

S P O T L I G H T

LLOYD

GODMAN



It is doubtful if Australasia has a more protean, visionary and ecologically committed artist than Lloyd Godman. Born in Dunedin, New Zealand in 1952, and now living in Melbourne, Australia, he has been exploring environmental issues through photography (in combination with sculpture, painting and installations) since the early 1980s. He began taking more or less traditional landscape pictures in the late 1960s, but exposure to iconoclastic artists like Man Ray, Kurt Schwitters, and Joseph Beuys inspired him to begin chipping at the edges of photography in the interest of breaking down boundaries.

Godman's engagement with the natural world began in childhood, when he would often escape to the bush or ocean during times of family conflict. It reached full bloom when the New Zealand government built a hydro dam at Clyde in 1982, flooding the Clutha, Godman's favorite river. He was spurred into action on a creative level with his *Last Rivers Song* series, time-lapse images of the Clutha resonant with dark tones and turbulent energy that transcend notions of aesthetic beauty and

speak to the river's uncontrollable power. Concurrent with his photographic pursuits, Godman has been equally active as a photographic educator and organic gardener—complementary career threads he invariably weaves into his art. "I always find some link between even the most disparate works," he explains. "Connections with plants, sustainability, environment and light inevitably surface."

Godman's perception of light as both an organic (he views the planet as a living emulsion) and spiritual force is evoked most eloquently in his *Carbon Obscura* series. Invited to make an "ephemeral sculpture" using a greenhouse, he affixed sheets of carbon paper to the windows and "drew" trees by pricking thousands of pinholes in the paper. Godman added a fog generator that was activated as each viewer stepped into the space, adding the reminder that we are all responsible for our own gas emissions. In addition to its global allusions, the project connects viewers to the power and mystery of light.

"Environmental issues have now become the overriding aspect of the work," Godman says. "The

absence of daylight has an incredible presence that captivates people. They go back three or even four times, and their experience is never the same. One guy spent an hour in there meditating."

Godman explores the power of mythology in *Homage to Baxter*, a series focused on locations associated with New Zealand poet James K. Baxter, who used myths for their symbolic value. Images like *Resonance VIII*, with its uprooted tree in an abandoned orchard, is a visual tone poem of faded time and dead ends.

"Landscape photography often gets painted as predictable, but when it contains real visual intensity, it evokes an intriguing mythology," Godman says. "Even the mundane places we are familiar with can set the scene for events of epic proportions. All the viewer needs is imagination."

Imaginative perspective is fundamental to the series *di/vision*, in which all the images are taken from a low angle, with the camera often pointing straight up at the heavens. The worm's-eye view and bisecting action of the framing imply an ironic perspective on these symbols of architectural ambition. Equally important is what Godman leaves out.

"The multiple images relate with a disjunctive gestalt," he explains. "When we build structures that reach into the sky, it appears we cut ungainly holes into a heaven that was once complete, but in fact we block off the light, and the holes in the fabric are actually the buildings themselves." The series *Acute* also explores unresolved architectural/environmental issues,

focusing on buildings that seem to fit uneasily into their immediate urban surroundings.

The abstract photograph series *When Light Turns to Dust* represents a fortuitous intersection of light, found imagery, time and decay, with Godman functioning more as archaeologist than photographer. *Body Symbols* presents the nude not as a landscape of eroticism or aesthetics, but as representation of the four basic elements. The images visually contextualize the body against nature and affirm that we are inescapably part of it. They also have a fairly direct engagement with abstraction, compelling an intuitive response to the work's symbols and metaphors. These and many other projects attest to Godman's refusal to recognize limits regarding what photography can express and how.

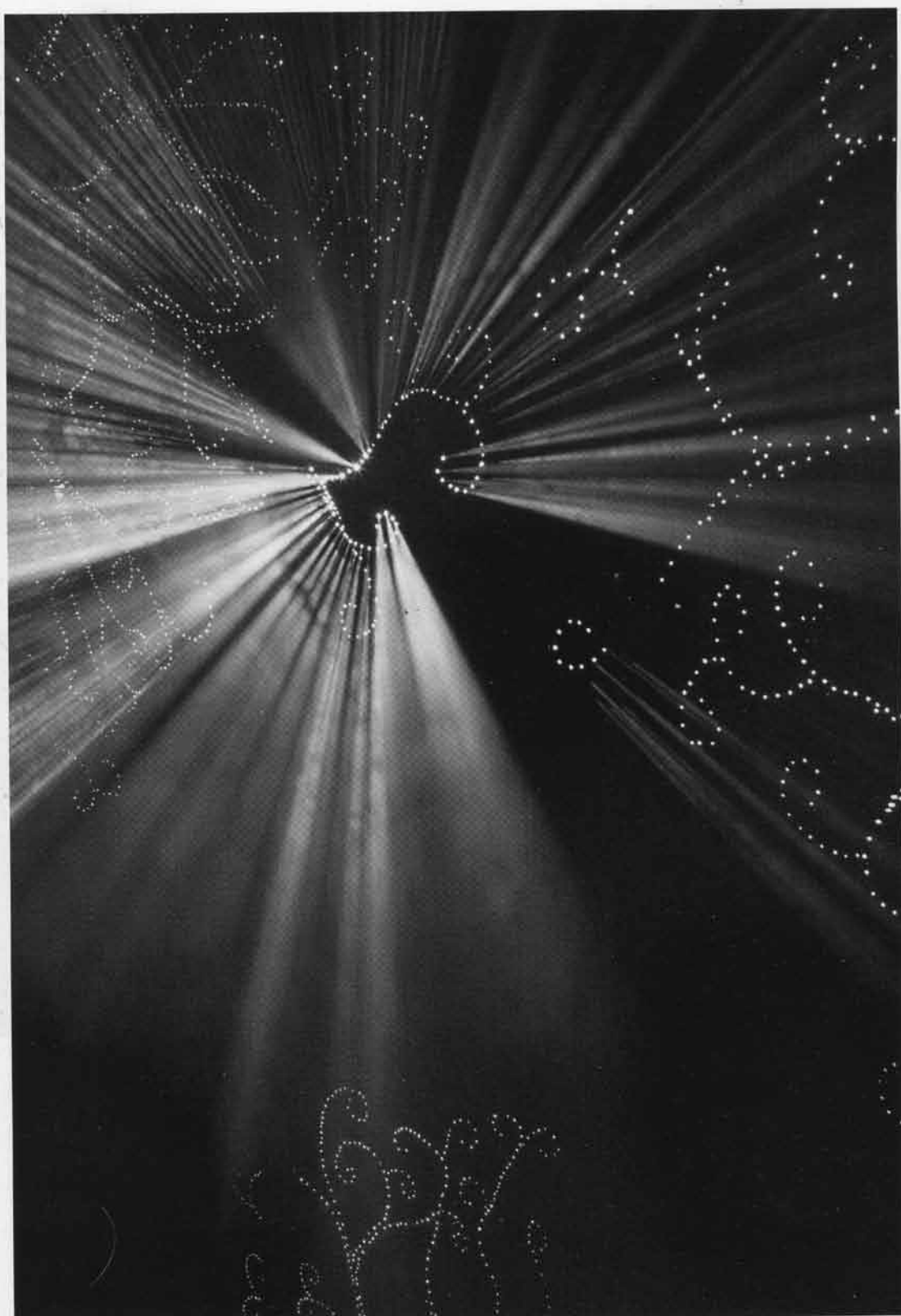
"I have never been focusing on a single style of work," he says. "There are still surprises and mysteries to be discovered, and I'm always enthralled by this exploration—the whole thing is a huge journey." —Dean Brierly

■ PRINT INFORMATION

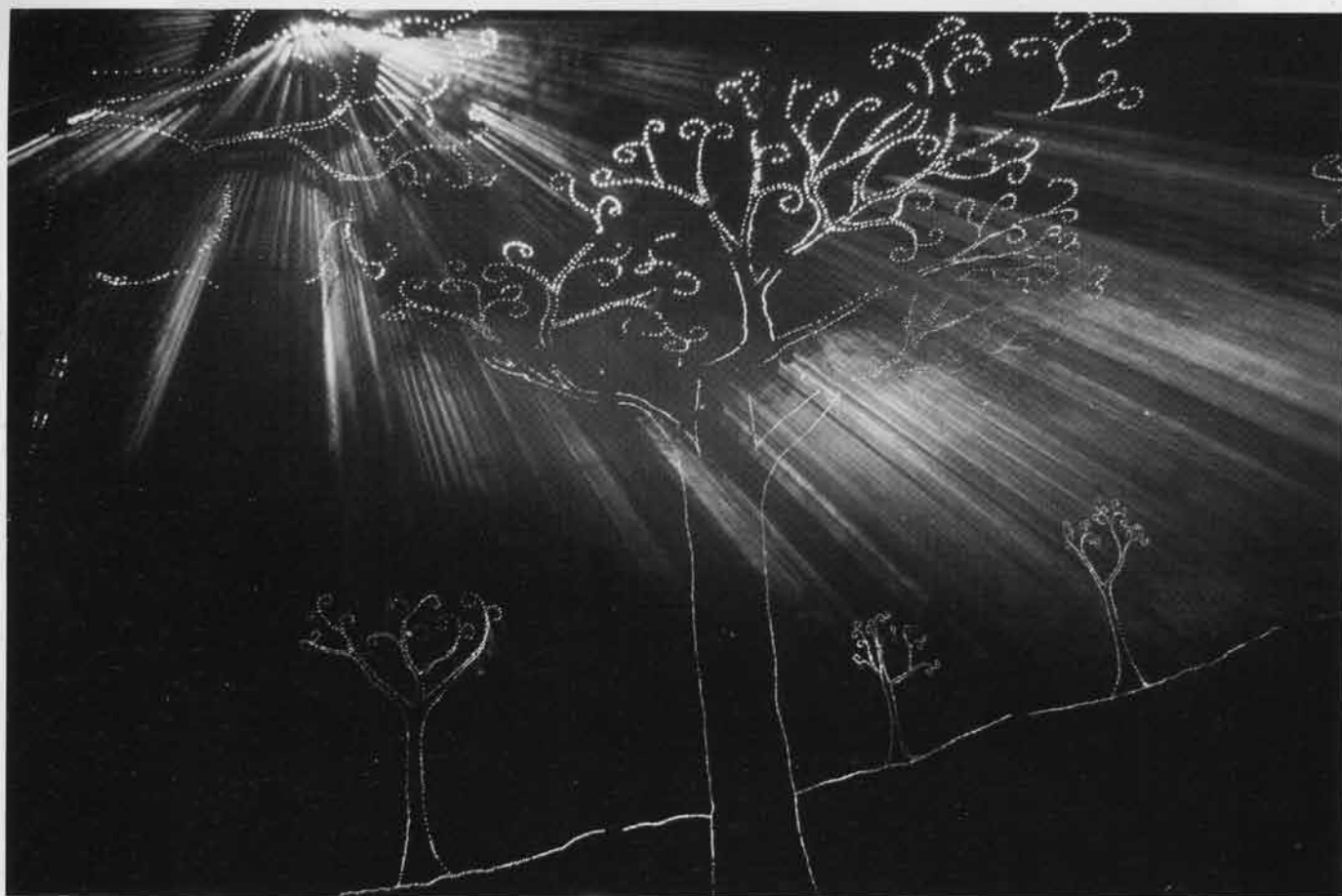
Prints vary in processes and sizes. Generally they are offered as one-off, signed, titled and dated originals. One extra artist copy is printed for exhibition purposes. Please contact the artist for detailed information.

■ CONTACT INFORMATION

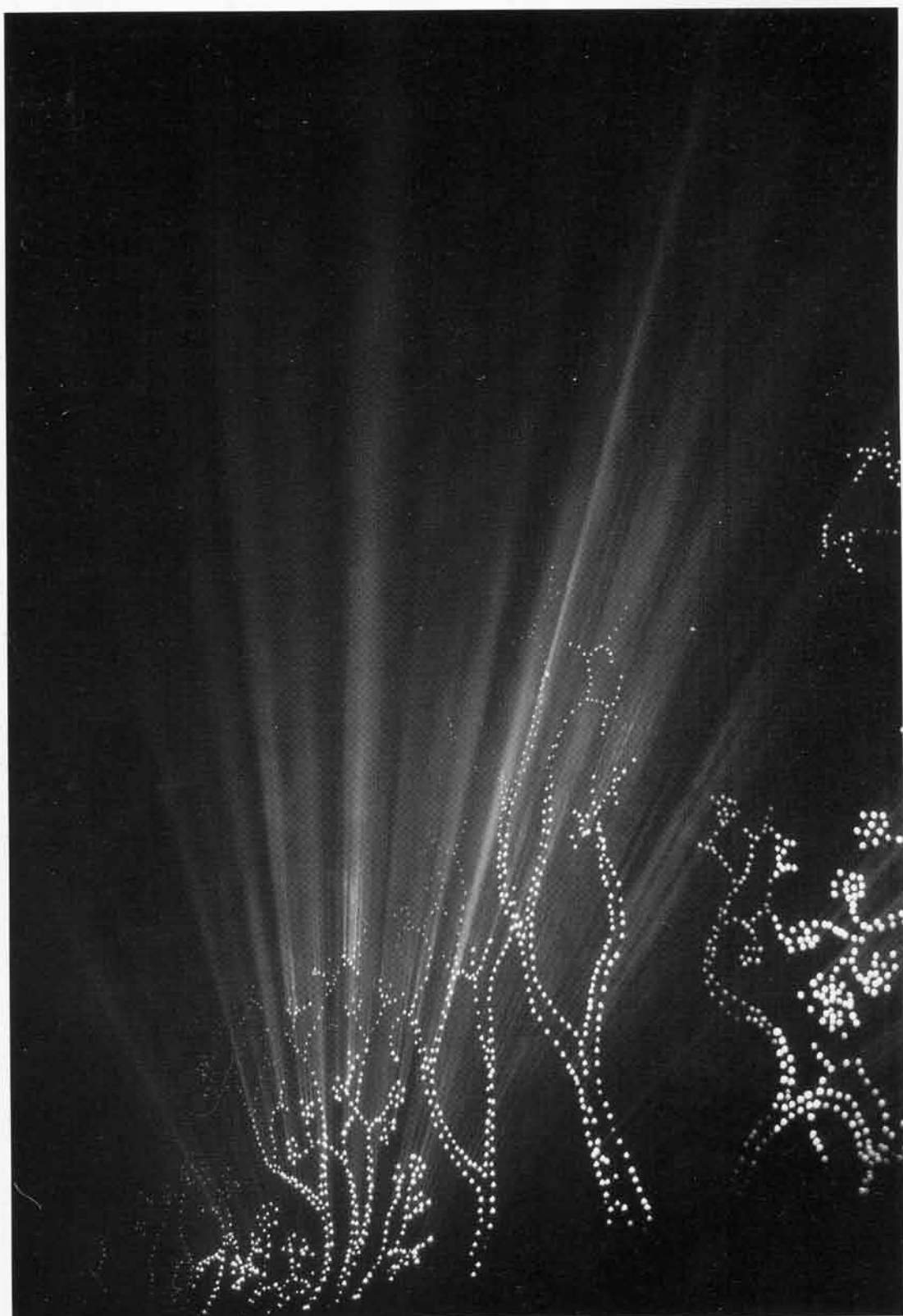
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CHAMBRE NOIR II—2007



CHAMBRE NOIRE I-2007



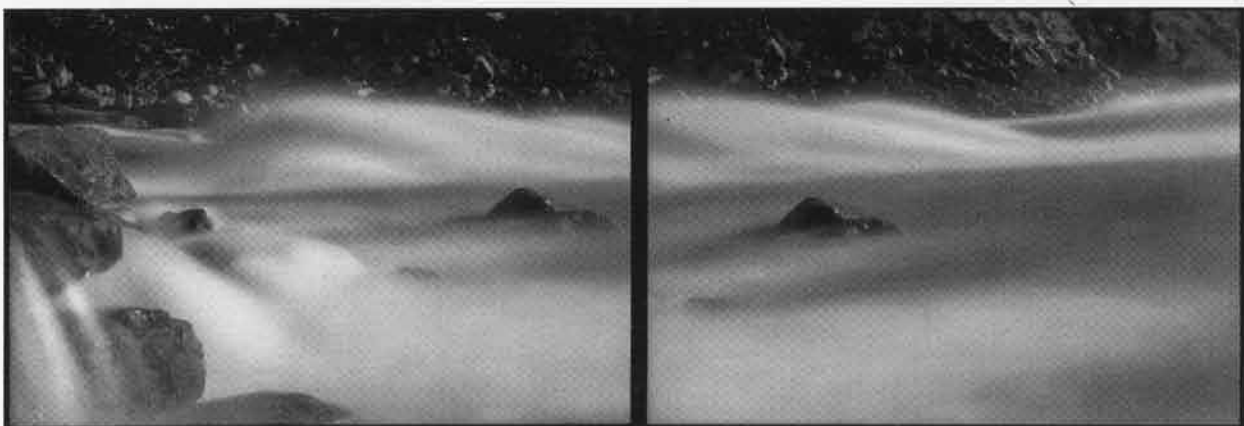
CARBON OBSCURA I-2007



LAST RIVERS SONG, PANORAMA V—1984



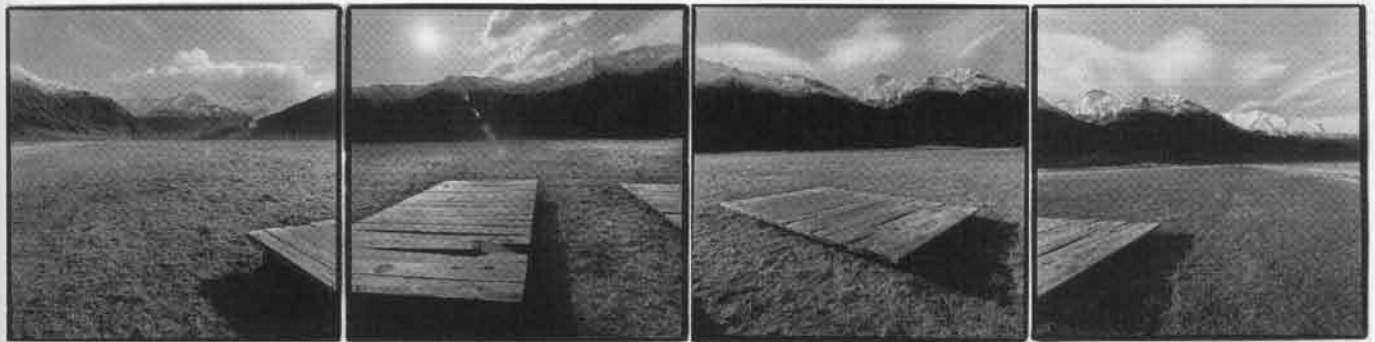
LAST RIVERS SONG, PANORAMA VII—1984



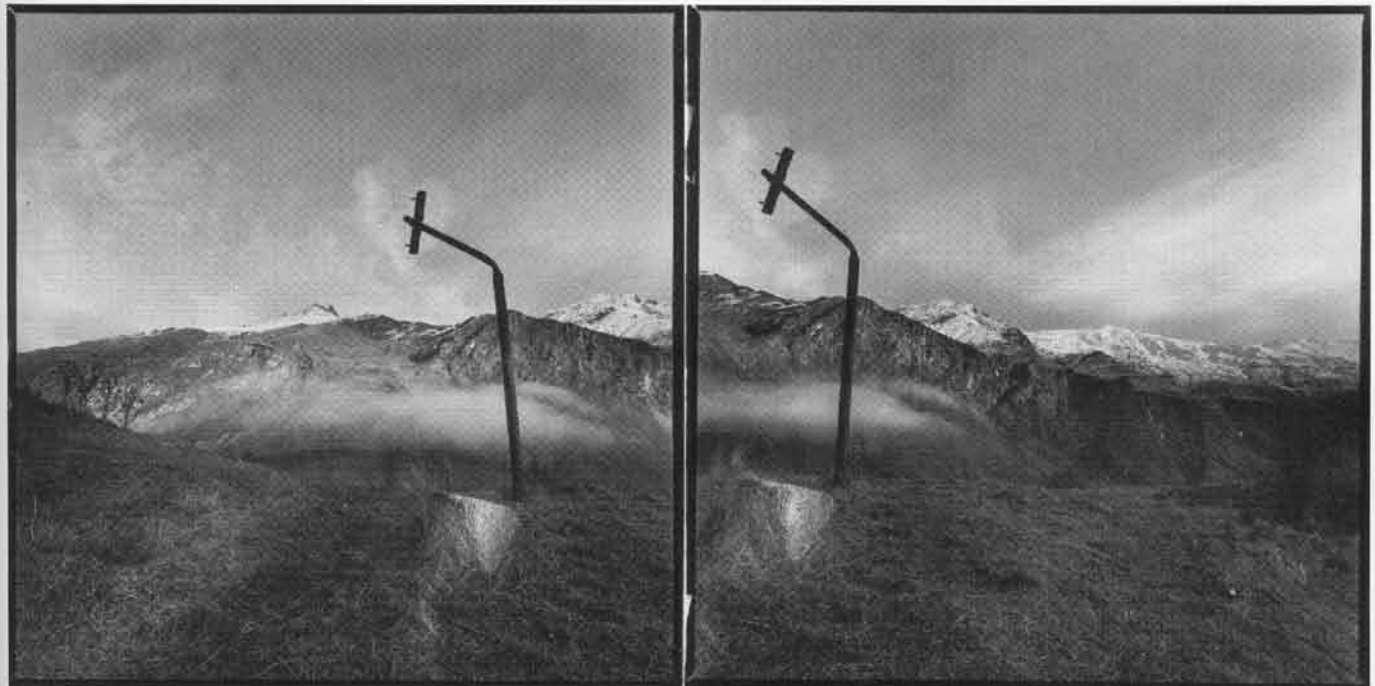
LAST RIVERS SONG, PANORAMA X—1984



RESONANCE VIII, PANORAMA OF THE ORCHARD AT DUFFY'S FARM—1994



RESONANCE XVIII, PANORAMA OF THE UPPER MATUKITUKI VALLEY BEFORE THE RIVER BRANCHES EAST—1994



RESONANCE XVII, LOWER MATUKITUKI VALLEY—1994

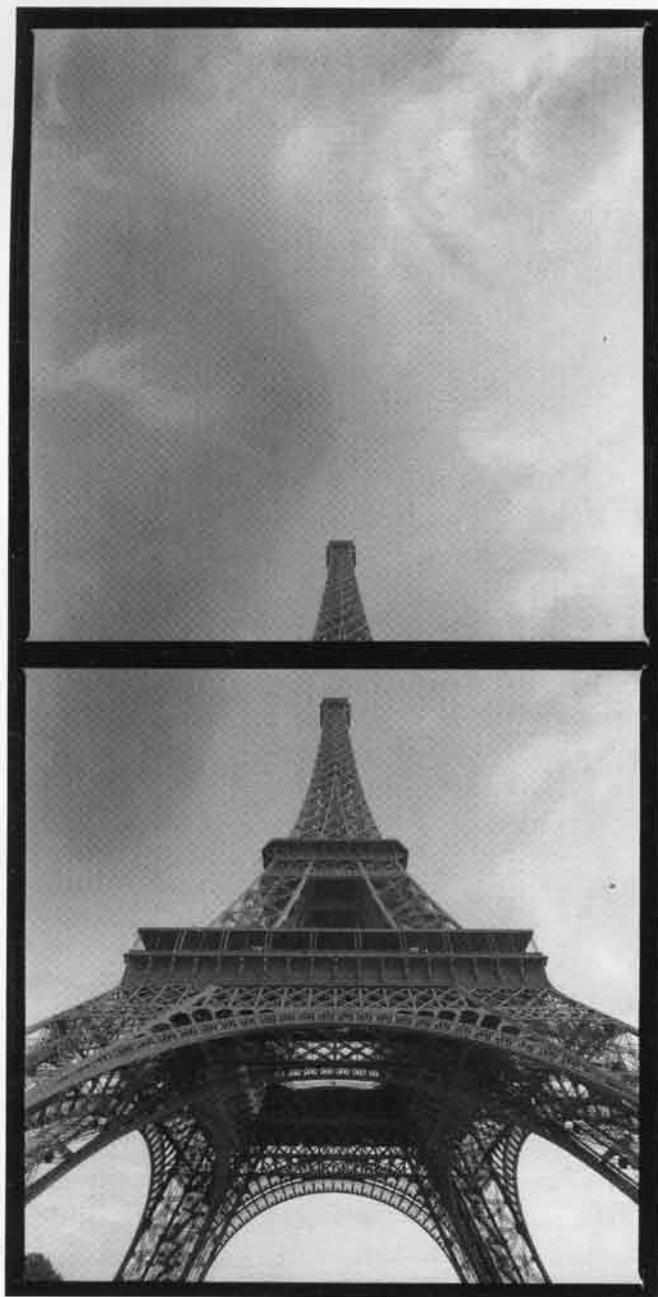


NEW ZEALAND ARTIST BILL HAMMOND IN THE RATA FOREST AT NIGHT, AUCKLAND ISLANDS—1989



when light turns to dust Artifact #13 discovered 2003 Co 1876 *[Signature]*

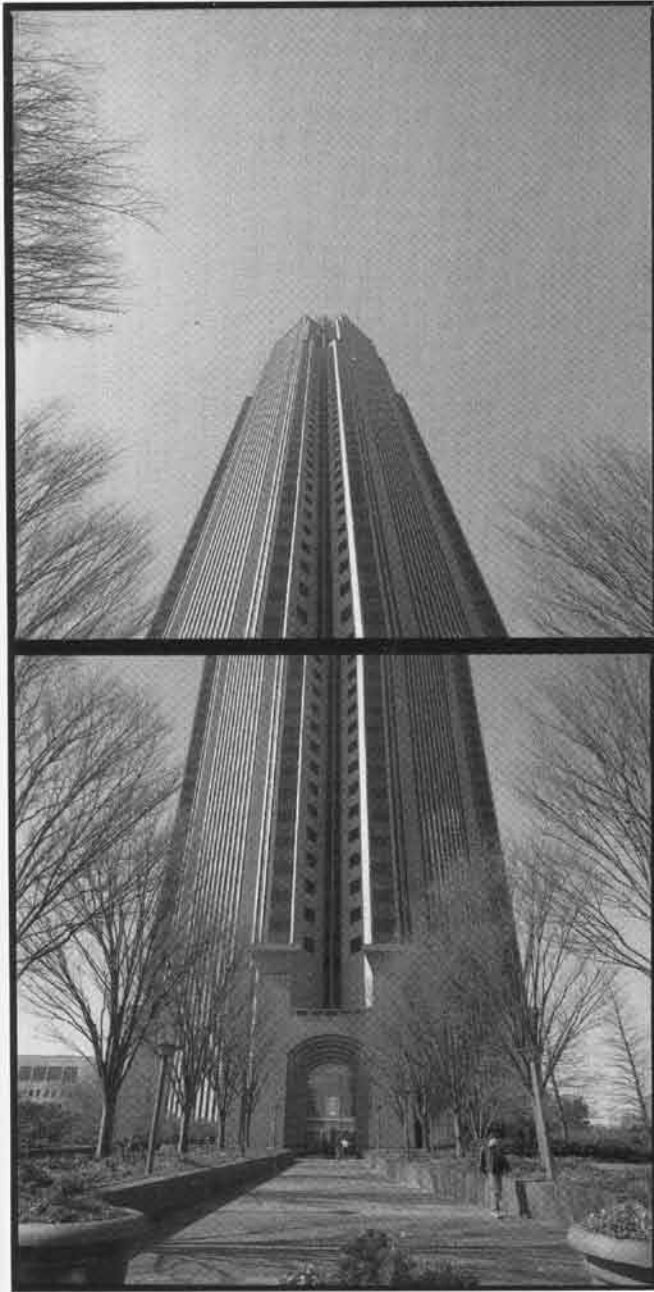
WHEN LIGHT TURNS TO DUST | ARTIFACT #13-2003



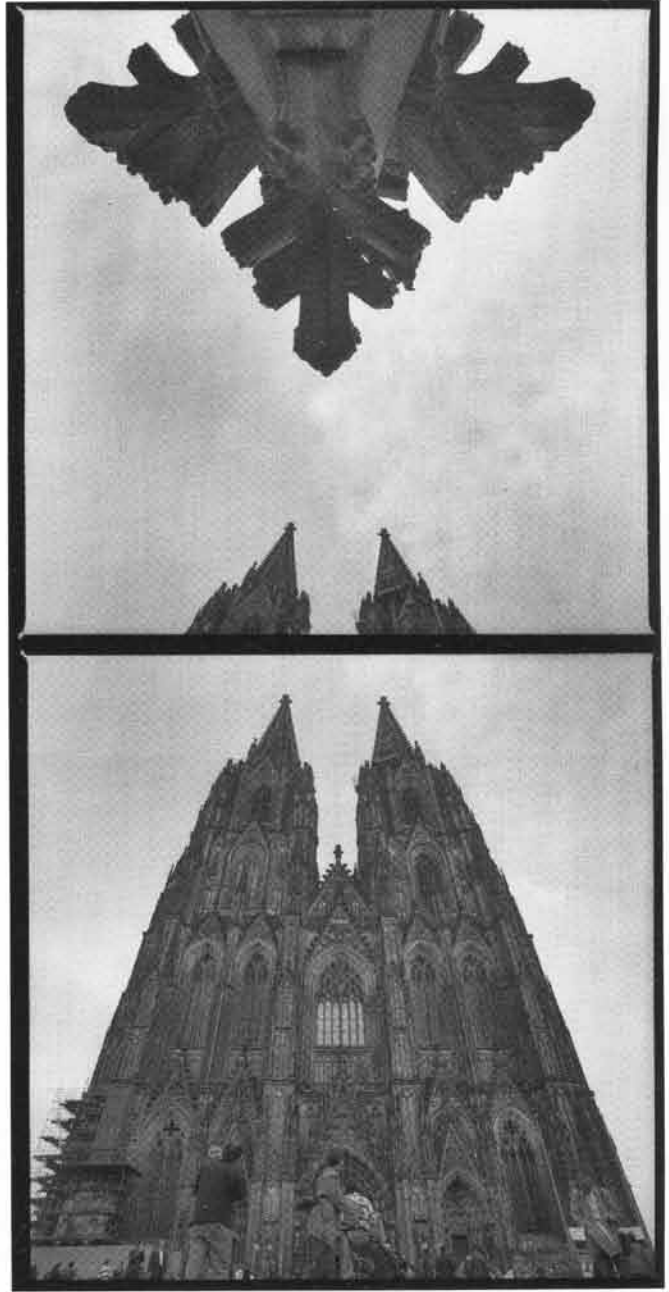
LA TOUR EIFFEL, PARIS—1994



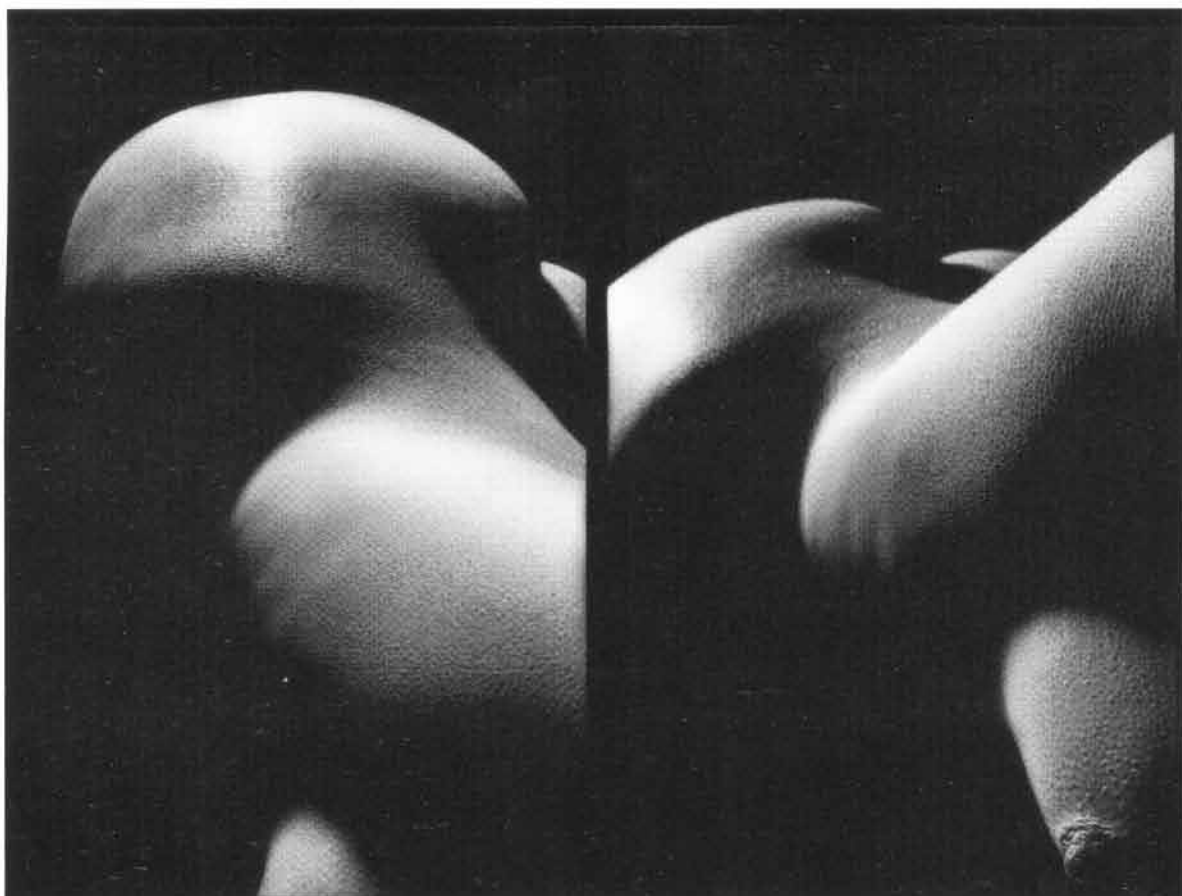
AUCKLAND 1, NEW ZEALAND—1998



ATLANTA IV, USA—2005



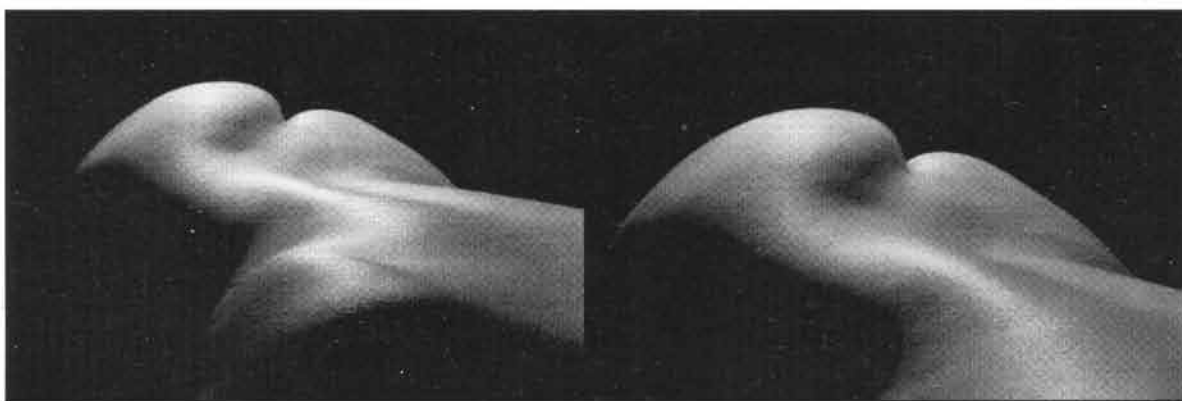
KÖLNER DOM, GERMANY—1994



NUDE 260-1-1987



NUDE 227-1-1985



NUDE 259-2-1987



DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND—2001



TIMARU, NEW ZEALAND—2002



HYDRO GRAND HOTEL, TIMARU, NEW ZEALAND—2002



PORT CHALMERS II, DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND—2001