

CLEAR LIGHT

The Architecture of Laretta Vinciarelli

Introduction by *George Ranalli*
Essays by *Peter Rowe, Camille Farey,*
Michael Sorkin, and Ida Panicelli

"Although much of my work is architectural in character, I do not represent real spaces. Rather, my work has its origins in the spaces I have abandoned – the mood of Rome and the landscape of Texas – and the paintings are of spaces I know that look nothing like what I paint... They are essentially meditations on essences of architecture like enclosure, surface and light."

Born in Italy in 1943, Laretta Vinciarelli passed away in New York in 2011. Trained as an architect in Rome but a watercolorist by vocation, her works reside in numerous private collections and among the holdings of prominent institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the National Gallery in Washington D.C., and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Noted for their luminous qualities of color and light, her depictions of imagined spaces open up a world of enclosed rooms, sweeping landscapes, watery materiality and atmospheric ephemerality. Describing her work, a noted theorist and critic once said, "They are not architecture exactly, but evidence that it exists." This book brings together paintings from 1981 onwards in the most complete collection of Vinciarelli's work to date. It also includes texts from knowledgeable commentators and for the first time presents sketch materials that provide an insight into Vinciarelli's working methodology. Vinciarelli's technique often operated at the very limits of her medium; sometimes even to the point of failure. In these paintings, color is used as a device for shaping space, with watercolor the chosen medium for its rich portrayal of light and the conceptual simplicity of the act of mixing paste with water.

The City College
of New York



OSCAR RIERA OJEDA
PUBLISHERS

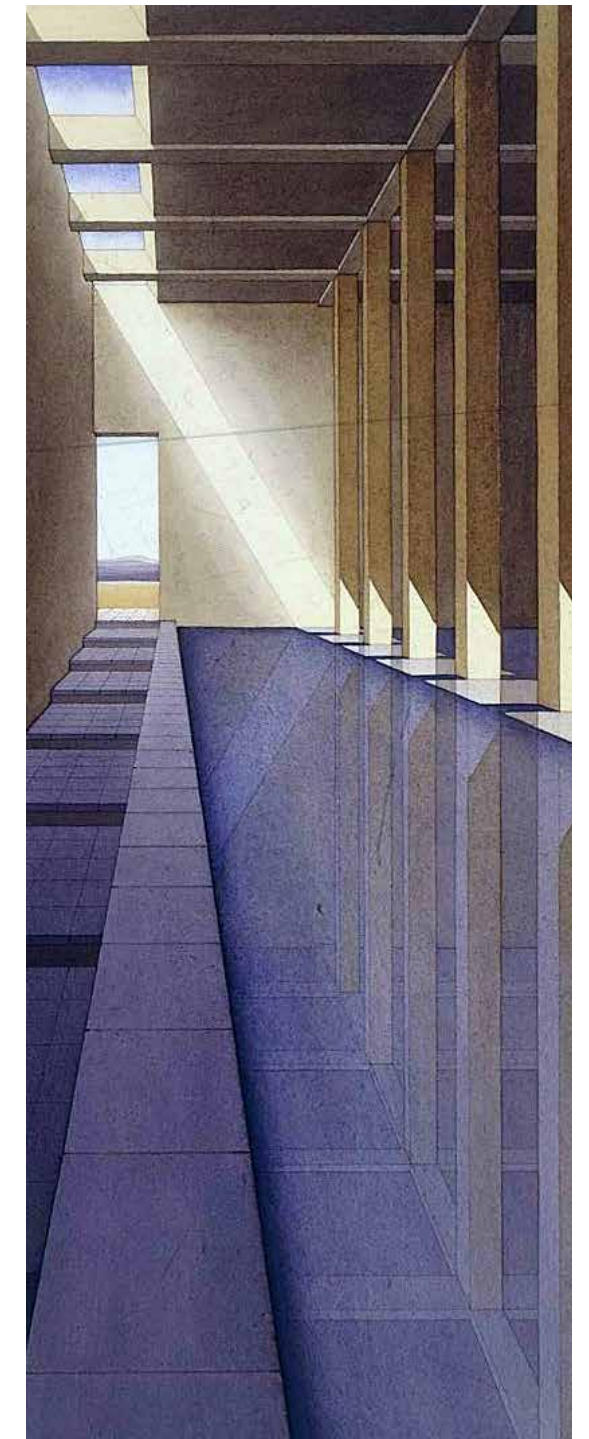
www.oropublishers.com
www.oscarrieraojeda.com



CLEAR LIGHT | The Architecture of Laretta Vinciarelli



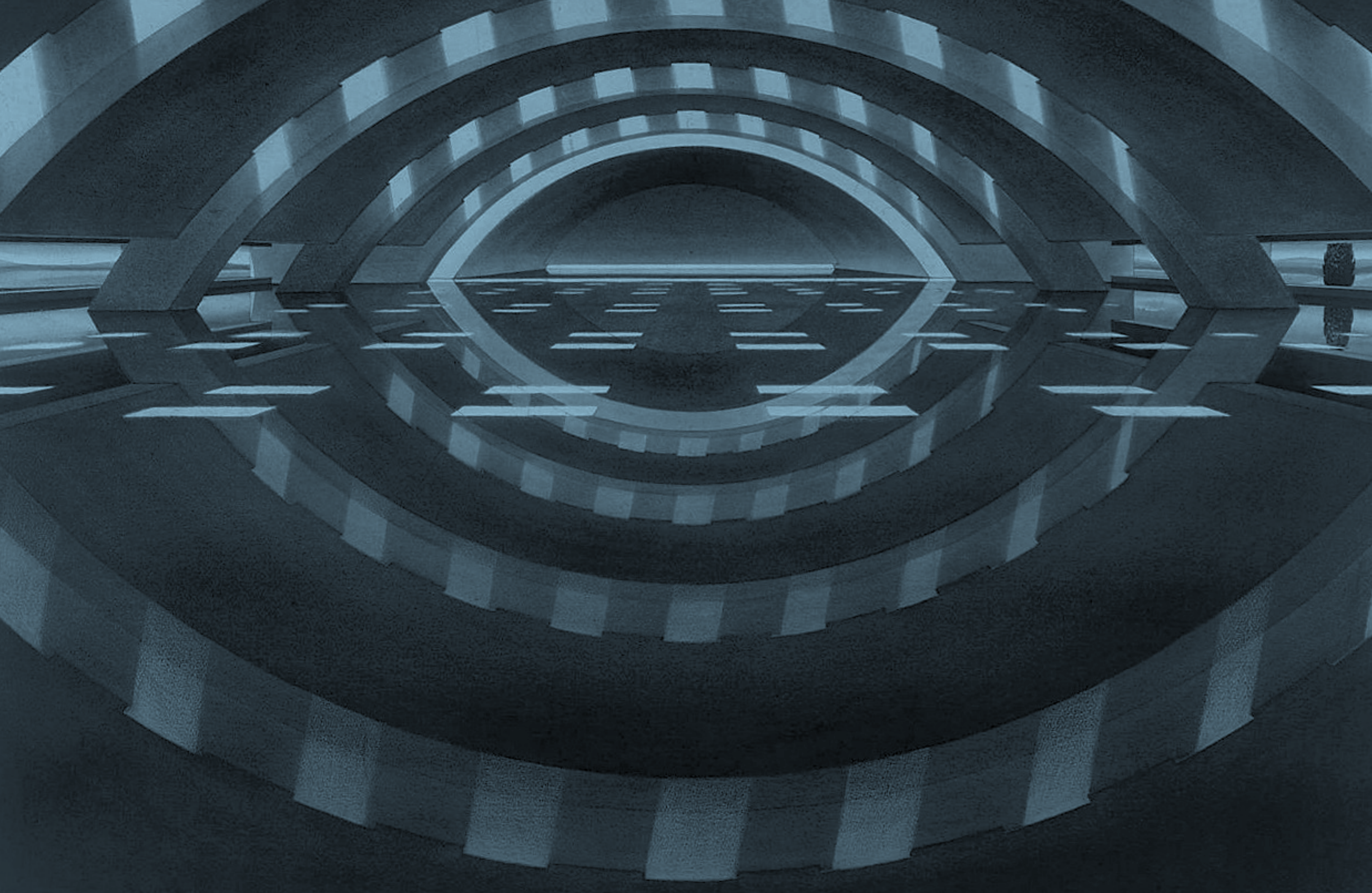
CLEAR LIGHT

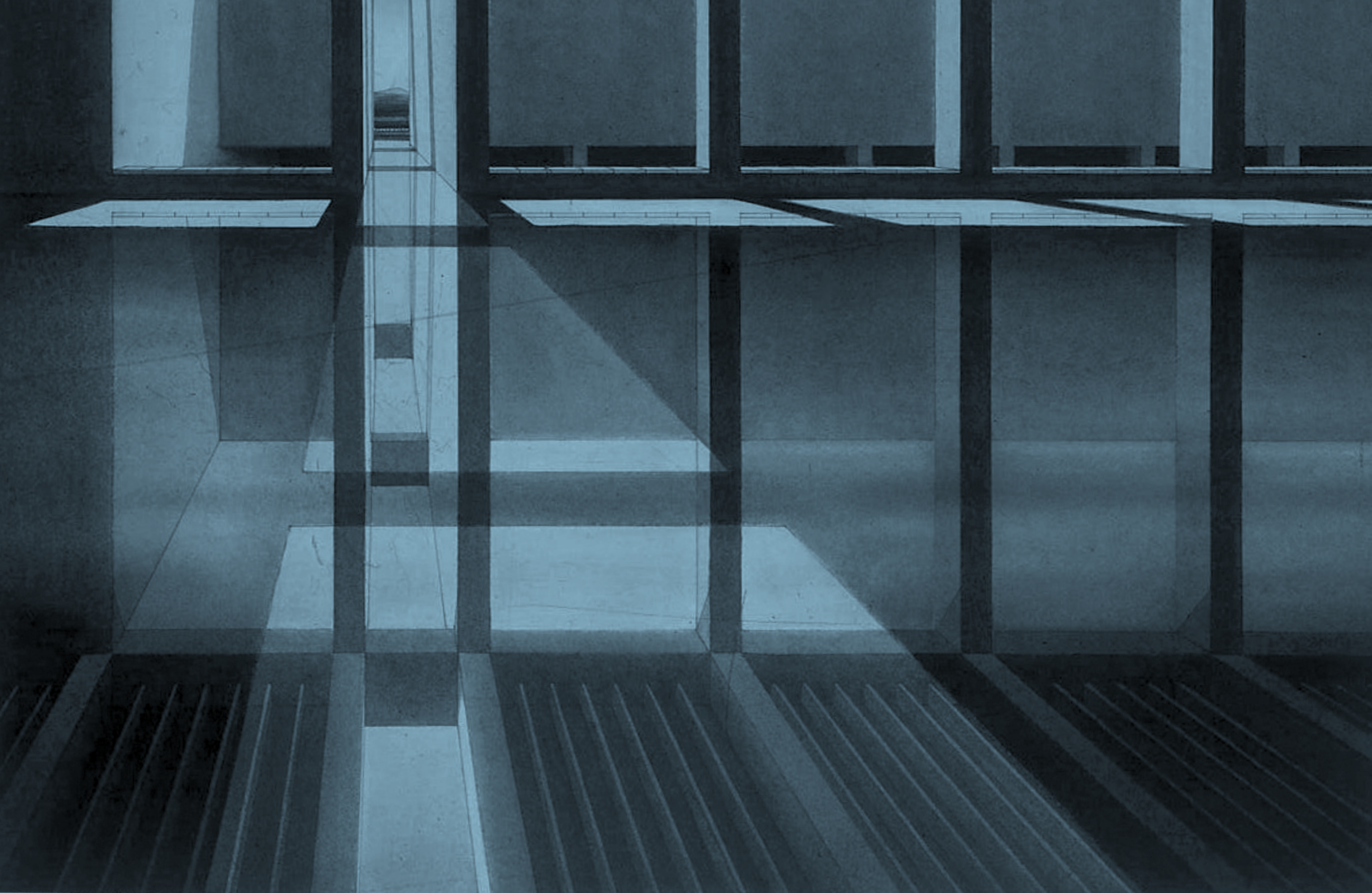


The Architecture of Laretta Vinciarelli



CLEAR LIGHT | The Architecture of *Lauretta Vinciarelli*





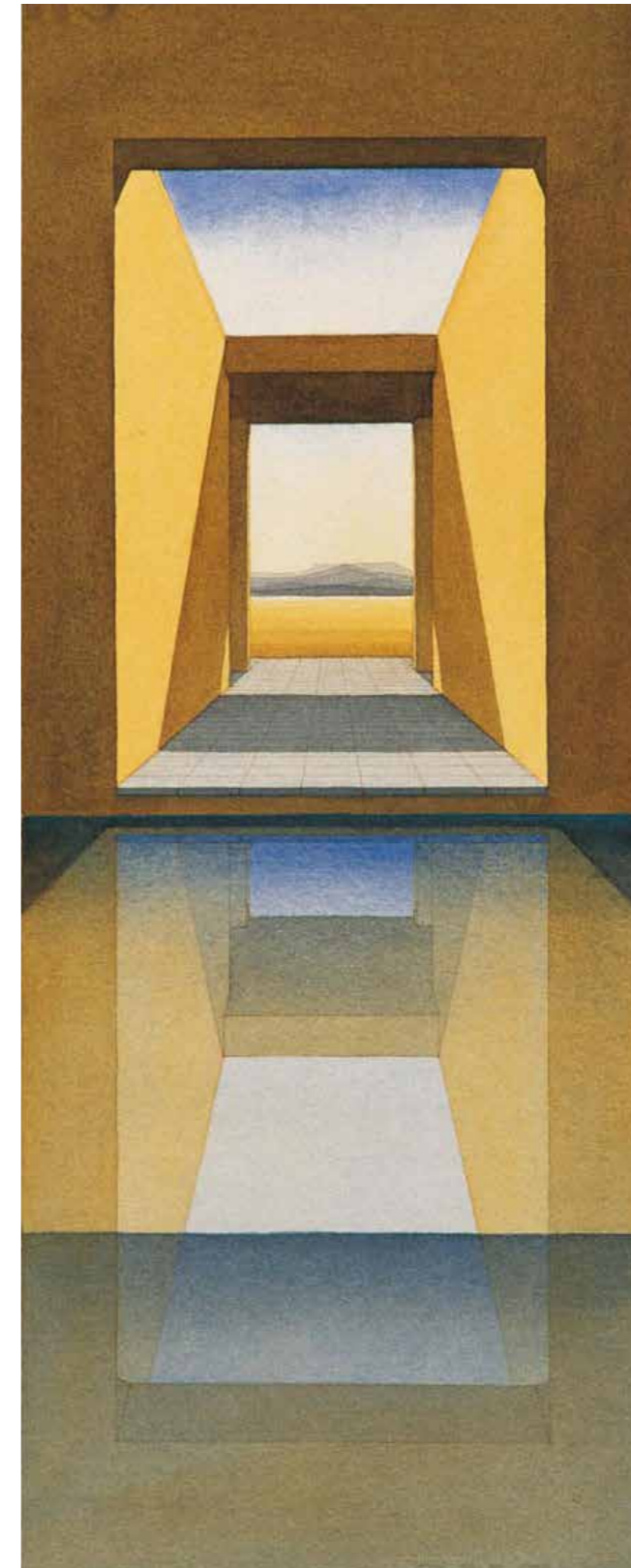
contents

acknowledgements	19
introduction by <i>George Ranalli</i>	20
plates	24
A Journey in Space, Light and Color by <i>Peter Rowe and Camille Farey</i>	226
sketches	234
Clear Light by <i>Michael Sorkin</i>	264
exhibition	268
For Laretta by <i>Ida Panicelli</i>	278
appendix	282
biography	284
exhibitions	286
permanent collections	289
notable projects	290
publications	291

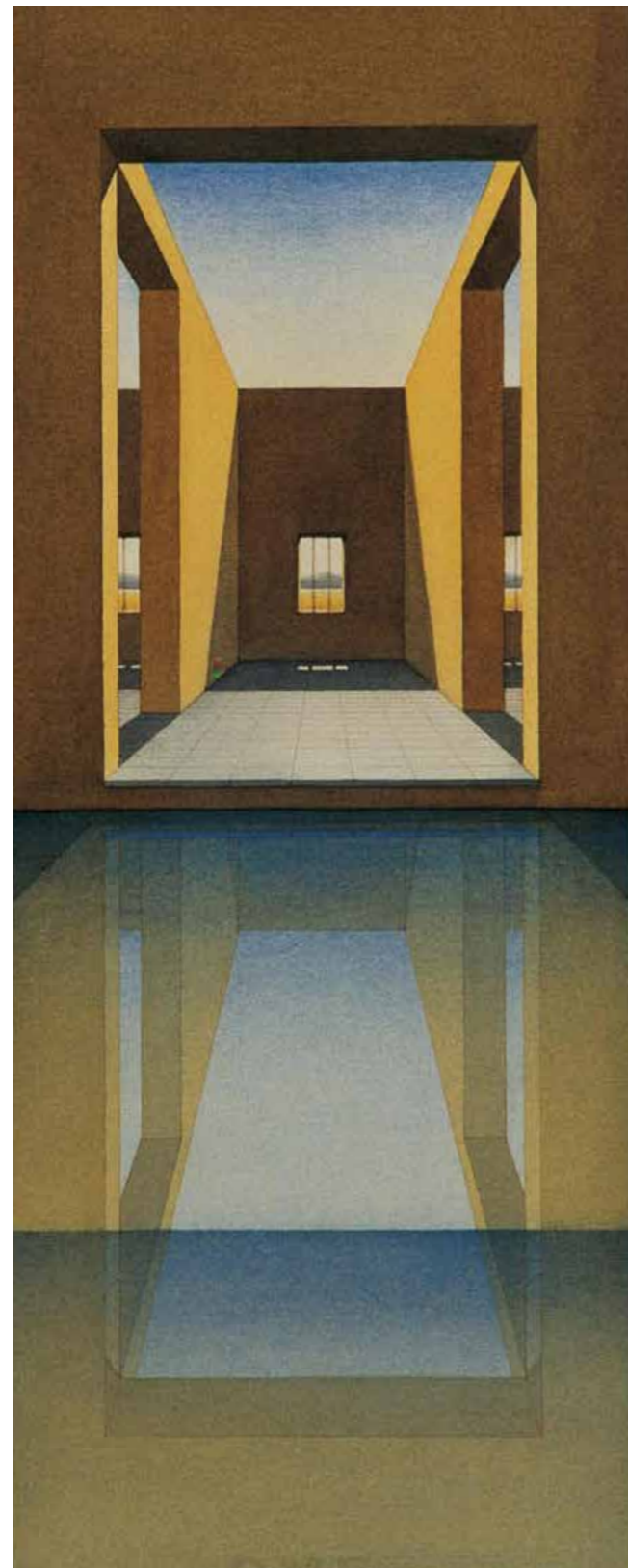
plates

The Seven Courtyards	26	Per Peter	120
Water Enclosure in Landscape	36	Per Sal e Ron	122
Water Enclosure	40	The Star	130
The Veil	44	Long Horizon II	134
Water Enclosure in Red	48	Night	140
Water Enclosure in Blue	50	Spatial Reverberation	152
Texas Remembered	52	Orange Incandescence I	158
The Subway Series	56	Orange Incandescence II	160
Window	60	Orange Incandescence III	162
Steps	64	Incandescent Frames	164
Water Enclosure	68	Orange Sound	168
Water Enclosure Study	74	Orange Silence, "Ombrellino"	178
Atrium	78	Silence in Red	180
Red Room	82	Stripes of Light	182
The Ray	86	Intimate Distance	184
Water Enclosure in Red	90	Luminous Void, Volume of Light	192
Atrium II	94	Suspended in Green	202
Atrium in Red	100	Suspended in Red I	208
Spring	104	Suspended in Red II	212
The Black Room	108	Icy Water	216
Per Ilaria	112	Suspended in Blue	220

Water Enclosure



Water Enclosure (1 of 3)
1987
Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
Paper size: 22 x 15 in
Image size: 20 x 8 in
Artist's Collection



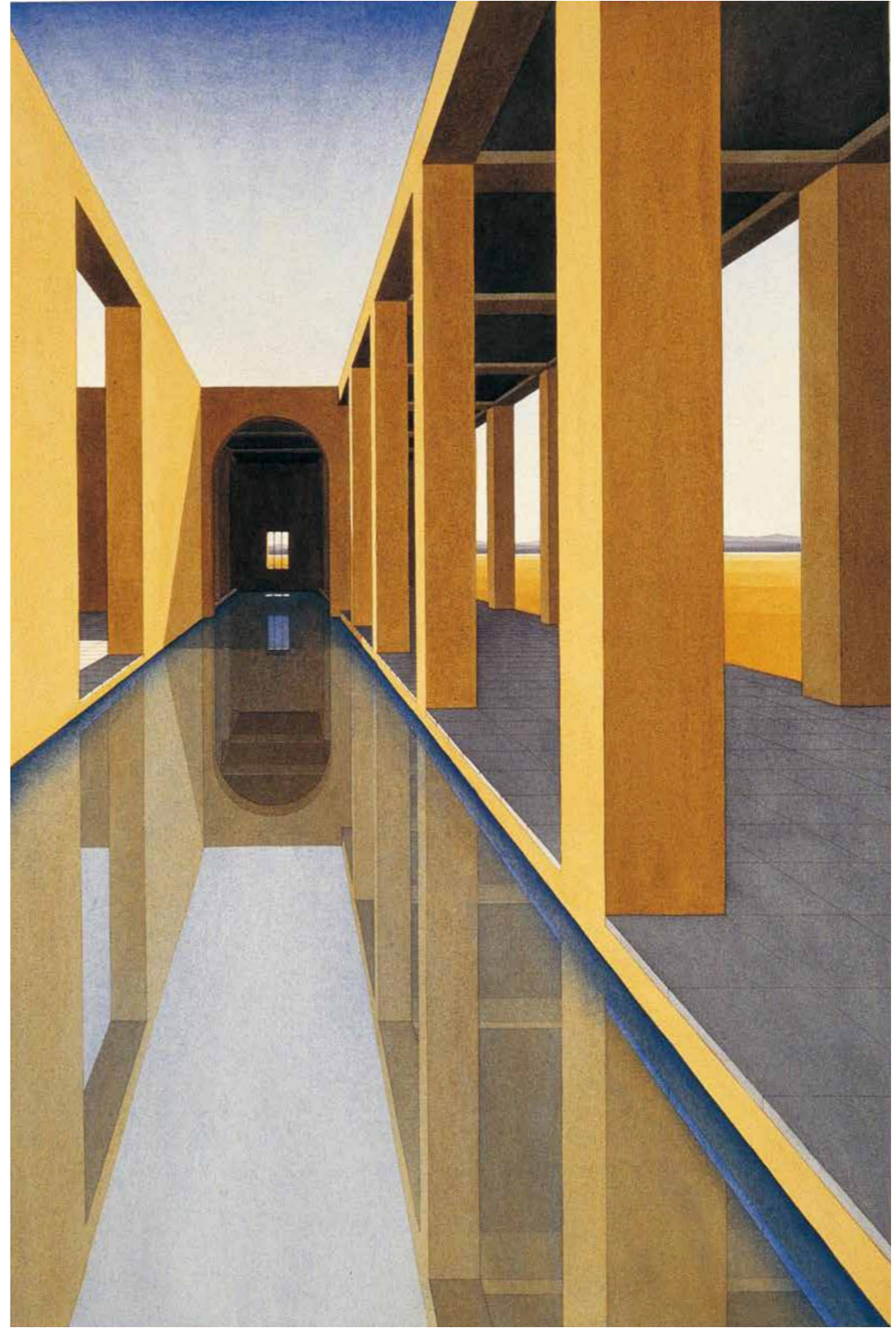
Water Enclosure (2 of 3)
 1987
 Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 Paper size: 22 x 15 in
 Image size: 20 x 8 in
 Artist's Collection



Water Enclosure (3 of 3)
 1987
 Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 Paper size: 22 x 15 in
 Image size: 20 x 8 in
 Artist's Collection

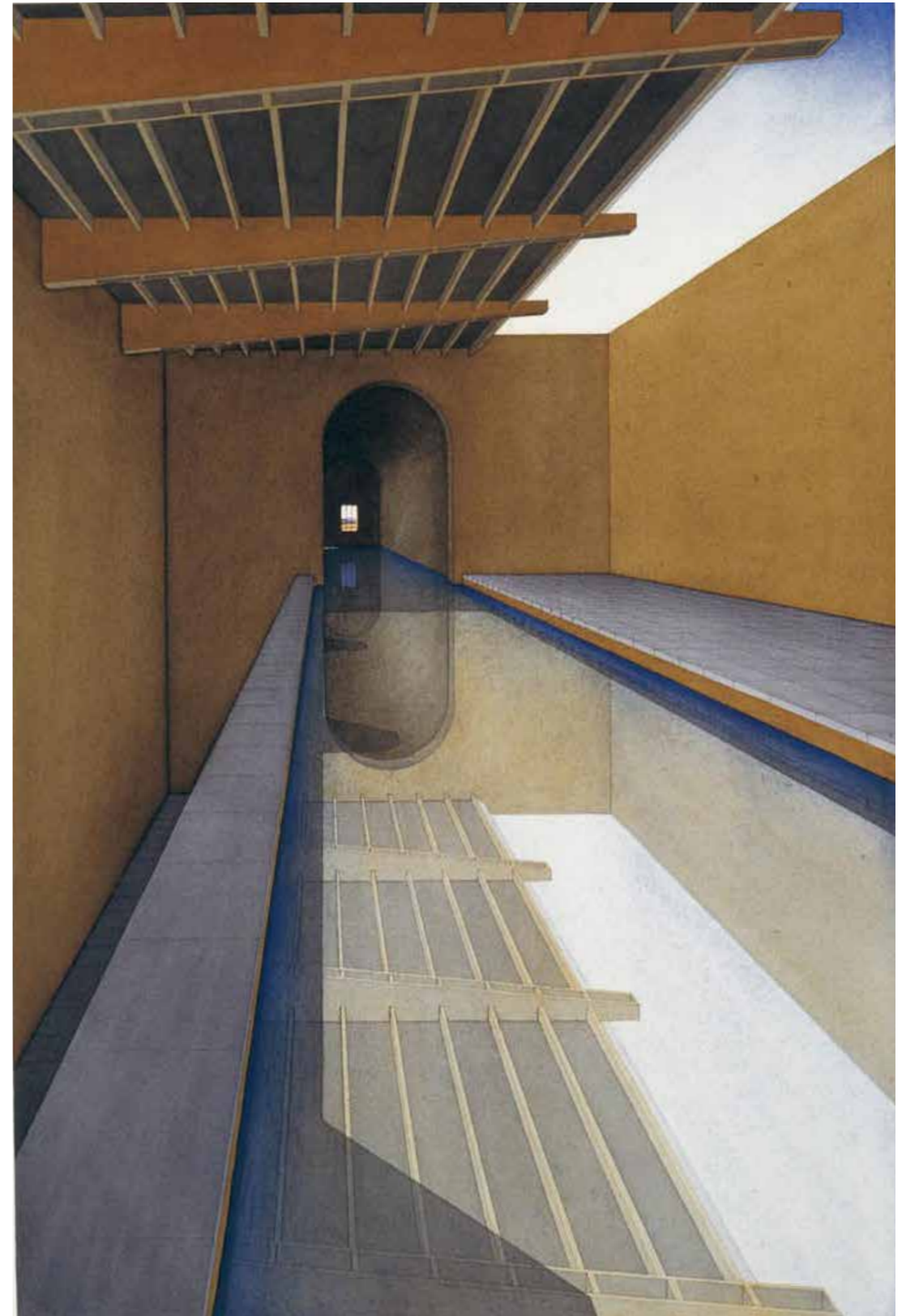


Texas Remembered (2 of 3)
 1988
 Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 30 x 22 in
 Private Collection



Texas Remembered (3 of 3)
 1988
 Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 30 x 22 in
 Private Collection

The Subway Series



The Subway Series (triptych, 1 of 3)
1988
Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in
Image size: 28 x 19 in
Artist's Collection





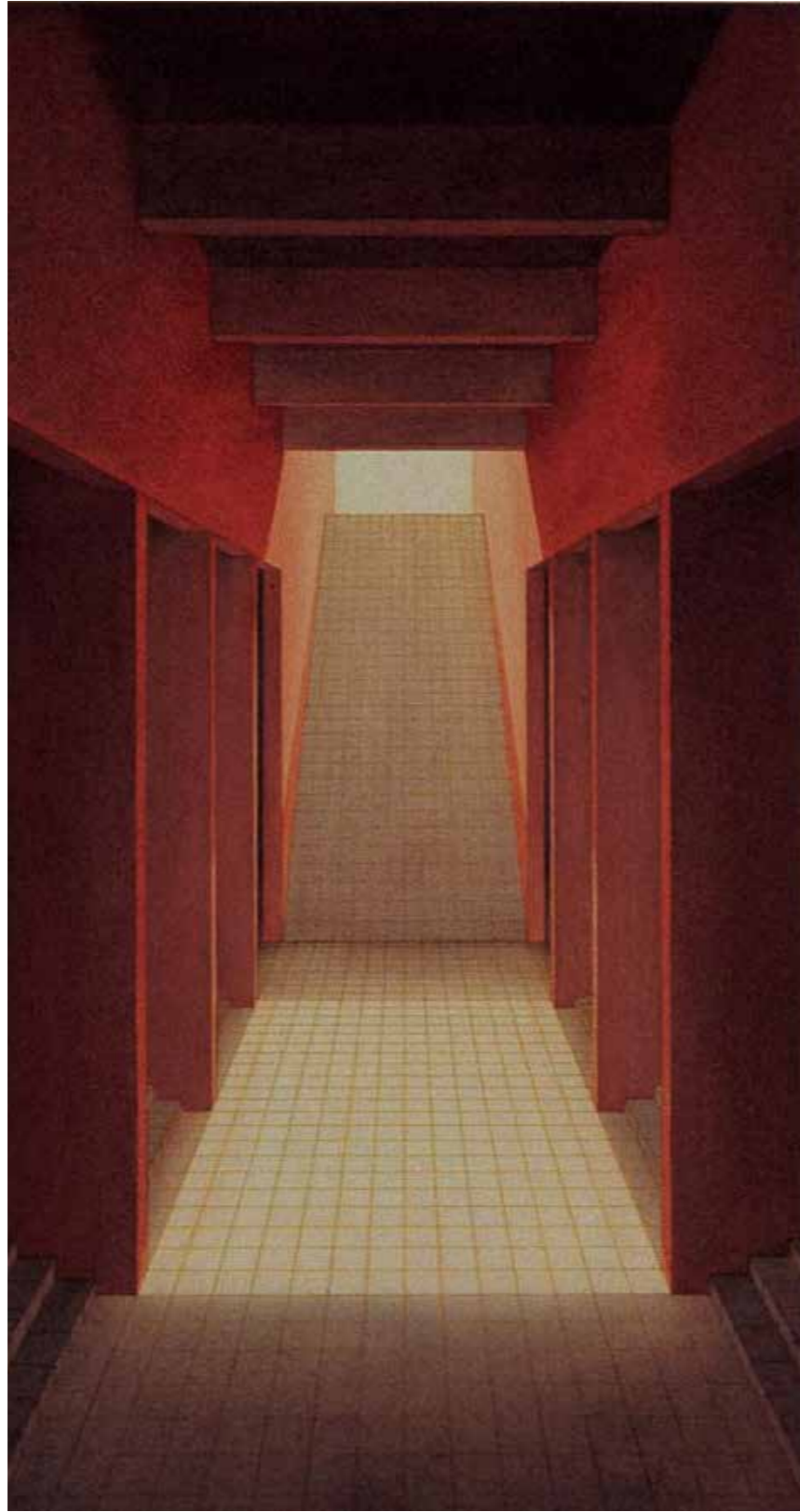
Water Enclosure IV
 1989
 Winsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in
 Image size: 27 1/2 x 11 in
 Private Collection



Water Enclosure V
 1989
 Winsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in
 Image size: 27 1/2 x 11 in
 Artist's Collection



Water Enclosure Study (2 of 2)
1989
Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
Paper size: 30 x 11 in
Artist's Collection



Red Room (2 of 3)

1990

Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper

Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in

Image size: 27 x 14 1/2 in

Artist's Collection



Red Room (3 of 3)

1990

Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper

Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in

Image size: 27 x 14 1/2 in

Artist's Collection





116

Per Ilaria III
1993
Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
22 x 30 in
Private Collection



117

Per Ilaria IV
1993
Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
22 x 30 in
Private Collection



124

125

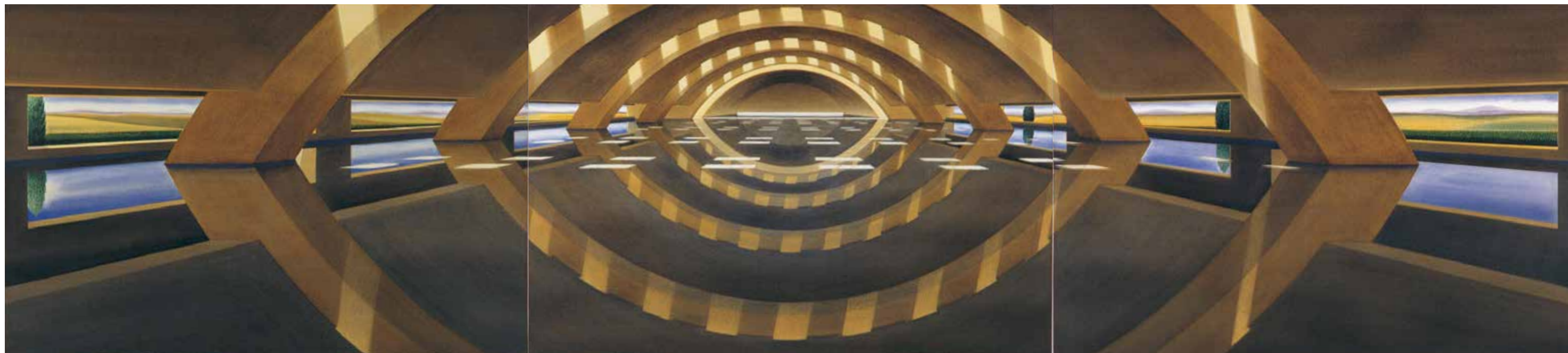
Per Sal e Ron (2 of 5)
1993
Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
29 x 41 in
Private Collection



The Star II
 1994
 Winsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 Paper size: 30 x 22 in
 Artist's Collection



The Star III
 1994
 Winsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 Paper size: 30 x 22 in
 Artist's Collection



134

135

Long Horizon II

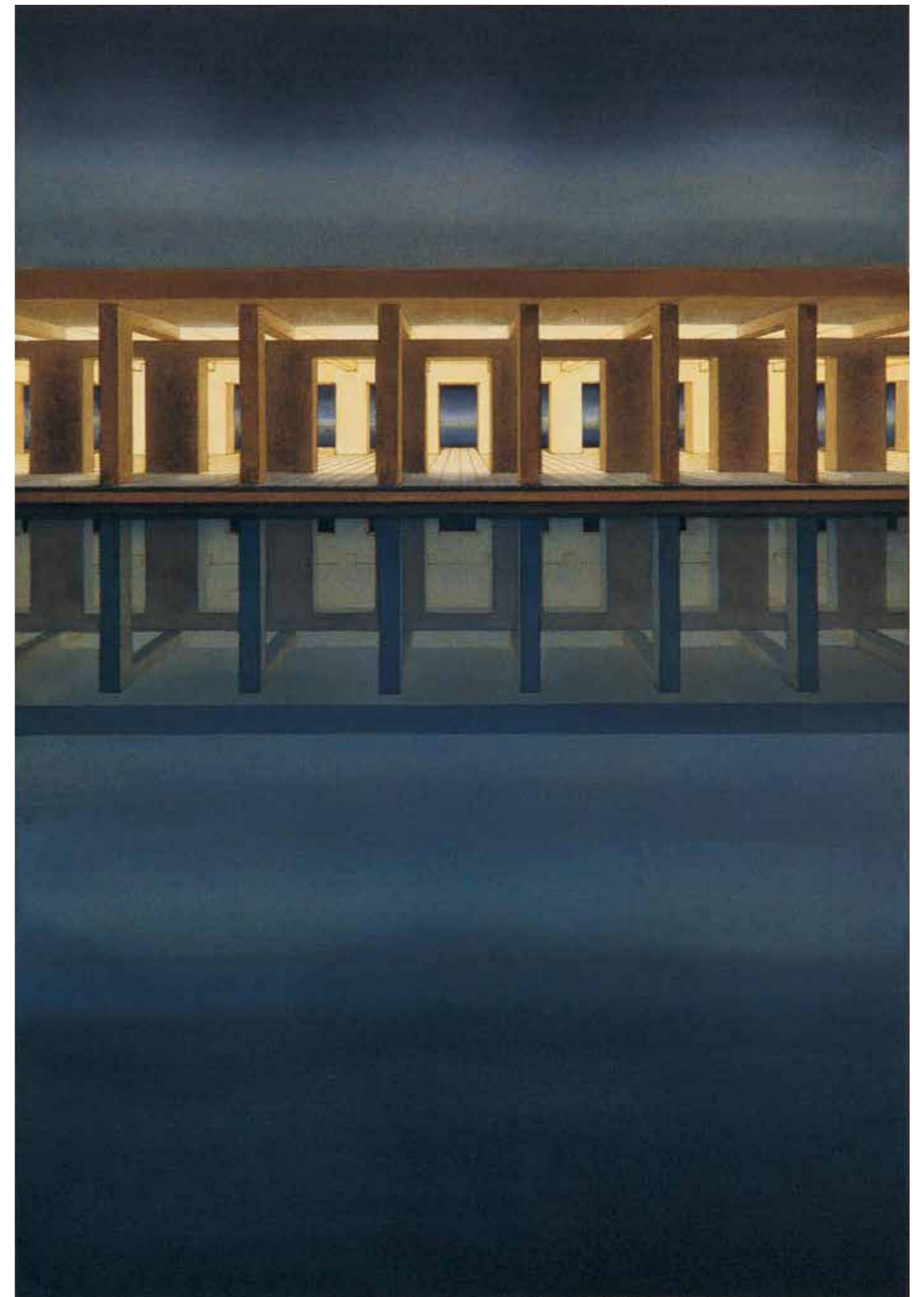
Long Horizon II
1995
Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
29 x 41 in
Museum Collection (National Gallery, Washington, D.C.)

Following spreads:

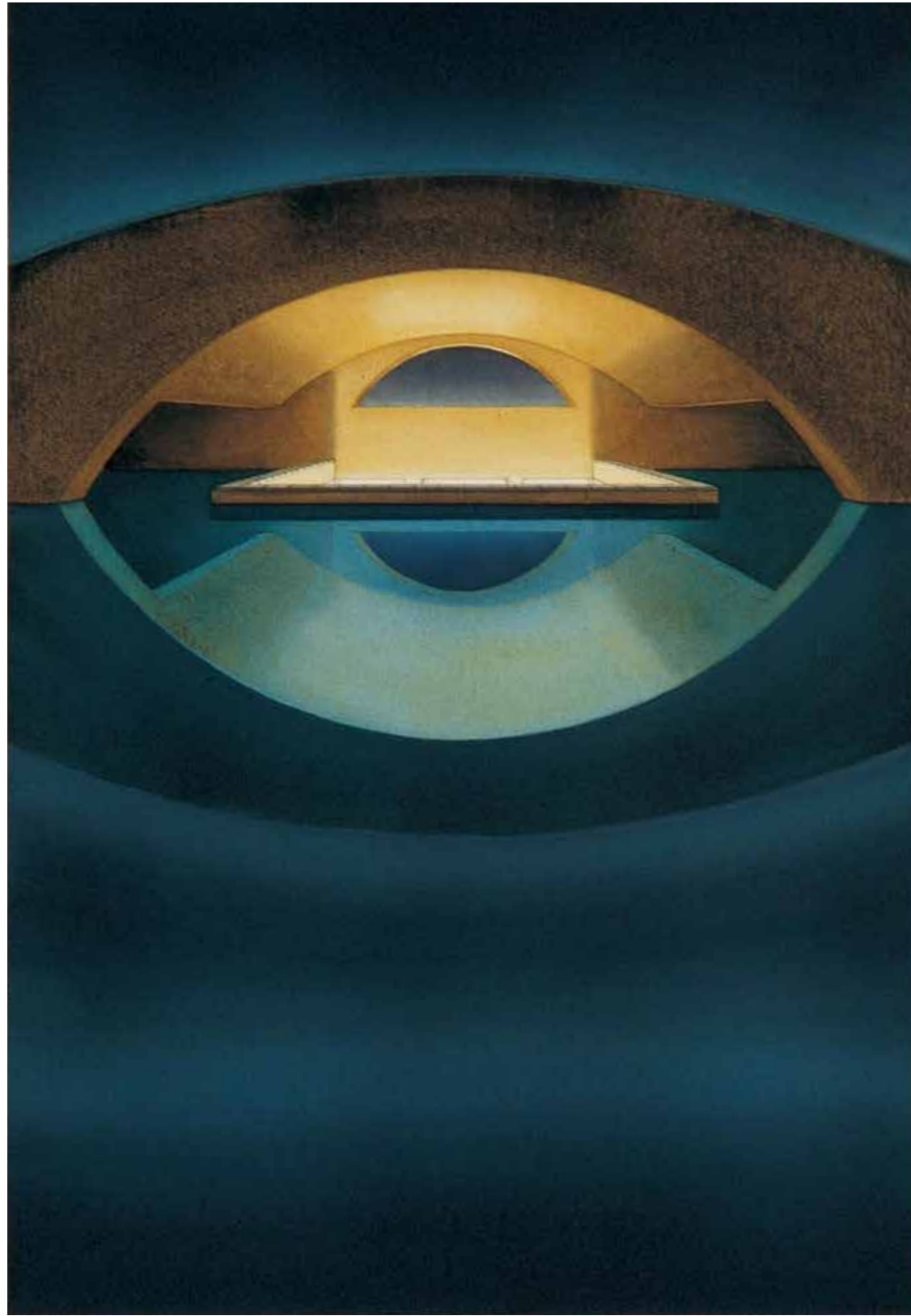
Long Horizon II
1995
Plate detail



Night



Night I
1996
Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
30 x 22 in
Private Collection



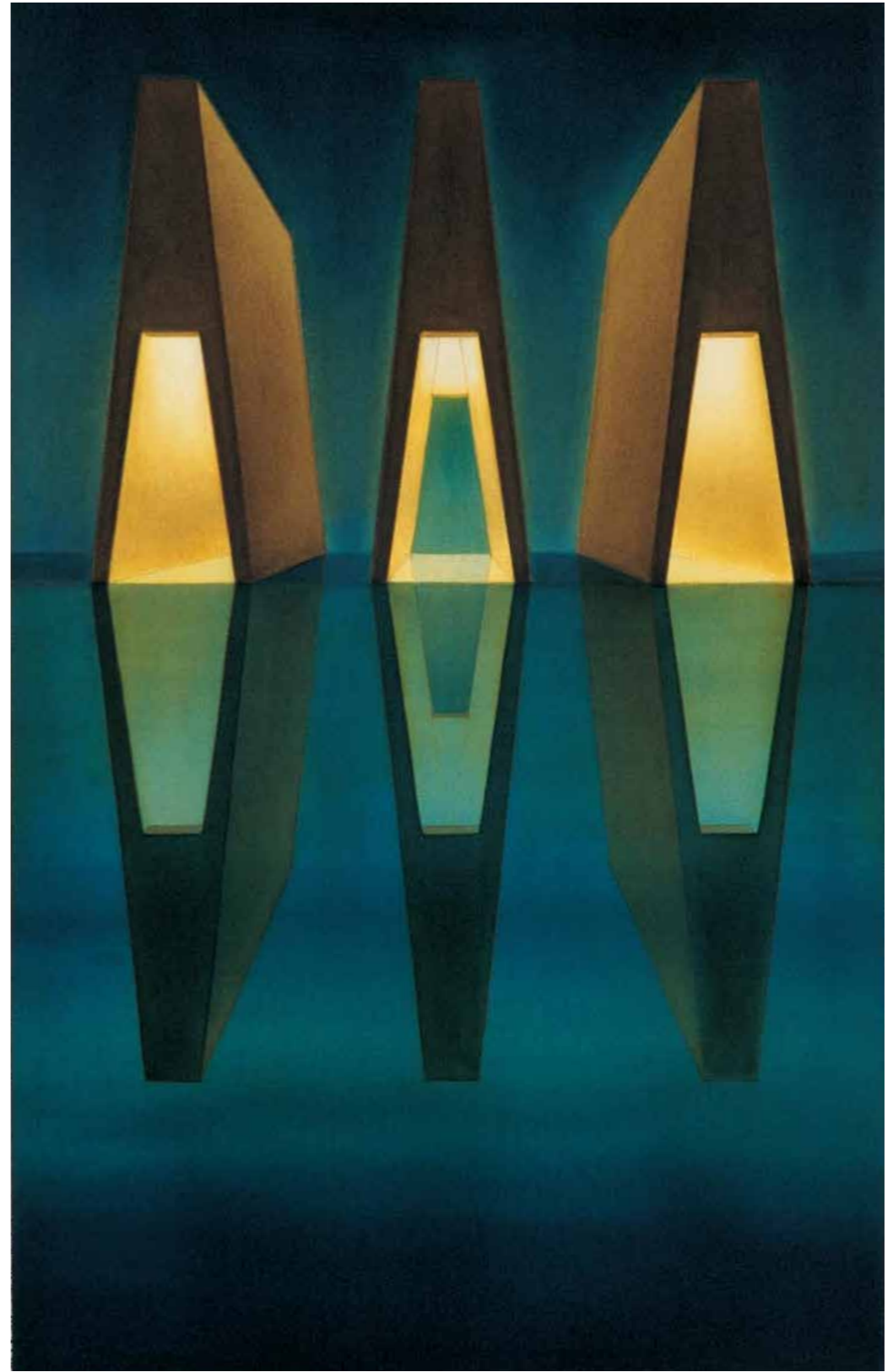
Night IV
 1996
 Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in
 Image size: 25 1/2 x 17 3/4 in
 Artist's Collection



Night V
 1996
 Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in
 Image size: 25 1/2 x 17 3/4 in
 Artist's Collection



Night VIII
 1996
 Winsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 30 x 22 in
 Private Collection



Night IX
 1996
 Winsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in
 Image size: 25 1/2 x 17 3/4 in
 Artist's Collection

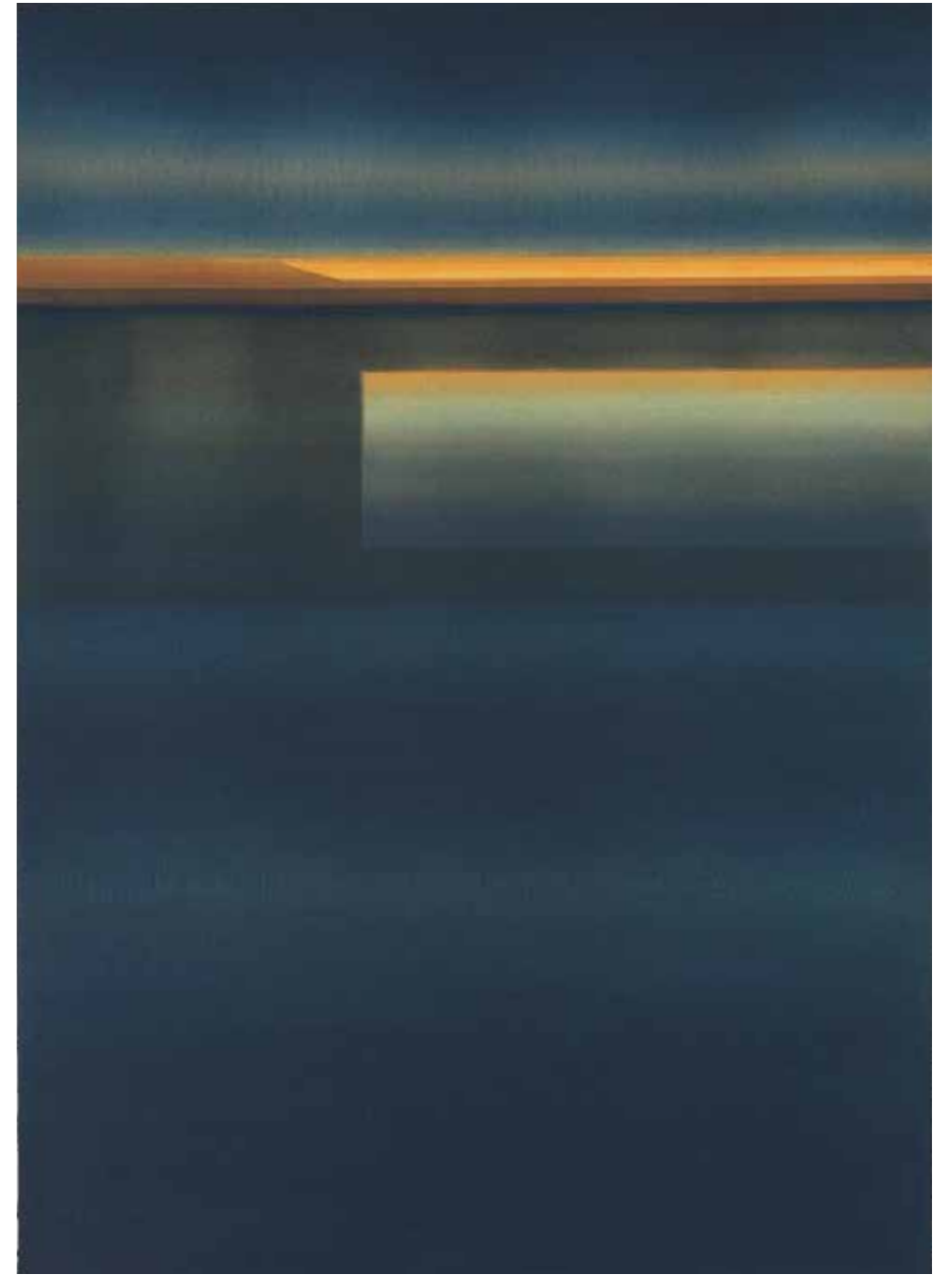


Orange Incandescence III

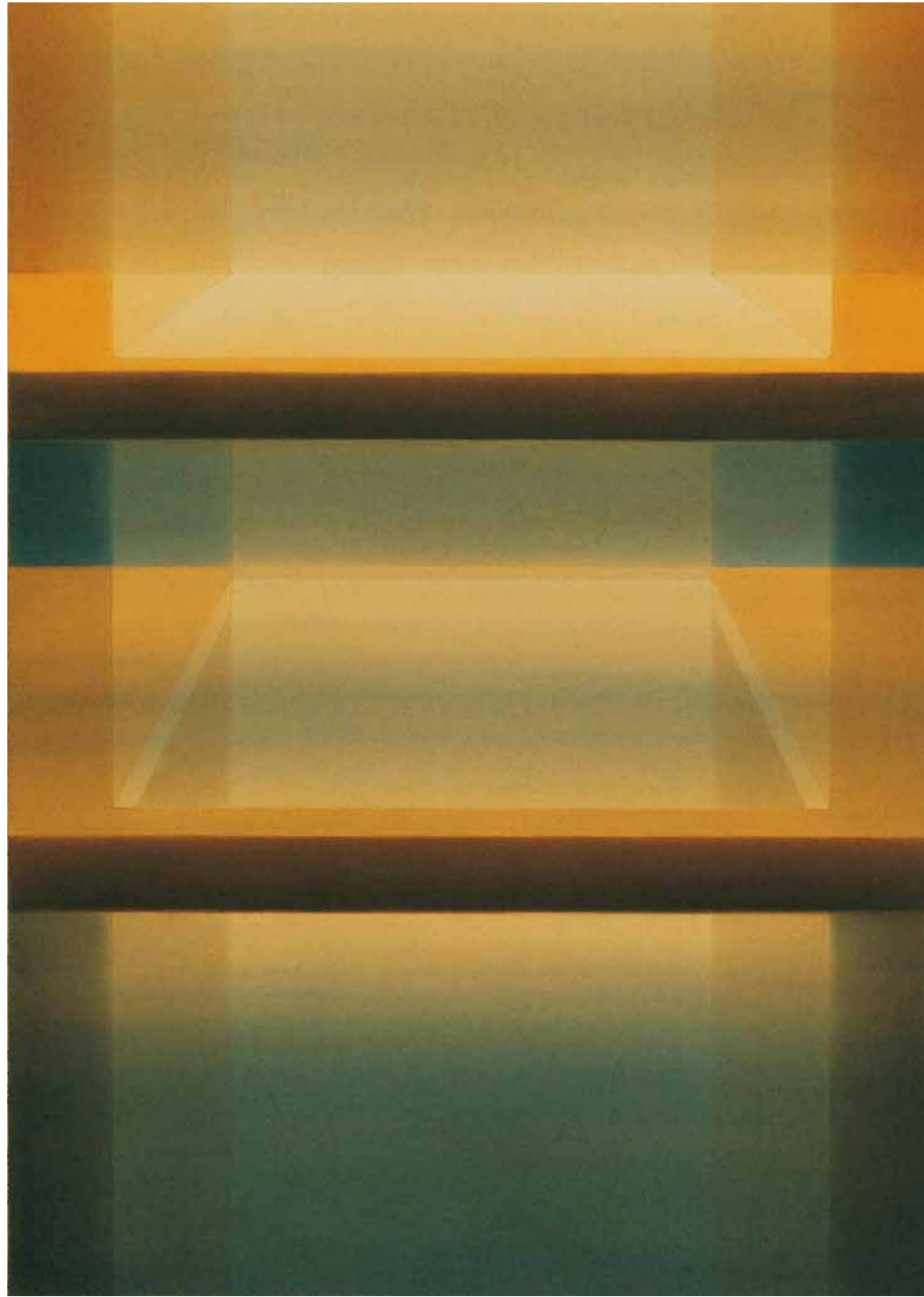
Orange Incandescence III (1 of 3)
 1997
 Watercolor
 Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in
 Image size: 27 1/2 x 19 1/2 in
 Private Collection



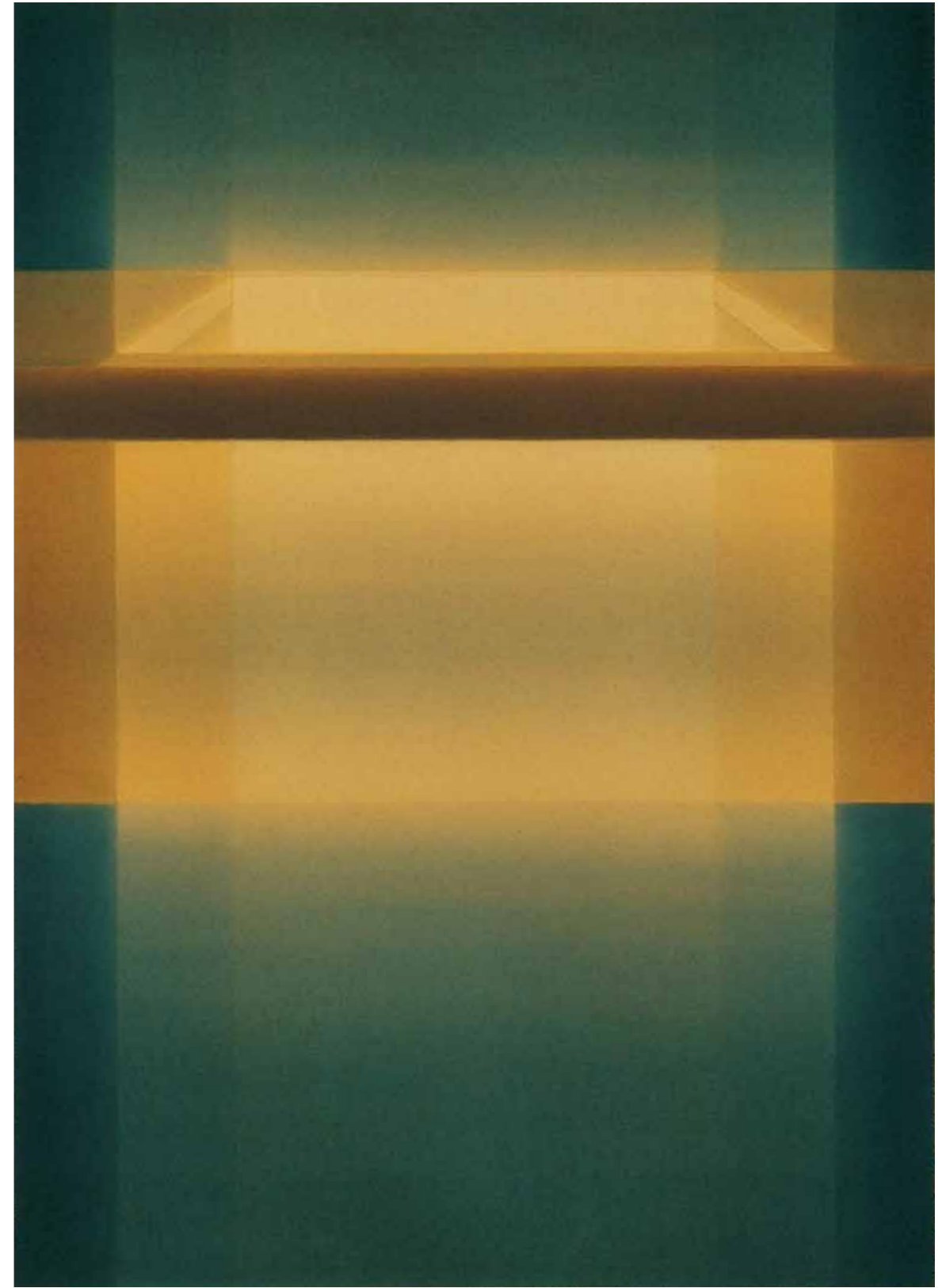
Orange Incandescence III (2 of 3)
 1997
 Watercolor
 Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in
 Image size: 27 1/2 x 19 1/2 in
 Private Collection



Orange Incandescence III (3 of 3)
 1997
 Watercolor
 Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in
 Image size: 27 1/2 x 19 1/2 in
 Private Collection



Intimate Distances II
 2002
 Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 30 x 22 in
 Private Collection

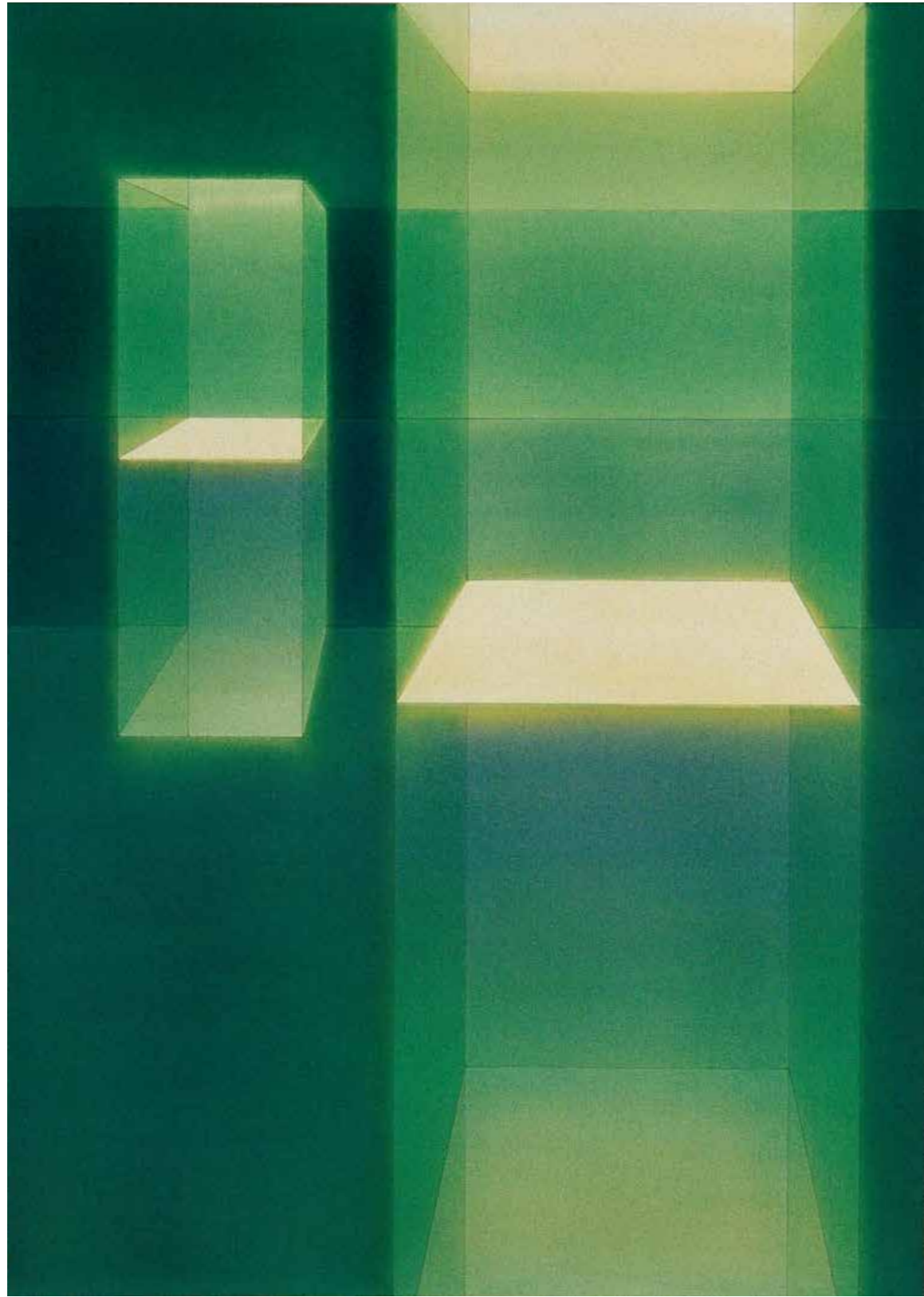


Intimate Distances III
 2002
 Windsor and Newton watercolor on paper
 30 x 22 in
 Private Collection

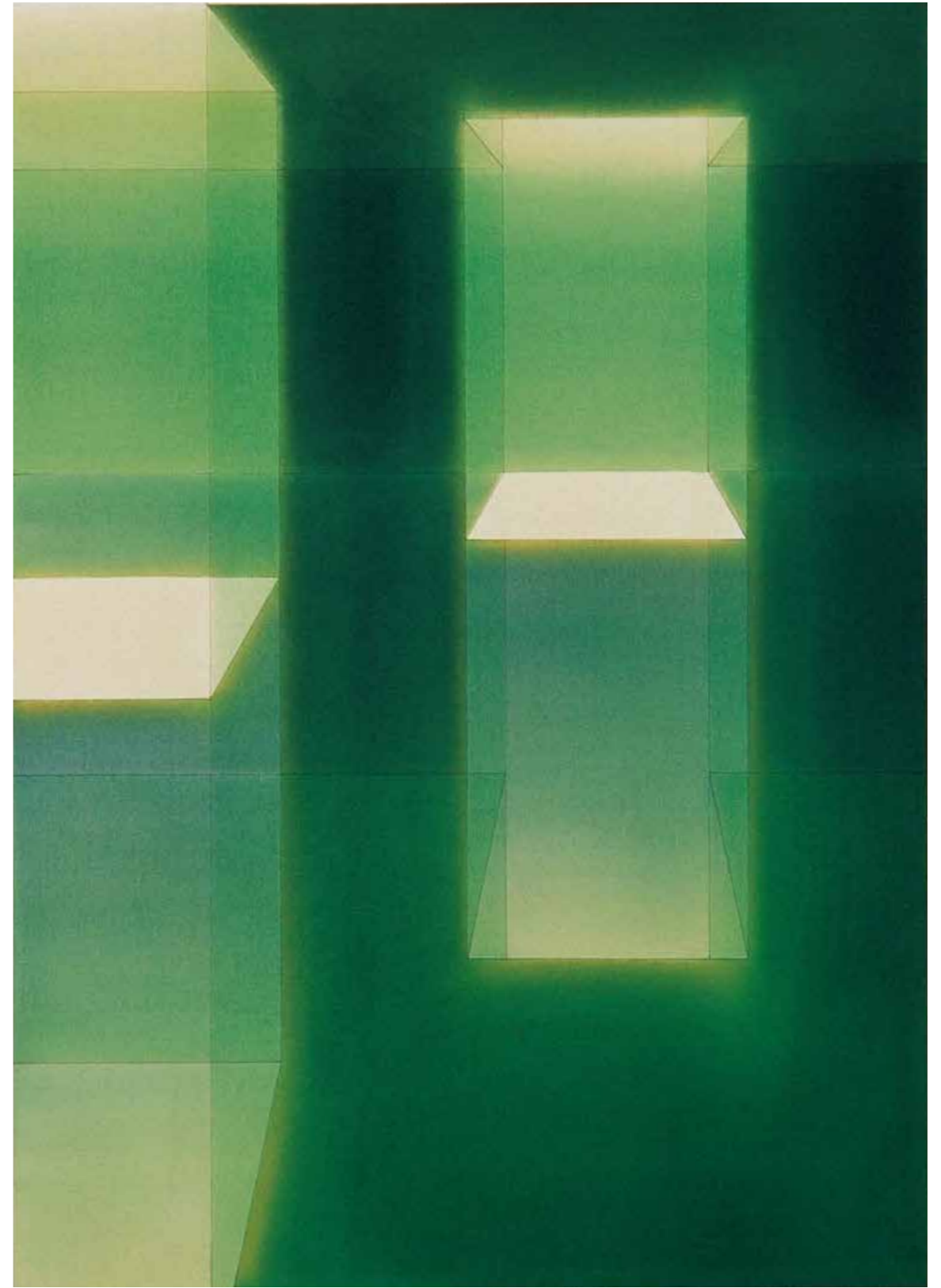
Suspended in Green



Suspended in Green III (1 of 4)
2004
Watercolor on paper
30 x 22 in
Artist's Collection

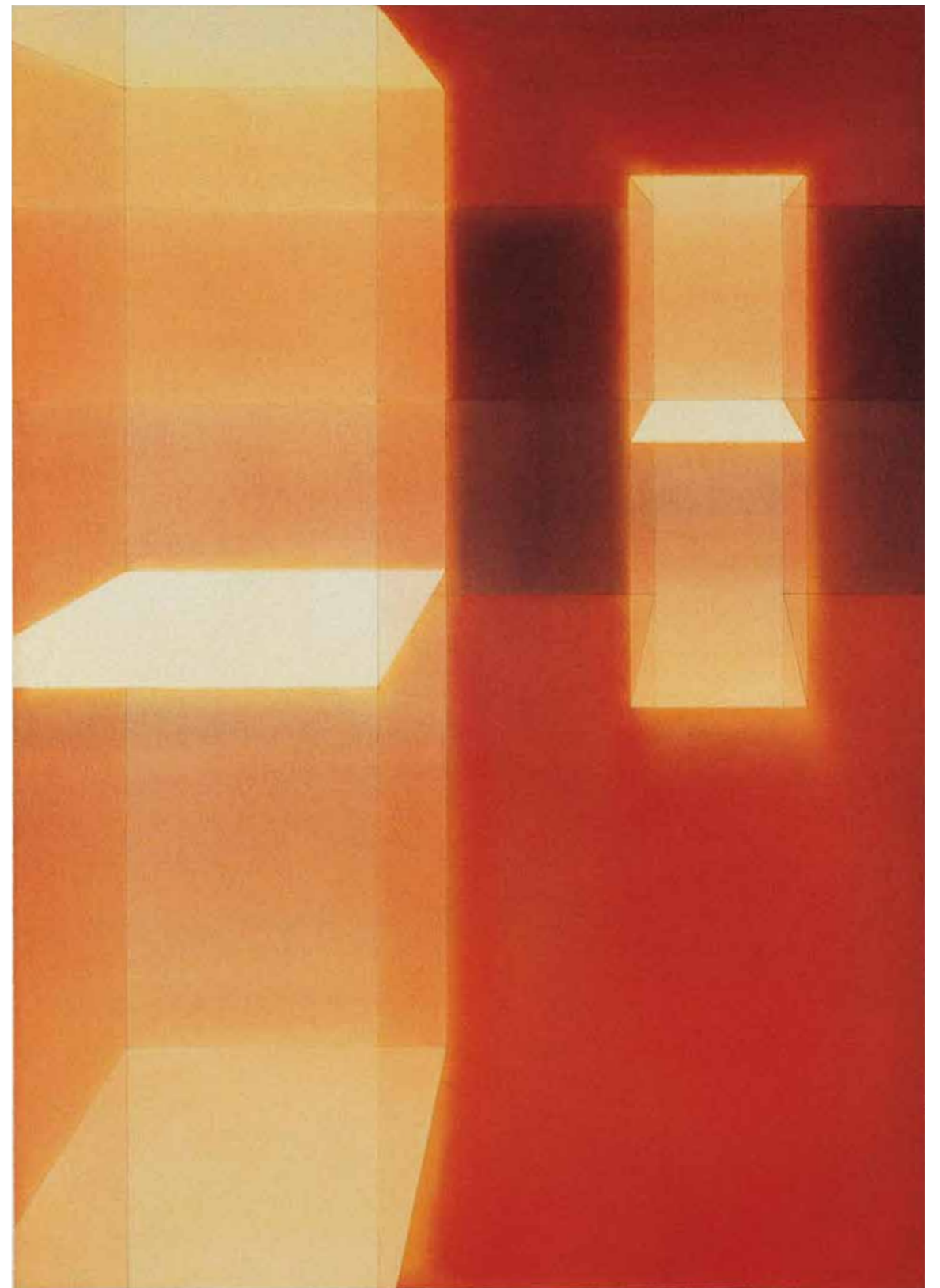


Suspended in Green III (3 of 4)
 2004
 Watercolor on paper
 30 x 22 in
 Artist's Collection

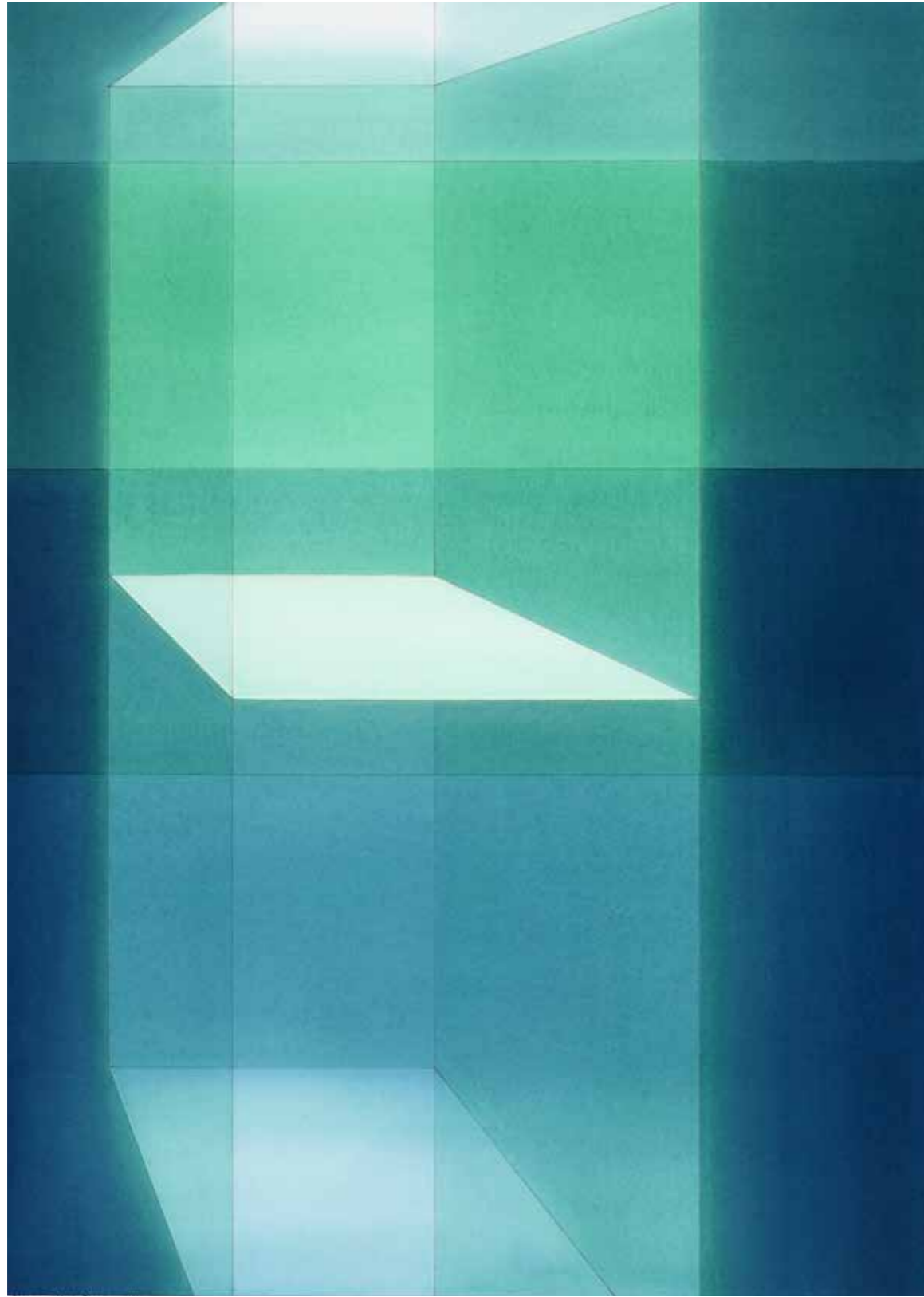


Suspended in Green III (4 of 4)
 2004
 Watercolor on paper
 30 x 22 in
 Artist's Collection

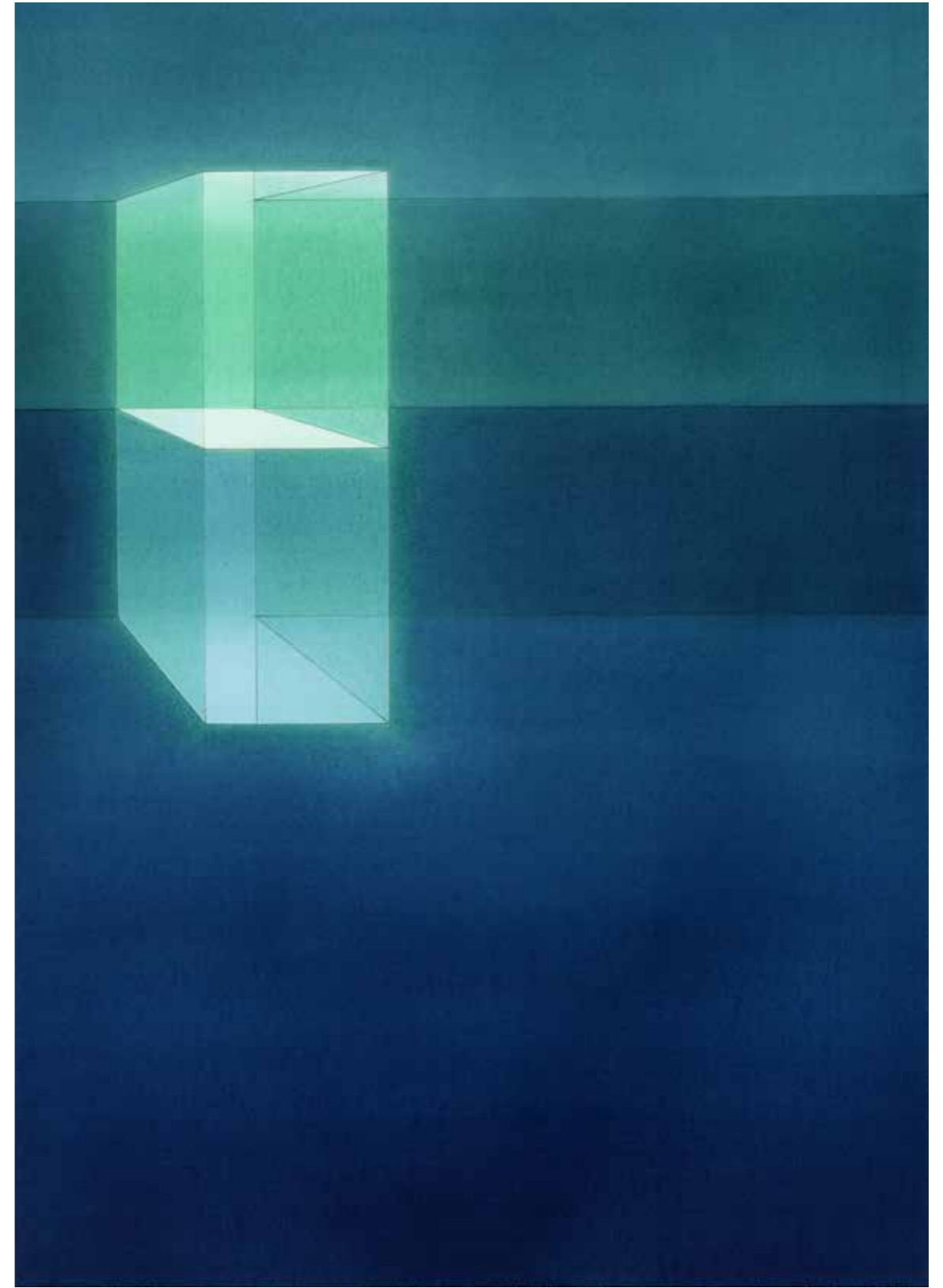
Suspended in Red I



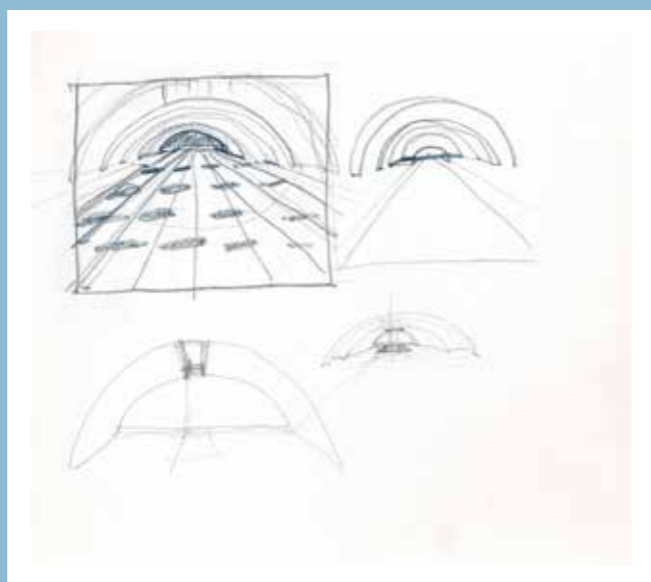
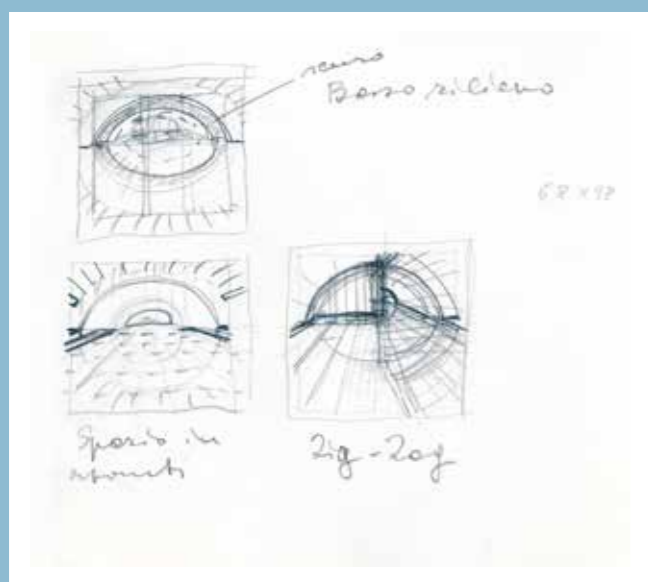
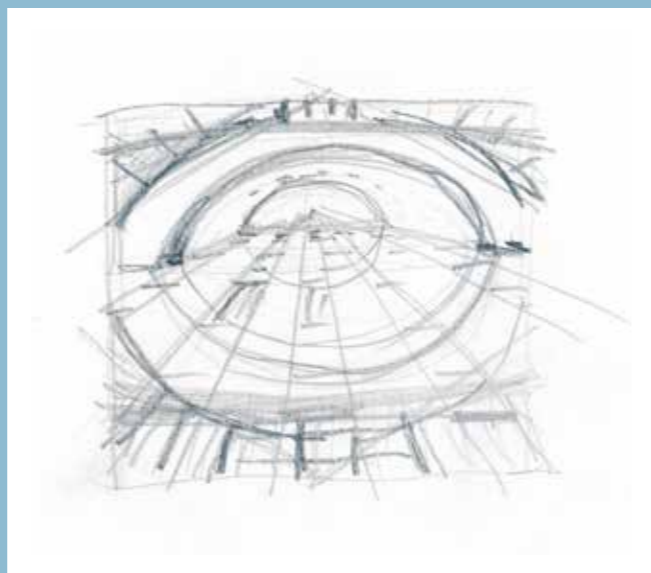
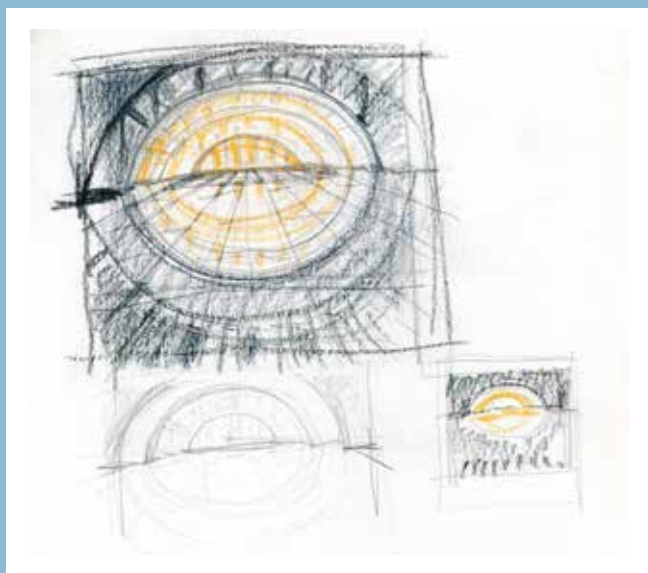
Suspended in Red I (1 of 2)
2005
Watercolor on paper
30 x 22 in
Artist's Collection



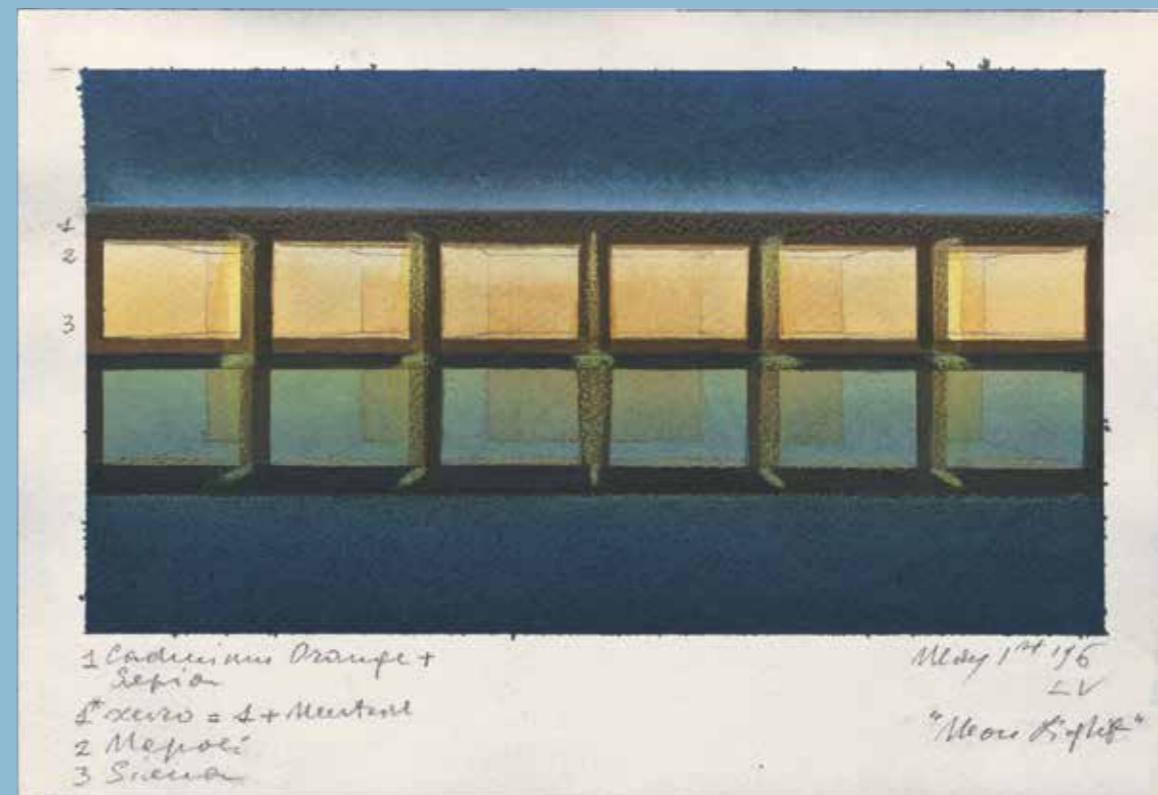
Suspended in Blue (C2)
 2007
 Watercolor on paper
 Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in
 Image size: 27 1/2 x 19 1/2 in
 Private Collection



Suspended in Blue (C3)
 2007
 Watercolor on paper
 Paper size: 30 x 22 1/2 in
 Image size: 27 1/2 x 19 1/2 in
 Private Collection

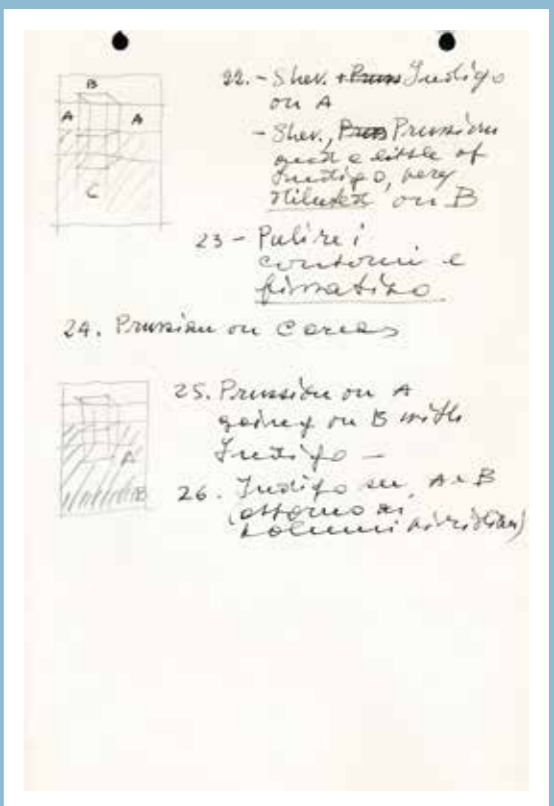
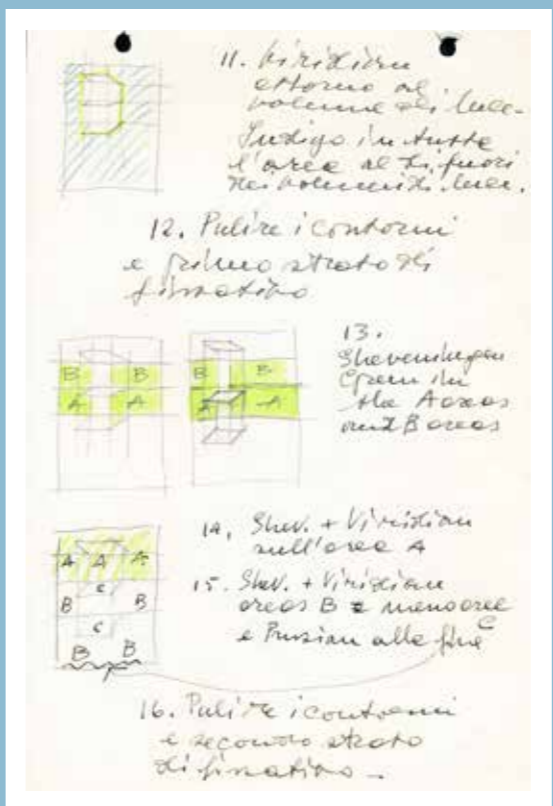
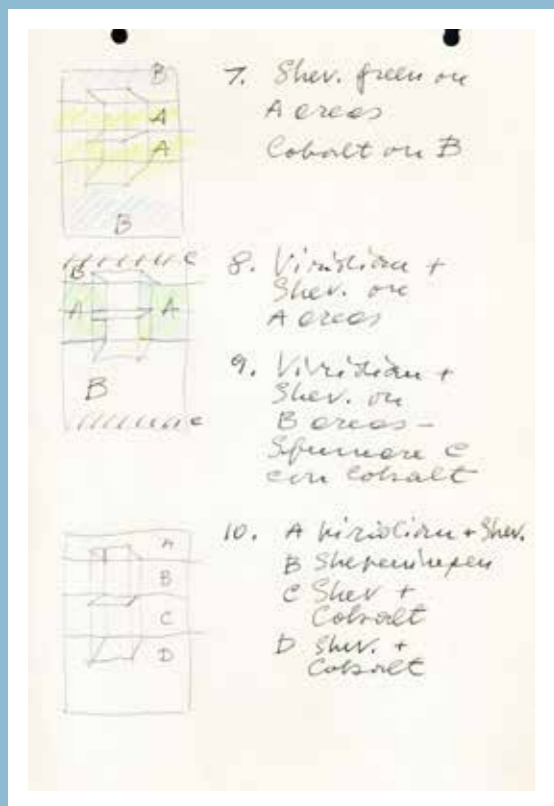
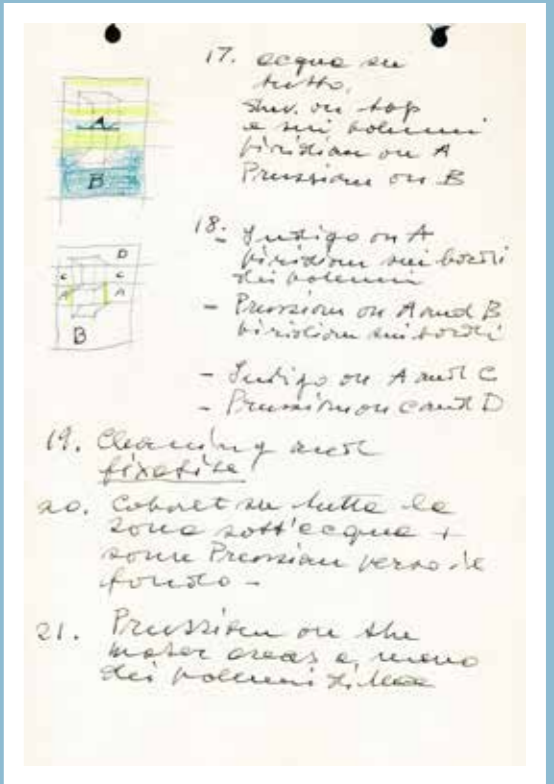
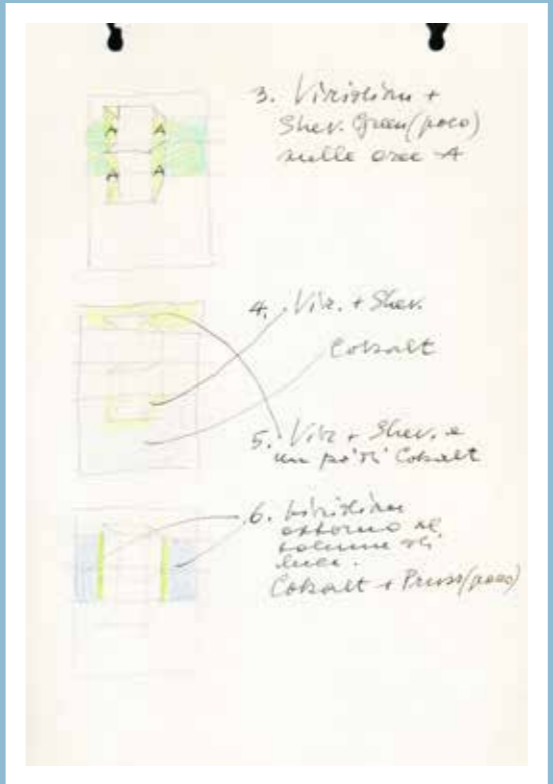


Mattino presto
3 maggio
196
LV



1 Caduciano Orange +
Sepia
1 x zero = 1 + Mentrol
2 Napoli
3 Sicilia

May 1st 196
LV
"New Light"

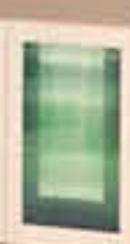




exhibition

The on-going series of exhibits at the Spitzer School of Architecture is offered to the students, faculty, and visitors to the school as members of a community exploring architecture's most profound conditions. It is our hope that the exhibits will enlarge the school's architectural vision, making a dimension of excellence available for close scrutiny that is hard to find elsewhere. The unmediated proximity of these works will, we believe, empower students to intimately engage with their properties.

The Laretta Vinciarelli exhibit, *Clear Light*, presented the work of this exceptional talent in a setting sympathetic to and in keeping with it. Her original watercolor drawings appeared to float before the walls as their luminous qualities shifted with the lighting from our upper clearstory. Views across the gallery offered a glimpse into the mind of this master draftsman, who possessed such a remarkable gift for depicting the elemental qualities of space. *Clear Light* was a fitting—and searingly beautiful—tribute to a brilliant architect, teacher, and thinker.





Photograph by Christa Ballantine, 2011

Laretta Vinciarelli (1943–2011)

Laretta Vinciarelli was an architect and artist who has art works and drawings in the permanent collections of the National Gallery in Washington, D.C.; the Museum of Modern Art in New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Archive of the Biennale of Venice; and the Italian Archive of Drawings; as well as in private collections. She exhibited in the 2002 Whitney Biennial and was represented by Henry Urbach Architecture in New York. Until 2000 she also taught at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation.

education

1971 Doctor in Architecture and Urban Planning, Università di Roma, Facoltà di Architettura.
Degree conferred 'Summa Cum Laude.'

positions held

1978-2000 Columbia University, the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation.
Adjunct Professor of Architecture. Principally involved in design studio instruction.
Co-ordinated 'second year' for three years and participated in the creation of the 'housing studio.' Also taught in first and third year building design.

1985-1992 City College of New York (CCNY), Department of Architecture and Environmental Studies. Adjunct Professor of Architecture.
Involved in design studio instruction at the third and fourth year of CCNY's undergraduate program. Also taught a drawing course, entitled 'Representational Techniques.'

1975-1978 Pratt Institute, New York. Instructor. Design theory instruction in 'Concepts of Design,' a two semester course sequence. Also taught drawing.

1981 Visiting Professor at Chicago University in Chicago Circle, Chicago, Illinois.

1982 Visiting Professor at Rice University, Houston, Texas. Graduate-level studio instruction.