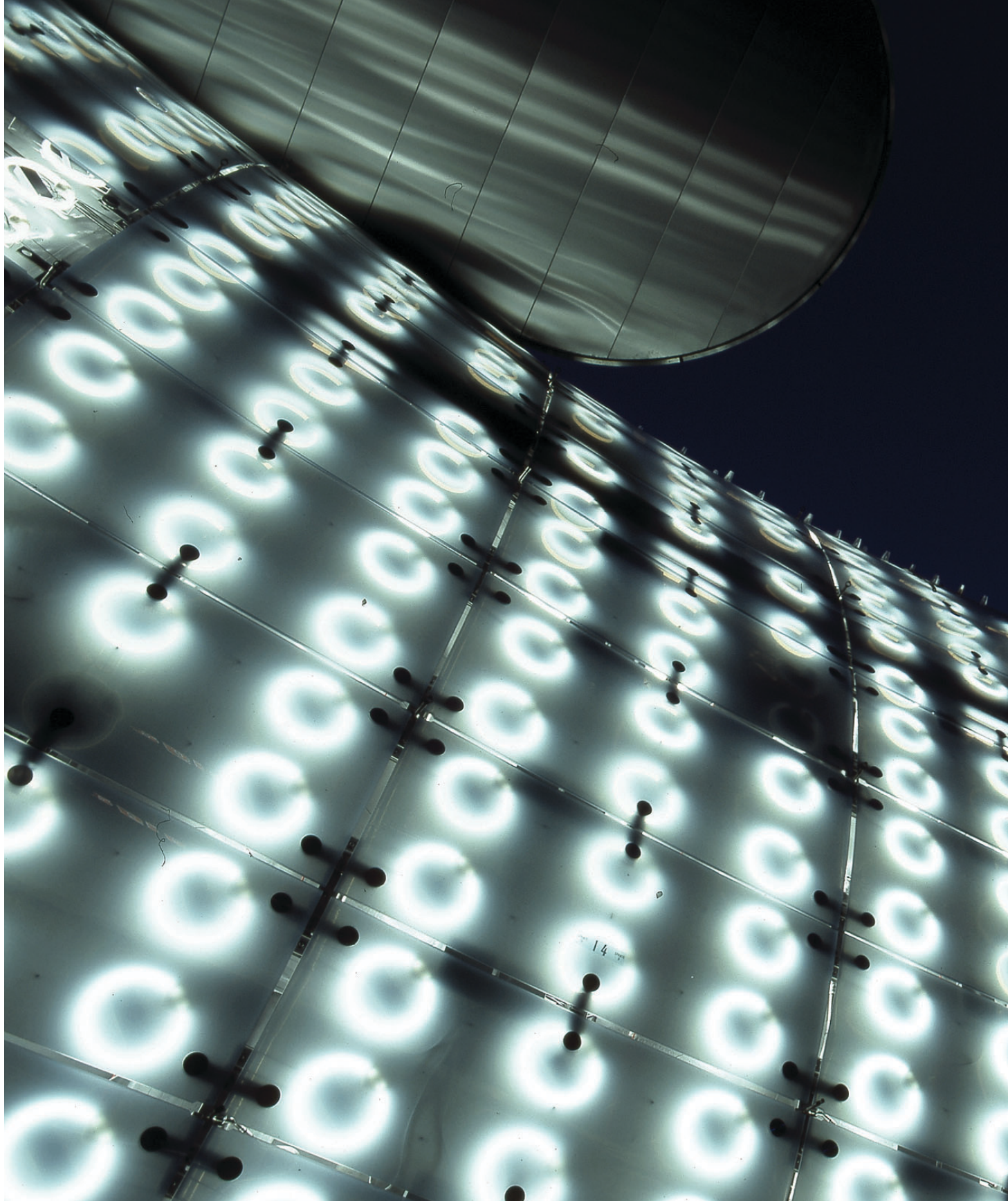


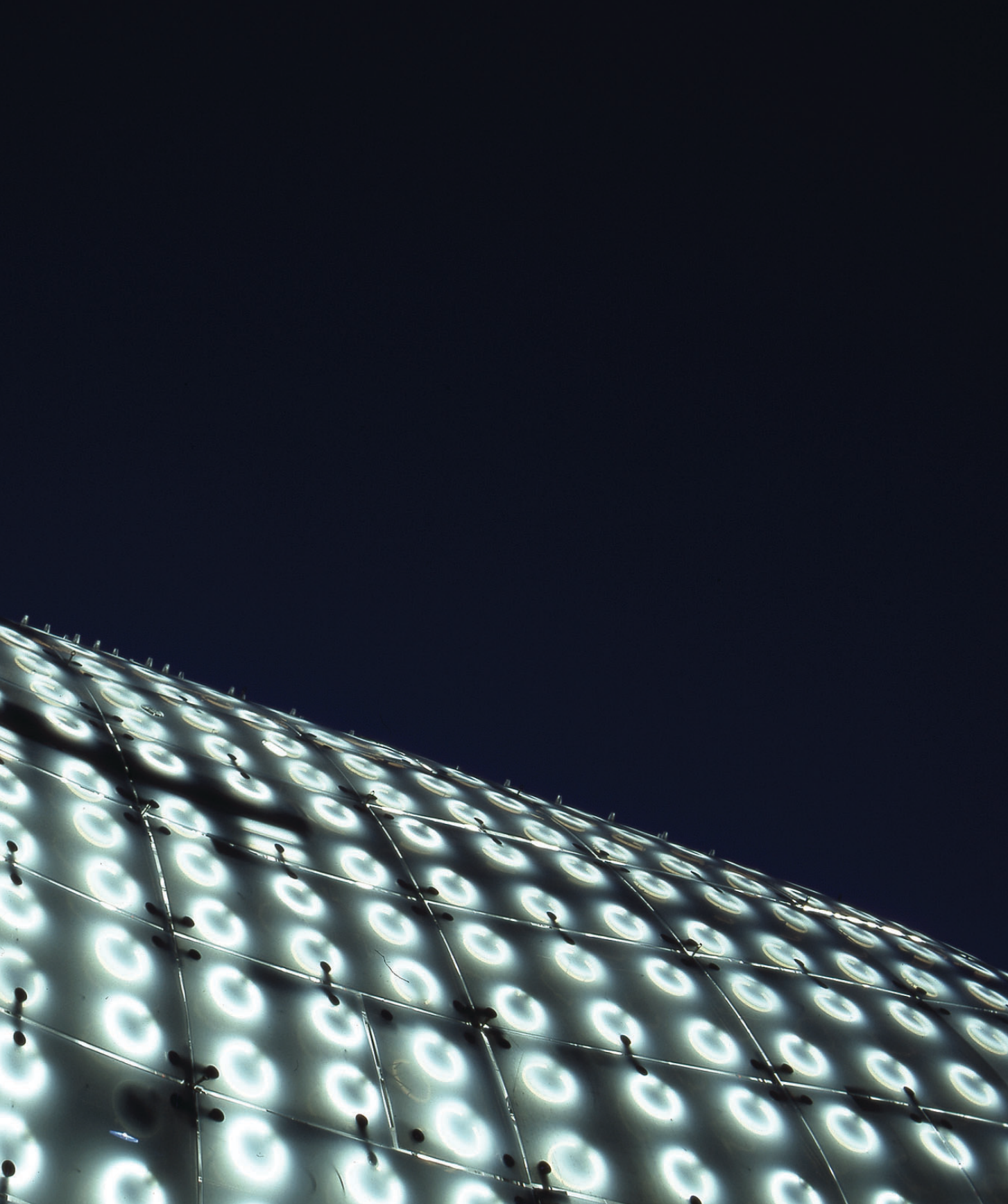








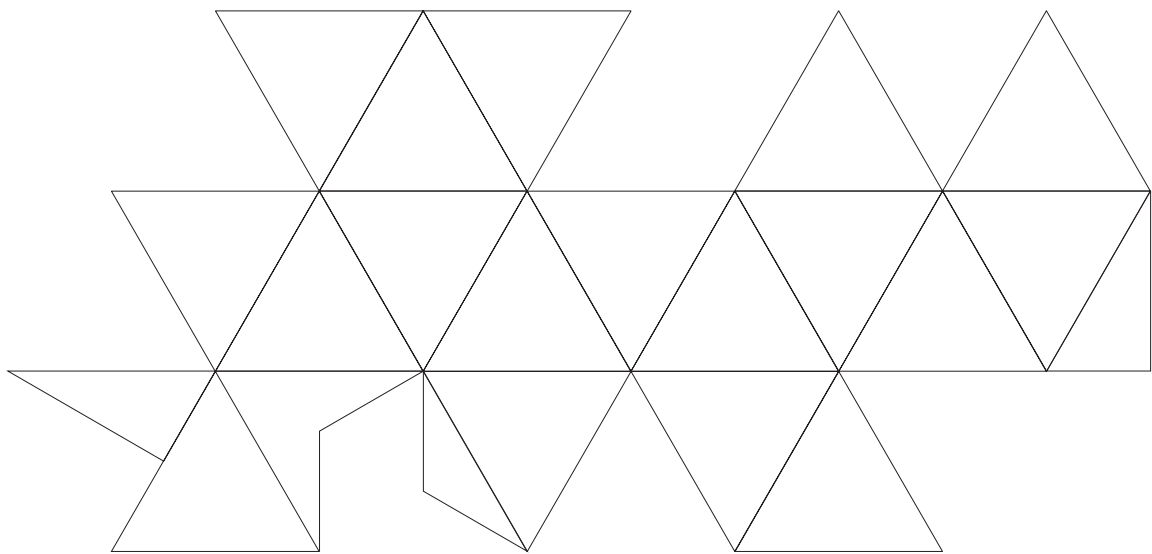
















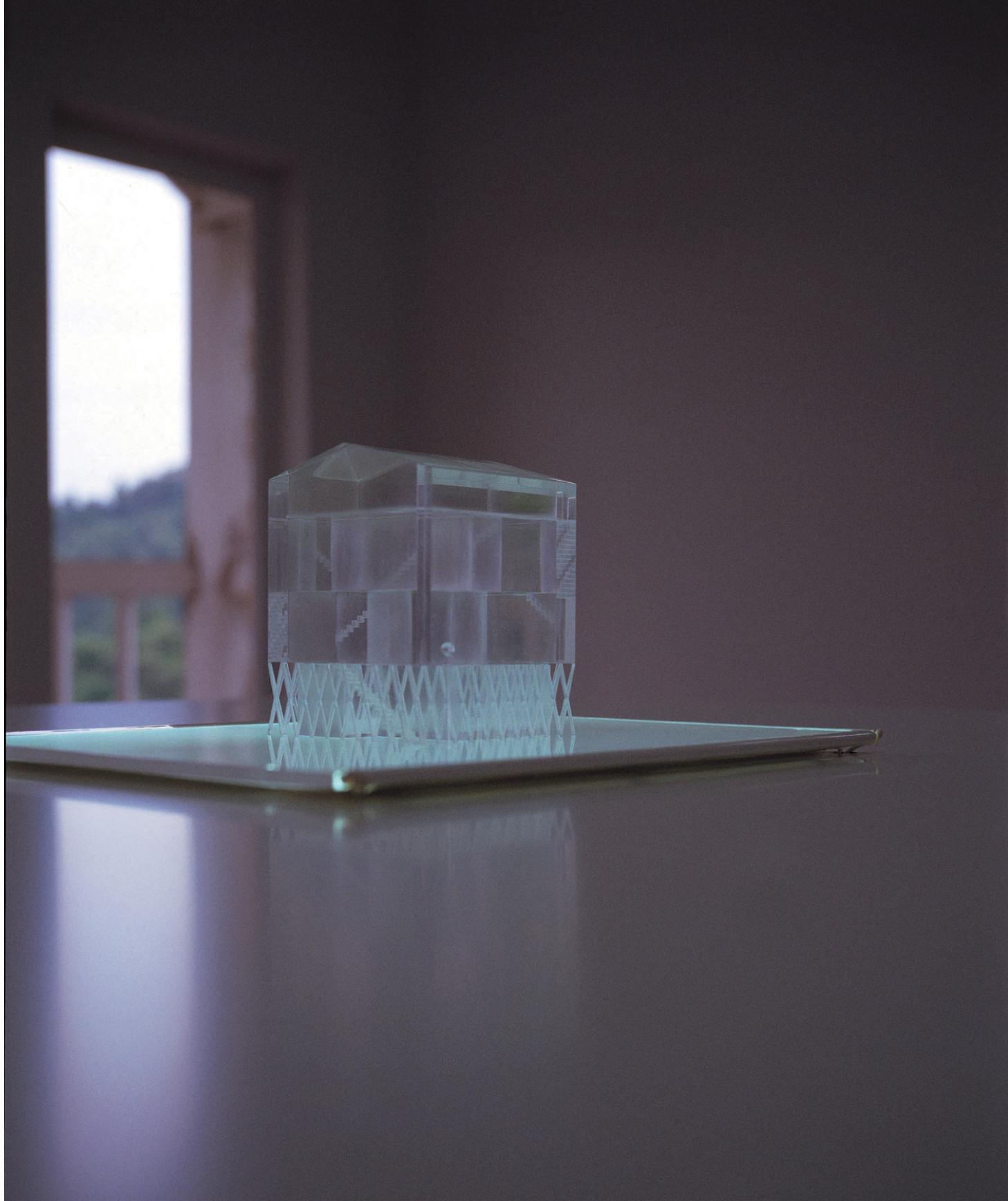














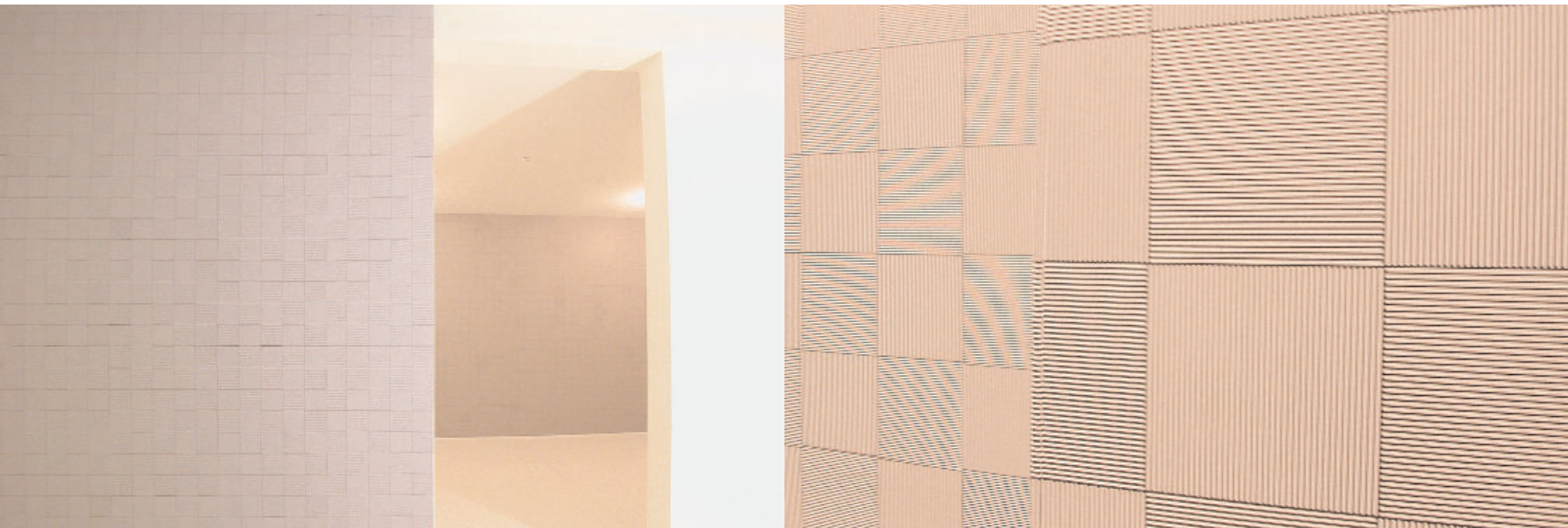


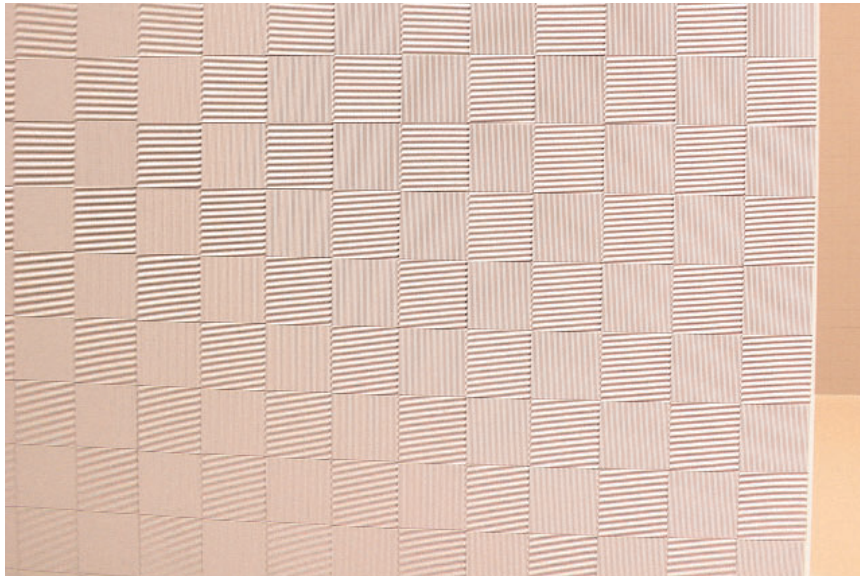


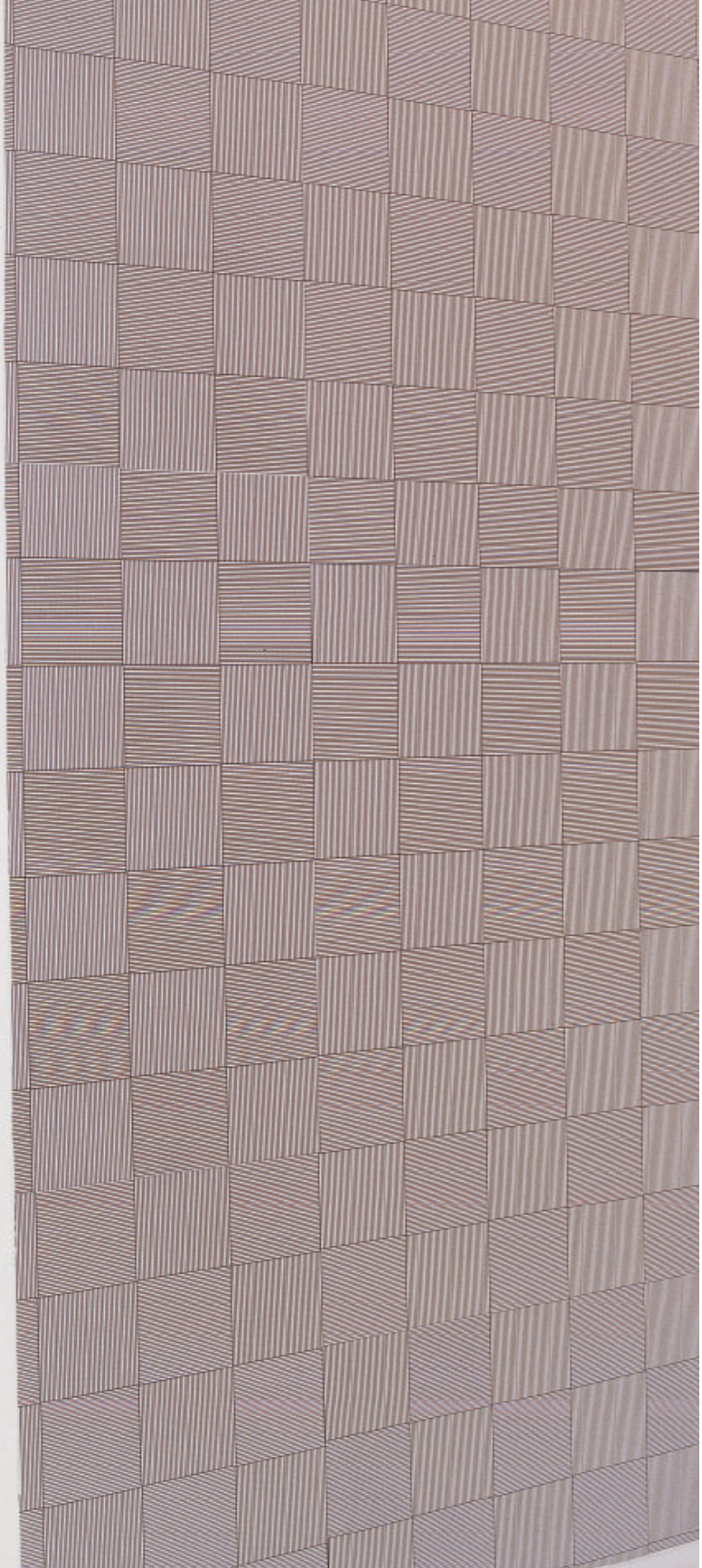
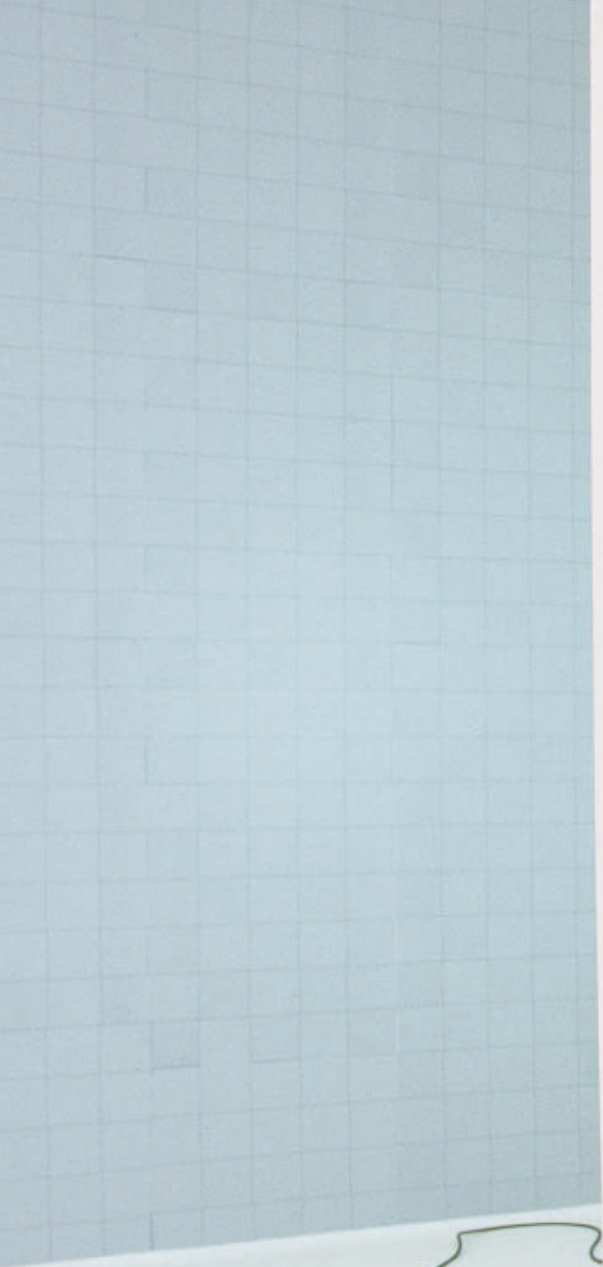


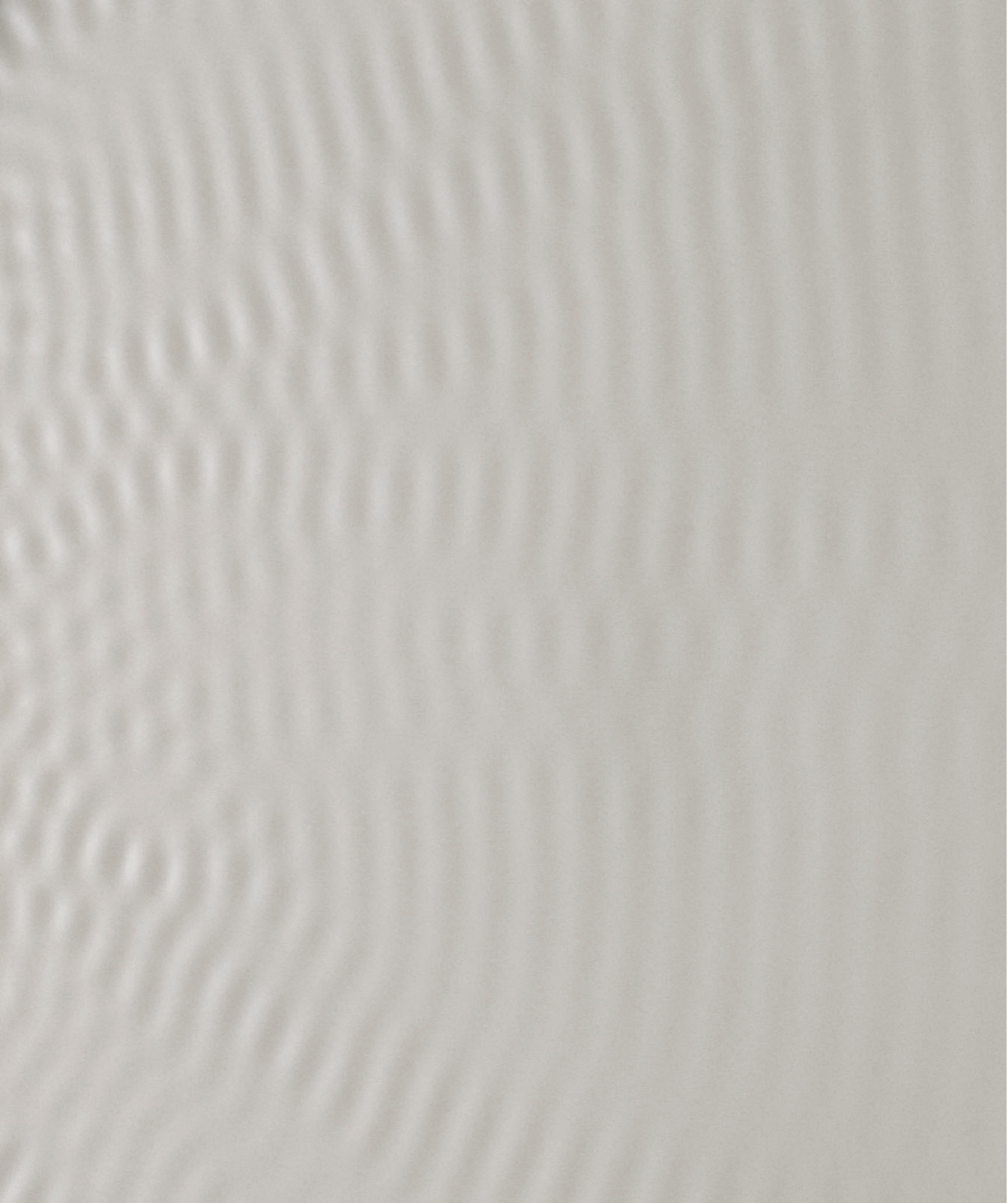


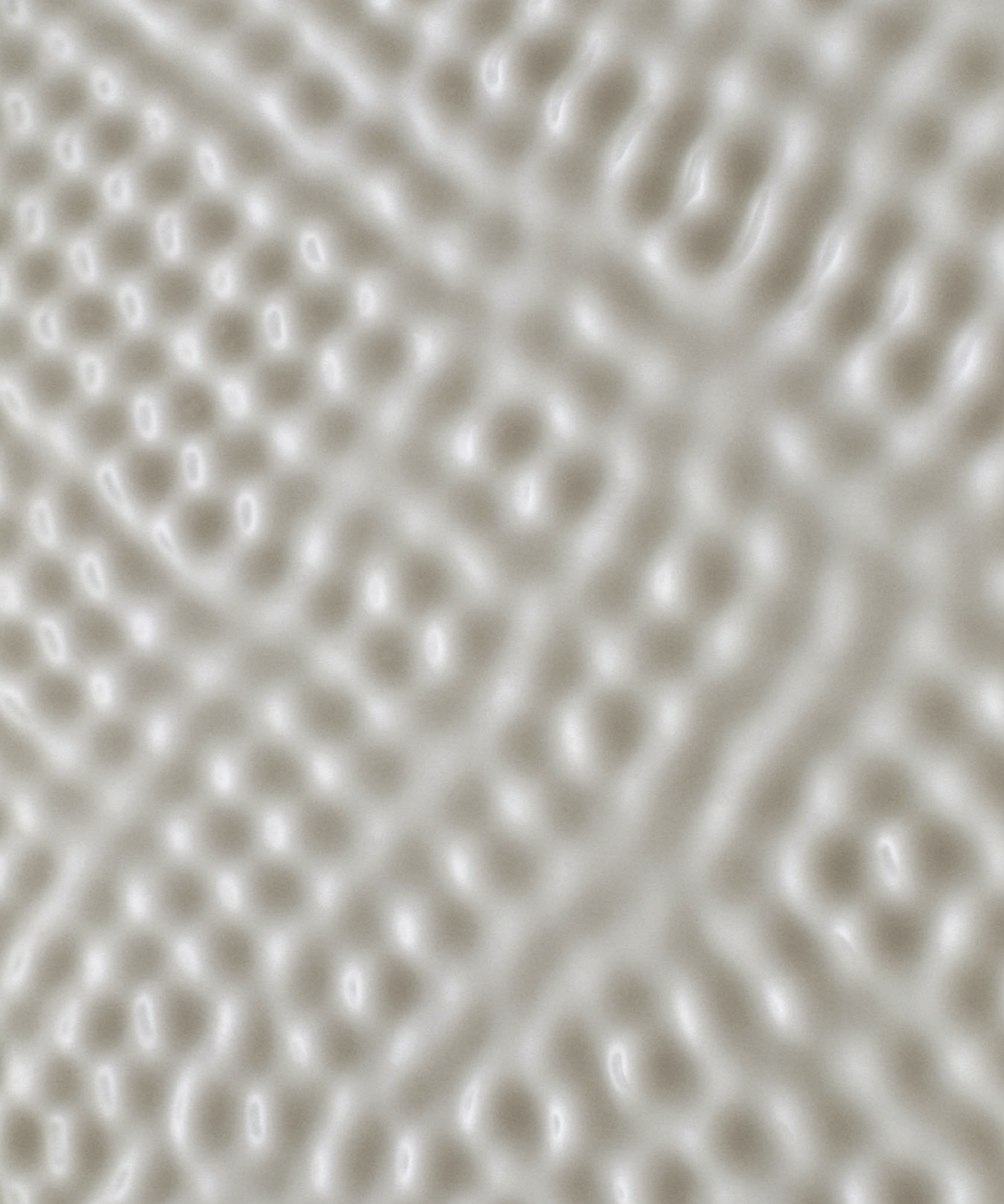


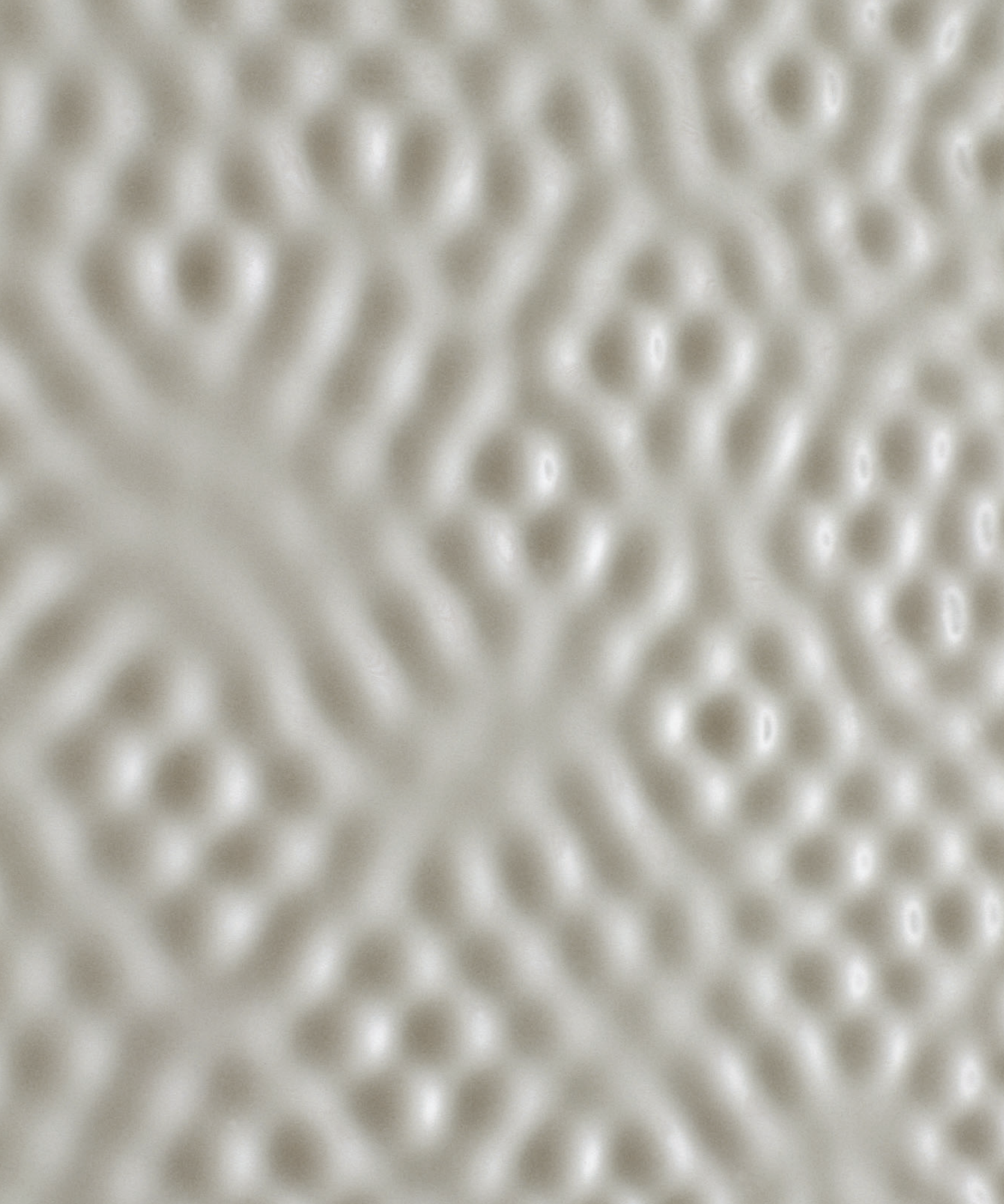


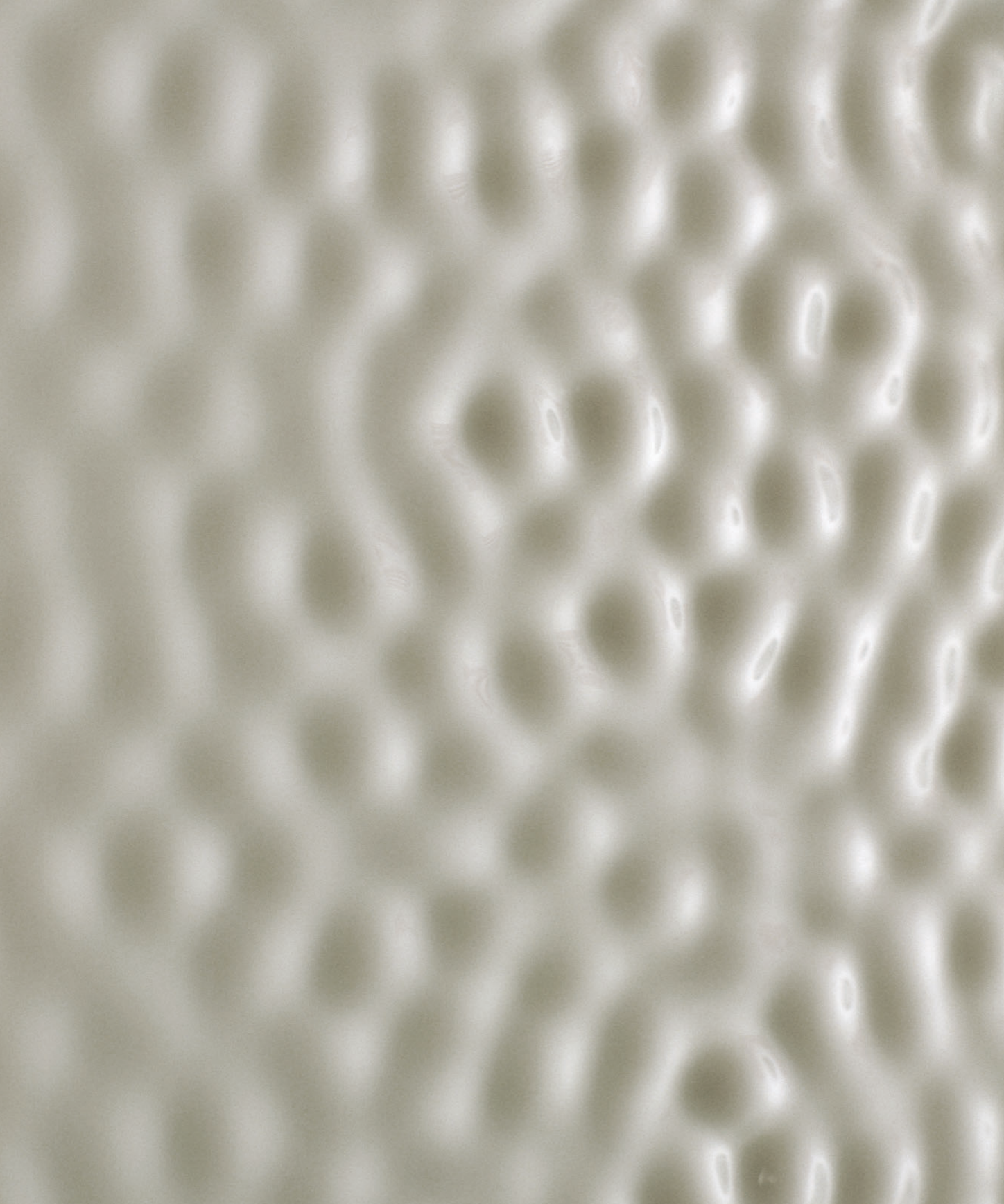


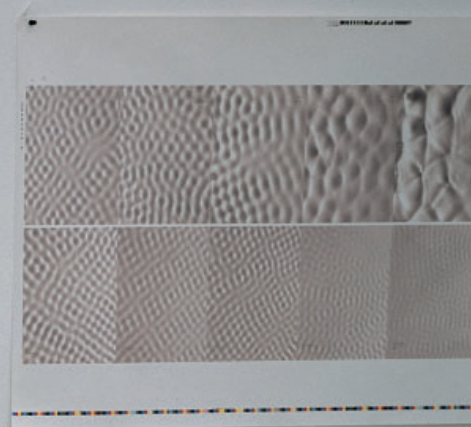












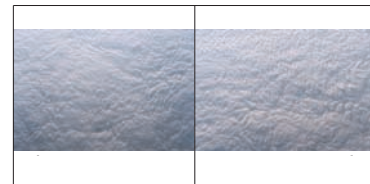
INDEX

page 17 "nebelkammer" 2003

utrecht central museum 16.–27. Apr 2003

photo: © anna van kooij

the cloud chamber renders the invisible visible, as every second, numerous tracks of cosmic and terrestrial radiation may be observed. the type of particle producing the tracks can be deduced from its shape and path. these diffusion cloud chambers are suitable for observing natural background radiation and although this radiation is very weak, the changing picture of many particle tracks which are simultaneously present, is easily observed. ultimately, the cloud chamber is one of the few objects where randomness such as this is visually manifested. the cloud tracks gradually fall downwards, disappearing before reaching the bottom plate, allowing new particle tracks to be visible. the natural background radiation comes from two different sources: from cosmic radiation and from the natural radioactivity of the earth.



page 18-28 "wolken" 2002

clouds photographed during milan-berlin flight, 24. mar 2002

photo: © carsten nicolai

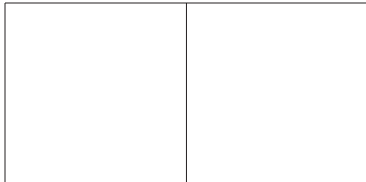
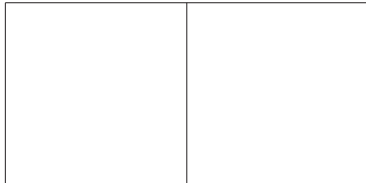
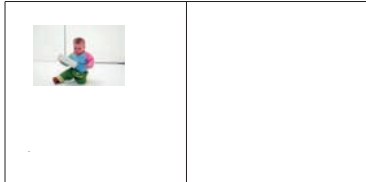
page 28-33 "modular re.strukt" 2003

paolo curti annamaria gambuzzi & co. milano, 09. apr 2003

photo: © carsten nicolai, © roberto mascaroni, milano

'modular re.strukt' presents works that intuitively respond to the notions of modular standardization, industrialisation and repeating systems contained within the utopian ideals of modernism. these ideas of modularity and standardization were integral inspirations to the architecture of le corbusier, bauhaus and later, the school at ulm. one might propose that a soulless 'cul de sac' was the outcome of an over-concreting of these applications and through the methods of industrialization. this process may be viewed as a finite definition of an uncreative situation. to re-energise creativity, this work 'restructures' the response to modular forms with an invitation to the viewer to force individuality back into the grid via the provision of logic systems, controlled by the hand. presented on a central platform,





are identical three-dimensional forms that configure physically to interlock with each other, building a repetitive surface. viewers are encouraged to interfere with the surface by extracting forms and re-building new structures. mounted on the walls around this presentation, are two-dimensional interpretations of this repetitive pattern in the form of screen printed monochrome designs. segments of the repeating pattern have been blacked out creating a virus like effect. as the overall regulation of the design is randomized, new patterns develop. next to these customized prints, are displayed some original monochromes ready for activation by the viewer who may also intervene and participate in the restructuring. thanks to annamaria gambuzzi and paolo curtì for their support in producing this work.

page 34 lina alva doris gröhndahl

page 37–44 “children workshop” 2002

perception of sound held at the watari-um,
the watari museum of contemporary art, tokyo on 26. may 2002,
as part of the exhibition ‘parallel lines cross at infinity’.
photo: © carsten nicolai

page 44 “children workshop” after the workshop 2002

page 45 “noto .empty garden”; “inside out” 2001

enviromental sound and soundtrack for shoulder speakers
photo: © carsten nicolai

a journey from museum to remote unplanted garden. the participant wears shoulder mounted loud speakers from which is emitted a soundtrack that includes unusually high frequency tones. these tones serve to sharpen the walker’s experience of surrounding situations and experiences - from the architectural spaces of the museum through the busy streets of tokyo and finally to the emptiness and intimacy of the unplanted garden. the soundtrack noto. empty garden- inside out is released by the watari museum of contempoary art, tokyo courtesy raster- noton.de. thanks to etsuko watari, koichi watari, mariko takeuchi

page 47–51 “logic licht” 2002

sequenced dmx light programming of nine dataflashes
as part of the exhibition ‘parallel lines cross at infinity’, at the watari.um
the watari museum of contemporary art, tokyo 2002
pictured in background: ‘random dot paintings’ 2002.
photo: © kenji morita.

exploring the field of repeating logic systems, the work ‘logic licht’ 2002 orien-
tates itself on 9 channels each containing complex rhythms programmed in loops
of 1.6 seconds. each channel is assigned a light that switches on and off in time
with the rhythms supplied from each channel. although the rhythms are original-
ly constructed from audio patterns, the only sound finally heard from the installa-
tion comes from the the filaments in the bulbheads as the light is energised.

‘random dot paintings’ 2002 provide a visual ‘platform’ onto which spectators may
impose their own subjective shapemaking decisions. empty silk canvases hang
from the gallery wall and next to them, sheets of black, fingertip-size circular stick-
ers. using these, visitors may begin to form patterns onto the canvas and by do-
ing so unconsciously inform the movement and decision of the next participant.

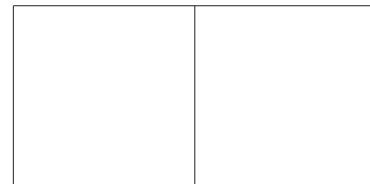
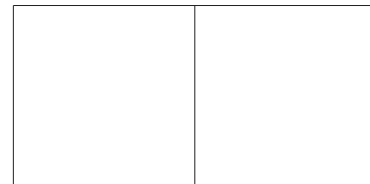
pages 53 “98 % water — aurelia aurita; “attractor” 2002

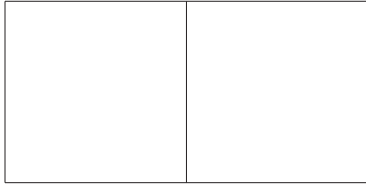
installation as part of the exhibition
‘parallel lines cross at infinity’, at the watari.um.
the watari museum of contemporary art, tokyo 2002
photo: © kenji morita.

pages 54–61 “98 % water — aurelia aurita”; “attractor” 2002

installation as part of the exhibition
‘parallel lines cross at infinity’, at the watari.um
the watari museum of contemporary art, tokyo 2002
photo: © carsten nicolai
photo: © kenji morita.

the jelly fish is a relatively simple structure with the vast majority (98%) of its body
mass comprised of water.the remaining 2% that constitutes the organism how-

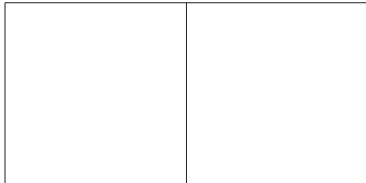




ever is capable of directing the biological mechanisms of the animal in terms of movement, direction and reproduction. the attractor projection exhibited alongside this installation, is a simplistic program that displays a constantly moving shape, the directions of which are provided from the calculated results of a pre-given formula. these two pieces together form a context that explain abstract models and natural systems.

what is an attractor?

in every system that is in motion, there are elements that are moving in a certain time frame. the trajectory of these elements sooner or later moves the elements to the surface of that specific system. there exists dynamic systems following specific attractors that make it possible to form a prognosis for that attractor's behaviour. defining a starting point for example has a profound impact on the trace of the attractor, creating more certainty of how that system will develop. by tracing the particles on the surface of an attractor, it references the starting point of this system.



[page 63–65 molecular model of a snow crystal, 2002](#)

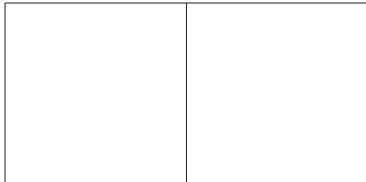
museum of ice and snow, ishikawa, japan 2002

photo: © carsten nicolai

[page 67 general classification of snow crystals](#)

nakaya ukichira: 'snow crystals — natural and artificial'

harvard university press, cambridge 1954



[page 68–70 "snow noise" 2002](#)

installation as part of the exhibition

'parallel lines cross at infinity', at the watari-um

the watari museum of contemporary art, tokyo 2002

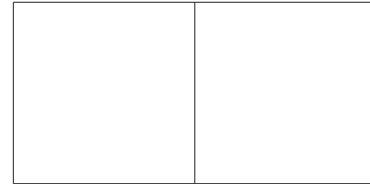
thanks to kenneth g. libbrecht. caltech; general classification

of snow crystals by ukichiro nakaya: snow crystals — natural and artificial,

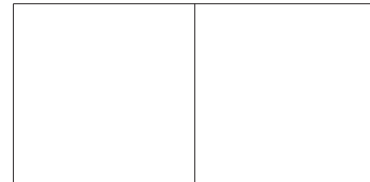
harvard university press, cambridge, 1954

photo: © carsten nicolai

the title “snow-noise” plays on a common use of the word “noise” to describe electrical interference in the transmission of image and sound. visual interference is called “snow” when the image is completely obscured. snow-noise also suggests the term “white noise”, referring to an equivalence of sound in which all frequencies are presented with equal energy. this results in an electronically produced aural white-out, used in experiments to eliminate competing sound details and allow complete focus on the subject of the experiment. the interruption of normal reception to produce a clearer understanding of our cognitive processes is central to this installation and ‘experiment’.



in snow-noise, the brightly lit passage through which the exhibition space is entered initially focuses the attention on the crackling sounds of ice shifting. moving into the laboratory-like main space, the visitor is surrounded by images and the amplified sounds of snow crystals in formation, encouraged for a moment to view the world as if through a microscope, reflecting on the details that often slip past observation. on entering the space, visitors are free to integrate with the environment by picking up a glass flask and initiating the process of growing their own snow crystals. in this way, the installation snow noise becomes a laboratory comprised of elements formed by public interaction and not purely from the hands of artists. snow is often thought of, by its nature, as being abundant. through emphasizing the particular elements and not the general effect, focus is shifted, making the viewers pay more attention to what surrounds them and to use their sensitivity. (includes extracts from a text by sophie forbat)

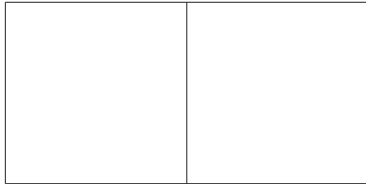


page 72 raster-noton.shop 2002

detail of raster-noton's lightinstallation 'white line light',
watari-um museum, tokyo 2002
photo: © carsten nicolai

page 73 "parallel lines cross at infinity" 2003

one day textwork 18.00– 01.30 cet
berlin postbahnhof 17.jul 2003; thanks to etienne russo and
virginia sanz-rojo at villa eugenie, jörg koch and sandra von mayer at 032 c,
christian feil at schrifkunst and to andrew cannon and lasse brandt
photo: © xavier linnenbrink



page 74–75 raster-noton .shop, 2002

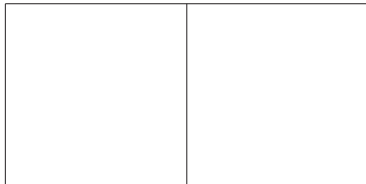
as part of 'on sundays', watari-um museum, tokyo 2002

curated by ken nibori aka nibo.

photo: © carsten nicolai

raster-noton opened a temporary shopspace for 4 months in tokyo japan in 2002. the space showcased live performances of artists from raster-noton and related labels, and a specific design was given to the interior of the shop which presented 'line white light', a sound/light installation from olaf bender, frank bretschneder and carsten nicolai. In this way, the raster-noton shop was not solely a trading point, but also a container for performance, design and collaboration.

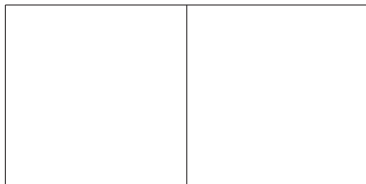
performing artists: atsushi sasaki (headz), nibo, shusaku hariya (salon), takagi masakatsu (silicom), ami yoshida, utah kawasaki, tetsuro yasunaga, christophe charles, itoken, sachiko m, otomo yoshihide, techno menses, noiseuse/denshi-zatsuon, tujiko noriko, akihiro kubota, yoshihiro hanno, terre thaemliz, keiichiro shibuya, olaf bender and carsten nicolai (alva noto, noto). many thanks to etsuko, koichi watari and kisato kusano — 'on sundays'



page 77 random flash, 2002

roof-top light installation at the watari-um building as part of the exhibition 'parallel lines cross at infinity' at the watari-um the watari museum of contemporary art, tokyo 2002

photo: © carsten nicolai



page 78–79 soundcheck, 2002

prototype international festival for electronic music

electricity power plant, theiss, austria 2. oct 2002

curated by franz pommasl

photo: © carsten nicolai

performing artists: pan sonic, mira calix, alva noto, pomassl, benzo, auxpan, alexei borisov, terre thaemlitz, fon, cm von hausswolff, thilges 3, tommy grönlund & peteri nisunnen, udo wid; thanks to antje mayer, franz pomassl.

page 81–83 alva noto .transform audio visuals live , 2003

'sonic architecture / static movement' stadsschouwburg
springdance festival, 27. april 2003, an evening curated by roland spekle,
hosted by the springdance festival.
photo: © anna van kooij

participants: alva noto, francesco lopez / jorge simonet, kurt ralske, alias, joost
rekveld, balé de ruade niterói / bruno beltrão, kodwo eshun, carsten nicolai,
rosemary butcher, andy goldsworthy. thanks to simon dove and inge koks, spring-
dance festival

page 85–87 jam home made jewellery store, 2001

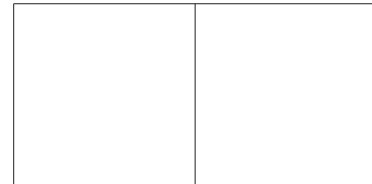
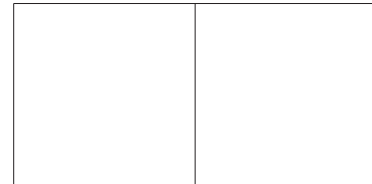
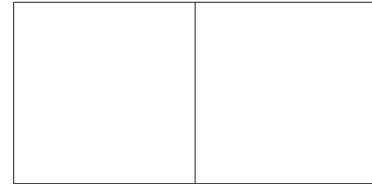
including interactive sound light installtion by myeong-hee lee
in collaboration with carsten nicolai, tokyo 2001
photo: © tetsuya yamamoto

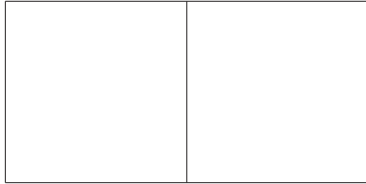
the store space, designed by myeong-hee lee posseses a black interior, whose
dimensions and shape are defined by thin white lines of light. these lines, once
crossed, trigger varying degrees of white noise through loudspeakers in the
space. many thanks to lee at octone.

page 89–93 "sync bix", 2003

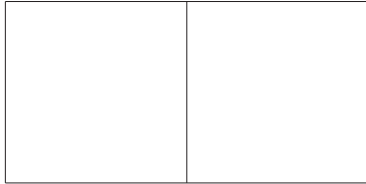
audio visual live performance for the opening
'Eintönen — Open Kunsthaus' of the Kunsthaus Graz, 27. Sep 2003.
photo: © Morley von Sternberg, London www.vonsternberg.com
photo: © Kunsthaus Graz / LMJ Graz

same night performed John de Kron 'deep skin'. this performances been the Prim-
iare of the light and media fassad e 'BIX' developed by the berlin based group re-
alities : united for the Kunsthaus Graz designe by Colin Fournier and Peter Cook.
the sound of the performances been broadcasted thru the local radio 'helsinki'
so that every Grazer became with his radio (getto blaster) a co-producer of the
performance night. additional a group cars with tuned audioamps been placed
in the city , as a kind of mobile speakersystem to amplify the sound citywide, in
the same way you could receive the realtime visuals of the fassade.
thanks to Jan und Tim Edler



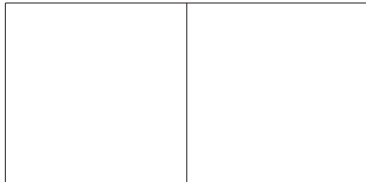


page 94–97 “neuaufteilung der welt”, 2000
(buckminster fuller version) in collaboration with olaf nicolai
as part of the exhibition ‘mapping’ at kunsthaus bregenz, 2000
photo: © carsten nicolai



page 101–109 “sun rec”, 2003
project for echigo tsumari triennial, 2003
at echigo tsumari region niigata prefecture, japan
photo: © carsten nicolai

‘sun rec’ is a long-term project which deals with the climatic factor of sun-rays. these are recorded locally over the period of one year. the sunlight is focused through a glass ball and burns into a special type of paper underneath where a picture develops. the clarity of the images depends on the intensity of light. the paper is collected and replaced on a daily basis. the 365 images which arise over the course of a year will record local changes as if in a diary, in which chance itself at the same also makes a contribution. the collection, becoming more complex with each day, has an unmistakeable element. It belongs to this location alone, describes its climate, its individuality. thus every image is unique, a document of a day and, exhibited together, an annual report. complexity and openness emerge in the course of the artistic project.



in addition to the sun recorder, an architectural model of a house exists, proposing an extra dimension to the project. within this house, a family would be invited to live. the house has all necessary features and space for comfort and it would also be here, that all images from the sun recorder would be documented in a specially designed exhibition room and archive. it would be the family’s responsibility and enjoyment to supervise this archive while living in the house. the project aims to give a focus to the locality of the area, and serves to provide a direct connection to the environment.

page 107 architecturale drawing for the house of the sun shine
recorder by Finn Geipel Lin. thanks Gulia Andi and Finn Geipel.

pages 110–117 “visual rhythm”, 2003

as part of the exhibition: ‘carsten nicolai . visual rhythm’

at gallery eigen + art, leipzig 30. nov 2002–15. feb 2003

photo: © uwe walter

‘visual rhythm’ is an optic monochrome wallpaper that is designed to cover the entire area of an interior space. this space is split into two rooms, each possessing different lighting conditions. the first room is halogen lit, the second lit by a tungsten bulb. as the spectator moves within the space, the eye perceives the large areas of the wallpapering as strobing, pulsing fields, and when movement is made between rooms, the varying lighting conditions promote further optical behaviours in the eye in terms of contrast and colour changes.

‘visual rhythm’ responds to the issue of visual media in our current time. increasingly, image is chosen over speech or written material to provide us with information. this ‘cutting away’ of remaining sensory fields and intensifying the visual sense is seen as a step forward in modern communication. by using the eye’s varying responses to what seems at first to be an evenly lit space, a metaphor for the subjectivity of visual response is provided, bringing us to question the contradictory nature of our media system and whether everyone reads things the same. through this installation, the work is shifted back to the observer.

page 116–125 “milch”

stillshots of sound modulated surfaces of milk.

these very low frequencies (between 10–150 Hz)

are partly out of the range of human perception.

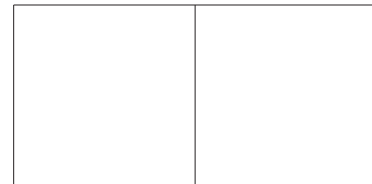
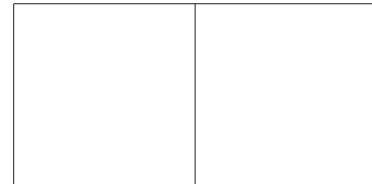
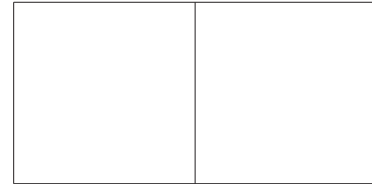
photo: © carsten nicolai

page 126 studio . berlin, 2003

‘wolken’, ‘milch’, diverse materials

photo: © carsten nicolai

all photographes © VG Bildkunst Bonn



Editor: **Simona Vendrame**

Editing: **Laura De Tomasi, dgfjsdgfjsjghks**

Graphic Design: **Carsten Nicolai, Alessandra Pinelli**

Design Concept: **Studio FM Milan**

Photolithography: **FGV, Milan**

Printing: **Grafiche Milani, Segrate, Milan**

tema celeste editions

Piazza Borromeo, 10 – 20123 Milan – Italy

ph. +39 02 80651782 fax +39 02 80651787

e-mail: editorial@temaceleste.com

www.temaceleste.com

© 2004 Gabrius S.p.A.

ISBN 88-7446-xxxxxxx

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced
in any form without the written permission of the publisher.



Printed in January 2004 by Grafiche Milani - Segrate (MI) - Italy