

Remains of a Fall

Tolis Tatolas

Senses are physiological functions that provide humans with perceptual data. Sensors create stimulations that travel to the central nervous system (brain) through the sensory pathway, which controls most of the activities of the body by processing, integrating, and coordinating the information it receives. It is commonly accepted that, out of all five traditional senses, vision plays a leading role in the neurophysiological procedure of perception. Think of the oft-used phrase 'to get the whole picture', which indicates that someone wants to understand the overall state of a situation. Which sense, then, comes second in the hierarchy? What happens when someone loses the ability to see – or, when someone walks in a room during night-time and the lights are suddenly turned off? In all cases, everyone will extend their hands by reflex in order to sense the space through touch, if vision is not available.

This series of photographic works presents remains of old, derelict residential buildings. Many of their structural elements are exposed on partition walls, or are shared with the adjoining buildings. They emerge from within the buildings' interiors and masonry: built-in bookcases, ceramic tiles, indoor pebbledash and coloured wall coatings, wallpapers, decorative plaster ornaments, iron protruding from reinforced concrete, electrical switches, parts of plumbing fittings, taps, and bricks. These act as pieces of a puzzle that impel the observer to link them up and to compose an image of the past. In this procedure, memory is of great importance. The buildings have been demolished either by natural causes, such as earthquakes or physical decay, or through human intervention, in the name of urban regeneration.

Despite the fact that the representations in the works can be 'seen,' for they are produced through the medium of photography, they can nevertheless also indirectly stimulate the sense of touch. The most prominent feature of these works is the variety of textures of the surfaces. These are so powerful that they also invoke touch in an imaginary, synaesthetic way. Through their richness, what would have initially been flat surfaces seem to physically protrude from their two-dimensionality to occupy space, and to form what appear to be three-dimensional structures. This impression endows these surfaces with a kind of sculptural quality. A large number of colours and a variety of materials found on the walls, as well as the play of light, add more detail, leading to a sharper result. These surfaces can, then, be thought of as 'urban palimpsests,' which contain layers of important historical information

about a city: an ever-changing environment. They have the power to trigger memory. They also become a pool from which collected data of the past can be drawn, so that future pathways can be designed for cities.

We are currently undergoing a period in which every day is a little fest of a continuous technological revolution. We constantly 'eye-witness' extraordinary changes in technology and overuse them in our daily lives. Meanwhile, however, touch has replaced the former main means of communication, such as speech and handwriting. This reflects the high priority given to, and the cultural significance of, touch. Moreover, the dramatic climate changes that impact the global population and the widespread socio-political and financial crises, combined with the posthuman direction of thinking, highlight an urgent necessity. It becomes imperative that we carry out a meticulous study of normativity as it relates to a high-performance culture. The habits based through which society functions seem to have shifted from the 'anaesthetic' arena of common sense towards a field in which human senses interconnect. Human and the city are joined in a way that creates a hybrid: a large scale post-organism, which is reproduced in a *sui generis* way.

In these photographic works the surfaces of the building remains have become exposed through human intervention in the overwhelming majority of cases. They are reminiscent of an auto-immune disease, during which the organism itself attacks and rejects its own parts. They resemble an urban atopic dermatitis, where buildings are vanishing because of, mainly, human activity, but also environmental damage. The remains of fallen

buildings simultaneously stimulate the senses of vision and touch and stand there to keep memory alive, as parts of a sequential transition, physical or imaginary. They become an allegory that recounts, in a nuanced way, the dynamics of the changes taking place in the constantly evolving operations of performance culture.

This aligns with the fact that senses are by default in a dynamic state. Senses are capable of perceiving the social environment as part of an organism in the ever-rotating wheel of evolution. They thus gain new potential and features through which to react to a host of stimulations in a perpetually changing world. As such, they can be said to transcend the limits of biology and philosophy, and become central to socio-cultural structures. The recent change in the hierarchy of senses, as we have hitherto known it, whereby touch does not follow vision, but seems to be its extension, its complement, or even its prerequisite, pays testimony to that. The haptic now plays a leading role in the urban normative, with a host of repercussions. As the sense primarily associated with privacy it is ambivalent in its potential: it can also be considered as the most affective, and as the most intrusive. This ambivalence becomes even more interesting when these two qualities of the haptic are juxtaposed, alternated, or even combined. It is at this juncture that, in a similar vein to bodily reactions to the haptic, photographs of buildings with their rich textures resulting from a variety of human intentions may serve as an interesting allegory of the contemporary double-edged sensorial experience of the city.

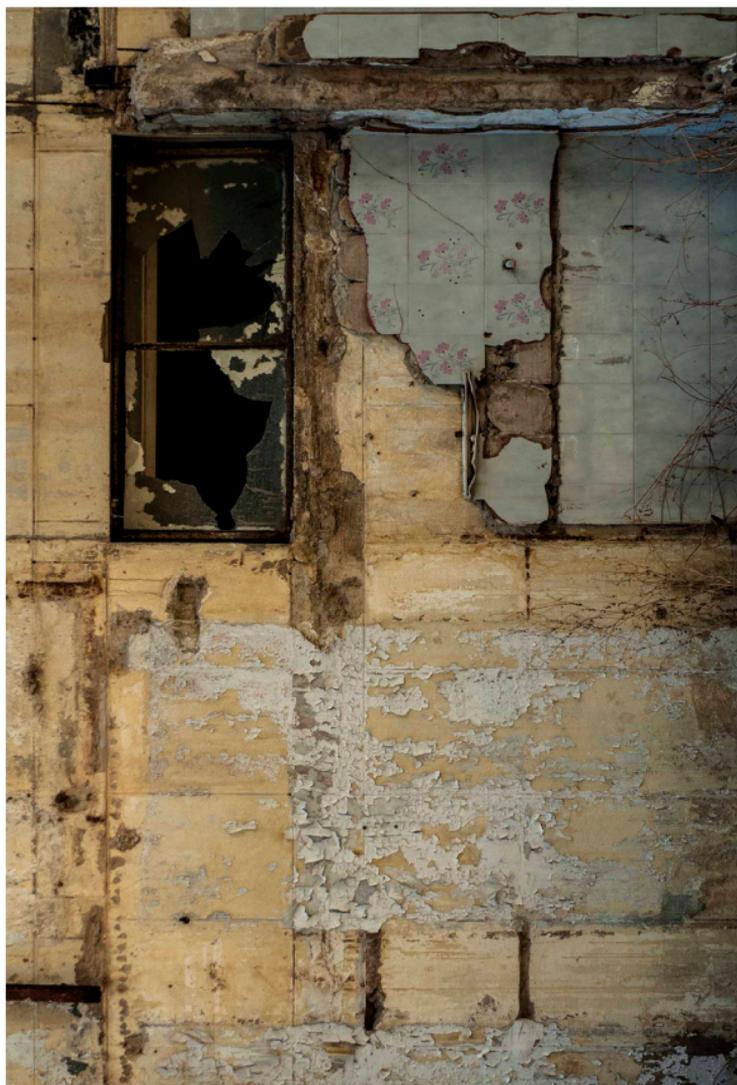
The new normativity, then, can be felt and better understood. Vision meets touch meets layers of history

meets the contemporary flux in a constant reconfiguration. It is then that we can, perhaps, dream of law-making processes that respond exactly to this complex web of relationships, illustrated by the buildings in these photographs and the wealth of visual-haptic experiences that these point to.

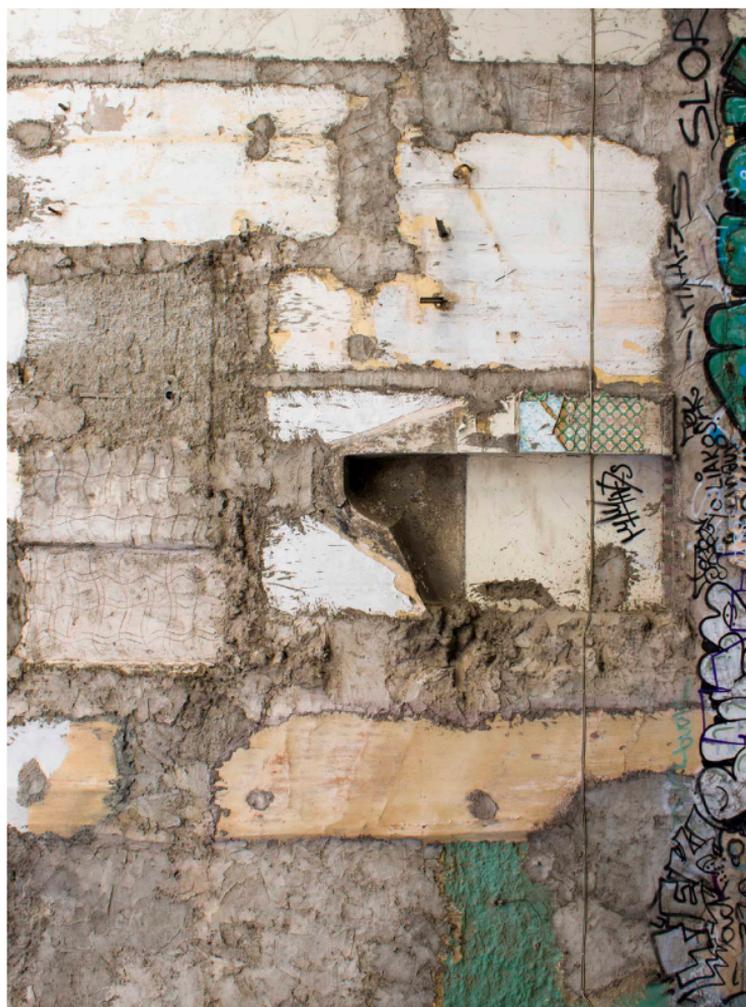
Project: Remains of a Fall

Medium

Archival pigment print on museum grade fine art paper-
Signed, titled, dated and numbered in ink on verso Limited Edition of 3 +1AP



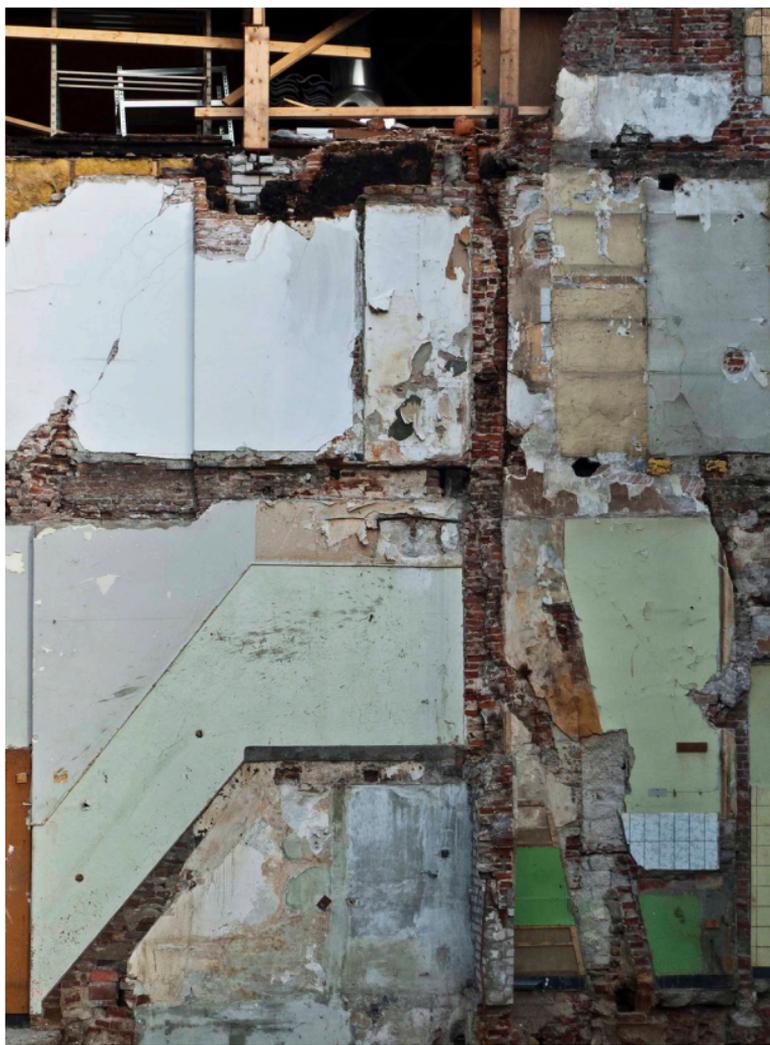
Untitled, 2017 / 80x120cm



Untitled, 2018 / 80x120cm



Untitled, 2018 / 80×120cm



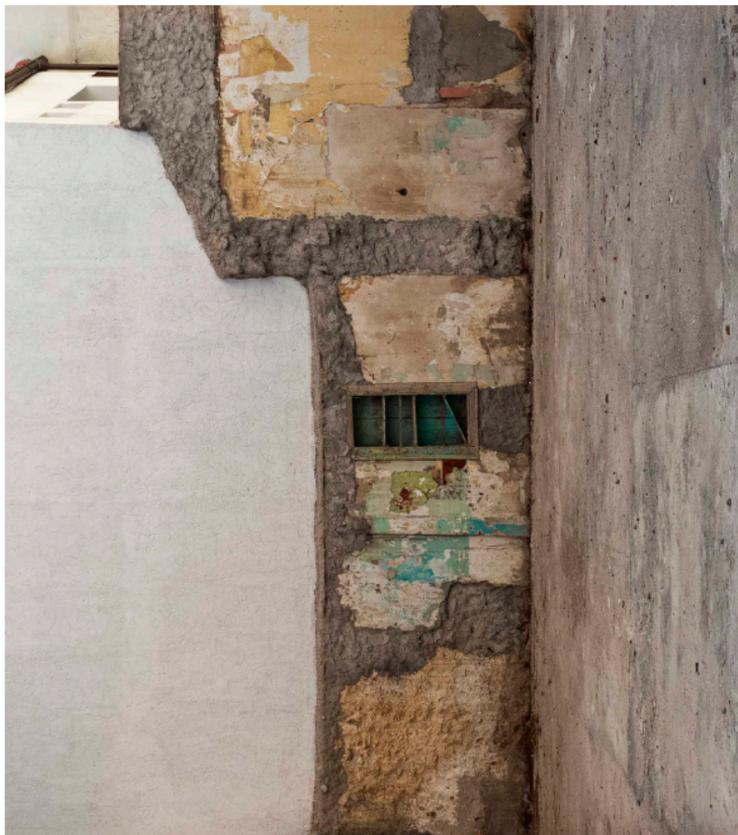
Untitled, 2016 / 110×80cm



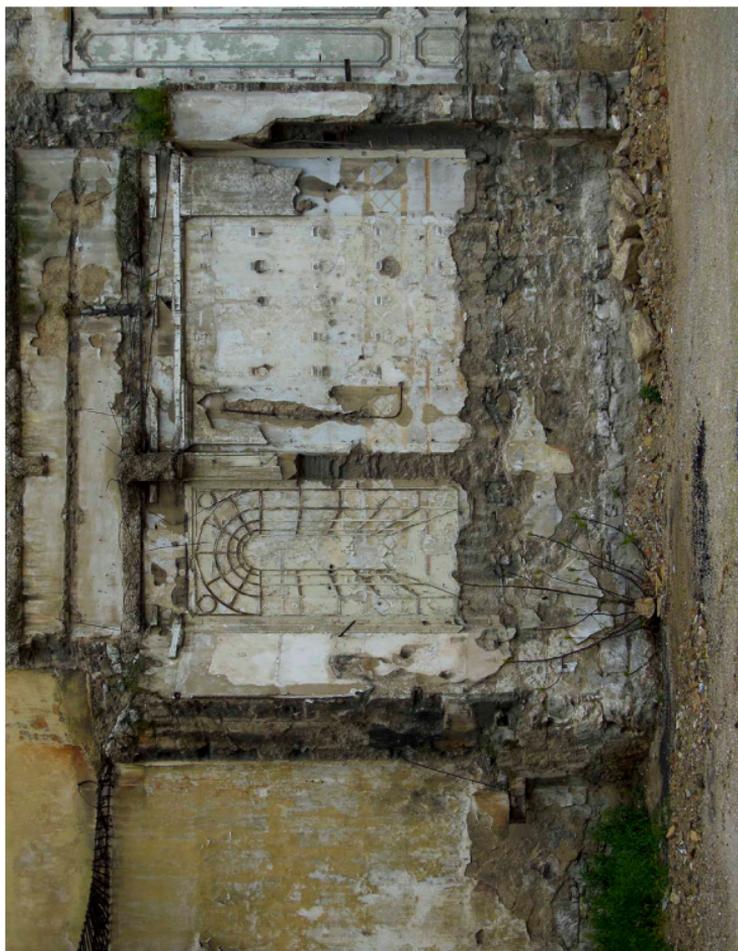
Untitled, 2015 / 125×80cm



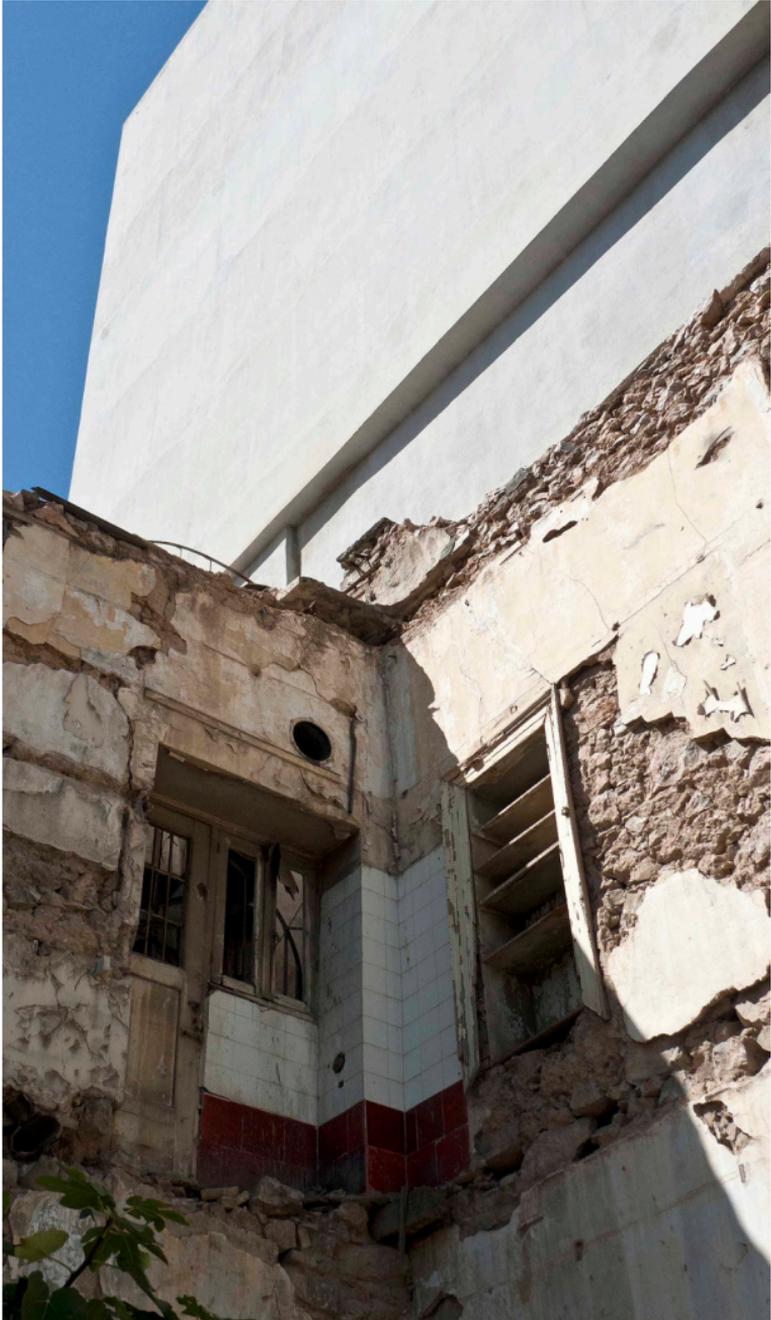
Untitled, 2015 / 125×80cm



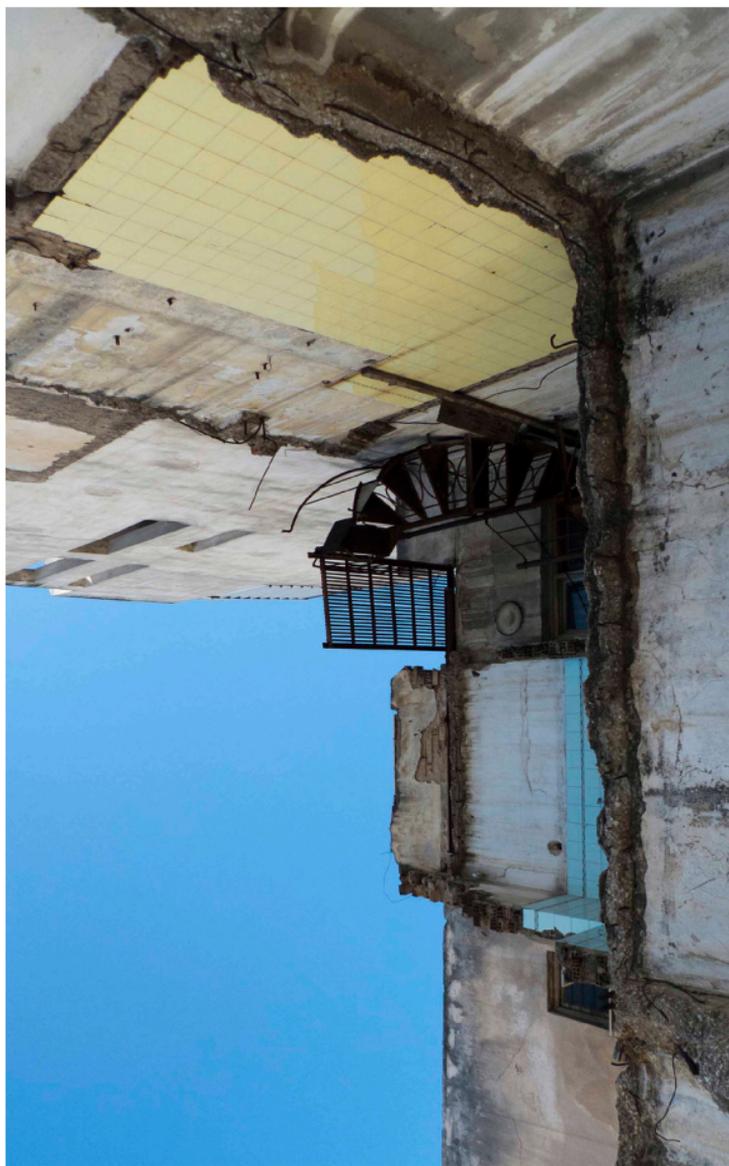
Untitled, 2012 / 80x92cm



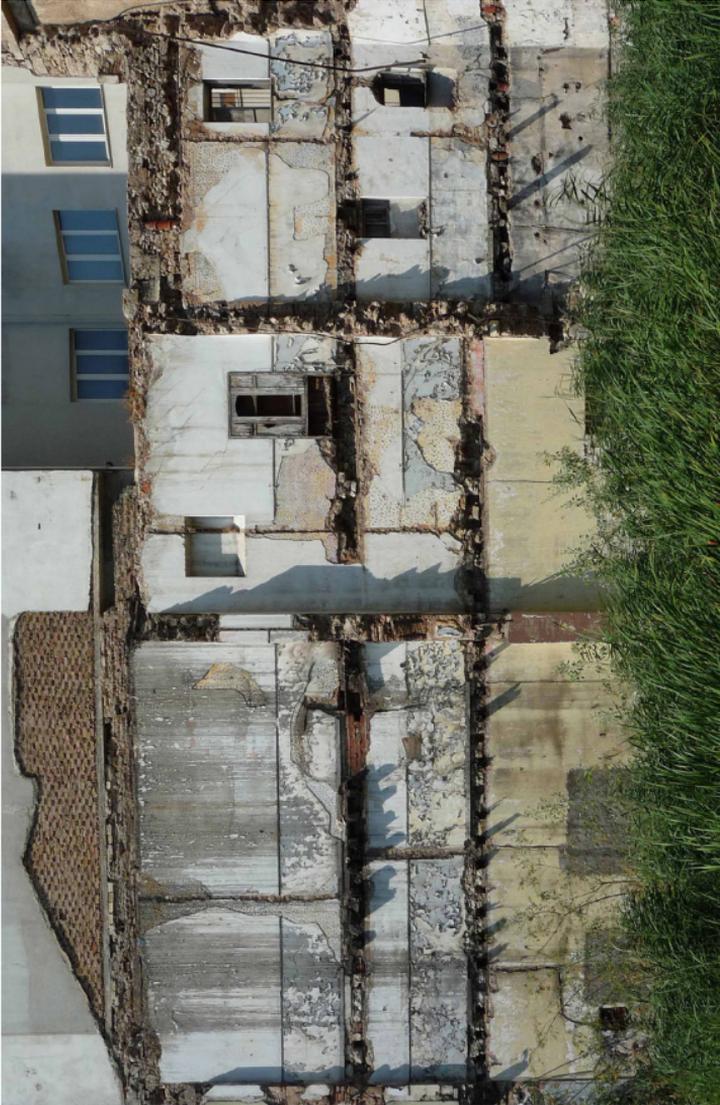
Untitled, 2011 / 80×105 cm



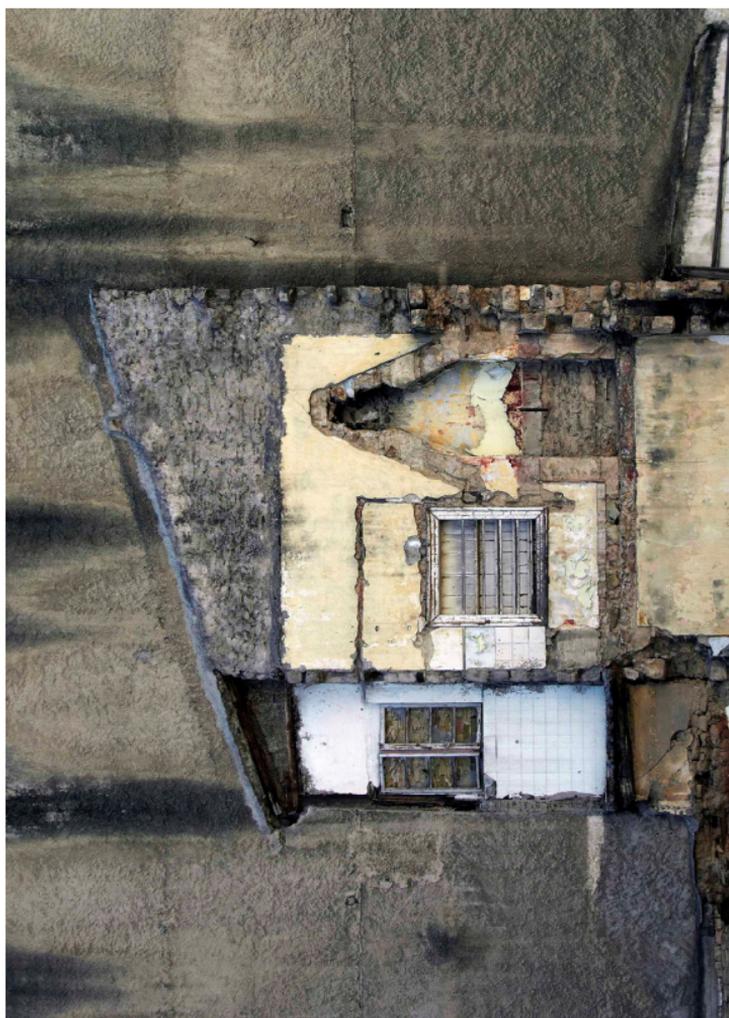
Untitled, 2012 / 140×80cm



Untitled, 2012 / 80x130cm



Untitled, 2011 / 80×125cm



Untitled, 2012 / 80×110cm

