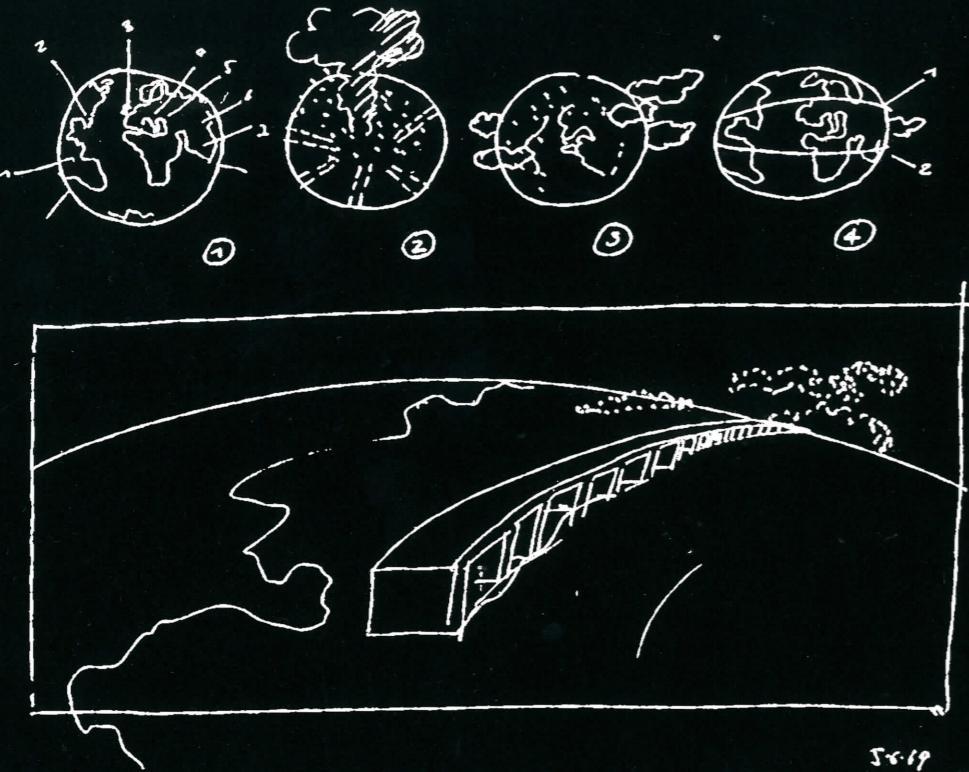


THE CONTINUOUS MONUMENT

An Architectural Model For Total Urbanization

Superstudio, 1969



For those who, like ourselves, are convinced that architecture is one of the few ways to realize cosmic order on earth, to put things to order and above all to affirm humanity's capacity for acting according to reason, it is a "moderate utopia" to imagine a near future in which all architecture will be created with a single act, from a single design capable of clarifying once and for all the motives which have induced man to build dolmens, menhirs, pyramids, and lastly to trace (*ultima ratio*) a white line in the desert.

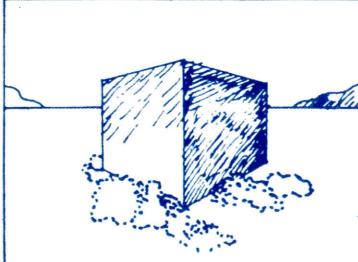
The Great Wall of China, Hadrian's Wall, motorways, like parallels and meridians, are the tangible signs of our understanding of the earth. We believe in a future of "rediscovered architecture", in a future in which architecture will regain its full power, abandoning all ambiguity of design and appearing as the only alternative to nature. Between the terms *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, we choose the latter.

Eliminating mirages and will-o'-the-wisps such as spontaneous architecture, sensitive architecture, architecture without architects, biological architecture and fantastic architecture, we move towards the "continuous monument": a form of architecture all equally emerging from a single continuous environment: the world rendered uniform by technology, culture and all the other inevitable forms of imperialism.

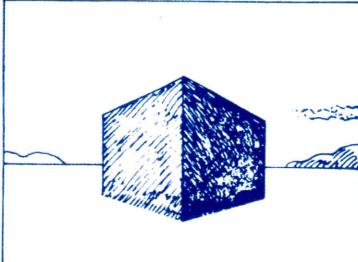
We belong to a long history of black stones, rocks fallen from the sky or erected in the earth: meteorites, dolmens, obelisks. Cosmic axis, vital elements, elements reproducing the relationships of sky and earth, witnesses to marriages celebrated, the tablets of the law, final acts of dramas of various lengths. From the Holy Kaaba to the Vertical Assembly Building.

A square block of stone placed on the earth is a primary act, it is a testimonial that architecture is the centre of the relationships of technology, sacredness, utilitarianism. It implies man, machines, rational structures and history. The square block is the first and ultimate act in the history of ideas in architecture. Architecture becomes a closed, immobile object that leads nowhere but to itself and to the use of reason.

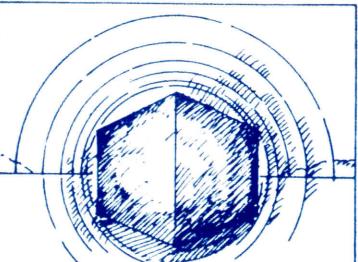
<p>1. Keplero cercò di iscrivere dei solidi elementari nelle orbite dei pianeti. Kepler tried to inscribe elementary solids within the orbits of the planets.</p>	<p>2. Vitruvio e Leonardo iscrissero l'uomo in un cerchio, gli indiani sistemarono il caos nel mandala. Vitruvius and Leonardo inscribed man within the circle, the Indians placed chaos within the mandala.</p>	<p>3. La sezione aurea, l'ordine, la simmetria erano insieme visione del mondo e mediazione per comunicare la natura delle cose. The golden section, order, symmetry, were at the same time a vision of the world, and a medium for communicating the nature of things.</p>	<p>4. Il mandala come base per la meditazione è il tentativo di ordinare e dare un senso ad elementi divergenti. The mandala as a basis for meditation is a tentative try at ordering and giving a sense to diverging elements.</p>
<p>5. Il desiderio di rendere il mondo chiaro e distinto ha segnato tracciati regolatori sul viso umano e sul mondo... The desire to render the world clear and distinct has left regular paths upon the human face and on the world...</p>	<p>6. creando sistemi basati contemporaneamente sull'uomo e sulla geometria (come il Modulor). creating systems based at one and the same time upon man and upon geometry (such as the Modulor).</p>	<p>7. L'uomo non è il centro delle cose, è solo uno dei vertici del poligono infinito che unisce cosmo, mondo, ragione. Man is not the centre of things, he is merely one of the vertices of the infinite polygon that unites the cosmos, the world, reason.</p>	<p>8. L'astrologia collegava le manifestazioni umane agli astri; le scienze rivelano sempre nuove connessioni tra le parti e il tutto. Astrology connected human destinies and the stars; science is ever revealing further links between the parts and the whole.</p>
<p>9. Le forme elementari sono la testimonianza di visioni del mondo. Dolmen, menhir, il sacro cerchio di Stonehenge, gli zigzaghi... Elementary forms are witnesses to different visions of the world. Dolmen, menhirs, the sacred circle of Stonehenge, ziggurats...</p>	<p>10. dei babilonesi e dei maya. le piramidi degli egiziani erano monumenti contro la morte, uno dei modi per sopravvivere, riconoscendosi... Babylon and of the Mayas, the pyramids of Egypt were monuments against death, one way to survive, in recognizing oneself.</p>	<p>11. Prendere coscienza del bisogno dei monumenti serve a colmare la frattura tra razionalità e inconscio: così si può osservare che... To realize the need for monuments is to fill in the fracture between rationality and the unconscious: thus one may observe that...</p>	<p>12. la Kaaba e il Vertical Assembly Building sono due uguali cubiche pietre nere, egualmente monumentali. The Kaaba and the Vertical Assembly Building are two identical black stones, both equally monumental.</p>
<p>13. Quando poi i segni umani non sono solidi elementari, sono lunghe linee continue, teorie d'elementi, espressioni di una... Then, when human signs are not elementary solids, they are long continuous lines, a theory of elements, the expression of...</p>	<p>14. stessa volontà di segnare e misurare. Ponti, muraglie cinesi... the same will to sign and measure. Bridges, Chinese walls...</p>	<p>15. o acquedotti sono sempre monumenti continui ugualmente allungati sulla terra per comprenderla. or aqueducts are still continuous monuments, also lying full length to embrace the earth.</p>	<p>16. Così fino alle autostrade, alle dighe e ai grandi manufatti della tecnica in scala con le nuove dimensioni. And so on up to the motorways, great dams and huge products of technology on a scale with the new dimensions.</p>
<p>17. Dalla Genesi: «In principio Iddio creò il cielo e la terra, la terra era una cosa senza forma e vuota» e poi dall'Apocalisse: From Genesis: «In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void» and then from the Apocalypse:</p>	<p>18. «La città era un quadrato, e la sua larghezza era uguale alla sua larghezza». Tutta la storia sta tra il caos e l'architettura. «And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth»; and all history lies between chaos and architecture.</p>	<p>19. La nostra storia è appunto una parola di formalizzazione, così è una storia di deserti naturali ed artificiali... Our story is just a parable of formalization, so it is a story of deserts, both natural and artificial....</p>	<p>20. deserti dove si posano nuvole o dove nascono nuvole che poi generano apparizioni geometricali lungamente attese. deserts where clouds may come to earth or where clouds are born, then to generate geometrical, long-awaited apparitions.</p>



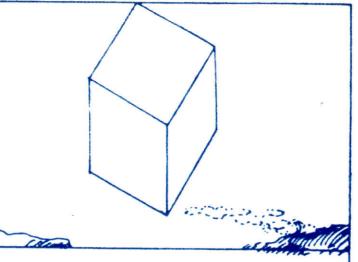
21. Così appare la geometria e il primo personaggio della nostra parola. Il blocco quadrato è il primo atto e l'ultimo nella...
Thus geometry appears, the first character in our parable. The square block is the first and last act in the...



22. storia delle idee d'architettura, come nodo di relazioni tecnologia/sacralità/utilitarismo tra uomo macchina strutture razionali e storia. history of architectural ideas, as the intersection of the relationships between technology/sacredness/utility, between man machine rational structures and history.



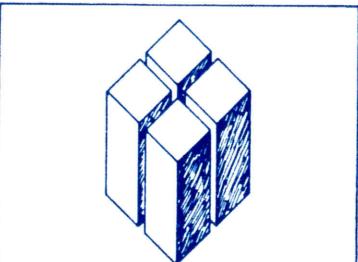
23. L'architettura è un oggetto chiuso e immobile che non rimanda che a se stesso e all'uso della ragione,... architecture is a closed, immobile object, referring only to itself and to the use of reason...



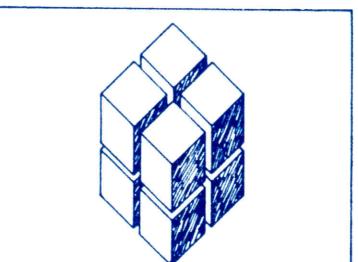
24. un oggetto inconoscibile che irradia luce aureole e arcobaleni, fino ad alzarsi in volo nello spazio isometrico. an unknown object irradiating light dawn rainbows, until it takes off in flight into isometric space.



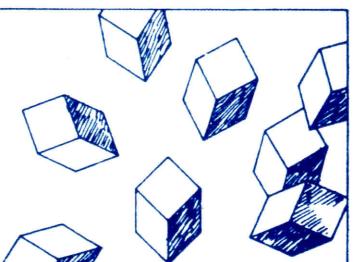
25. Il blocco viene costretto da due cinghieature ad esser un cubo perfetto...
The block is forced into a perfect cube by two straps...



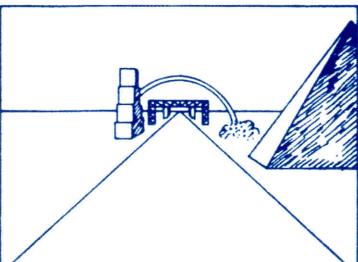
26. e appena liberato si divide in pezzi seguendo leggi precise, mostrando volta per volta i principi generatori... and as soon as it is freed, it divides up into pieces, following precise laws and showing each time its governing principles...



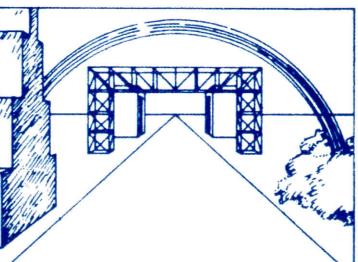
27. fino a diventare una serie di cubi più piccoli, e più piccoli ancora... until it becomes a series of smaller cubes, and yet smaller...



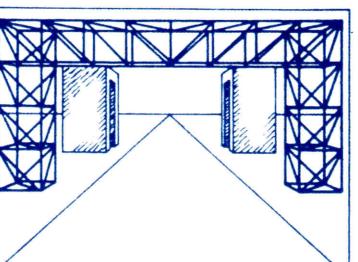
28. e le parti si disperdono ma l'ordine non genera il disordine e ogni parte ha con sé il messaggio genetico della sua razza ordinata, and the parts disperse, but order does not generate disorder and each part has with it the genetic message of its ordered race.



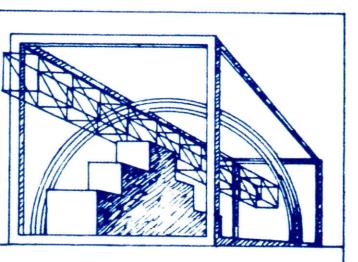
29. UN VIAGGIO IN AUTO IN UN MUSEO DRI-VE-IN DELL'ARCHITETTURA. Souvenirs di viaggio da un viaggio nelle regioni della ragione
A CAR JOURNEY TO A DRIVE-IN MUSEUM OF ARCHITECTURE. Souvenirs from a journey into the realms of reason



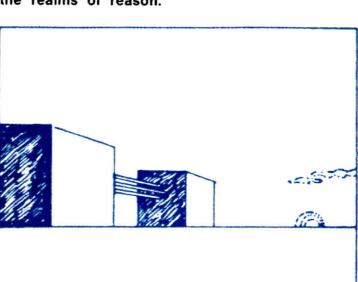
30. Dall'architettura dei monumenti attraverso l'architettura delle immagini e l'architettura tecnomorfa all'architettura della ragione
From the architecture of monuments through the architecture of images and technomorphous architecture to reach the architecture of reason



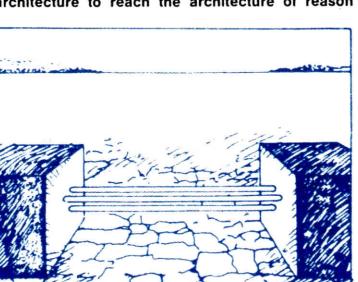
31. durante il viaggio ci sono apparizioni di monumenti antichi, arcobaleni e nuvole al neon, macchine tralicci e statue.
(throughout the journey there are apparitions of ancient monuments, rainbows, neon clouds, machines steel framework and statues).



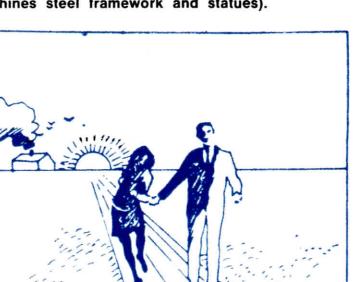
32. L'arrivo triomfale al tempio della Ragion Pura (scritta: «nella prospettiva storica, la Ragione domina tutto»).
The triumphant arrival at the temple of Pure Reason (banner: «in historical perspective, Reason dominates all»).



33. COME ILLUMINARE IL DESERTO. Due prismi neri di marmo o cristallo collegati da un arcobaleno al neon per illuminare la mente, posti...
HOW TO ILLUMINATE THE DESERT. Two black prisms of marble or crystal joined by a neon rainbow to illuminate the mind, placed...



34. nei deserti artificiali o interiori. Quando il sole tramonta i tubi cominciano a brillare a intermittenza, e nei lampi delle...



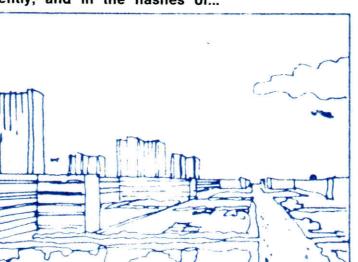
35. accensioni appaiono immagini di architetture di sogno, radiosi orizzonti con un fil di fumo, tempo libero, maisons pour le...



36. week-end, immagini di felicità per mezzo dell'architettura, costruzioni ariose, città ordinate, spazi verdi...



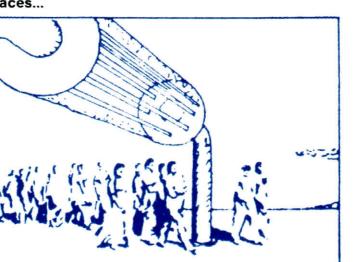
37. Nella luce che aumenta si vedono i nuovi monumenti della scienza e della tecnica (Crystal Palace) e le utopie (Falansteri)... In the growing light, one can see the monuments of science and technology (the Crystal Palace) and utopias (Falansteri)...



38. New Harmony, Philadelphia) e le costruzioni eroiche del razionalismo (Weissenhof, Bauhaus, Ville Radieuse); i cataloghi delle illusioni... New Harmony, Philadelphia) and the heroic buildings of the age of rationalism (Weissenhof, Bauhaus, Ville Radieuse); the catalogues of illusions...



39. e delle utopie. «Il mondo delle idee, delle credenze, delle fantasie e dei progetti è altrettanto reale della realtà» (L. Mumford). and utopias. «The world of ideas, of beliefs, of fantasies and projects is just as real as reality» (L. Mumford).

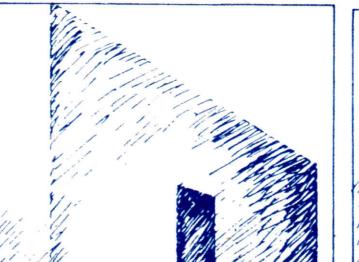


40. I tubi luminosi divengono un arco trionfale e sotto ci passano carovane di nomadi, impiegati in gita, processioni di pace. The glowing tubes become an arch of triumph under which processions of nomads, white-collar workers on holiday, peace demonstrations, pass...



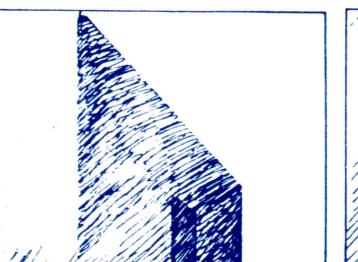
41. LE APPARIZIONI. 1. LA PORTA. «Tutto ciò che abbiamo amato è andato perduto, siamo ormai nel deserto. Davanti a noi non c'è che un quadrato...»

THE APPARITIONS. 1. THE DOOR. «All we have loved is lost, we are now in the desert. Before us there is but a square,

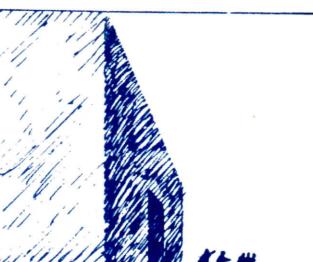


42. nero su fondo bianco» (K. Malevic). Come una porta, una soglia metafisica.

black on a white ground» (K. Malevich). Like a door, a metaphysical threshold.



43. Un rettangolo neutro, geometrico, come presenza misteriosa tra due mondi. E' su questa porta, su questo confine che noi viviamo... as the case may be, convinced of the necessity of living inside a crystal cube or of isolating ourselves in the desert.



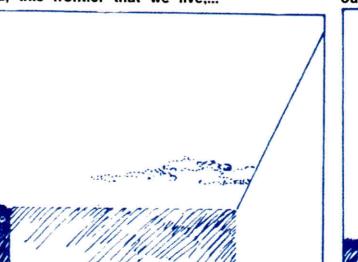
44. di volta in volta convinti della necessità di vivere all'interno del cubo di cristallo o invece di isolarsi nel deserto.

45. LE APPARIZIONI. 2. IL CORRIDOIO. Fatto ad «U», poggiato sul terreno con angoli rigidamente retti...

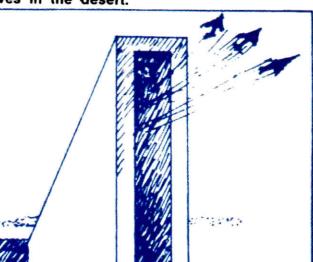
THE APPARITIONS. 2. THE CORRIDOR. «U-shaped, set on the ground at rigid right angles...



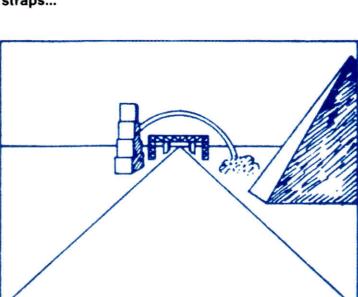
46. Io si percorre con lo sguardo da fuori, se ne esaminano le superfici lisce e lucide... from the outside, our eyes run over its smooth, shining surfaces...



47. sappiamo che ha un interno, ma non sappiamo come. E' disponibile comunque ad ogni utilizzazione. we know it has an interior, but we do not know how. However, it is at our disposition for any use.

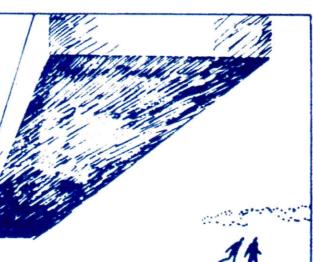
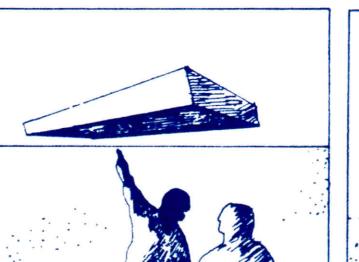
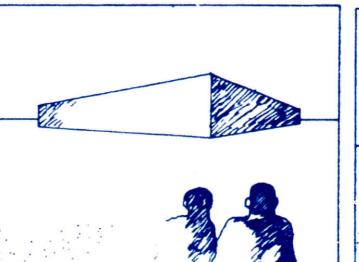


48. Ed ecco improvvisamente uscire tre jets. And suddenly, unexpectedly, three jets fly out.



49. LE APPARIZIONI. 3. LA PIETRA. Grande e nera giace nel deserto. Come in uno specchio scuro rimanda immagini in movimento di uomini e città.

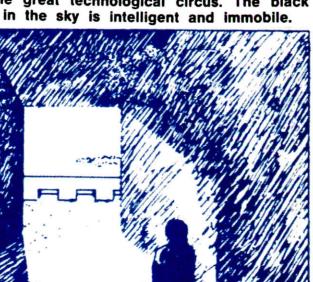
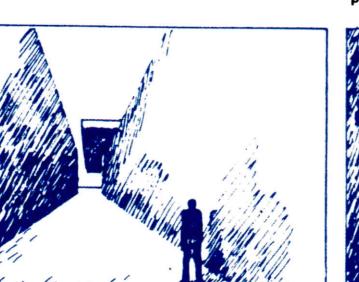
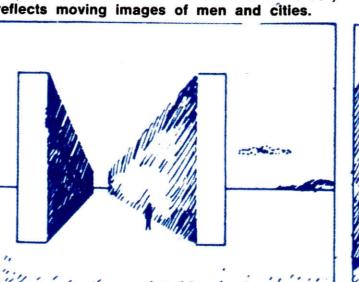
THE APPARITIONS. 3. THE STONE. Large and black, it lies in the desert. As in a dark mirror, it reflects moving images of men and cities.



50. Poi comincia a muoversi e si alza in volo. Then it begins to move and takes off in flight.

It reaches a certain height and then remains parallel to the ground, moving.

Within, it contains the distorted image of the city, the great technological circus. The black mirror in the sky is intelligent and immobile.



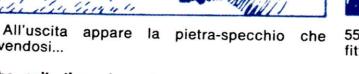
51. Raggiunge una certa quota e poi rimane parallela alla terra, muovendosi...

At the exit, the mirror-stone appears, moving...

52. Dentro ha l'immagine distorta della città, il grande Barnum tecnologico. Lo specchio nero in cielo è intelligente e immobile.

53. LE APPARIZIONI. 4. I MURI. In prospettiva con gente che ci passa dentro. Camminare in prospettive parallele (New York).

THE APPARITIONS. 4. THE WALLS. In perspective with people walking between them. To walk in parallel perspectives (N.Y.).

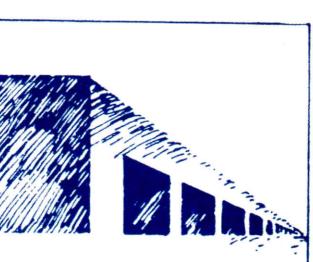
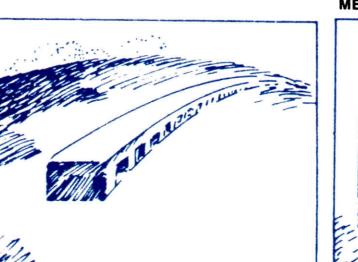
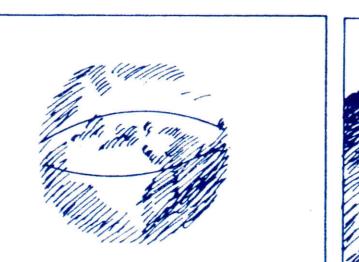


54. All'uscita appare la pietra-specchio che muovendosi...

and jumping onto the parallel walls, becoming a ceiling, and the walls become a dark tunnel.

55. balza sui muri paralleli e diviene un soffitto e i muri divengono un tunnel buio.

Walking in the dark for a long time, and at last seeing a faint glow, and in the light, like a white line, we see the CONTINUOUS MONUMENT.



56. Camminare a lungo nel buio vedere un chiarore, e nella luce appare come una linea bianca le pareti del MONUMENTO CONTINUO.

Envisaging the progressive impoverishment of the earth and the now nearby prospect of «standing-room only»...

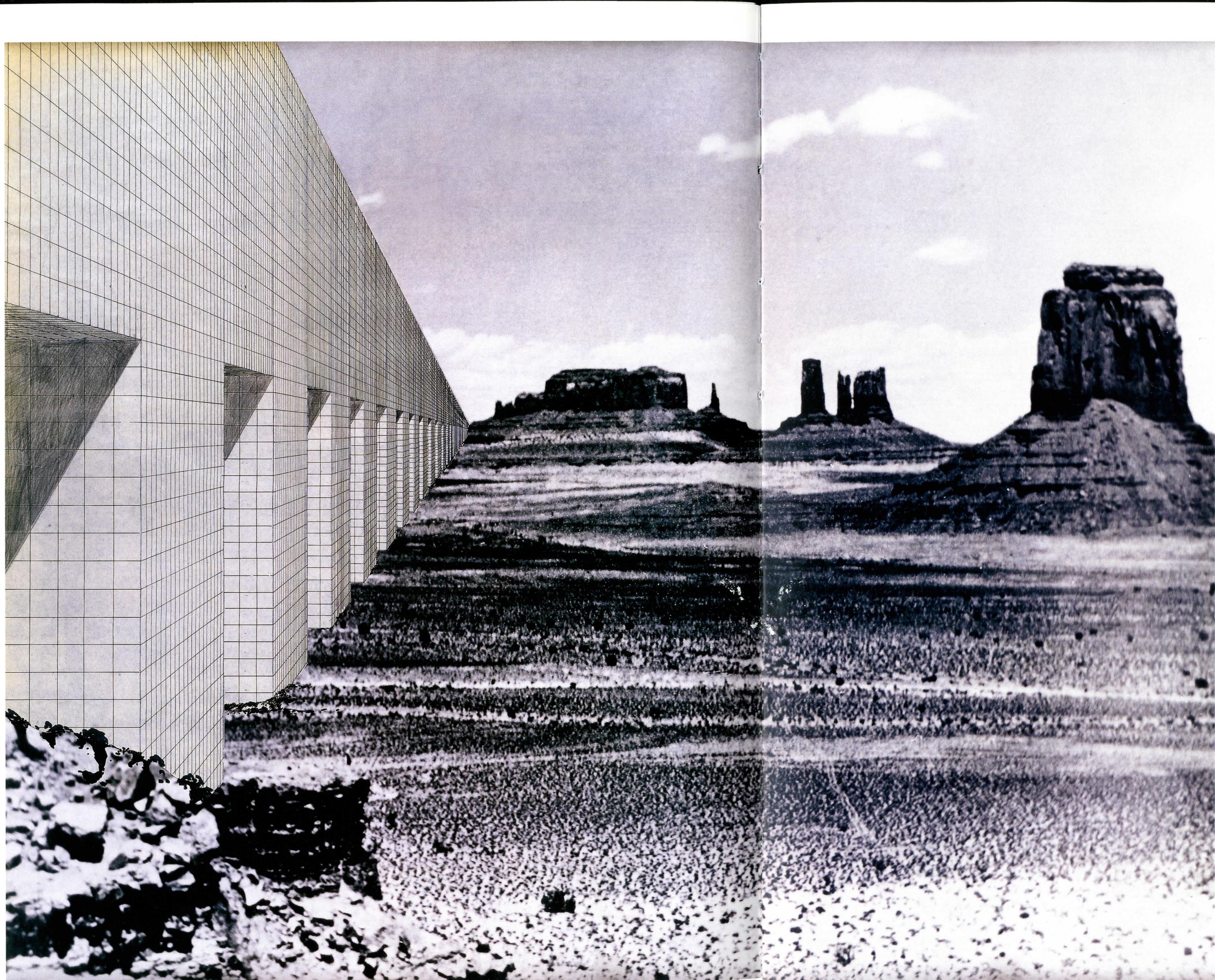
57. Di fronte al destino di progressivo impoverimento della terra e alla prospettiva ormai vicina dello «standing-room only»...

possiamo immaginare un'architettura unica con cui occupare le zone di abitabilità ottimale lasciando libere le altre.

we can imagine a single architectural construction with which to occupy the optimal living zones, leaving the others free.

58. Il modello architettonico di urbanizzazione totale è un'estrapolazione logica di una «storia orientata», da Stonehenge ai V.A.B. ai meridiani, un'architettura riconoscibile.

Un'architettura unica capace di dar forma alla terra; (misurandola: come i paralleli e i meridiani), un'architettura riconoscibile.



Envisaging the progressive impoverishment of the earth and the now nearby prospect of "standing-room only" we can imagine a single architectural construction with which to occupy the optimal living zones, leaving the others free.

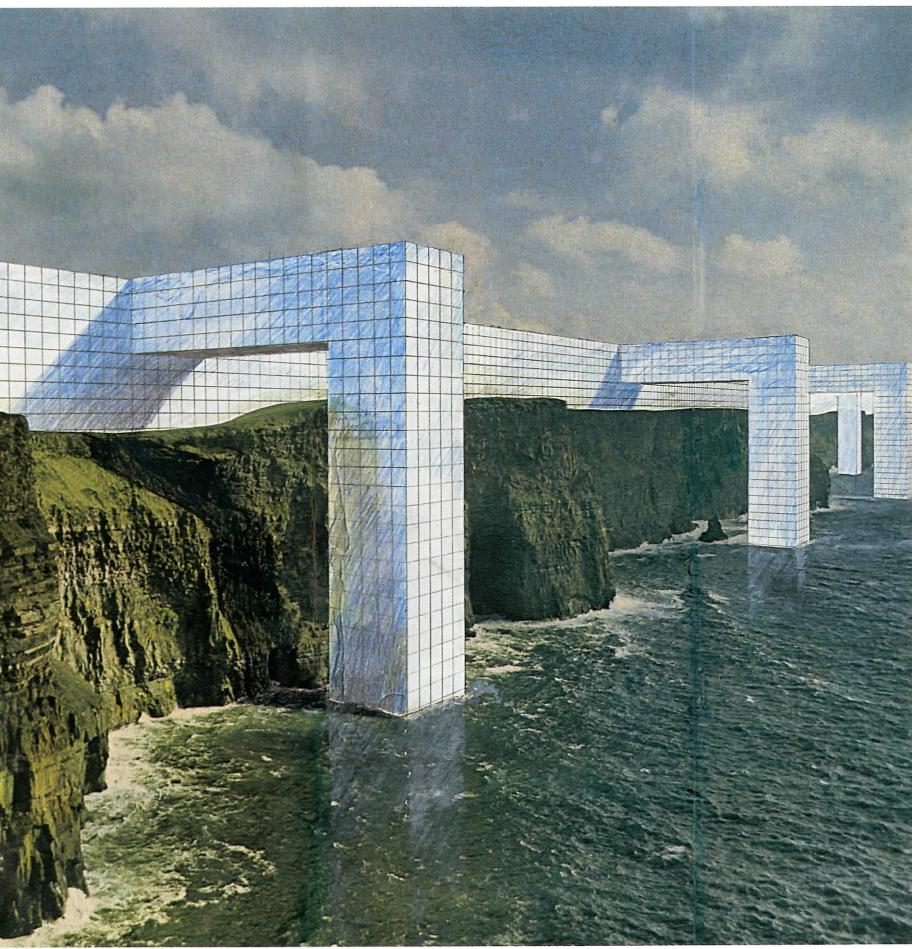
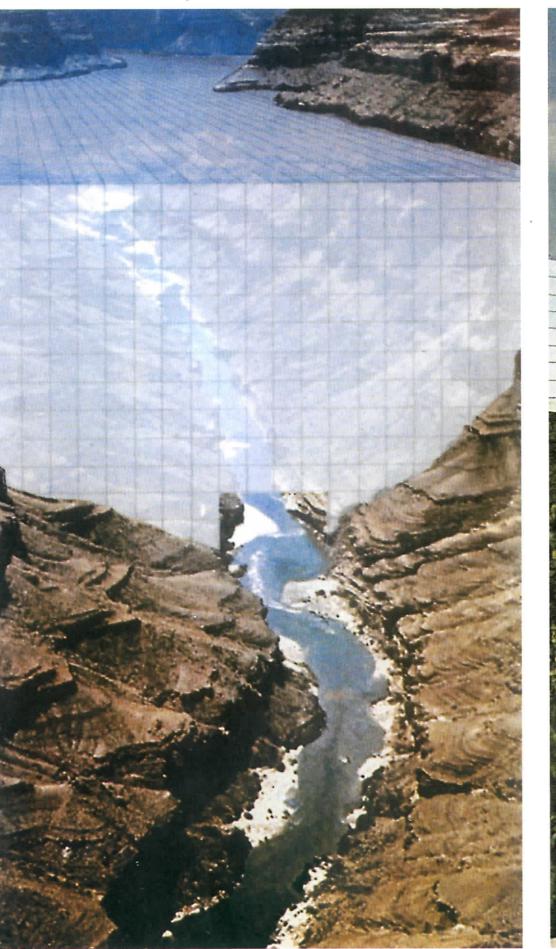
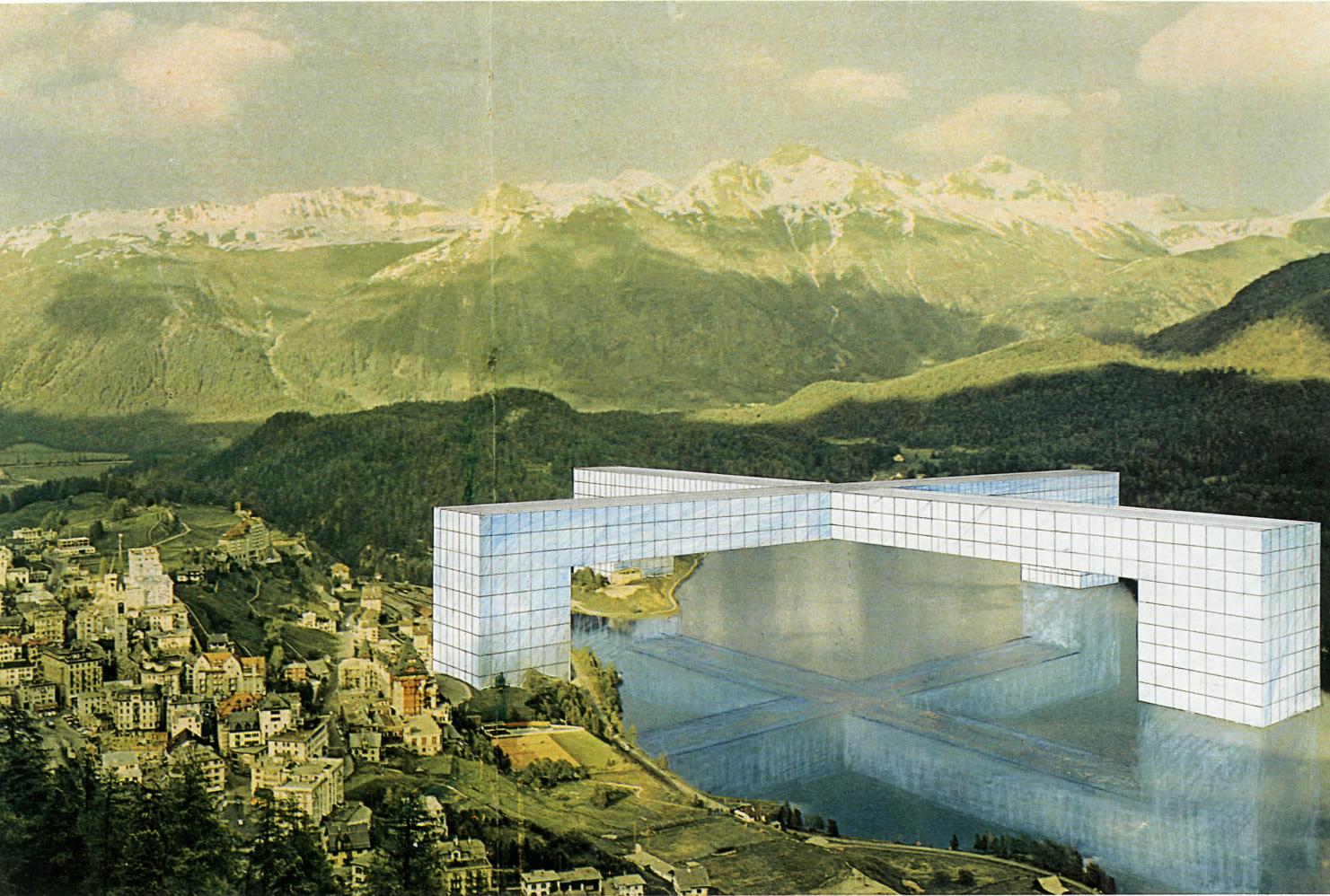
The architectural model of total urbanization is the logical extrapolation of "oriented history", from Stonehenge to the VAB, to the continuous monument. A single form of architecture, capable of shaping the earth (measuring it, like longitude and latitude), a recognizable architecture.

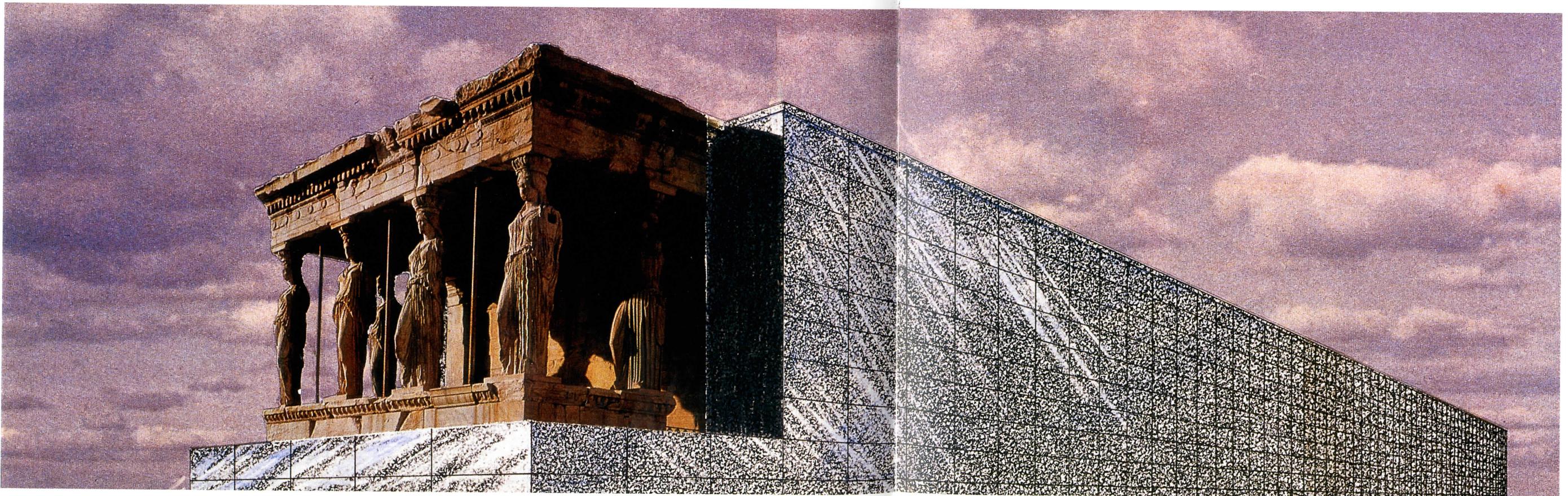
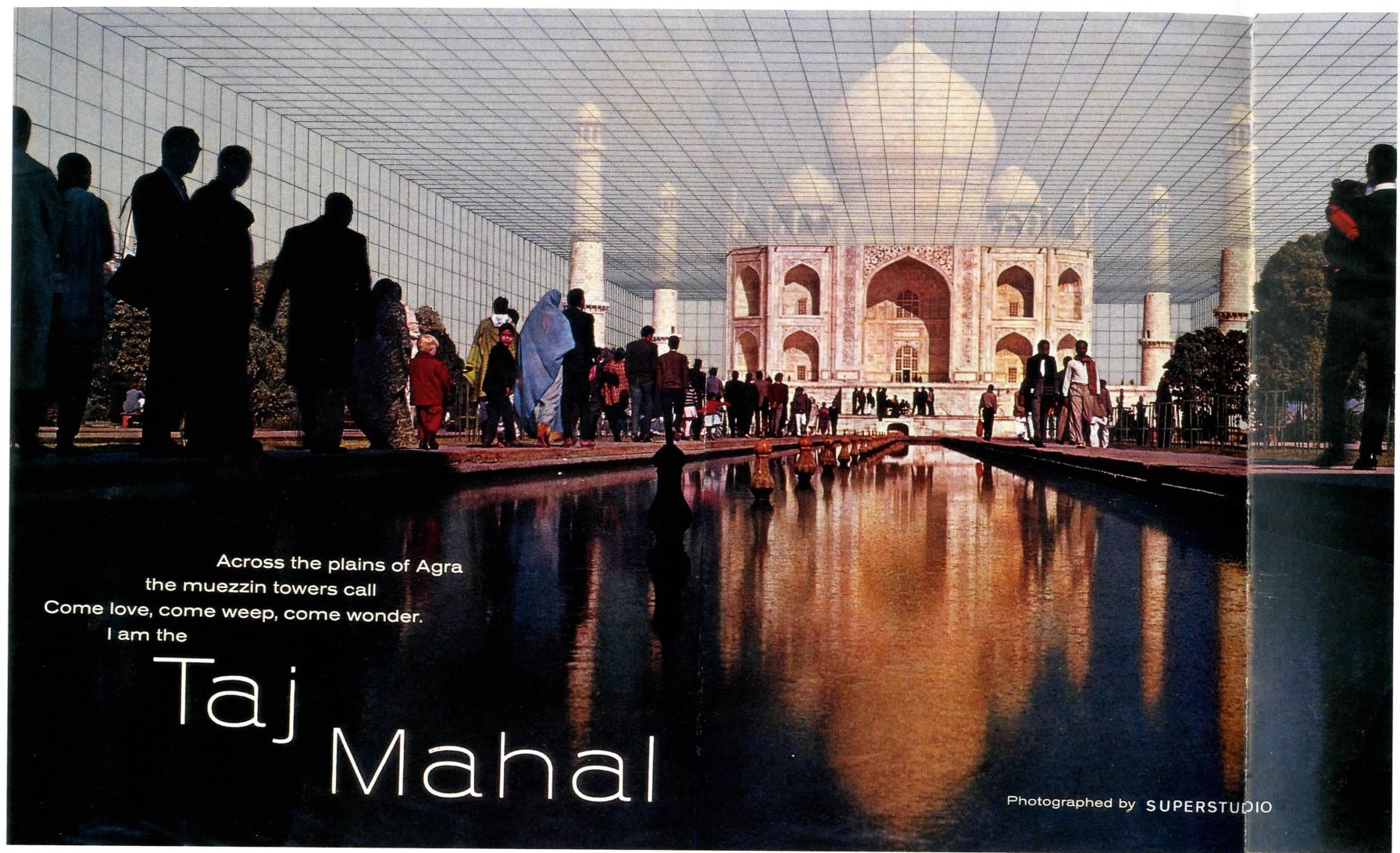
The continuous monument is the extreme pole of a series of projecting operations centred round the idea of the "single design", a design which can be transferred from one area to another, remaining unchanged: an impassible, unalterable image, whose static perfection moves the world through the love of itself that it creates. Through a series of mental operations, one comes into possession of reality and reaches serenity: thus architecture is understanding of the world and knowledge of oneself.

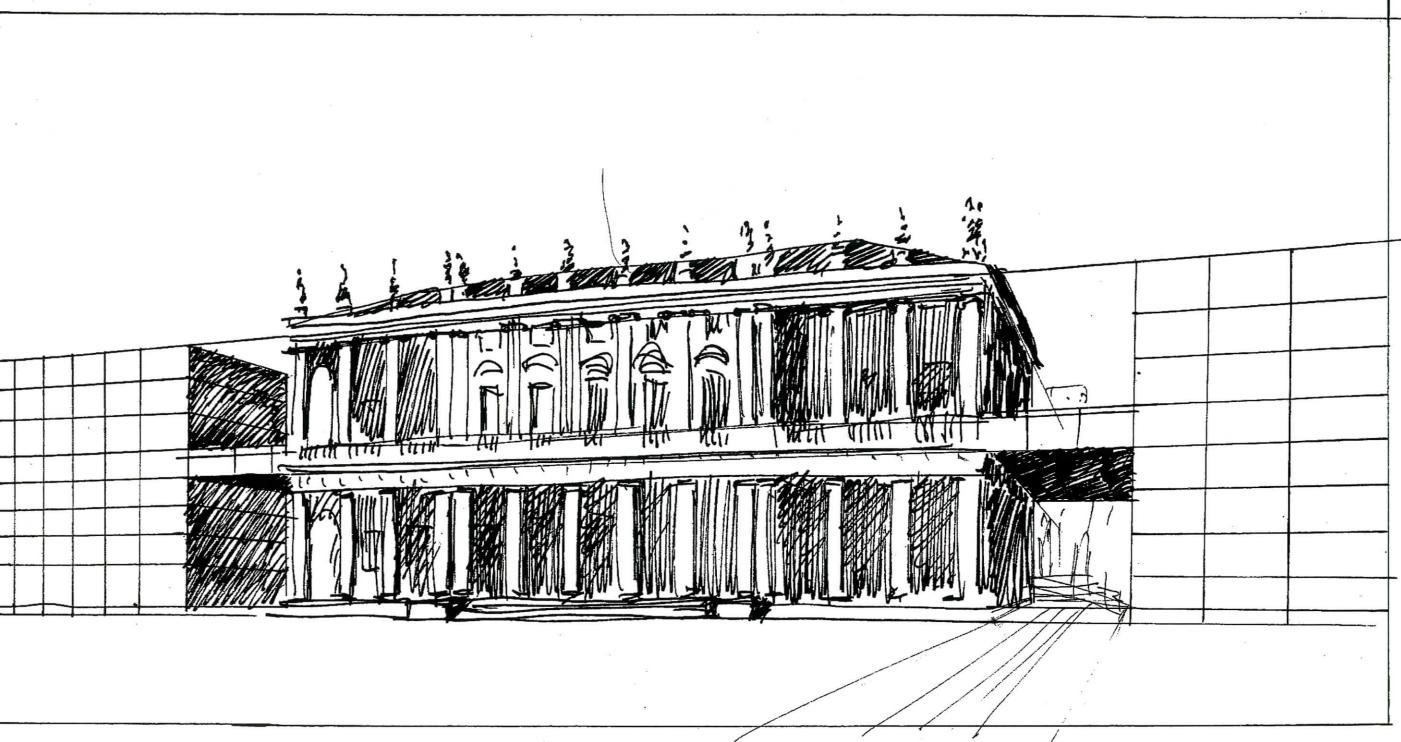
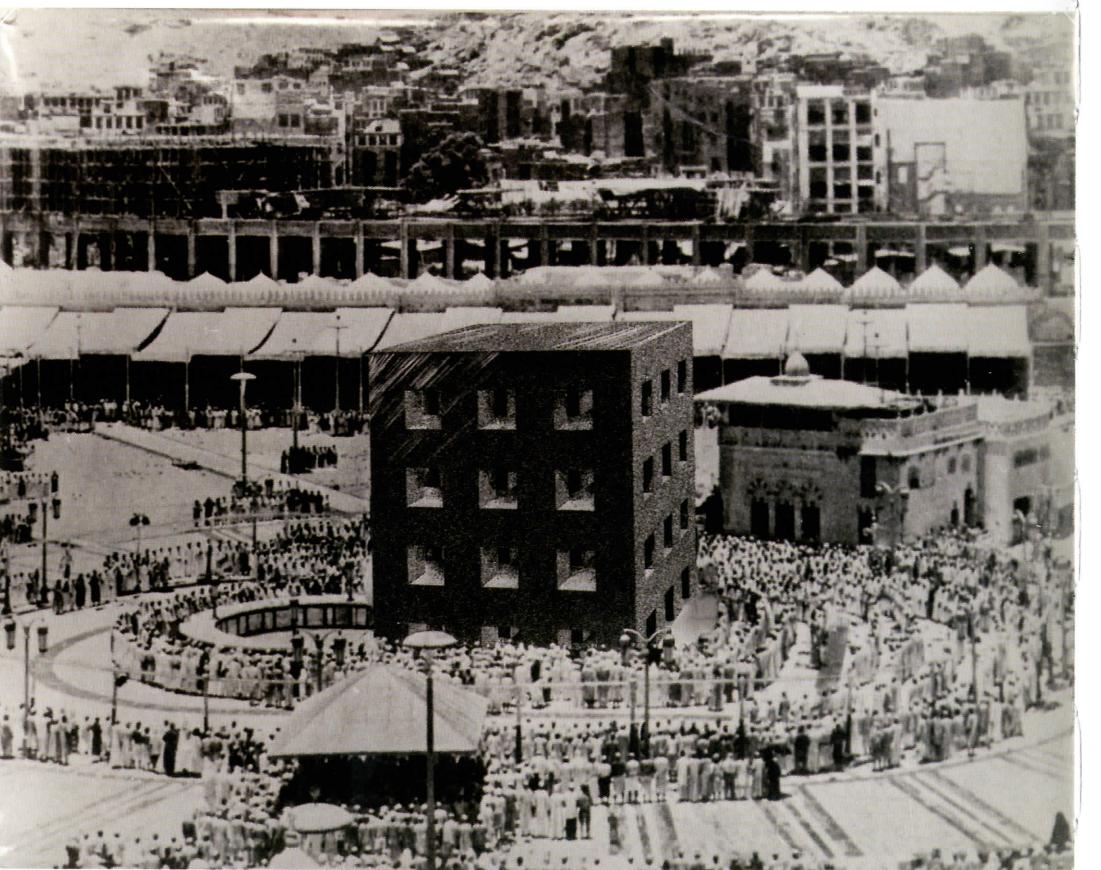
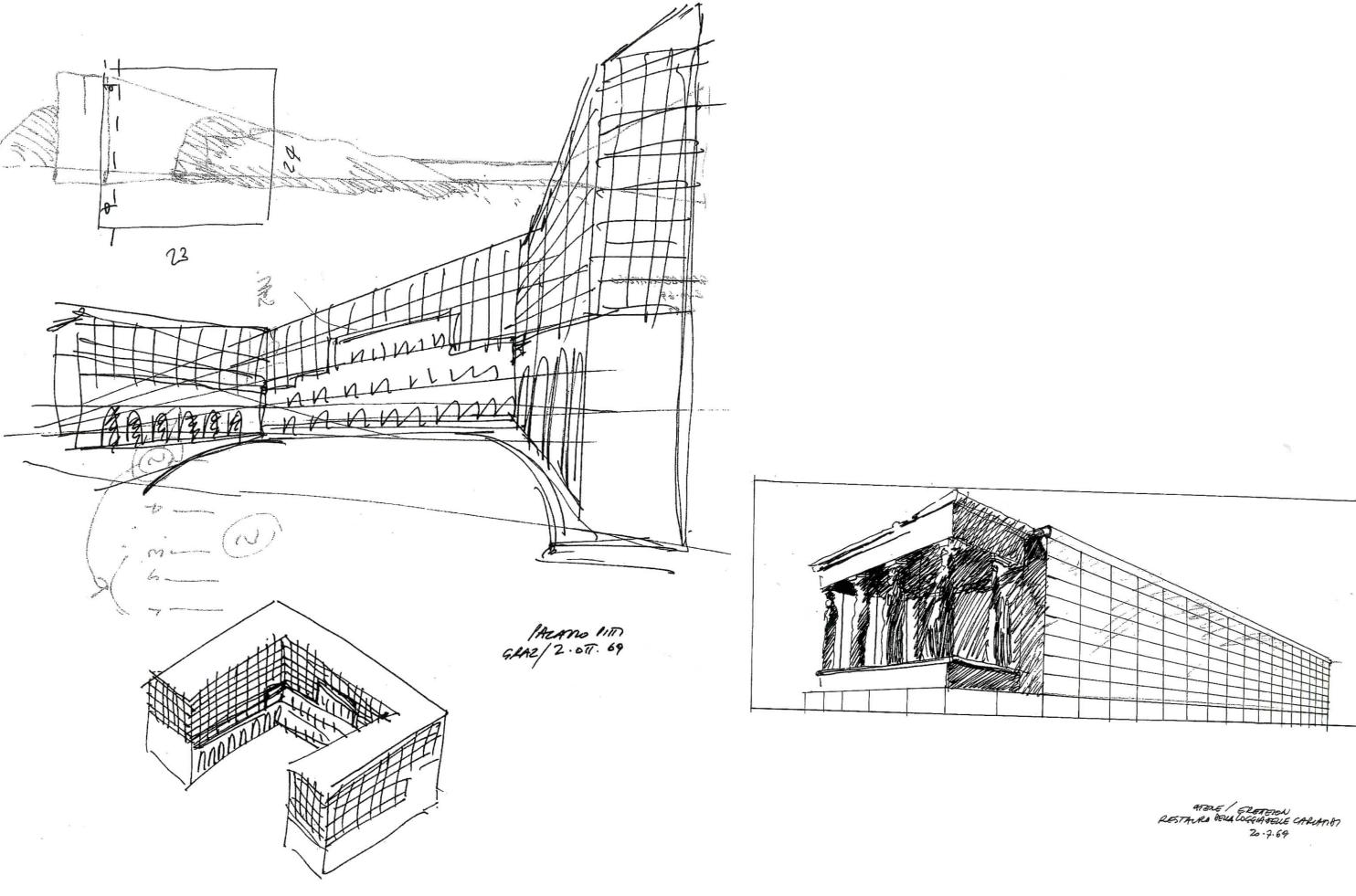
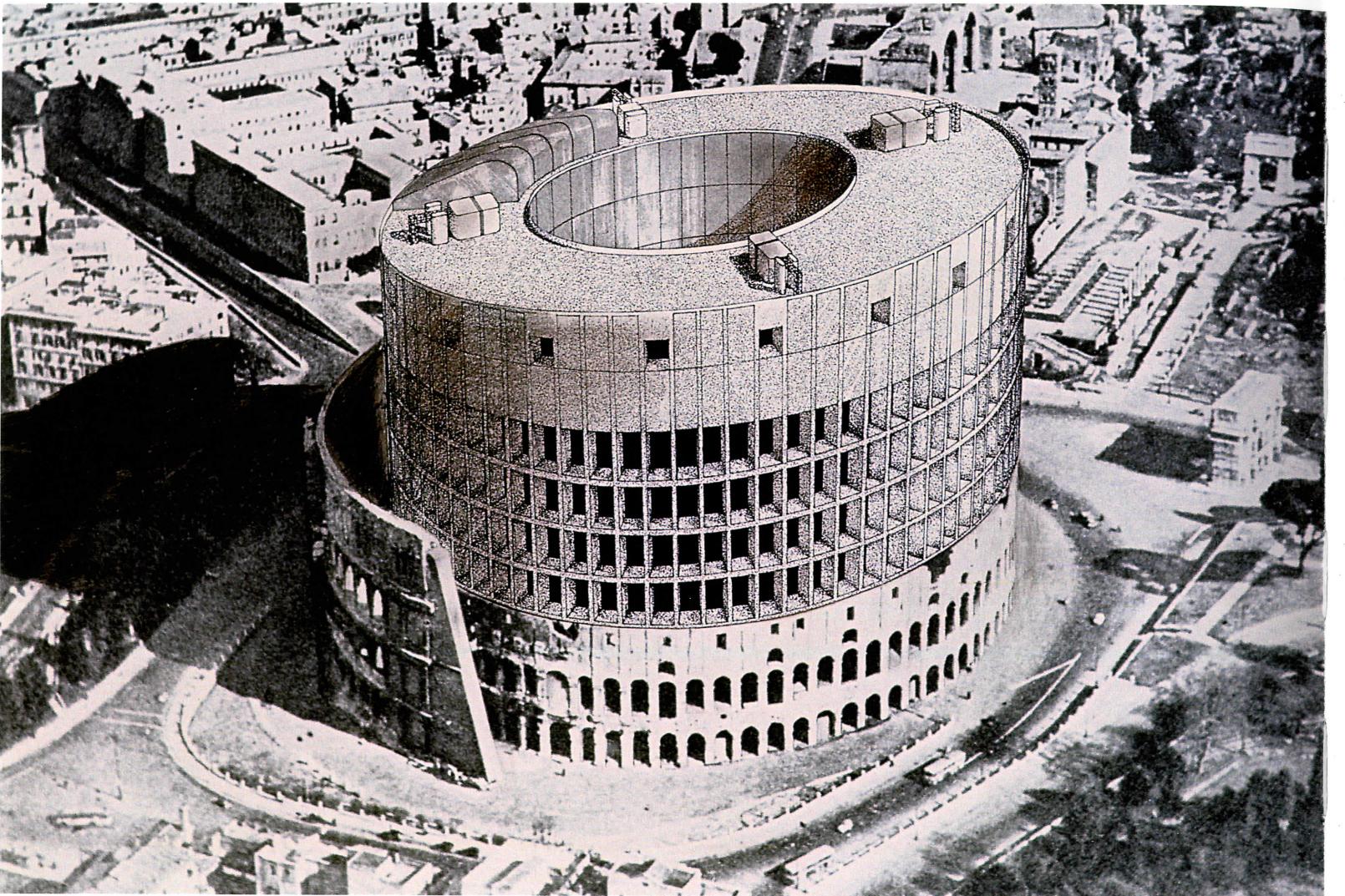


NATURE

Some random images, disquieting as all postcards bearing “greetings from ...”
Architecture faces nature without disguising itself, but presented as the only
alternative: *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. One may cross deserts, cover
over canyons, join up Alpine lakes, also use, geometrically, hills and rivers with
new horizons. Or other operations on earth, mountains and sea, always as examples
of rational operations, organized and measured.





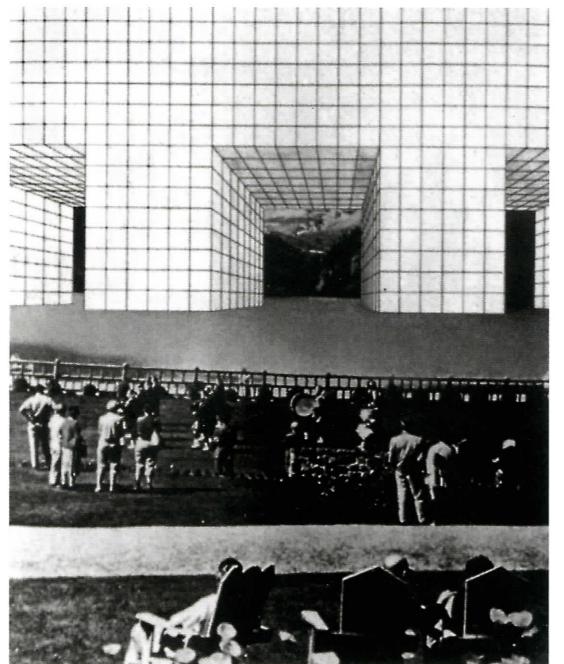


ANCIENT MONUMENTS

The Holy Kaaba substituted by an enormous block of black marble with square holes, and no one knows where the holy stone is any longer: but this is no obstacle to true faith.

The Caryatid Porch as the facade.
The Taj Mahal protected and climatized.

A classical garden in Madrid ... an additional layer to the Coliseum, etc.: all operations *per absurdum*, in grandiose style.



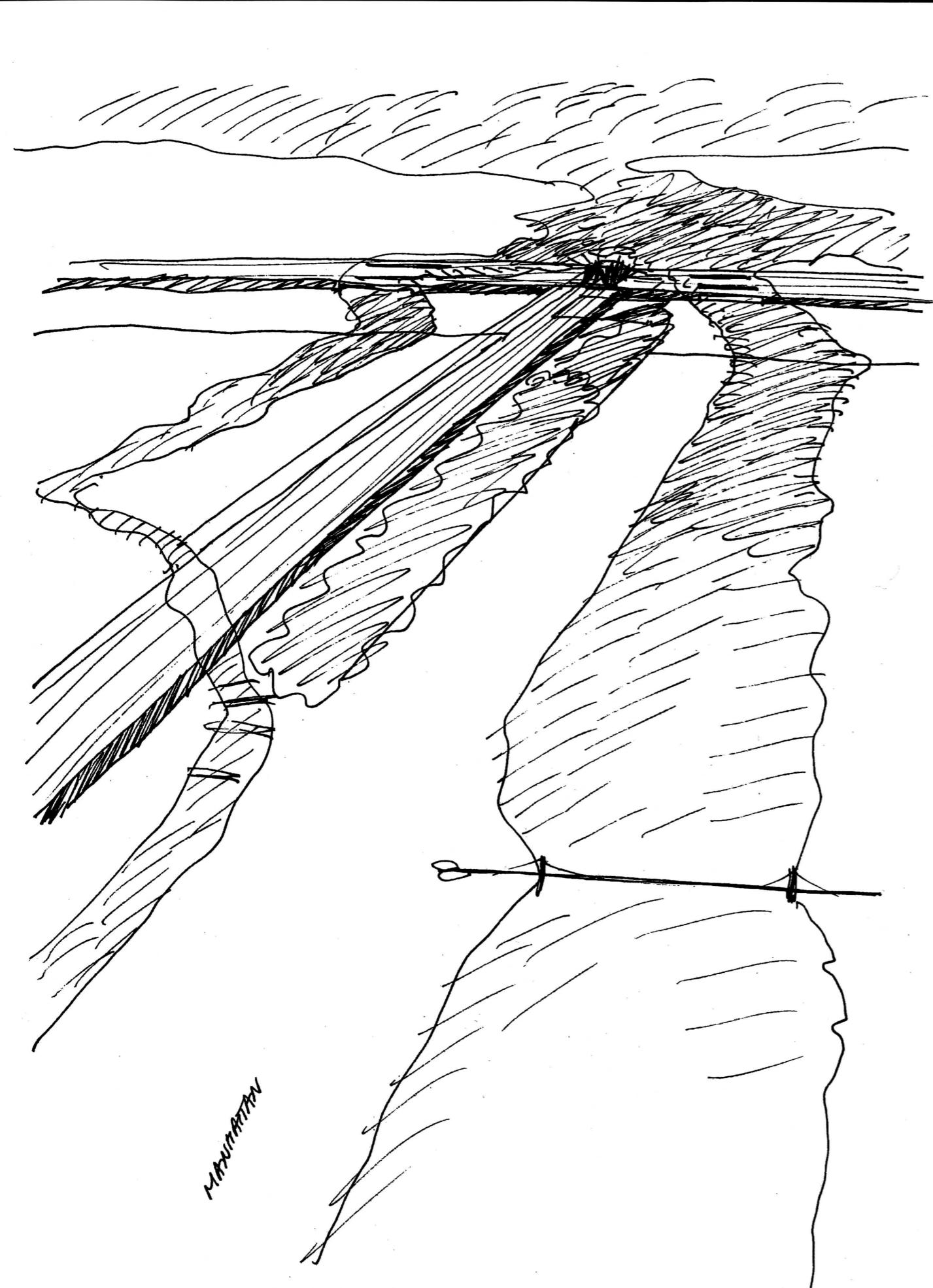
CITIES

Coketown revisited. Where is Utopia?

Graz with a structure linking the green zones passing over the Schlossberg and the Mur leaving the old city untouched.

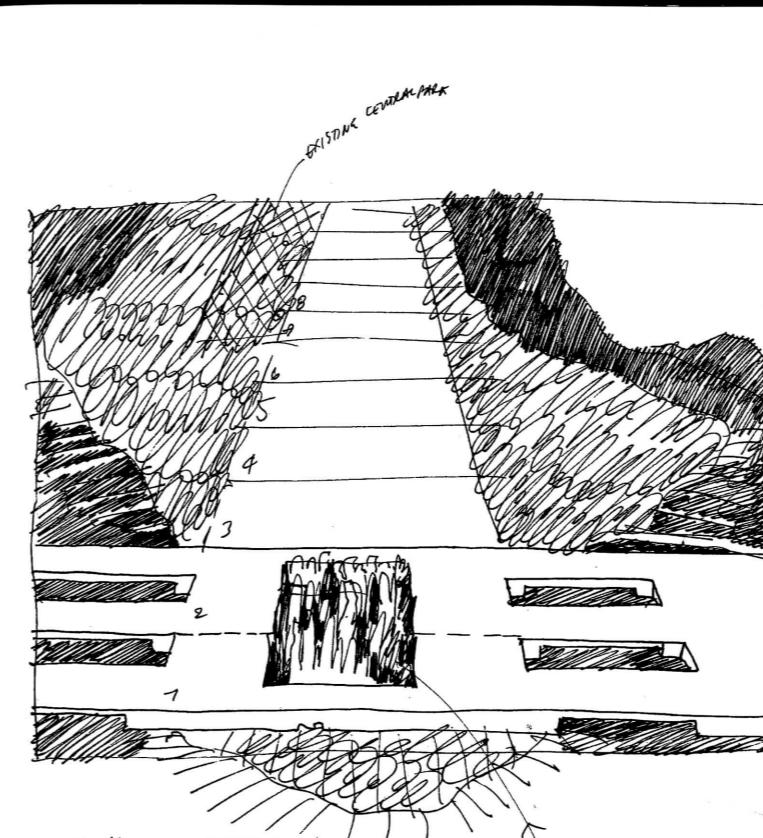
The *autostrada* (motorway) is the yardstick of the dimension: the first continuous monument.

Old Florence, frozen and perfect amidst the grass and flowers, to serve as Pythagoras' table for the new way of thinking with the monument at the foot of the hills.

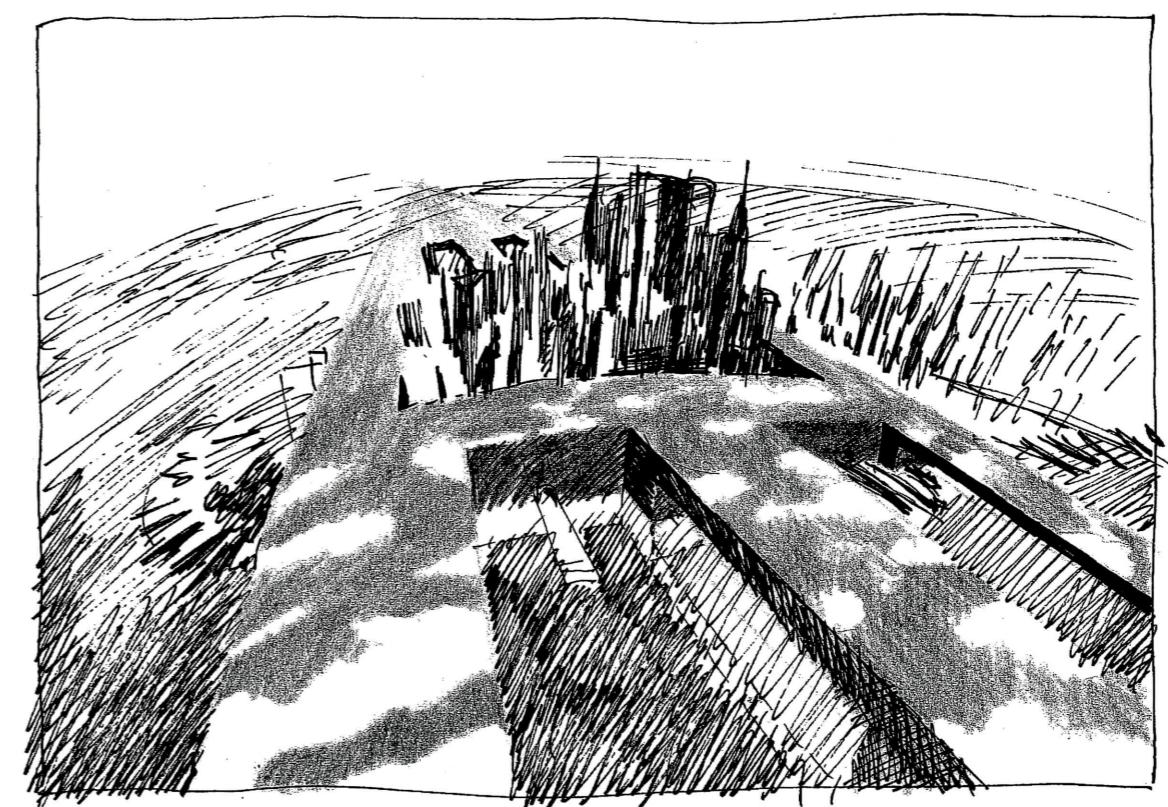
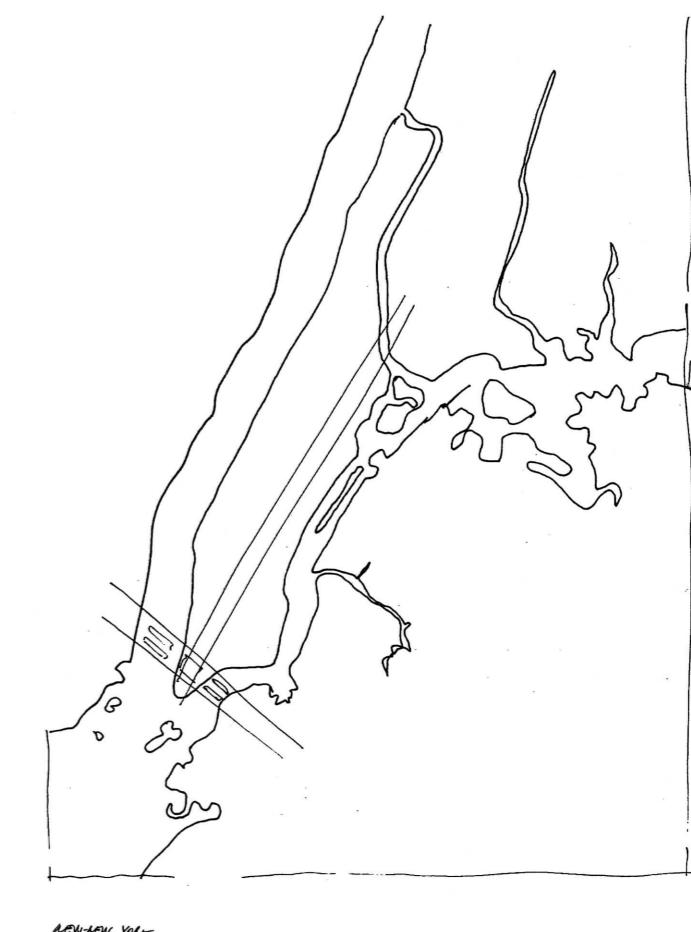


VIEW OF MANHATTAN LOOKING SOUTH

26.10.69

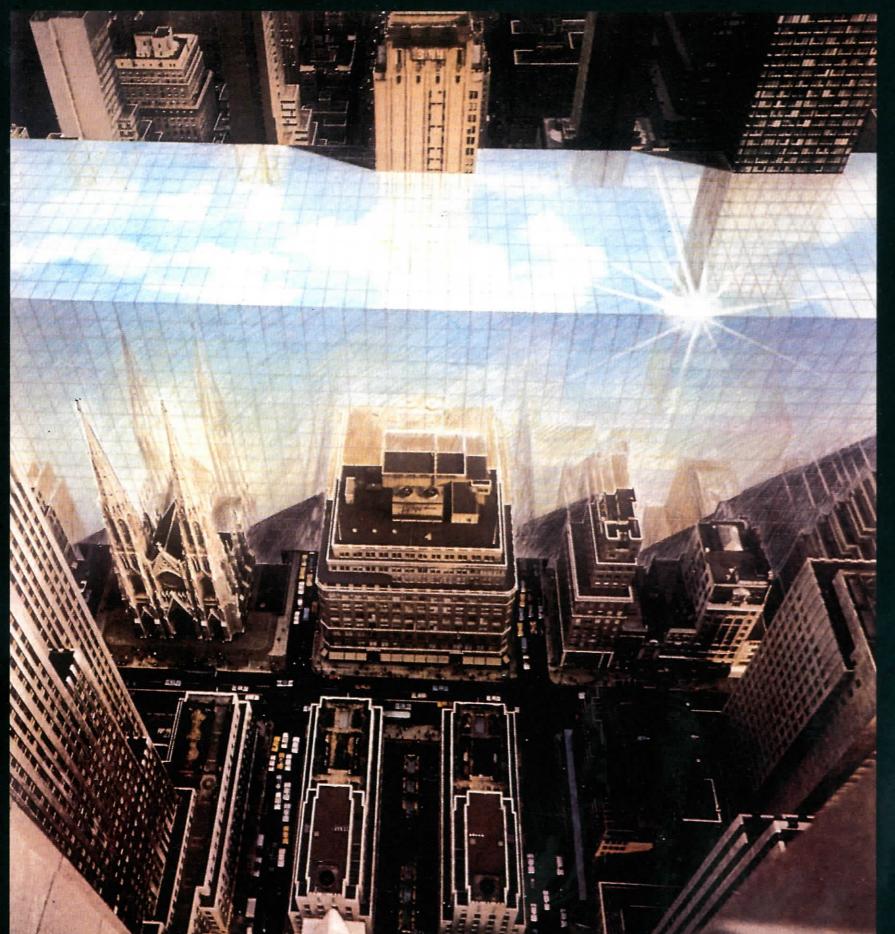
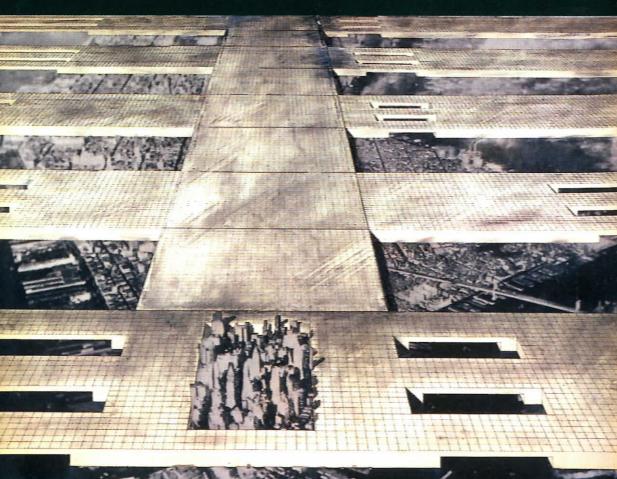
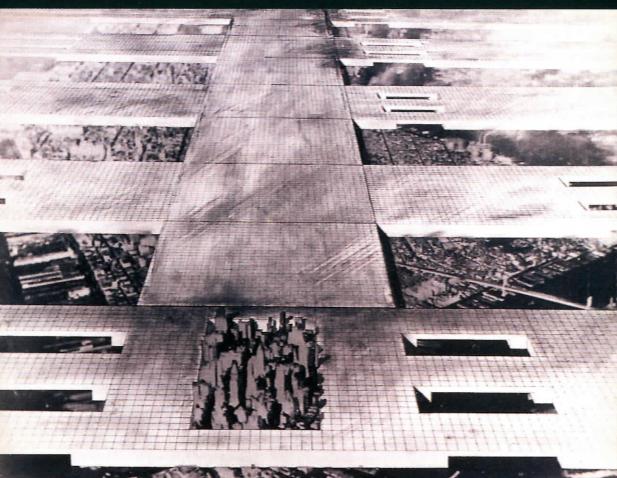
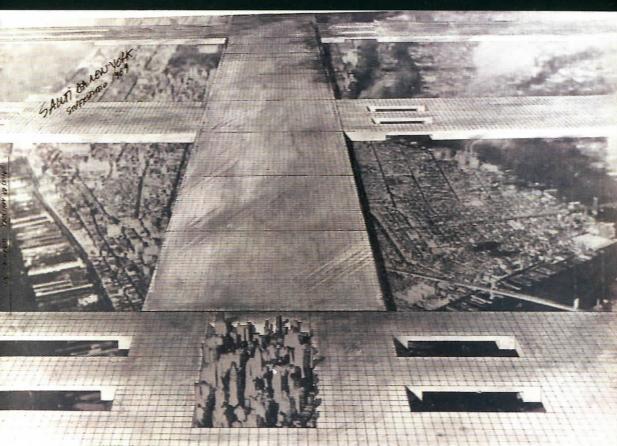
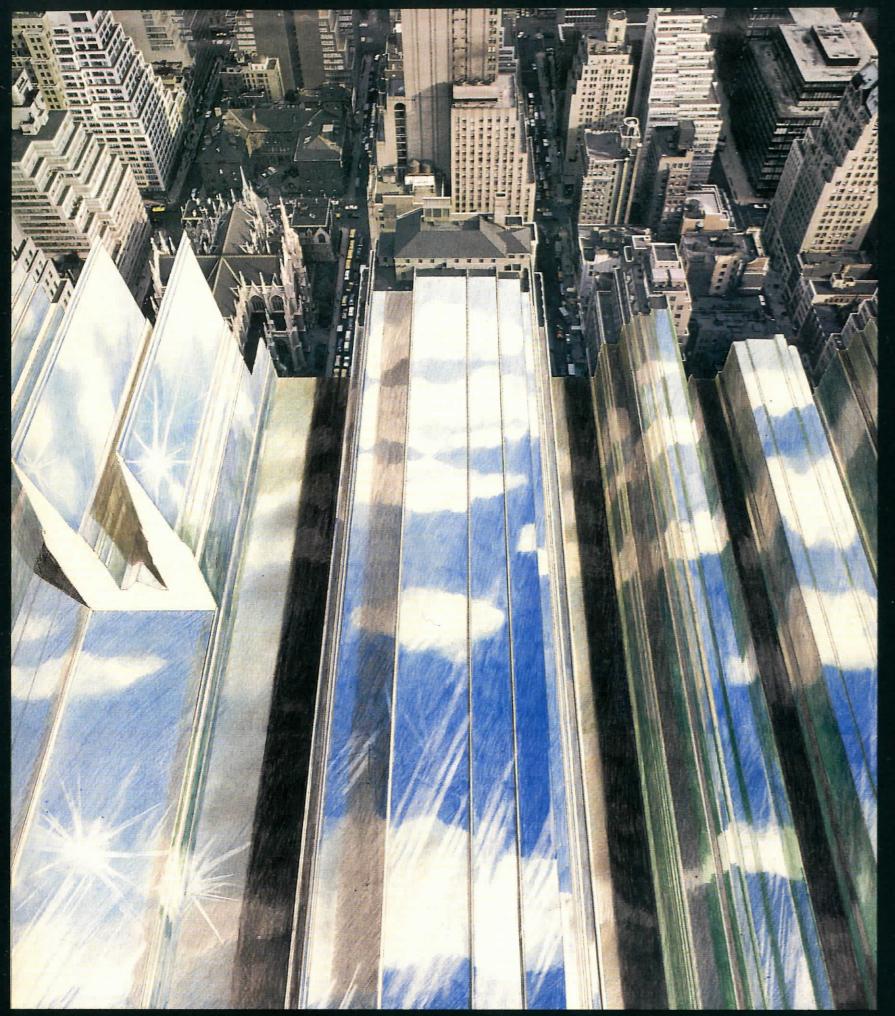


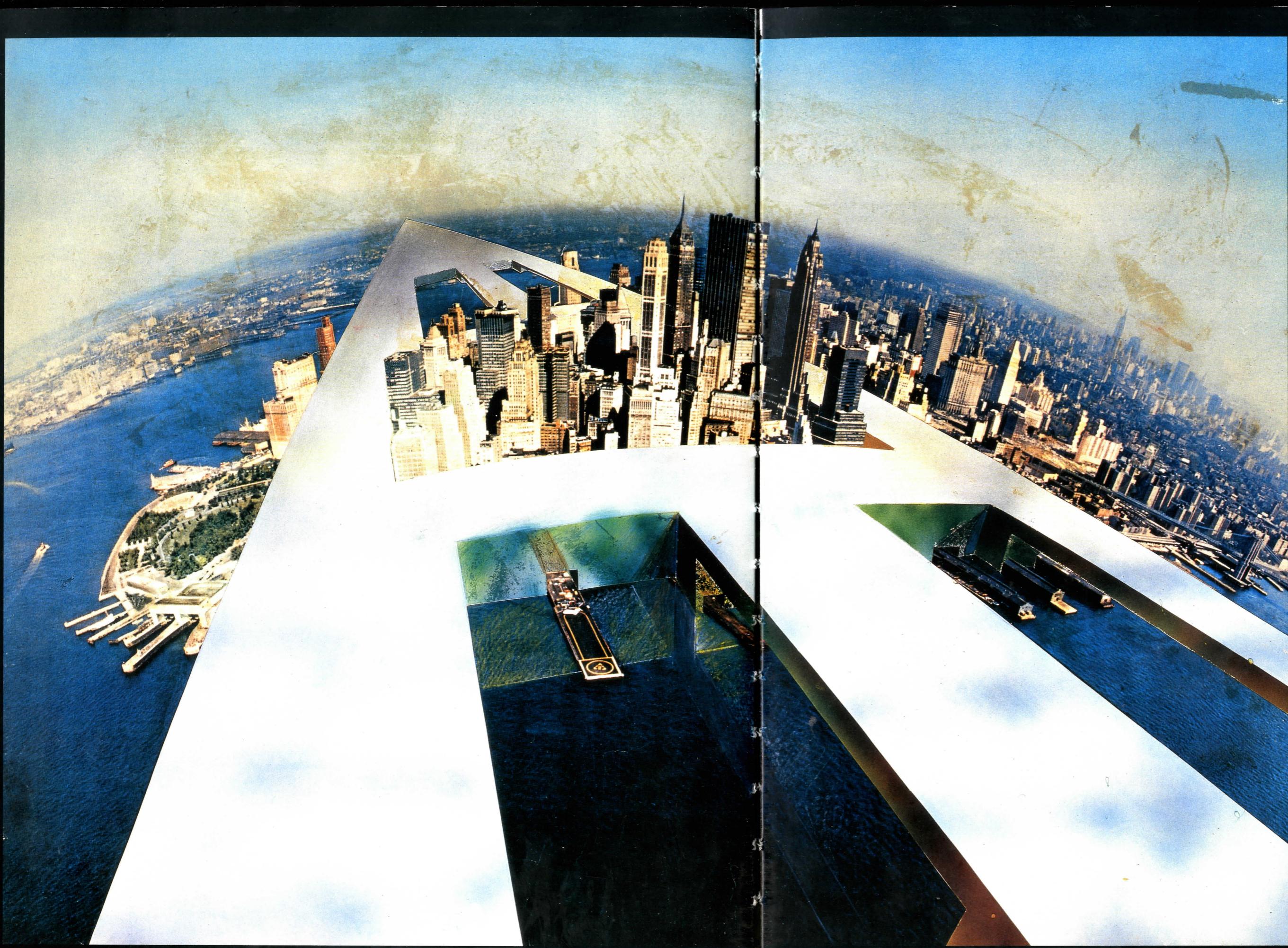
20/10/69



NEW YORK

NOVEMBER 1969





NEW NEW YORK

New York for example. A super-structure passes over the Hudson and the point of the peninsula joining Brooklyn and New Jersey. And a second perpendicular structure for expansion. All the rest is Central Park. This is sufficient to hold the entire built-up volume of Manhattan.

A bunch of ancient skyscrapers, preserved in memory of a time when cities were built with no single plan....

And from the Bay, we see New New York arranged by the Continuous Monument into a great plain of ice, clouds or sky....