

Negation and Reconciliation

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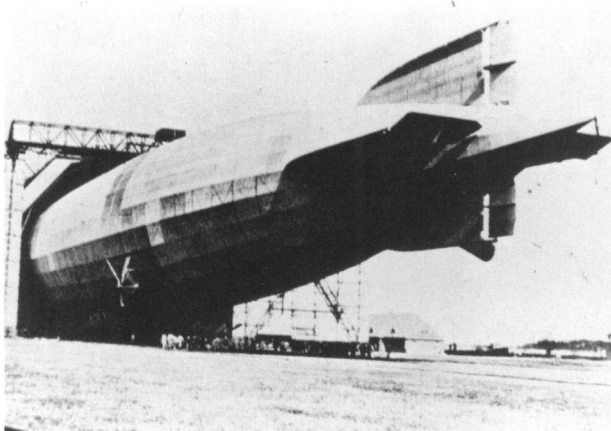
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**The sensuous and the spiritual
which struggle as opposites
in the common understanding
are revealed as reconciled
in the truth expressed by art.**
Georg Hegel, *On the Arts*

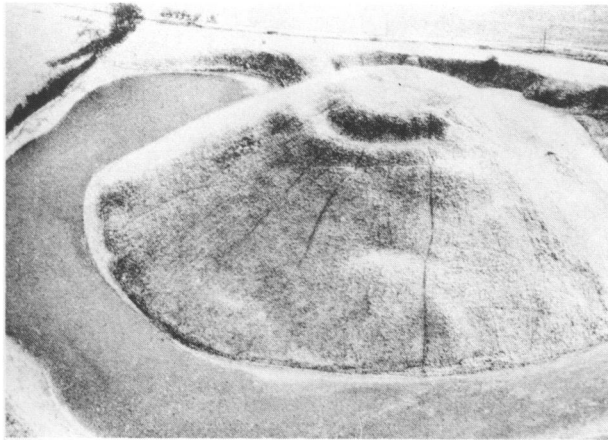
IF WE CONCEIVE OF TIME as a process of transformation through continuous negation, then the basis of time is self-criticism and its products are ceaseless division and separation. The form in which time manifests itself is the repeated interpretation of an eternal truth or an archetype.

The modern age began as criticism of all mythologies, and therefore modern architecture is the first in history to predicate itself not only on the criticism of cultural antecedents but also on the criticism of art *per se*. Modern architecture provided neither a new treatise nor a new style. Instead, it brought about a radical break in the continuity of history. This radical form of critique indicated the possibility of an irreversible termination of style:

Everything varies both with time and by place, and we can not fix anywhere upon an invariant quality such as the idea of style supposes, even when we separate things by their setting. But when duration and setting are retained in view, we have shifting relations, passing moments, and changing places in historic life. Any imaginary dimensions or continuities like style fade from view as we look for them. Style is like a rainbow. We can see it only briefly while we pause between the sun and the rain, and it vanishes when we go to the place where we thought we saw it. George Kubler, *The Shape of Time*

THE TERMINATION OF STYLE becomes synonymous with the repudiation of formal speculation as a possible generating force for a new beginning in architecture.

If anything, my own work owes its origin to the principle of intervention and decomposition as the quintessence of the primal architectural event, a principle which is totally antithetical to any form of aesthetic or historical manipulation. *Ort* ("site") originally meant, in the German language, the pointed end of a lance and suggests a gathering together.



IT IS THE CONQUEST OF THE SITE, the transformation of its topographical nature, that manifests the ontological roots of architecture. The process of design is only a secondary and subsequent act, whose purpose is to reconcile and harmonize the consequences of the initial intervention, collision, and negation.

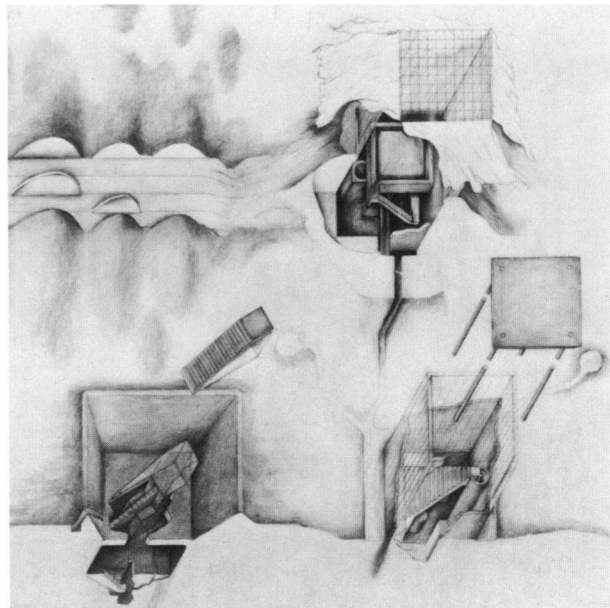
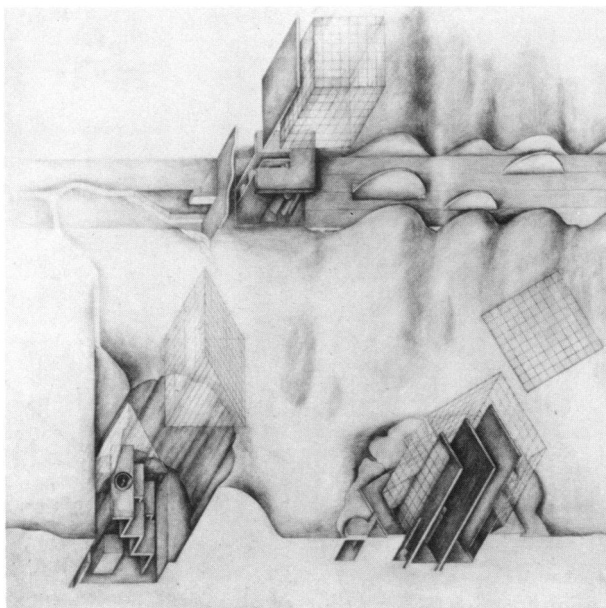
I see the process of architectural creation as one that oscillates between negation and reconciliation: it is a continuous confrontation between ideal and matter, idea and image, intellectual and physiological, technological and spiritual. More specifically, architectural space can only be defined as the collision of geometric and physiological space or of ideal and matter, and while the ideal represents the notion of infinity or the eternal, matter can be regarded as the symbolic representation of the body—its presence and its absence. While man's conceptual powers aspire to the infinite, his body is essentially fragile, temporal, a corpus which will be laid waste, like material itself, by the unremitting and critical action of time.

Every civilization is a metaphor of time, a version of change. The preeminence of the now could, perhaps, reconcile us with the reality that the religion of progress, with the same zeal as the old religions, tried to conceal or disguise: that of death. Octavio Paz, "The New Analogy"

ARCHITECTURE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AND WILL ALWAYS BE a monument to the eternal, commemorating both the absence and presence of man. If there remains any hope for the reengendering of the iconic in the modern world, then this will only derive from a reinterpretation of the archetypal existence of man; that is to say, new icons cannot possibly be established on the basis of signs and objects drawn or transposed from lost historical epochs. New icons in architecture will either come from the recognition of our intrinsic ontological limits or they will not arise at all.

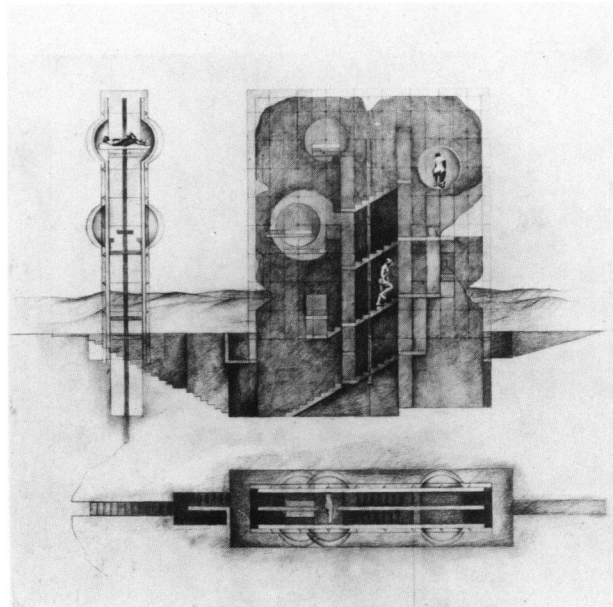
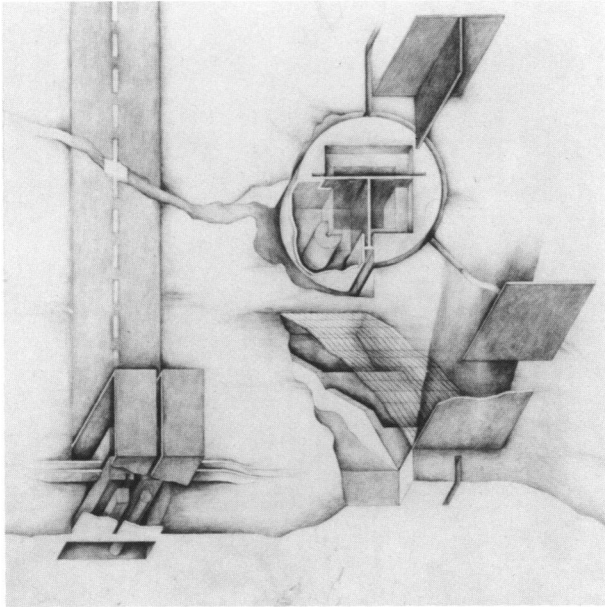
A place in which everything comes together, is concentrated, the site gathers unto itself, supremely and radically. Its gathering power, gathers in and preserves all it had gathered, not like an encapsulating shell but rather by penetrating with its light all it had gathered, and only thus releasing it into its own nature.

Martin Heidegger,
"On the Way to Language"



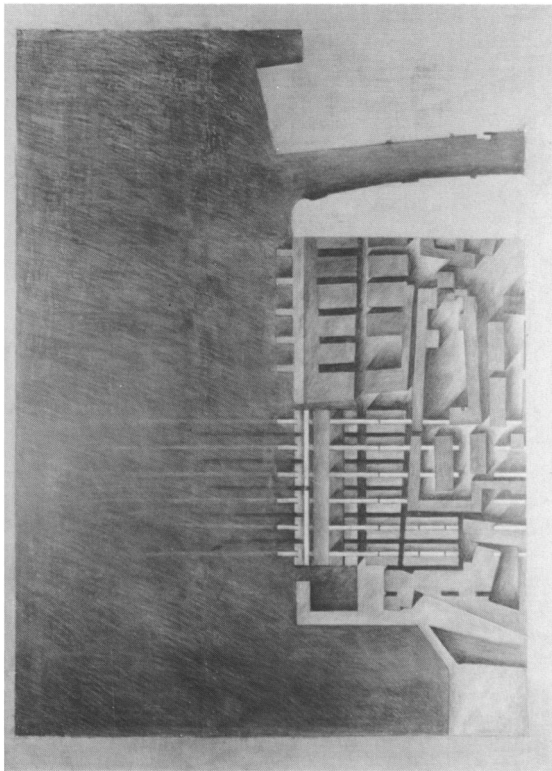
Nine Houses:
House with Path
House with Internalized Shadow
House with Three Walls
Project, 1972–75

Nine Houses:
House with Curtains
House with Two Horizons
House with Flower Walls
Project, 1972–75

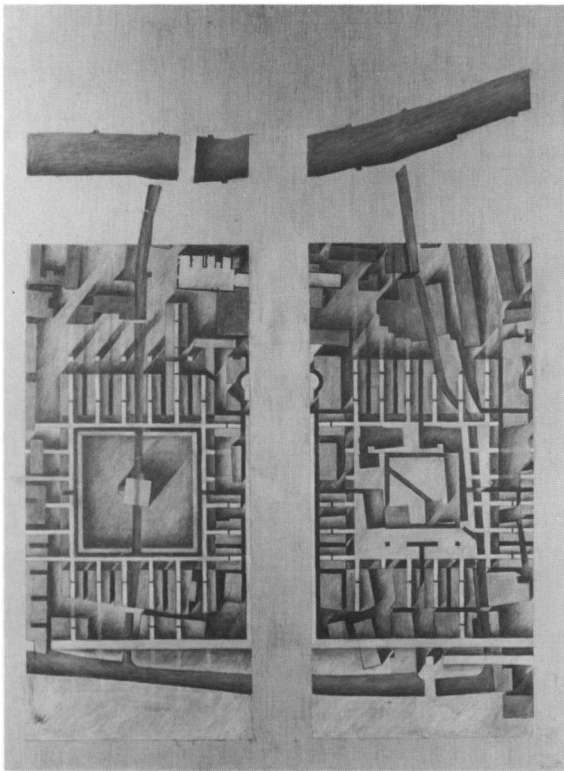


Nine Houses:
House with Road
House with Three Rooms
House with Permanent Shadow
Project, 1972–75

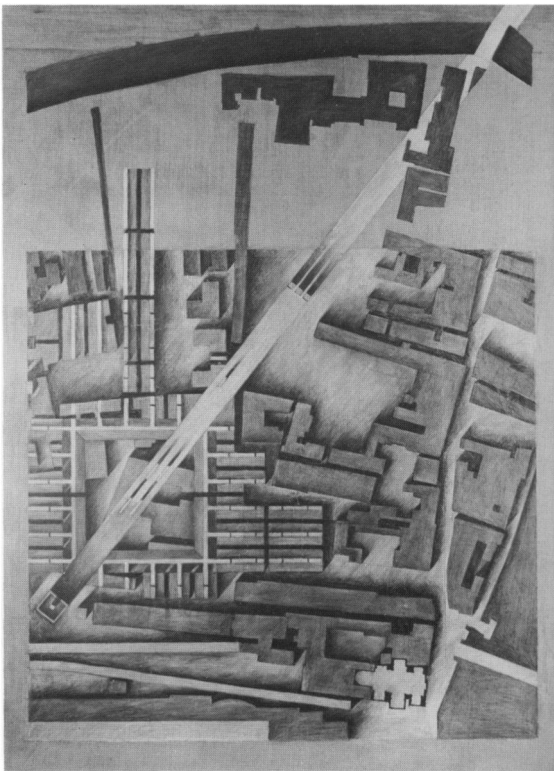
House without Rooms
Project, 1974–75



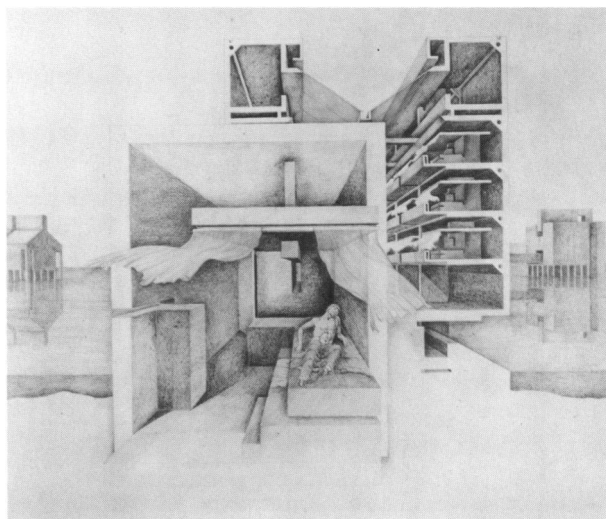
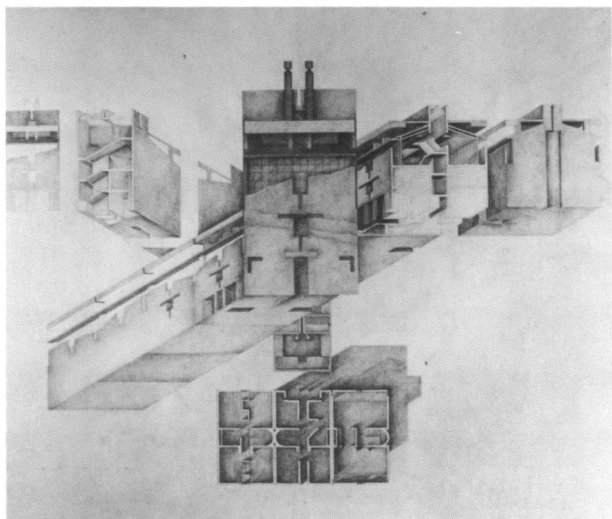
10 Ideas for Venice
City of Twofold Vision:
House of the Boats
Cannaregio, Venice
Project, 1978–80



10 Ideas for Venice
City of Twofold Vision:
Square of the People, Square of Solitude

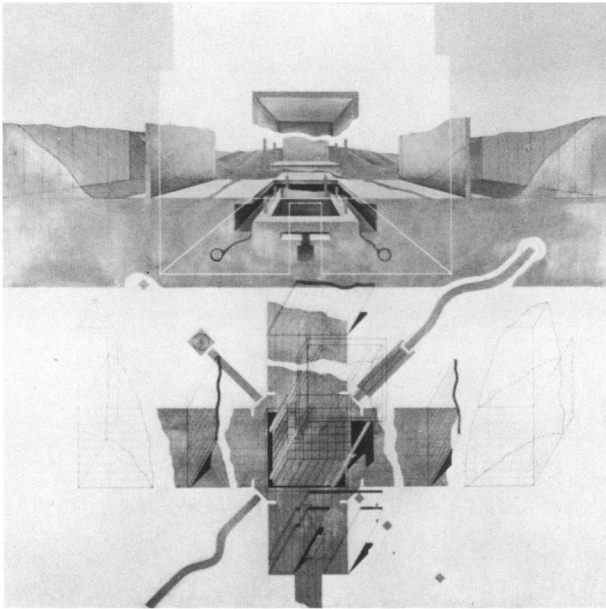


10 Ideas for Venice
City of Twofold Vision:
Square of the Artisans

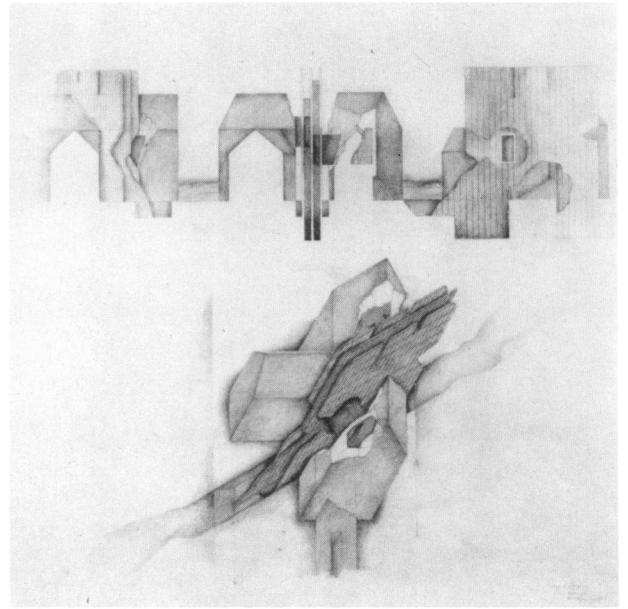


10 Ideas for Venice
City of Twofold Vision:
The House

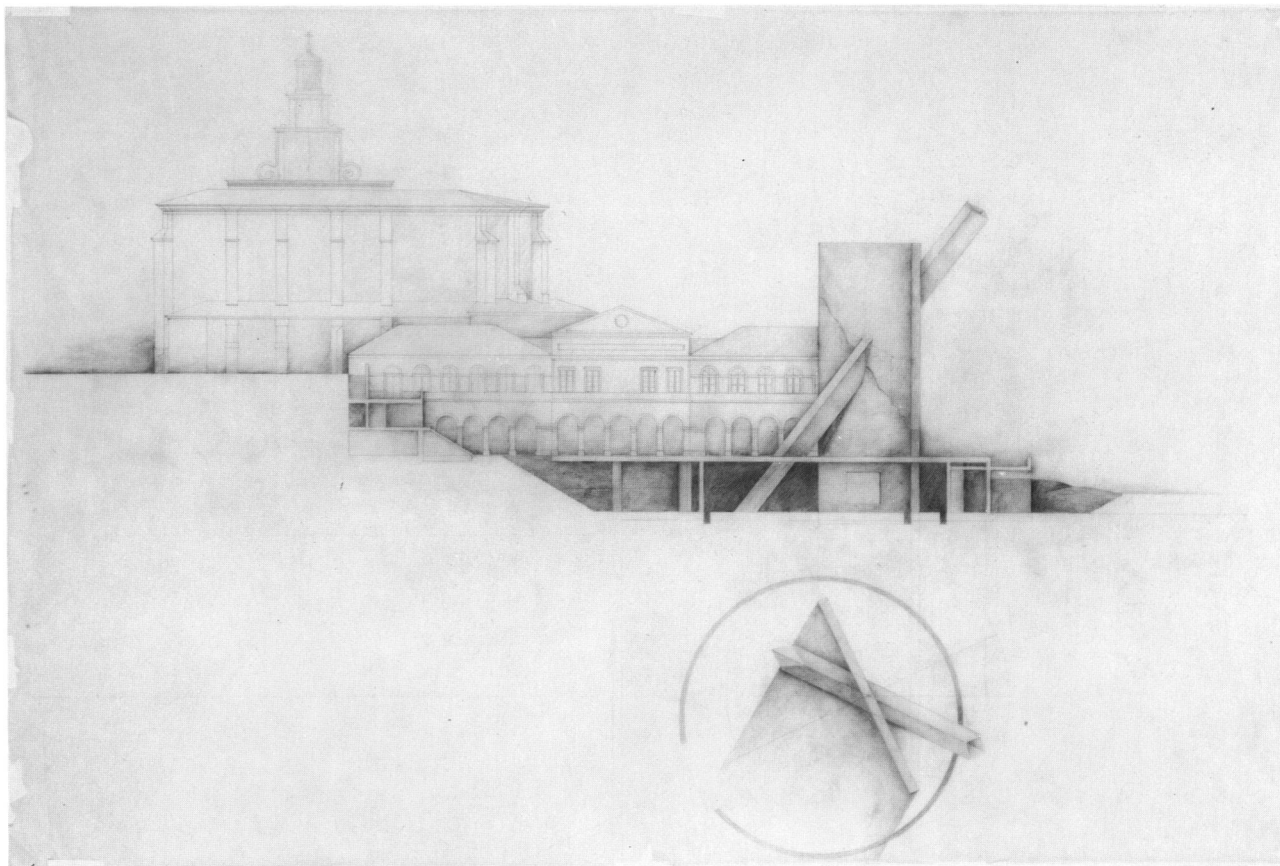
10 Ideas for Venice
Hospital:
House of Hope, Houses of Birth, Houses of No Return
S. Girolamo, Venice
Project, 1978–80



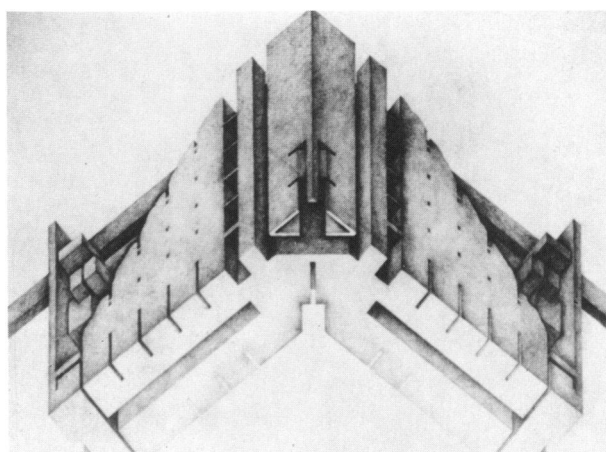
House with Two Horizons
Project, 1973



Seven Gates to Eden: Gate 1
Project, 1976



Monument for the Absence of the Painting *Guernica*
Guernica City, Spain
Project, 1981



Universal Corner Building for a City Block
International Building Exhibition, Berlin, 1984
Competition Project, 1980–81