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Constructions from the Roman Forum

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A

The physical evidence of the Roman Forum exists in confrontation with the idea of its representation. Its definition is instead that of the archetypal site—the unbroken horizon, the meeting of earth and sky. Its floor is more a fallen wall, the horizontal plane that anticipates the intervention of the architectural act—to build up into the sky or to build down into the earth. It is the wall of an embankment, restraining against the eruption of the material of its presence, the figure of its memory.

The suggestive potential of such a dialectic is presented as an armature for an investigation into architectural form. There are two intentions: the making of object simultaneous with the figure in space, and abstraction as a process of drawing. The subject is the Roman Forum, the frame is the limit to its perception from within. The translation as drawing and the process of drawing are intended to provide the physical material for construction (or reconstruction). There is no intended program except as may be suggested by the result.

My intention in looking at the Roman Forum was to resolve a contradictory memory of the place and in the process to extract something, to identify and investigate the relationship between the making of object simultaneous with figural edge.

A Sketches

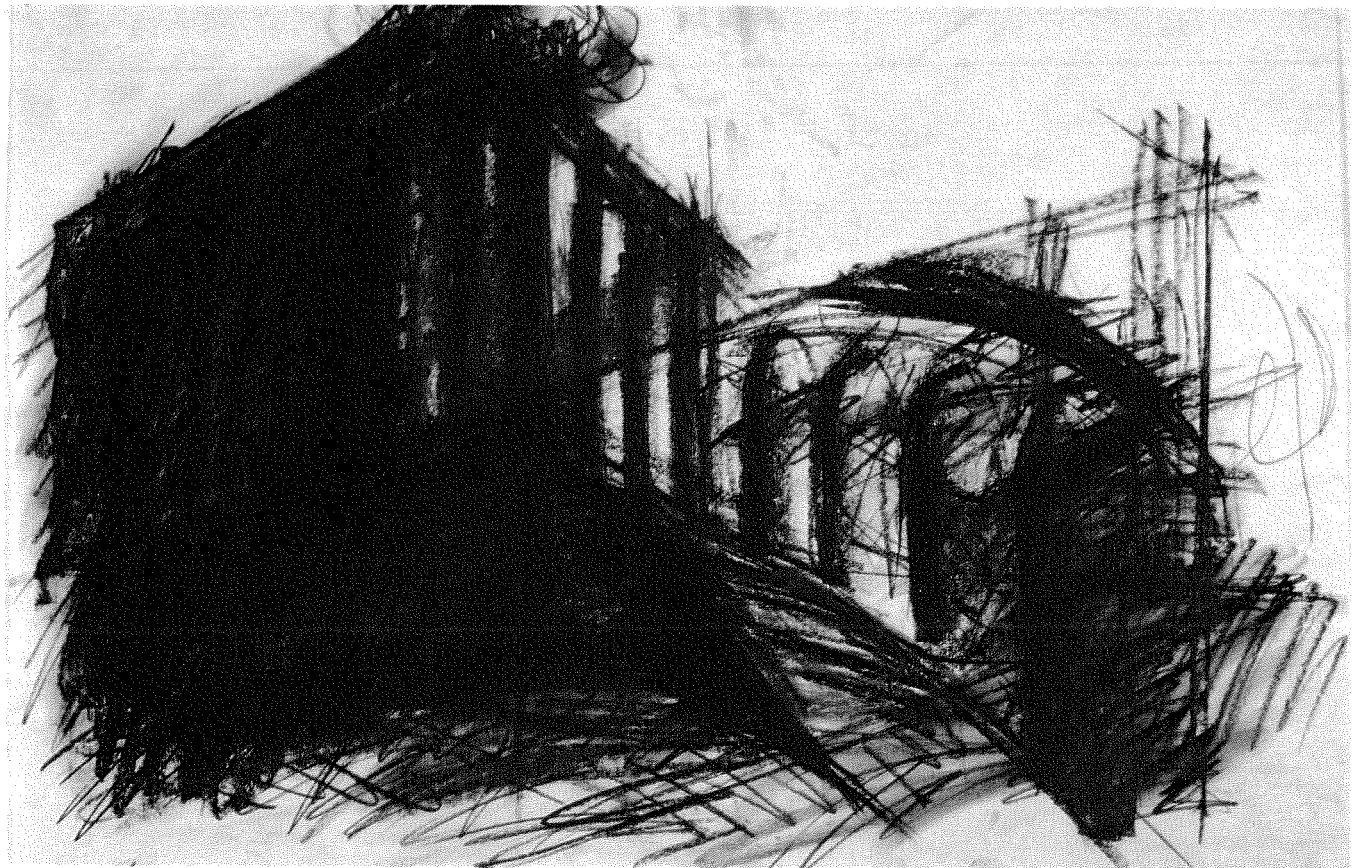
Drawings by Frederick Biehle



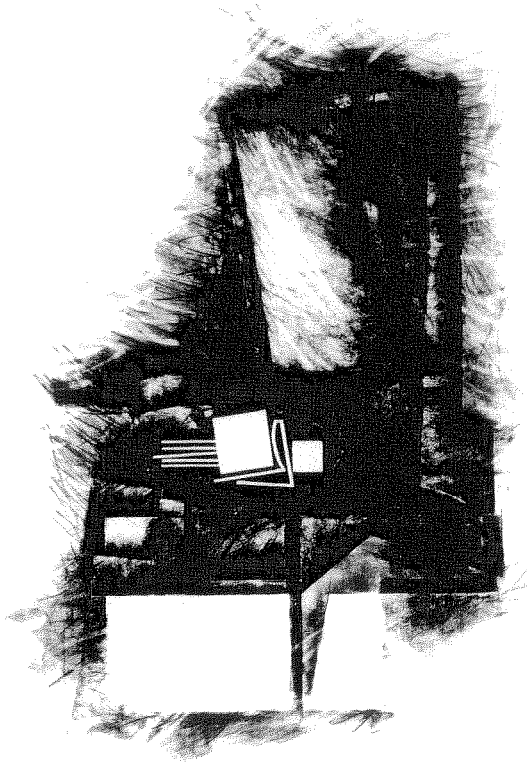
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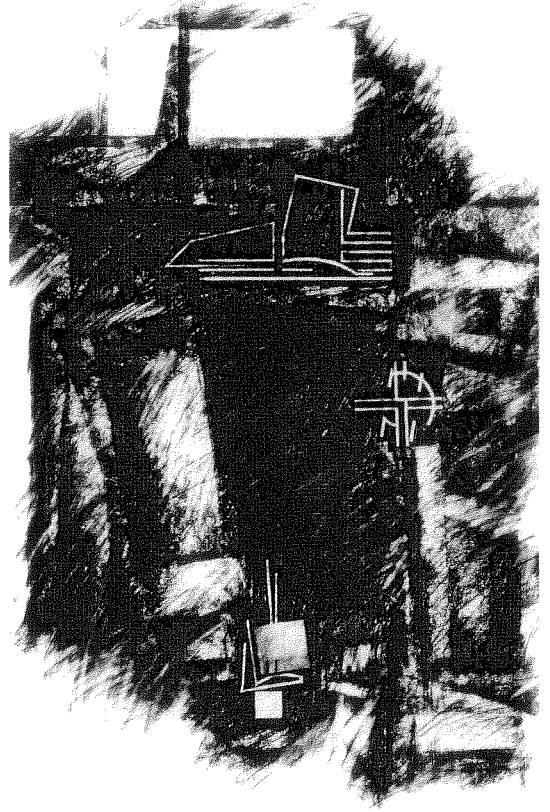
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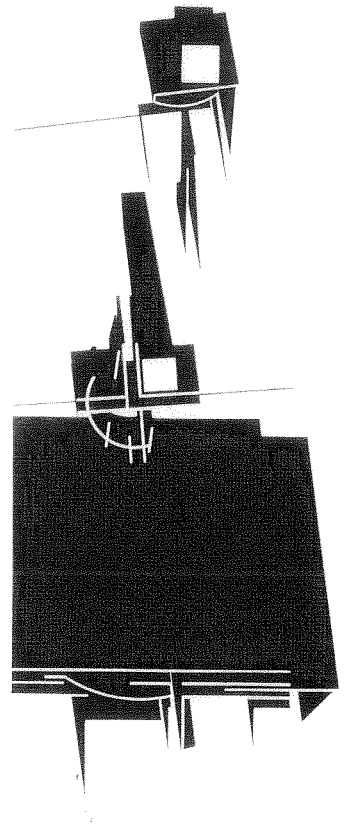
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B

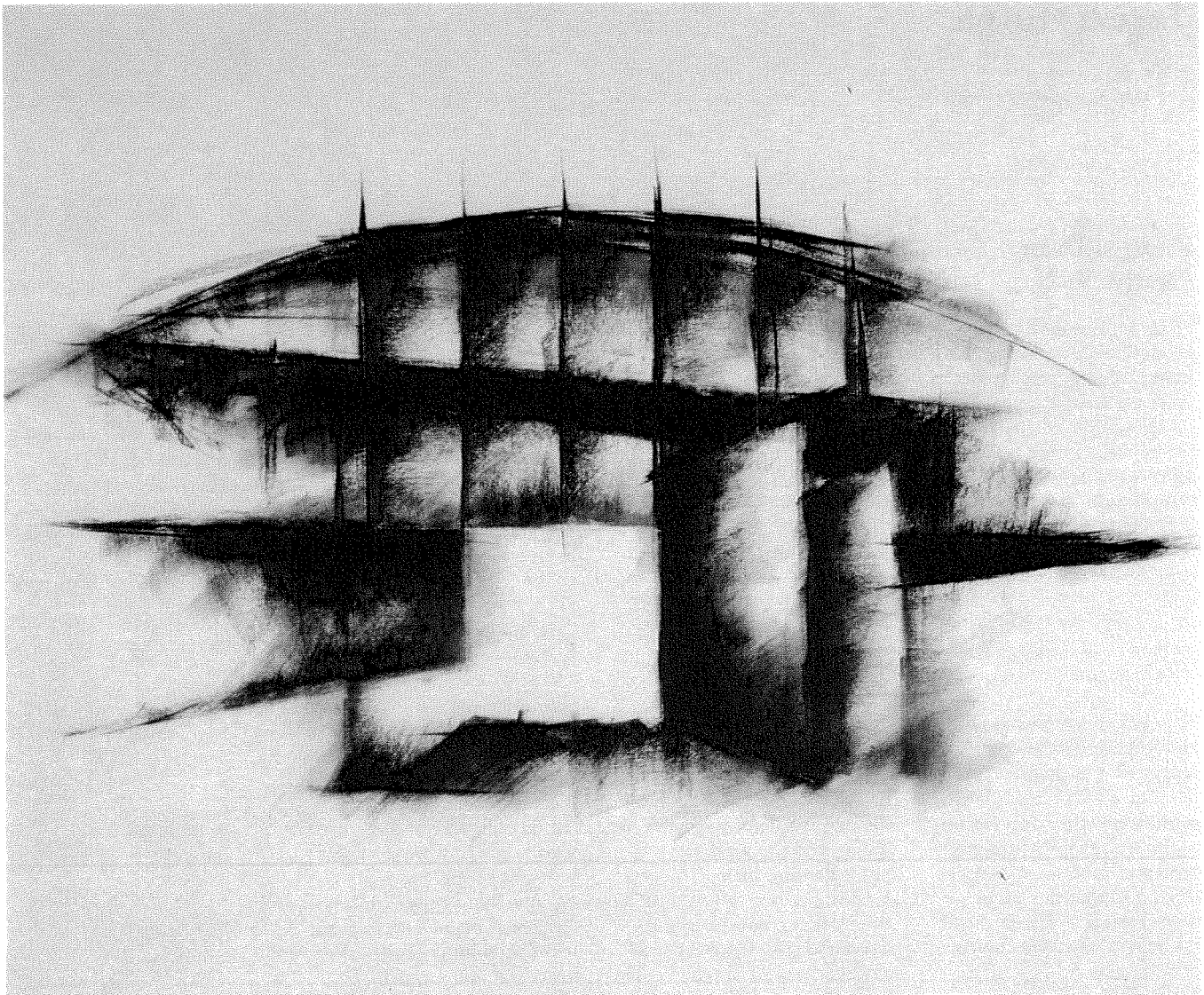


B



B

B Elements reconstructed
Drawings by Frederick Biehle



The Roman Forum is the idea of essential place, yet it exists without tangible form, without a body that can be called to memory.

This contradiction, this idea without model, seemed to offer the framework for an investigation of form, the result of which might be one definition of that place.

The discovery is that its value lies in the very uncertainty of the memory, the strength of its contradiction.

As a place I am now more conscious of its landscape, of the magnetic pull of its presence, but it remains without model.

It is a vast upturned cathedral—both the object that one must maneuver around and the space around which the city is layered.

Its perimeter, its definable edge remains elusive.

It is the city of Rome that offers the Forum as model.

Temple of Vesta

Drawing by Frederick Biehle