

# **PONT PHOTO GRAPHIQUE**

**Book #6 of THE BRIDGE**

**By HANS FLEISCHNER**

## PONT PHOTOGRAPHIQUE

A bridge to cross over train tracks, my  
parents once took.

In 1946 on their way from London to  
Vienna, by way of Paris.

A bridge with no name, but well made, in  
1930.

A bridge where once the Romans had  
built an aqueduct to bring the water to  
their town, further down the hill.

I couldn't have asked for this bridge,  
since it had no name and no stories to  
tell.

I walked from Jean Jaures Metro station  
down Lafayette Boulevard crossing the  
bridge over the Eastern Railroad tracks,  
leading to Vienna.

As I photograph that bridge, I see The  
Bridge in stark contrast to the one I was  
walking, standing on.

Standard, black colour metal bridge.

I saw this bridge, took note of it and kept  
returning to it for many years.

Well over 10 years.

Just recently a friend of mine asked me,  
why this bridge.

6 books, including this one, are telling the  
story and now Book #7 is in the making,  
Pont Photographique.

Hans Fleischner, December 2024, Vienna

## **1.Paris, its bridges and its photographers**

Bridges have a rich symbolic meaning in art history and thus in photography. They often stand as a metaphor for the connection between different worlds, be it physical, social or spiritual. In photography, bridges have taken on this meaning and are often used to illustrate themes such as transition, change and communication. The structure of a bridge - which has its origins in functionality - becomes an object of aesthetic contemplation, focused observation, through the lens of a photographer.

Crossed by the Seine, Paris is a city characterized by its bridges. These bridges not only connect the banks of the Seine, but also the history and culture of the city. From the Pont Neuf, the oldest surviving bridge in the city, to the modernist Passerelle Simone-de-Beauvoir, the bridges reflect architectural and social evolution.

The Pont Neuf, the oldest stone bridge in Paris, is a symbol of the Renaissance and urban renewal.



Its construction began in 1578 under Henry III and was completed in 1607 under Henry IV. This bridge has a prominent place in art and photography, not least because of its massive structure and its location in the heart of Paris, near the Louvre and the Île de la Cité. Famous photographers such as Eugène Atget have immortalized the Pont Neuf in their shots, often portraying the bridge as a symbol of permanence in an ever-changing urban landscape.

The Pont des Arts is a pedestrian bridge originally built between 1802 and 1804, connecting the Louvre Palaces with the Institut de France. It is famous for the countless "love locks" that couples have attached to its railings. This bridge symbolizes the relationship between the individual and the city through its use as a meeting place and through the remains left by visitors.

A prime example of the Belle Époque style, the Pont Alexandre III is one of the most elaborate bridges in Paris. Opened in 1900, this bridge connects the Champs-Élysées to the Invalides and has become one of the city's most iconic structu-

res. Its lavish decoration and the monumental statues that adorn it make it a popular subject in photography, especially at night when the lighting highlights the gilded sculptures and bathes the bridge in a magical light.

Photography in Paris has a long tradition that dates back to the 19th century. With the invention of the daguerreotype in the 1830s, Paris became one of the first urban centers to be comprehensively documented photographically. Bridges played a central role in these early photographs, not only because of their aesthetic quality, but also because of their importance as social and economic hubs.

A pioneer of Parisian urban photography was Eugène Atget (1857–1927), whose work documented the changing urban landscape of Paris. Atget's photographs of Parisian bridges are not only historical documents, but also poetic representations of city life. His work shows how bridges serve as connecting elements in the city, while also symbolizing the changes that Paris was going through during this period.

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908–2004) often captures in his pictures the fleeting moment in which the composition and the events on the Parisian bridges come together to form a meaningful whole. His photographs of the Pont des Arts or the Pont Alexandre III reflect the dynamic relationship between people and architecture and testify to the vitality of urban life.

For contemporary photographers, the motif of the bridge is a lever to explore overarching themes such as globalization, migration and the fusion of cultures.

And then a photographer comes along, born in Vienna, but driven by his parents' influence and curiosity to become a true citizen of the world, and discovers his own bridge in Paris. Where else? It is not for nothing that artists of all eras, philosophers, emigrants and journalists have celebrated the Seine metropolis as the "capitale du monde", capital of the world.

The Pont La Fayette is something like the big brother of the bridge that has been luring Hans Fleischner to Paris for over ten years. Because

"his" bridge is only a few dozen meters away, it doesn't even have a proper name, it's just part of the street that connects two arrondissements. Built in 1930, it is a beautiful example of functional, linear industrial architecture. There is nothing ornate, there are no cute little figures, the bridge is there to get you from A to B. It does this on the trail of the old aqueduct that has supplied the former Lutetia with water since ancient times.

The steel truss bridge has left no trace in the history of the city. We know nothing of the heroic battles of the Resistance against the Wehrmacht for this crossing over the tracks of the Gare de l'Est; we do not know whether protesting Algerian workers were beaten to death there by Papon's CRS on June 17, 1961, or whether students built a barricade there in May 1968.

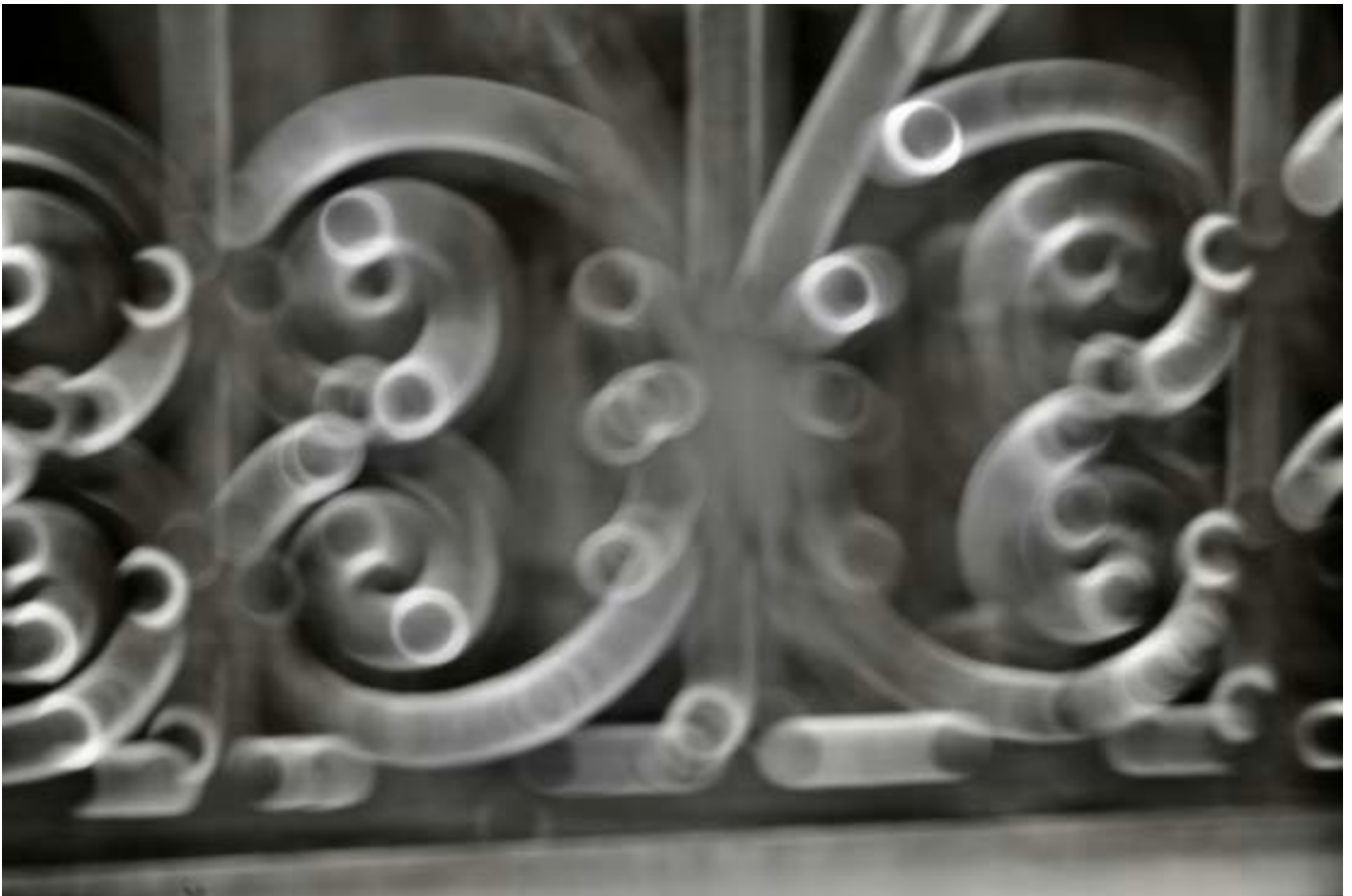
But what we do know is what this bridge looks like, day and night; what we can see from this bridge. Which people walk over this bridge. What A and B look like. We have Hans Fleischner to thank for this, who wrote the city's history with his cameras.

Kurt Lhotzky



















































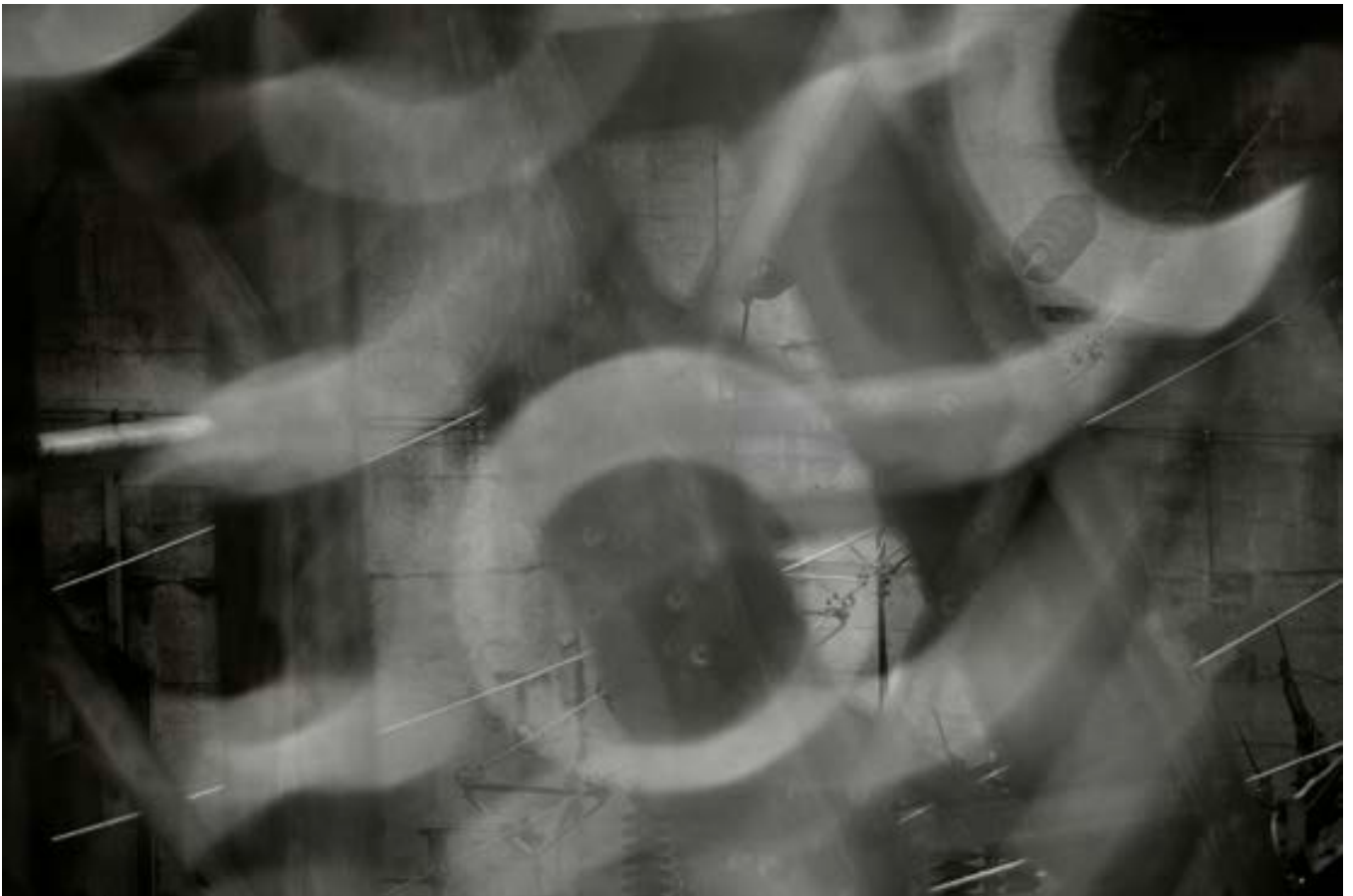
















































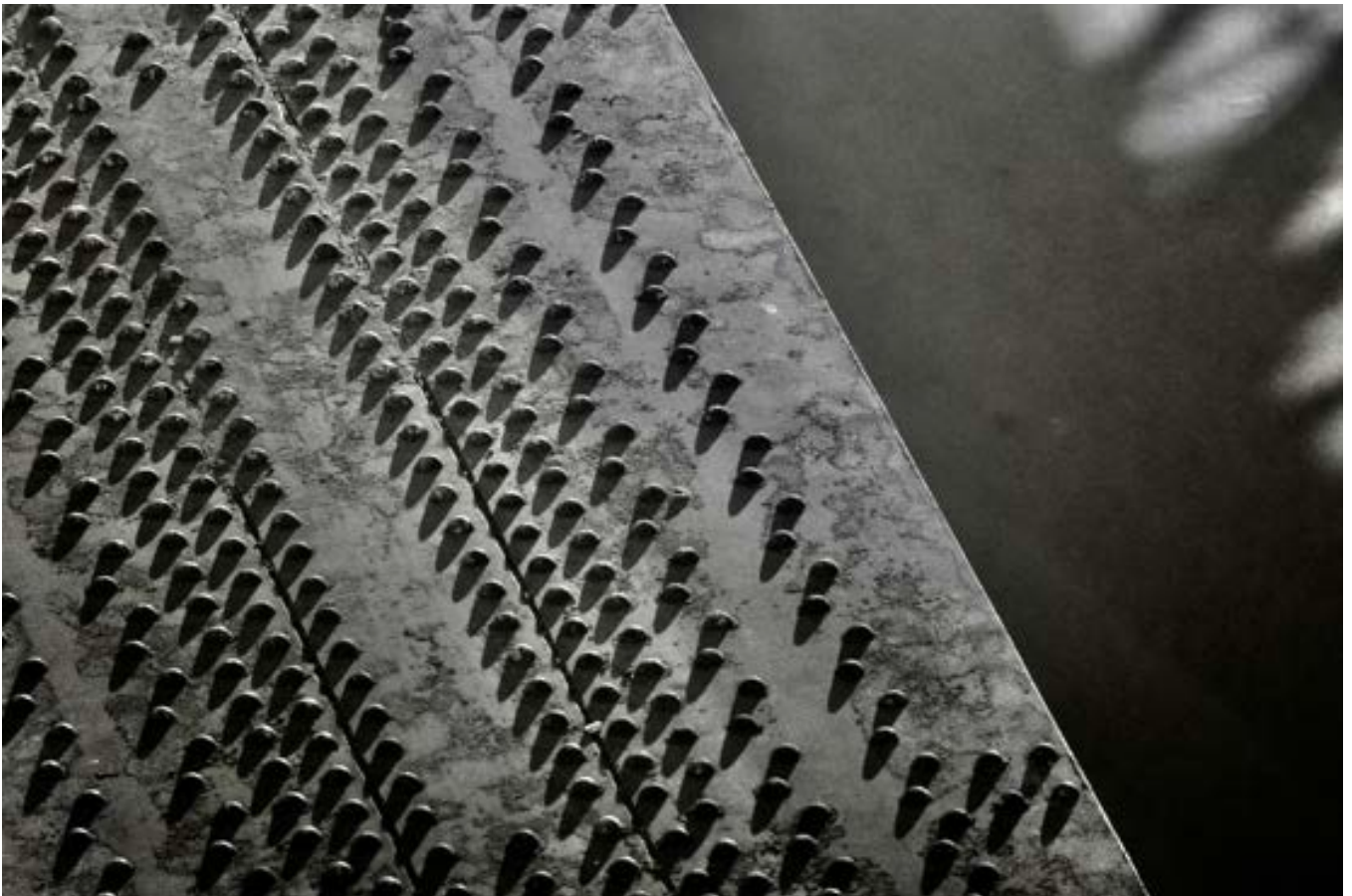










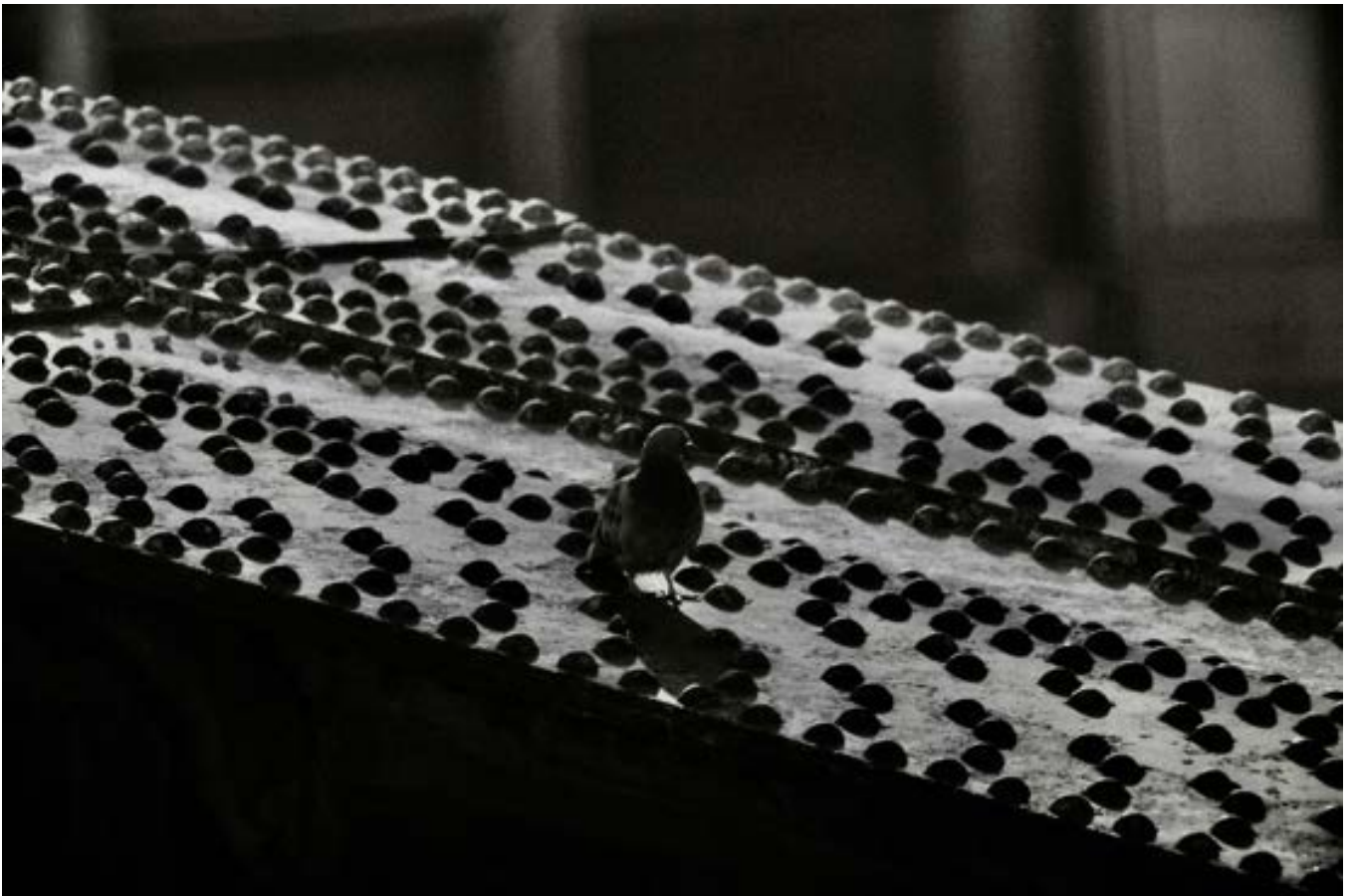






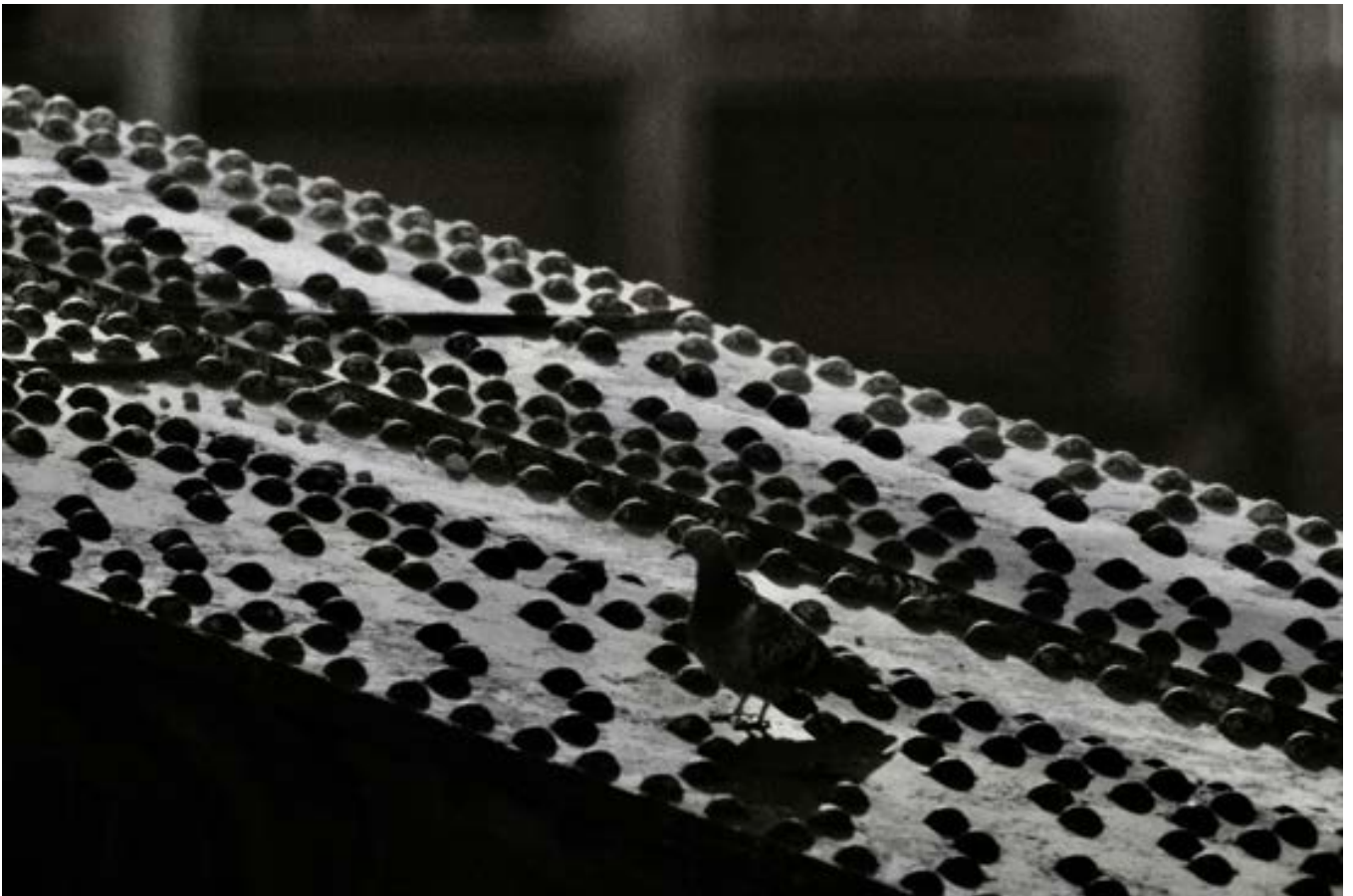


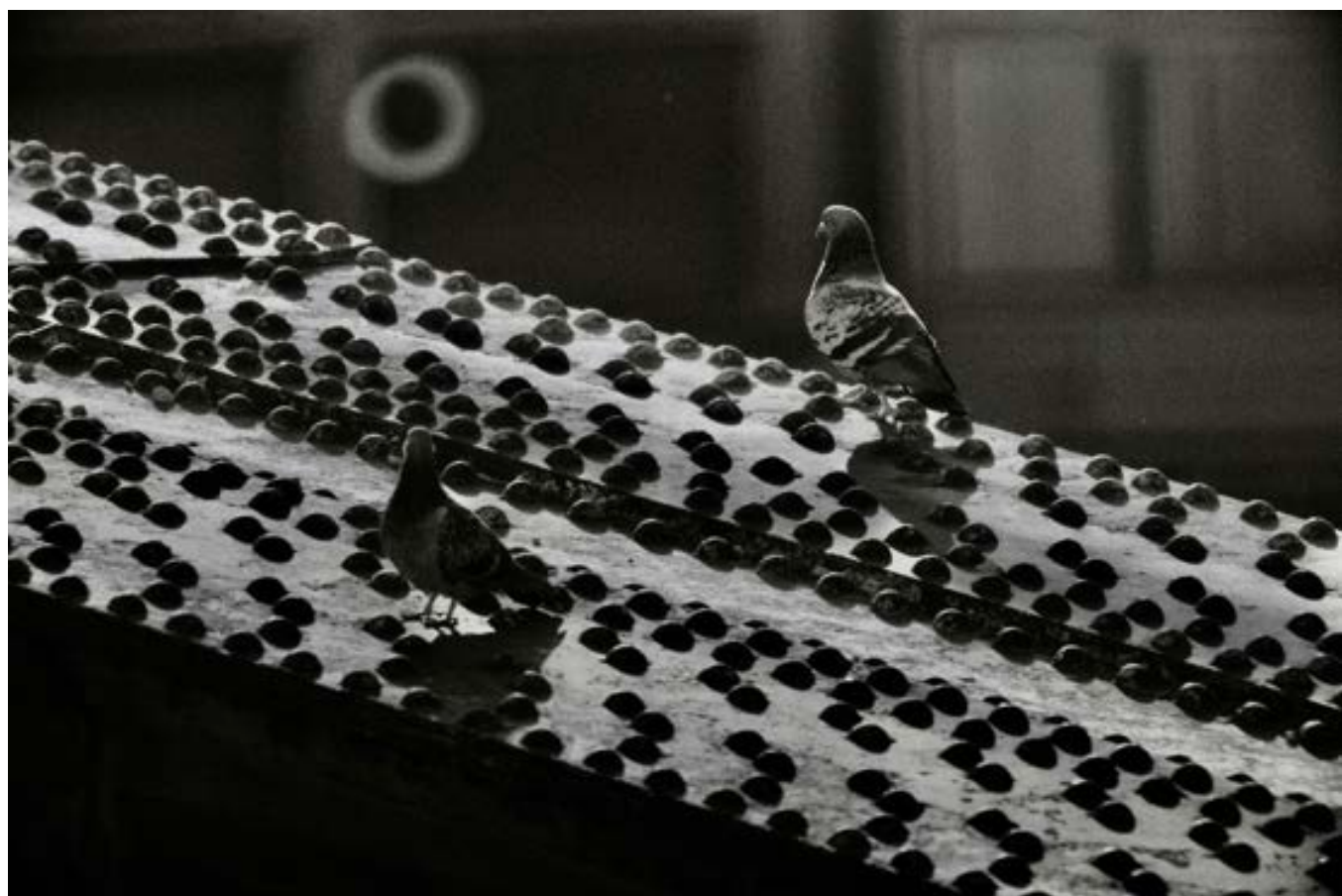




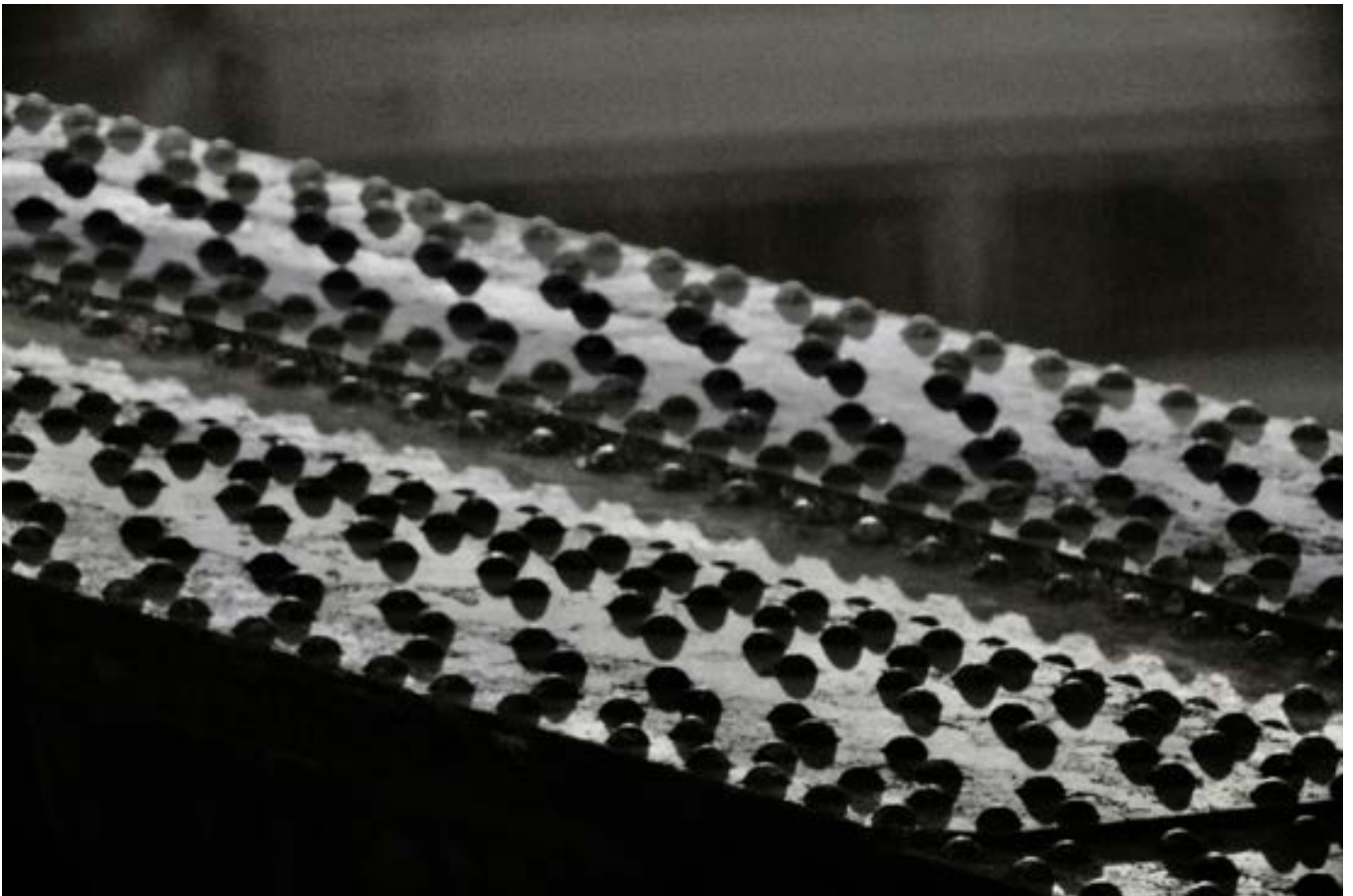






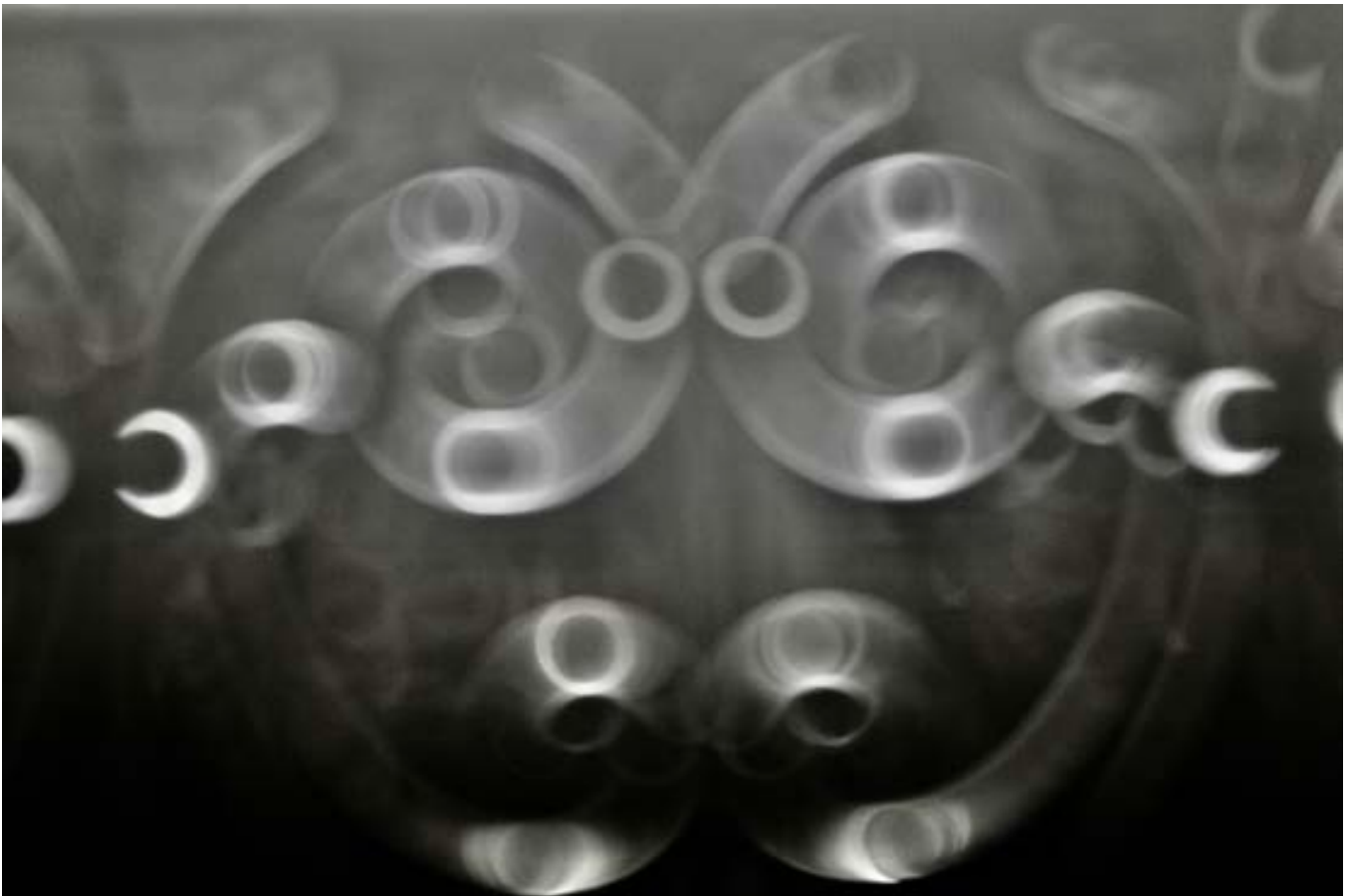




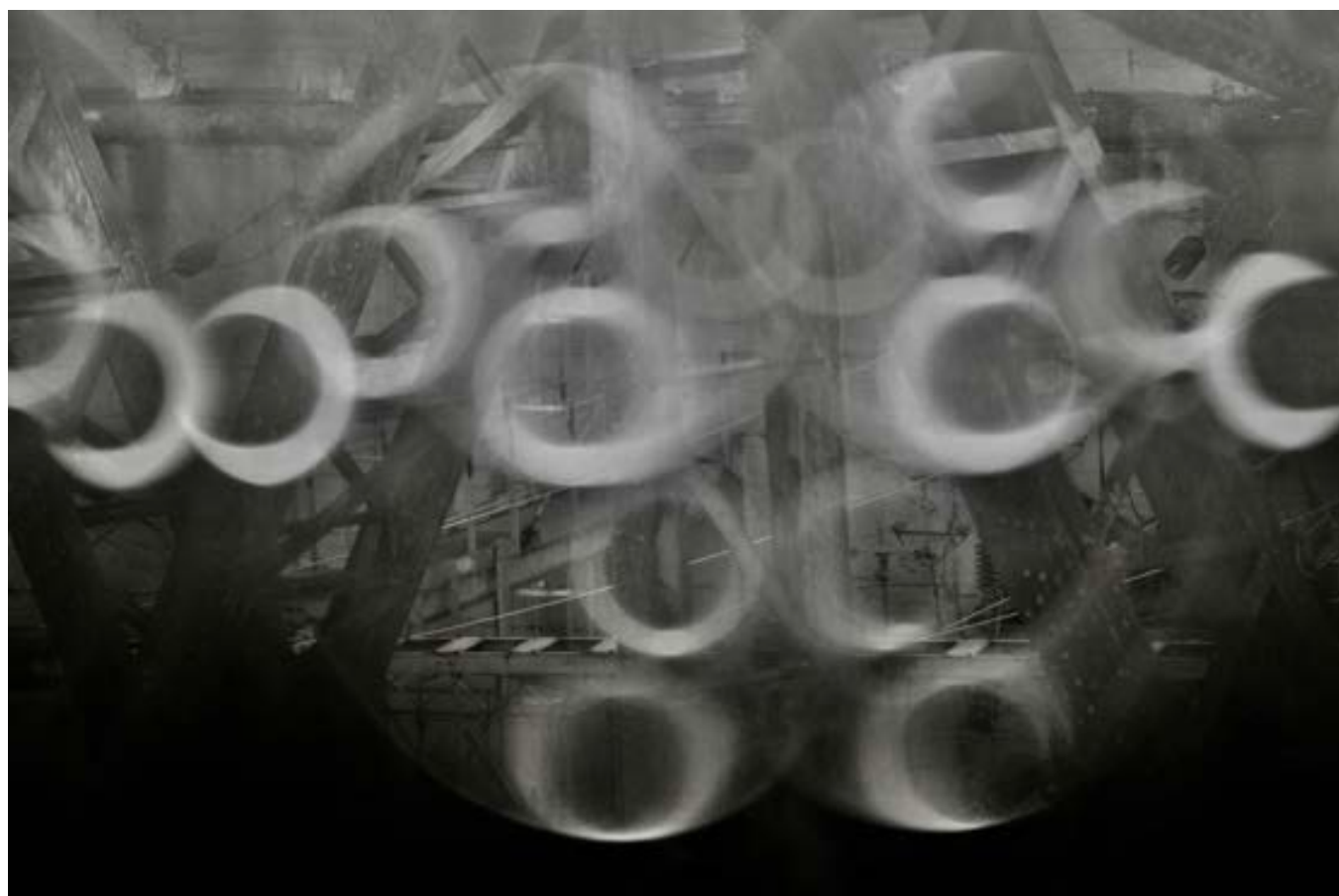












































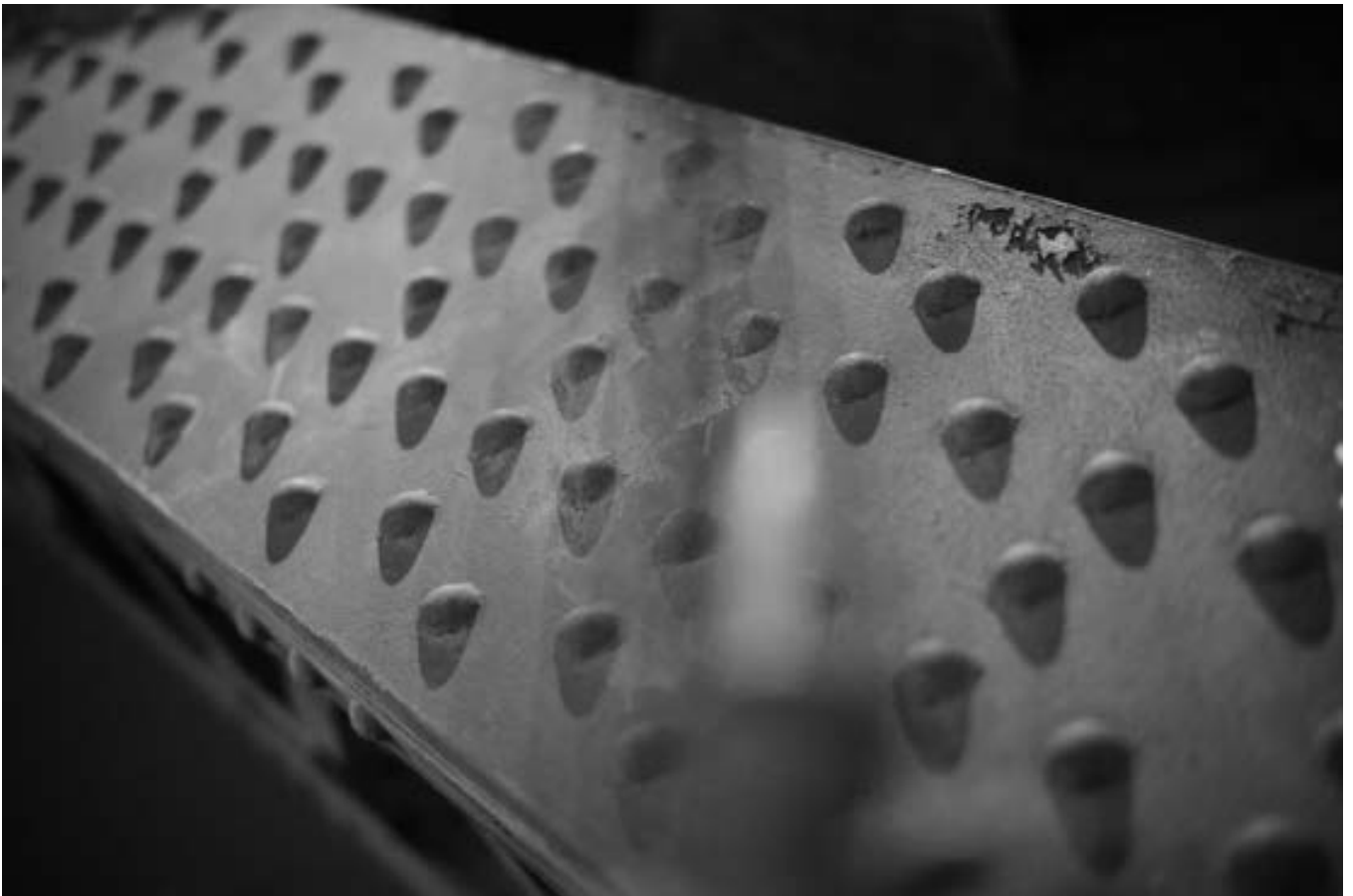


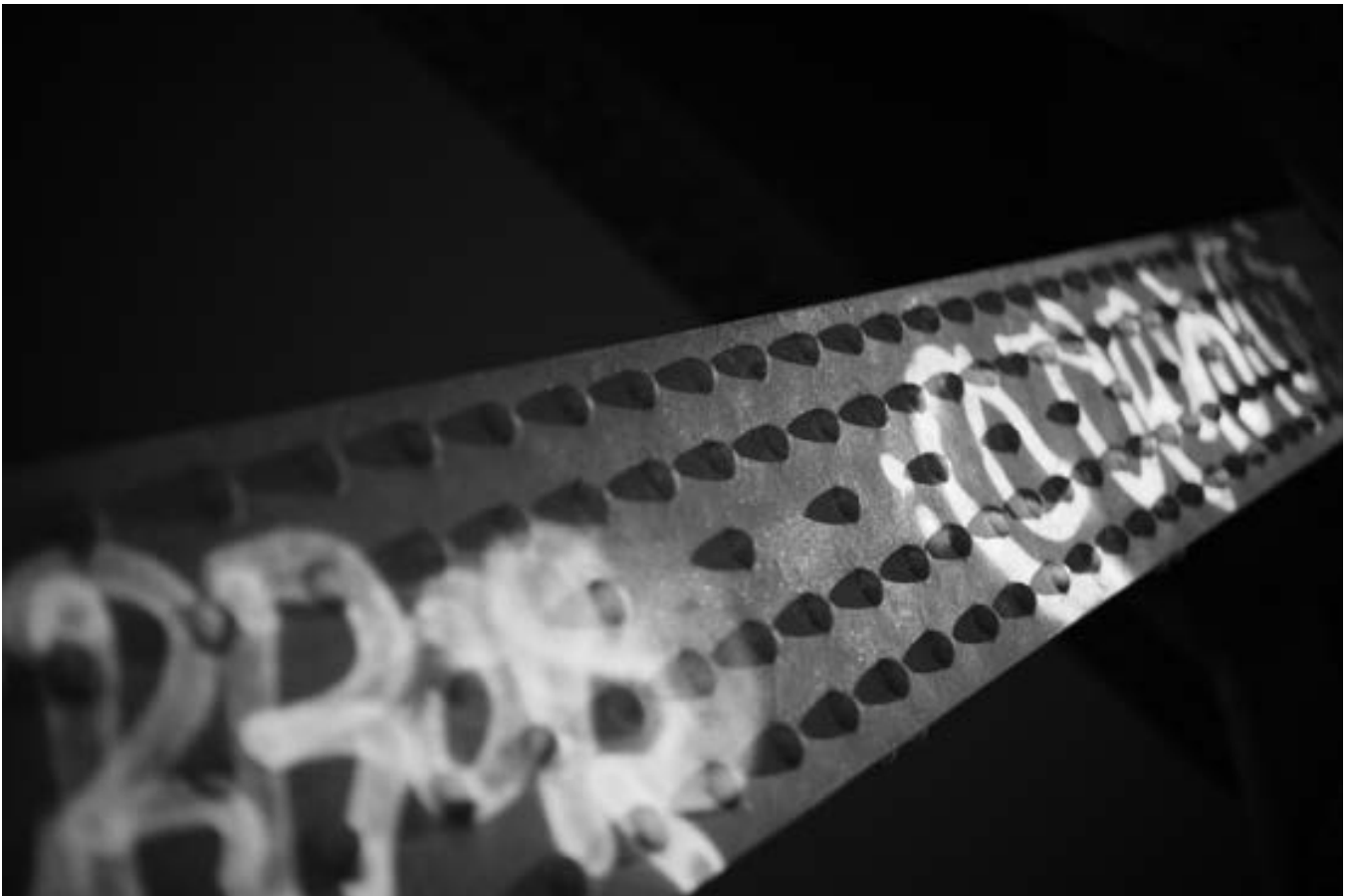




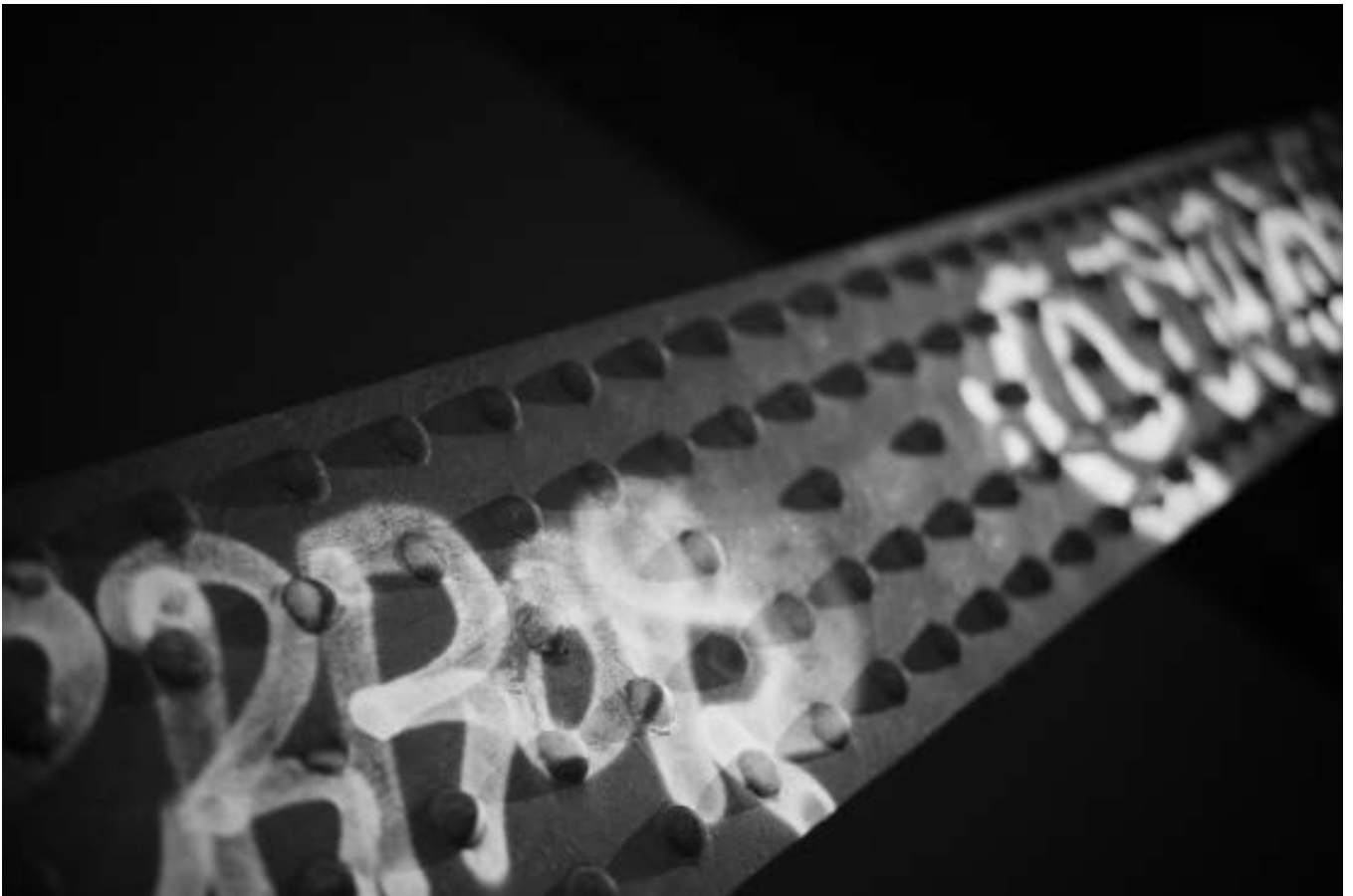
































































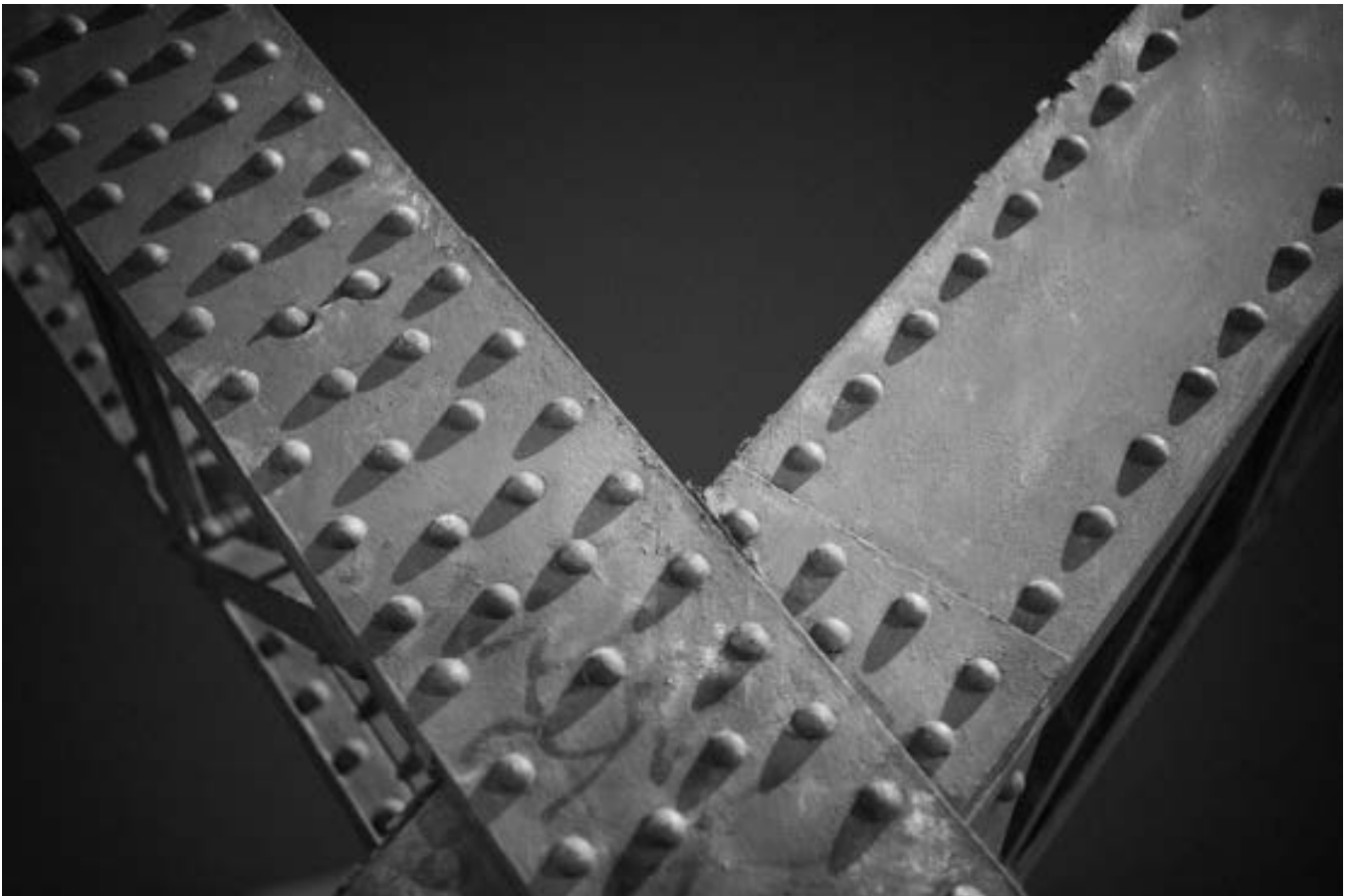


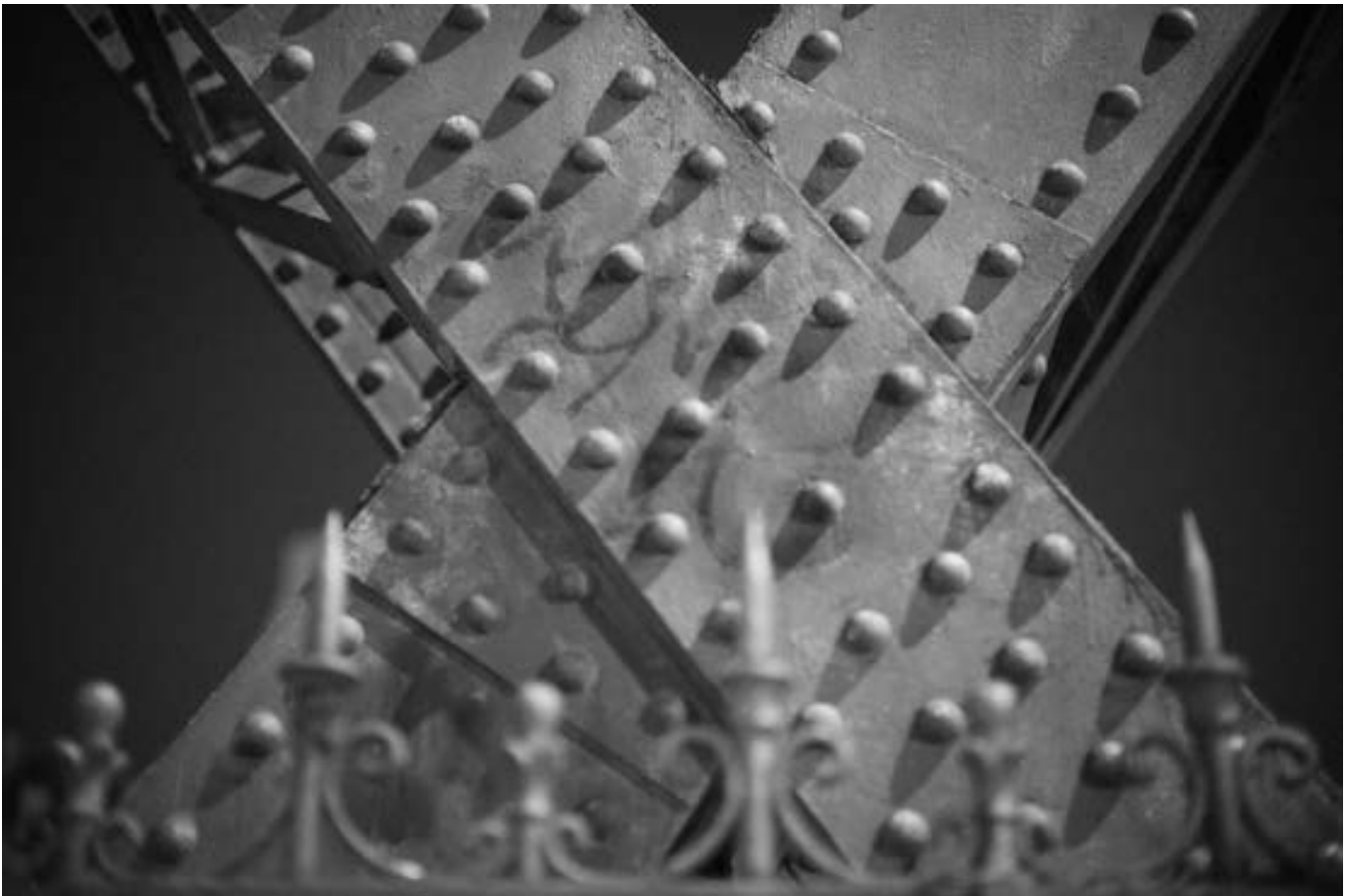




















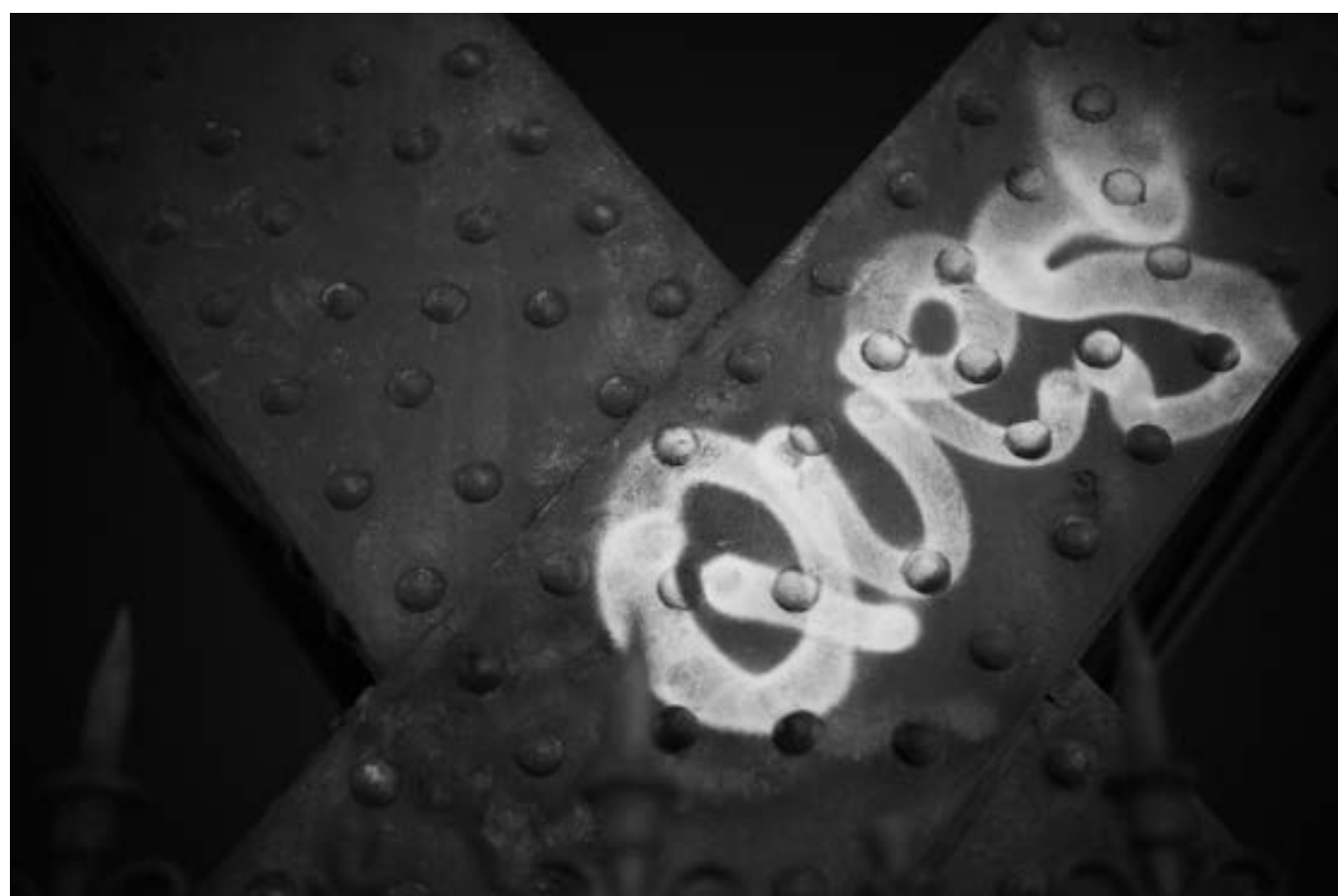








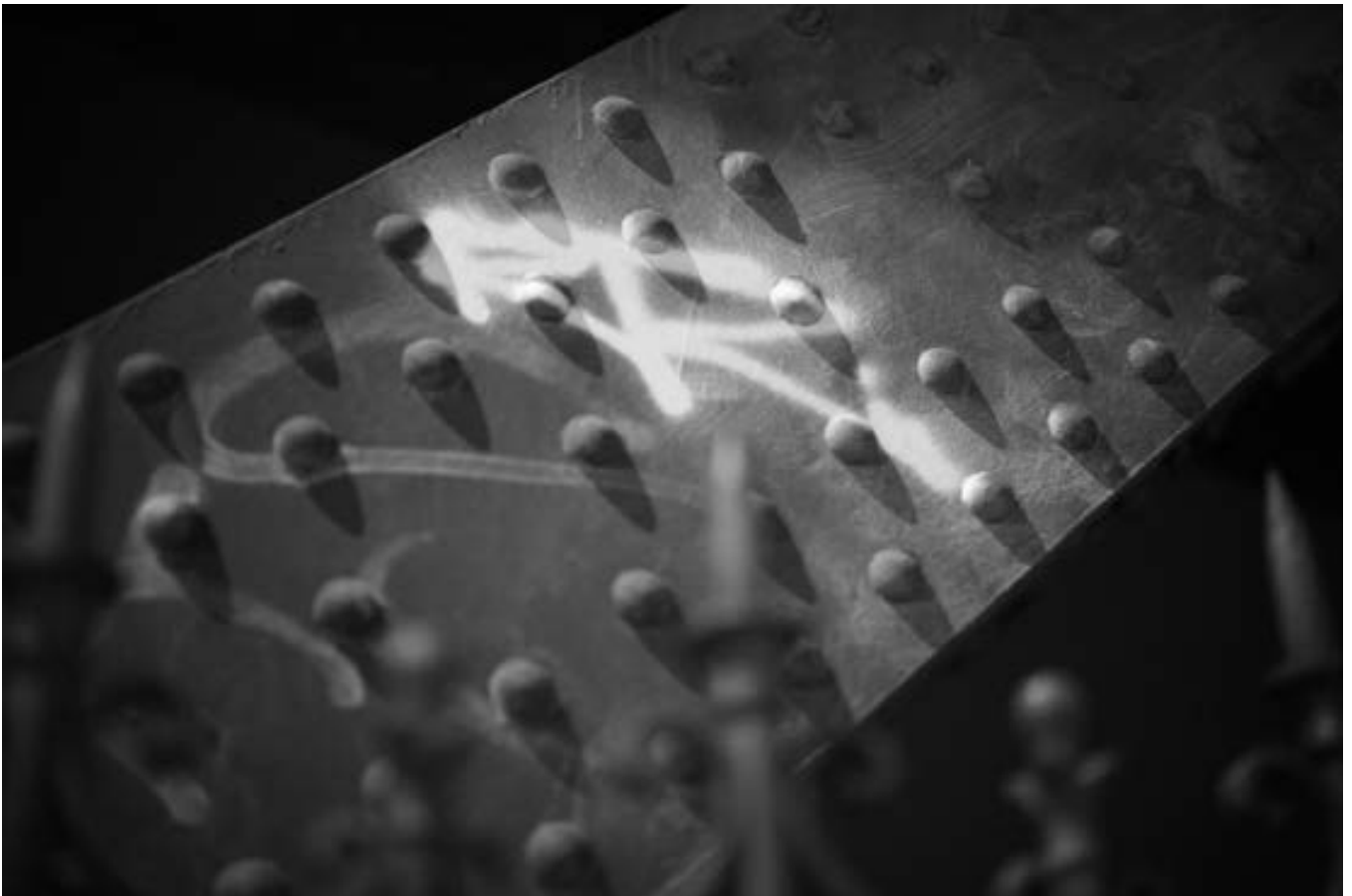










































































































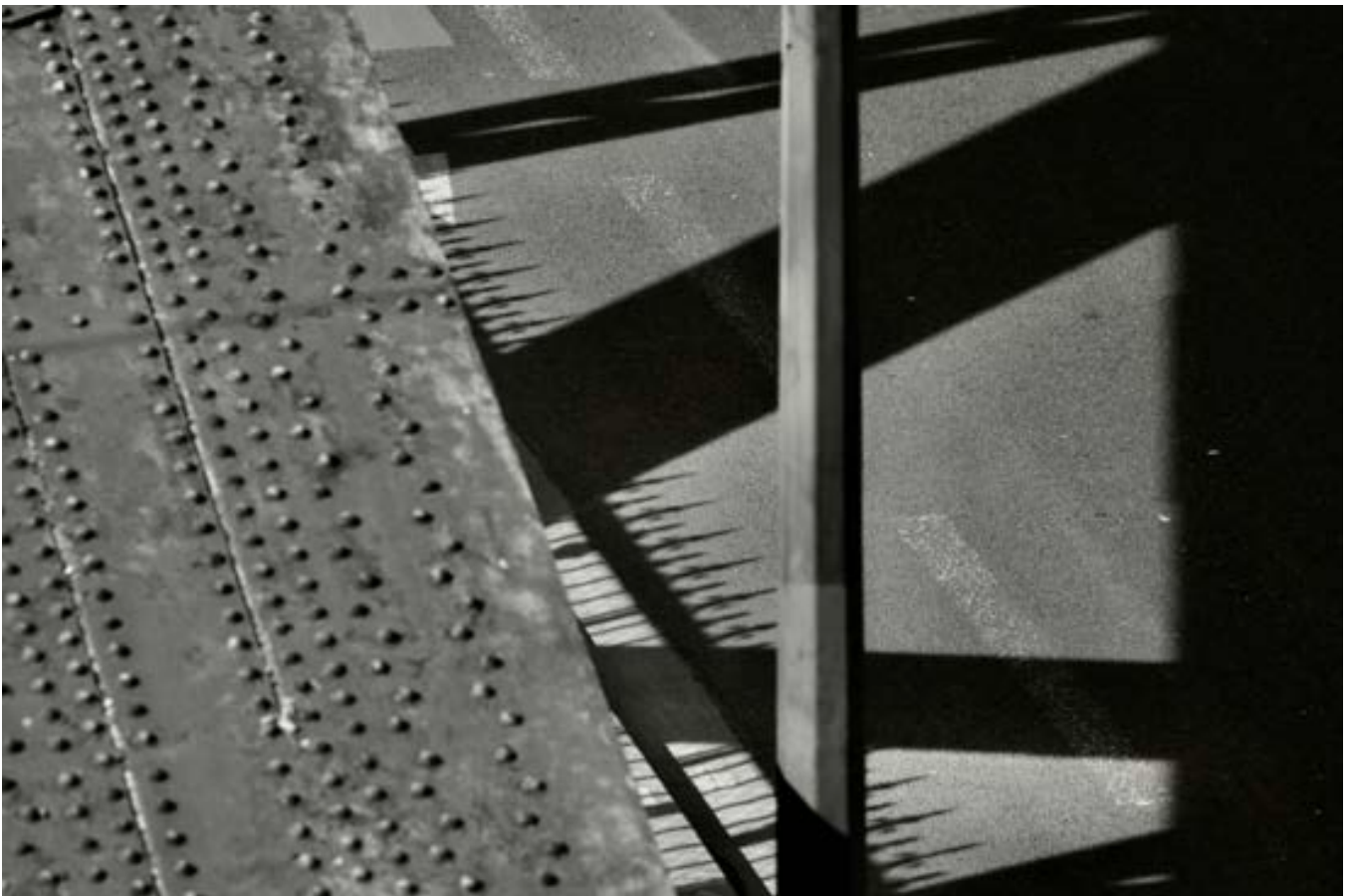


















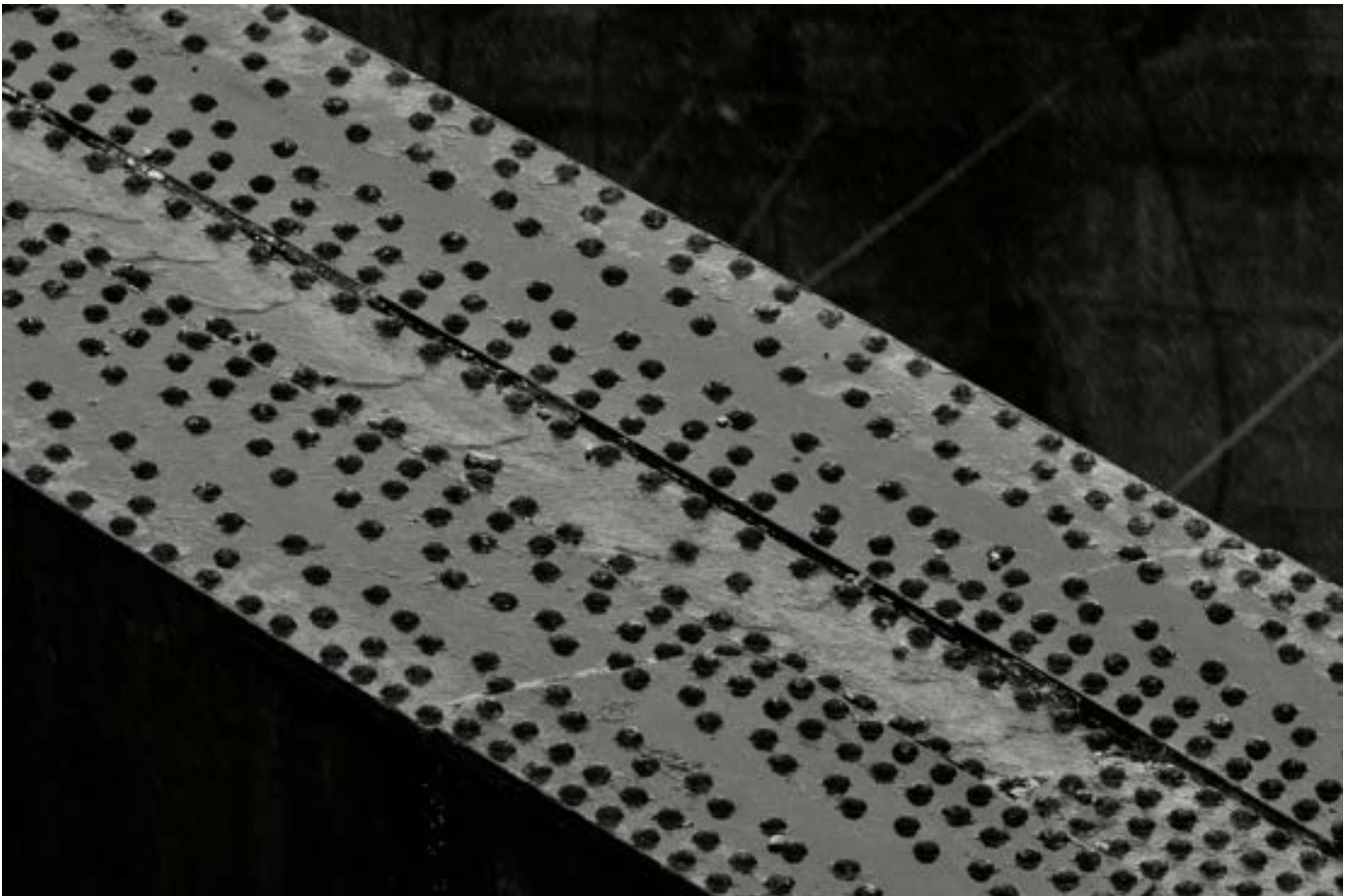












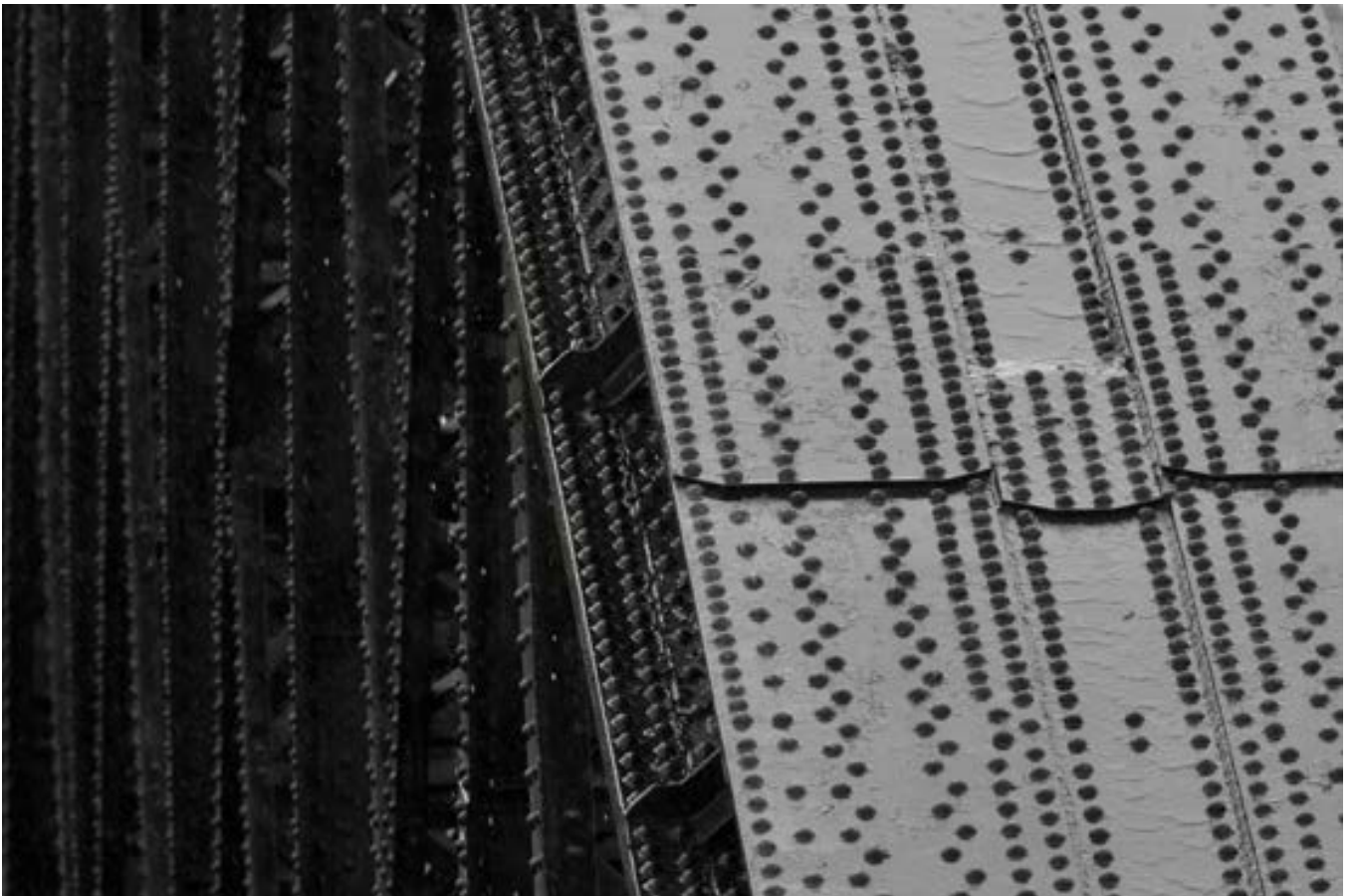






































































































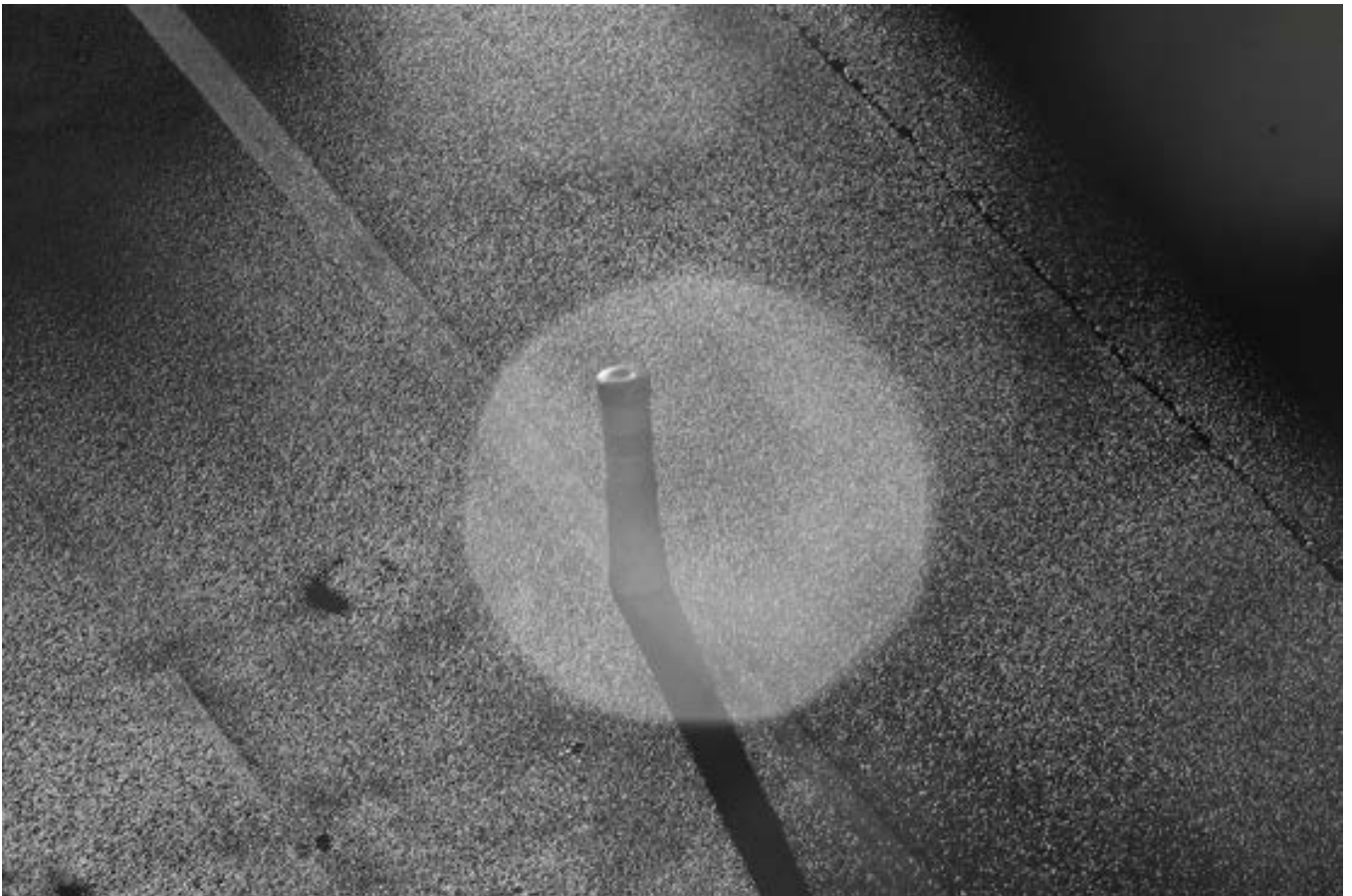






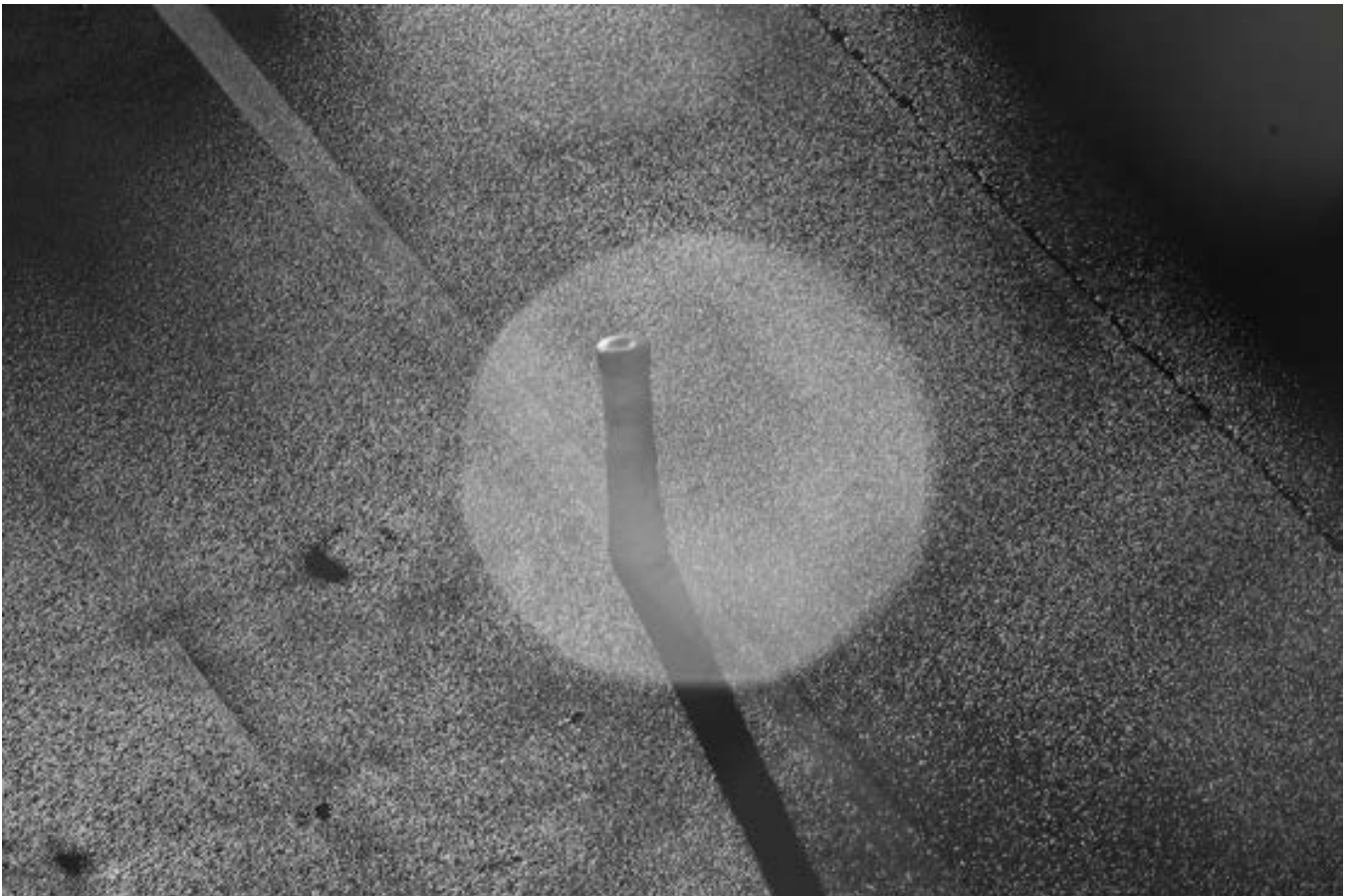














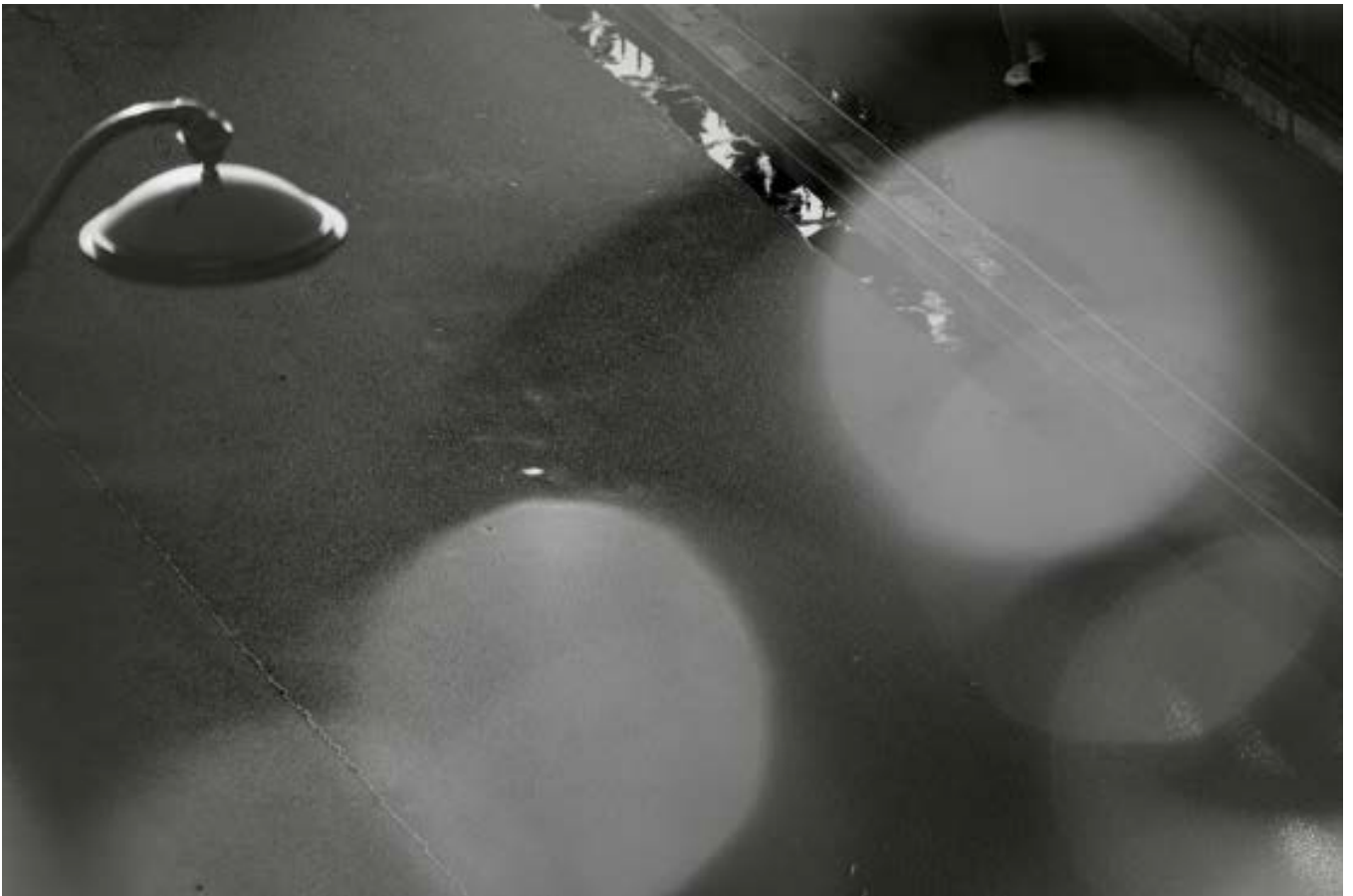


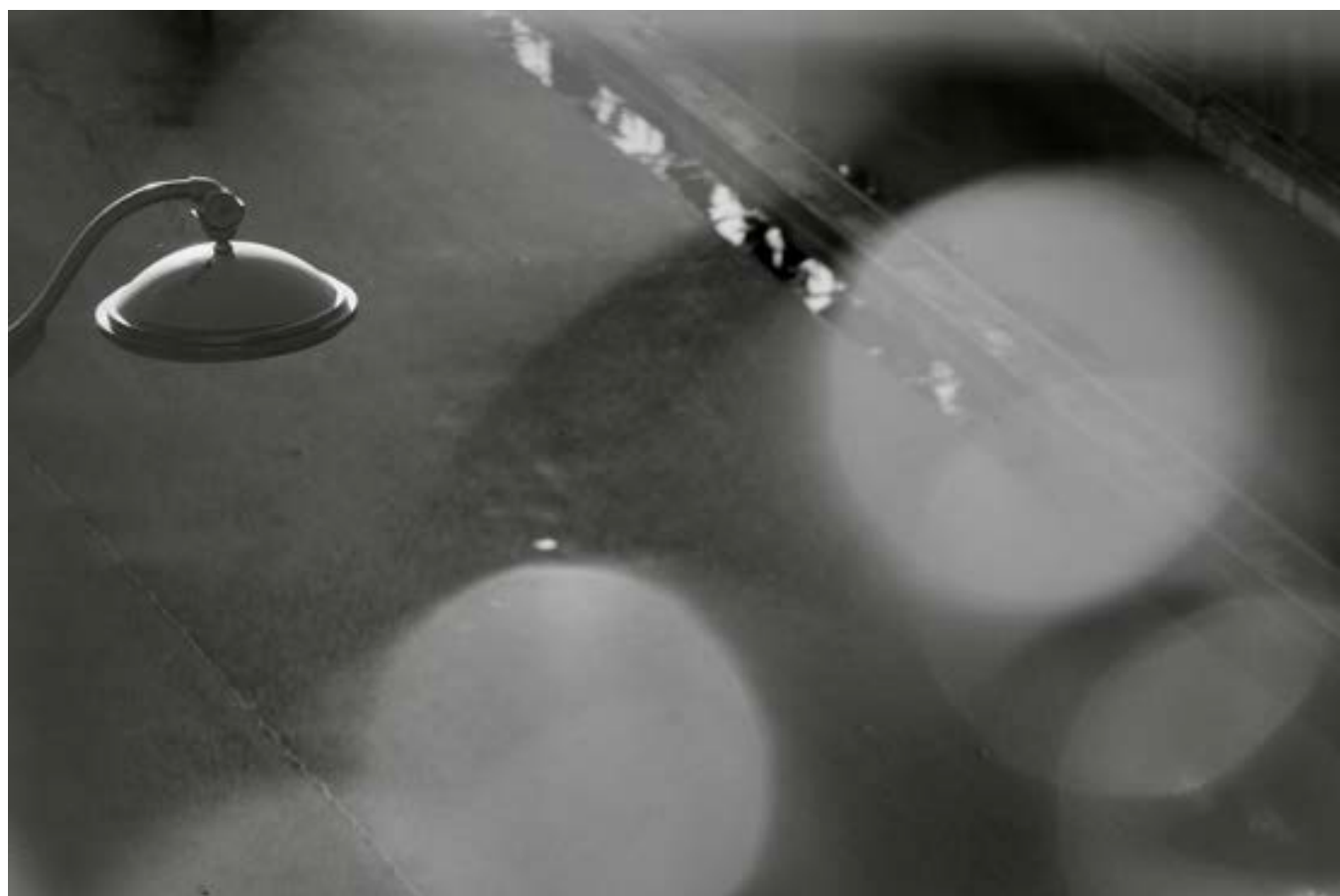


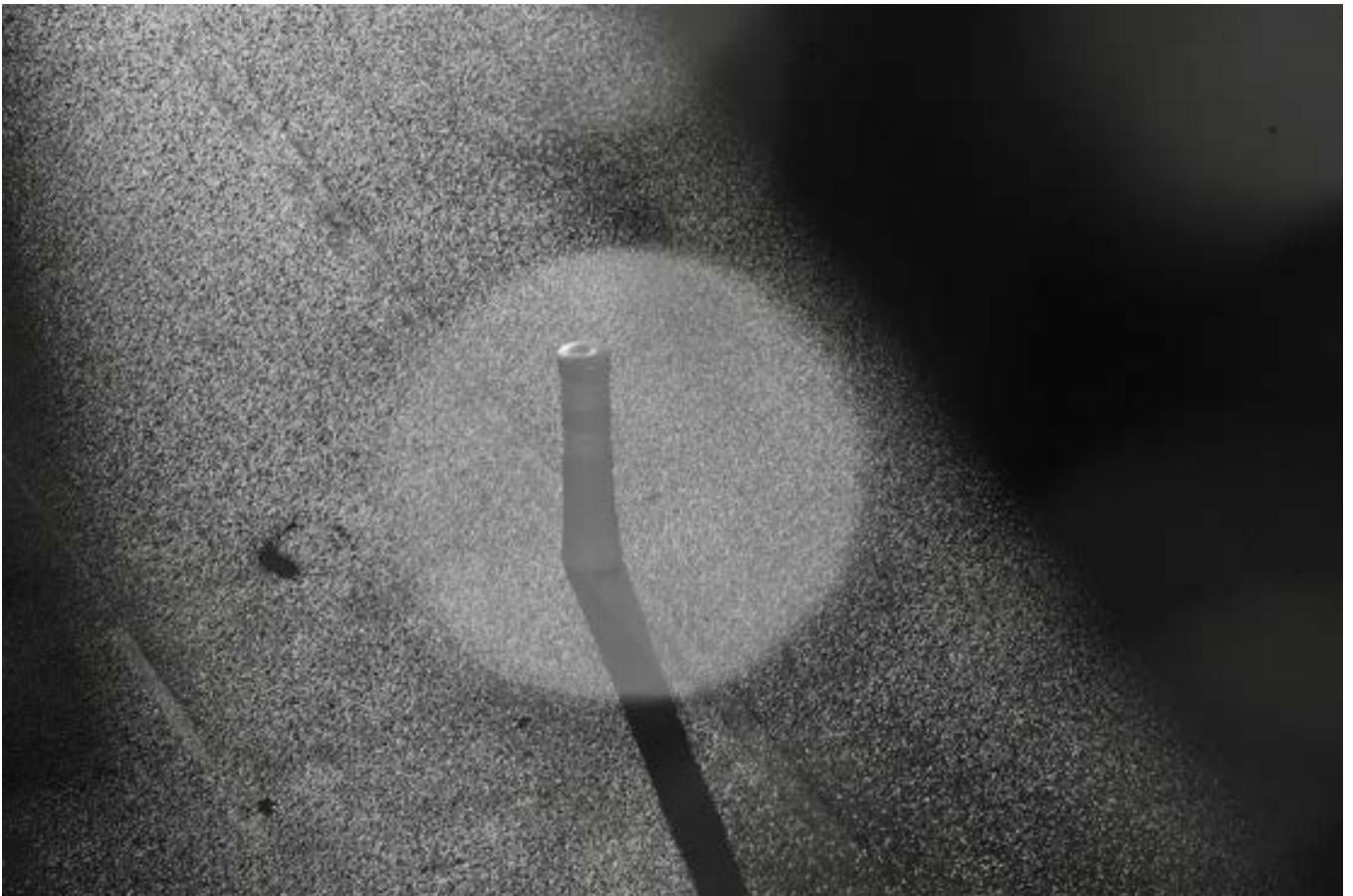




























































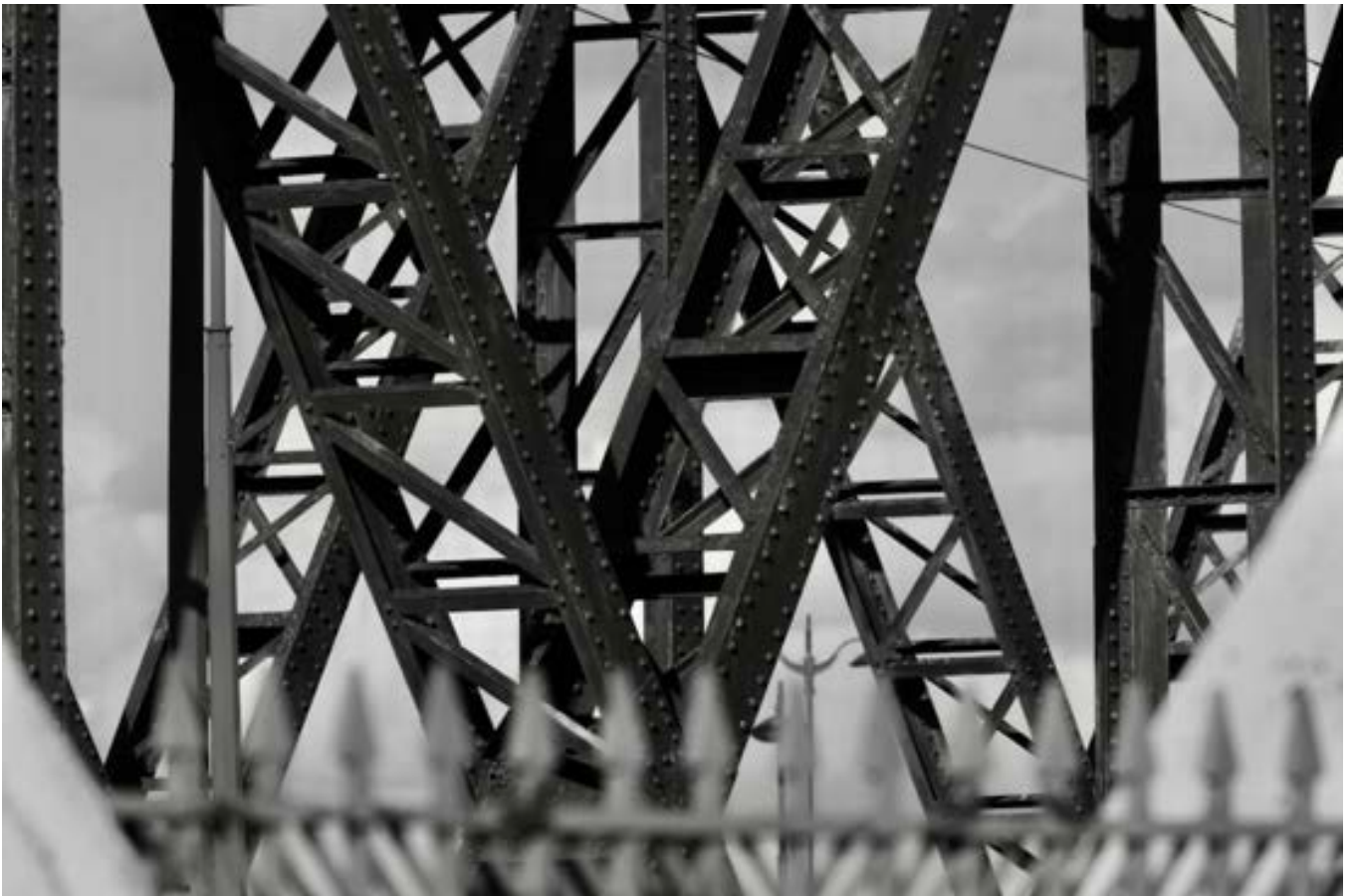
















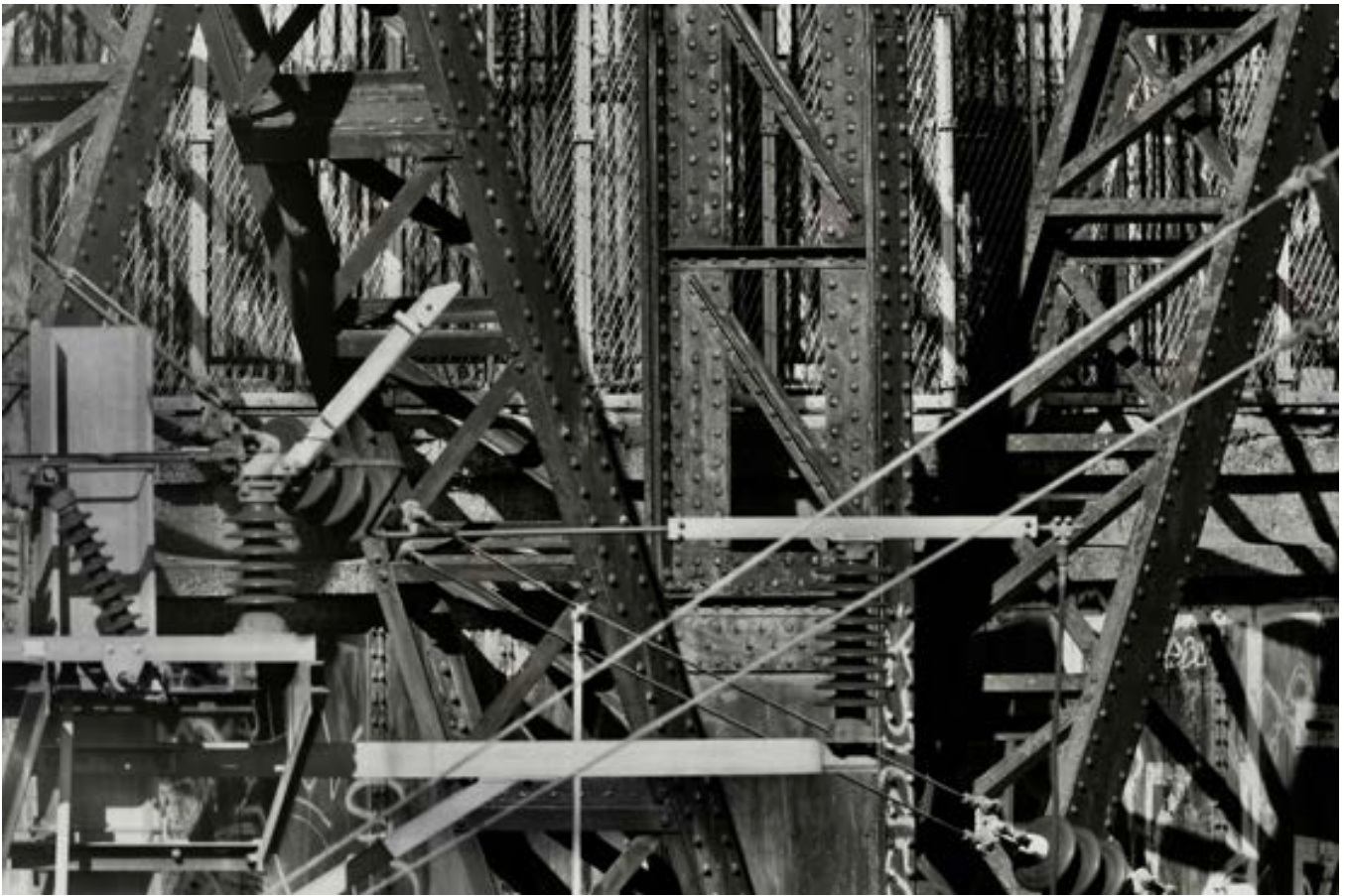
























































































## PONT PHOTOGRAPHIQUE

A bridge, an object, a space to be photographed, to be photographed on, at, in.

Like a car, a performance, a singer, maybe a model. Lovers, too. By themselves, in a movie, maybe tourism influencers.

I already performed there and will add another performance in spring 2025.

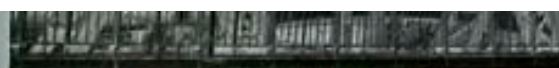
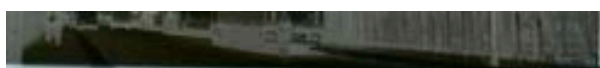
The Bridge as an event space, a stage, an experimental venue.

I did some photography there in that vein and in Spring 2025 will do some more.

If Book #6 is focusing exclusively on The Bridge, Book #7 will show various performances and experiments, with The Bridge as the stage.

If I can make one promise, it's that the photographs on the Pont Photographique will live up to the presence of the space, the stage, and the crossing of The Bridge day and night.

Hans Fleischner, December 2024, Vienna









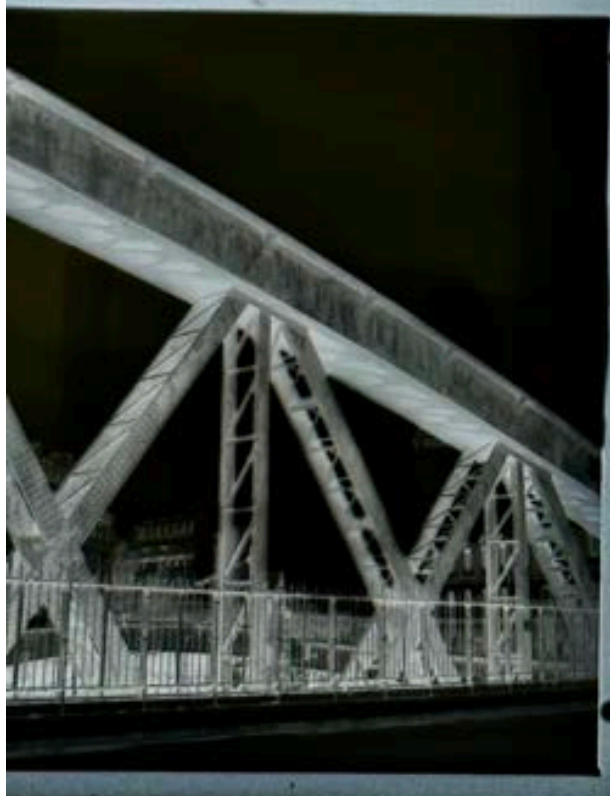






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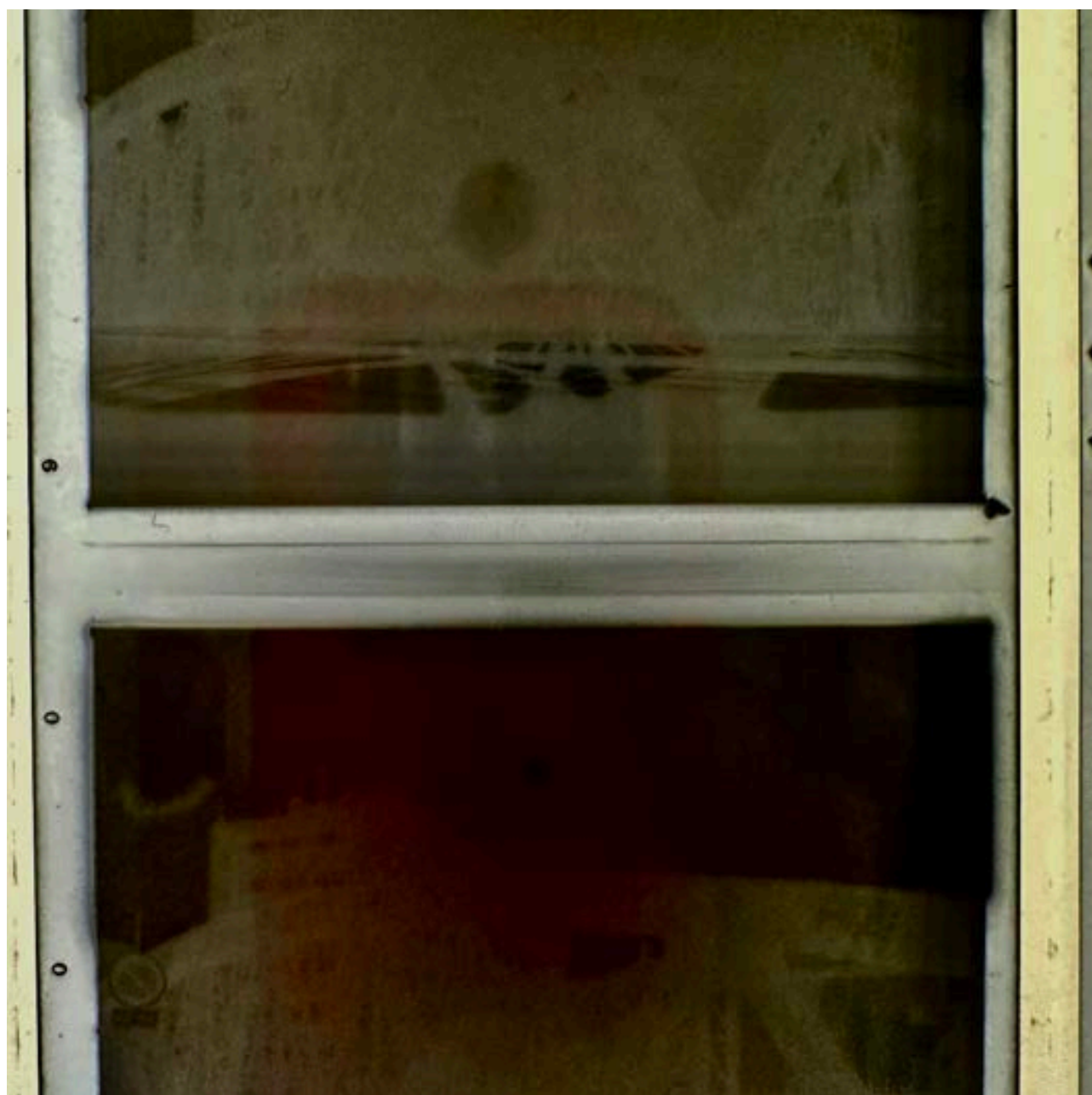














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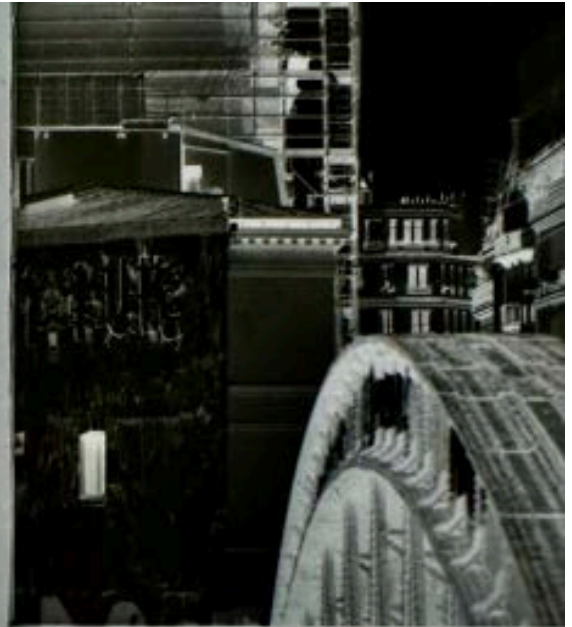
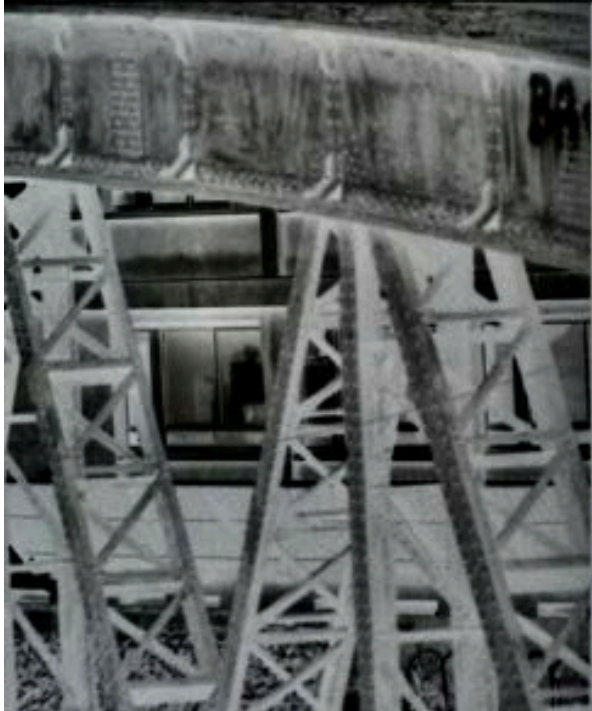
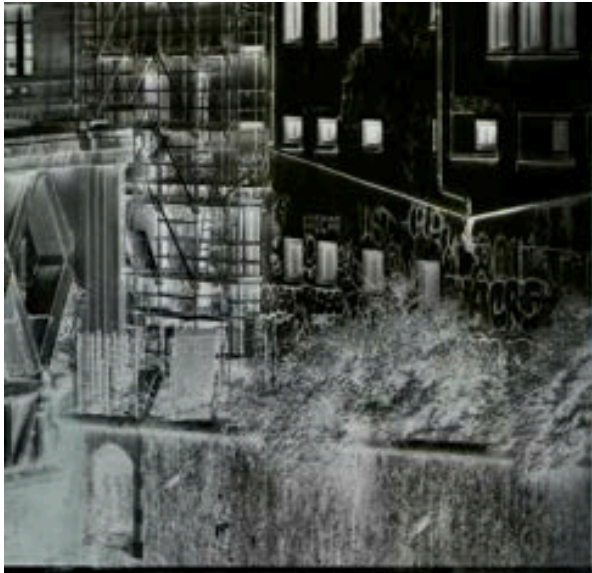
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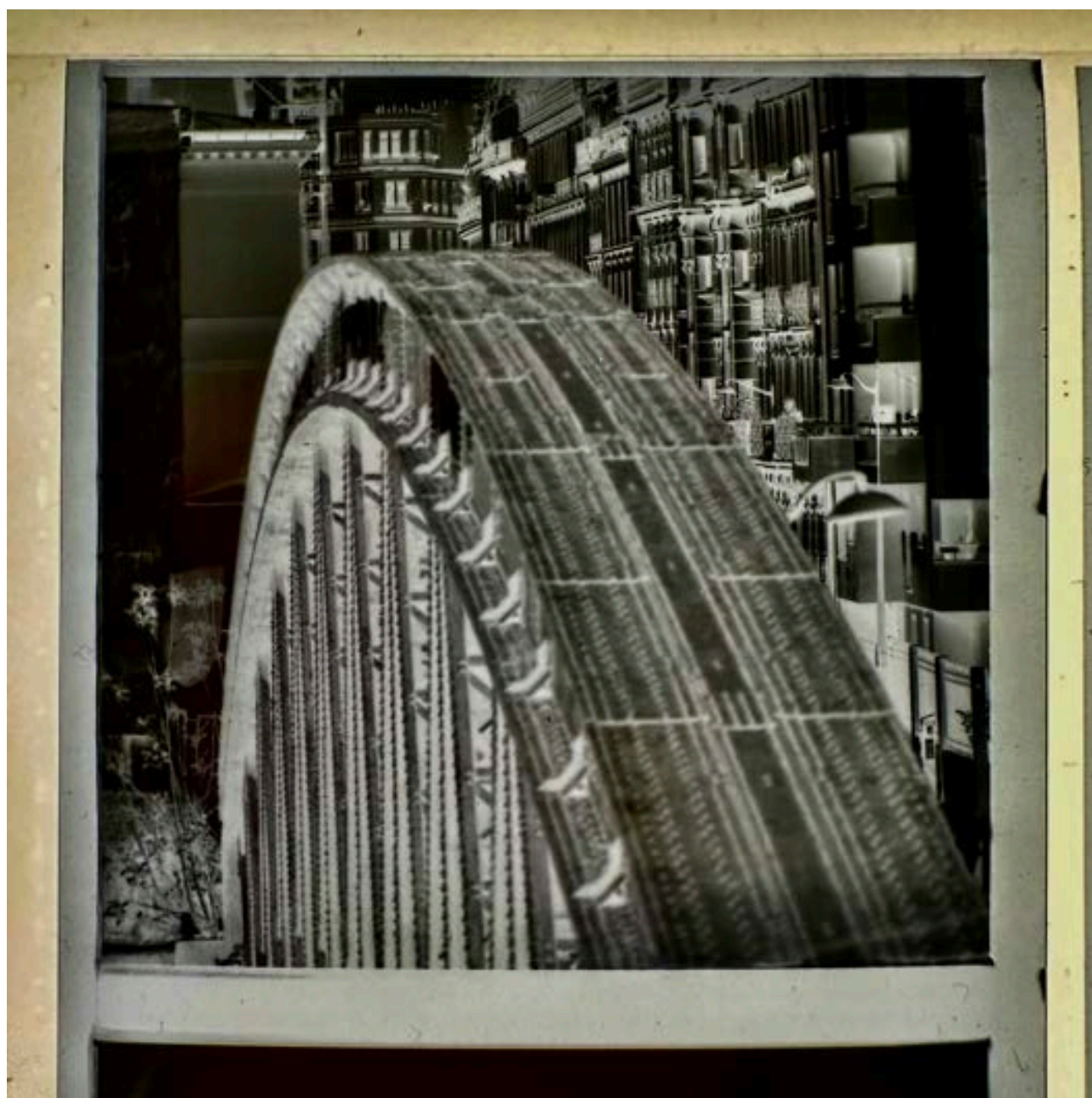














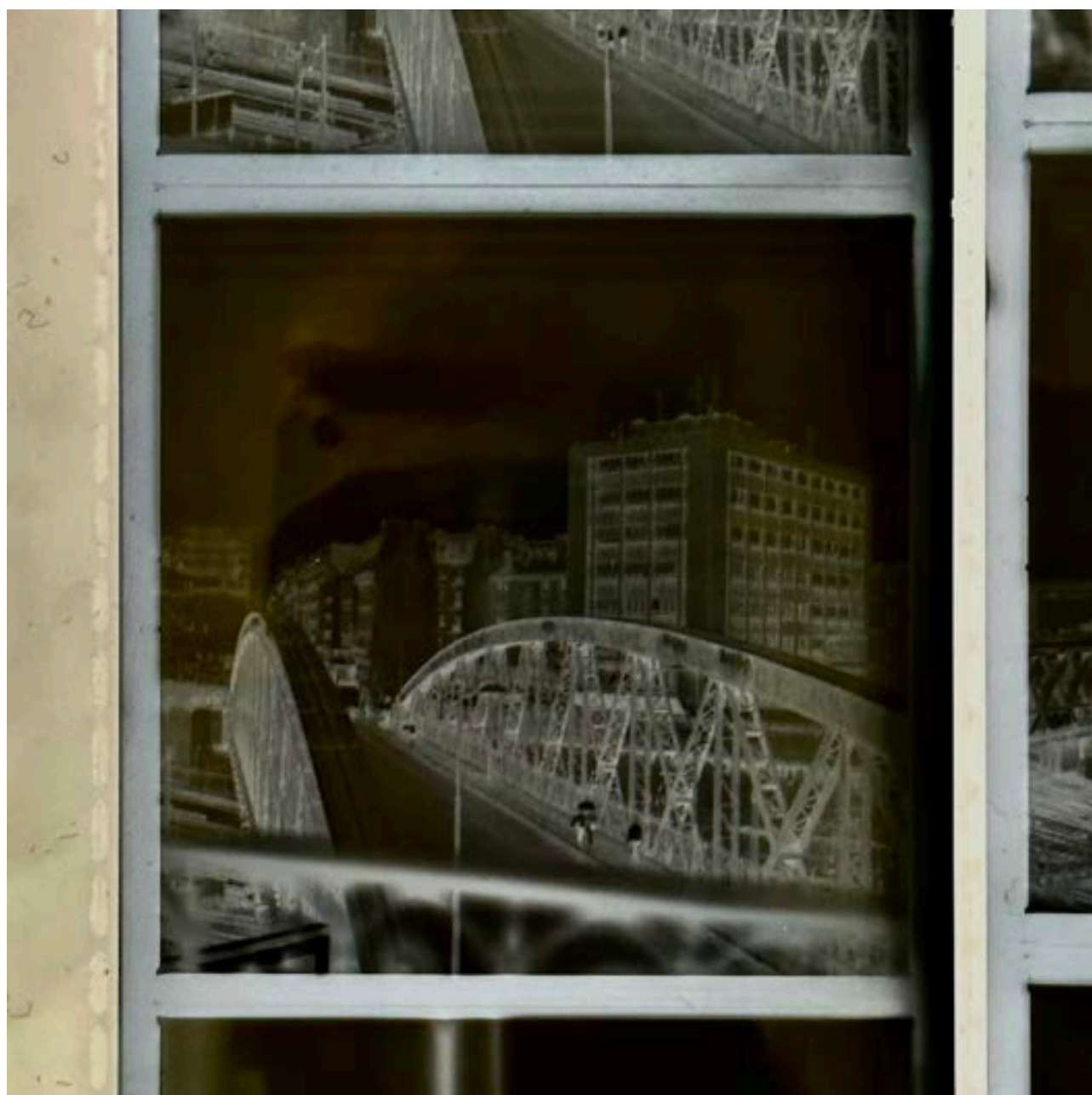






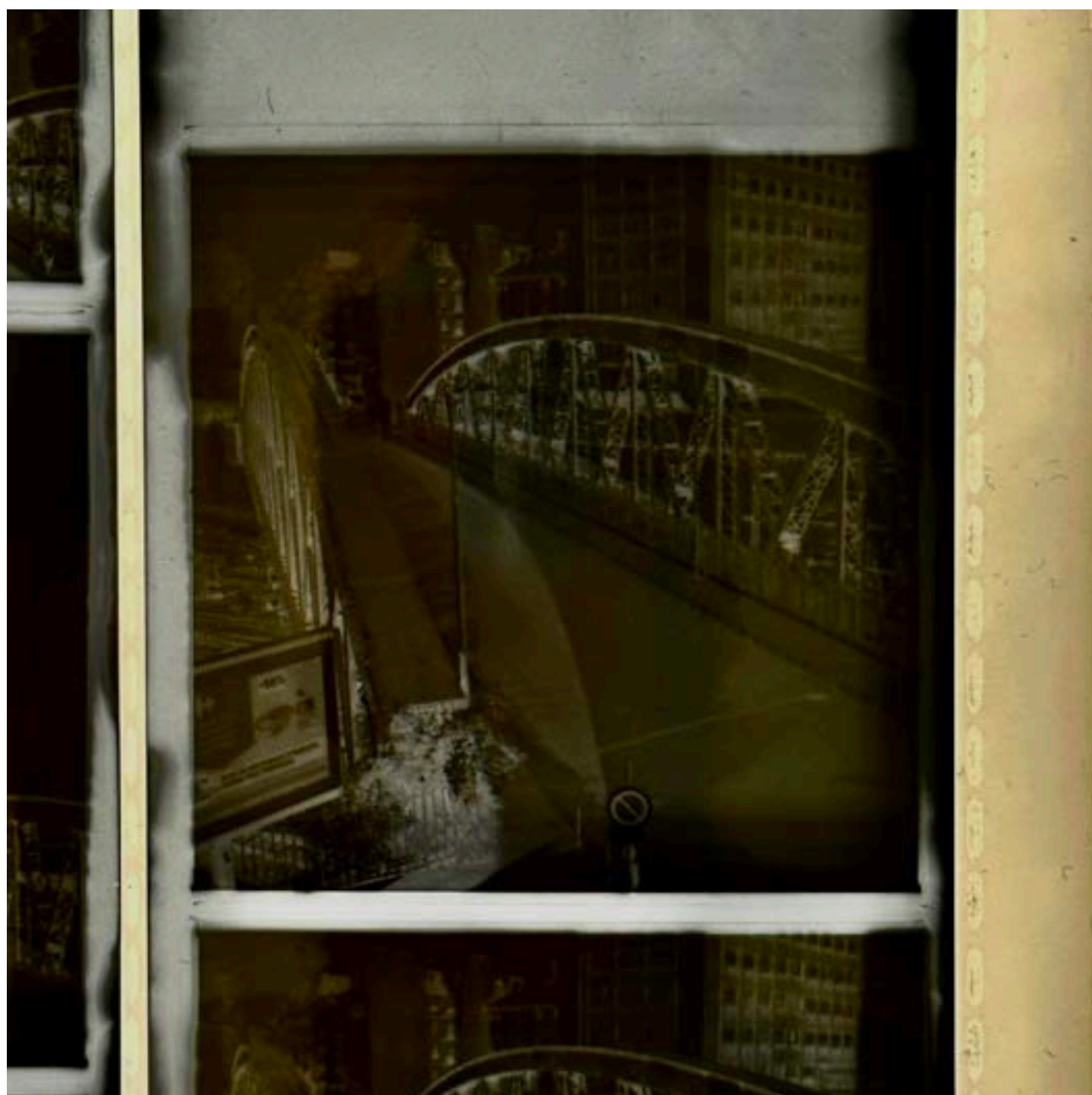


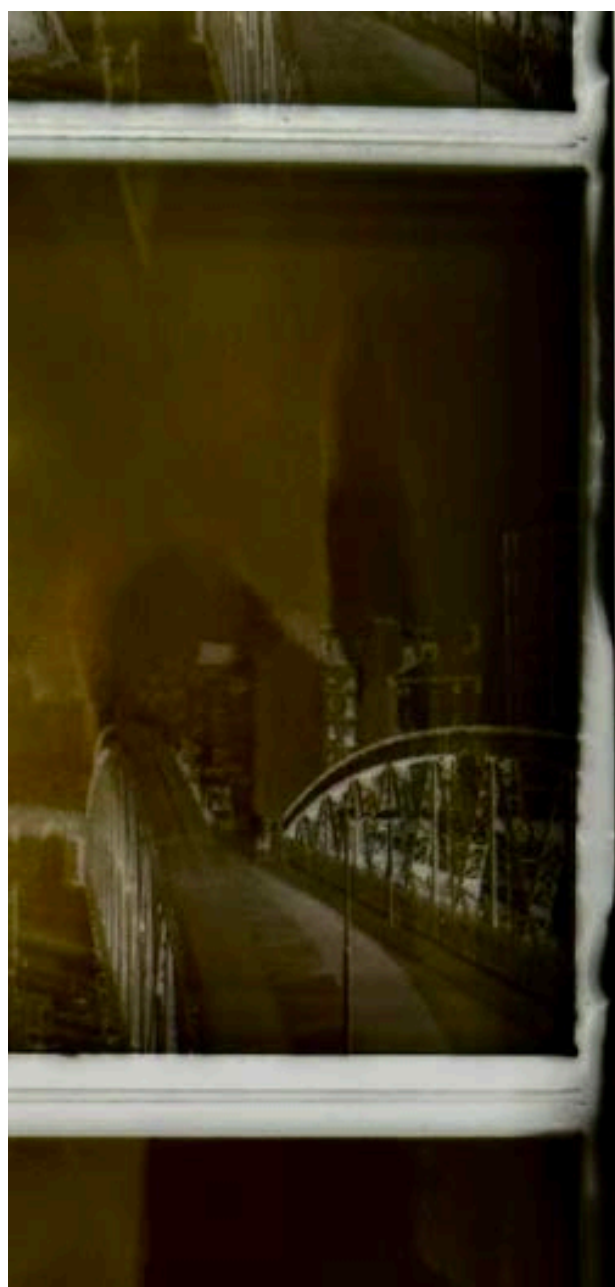








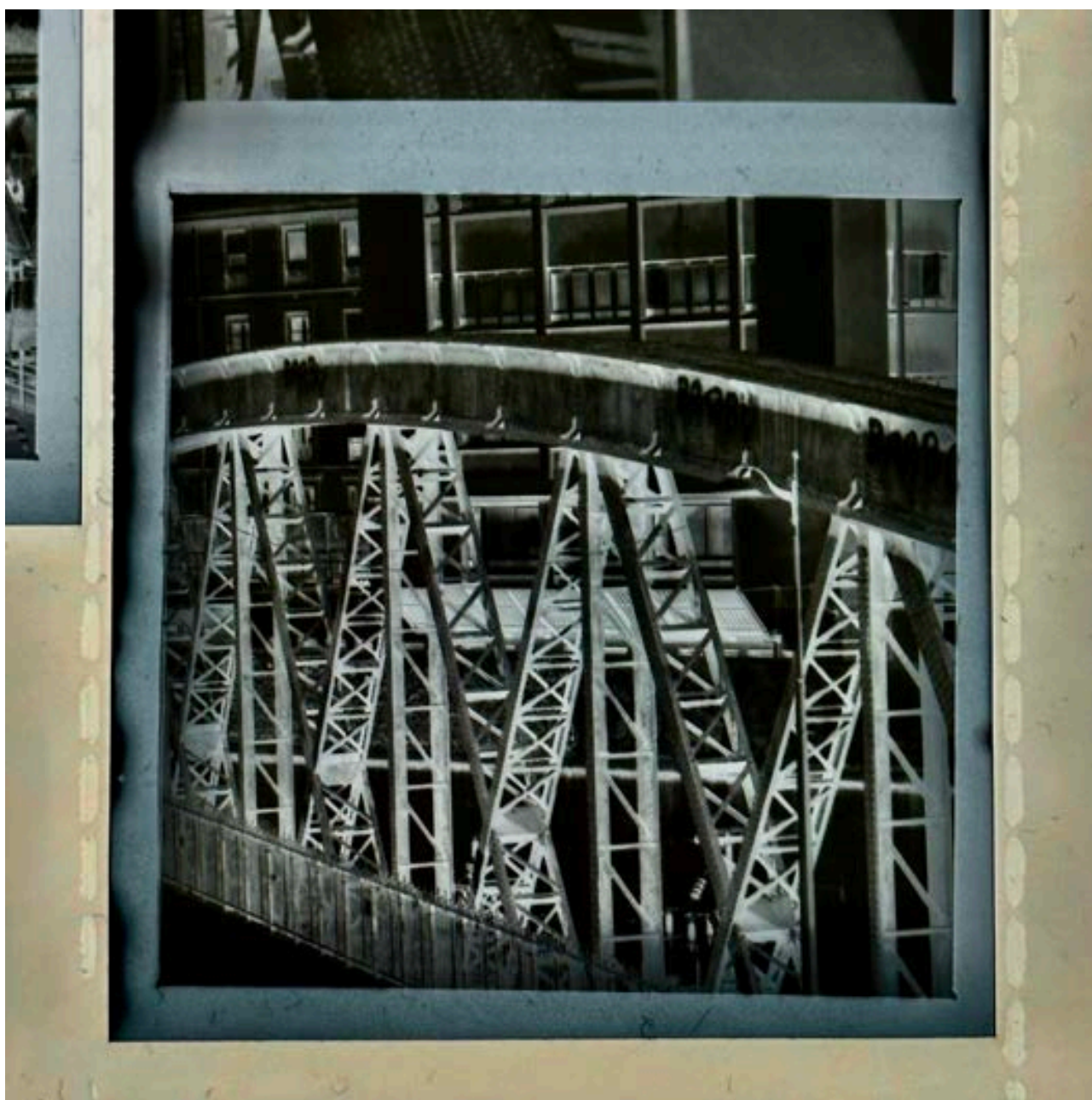


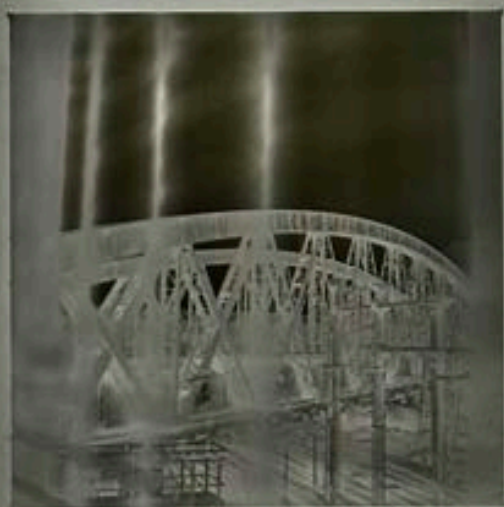


















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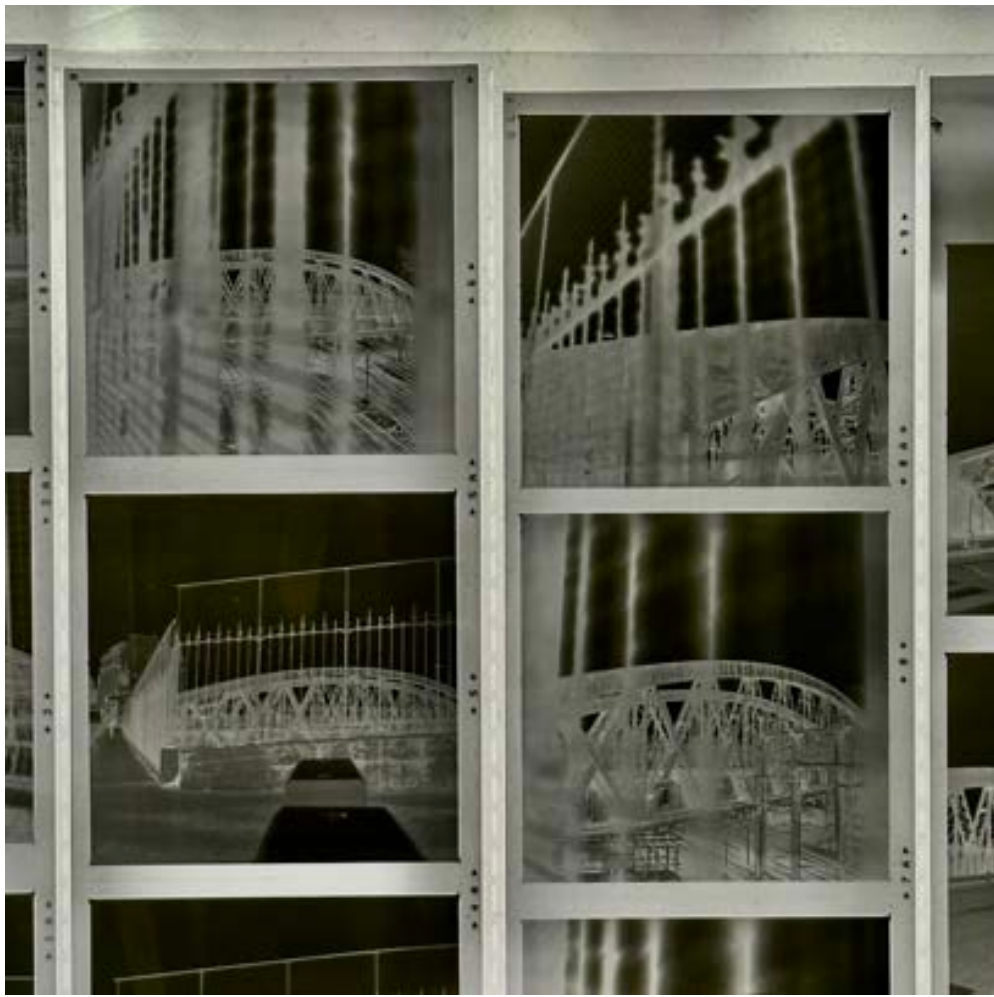
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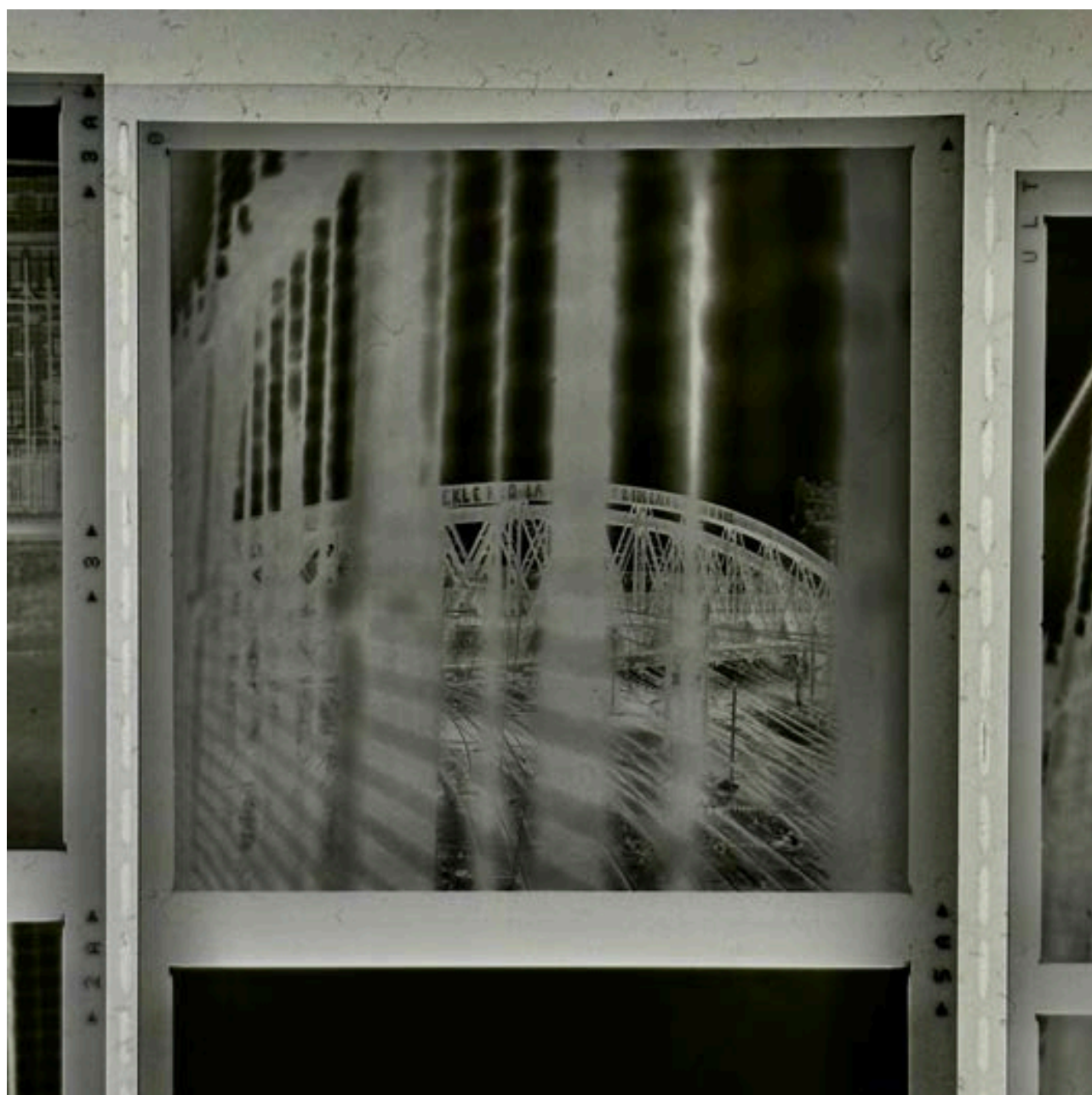
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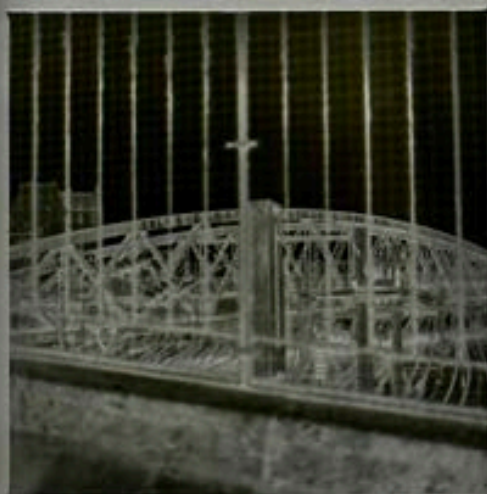
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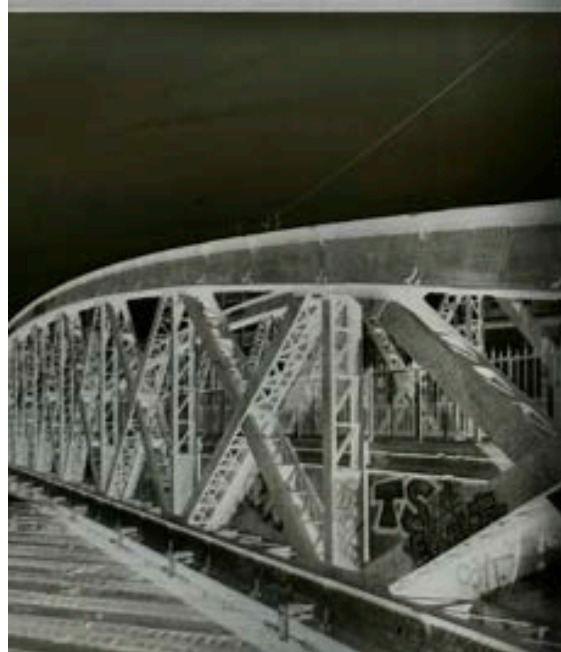








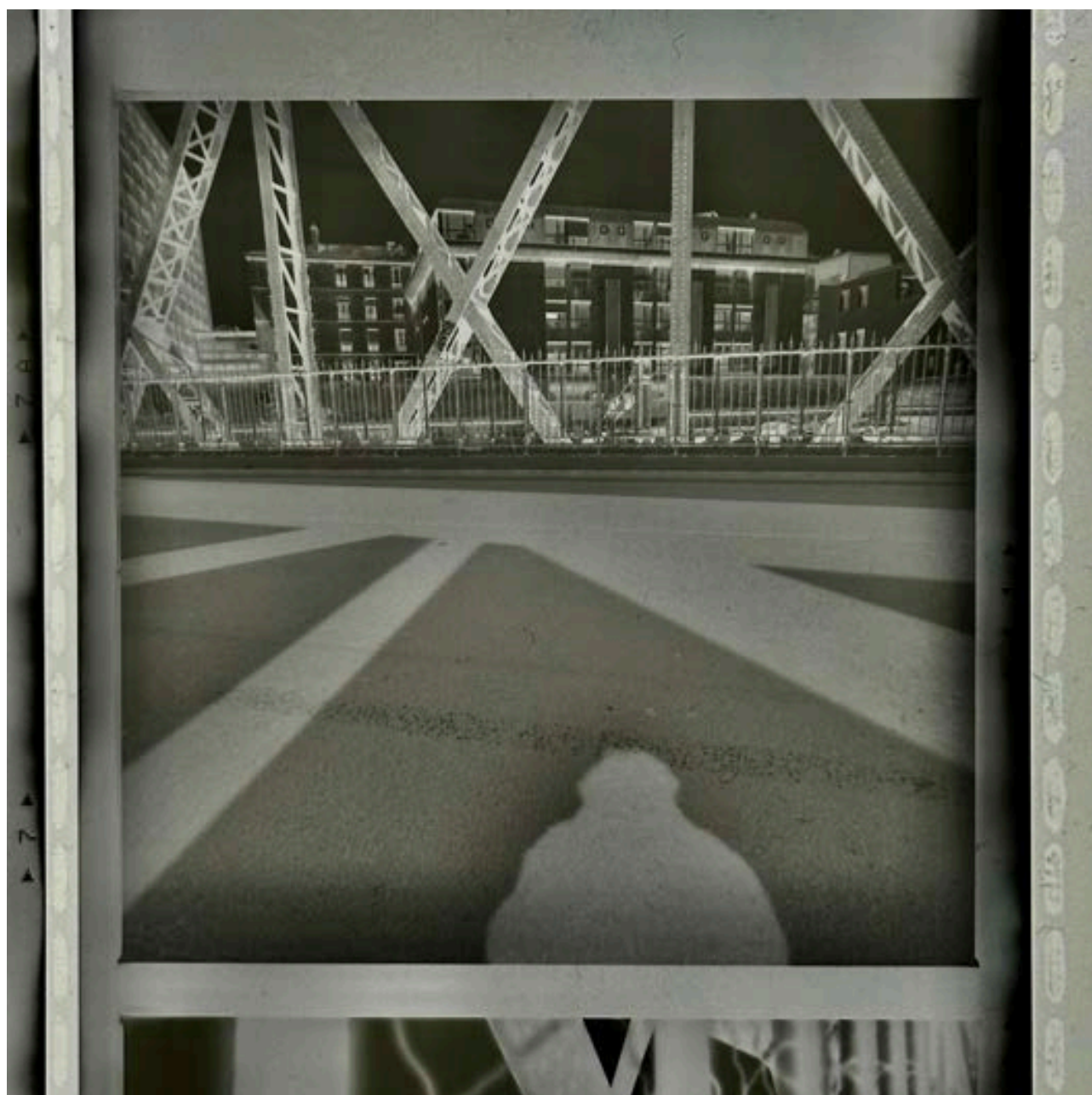
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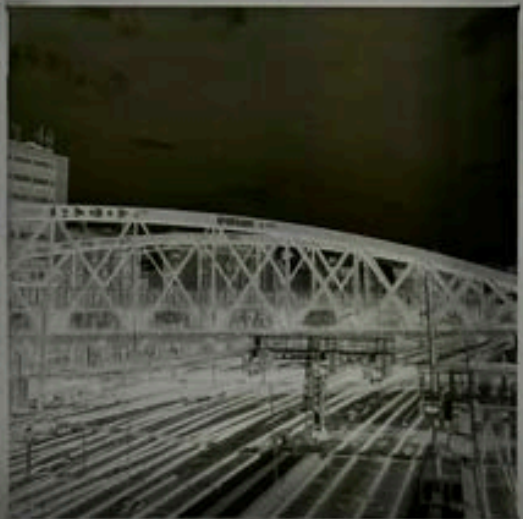














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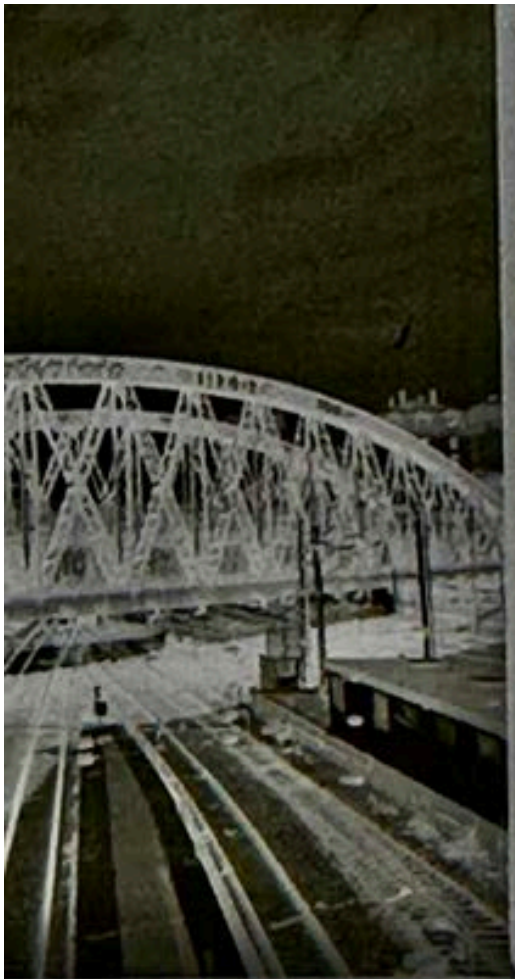


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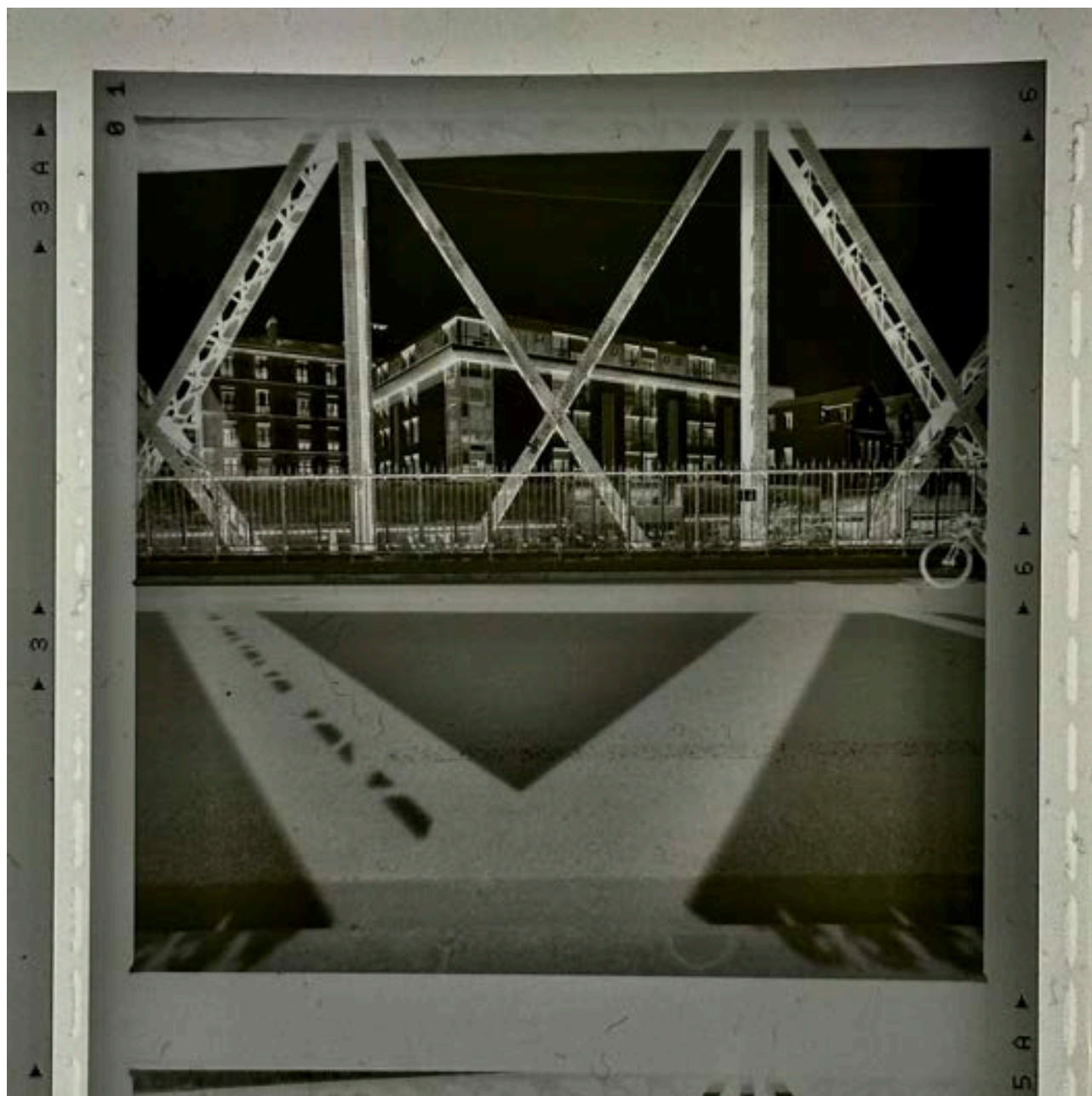














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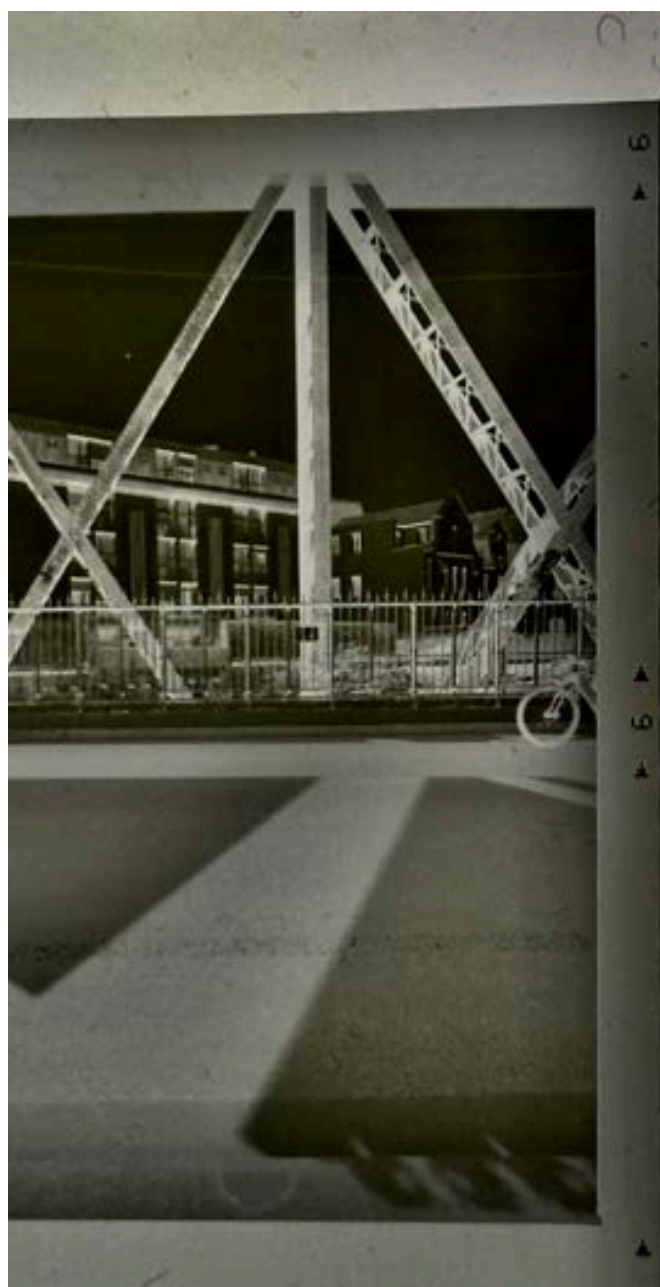




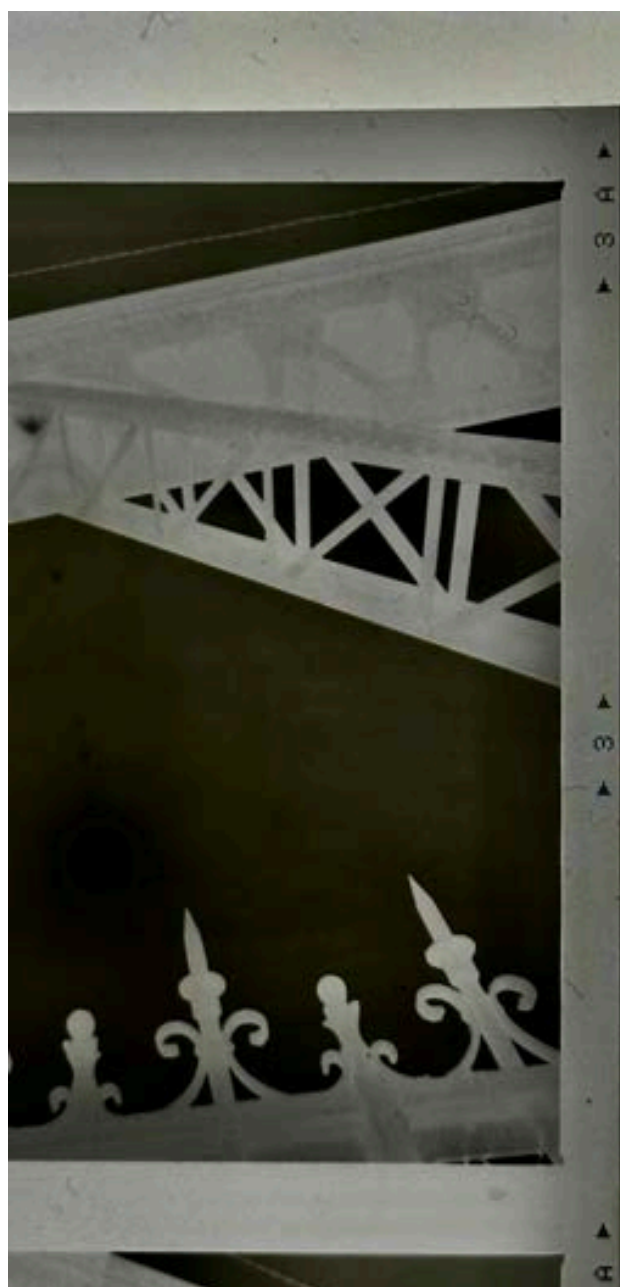
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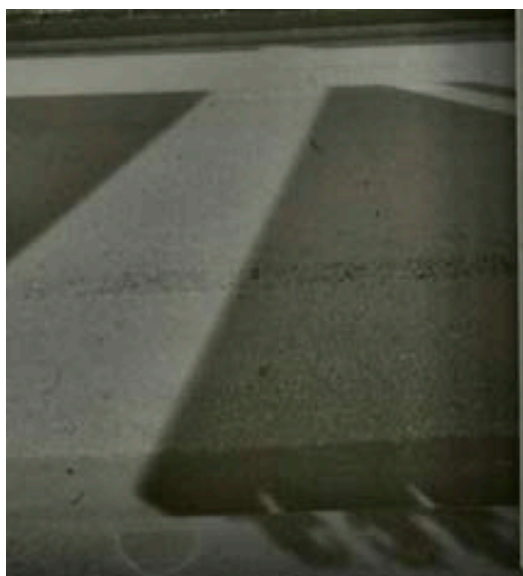




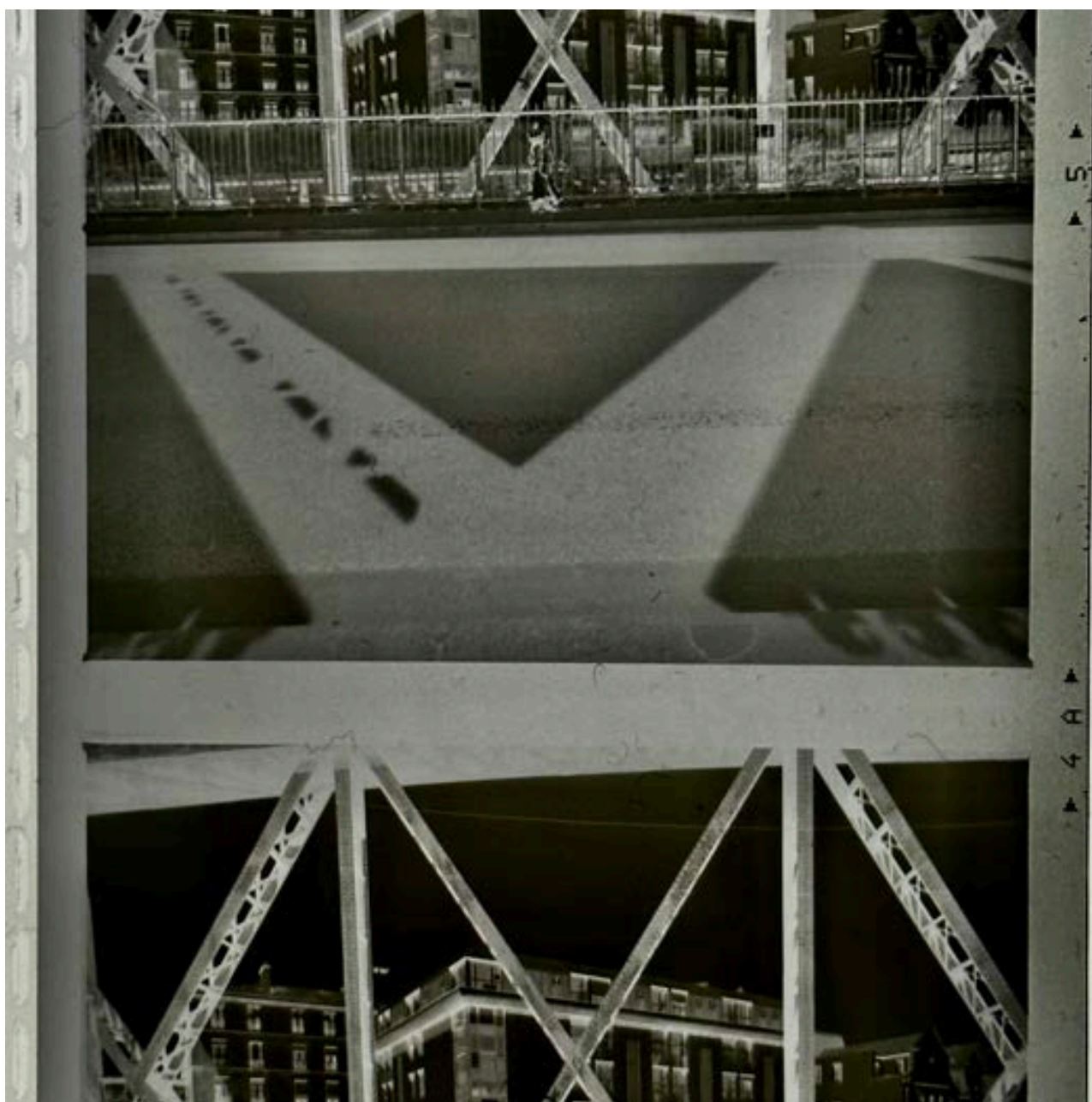


















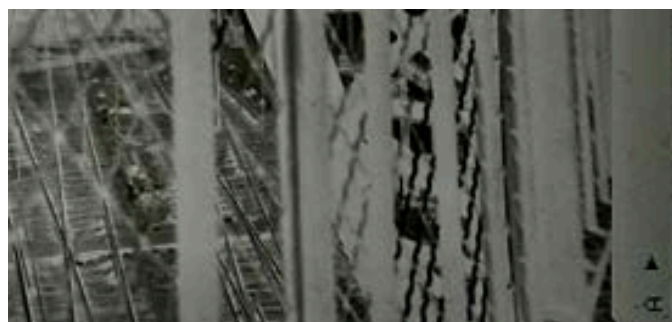








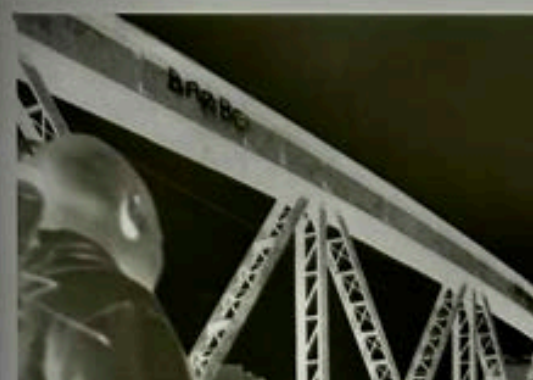




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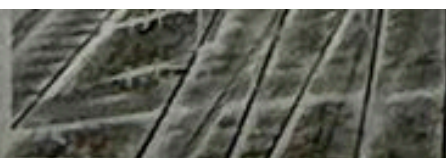






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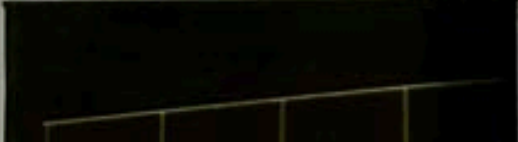
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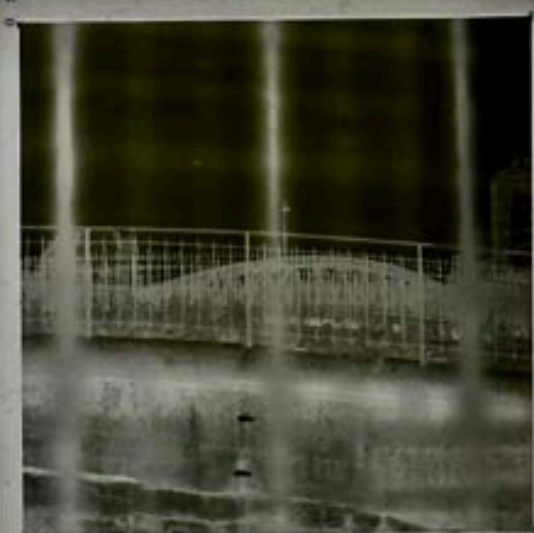


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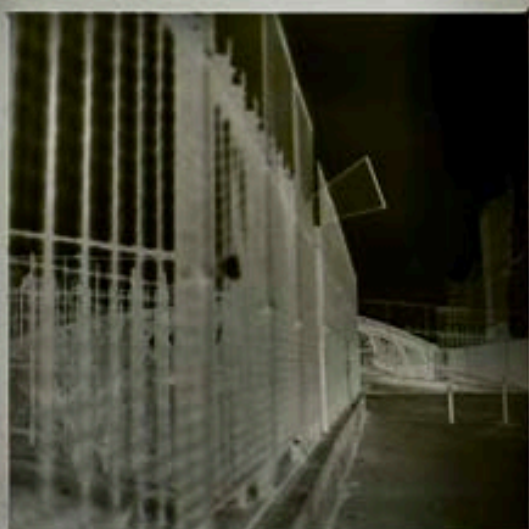
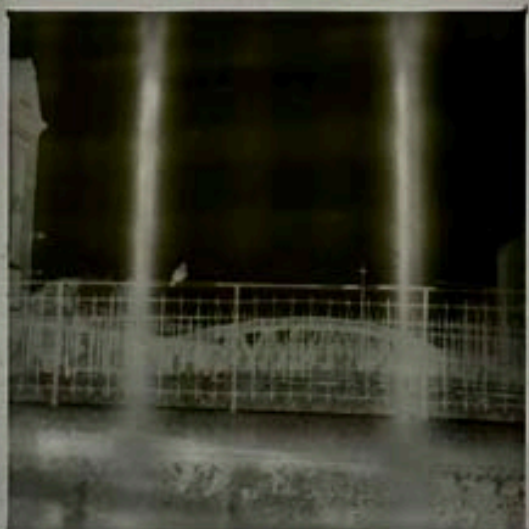
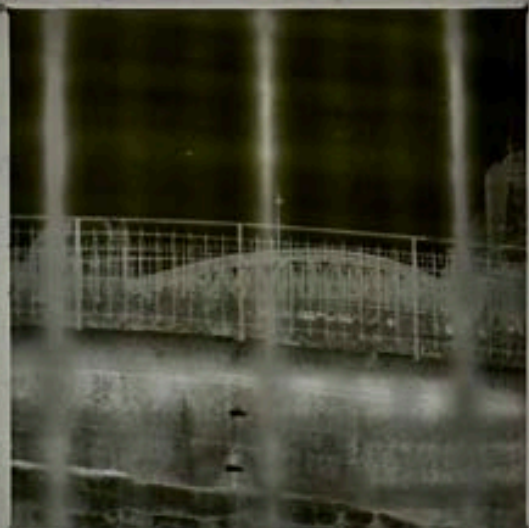


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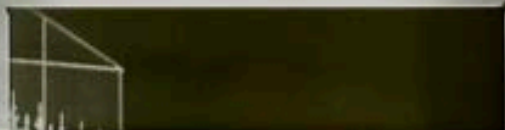
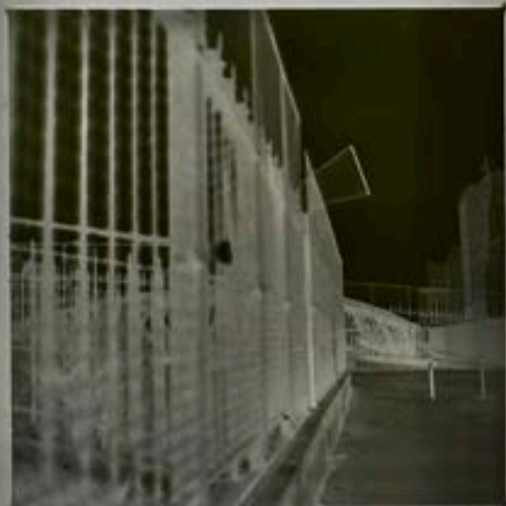


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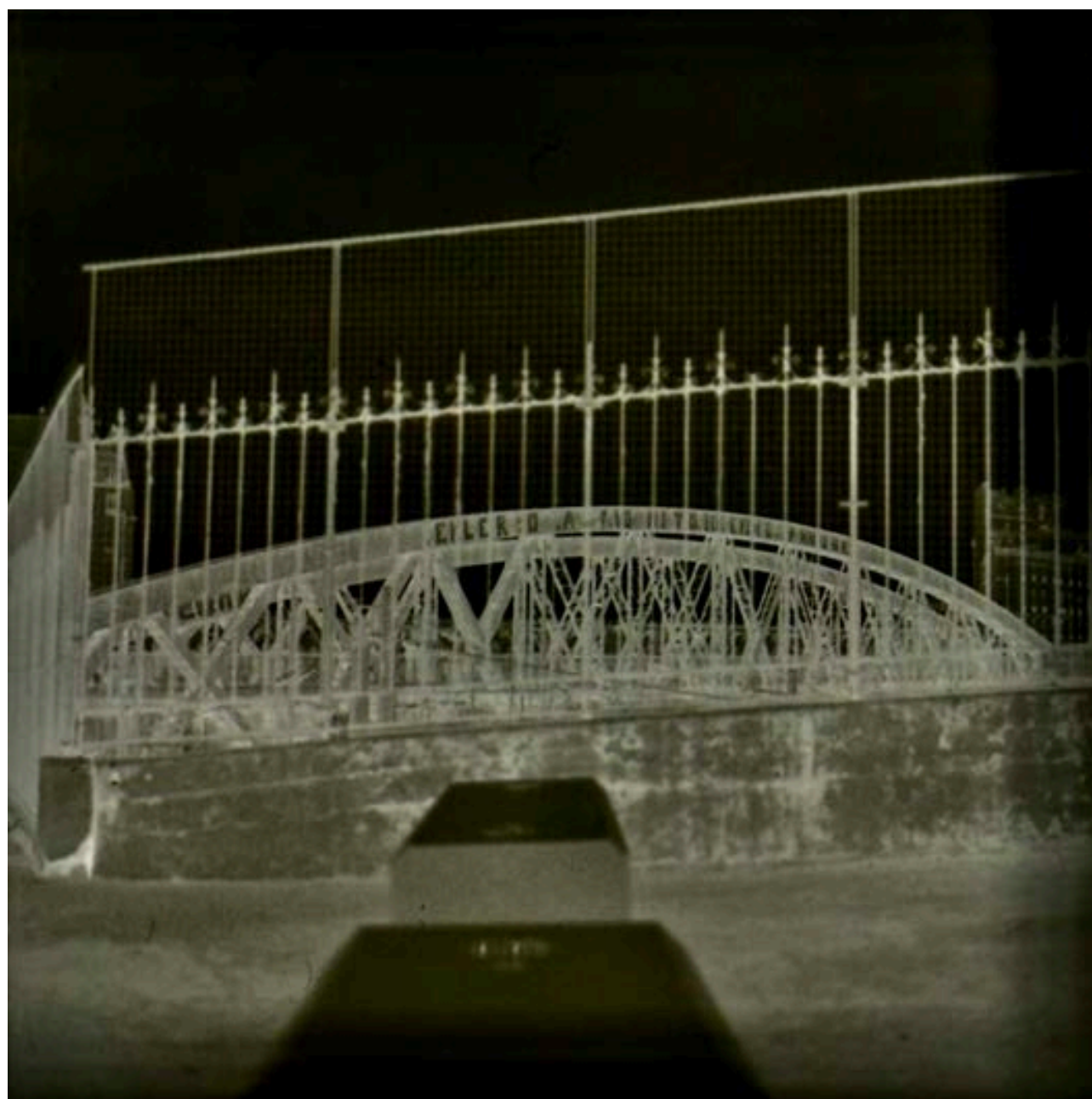


















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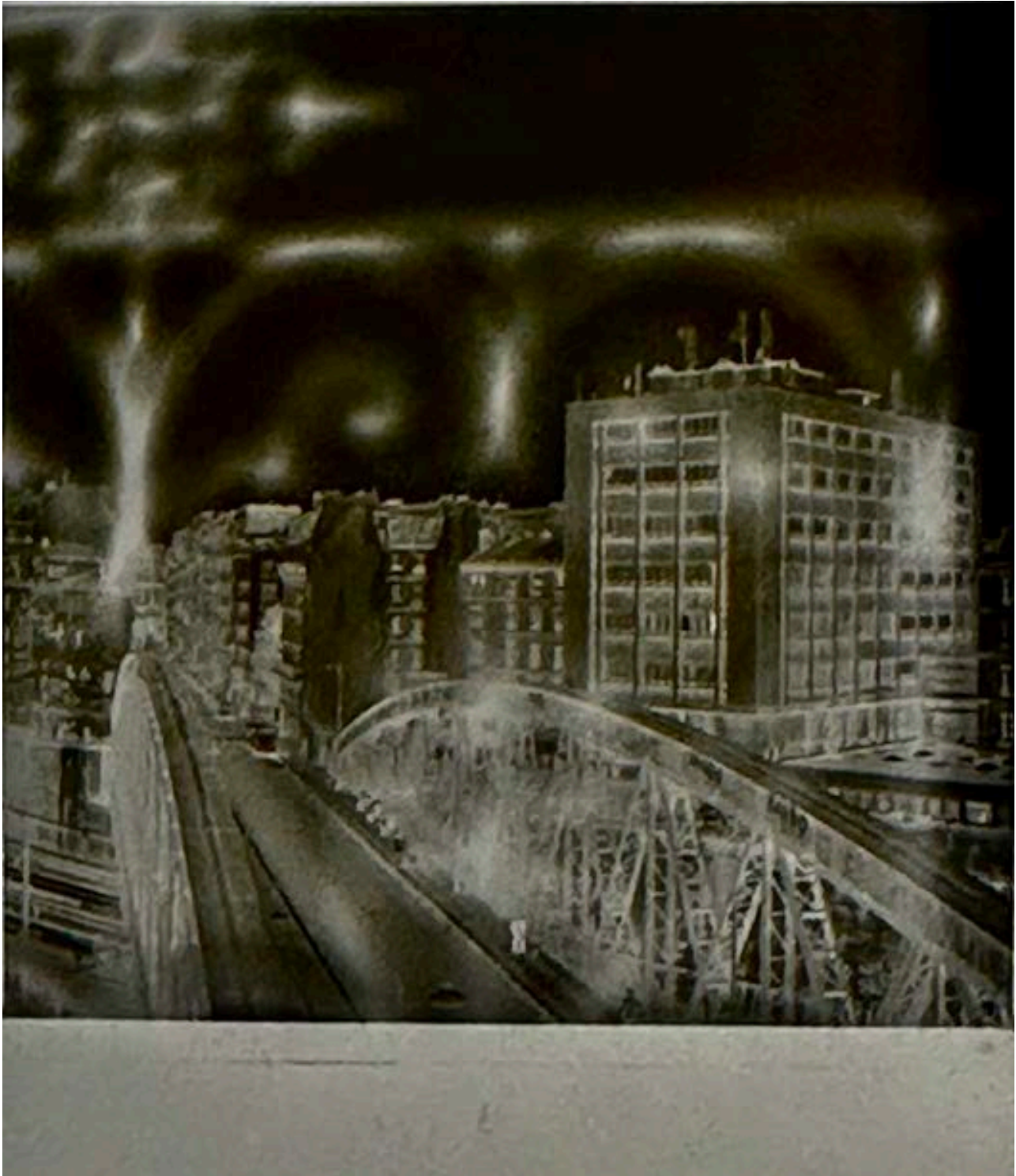
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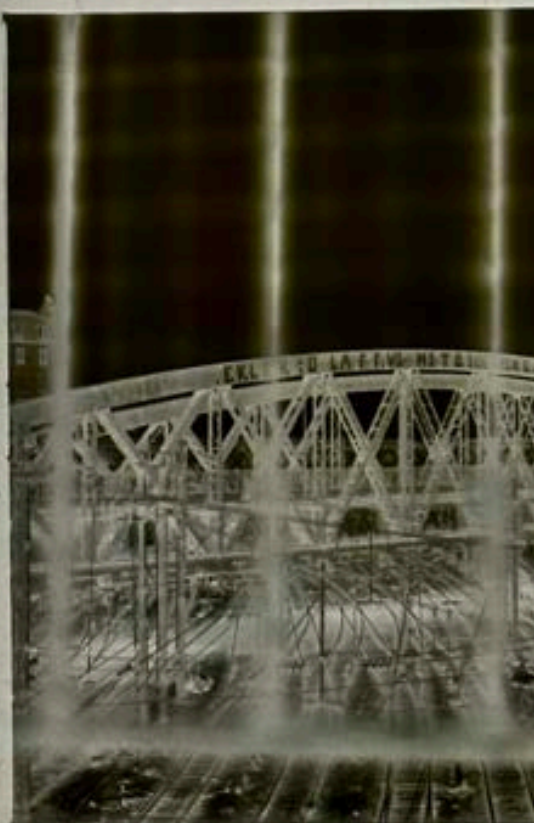
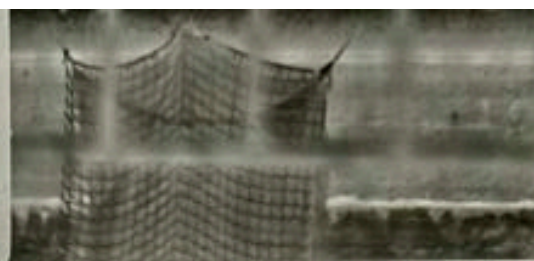
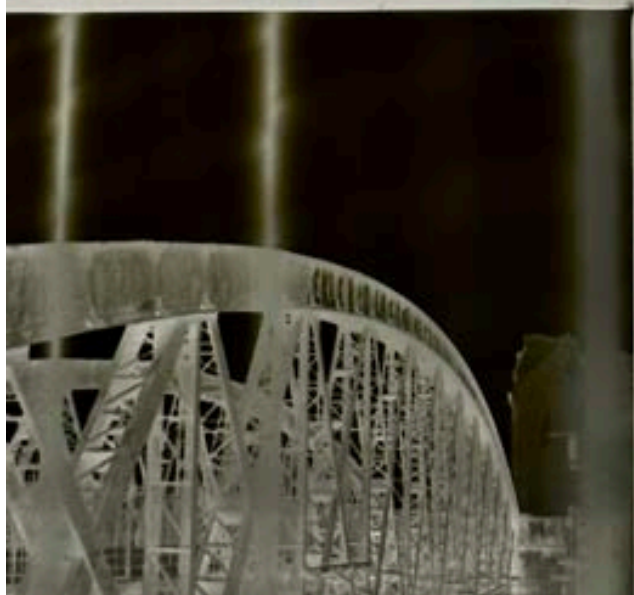












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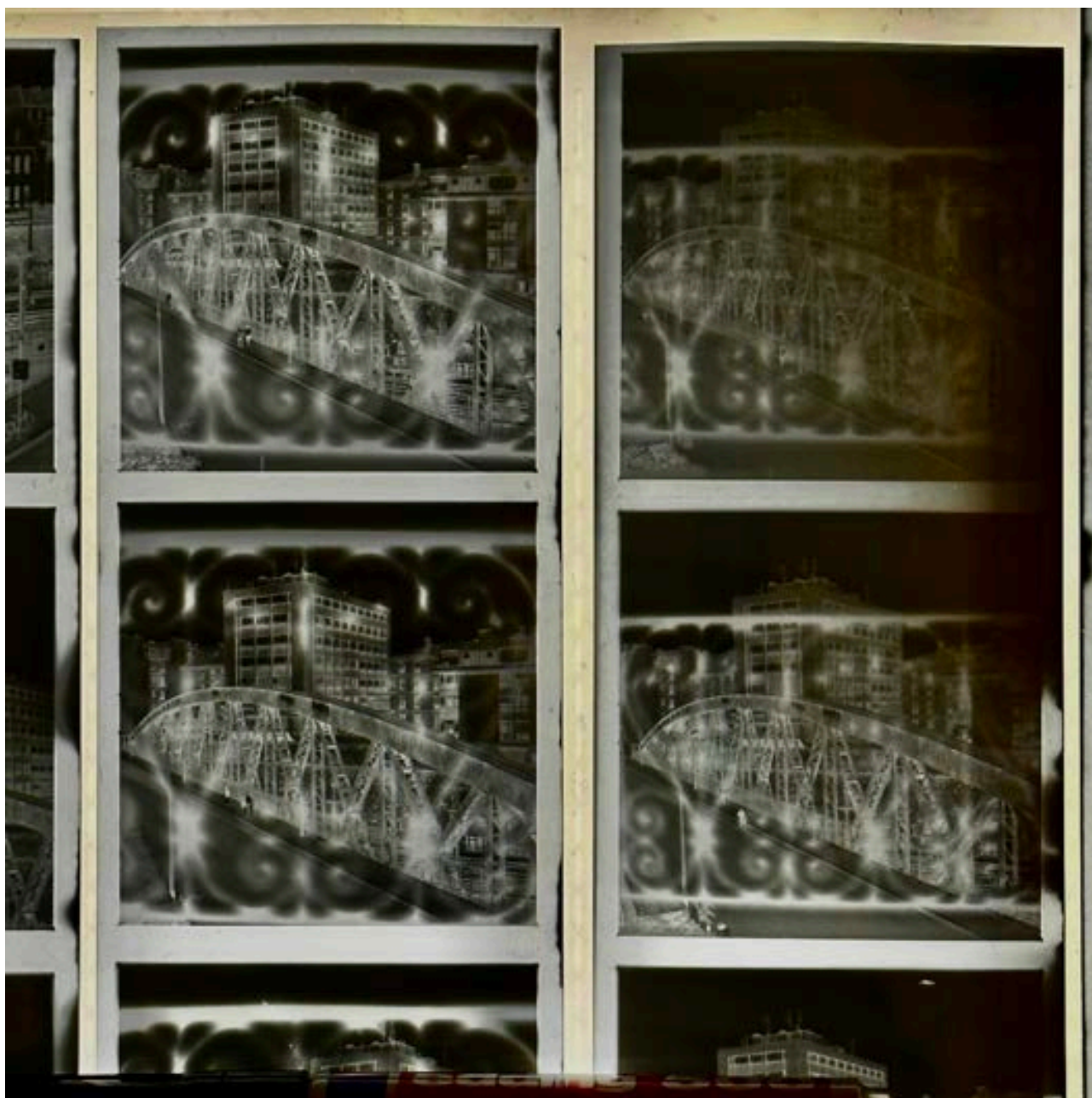


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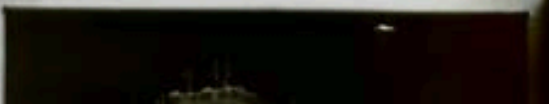
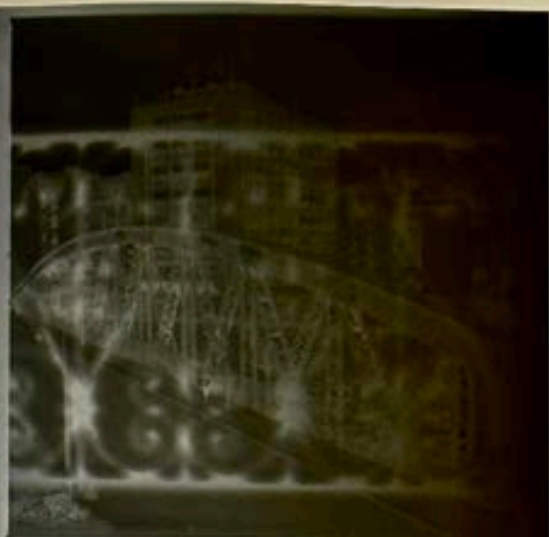
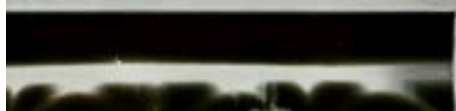
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Afterword / Preface.

The 6x6 (120) negatives where from two previous trips.

A good chance to use them now to close Book #6 of The Bridge, called Pont Photographique.

In Book #7 of The Bridge, some of the same will be included, plus plenty more images already mentioned earlier.

Hans Fleischner, January 2025, Vienna.

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