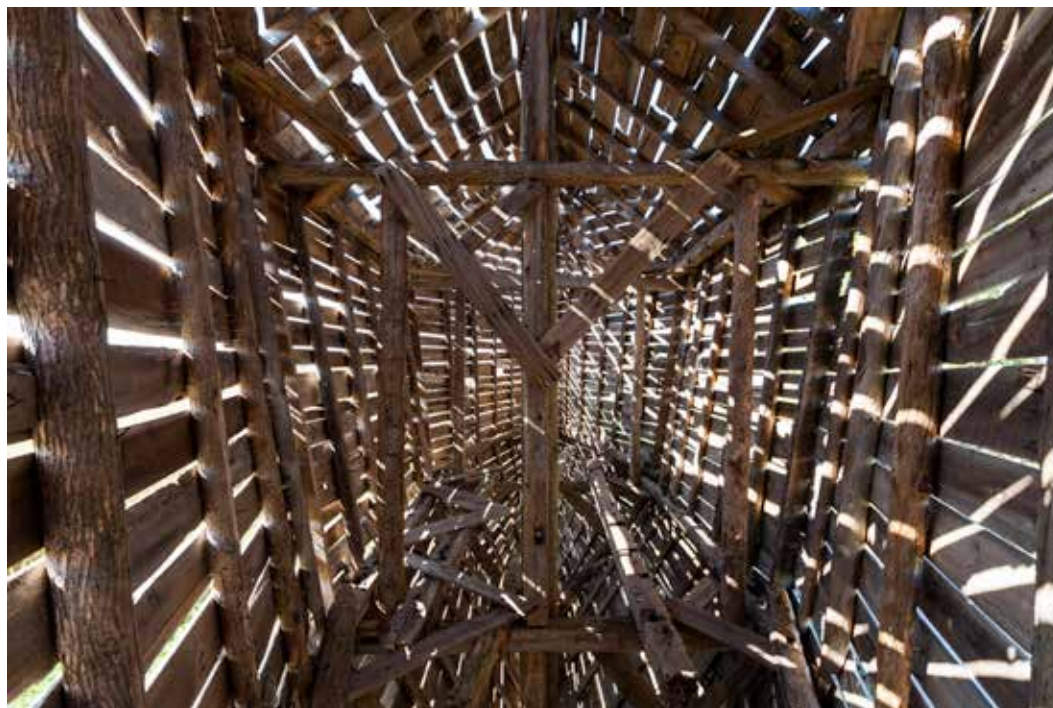**CELESTIAL SHIP OF THE NORTH (EMERGENCY ARK) AKA THE BARNBOAT**
2015
#0037, 2016, Port Austin, Michigan

Retreating/Retracing Space:
Scott Hocking's Diagrams of Visibility
Michael Stone-Richards

The archeology of the human spirit is one of the characteristics of ancient poetry. It consists in the attempt to consider the origins of things in light of the current experience of those things.
Seth Benardete[1]

Mixing the documentary mode with lyrical fiction, *The End of the World*, Scott Hocking's recent show at Susanne Hilberry Gallery, presented Detroit as a Surrealist archive.
Matthew Biro, "Scott Hocking"[2]

In geography similar to Istanbul's —
read for Lake Huron, the Black Sea,
for the St Clair River, the Bosporos,
for the Lake St Clair, the Sea of Marmara,
for the Detroit River, the Dardanelles,
and for Lake Erie, the Mediterranean —
a natural place for Ford and Olds to open factories,
strategically tangential to the Pittsburgh steel mills,
Akron rubber plants, the Mesabi iron ore range.
Here, in ultimate concentration, is industrial
America […]
　　　　　　the capital of a new planet.
Lawrence Joseph, "Here in a State of Tectonic Tension"[3]

Contextualizing Scott Hocking's Practice (I): Neo-Constructivism
The epigraphs to this essay are not ornamental but are present to ease the reader's—and this writer's—way into a reflexive account of a critical practice that in many ways has come to be representative of the most urgent post-studio art emerging from Detroit these past twenty years or so. This practice has also been foundational for the writer of this essay to understand the complex and layered plural histories of Detroit as well as provid-

ing the means of entering into new vocabularies for thinking the practice of the City—the idea of the City and not just Detroit—in contemporary representation. What I shall call the first moment of contextualization for Hocking's transdisciplinary practice shows it to occupy a position that straddles Detroit—both city and function, Detroit and the plurality of representations that Detroit can fulfill[4]—and a certain language of international art. The contextualizations that are here proposed should be understood as moments and dimensions of a complex and dynamic set of practices.

A convenient way to begin to understand Hocking's practice would be to put it in dialogue with Tyree Guyton's Heidelberg Project (HP) by drawing upon two distinct discourses: Neo-Constructivism and Post-Surrealism. The HP is now more than thirty years old and has become world famous not least among urbanists, architects, and social practitioners. There is a precise moment when HP began to extend beyond Detroit and in so doing came to embody a particular vision of architectural discourse, when HP fully began to escape its folk reception and became part of an architectural avant-garde. The person more than any other responsible for this is the conceptual architect Kyong Park, a co-founder of Storefront for Art and Architecture in New York. Here it is important to note that Kyong Park's practice and vision of urbanism and architectural discourse is fundamentally Neo-Constructivist. When Park left Storefront to move to Detroit, he brought with him a vision of urban voiding that he had explored in exhibitions of what he and his collaborators called "warchitecture," focusing on cities damaged through sustained violent or military conflict such as Beirut, Belfast, and Sarajevo.[5] A photograph of a building in Yugoslavia with civil war-damaged cladding and then shown without cladding as a result of war destruction is used at the opening of Park's collaborative anthology *Urban Ecology: Detroit and Beyond*.[6] It is almost the only trace that remains of Park's initial conception of Detroit as a city within the United States that is most like an example of the voiding and damage of *warchitecture*.[7] War's impact on the fabric of a city and its architecture was one means of understanding the voiding of a city and how such voiding could irretrievably change the representation of the city not only to others but to itself. Similar effects also could be achieved through sustained economic depression/reorganization and the extraction of resources from a city capable of leaving voids and collapsed populations in its wake. From the Neo-Constructivist viewpoint characteristic of Park and his collaborators, cities that are integrated into

Fig. 1: Figure/ground maps of downtown Detroit, 1916, 1950, 1960, 1994. Richard Plunz, "Detroit Is Everywhere," *Architecture*, April 1996

Fig. 2: Dan Hoffman, *Erasing Detroit*, September–October 1991

global capital are subject to capital flows beyond any city's control. Park saw Detroit as not only a representative American city but also as a city representative of the type that would be left emptied, voided when capital flow moves elsewhere. In one example of great importance to Park and his colleagues, when State power, comprehending the implications of the atom bomb in the destruction of cities, reconceives the concentration of human, capital, and manufacturing resources in cities and begins the dispersion and relocation of such resources away from the city, something for which the interstate highways under Eisenhower became a potent symbol.[8] One title and one diagram, more than any other, would come to encapsulate this position as developed by Park and his colleagues: Richard Plunz's "Detroit Is Everywhere," published in *Architecture* magazine in 1996, along with a set of four figure/ground diagrams of downtown Detroit that depict the loss of population density in 1916, 1950, 1960, and 1994 (Fig.1). It would be possible to track this argument simply through *the afterlife of this figure/ground diagram*: in its use, magnified in gray and white, as a frontispiece to the work in experimental geography *Stalking Detroit* (2001), in which a group of architects and scholars take Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Stalker* (1982) as a model for exploring the fabric and image of the city of Detroit. Central to *Stalker*, and what was of most interest to this group of experimental architects and scholars, was the role in the film of a particular part of landscape, a place of pure liminality, called *The Zone*,[9] where the laws of physics and sociality are suspended. Hocking draws upon this idea as described below. Within *Stalking Detroit*, we also see a use of the Plunz's figure/ground diagram by the cultural historian Jerry Herron in his essay "Three Meditations on the Ruins of Detroit," continuing Herron's formulation of his version of the argument that *Detroit is everywhere*.[10] Most famously, and poetically, Dan Hoffman's striking *Erasing Detroit* (Fig. 2) is a conceptual extension of the argument graphically enunciated in Plunz's diagrams. In 2011, in what is an architectural masterplan for a possible future *cultural village* in a devastated and voided neighborhood that is the beneficiary of the attention leveraged by the Heidelberg Project, University of Michigan architect Christian Runge deploys a figure/ground mapping of the McDougall-Hunt neighborhood, the poetics of which are based upon Plunz's diagram. The processes of abandonment due to population loss have left a fragmented environment in which "The total aggregated void space is exceptionally large and is now driving the overall form and mass of the neighborhood."[11] We have come full circle to Plunz's argument,

which is that "Detroit is a reflection of our culture at large, Detroit is everywhere. To look at Detroit is to look at *all of our cities*, but with the symptoms of our urban decline enhanced. History may well record that *the growth and decline of Detroit proved to be the archetype* for United States urbanism in this century."[12] In this light, Plunz will argue that, if we are to understand Detroit—Detroit as place but even more Detroit as function—"we must finally shed our expansionist illusions. *Urban entropy is more important to current architectural theory and practice than is urban 'growth.'*"[13] Plunz and students from the urban design program at Columbia University joined Park (Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York, and Detroit), Hoffman (Head of Architecture, Cranbrook Academy of Art), and Stephen Vogel (Dean of Architecture, University of Detroit Mercy) to prepare for an exhibition called *Detroit Is Everywhere* at Columbia University. The Heidelberg Project—even as it sought to resist decay, entropy, and abandonment—was the place, they decided, that encapsulated, and made visible, in its concentrated formlessness and through its distinctive use of consumer objects as examples of cargo objects, the very processes of decommodification that characterized the ruination of the city. The following materialist definition of a ruin-object may be given: a ruin is the shell left behind when the resources required for flourishing have been withdrawn from all afferent networks.

Contextualizing Scott Hocking's Practice (II): Post-Surrealism
At the moment, therefore, that HP becomes the most renowned contemporary work *from* Detroit, it has also entered an international language of architectural discourse. The title of Park's anthology is *Urban Ecology: Detroit and Beyond*, which opens out onto two pages showing an atlas diagramming interconnections across the continents. In this developing discourse—I stress, the first fully developed conceptual discourse around the HP—the HP serves to illustrate a Neo-Constructivist materialist thesis about the effect of the globalization of capital:

The Detroit scenario has been played out in scores of other cities large and small [...]. With the new global configuration of capital, the days of local urban patronage are gone. Gone is the era of reinvesting in cities the wealth that they have created: capital no longer has such localized obligations.[14]
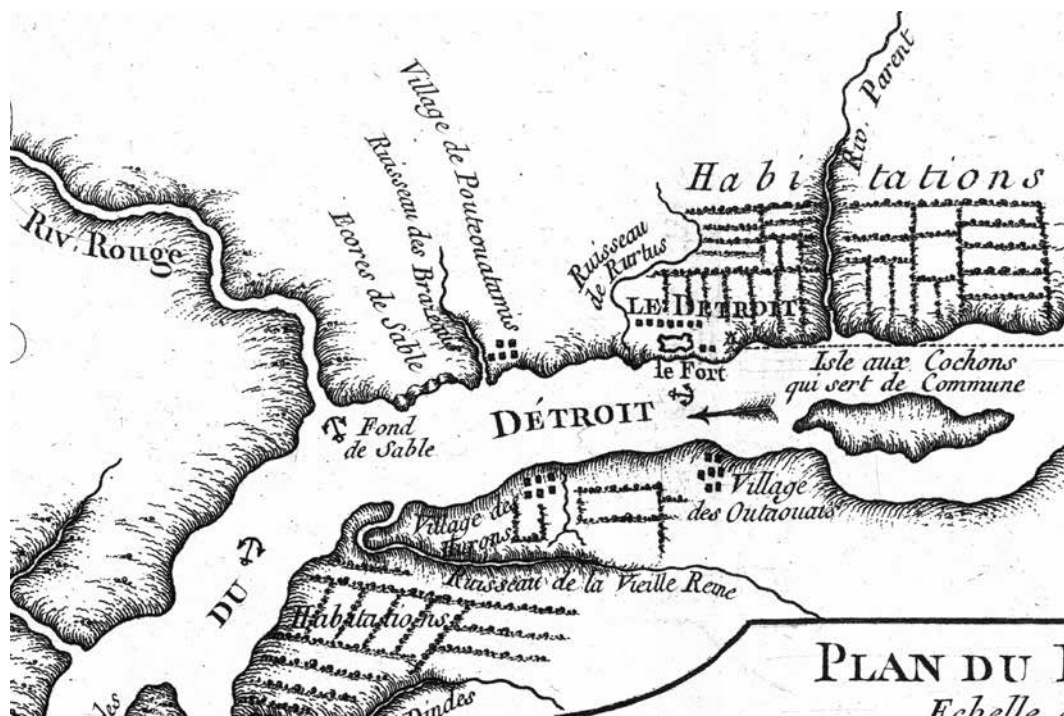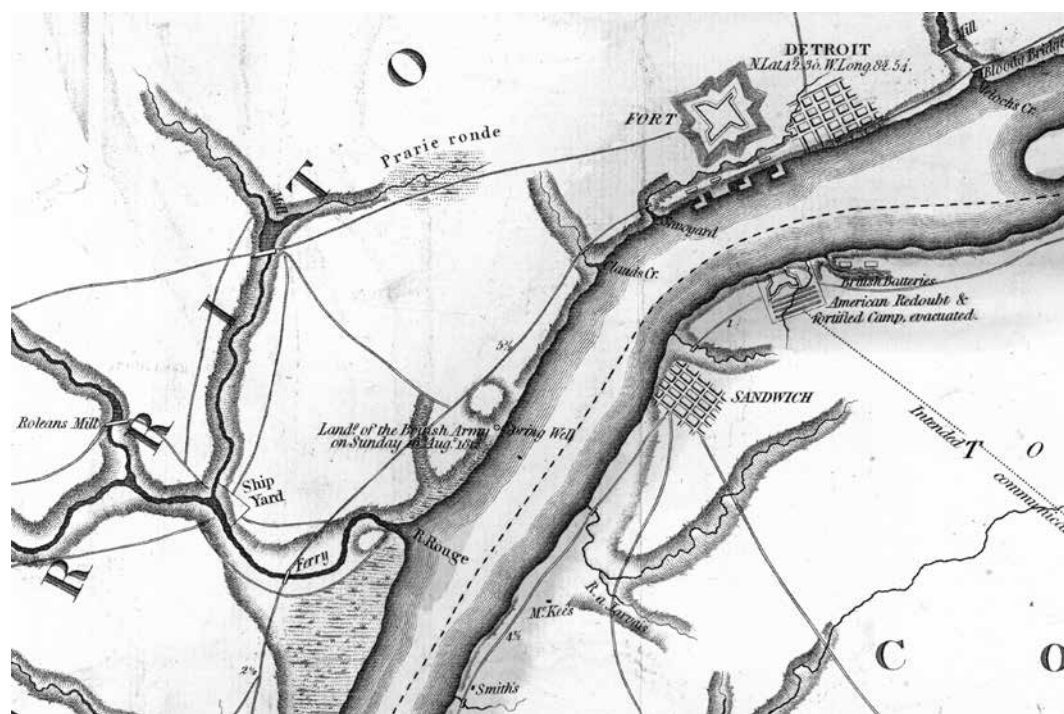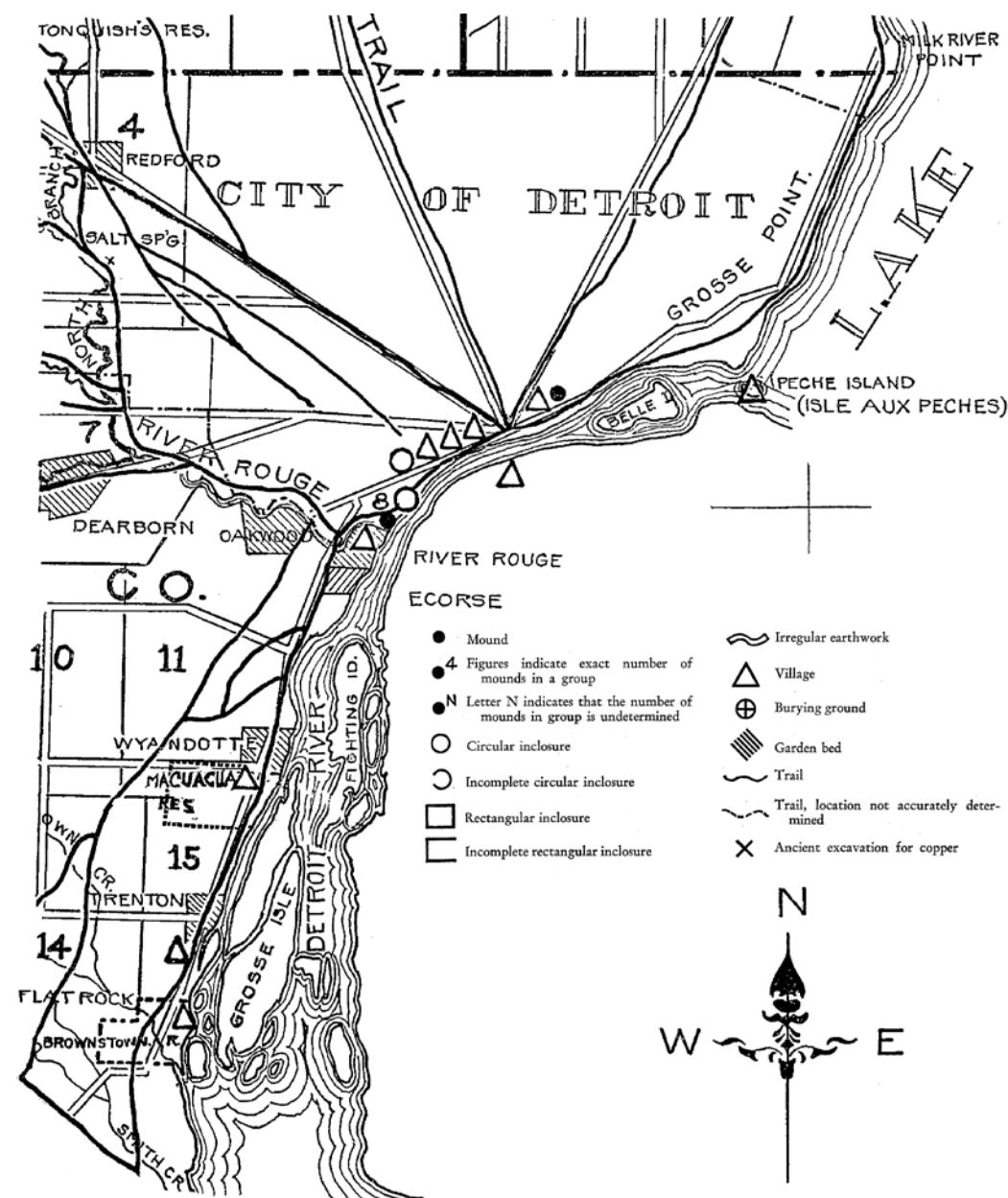
Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 3: Jacques Nicholas Bellin, "La Riviere Du Detroit Depuis le Lac Sainte Claire jusqu'au Lac Erie," (detail), 1764, showing sand dunes and mounds. Detroit Historical Society

Fig. 4: Detail of "Map of Detroit and Adjacent Country" showing topography of mound sites. John Melish, *A Military and Topographical Atlas of the United States (1813-5)* (Philadelphia: G. Palmer Publishing, 1813)

Fig. 5 (above): Wilbert B. Hinsdale, "The Archaeological Atlas of Michigan, " *Michigan Handbook Series, No. 4* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1931)

Scott Hocking's practice is dialogically parallel with this emergent discourse—that is at once rooted in a place, Detroit, but also beyond Detroit, participating in an international language of art practice. Even as Hocking's practice is not the same as HP—though both presuppose the processes of ruination that are the result of the extraction or loss of capital—it cannot be avoided that this architectural discourse, powerful though its insights are, does not articulate an aesthetic of Guyton's conception of Heidelberg and does not even address its singularity. This is where we might begin to address Hocking: both HP and Hocking's practice are of the city, but, and this is key: HP is a fixed location in the McDougall-Hunt neighborhood of the lower East Side of Detroit, among a set of domestic buildings. This raises questions of the vernacular, domesticity, and subjectivity. The objects of the HP, in each unavoidable instance, are predominantly domestic objects such as toys, vacuum cleaners, vinyl records, teddy bears, clocks, and shoes. It cannot be escaped that there is no interior to the HP, no inside of a house. What one sees in its iconography, its consumer, cargo-like objects, are the displaced contents of interior accommodations, media for play, and the construction of subjectivity in the spatiality of the home now represented as a space of lost futures. This is an iconography that points to the fixed nature of home and so becomes an iconography of homelessness as fixed, immovable. It is the viewer who moves around and through the HP. The Neo-Constructivist discourse around HP captures this fixedness and immobility—entropy, the internal collapse of the site, is the only movement, as represented though the aforementioned figure/ground drawings where the boundaries do not move. When the question of mapping is raised as a conceptual issue, one quickly grasps that a different kind of mapping is implied and presupposed by Hocking's practice, for Hocking is first and foremost a walker, who develops a practice of walking. Nothing could be clearer when one compares the form of mapping used by Plunz and Park and his colleagues with the form of mapping used by Hocking, above all, but not exclusively, in *The Mound Project* (2007—present) (see page 289).

As we have seen in the diagrams for "Detroit Is Everywhere," the only movement is entropic, that of internal collapse. At the boundaries, there is no movement, for at issue, fundamentally, is a statistical fiction, namely, population count. Mapping in Hocking, on the other hand, is a layering of spaces, changes in nomenclature and naming—from French to English, say—in encampments. Although the river is a constant, something that is the case in all great cities with rare exceptions, it is clear that the map is viewed phenomenologically for the human body to traverse, to walk through. The afferent networks and the nodal points within those networks through which resources have been withdrawn from many parts of the city are the paths, and places of his walking become the media of his research and particular archeology. Archeology is to be understood as bringing to light in acts of uncovering and recovery, where hiddenness is in tension with unconcealing, the static settled in its resistance to the dynamic, for there cannot be anything wholly hidden or wholly unconcealed. This is in part the significance of speaking of a practice of plural histories in the city. Walking is the medium of Hocking's archeology, not only an archeology of power à la Foucault, but also, even more so following Seth Benardete from one of our epigraphs, where Benardete will declare that "'Archeology' was the only path still open to any possible 'physiology'"—that is to say *circulation*, following the exposure to light and air of stratigraphic layerings. Further, beyond this itinerant archeology, it cannot be overemphasized, in contrast to HP, that Hocking is preoccupied mostly with non-vernacular buildings, such as the factories designed by Albert Kahn, including the Packard Plant or the Fisher Body Plant, which houses his *Ziggurat* series (2007—2009) (see pages 165—168). The relationship between the vernacular (domestic) and the non-vernacular (factory) is also that between home and work (or labor) in different spheres of existence. When the processes of abandonment and ruination touch the non-vernacular—for every Packard Plant or Fisher Body factory that becomes abandoned—hundreds of homes will lose their means of sustenance, for between factory and home are innumerable afferent networks. Hocking's practice is not concerned primarily with the redundant consumer objects of an abject modernity;[15] instead, we find at play a different mode, a different concern, *another conception of visibility*. Where the architectural discourse that found its illustration in the HP as making visible the entropic processes of globalized modernity in the urban fabric of which the consumer objects in the HP are decommodified residues, Hocking's practice of visibility is inseparable from invisibility. The first aspect is linked to the role of walking, which I characterize as *modes of moving in secret*. As the French thinker Pierre Boutang put it with simplicity, "Is secret that which has been put aside, separated,"[16] and the first is the practice of walking. There is not a Detroiter that does not have *their* Detroit, their image of the city, their memories and stories to tell, their chosen path around the city, but I know of no Detroiter who walks as

much in and across and around the city as an intentional practice. Further, Hocking's walking is distinctive in that what he makes—when he makes, that is, when he assembles on site—comes from objects that he finds during his walks. What he thus makes is out of the way—made aside, put aside, situated apart, instituted in an *interval*—without any expectation that it will be seen. Not infrequently this movement apart, in secret, is further wrapped in the experience of night, another form of the secret, so that we arrive at a poetics of movement whereby the city is revealed in a continuity marked by fragmentation—a quiet dramaturgy of reveal and concealment made possible by the dissolve of night, the only evidence of which is what is captured in the staging for photography. This is Hocking's post-Surrealist mode: the work in a new frame or on a stage where the juxtaposition of object and frame or stage transforms the environment into a discovery. Here are certain works that I also take as exemplary figures of this practice, of what is most distinctive in Hocking: *Night House*, *The Egg*, *MCS*, *Voice of Space*, *Garden of the Gods*, and the *Ziggurat* series, about which I shall have more to say below.

The critical edge in Hocking's work is the role of research and investigation, as this leads to one of his principal subjects: an investigation of the conditions of representation, as this bears on what the poet Jim Gustafson famously called *the idea of Detroit*. In doing so, Hocking's work—in Iceland, Australia, Germany, Detroit, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and other venues in North America—uses archival research, archeology, anthropology, social geography, walking, site-specific installation, and photography as means of simultaneously constructing, capturing, and investigating the processes by which forms within the city and "nature" emerge, become depleted, ruined, displaced, and finally cast off in processes of de-differentiation. If Hocking's was a traditional art practice, we should speak of genres of landscape, still life, etc. His is not, however, a traditional art practice, so it is better to speak of the way in which certain forms assume the provisional status of genre— for example, the factory as a genre, where it is understood that the factory to Hocking is not a genre of *photography* but more a form with a (manipulable) history, a sense of inside and outside *constructed* by the artist through the complex patterning and interweavings of collection, installation, photography and, importantly, the work of the hand as witnessed in a series such as *Sisyphus and the Voice of Space* (2010) (Fig. 6). Part of the title, "The Voice of Space," is an allusion to the painting series *La Voix des airs / The Voice of*

Space (c. 1928–1931) by the Belgian surrealist René Magritte, by which Hocking makes clear that his concern is not with documenting but with representation, and thereby construction or figuration. Other examples of the way in which forms assume the status of genres are Hocking's great exploration of and installations within the Albert Kahn-designed Fisher Body Plant—one of which is the already iconic series *Ziggurat*. Closely related yet distinct is the series *Garden of the Gods* (2009–2011) (see pages 173–176). This series consists of installations made from materials on-site—reinforced concrete columns, with broken, used televisions atop the columns—on the collapsed roof of the Packard Plant as though the installation and constructed imagery captured a mythic landscape in snow, in a field of ruins. At one moment, the exposed metal supports in the reinforced concrete of collapsed roof and columns positioned at a distance just right make the resultant configuration appear like a form of drawing (see page 176)—in other words, the work of distancing inherent to the project is there to make the experience not an *image* but a construction. Here a number of Hocking's concerns and practices converge in construction (walking, surveying, recuperation, the work of the hand with on-site available materials, process sculpture, investigation of site-specificity and spatial form as a result of varied historical sedimentations, the photograph as [partial] indexical record or witness, and artistic artefact for attentive engagement) bearing upon the problematic of ruination and the archeological, especially as conceived within the archive of Surrealist critical practice.[17]

Ruin-objects—Factories—Castles

But what, in the context of Detroit industrial and social histories, is a ruin? There are few subjects more sensitive, few issues approached with more personal investment, yet few issues more profoundly misunderstood in contemporary Detroit than *the question of ruins*.[18] There is a piece of social automatism that at the mention of the word "ruins," or the expression of any interest to visit abandoned buildings, triggers the phrase "ruin porn." This is almost like an imprecation, as if it were universally understood to be a knock-down refutation after which one should "Go back to your corner!" If I were the president of a college in Detroit, or the mayor of the City of Detroit, I confess that I would rather talk about anything other than abandoned buildings. I am, of course, neither, and my job is to try to understand, for *there are ruins and ruins*, as the great psychoanalyst and writer J.B. Pontalis once observed,

Fig. 6: Scott Hocking, *Sisyphus and the Voice of Space*, 2010

remarking on the need to recognize the type of temporality linked to a certain type of attentive engagement in the idea of ruins, especially as found in the ancient relation between paintings, ruins, and wrecks (*naufrages*) in a logic of fragmentation. Here is the comfortable idea of ruins:

> There are ruins and ruins. Those propitious to gentle melancholy, to nostalgia: the monument—temple, castle, dungeon, abbey—already sacred or noble from its origin [...]. There is a whole pictorial tradition of ruins and wrecks: the alliance of painting and of ruins in their *power of evocation* of what is not, of *what is no longer observable from end to end under our eyes.*[19]

One goes to Rome, to certain parts of England or Germany, to be enchanted by the remains of monasteries or once great houses or the intentionally left fragmented remains of war (Oradour-sur-Glane in France[20] or the Imperial Garden in Beijing). Perhaps one visits Colorado and its Garden of the Gods, or Utah with its pre-historic rock formations to allow the mind to play with the making visible of the passages and ravages and so many losses of time.[21] Each human loss in time is a loss of a possible human future, as Guy Debord never ceased to force home in the ethics of temporality he made central to his account of liberty. Here, though, is another fragment, the gaze upon which does not allow the mind an equally easeful playful absorption:

> But to wander in a damaged and shelled city, in a destroyed neighborhood deserted by its inhabitants overwhelms us. The vision of a work-place left in abandonment discomforts us: this house, then, will never become finished! Why has its construction been stopped? What a failure! It is dead before being born, it is abject waste, never having achieved the moving status of relic, or remains. Incomplete, but incomplete forever, as it will never have been granted the *time to become a ruin.*[22]

Pontalis is saying something important here, something that implicitly underlies the resistance of many Detroiters to any talk of ruins. Not all architectural fragments are ruins or relics; some architectural fragments are marks of premature death and so more to be mourned than to be indulged in aesthetic reverie. In this form of fragment there is abandonment, and time seems

not to have touched it (the remains, the ruin-object or fragment) sufficiently for it to *become*. It is, indeed, stunted, and there is no charm, there is nothing playful or inviting about it, is in fact *resistant*. Pontalis's characterization that this fragment that remains "will never have been granted the time to become a ruin" is poignant and conceptually acute—not that this fragment has not been granted time, but rather that "it will never have been granted." There is no future in which this fragment/ruin-object can have had intercourse with time and so it survives or subsists—it cannot be said to exist—in space as a spatial resistance, something from which humans turn away, *refuse* to look, and with which they cannot imagine a sustaining interchange of reciprocity. It is as if the spatiality of the ruin-object is dead time as object-residue. What we call a relic, on the other hand, allows separation in continuity, while the object-residue (of something), the ruin-object, refuses proximity, refuses touch. The relic, in analytic terms, is part of a logic of separation in which the venerated relic-object allows the dead to be dead (separated) so that the living may continue living (transmission)—in other words, to use the colloquialism, there is no closure, and this resistant, unloved and unloving fragment interrupts us in our otherwise free, unthinking movements and makes us almost internalize its projected resistance.

And yet, imagine the following verse, which most readers of modern poetry in English know from "What the Thunder Said," the final section of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*:

> What is that sound high in the air
> Murmur of maternal lamentation
> Who are those hooded hordes swarming
> Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
> Ringed by the flat horizon only
> What is the city over the mountains
> Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
> Falling towers
> Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
> Vienna London Detroit
> Unreal [23]

The point here is not a finer interpretation of the poem. It is relatively straightforward to grasp that we are witnessing a scene of collapse and break up saturated by sounds of violence and grieving ("Murmur of maternal lamentation / … those hooded hordes / … Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air") bearing not only on individuals but a "city over the mountains." As examples of said city we have:

> Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
> Vienna London Detroit
> Unreal

At which point, reader, you protest—as audience members from Detroit to the University of Washington, St. Louis have protested—that "Yes, but, but, I'm sure that Detroit was not included in this passage from 'What the Thunder Said.'" And since deception was not my intention, I readily concede. The point, however, is that each of the cities named in "What the Thunder Said"—Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, London—is a civilizational city, still present, but no longer the center or source of a civilization. By any standards, Detroit was a civilizational city, as one cannot imagine the late modern world, *wherever modern conditions of production prevail*, without the innovations in technology pioneered in this city. Stalin was a great admirer of Henry Ford's accomplishment, for example, and the city is known for its role as an *arsenal of democracy* during World War II as its civic industrial technology quickly pivoted to a war footing. Detroit was also, in terms of social history, the core of the union movement and its social accomplishments that saw people with barely a high school education earn wages sufficient to get their families into the middle class in one generation. Civilizational cities typically decline over extended periods—they are old, and even when decline is rapid, they have ancient histories behind them—but Detroit's decline was unprecedented in the modern age. Its decline seemed to take most by surprise, even as there is widespread agreement among scholars and artist-thinkers, to re-quote Richard Plunz, that Detroit is a victim of a process endemically modern, for:

> The Detroit scenario has been played out in scores of other cities large and small […]. With the new global configuration of capital, the days of local urban patronage are gone. Gone is the era of reinvesting in cities the wealth that they have created: capital no longer has such localized obligations.[24]

Where did it all go? One argument has it that, following white flight from the city, the wealth of Detroit went to the (white) suburbs, the creation of which were subsidized by the American government at the same time that the same government supported redlining within the city—that is, marking off certain (Black) districts of a city as not qualifying for mortgages and insurance. Another argument, and by no means inconsistent with what I have just outlined, would be the *Detroit Is Everywhere* argument—namely, that what we are confronted with is a process of the globalization of ruination, that ruination is built into the economic processes of late modernity specifically where the market has become disembedded from social values: "With the new global configuration of capital, the days of local urban patronage are gone. Gone is the era of reinvesting in cities the wealth that they have created: capital no longer has such localized *obligations*." In the language of contemporary anthropology, ruination is not primarily a local phenomenon but an imperial process.[25] When Ann Laura Stoler deploys the concept of ruination in an analytic sense—something that she links to the concept of entanglement, that is, mutual dependence—she does so in order to address "the *connective tissue* that continues to bind human potentials to degraded environments, and degraded personhoods."[26] This is where a surrealist-inflected critical practice of ruins, spectrality and, in place of castles—*la question des chateaux*—the *question of factories*, becomes decisive in comprehending Hocking's practice, for it is only too clear that in his practice the factory becomes the figure of the intersecting forces and problems of ruination and social stratigraphy. The ruined factory—standing in for the ruined castle—is a frame for the staging of the work in secret.

As I write, I am looking at *Ziggurat*, a triangular, pyramidal form with which I have lived since 2010 or so (see pages 166–167). A basic form. A mythic form. A symbolic form. It is assembled out of hundreds of wooden bricks found on-site. The location in which *Ziggurat* is depicted, inside the Fisher Body Plant, an industrial site, is itself also a basic form, a mythic form, a symbolic form. Its location is not an accident, as the presence of the *Ziggurat* creates, within the historically sedimented industrial site, a *non-site* as intervention. *Ziggurat* re-enlivens the space. As recorded in the Babylonian creation epic the *Enuma Elish* (1900–1600 BCE), the Ziggurat, in its original Mesopotamian function, was a form for the commemoration and celebration of the victory of the younger gods led by Marduk over the older gods. As such, the Ziggurat also sanctified the space—the establishment of a sacred

place upon that site of defeat (for some) and victory (for others). But why is this basic form in the Fisher Body Plant? It embodies the troubling relationship between power and labor. Long before Marx, or capitalists for that matter, the *Enuma Elish* and related Mesopotamian stories made clear the cosmological significance of labor in the organization of societies. Hocking's symbols are nothing if not consistently cosmological. From Tablet 1 of the *Story of the Flood*, the problem of labor is posed as follows:

When gods were man,
They did forced labor, they bore drudgery.
Great indeed was the drudgery of the gods,
The forced labor was heavy, the misery too much.[27]

And don't you know, the gods complained. Throughout these narratives there are variations on a theme for how the (lesser) gods escaped the drudgery of labor. Perhaps the most powerful version is to be found in Tablet 6 of the *Enuma Elish* where, after an intergenerational battle between the first and younger gods, Marduk, leader of the victorious younger gods, takes a defeated god, Quingu, on whom symbolic punishment will be inflicted:

They bound and held him before Ea,
They imposed the punishment on him and shed his blood.
From his blood he made mankind,
He imposed the burden of the gods and exempted the gods.
After Ea the wise had made mankind,
They imposed the burden of the gods on them!
That deed is beyond comprehension,
By the artifices of Marduk did Nudimmud create![28]

That deed is beyond comprehension—no matter the translation, the effort is to convey what a miraculous thing it is to be able to create a being, a creation requiring powers great and exemplary even for a god, a being to bear drudgery and labor and, miracle of miracles, for that being, to accept its condition. Here is Marduk's speech, Marduk's promise to his fellow gods—the one percent of their day:

I shall create humankind,

They shall bear the gods' burden that those may rest.[29]

In other translations it is made clearer: so that the gods may be *at leisure*: "The work of the gods shall be imposed [on man], and so they shall be at leisure." The politics of labor is here the foundation of the politics of *jouissance* (pleasure) after which the architecture of society and sociality is wholly organized. *Ziggurat* amidst the ruins of the Fisher Body Plant suddenly recovers this relation between power and labor, power and pleasure, but also power and oppression buried into oblivion as other forms intervene in place of this primordial link between power and pleasure.

For the Surrealists—above all Benjamin Péret and André Breton—the ruin, of which the exemplary (but not exclusive) form is the castle, begins to appear at the collapse of the Middle Ages and becomes a visual analogue of this very collapse. Each generation will produce the ruin historically distinctive to it. The appearance of ruins subsequently coincides with key moments of social pressures and transformations where, as Breton put it, "the inevitable ghosts which haunt them mark, with an especial intensity, the apprehension of the return of powers of the past."[30] Where Breton formulates this iconography and the accompanying sense of the return of the powers of the past as the *question des châteaux*,[31] I am putting this in terms of the question of factories. Indeed, I am claiming that the factory in our late modernity performs the same function as the castle in Surrealist thinking of the ruins.[32] There is clear warrant for this in another great Surrealist poet, Péret, in his stunning reflection "Ruines: Ruine des ruines" published on the eve of war, 1939, in *Minotaure*. For Péret, the castle is the form of man's ambitions, the ruination of which—human ambitions—makes of the human a ghost for themselves visited by their own ghost seeing only "the ruin, a place to hide from themselves the creature they do not want to be."[33] This hiding of the truth from oneself is the element of *disavowal* essential to the conception of the ruin and ruination at work in the critical practice of Hocking and derived in part through Surrealism. Ruins, says Péret, attest to *the return of the ghosts of one's childhood which cannot be denied.*[34] To make clear that the concept of childhood at play is not that of the individual or person, Péret declares that:

Nothing of collective childhood [*l'enfance collective*] is deniable save by those societies which have become unworthy of such a collective past and who glorify it in order all the better to deny it. Mussolini celebrates ancient Rome although his actions are in opposition to the progress that ancient Rome brought to the world. Stalin seeks to make of Lenin a dead ruin in order all the better to betray him. It is the same everywhere. Ruins are denied by those whose life is already nothing more than a ruin of which nothing will subsist if not the recollection of a piece of spit.[35]

This is a remarkable passage for its political reading of ruins and the role of disavowal in the denial of ruins—Mussolini, Stalin, etc. It is, however, when Péret writes that "One ruin chases another ruin, that which preceded it, and kills it" that I was able to begin to comprehend *Ziggurat* in terms of the childhood of Detroit—industry, power, and oblivion, in terms of a material and cultural unconscious. What might we grasp as becoming visible in the commemoration of *Ziggurat* in the Fisher Body Plant if not the *repressed* and disavowed history of Native Americans, slavery, and the exploitation of working bodies, working bodies linked to "nationalities," each denied—eventually repressed—but the basis of wealth and *jouissance* for others, the Marduks of our day? These are the social ghosts or buried specters of Detroit's childhood. Not the (European) castle but the factory is the form, the figure of this economy of disavowal, repression, and fragmentation as conceived by Hocking. Everywhere we are left with absences, voids, and these absences and voids have an architecture of which walking in space is also a figure—that is, the walking not seen, along with the "works" not designed for an audience, the constructed works whose undoing might not even be witnessed. "Around the secret," observes Boutang, "as though its prestige and its defense [...], one finds the absolute negation of all appearing. This non-appearing is not illusory."[36] This work in secrecy is the analogue of the material absence of a city in ruination, pointing to the disappearing of lines of demarcation—*de-differentiation* is the word that Georg Simmel used in his great essay "The Ruin" (1911)—or *space as boundary* becoming a space of absence, for example, in Hocking's *The Zone* (1999), both marker and figure of absence. The factory is the vehicle for this absence. The ruin-object in Detroit—the house, the field, the factory, a *life*—has, indeed, received a certain kind of time, has been a forum of interaction, but it has been, primarily, economic time, the time of the commodity. The ruin in such a context may be defined as the shell left behind in abandonment after the massive and irreversible transfer of capital (social energy) away from the city and its social networks or arteries, a city ill-equipped for the arrival and

temporality of globalization that it helped to create. In its most fundamental sense, abandonment, in the materialist sense being explored here, is the loss of measure and relationality incident upon the withdrawal of the commodity.[37] The resulting shell is not devoid of significance, community, or history—hence the language of re-treat (withdrawal, fading, concealment, disguise, obscuring, voiding, collapsing) and the related work or dérive or re-doing, re-essaying in urban margins and liminal spaces so present in Hocking's art practice.[38] In many respects, the irritation felt by some at others' fascination with the ruin-objects of Detroit is a reaction-formation at becoming voyeuristic objects.[39] All this does, in a strange way, is show the manner in which the voyeurism built into the origins of the Western camera has now turned its gaze from exotic "others" to ourselves. In other words, one suddenly feels what it is like to be *looked at* at the very moment that resources, which once were drained from other places, are now drained from us and our social and ecological environments of sustenance.

This process started with Native Americans and is commemorated in Hocking's *Garden of the Gods*. The title of this series alludes to rock formations to be found in Colorado and Illinois that, as the poet Robert Hayden wrote in his "[American Journal]," were sacred. Here is how Hayden, in the persona of an extraterrestrial alien anthropologist visiting earth in Colorado, puts it:

> much here is
> beautiful   dream like vistas reminding me of
> home   item   have seen the rock place known
> as garden of the gods and sacred to the first
> indigenes   red monoliths of home.[40]

The "first indigenes" are long gone, their culture devastated, available only in fragments and ruins. Even their burial mounds—again, so present in Hocking's practice—are destroyed or buried over, opened and looted, or removed, barely visible, if at all, in the conceptual realm alone. But the first indigenes are followed by others—the French, the British—who in turn are followed by others—the Irish, the Polish, the Christian Arabs who have had a presence in Detroit for over a hundred years, and the Black Americans who started to come in small numbers from the South precisely as the First World War cut off the labor supply from Europe and elsewhere. This has bearing on Hocking's

practice—*there is no contact that does not leave a trace or imprint*—and this is what makes his practice fundamentally archeological or stratigraphic, as each leaves behind a city more complex, more rich with affect, ruins, relics, histories, and lives layered in oblivion and forgetfulness, *the process of making oblivion gaining speed.*[41] Hocking's practice is less about mourning such passage than commemoration, but even more than commemoration, hence the *Ziggurat*. His practice, rather, is an unveiling of oblivion and forgetfulness as though, in the *Garden of the Gods* (see pages 174–175), the columns are upshoots of a buried past, rocks among the greenery, the detritus of industry amid the dashed, broken hopes of a life predicated upon consumption. The broken TVs give testimony to some timeless rite of celestial communication: messages from the stars—celestial and interstellar communication as the earthly stars become deified and refined into *images* for transmission—or the gods (not captains) of the universe. It is as though the installation (upon which one chances within the frame of the Packard Plant) and photography record a kind of secular orogenesis embodying the interaction of man's play and industry/labor for which *art* and *consumerism* are curious doubles of each other in the staging of forgetfulness and oblivion —from Colorado (a Spanish name for the Colorado River), through Illinois (a French transliteration of a native-American name) to Detroit (from the French, *dé troit*, for the *strait* of Detroit) [42] and its many burial grounds, whose *re-treat* (withdrawal and re-tracing) is the subject of *The Mound Project* (see page 289). "The work is not put in a place, it is that place," [43] observed Robert Smithson. Above all, however, Hocking's languages and forms—drawing upon the materialist dimension in archeology, anthropology, and natural history—point to an overriding preoccupation, namely, *the politics of (in)-visibility*. I do not know if there is an archeological turn or imaginary in recent contemporary art as Dieter Roelstraete, who curated Hocking into his exhibition *The Way of the Shovel: On the Archeological Imaginary in Art*,[44] has argued since his 2009 *e-flux* article on the topic, but I am quite sure that there is in contemporary art and related meta-discourses a powerful preoccupation with the politics of visibility. Chantal Akerman's cinematic meditations on demographic movements (from *D'Est* in 1993 to *De l'autre côté* in 2002 and *Là-bas* in 2006) and Alfredo Jaar's *Let There Be Light: The Rwanda Project* (1994–1998) will suffice[45] and further the point that archeology has become one of the figures of this preoccupation, in a manner consistent with yet differing from Robert Smithson's figures of the archeological.

It becomes powerfully clear in this light that Hocking has developed a distinctive practice calling for its own critical language. The whole misinformed talk in Detroit and certain places about the photography and representation of ruin-objects, ruins and ruination has detracted from, wholly missed, the principal concern, a concern that is central to Hocking's developing practice, for Hocking's work shows its criticality through the engagement with and investigations of the politics of visibility, through the ways in which the dis-appearance of appearance is staged (this is the *retrait/re-treat*), how erasure becomes manifested. There is no clearer example of this than the series *The Mound Project* that attempts to *point* (for words are not readily available) to the creation of oblivion through the erasure of sites of memory (in this case, the removal, displacement, or destruction and eventual devastation of pre-contact burial mounds in Detroit) only to be "replaced" by (or re-treated as) brownfields. Factories, in turn, become redundant, blighted, wasted lives, with all (or most) visible evidence of the past erased as part of a process of cultural devastation, where destruction and erasure become irreversible at the cultural level and so permanently disruptive of transmission.

It is no surprise—indeed, it is a logical extension of his developed and developing language and forms—that this approach to the politics of visibility should lead him, in a more recently begun project, in an act of *re-tracing*, to a quasi-archeological and social-cultural investigation of the area of Detroit called Black Bottom. This is one of the most poignant sites of erasure of African-American culture in Detroit, removed in the name of urban renewal and now the site of the Mies van de Rohe complex of apartments in Lafayette Park (c. 1956). *The Mound Project*, in its treatment not of mere absence-presence (after all a relatively crude binarism) but rather of the retreat from representation into invisibility, has prepared the way conceptually and perceptually for the kind of phenomenological and historical intuition of erasure, retreat, re-tracing and, finally, devastation (rather than mere destruction from which it is possible to recover). We see, for example, the interstate highway I-75 (see page 16), like a looming presence, a beast, a weight, even, holding its appropriating presence over the once lived-in land vacated, then devastated by eminent domain. We are invited to construe the surrounding negative space dialectically and so precisely not as mere absence against a supposed presence but as an active historical configuration whose resonance and vibration—that tone of the neutral, the bland as we grasp it in *Morgan Estates* from *The Mound Project* (2007)

Fig. 7: Scott Hocking, *The Mound Project, Morgan Estates*, Detroit, 2007

(Fig. 7)—have found visual density in the *photo-graphein* (light-writing) of Hocking's practice.

Likewise shall we be required to see the gracious Lafayette Gardens—like the manifestly ugly and beast-like I-75—as contemporaneous forms of cultural burial grounds…but also come to recognize that this is the city where the living are complicit with the dead. I could quote Sophocles' *Antigone* or Simone Weil on precisely this point, but maybe the Anglo-Nigerian writer Ben Okri says it in a late modern diction when, in his "A Prayer from the Living" that opens Alfredo Jaar's *Let There Be Light: The Rwanda Project*, the dying man in the City of Man states: "And when I looked at the body next to me and found the luminous unfamiliarity of its face to be that of my lover's—I sang all through the recognition."[46] The post-industrial city, however, bears within itself this difference, namely that is it is marked by oblivion, that is, forgetfulness, hence the politics of (in)-visibility so prominent in contemporary practice and in Hocking's development of this preoccupation in his Detroit-based work.

The Analogical Imagination

"In geography similar to Istanbul's—" Lawrence Joseph

There is, last but by no means least, another aspect to Hocking's artistic practice, an aspect that is based in the Detroit habitus and that also shows him thinking in terms of the history of art. When, in October 2010, Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler came to Detroit for the creation of their opera *KHU*, while experiencing the duration of the work (an approximately twelve-hour event from beginning to end) something obvious hit me with a force which hitherto I had never felt. At the precise moment of the raising from the Rouge River of the god Osiris under the form of the engine of the Chrysler Crown Imperial surrounded by a form of keening—led by Isis—with which one is no longer *accustomed* in the Western tradition, I realized that Barney's work is not first and foremost a semiotic venture but is rather firmly anchored in the ancient—and renewable—conception of the analogical imagination. The engine of the Chrysler Crown Imperial *is* a god.[47] Surrealism was the last great renewal of this mode of working with the analogical imagination, since which time artists such as a Beuys or an Abramovic have developed distinct strategies that are variations of analogy as practice aimed at breaking, frustrating, or problematizing the mirror-ing tendencies inherent in human projection. What could easily be seen as the movement of the signifier in Barney's work could also and more plausibly be grasped as the movement of forms and analogy in a distinctly fabricated (manipulable) analogical space. *Garden of the Gods* and *The Mound Project* are analogical spaces figured through materialist practices. It struck me then that the only artist in Detroit for whom the analogical mode was still available, that is as an operant set of reflexes and forms, was Scott Hocking. His 2012 one-person show *The End of the World* at Susanne Hilberry Gallery (see pages 100–101), which was a turning point in his development, was nothing if not analogical with its Mercury motor car (the literal and the figural simultaneously), held in salts (again, the literal and the figural) (Fig. 8), and with its installation of a wall of books (see page 97), each cover of which bears on the topos and form of the end of the world. Nearly all are alchemical or available to an alchemical movement, the persistent but least commented aspect of his oeuvre. One encountered throughout the exhibition and in the related work that fundamental alchemical disposition that the world is a system of symbolization in which everything (large and small, high and low, inside and outside, before and after) is interconnected and thus is a system in which all is mutually translatable. The old tradition of alchemical thought believed that there was a key for all this—nineteenth-century alchemy in its Symbolist as well as non-Symbolist modes is one of the most curious forms of positivism ever invented!—but after Surrealism and up to Abramovic and Barney, there is no key to a book of symbols but only movement and transformation, matter as mode. Hence the great saying by Breton in the essay on the *peu de réalité* (the paucity or little that there be of reality) that the world is limited only by the poverty of our imagination. What the analogical mode seeks is the open play of the imagination, a mode predicated upon mutual translatability, anthropological equivalence or balance without mere mirroring—that is, a mode in which terms may be brought into material equivalence, but not tautology. This is the work of Barney's *Drawing Restraint 9* (2005). We see this mode of attention in Hocking in the photographic series called *Detroit Nights* (2007–present) (see pages 5–20). This was something present from the earliest stage of his professional life as an artist with the *Alchemical Works* (1997–present) (Figs. 9 and 10), the techniques and modes of which are brought to bear upon the materialist work based in Detroit and the Packard and Fisher Body Plants. For example, *Fisher Night Window* (2008) (Fig. 11), whose use of reflecting light upon a horizontal sur-

Fig. 8: Scott Hocking, *The End of the World*, Susanne Hilberry Gallery, Ferndale, Michigan, 2012

Fig. 9: Scott Hocking, *Sisyphus* from the *Alchemical Works* series, 2004
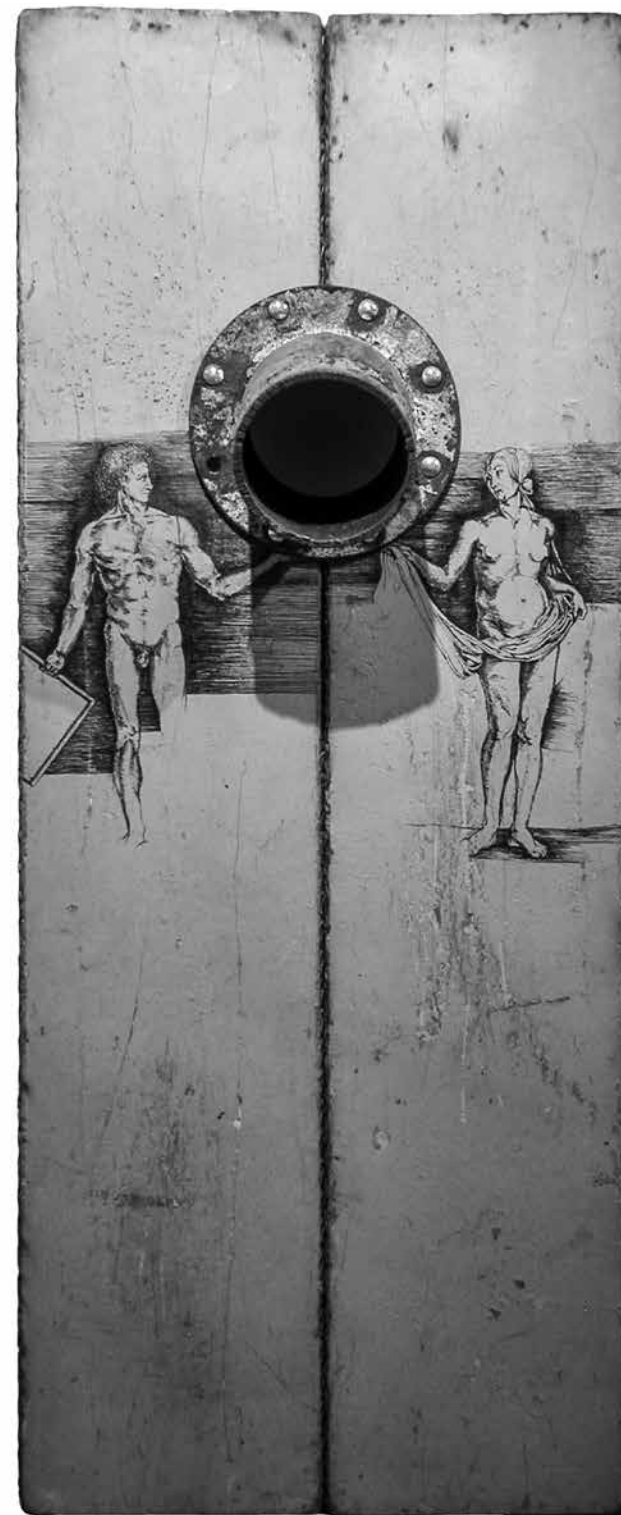

Fig. 10: Scott Hocking, *The Creative & The Receptive* from the *Alchemical Works* series, 2004

Fig. 11: Scott Hocking, *Fisher Night Window*, Fisher Body Plant 21, Detroit, 2008

face fulfills a similar effect to the broken mirroring devices to be found in late nineteenth-century painting such as Paul Sérusier's *The Talisman* (1888), and which were among the principal formal sources in the emergence of abstract painting in the tradition of both Kandinsky and Mondrian. We see the same devices at work in Atget in photographs such as *l'Ambassade d'Autriche, rue de Varenne* (1905) and *Saint Cloud* (June 1926).

The fundamental aesthetic transformation is that of matter with experience. The way in which the raw material of the Fisher Body Plant has been transformed through light into *Night Window* not only reaffirms such strategies about the role of form in the transformation of matter, but also shows how the analogical imagination is still at play, even as Barney showed, especially in Detroit, but nowhere more than in the practice of Scott Hocking.

It is in this criticality and historicity that Hocking is at once of Detroit yet part of a powerful set of languages in contemporary practice.

Notes

1. Seth Benardete, "The Poet-Merchant and the Stranger from the Sea," *The Archeology of the Soul: Platonic Readings of Ancient Poetry and Philosophy*, ed. Ronna Burger and Michael Davis (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2012), 1.
2. Matthew Biro, "Scott Hocking," *Artforum* (March 2013), https://www.artforum.com /print/reviews/201303/scott-hocking-39469.
3. Lawrence Joseph, "Here in a State of Tectonic Tension," *London Review of Books*, 34, no. 22 (November 22, 2012), https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v34/n22/lawrence-joseph /here-in-a-state-of-tectonic-tension.
4. On Detroit as a critical function, see Michael Stone-Richards, "Introducing Detroit Research," *Detroit Research* 1 (Spring/Fall 2014): 5. I should like to acknowledge both Addie Langford and Biba Bell in the formulation of Detroit as not only place but critical function as we discussed the creation of the journal *Detroit Research*.
5. *Warchitecture—Sarajevo: A Wounded City*, Storefront for Art and Architecture, 1995, http://storefrontnews.org/programming/warchitecture-sarajevo-a-wounded-city/, accessed April 25, 2022.
6. Peter Lang, "Over My Dead Body," in *Urban Ecology: Detroit and Beyond*, ed. Kyong Park (Hong Kong: MAP Book Publishers, 2005), 010.
7. The frontispiece of the book shows J.L. Hudson's Department Store in downtown Detroit as rubble, 1998.
8. Though most writers draw upon the (by now canonical) work of Thomas Sugrue on *Detroit and the Origins of the Urban Crisis*, here it is worth reading another architect collaborator from the *Stalking Detroit* project, who also reproduces Plunz's diagram. Charles Waldheim, "Detroit—Motor City," in *Shaping the City: Studies in History, Theory and Urban Design*, ed. Rodolphe El-Khoury and Edward Robbins (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 89–108.
9. Hocking will title one of his most compelling Detroit series *The Zone* (1999–ongoing). I take it that this title is referring both to the book *Stalking Detroit* as also the film *Stalker*.
10. Jerry Herron, "Three Meditations on the Ruins of Detroit," in *Stalking Detroit*, ed. Georgia Daskalakis, Charles Waldheim, and Jason Young (Barcelona: Actar, 2001), 32–41.
11. Christian Runge, "Re-envisioning Post-Urban Landscapes: The Heidelberg Project and Detroit's McDougall-Hunt Neighborhood," in *The Heidelberg Cultural Village: Art into Urbanism*, ed. Beth Diamond (Blurb.com: Heidelberg Design Lab, 2011), 58.
12. Richard Plunz, "Detroit Is Everywhere," *Architecture* 85 (April 1996): 55.
13. Plunz, "Detroit Is Everywhere," 61, my emphasis.
14. Plunz, "Detroit Is Everywhere," 57.
15. Hocking uses what is on-site, which may on occasion include abandoned televisions. See *Garden of the Gods* in this volume, 173–176.
16. Pierre Boutang, *Ontologie du secret* (Paris: PUF, 1973), 48.
17. The way in which Hocking's practice of the city situates itself in relation to painting, and especially Surrealist painting, bears comparison with the work of the anarchitect Gordon Matta-Clark whose concerns and forms were mediated through Robert Smithson. Alche-
my, sedimentation, archeology, walking, process sculpture, the construction of non-sites, the nature of city-place, with Detroit instead of say Smithson's Passaic, NJ, are also Hocking's concerns. On alchemy in Matta-Clark's thinking, see Thomas Crow, "Alchemy and Anthropology," in *Gordon Matta-Clark*, ed. Corinne Diserens (London: Phaidon, 2010), 22–37. It remains, however, that Thomas Crow, like so many other important academic art historians of his generation, does not have a clue what to do with or say about alchemy as a formalism in Matta-Clark's work or the art of the 1960s and 1970s. In effect, mainstream art historiography of the last twenty years has arrived at a compromise between social history of art and the writing that falls under the journal *October*, which has led to a writing of post-World War II art history and criticism that could be called *grosso modo*, the *Artforum* view of things. Matta-Clark belonged to a group of artists and thinkers whose work was best captured in the great experimental review *Avalanche*, which, in turn, should be seen in relation to the culture of *ARTnews*. A new form of art writing and history, drawing upon the culture of *ARTnews*, *Avalanche*, and other forums of this kind, remains to be composed and with it an alternative history of modern and contemporary art.
18. On this pictorial tradition of ruins, see the recent Tate Gallery exhibition *Ruin Lust* (with artists ranging from the painter Turner to the filmmaker Tacita Dean). Brian Dillon, *Ruin Lust* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 2014).
19. J.-B. Pontalis, "Le Souffle de la vie," *Ce temps qui ne passe pas* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 126, my emphasis.
20. For a thoughtful cultural history on this mode of ruination, see Margaret M. McGowan, "Visions Transported: The Creative Power of Ruins," *The Vision of Rome in Late Renaissance France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 129–86; and more recently, Susan Stewart, *The Ruins Lesson: Meaning and Material in Western Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).
21. The locus classicus for this form of reverie upon the ruin is Rose Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964). A more current approach that takes ruins in terms of critical practice/ theory can be found in the Whitechapel Documents of Contemporary Art volume on *Ruins*, ed. Brian Dillon (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011) and Christopher Woodward, In Ruins (New York: Pantheon, 2002).
22. Pontalis, "Le Souffle de la vie," 127.
23. T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* in *Collected Poems, 1909–1962* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1991), 67.
24. Plunz, "Detroit Is Everywhere," 57.
25. On ruins as symptoms of structural processes of ruination, see Ann Laura Stoler, "Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination," *Cultural Anthropology* 23, no. 2 (May 2008): 191–219, and Ann Laura Stoler, ed., *Imperial Debors: On Ruins and Ruination* (Chapel Hill, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).
26. Stoler, "Imperial Debris," 7.
27. *Story of the Flood*, 1700 B.C.E., trans. Benjamin R. Foster, in *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1995), 52.
28. *Enuma Elish*, 1900–1600 B.C.E., trans. Benjamin R. Foster, in *From Distant Days: Myths,*

Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1995), 39.

29. *Enuma Elish*, 38.

30. André Breton, "Limites non-frontières du surréalisme," in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Marguerite Bonnet et al. (Paris: Gallimard, 1999), 3: 666.

31. Breton, "Limites non-frontières du surréalisme," 668.

32. This qualification needs to be made as the castle in Surrealist thought is also and above all the place of elective friendships.

33. Benjamin Péret, "Ruines: Ruines des ruines," *Minotaure* no. 12–13 (1939): 57.

34. Péret, "Ruines: Ruines des ruines," 57.

35. Péret, "Ruines: Ruines des ruines," 57.

36. Boutang, "Retrait," *Ontologie du secret*, 51.

37. The resulting shell, which he also calls a fossil, allows Péret readily to imagine key parts of Paris as future ruins: La Bourse (Wall Street, say); L'Opéra (The Metropolitan Opera, say); La Tour Eiffel (the World Trade Center, say, or Detroit Industry Murals). See Péret, "Ruines: Ruines des ruines," 61.

38. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *Retreating the Political* (London: Routledge, 1997).

39. The term "ruin porn" is empty and void of conceptual content. In short, it explains nothing and is a mere protest at being looked at—but the Western camera was designed to look, stare, and objectify.

40. Robert Hayden, "[American Journal]," *Collected Poems* (New York and London: Liveright, 1996), 192–93. Less accessible but important for its Lawrence F. Sykes cover design of a collage of moon landing and atlas is the Effenden Press 1978 edition of the book *American Journal*, of which "[American Journal]" is the closing poem. Clearly, Hayden's "[American Journal]" could readily, and rewardingly, be read as an Afro-Futurist testament.

41. Norman M. Klein, *The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory* (London and New York: Verso, 2008).

42. No surprise, then, that one of Hocking's finest essays is called "A Nice Place along the Water." See *Detroit Research* 1 (Spring/Fall 2014): 44–48.

43. *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 171.

44. Dieter Roelstraete, *The Way of the Shovel: On the Archeological Imaginary in Art* (Chicago and London: Museum of Contemporary Art and University of Chicago Press, 2013), 126–31.

45. See Michael Stone-Richards, "Notes on Biopolitics: On a Posthumously Published Text by Guy Debord," *Detroit Research* 1 (Spring/Fall 2014): 137–46.

46. Ben Okri, "A Prayer from the Living," in Alfredo Jaar, *The Rwandan Project: 1994–1998* (Barcelona: Actar, 1998), no pagination.

47. Michael Stone-Richards, "Coda: And What Would a God Look Like, Anyway? Matthew Barney in Detroit," *Care of the City: Ruination, Abandonment, and Hospitality in Contemporary Practice* (forthcoming, Sternberg Press).

SCRAPPERS
1999–2004
The Angel Prophet Eli Wheeler, 2001, Detroit

SCRAPPERS is a photographic series documenting the lifestyle and environment of Detroiters, often homeless men, who survive by salvaging scrap metal. The series was culminated in photographs and writing for the *Shrinking Cities International Research* project, exhibited at the KW Institute of Berlin in 2004. Along with lectures and a photo essay, the finished project also included a sculptural installation: 200 lbs. of copper wire in a charred metal shopping cart and 50¢ bags of caramel-corn snacks—the equivalent amount of food a scrapper named Country Boy could buy from the gas station at my corner after smelting and selling this copper. Documented over the course of five years at the turn of the century, the *Scrappers* project captured the height of illegal scrapping and salvaging throughout Detroit, when semiprecious metal prices were at their highest, and the sound of scrap-filled shopping carts rattling down my alley at 3am was a commonplace nightly occurrence.