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FRAGMENTS
Christian Schafferer

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2011 - 2019

ARGYROTYPE
CYANOTYPE

*Culture suffers damage when it is planned and administrated;
when it is left to itself, however, everything cultural threatens not
only to lose its possibility of effect, but its very existence as well.*

Theodor Adorno

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Foreword

According to Jacques Lacan,¹ the human self is split and its cohesiveness an illusion. There is no stable and pre-given identity. Specifically, the process of identification begins during the early childhood when the infant is inscribed into the social world, the *symbolic order*, by uttering “I”. Through identification the infant lost ‘wholeness.’ Identification automatically leads to the formation of the *Other*, a bipolarity, which is caused by a conflict between the imaginary I and the *Other*, the *symbolic order*, for the latter restricts us to fully comprehend the first. As the imaginary I cannot be fully described by the language and grammar of the *symbolic order*, a stable identity cannot be achieved. Instead there is an ongoing process of failed identification. Through permanent identification we attempt to make up for the lack of identity and we blame the *Other* for this failure. We believe that without the *Other*, we could reach the state of pre-social completeness, fully recapture our ‘lost” enjoyment or *jouissance*. But this completeness, this unity is an illusion.

¹ J. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, Book IX, Identification 1961-1962.

It has never existed, for the imaginary I, the ego, has been retroactively constructed on entering the social world. Nevertheless, it is the imaginary promise of recapturing our lost/impossible enjoyment which provides the libidinal support for political projects as well as social engagements (romantic relationships/wars). The promise, the utopia, is kept alive by limited experiences of *jouissance*, such as marriage or the success of the national football team, which can bring us closer to an attainment of identification. The experienced *jouissance* is however only temporary and partial, raising the subject's awareness of her failed identification as well as of the still existing lack of the sacrificed *jouissance qua fullness*, and thus reproducing the illusionary promise of its recapturing. The inherent lack of identity and the desire to regain the pre-social unity constitute the human condition.

The 38 works included in this book illustrate fragments (artefacts) of historically accumulated illusions about recapturing the imaginary pre-social unity and its corresponding *jouissance* throughout time and space. Luxury skyscrapers and other tall constructions, such as churches and Ferris wheels, are part of the human *desire*² for unity and *jouissance*. Such desires are also expressed in the fetishization of sexuality and the deification of the human body. Artistic or religious performances are other human attempts to reach pre-social conditions of unity.

A further set of fragments of the human self exists in the *preservation*³ of social practices and heroic narratives to cope with the impossibility of reaching pre-social completeness. In this context, memories of an illusionary past, a golden age, dominate our lives. Artefacts, such as the *Wounded Star* (#29, page 71), not only visualize such nostalgic memories,⁴ but also represent the basic human desire for utopia. The line between desire and preservation is often fuzzy. Thus, some of the artefacts

² Section 1 of the book covers 19 artefacts of *desire* (pages 11-49).

³ There are 14 artefacts of *preservation* in Section 2 (pages 51-79).

⁴ In the case of the *Wounded Star* (#29), the artefact preserves the memories of rundown beach bars of *La Barceloneta* and tiny apartments built in the area almost a century ago.

⁵ *Abschied* /'apʃi:t/
An act of departure; the eternal separation; the final farewell (pages 83-93).

illustrated here may fit into both categories. As such, the ballet dancer's (# 19, page 49) performance is an act of desire but at the same time constitutes an act of preservation. The role of her teacher, too, is ambiguous. Notwithstanding, the artefacts covered in the first and second part of the book predominately deal with collective illusions, whereas in the third part, I look at individual memories. In the *Abschied*,⁵ I recollect memories of a bus ride I took after my last visit to my beloved grandmother.

I would like to thank Jon Renzella for his inspirations and for inviting me to exhibit my works at *Lei Gallery*, Taichung. I would also like to express my gratitude to my brother Markus for his generous support.

Taichung, 8 April 2019

D E S I R E

1

Luxury Hotel • Pattaya
Toned cyanotype
29.7 x 42 cm
2014

12



2

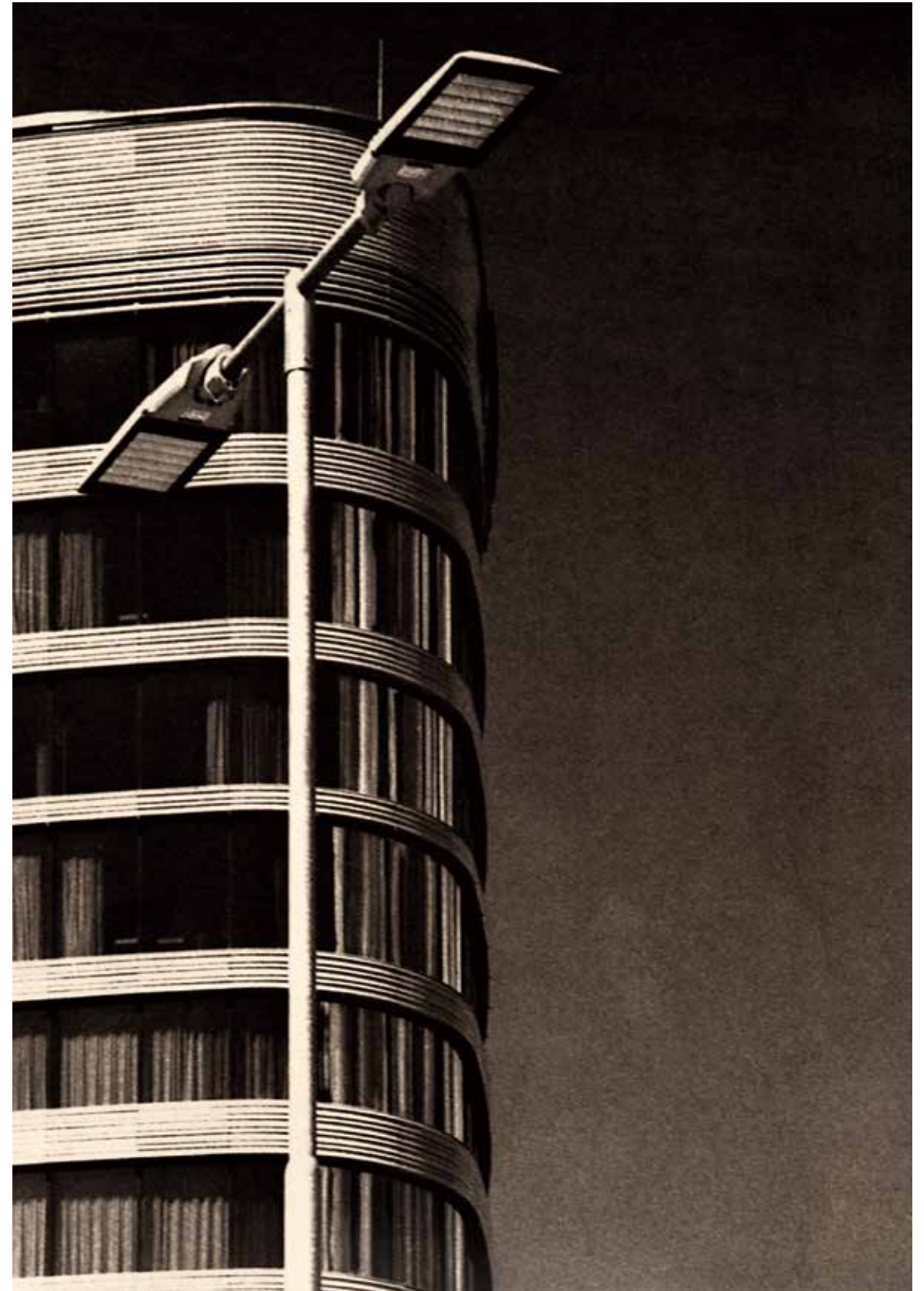
Pema Tower · Innsbruck

Toned cyanotype

29.7 x 42 cm

2016

14



3

Office Building · Bangkok

Toned cyanotype

29.7 x 42 cm

2016

16



4

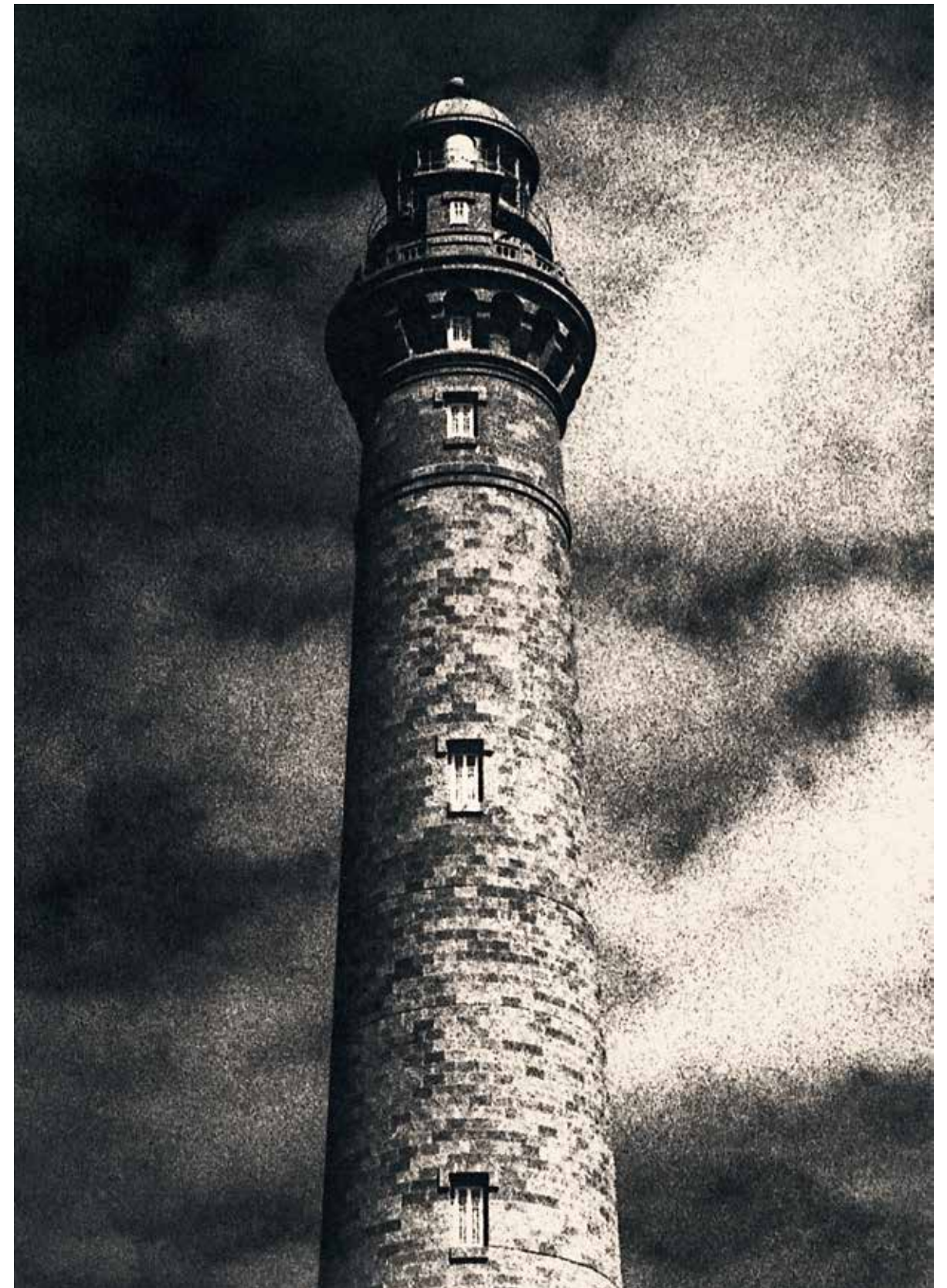
Île Vierge · Bretagne

Toned cyanotype

29.7 x 42 cm

2016

18



5

Casa Batlló · Barcelona

Toned cyanotype

29.7 x 42 cm

2017

20



6

National Taichung Theatre · Taichung

Toned cyanotype

29.7 x 42 cm

2018

22



7

Ferris Wheel · Nice
Toned cyanotype
29.7 x 42 cm
2017

24



8

Ferris Wheel · London
Toned cyanotype
29.7 x 42 cm
2013

26



9

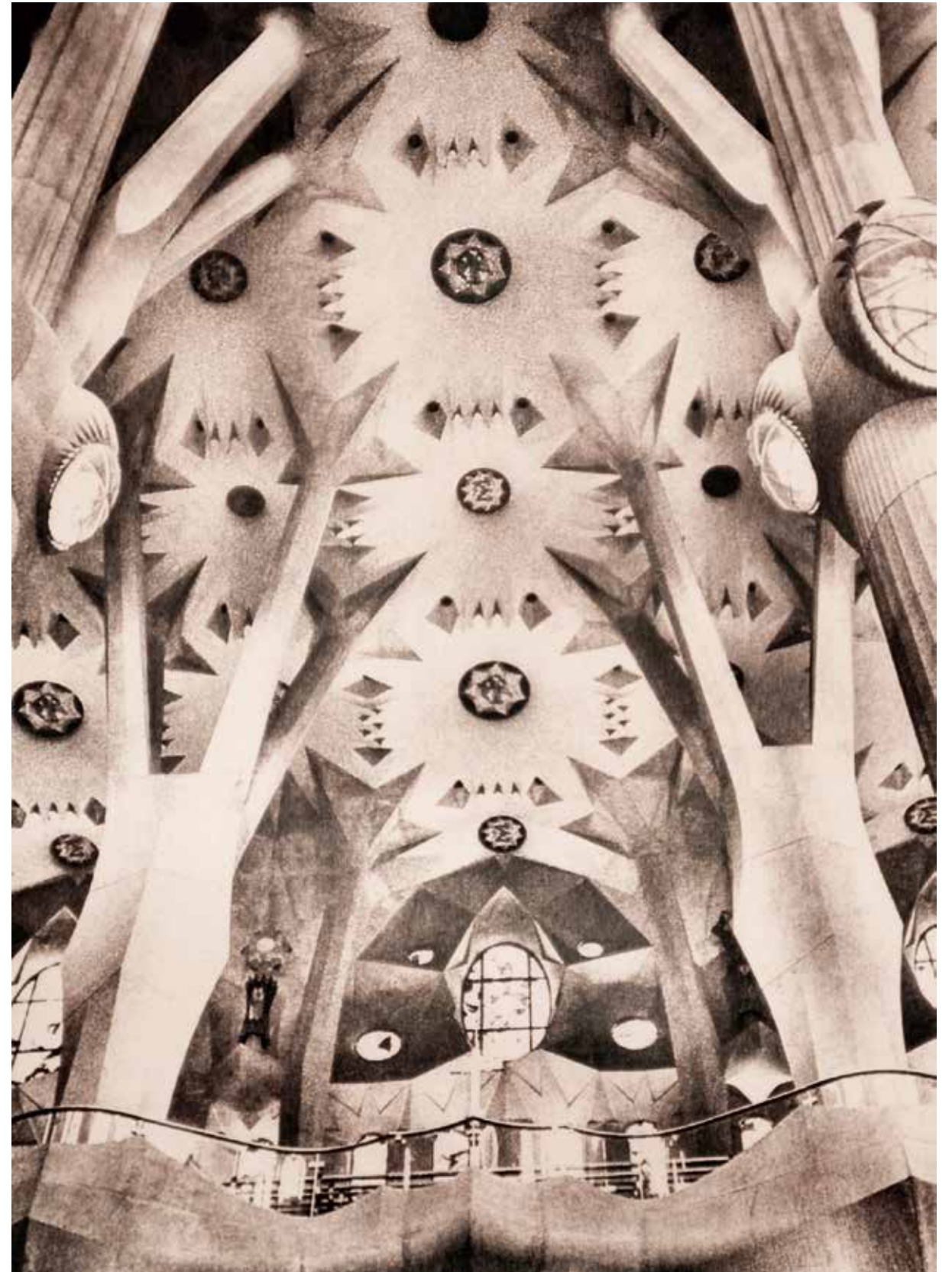
Sagrada Família I · Barcelona

Toned cyanotype

29.7 x 42 cm

2017

28



10

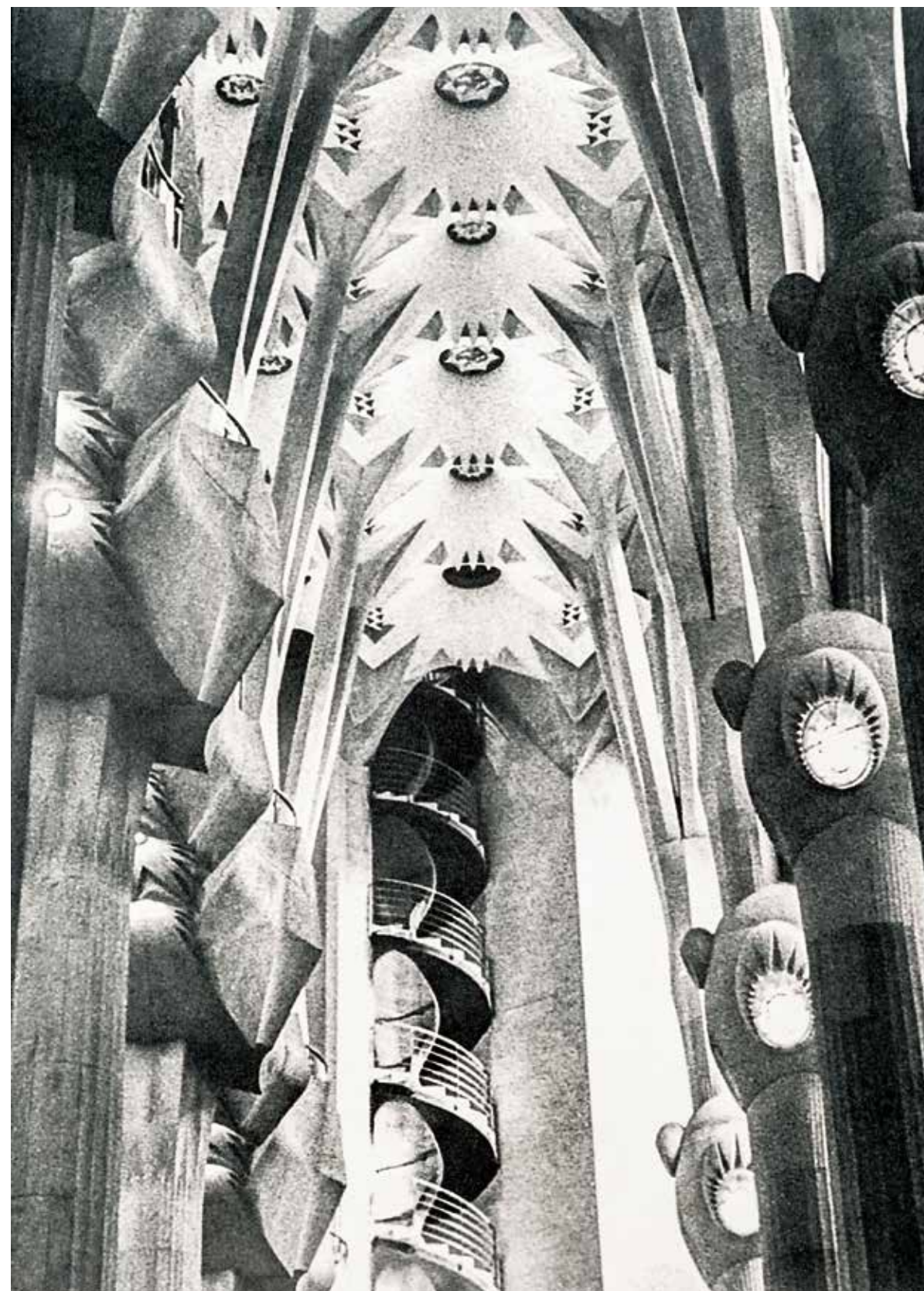
Sagrada Família II · Barcelona

Toned cyanotype

29.7 x 42 cm

2017

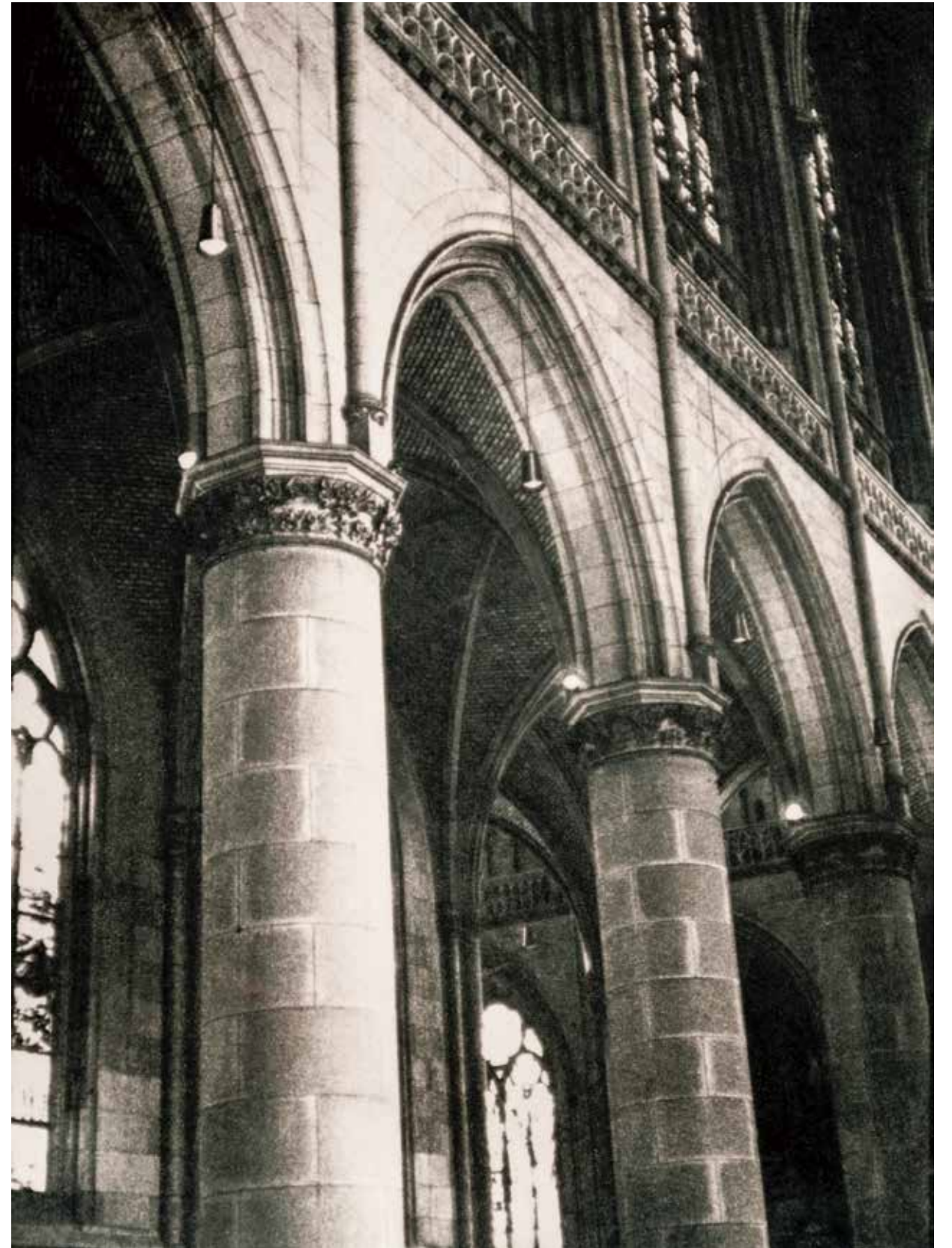
30



11

Mariendom I · Linz
Toned cyanotype
29.7 x 42 cm
2017

32



12

Mariendom II • Linz
Toned cyanotype
29.7 x 42 cm
2011



13

Infinity I · Taichung
Toned argyrotypes
26 x 36 cm
2014



14

Infinity II · Taichung
Toned argyrotypes
26 x 26 cm
2014



15

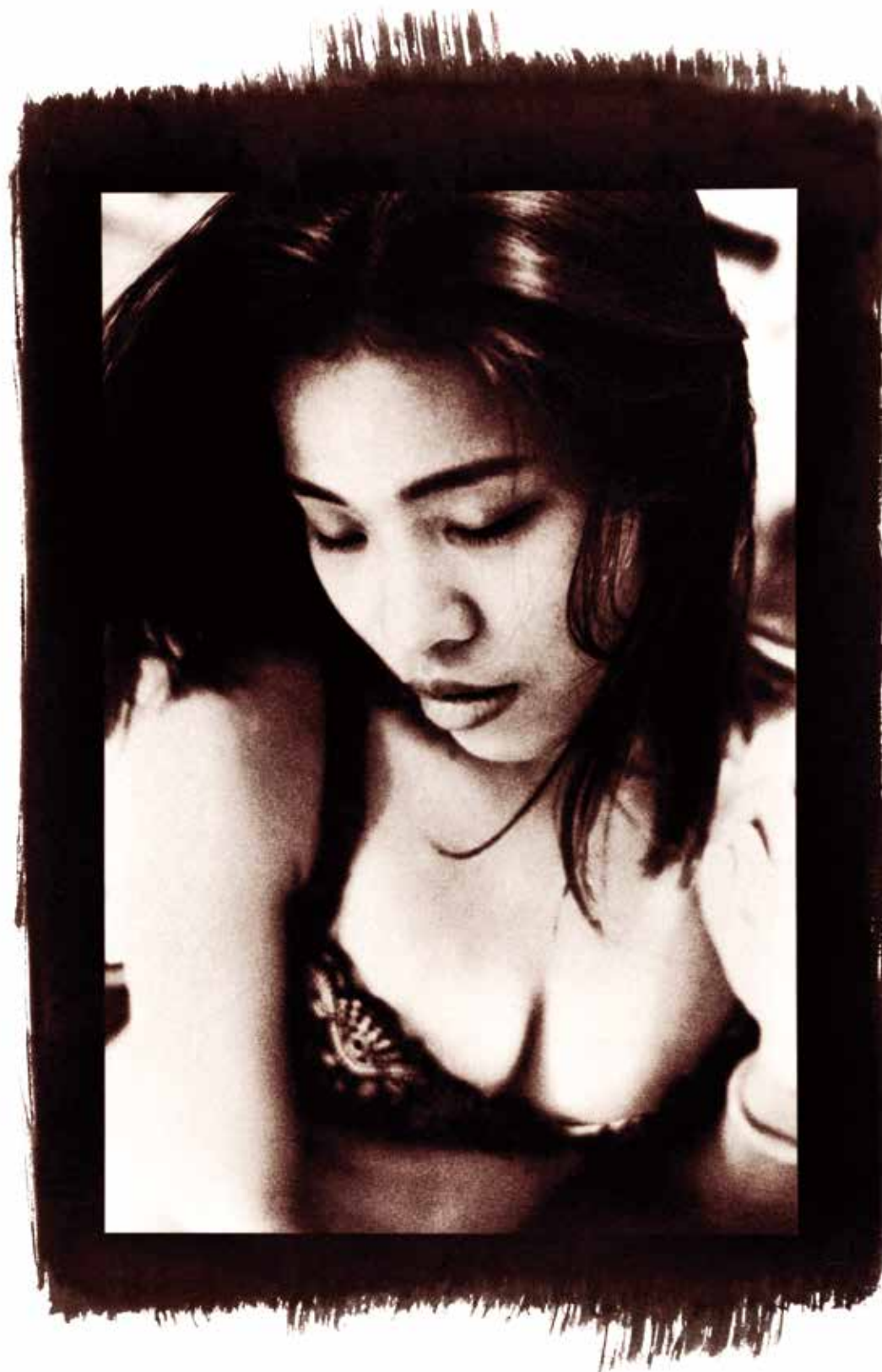
Infinity III · Taichung

Toned argyrotpe

26 x 36 cm

2016

40



16

Dancer I (Nacht der Vielfalt) · Linz

Toned argyrotpe

26 x 36 cm

2010

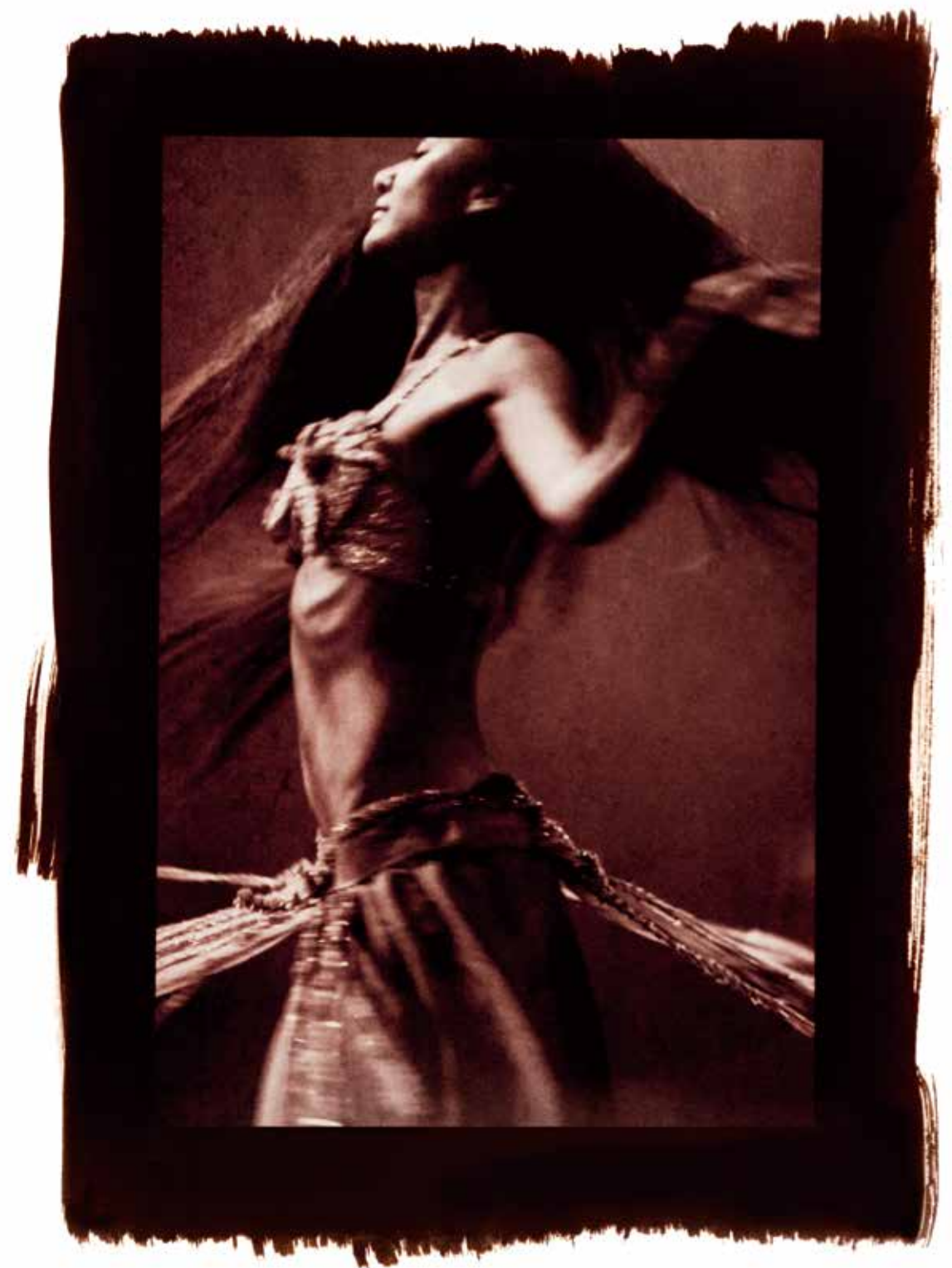
42



17

Dancer II (Nacht der Vielfalt) · Linz
Toned argyrotypes
26 x 36 cm
2010

44



18

Ballet Dancer I · Linz
Toned argyrotypes
26 x 26 cm
2018



19

Ballet Dancer II · Linz
Toned argyrotypes
26 x 36 cm
2018

48



PRESERVATION

20

Schwarz auf Weiß I (Salzburg Biennale) · Salzburg

Toned argyrotypes

26 x 26 cm

2011

52



21

Schwarz auf Weiß II (Salzburg Biennale) · Salzburg

Toned argyrotypes

26 x 36 cm

2011

54



22

Narcissus und Echo I (Salzburg Biennale) · Salzburg

Toned argyrotpe

26 x 26 cm

2011

56



23

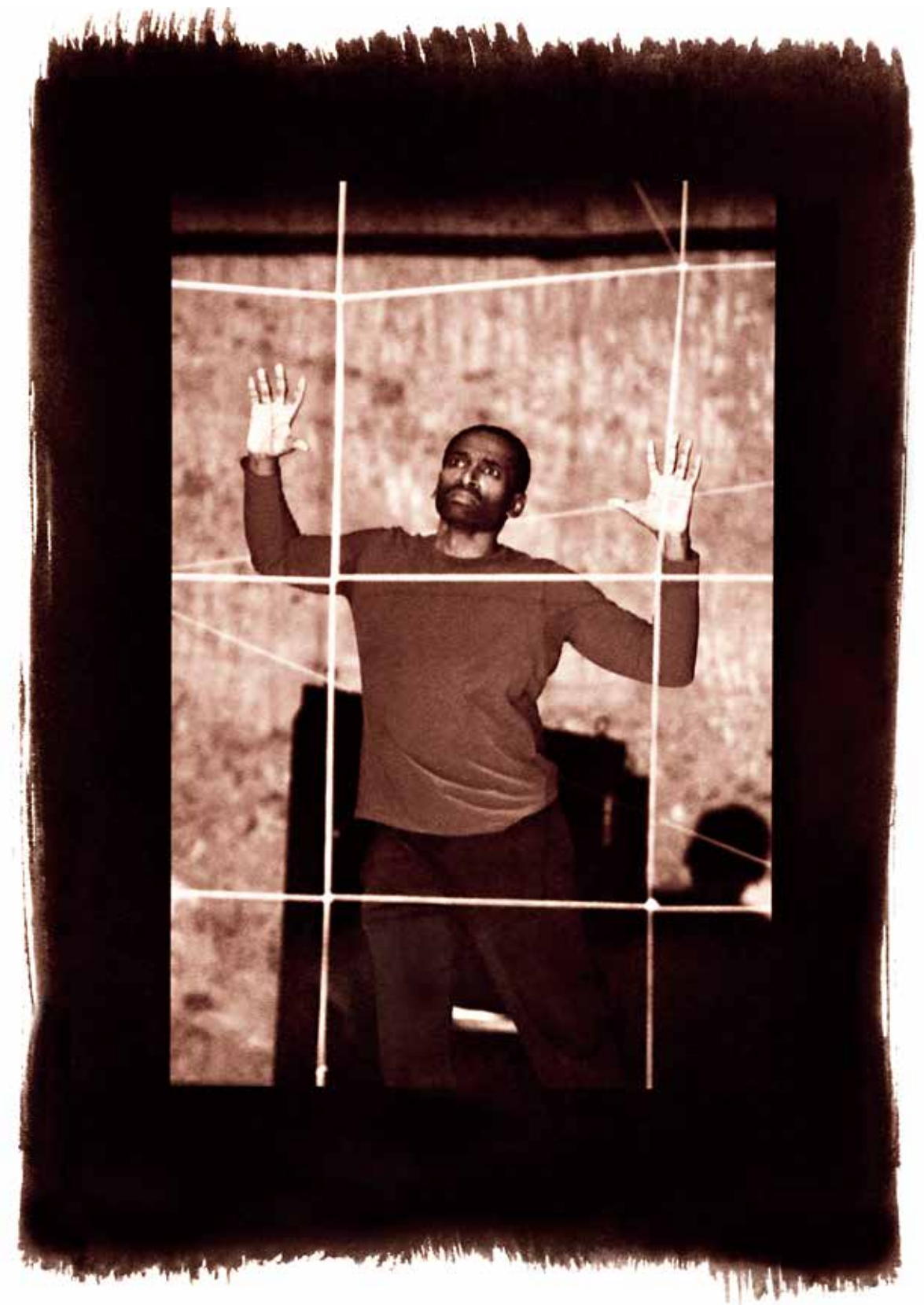
Narcissus und Echo II (Salzburg Biennale) · Salzburg

Toned argyrotpe

26 x 36 cm

2011

58



24

Damals · Taichung
Toned argyrotypes
26 x 36 cm
2016



25

Mirage I · Taichung
Toned argyrotypes
26 x 36 cm
2018



26

Mirage II · Taichung

Toned argyrotypes

26 x 36 cm

2018

64



27

Abandonment I · Taichung

Toned argyrotypes

26 x 26 cm

2011

66



28

Abandonment II · Taichung

Toned argyrotypes

26 x 36 cm

2011

68



29

The Wounded Star (Platja de Sant Miquel) · Barcelona

Toned cyanotype

29.7 x 42 cm

2017

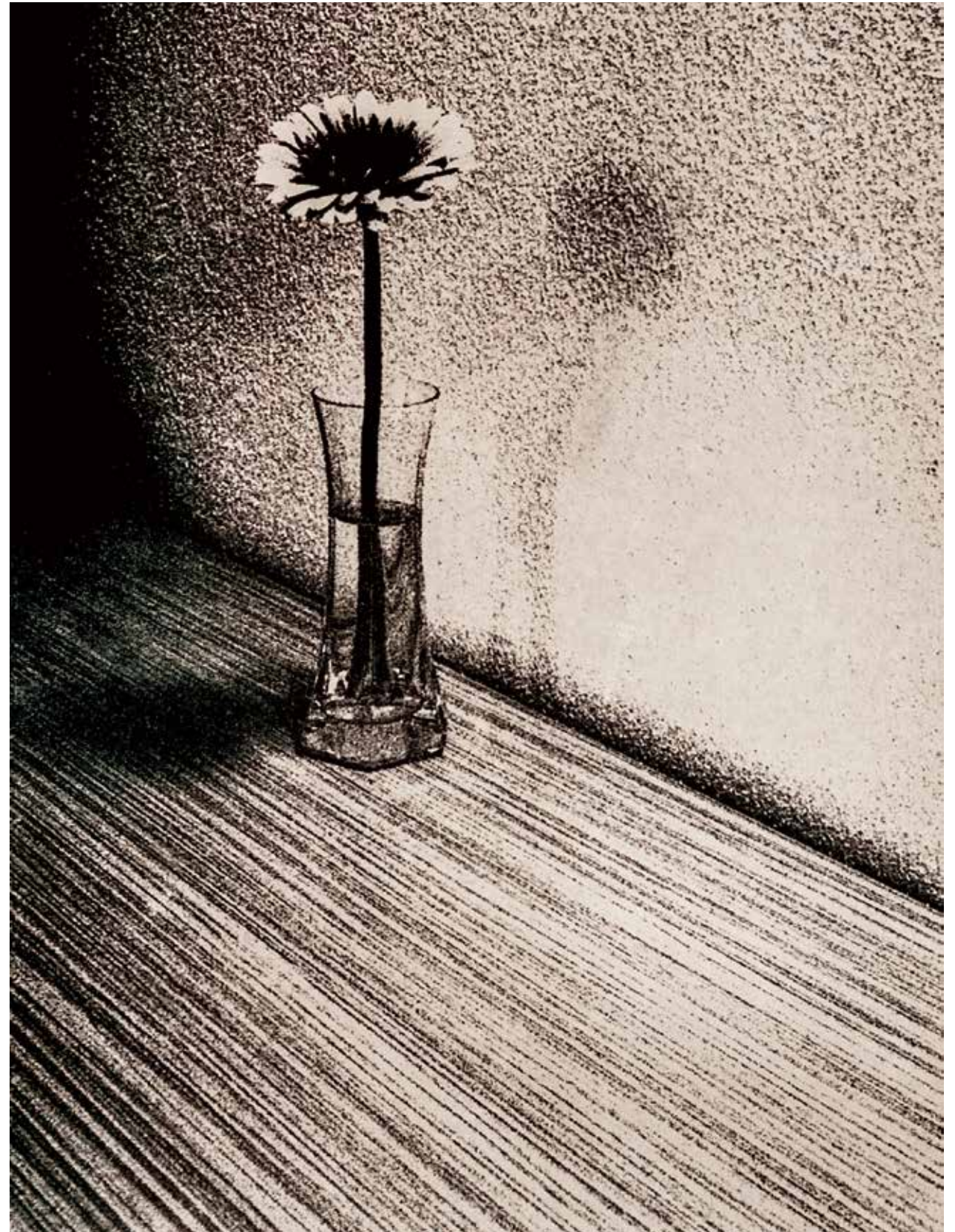
70



30

Signifier I · Linz
Toned cyanotype
29.7 x 42 cm
2017

72



31

Signifier II · Taichung

Toned argyrotpe

26 x 26 cm

2019

74



32

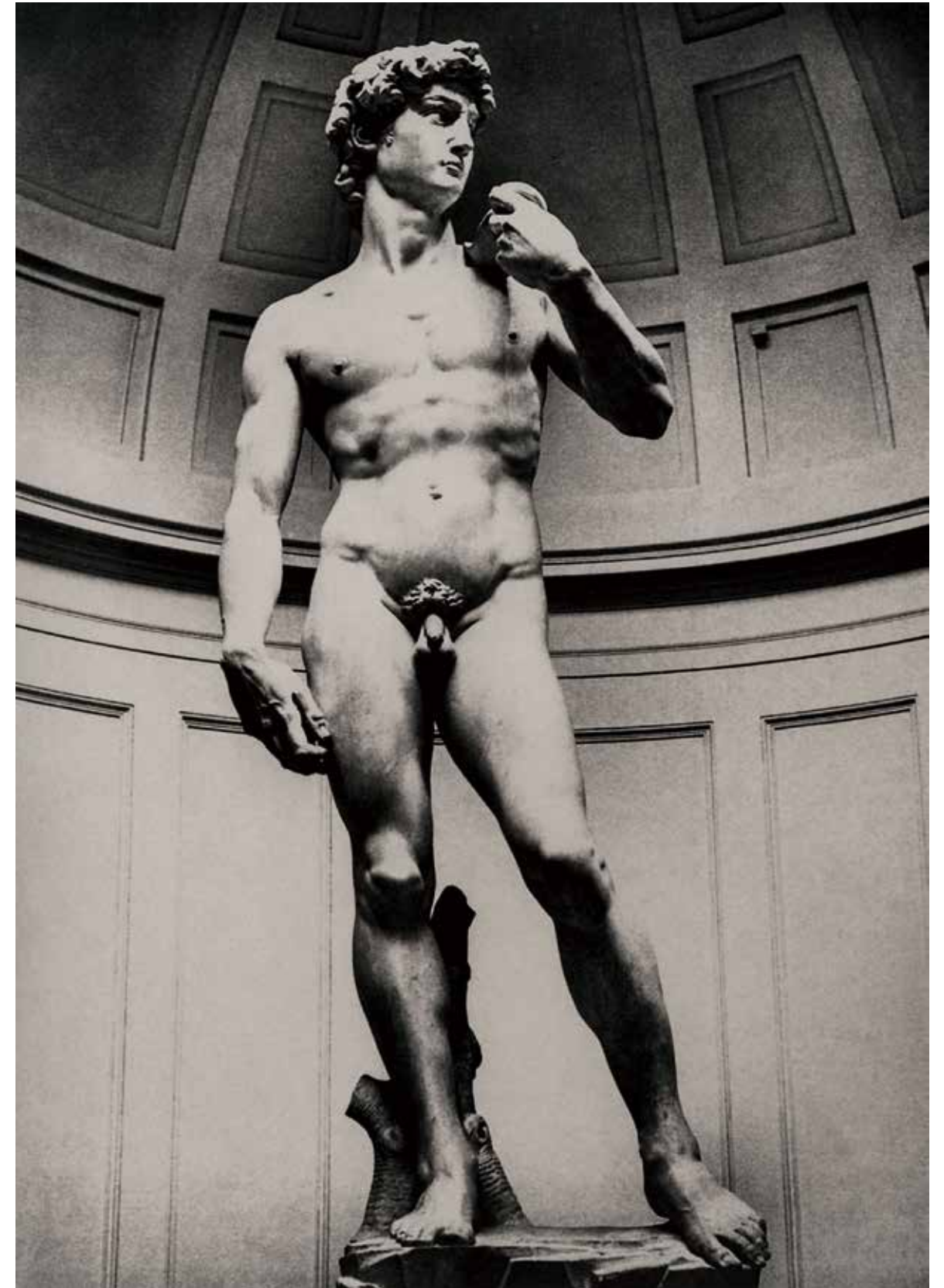
David (Michelangelo) • Florence

Toned cyanotype

29.7 x 42 cm

2018

76



33

Self-portrait · Taichung

Toned argyrotypes

26 x 26 cm

2016

78



A B S C H I E D

34

Abschied · Final Farewell I

Toned argyrotypes

26 x 36 cm

2018

82



35

Abschied • Final Farewell II

Toned argyrotypes

26 x 36 cm

2018

84



36

Abschied · Final Farewell III

Toned argyrotypes

26 x 36 cm

2018

86



37

Abschied • Final Farewell IV

Toned cyanotype

36 x 36 cm

2013

88





38

Self-portrait · Bangkok

Toned cyanotype

36 x 26 cm

2019

90

Christian Schafferer is an Austrian political sociologist and economist. Inspired by his father's professional life in the art world, he got interested in photography, philosophy and psychoanalysis in his early childhood. In his works, he endeavours to determine the social circumstances behind the captured moments and their implications for society. He lives and works in Taichung but prefers to travel abroad during summer and winter vacations.

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