1.
Lena Kirsch: »Realmontage«, (Seminar Contribution), Munich, 2020.

Realmontage
Photographic Reading of Everyday Spaces

Max Treiber

Abstract: This contribution reflects a series of seminars that were created in a cycle of four semesters by the Chair of Architectural Design and Conception at the Department of Architecture at Technical University of Munich. Informed by the author's own research foci, a teaching concept is presented that uses photographic images to approach the perception of architectural spaces and translate them into new unfamiliar spatial models. This is a critical engagement with reality, where montage is integrated as a process-oriented and multiplying technique. The following reflection is described along with the respective exercises, a selection of works in which the students were challenged to see, explore, discover, and question the multi-layered interplay of built spaces. Under the condition of determining and acquiring analogous design methods, different topics of spatial perception and architectural design were examined. The question of how the perception of our everyday surroundings is understood as a resource of spatial phenomena and how photography can reveal new ways of seeing architecture was always at the center of the discussions. These investigations aim to expand our own repertoire of perspectives on our built environment, as well as broaden the spectrum of different design methods.

Keywords: Architectural Model; Image Repertoire; Montage; Photographic Perception; Photographic Series; Spatial Intervention.

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Introduction

>»It has often been rightly pointed out that any art necessarily operates with montage, that is, with a process of selecting and reassembling parts and pieces« (Tarkowskij 1984: 132).

As we know, the process of montage can be formulated in different ways. Each design method has its own way of dealing with the technique of montage. However, common to all of these methods is the fact that it is a multi-layered process that occurs in several steps. In connection with a research subject, a teaching concept is presented that approaches the perception of architectural spaces with the help of photographic images and uses the technique of montage to extract spatial situations to analyze them. This established a process that highlighted new instances of existing spatial layers that revealed new conceptions of architectural knowledge.

In the first passages, a visual repertoire for the effect and experience of architectural spaces is elaborated upon, and a differentiated insight into associative techniques of architectural experience and perception outline the teaching concept. The starting point is described by the photographic image in which **Everytime Everywhere** claims that visual perception is also considered as an influential factor in everyday spaces. In **Minimal Journeys**, photographic recordings of spatial dynamics in immediate surroundings become the frame of reference for discussion in seminars. In these discussions, everyday spatial constellations are photographically examined, fragmented, and they find something **New in Known** as found material in their own spatial compositions. In this context, the photographic image is not to be understood as a representation without content but as the object of a meaningful process in design.

After outlining the individual parts of the teaching concept that build upon each other, the respective exercises **Depth advertising**, **Thin Veil**, **Frescoes en passant** and **From Image to Body** elaborate on different principles of mounting and describe the results from the production of spatial works that emerged with the discussion of everyday space. Within the four focal points, image quotations from different artistic positions refer to guest lectures (fig. 2). These images (placed in the margin), extracted from an artistic work, supported the working process of engaging with different photographic methods and anticipation with the built environment.

As it was an essential experience for participants in the seminar, this contribution also aims to stimulate the unbiased view and the **Motivation to Look Closely** at our reality, to recognize what surrounds us as thinking beings in a physical environment by quoting the Swiss sociologist Lucius Burckhardt: »to open up new perspectives, to try out ways of seeing, and to perceive the unfamiliar« (Burckhardt 2011: 108).


2.
Philipp Zwanzig: the future is now, Berlin, 2021.
(Guest lecture: February 5, 2021).

Everytime Everywhere

> »Photography is in any case always surreal in its changes of scale and its constant juxtapositions, and in comprising both the conscious (?) and unconscious (?) images of a reality no longer present. Reality is being transformed into a colossal photograph, and the photomontage already exists: it's called the real world« (Ghirri 2019 [1979]: 24).

Photographs are omnipresent and the daily flood of images has become part of my everyday life. With the digital turn, the presence of the photographic has changed in a remarkable way (cf. Siegel 2014). The production and processing possibilities for photographic images are not only easily accessible to everyone but are also available everywhere and at any time in the form of the omnipresent digital camera with telephone and internet functions. This has an extreme impact on our perception – how we imagine our reality and how we view it. Everyone who does not organize their picture archive on a daily basis knows the complex moment of searching, finding, sending or showing a certain picture in a *multi-layered picture strip*. Today, I not only take pictures with the shutter release of my camera, but I also use all the download or screenshot functions of my mobile or immobile archiving devices. Then, when I am not staring at tiny screens while looking at these small pictures, I am moving between large pictures on billboards, digital screens, advertising walls and columns or masked building facades in cities (fig. 3). Photographic images move ceaselessly with me before my eyes and feet.
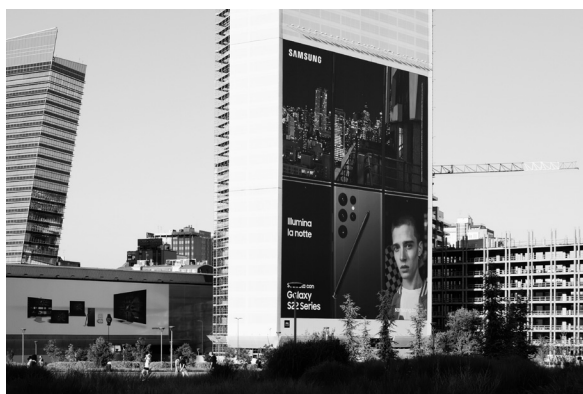
3.
Max Treiber: Milan, 2022.

They are wandering objects, roaming and transgressing. As the art historian Georges Didi-Huberman claims: »We cannot speak of images without thinking about their movement, their displacements and reciprocal montages in space« (Didi-Huberman 2011). The Italian artist Luigi Ghirri (1943–1992) analyzed and documented the photographic image as a phenomenon that transcends spatial boundaries in an accessible way. Trained as a cartographer, he depicted photographic and essayistic narratives of seeing. He left behind an extensive body of work in numerous photographic series where photography becomes a documentation of the duality of physical and pictorial space, and presents it for discussion about the relationship between image and space (fig. 4). With an eye for the external reality of what is mounted, Ghirri transformed the objects and situations of his everyday life into tools of conceptual reflection on space. Following his documentation, as a teacher I would like to demonstrate *photographic readings of spaces* respectively *spatial readings of photographs*, which students in seminars can use as architectural designs to sharpen their perception of built reality and use as inspiration for new ideas of space.

The aim is to trace the various potentials of the given and to investigate the horizon of meaning for one's own photographic image archive and the operation of montage with fragments of images for making space visible and conscious. Through exploring a range of possible operations of architectural montage, the results are intended to bypass the increasingly media-based and pre-defined practices of application and present their own possibilities for individual design.

4.
Luigi Ghirri: Quartiere Beaubourg, 1997, © Eredi di Luigi Ghirri.

Minimal Journeys

> »The subjects are everyday objects, things found in our ordinary field of vi-
> sion – images that we are used to looking at passively. Isolated from the real-
> ity which surrounds them and presented in a photograph as part of a differ-
> ent discourse, these images become laden with new meaning. And it's here
> that we can start to look upon them actively, that we can embark on a critical
> reading of them« (Ghirri 2019 [1973]: 17).

This excerpt from the text for *Cardboard Landscapes [Paesaggi di cartone]*, one
of Ghirri's first photographic series, describes essential components of the
applied method of montage in the seminars. First, there is the reference
to the everyday space in which the examination of visual perception takes
place. The familiar, the ordinary, and well-known environment were places
for empirical exploration, *minimal journeys*, as we called them in the seminar.
Explorative strolls within a small perimeter of the immediate environment
opened the students' rooms, their apartments or shared apartments in the
building block, the staircase down to the street, the neighborhood in the
district, to a wide field of numerous discoveries (fig. 5).

It was crucial that the students approached this familiar environment,
which was enriched by experiences, memories, and moods, with a neutral
view. The German sociologist Bruno Hildenbrand described this willing-
ness as taking an »abductive attitude« (cf. Steinke et al. 2003: 24-25), which
was assumed to free oneself from preconceptions in order to look at spatial
situations objectively. In this state, the discovery of spatial phenomena that
unconsciously accompanies the students' everyday life is possible. Thus, in
the first instance, the investigation pursued an open gaze on their reality.
Insofar as the exploration took place consciously, it changed the perception
of the immediate surroundings and revealed something hidden.

»This is why I'm particularly interested in the urban landscape and the out-
skirts of towns – because that's the reality that I experience every day, that I
know best and that I'm able to represent as a ›new landscape‹ subjected to an
ongoing critical analysis« (Ghirri 2019 [1973]: 17).

Following Ghirri's observation, it is important to mention that these explor-
ative strolls were not indefinite (derivé), but that the investigations always
had an objective and a concrete field of engagement.

In the seminar, the *minimal journeys* therefore had a thematic focus and
so offered further stimuli. In addition, different perspectives on the same
topic were intended to encourage participation and discussion in the group.
Moreover, the journeys created a sensitivity to the similarities and differ-
ences caused by increasing the diversity of individual spatial effects and
perceptions (cf. Schloch 2019: 22). Thus, in the second instance, changes of
perspective on our familiar spaces, combined with a thematic orientation,
were intended to break routines and illustrate the unconscious (fig. 6).

In this step, the photographic apparatus was understood purely as a tool
of documentation. It was not taught and discussed as a machine for repro-
ducing a single moment and its technical capabilities were discussed even
less. Instead, the photographic image was conceived of as a document to be
the object of a meaningful process of recording and analyzing spaces. So it is
worth noting that when we spoke of an image here, we still meant the tech-
nical image: The image that is generated by a device (cf. Flusser 1983: 13). Like
a sketch, drawing or written note, photography allows students to examine
what they find in everyday life and add it to their repertoire. Whether they
are physically archived or immaterially stored on data storage media, these
fragments are just waiting to be inserted into new constellations.

5.
Hayahisa Tomiyasu: »Storen« (»blinds«), Zurich (2018– 2020), Film stills.
(Guest lecture: November 20, 2020).

New in Known

> »In the act of cutting out, what has been cut is set free once and for all. Freed from their contexts by the scissors, the cuttings are easier to classify, combine, and assemble in a provisional way« (Vogel 2003: 25).

The photographic record, in which an individual piece was taken out of its context in order to acquire a new meaning in combination with other pieces, initiated the process of montage. Until this combination could take place, the various pieces were assembled, classified, and combined into a selection at the individual's will.

In spatial experiences of the everyday environment, specific domestic or urban, structural or material details were thus collected and made available in a selection for one's own work (fig. 6). Here, it was particularly important to ensure that the image detail is precisely chosen and that the viewer's focus upon the image was naturally directed to the aspects that the highlighted theme conveyed. Through a continuous connection and the displacement of various spatial images that were collected, exhibited, and juxtaposed, a treated theme became recognizable. The collection, the catalog, the series or the built-up repertoire was based on the *multiplicity*, the *diversity*, and the *hybridity* that introduced all montages (cf. Meili 2018). Thus, the photographic image collections did not serve the purpose of pure archivization. Rather, the students understood them as a starting point for the realization of a whole from various individual pieces. An unbiased attitude toward the students' surroundings, was then continued in the expanded photographic collection. The compilation, presentation, and discussion of the photographic analysis, summarized in a collection of spatial occurrences, allowed a flash of thought that led the students to further develop the topic. A recognition of something new in what already existed was assumed here as an »abductive conclusion« (Steinke et. al 2003: 327).

In making the collected knowledge of images and space against the background of an extracted theme explicit, the next and final step was to transform certain aspects of the accrued experience into something new (fig. 8). The results in the form of spatial artifacts, such as photographic series, performative spatial interventions or architectural models, described the familiar spaces from a different perspective on the one hand and opened up new, previously unknown spatial concepts on the other.

A variety of approaches to the photographic collection and its interpretation were revealed by this process. Different results were achieved, which in turn revealed essential components of the montage technique. Consciously and repetitively, the following insight was applied to the practice of the procedure and the description of the different results.

6.
Andreas Gherke: »Berlin«, 2020
(left): Glinkastraße (detail), Mitte, 2014,
*(right): Tempelhofer Damm (detail), Tempelhof, 2016.*
(Guest Lecture: June 11, 2021).

Seminar Exercises and Results

The following reflection describes four thematic focuses of spatial analysis, each of which was covered in a seminar. The seminars were always divided into at least two applied parts for architectural experience and discursive work with the photographic image. The first part usually consisted of collecting concrete spatial experiences of the everyday environment and making these explorations available by centering them in a photographic series. Through reduction, an overview and the culmination of a specific spatial theme emerged from a diverse collection. The experiences were presented in an accessible way for the group to continue thinking about them in collaborative engagement.

The second part became a continuation of the first. Building on the extracted theme, the aim was to translate the series into another analog medium. In doing so, the seminar participants left the two-dimensionality of the photographic collection and worked on the transfer into spatial depth, whether through physical models or installations.

»These photographs stand for a sense of plasticity which belongs to ordinary yet unusual views of the suburban scenario. They represent a ›state of things‹: backdrops of everyday life, waiting for something to happen, yet being already protagonists of a careful composition« (De Belle 2015).
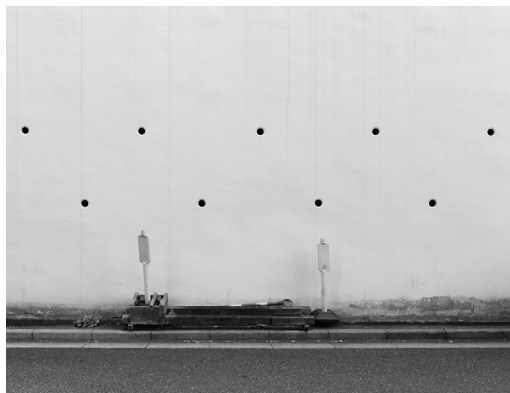
7.
Louis De Belle: Ordinary Backdrops, 2015.
(Guest lecture: January 8, 2021).

8.

Egzon Musa: »Empirical drawing journey«, From an ordinary backdrop - a courtyard passage to a house on an island. Seminar Contribution, Munich, 2020.

Minimal journeys of spatial experience and participation in lectures about different positions framed the seminar appointments (fig. 7). The joint work during the semester not only dealt with the specific photographic experience and the discussion of related topics, but also with the perception of, and influence on, architectural spaces.

The perception of one's own approach and method of working was the topic of the seminar's joint discussion and was elaborated upon in group work. The explicit thematization of the experience required a process-oriented way of working, which was continuously refined and specified in the respective process and from the insights of the seminar. In weekly meetings, participants discussed their own views using photographic series and models.

On the one hand, the participants acquired a visual repertoire of knowledge about the effect and experience of architectural spaces, as well as a distinct insight into associative techniques of architectural experience and perception (fig. 8). In addition to the production of spatial works, their experiences were recorded in self-guided accounts. Works from these are shown below and discussed within the following thematic focuses.

1. ›Depth Advertising‹*

»I put a picture up on a wall. Then I forget there is a wall. I no longer know what
there is behind this wall, I no longer know this wall is a wall, I no longer know
what a wall is. I no longer know that in my apartment there are walls, and if
there weren't any walls, there would be no apartment« (Perec 1994 [1974]: 39).
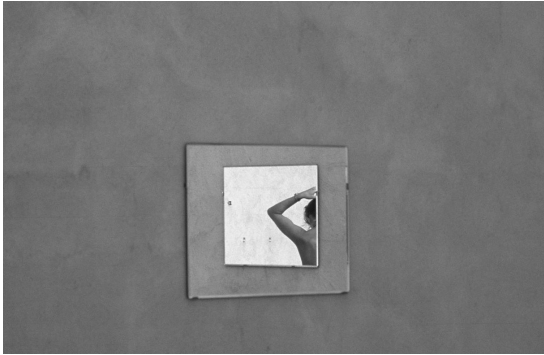
9.
Luigi Ghirri: Ile Rousse, 1976, © Eredi di Luigi Ghirri.

We began to examine the walls of our individual environment. The investiga-
tion was focused on the walls that already carry pictures within them (fig. 9).
Pictures that can be found on and in walls – inside or outside – as well as
pictures that are composed by walls themselves. Through explorations of
the immediate neighborhood, a photographic collection that would give us a
first insight into the characteristics of our walls was to be created. The subse-
quent process should have led to a concentration on and elaboration upon a
spatial theme. With the knowledge of place, and on the basis of the extracted
theme, the aim was to mount the found murals or fragments of them into
real spatial situations.

At the beginning of the exercise, the focus was on the individual photo-
graphic investigation under the premise of looking closely at walls. In the
process, photographic series that documented everyday walls and their frag-
ments were created. From the walls in a room in the apartment building to
the walls in the streets of the neighborhoods.

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* The title ›Depth Advertising‹ is borrowed from a chapter in Roland Barthes' *Mythologies*

On *minimal journeys*, the personal environment was captured by ›stopping‹ and ›looking‹ in, and in front of, one's own walls. Thus, the first part of the exercise was to free oneself from any habits regarding the walls, to consider them as carriers of information and to perceive the unfamiliar: »As carriers of a considerable part of the human visual imagination« (Flusser 1993: 29).

The focus was never on the result as an absolute goal, but on the processual approach with an open result. Be it through a close look at the walls surrounding us with their materials and traces, with inscriptions and signs, with reflections of window glass or compositions of superimposed layers (fig. 10). The close observations of these projection surfaces tell stories as if by themselves. They enlighten us about the nature of tangible spatial boundaries and reveal that there is still a space behind the wall. The self-evident and banal become an adventure.

> »We began to work with a pocket mirror, creating the possibility of projecting the reflection of one window into that of the other and connecting it with the actual spatial layer behind it. […] Through extensions and superimpositions of the views and the merging of different spatial layers, spatial montages are created that result in a change in the individual perception of space« (Georg Meck/Max Böhringer 2020: Seminar Contribution).

10.
Georg Meck and Max Böhringer: »The inner wall of the outer wall of the inner wall«, Seminar Contribution, Munich, 2020.

Here, the examination of photography left the handling of the flat image. The insights gained from the photographic collection (figs. 14–16) led to more intensive pre-occupations with spatial depth. It was no longer the image in front of and inside the wall that was the focus of observation: It was now about the space that fills the walls (fig. 17). Starting from the detached theme of the first part with rational findings, documentary photography encountered the fictional. In temporary installations, the photographically extracted theme was mounted in real space. The found spatial constellations were reshaped by interventions, which in turn produced a blurring of spatial boundaries. What began as an intimate collection became a public show. Thus, the aim was to allow the viewer to participate in the themes of reflection and mirroring, surface texture, massiveness, and fragility from the *minimal journeys* to the greatest possible adventure and thus stimulate discussion.
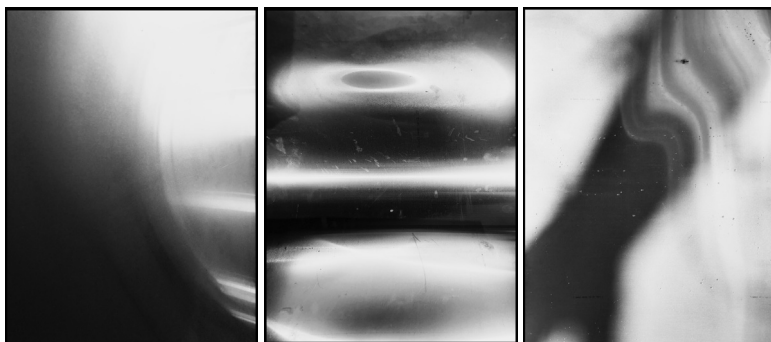
»One second. A blink of an eye. An instant. From beginning to end, the photographic project embraced the idea of the fleeting and ephemeral. [...] I understand space as a continuous and exciting moment. The reflection as a fracture of self and space. The surface as an emotional and spatial catalyst. The light as the motor of the whole. With this I recognize the motive and the aim. The material and its conditions. Its behavior, its reaction and its structure« (Juan Vintimilla 2020: Seminar Contribution).

11.–12.
Juan Sebastian Vintimilla: »Ephemeral«, Seminar Contribution, Munich, 2021.
Series (left): Aluminum photopolymer plates.
Intervention (above): »Interaction with light«.

»The wall loses its function of closed surface. Because it has been broken, has a crack or an opening, is covered by something, it becomes the ceiling or the floor. It also becomes a portal to an unknown world, a secret retreat, and a protected refuge. All this can be seen if you leave the usual scale and look very closely« (Lena Kirsch 2020: Seminar Contribution).

13.–14.
Lena Kirsch: »The innewall of the outerwall of the innerwall«, Seminar Contribution,
Munich, 2020–2021. Series (left): »Alice«. Intervention (above): Entrance Hall at
Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich.

2. Thin Veil

In one of his last essays *A Light on the Wall* (1991), Luigi Ghirri describes his visit to Giorgio Morandi's studio in Bologna. In conversation with Mr. Zucchini, curator of the Morandi family archive, the latter describes a profound experience the artist underwent that created an important incentive for the following exercise:

> »right in front of his studio window, he saw an enormous 60s-style apartment block being built, complete with balconies, shutters and pastel yellow plaster. The size and colour of the building had altered the amount and quality of light entering Morandi's studio, and so he was forced to build a series of canvas structures which, when correctly positioned, could restore an acceptable level of brightness to the objects lined up against the wall of his studio, waiting to be painted. This device, which Morandi called the ›velatino‹ (thin veil) gave back to his still-life objects what the changing city had taken away, and the objects were animated by light once more« (Ghirri 2019 [1991]: 223).

15.
Taiyo Onorato & Nico Krebs:
The Great Unreal, 2009.
(Guest lecture: 10.04.2021).

The participants climbed through the windows into their own chambers. The rooms where they spent most of their time, especially when it was largely forbidden to enter the public space (the exercise took place in hybrid form in lock-down during the Covid pandemic of early to mid-2021). In doing so, the students aimed to approach their spaces as objectively as possible.
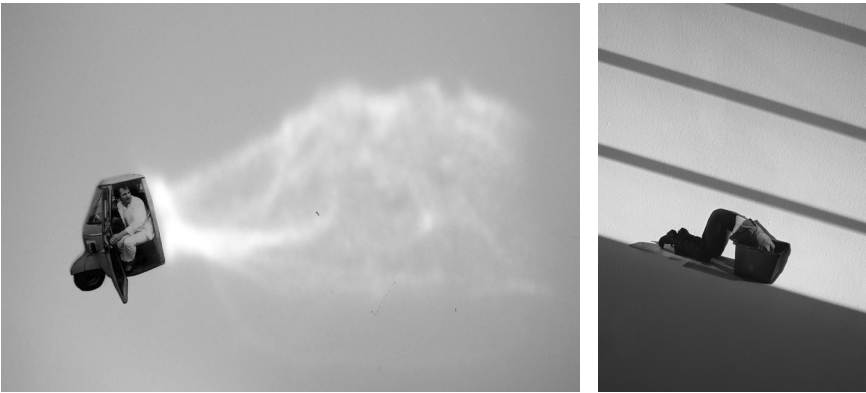
16.
Fabienne Gehrmann: »Picture fragments with light on the wall«, Seminar Conttribution, Munich, 2021.

Through objective explorations in their immediate surroundings, a photographic collection that elaborated upon a spatial theme would be created. Further along in the process, this would be which in the further transformed into a spatial installation (fig. 15). The project's focus was to become aware of the spatial dynamics and conditions within one's four walls. We had assumed that we knew our own rooms very well: The particular ›odor‹ when we opened the door, furniture, plants, and private things that give the place a personal and individual character. Different surfaces, sounds inside and outside, times of day and seasons that affect the spaces, room depths and heights, projections and setbacks, niches and hallways that make some areas busier and others less so. But how well do we really know our own spaces? In this investigation it was necessary to observe the most obvious place for a spatial engagement in order to change it.

The participants found features and situations that they didn't usually notice in their daily routine. The room of one's own became a field of experimentation (fig. 16). The means for the mounting resulted from the respective analysis. Working materials were found in the process of dealing with room inventories. Using this knowledge, the aim was to produce a room installation that referred to the extracted theme and gave the room a new sense of space.

»In the confrontation with one's own room, which one knows so well but wants to discover anew, the process of photographic collection helped to achieve a different approach to the familiar space.

Within an extensive collection of different situations in the room, the confrontation with the work of the other students was a decisive impulse in the discovery phase. Inspired by the discussion in the course, the theme of desire developed. Memories of outdoor activities and atmospheres. The need to leave the narrowness of everyday space and look upward into the wide-open space, into the inflated and slightly swaying sails, in the middle of Lake Constance, surrounded by silence, static, and yet dynamic, carried by the wind and forgotten by everything else.

The montage and installation bring this view into the narrowness of the room. The fabric divides the room by its folding and movement into areas that are nevertheless connected to each other. Suspended and stretched from the ceiling, it creates zones of space in which, despite the immediacy, I can be far away in thought and yet concentrated in the here and now« (Constantin Schindler 2021: Seminar Contribution).

17.
Constantin Schindler: »Thin Veil«, Seminar Contribution, Munich, 2021.
Intervention (left and above).
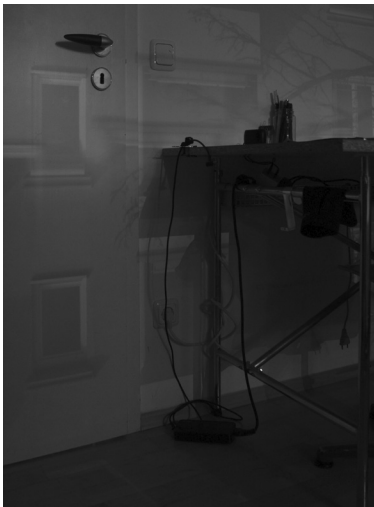
»In this series of pictures I give a personal insight into my room and my sur-
roundings. The window becomes the projector, the walls of my room the pro-
jection surface. I use the principle of the camera obscura. I would like to invite
the viewers to look into my living space. The projection of the outside space
illuminates and sets the room in scene. Thus, each view is both a look inside
and outside. In the series, different lighting moods alternate over the course
of a day. New views of the already familiar emerge. The spatial boundaries of
my room disappear« (Tiziano Aramburo 2021: Seminar Contribution).

18.
Tiziano Aramburo: »Thin Veil«, Seminar Contributio, Munich, 2021.
Intervention (left and above).

3. Frescoes en passant

»The ruin opened up to me like a theatre curtain on walls that were like pages to be turned, pages full of lived experience, read as unwitting frescoes made up of signs and color, scratches, cracks and chimney smoke on chipped plaster, a real palimpsest of time« (Guerzoni 2017: 44).
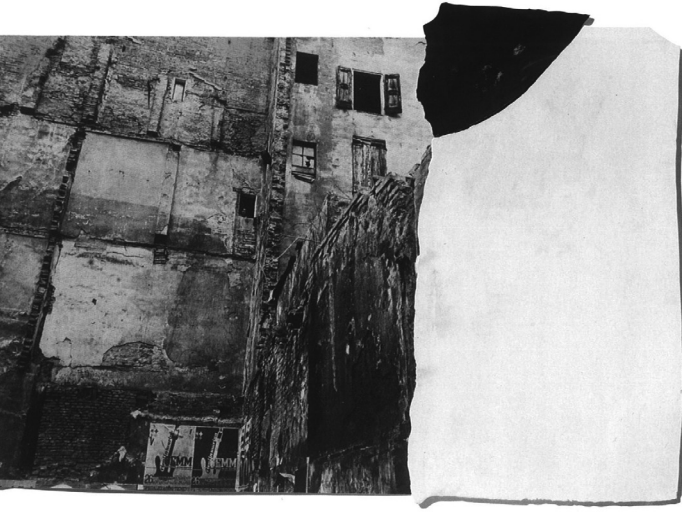
19.
Franco Guerzoni: Affreschi, 1972,
*Gypsum and pigment on emulsified*
canvas.
Photograph: Luigi Ghirri.

20. *(right)*
Anna-Lena Bodendörfer: »Party
Wall«, Seminar Contribution,
Munich, 2021.

After staying at the Archivio Luigi Ghirri, I had a conversation with Franco Guerzoni in his studio in Modena in the summer of 2021. We talked about two of the series that he developed together with Ghirri. During their friendship, a collaboration developed in the late '60s and early '70s in which the two young artists explored their city, the environment, and the landscape space around Modena. In search of their identity outside the academic world, Ghirri produced a large number of photographs of the situations they found, which Guerzoni then used as a basis for adding fragments of material (fig.19). The images tell of their journeys between abandoned farms and newly completed houses; ruins and new constructions still covered with scaffolding. It indicates a discrepancy, incompleteness, and a rapidly changing world. The Affreschi and Archaeology series focus on the rawness of architectural surfaces. Like researchers in an archaeological site, they carefully and thoughtfully examined what they found.

This attempted approach to the built and changing environment became the leitmotif for the following exercise. In a thematic focus, the outer layers, the *clothes of houses* (cf. Ghirri in *Catalogo*) of the individual environment should be deciphered and translated into a spatial object within a limitation to the material of plaster. These layers span and protect the underlying body from environmental influences but even their function and appearance can be affected by various factors. Natural aging processes, sensitive areas, and exposure to stress contribute to changes. They cause cracks, wounds, and injuries to appear in the protective layer. This is followed by the process of healing, beginning with the closure of the wounds, and ending with the complete regeneration of the surface. What remains are transitions from old to new, scars, and visible color changes. These transitions form the interface with the outside world and serve as a reservoir of history and memories. Life has inscribed itself on their surface, representing the documentation and visualization of life's changing circumstances (fig. 20). Deciphering these layers could contribute to a catalog of knowledge about the life of surfaces, textures, and their appearance in reality.
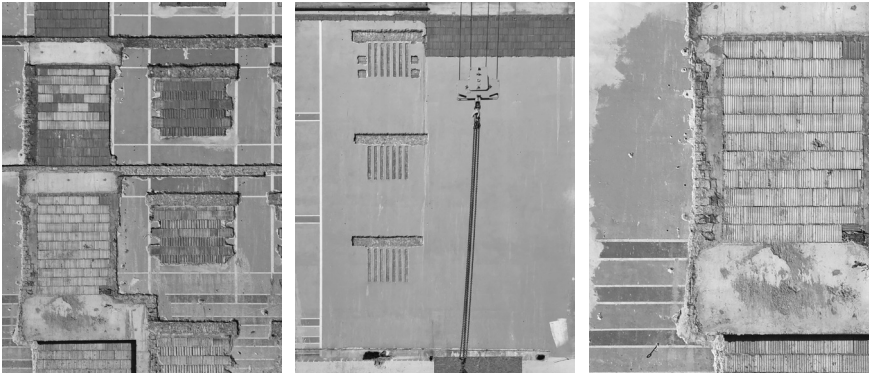
»Former windows have already been bricked up, lintels exposed or plaster partially removed. An uncanny variety of compositions of colors, materials, and textures emerges. Open wounds, healing areas, bandages, and plasters. Yes, even ornaments are formed. By chance. Unplanned. A certain search for traces of the original and the new quickly emerges. Despite the raw surfaces and defensible roughness, these exposed facade surfaces had a characteristic appearance that the new was lacking« (Anna Lena Bodendörfer 2021: Seminar Contribution).

»During minimal journeys through our neighborhoods, we have noticed that the ordinary electrical box is not only inconspicuous and mostly overlooked, but has an interesting expression as a composition of basic architectural elements. Despite different manifestations and varying degrees of use, certainly the same features can always be found. A base, the foundation on which the box stands. A middle part, the facade, as protection from the outside and as a communication surface for posters, stickers and signs. And finally, the upper finish, the roof with attic. After bundling different formats and states of the electric box, it was obvious to us to translate the collage-like surfaces of the boxes into a spatial layering. With the help of acetone, the photographs could be ideally transferred to the dry plaster surface. The result was a multi-layered sculpture as an independent architectural relief« (Johann Klause, Lukas Habermeyer 2021: Seminar Contribution).
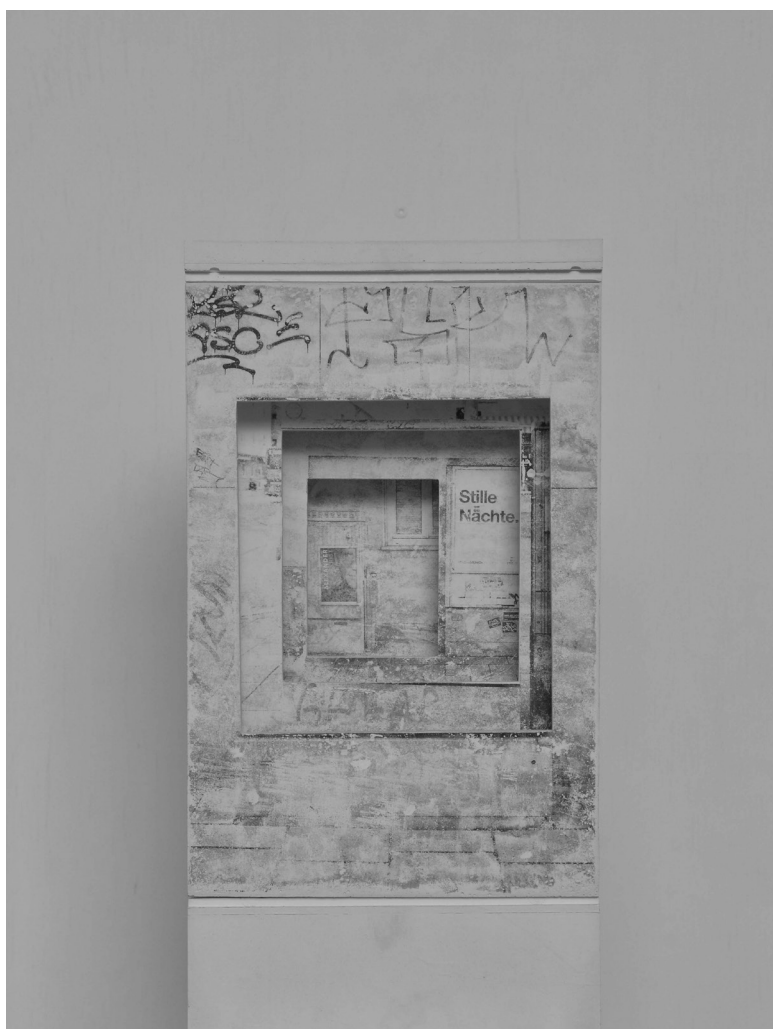
21.–22.
Johann Klause and Lukas Habermeyer: »Electric Box«, Seminar Contribution, Munich, 2021. Series (excerpt, left). Model (above).
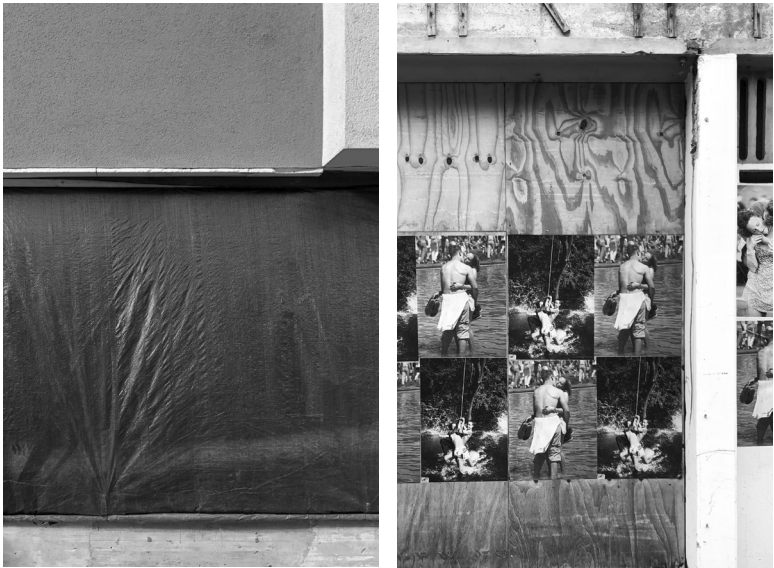
»Cutouts with frontal and clearly directed image composition. Both photo-
graphs show the encounter of facades of different textures in the surface,
color, and proportion. These differences give the faces unequal weight-
ing in visual perception. An impression that is also to be translated into
a haptic effect in the context of the exercise. The skin as a sensory layer of
feeling and touching, and photography as a medium of purely visual per-
ception is to be transformed into a state that links haptic and visual percep-
tion, and largely raises the question of a haptic seeing and visual feeling«
(Linus Huber 2021: Seminar Contribution).
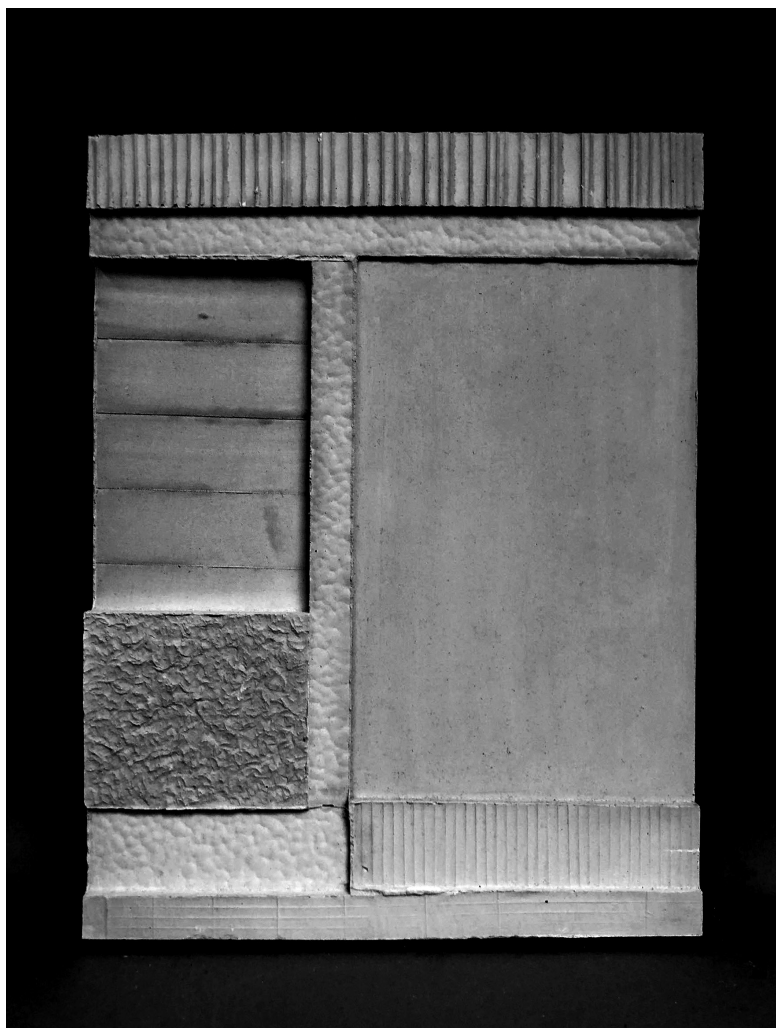
23. – 24.
Linus Huber: »Blackboard/Image«, Seminar Contribution, Munich, 2021.
Series (excerpt, left). Model (above).

4. From Image to Body

> »In these cases, considerations of gravity become as important as spatial is-
> sues. The focus on material and gravity as instruments leads to forms that
> were not planned from the beginning. Considerations of order are necessar-
> ily random, imprecise, and unremarkable. Arbitrary layering, loose stacking,
> and hanging give the material temporary form« (Morris 2000: 108).

Released from the wall, the surface, the relief, the skin, the following
works led to an examination of spatial bodies. The observations were again
concentrated in series. An individual repertoire of spatial fragments, spatial
constellations, as well as spatial forms, emerged from the found photo-
graphic objects (fig. 25). With this collection, the aim was to assemble the
individual pieces, freed from their origin, into a coherent whole.

25.
Kathrin Sonntag: »Sixpack«, (Body Parts series),
Inkjet Print, 2020.
(Guest lecture: 10.12.2021).

The concept for the exercise was developed on the one hand from the photographic investigations of typologies as described in the works of Bernd and Hilla Becher, and the later documentaries of Lewis Baltz or Luigi Ghirri. Series of insignificant infrastructures and architectural by-products, to which we usually pay little attention, were analyzed precisely here in photographic explorations (fig. 26). On the other hand, it is true that architects also photograph, and have always photographed, as shown by the black and white images of trips taken by the Swedish architect, Sigurd Lewerentz (1885–1975)[1], who documented details, banalities, unusual perspectives, and abandoned places. In contrast, the color travel photographs of the Japanese architect, Kazuo Shinohara (1925–2006)[2], who in *Street with human shadows* exclusively portrays people in their cities surrounded by house facades. The exercise aimed to invite the viewer to engage with the ›everyday beside‹ and the resulting production of a spatial structure that brought the observations of the minimal journey to a common point.

26.
Aldis Pahl and Sven Grotheus: »statues & fountains«, Seminar Contribution, Munich, 2021. Series (excerpt).

1   With reference to *A Trip to Italy* and *Trips around Sweden*, 2022, in: 2G Essays, Moisés Puente.

2   With reference to *Street with Human Shadows* (Kazuo Shinohara, CCA Kitakyushu, 2007) and *View from this side* (Rollo Press, May 1, 2019).

»Antennas, as everyday forms or found bodies, are concentrated into a spatial theme in a photographic series. The series illustrates the theme of the ephemeral composition of the disembodied in a field of tension between filigree and massiveness. The twelve photographs find each other for a typological image in a uniform composition. The nearly disembodied skeleton of the antennae makes use of a common vocabulary of elements that further differ in proportion, orientation, and sequence. When viewing the series, it seems as if the elements stand in a choreographic composition with each other each other, so that the structures appear seemingly from different angles as a formation of the same. The series as a starting point evokes a transformation of the disembodied skeleton into a spatial object« »The characteristic elements of the antennae are encased in a skin of plaster and textile. They remain visible as a structural imprint and yet reveal themselves as an independent body with a fragile surface and a massive appearance«.
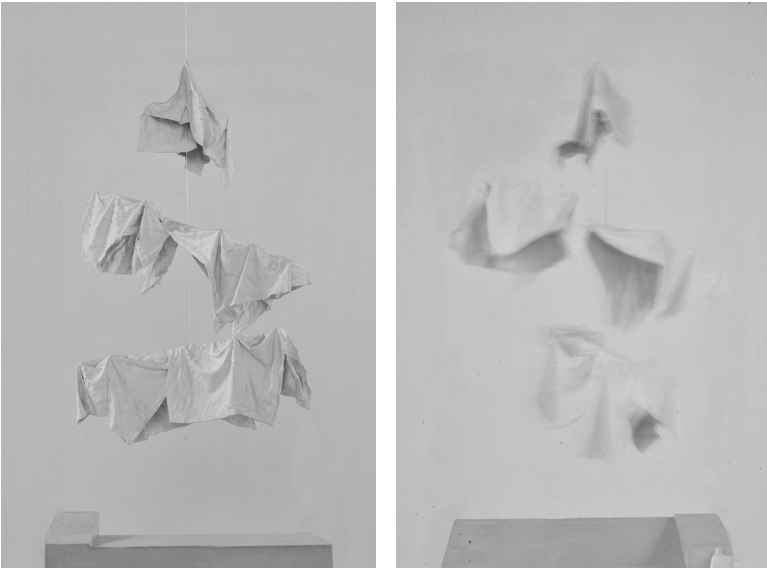
27.–28.
Linus Huber, Lea Maue, Myriam Wiesner: »Image/Body«, Seminar Contribution, Munich, 2021. Series (left): Munich Antennas. Model (above).

»In addition, the motif of apparent movement from the photographic series is also found in the transformation process. The now corporeal structures are brought into a common, as well as mutually movable/changeable state. In this choreographic constellation, the disembodied skeleton of the antennas becomes a spatial object whose body can be experienced as an independent space, but also together as a space between the bodies. A breeze is enough to set the bodies in motion and set the performative change in motion. With the removal of the vertical structure, the bodies become independent and yet appear light despite their massiveness. The base remains the basis as a formal analogy of the roof, but no longer of the structure, but of the frame and thus of the space in between, so that the filigree appears heavy and the massive light« (Huber/Maue/Wiesner 2021: Seminar Contribution).

»The Realmontage begins here with the close observation of a spatial object in our environment. How does the object attract our attention? What are the components of its appearance? Does it appear in different types? The photographic series provides information about this and forms the basis of formal abstraction, the decomposition of the object into its formal parameters.

In the case of the street lantern, these are four modules that determine its appearance significantly: an opaque body to hold technical components; a translucent body that protects the interior from the weather and allows the light produced to escape; four brackets that allow for easy maintenance and replacement of parts, and a contextualizing element that allows the parasitic use of the luminaire in a wide variety of environments, on pole or wire rope.

The joining principle is radically simple: folded pinning and clipping. The exploration of their aesthetic potential is the goal of a continuous design series, which continues consistently from the elaboration of the structure, through the selection of materials, to the final montage in a new object« (Sebastian Schaaf 2022: Seminar Contribution).

29.–30.
Sebastian Schaaf: »Object N«, Seminar Contribution, Munich, 2022.
Series (excerpt, left): Munich street lanterns. Model (above): Interpretation.

Motivation to Look Closely

> »The processes we have summarized here are not an invention of our own
> but, on the contrary, a fairly common social practice that we intend to sys-
> tematize« (Debord/Wolman 1956: 9).

Explicitly, the focused gaze through the camera lens was considered here
as the starting point for a critical engagement with reality. Through repet-
itive/multiplying montages, new variations on an existing arrangement of
spatial layers were brought to light. As such, I would like to summarize how
the montages conducted here are a cohesive process on multiple levels: The
process always began with the precise observation and recording of what was
found and initiates the creation of a collection. In the photographic collec-
tion, juxtapositions and parallels were made visible. In addition, connec-
tions and contrasts were made on an individual level. This means memories,
which photography is not capable of: A memory far from the exact precise
image; a vague idea; a smell; a feeling; a stillness; a past spatial experience.
These findings were in turn sharpened into a spatial theme and found a new
expression in translation. With this transformation into an artifact in its
own right, there was a modification of what was found, as well as a recon-
nection to its origin. The physical presence of the new, for which no concept
yet exists, showed the sum of the collected qualities: A forged relationship
between existing, prefabricated entities that provoked the emergence of
unexpected, new qualities.

 The motivation for this research and teaching is that the perception of
our everyday spaces, as well as the effects of image production overall, are
increasingly becoming the subject of architectural debates. Thus, the process
that has been systematically addressed here is one of many ways with which
to engage more intensively with the spaces we find every day, on the one
hand, to gain insight into their essential characteristics and dynamics and on
the other hand, to sharpen the ability to trace a physical connection between
oneself and the surrounding reality.

A final note of thanks goes to all the students for their inspiring outputs that
enrich this issue and to the guests for the stimulating inputs, as well as to
the openness of the chair, which made the free-working method possible and
supported it.

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