

Walter Pichler, projects

Author

Pichler, Walter, 1936-2012

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1975

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WALTER PICHLER: Projects



CELL, 1974

Vienna is Peter Pan's most enchanted of castles; a grand theater where the memory of architectural grandeur reverberates tauntingly against her frozen sets. It has been said that Vienna's architecture and design groups—her only avant-garde—are a large and gifted chorus who sing her glories. But it has become gradually evident that the score this chorus reads from has, in essence, been inspired by the most recondite of Vienna's artists: Walter Pichler, the Phantom of the Opera.

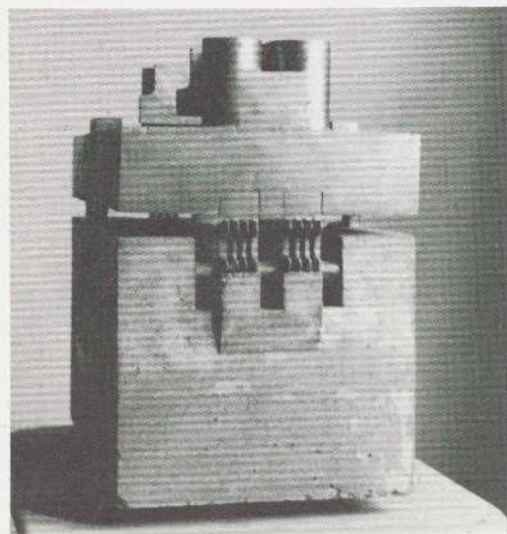
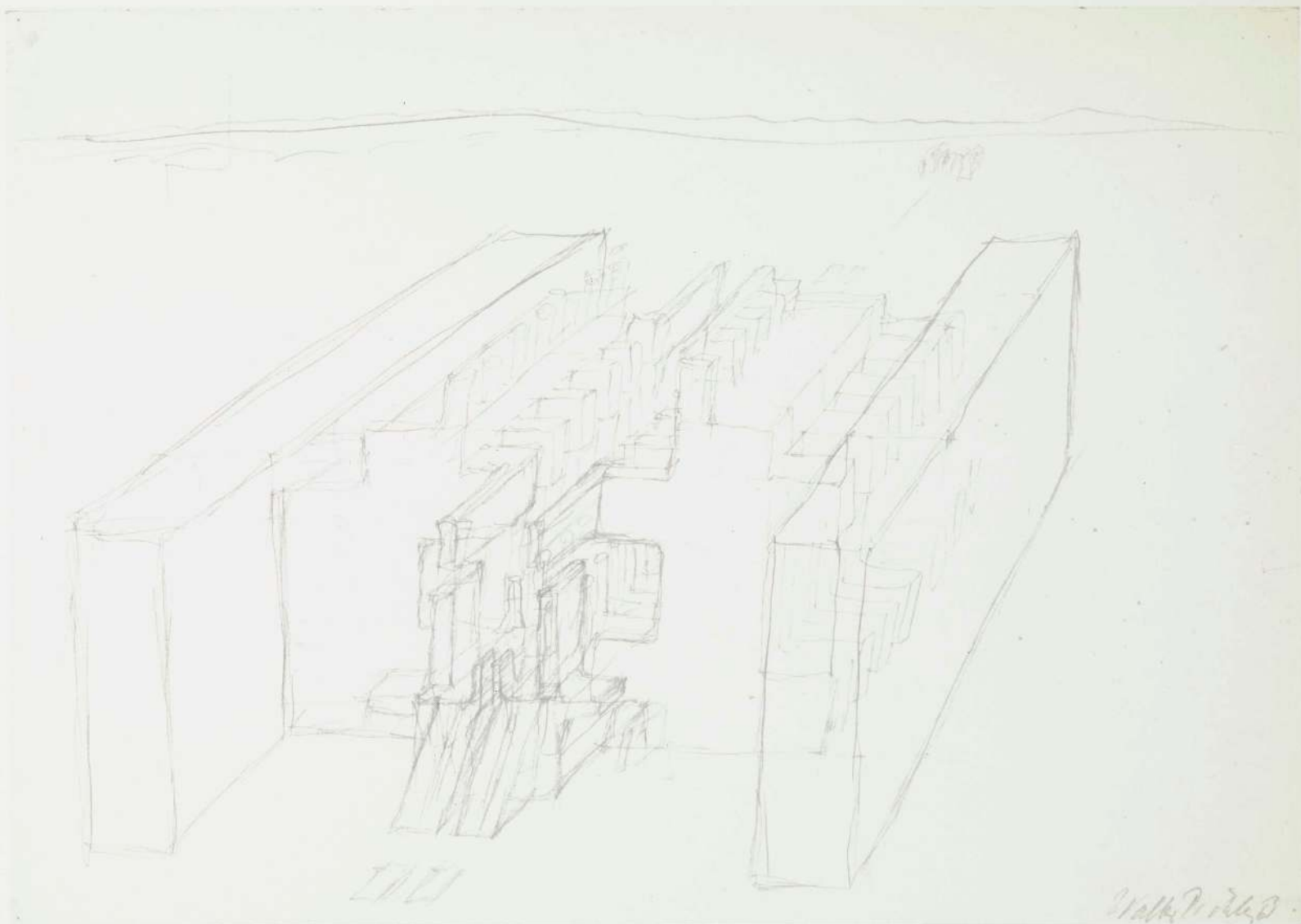
Pichler's hauntingly beautiful drawings and seminal projects have been the pervasive influence behind many of the most recent products of the Austrian and Italian design and architectural avant-garde. The large, pessimistic underground megastructures he caustically proposed a decade ago have turned into the archaeological remnants of his earlier, more mundane existence. Since then, Pichler has undergone a profound transformation. One of his main concerns for the last years has been the architecture of the primeval house; the place where man's irreducible solitude dwells.

In Pichler's iconography, a roof and four posts define a sacred area. To furnish that holy place he designs, or rather conjures up, sacred artifacts for the performance of the always renewed daily rituals. These artifacts are intended to serve as mediators between his fearful desires, and his vision of God's raging indifference. Designs such as his "Chair for a Suicide," "Bed," "Cross in a Wooden Hut," and "Silo," among others, might be seen as the peace offerings a lucid challenger presents to the one he knows to be the ineluctable victor. The hidden purpose is, perhaps, that such objects, rather than act as mediators, be taken as surrogates of himself. But the underlying hope is that in choosing the ideal object over the real one God will reveal His human nature.

Birth, love, and death are the underpinnings of tragedy's classic structure, an edifice contemporary poetic sensibility perceives as reduced to its constituent elements, like a cloud of dust which can take any shape, but assumes none. Pichler, a devout Catholic, sees life as a fugitive passage towards another abode, but every aching joint in his body, every agony of facing yet another morning are for him the reassuring signs that the voyage still goes on. Pichler's basic instinct is to work, his quest not for survival, but for salvation.

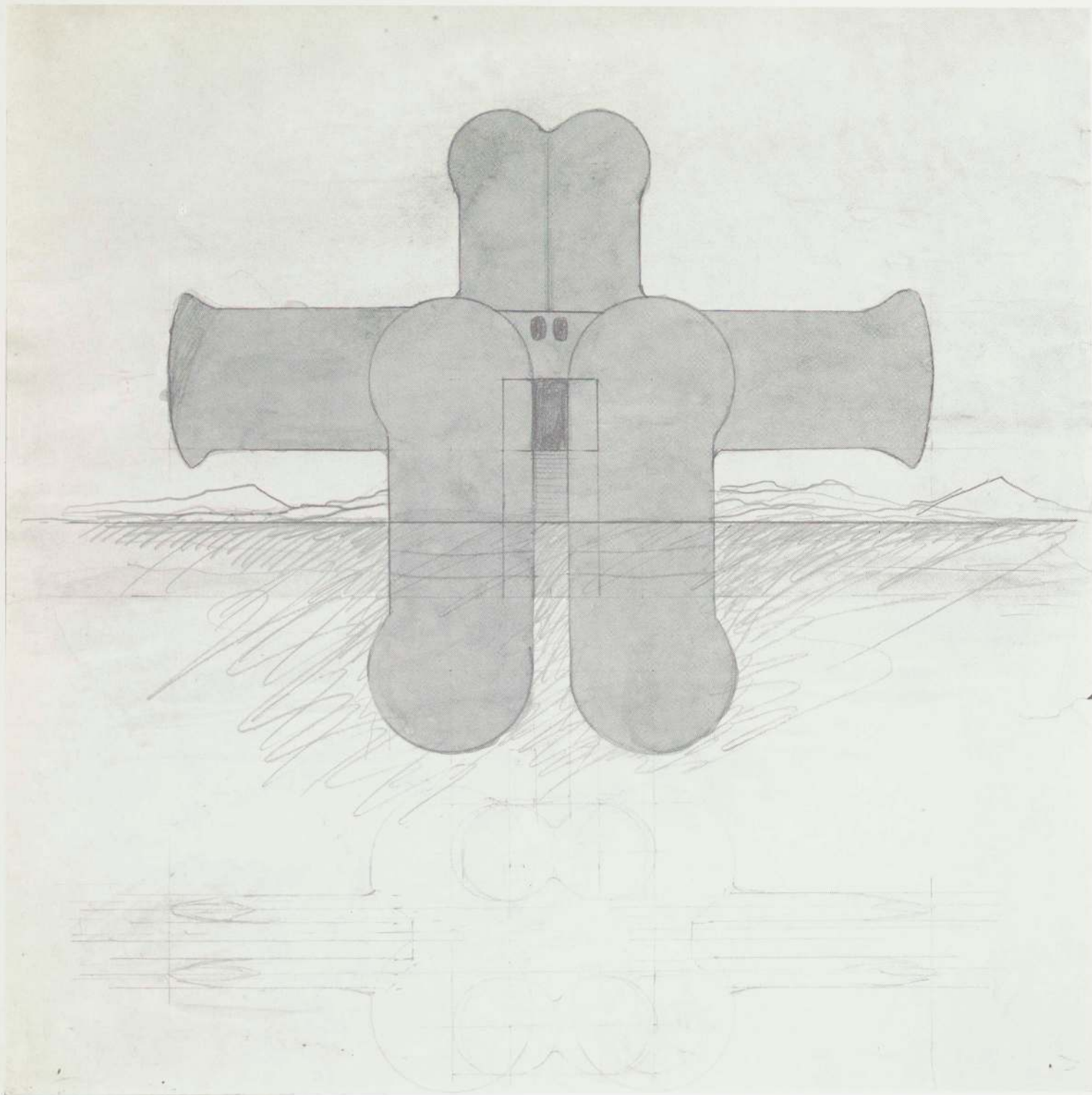
Close to fifteen years ago, when he was 25, Pichler made a sculpture he called "Alte Figur." It has never left him. I imagine him at night, laying it down horizontally; in the morning, putting it up vertically. With one gesture he opens the day, with the other he initiates the evening. Analogy versus irony are his methods; the end contradicting the beginning, his myths. By means of analogy he replicates the archetypal acts of life; through irony he lucidly acknowledges the ultimate sentence.

Emilio Ambasz
Curator of Design
The Museum of Modern Art, New York



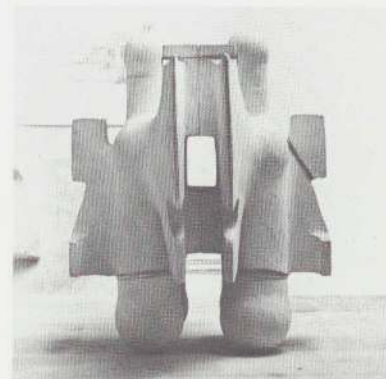
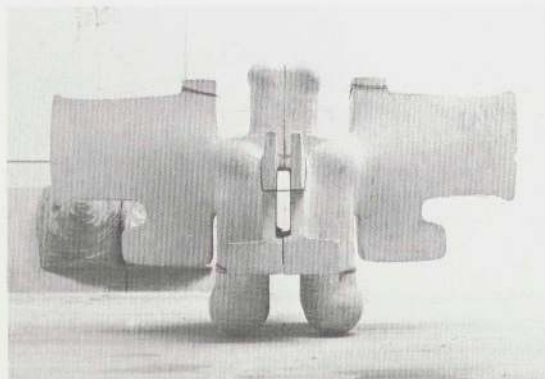
COMPACT CITY, 1963

COMPACT BUILDING, 1963



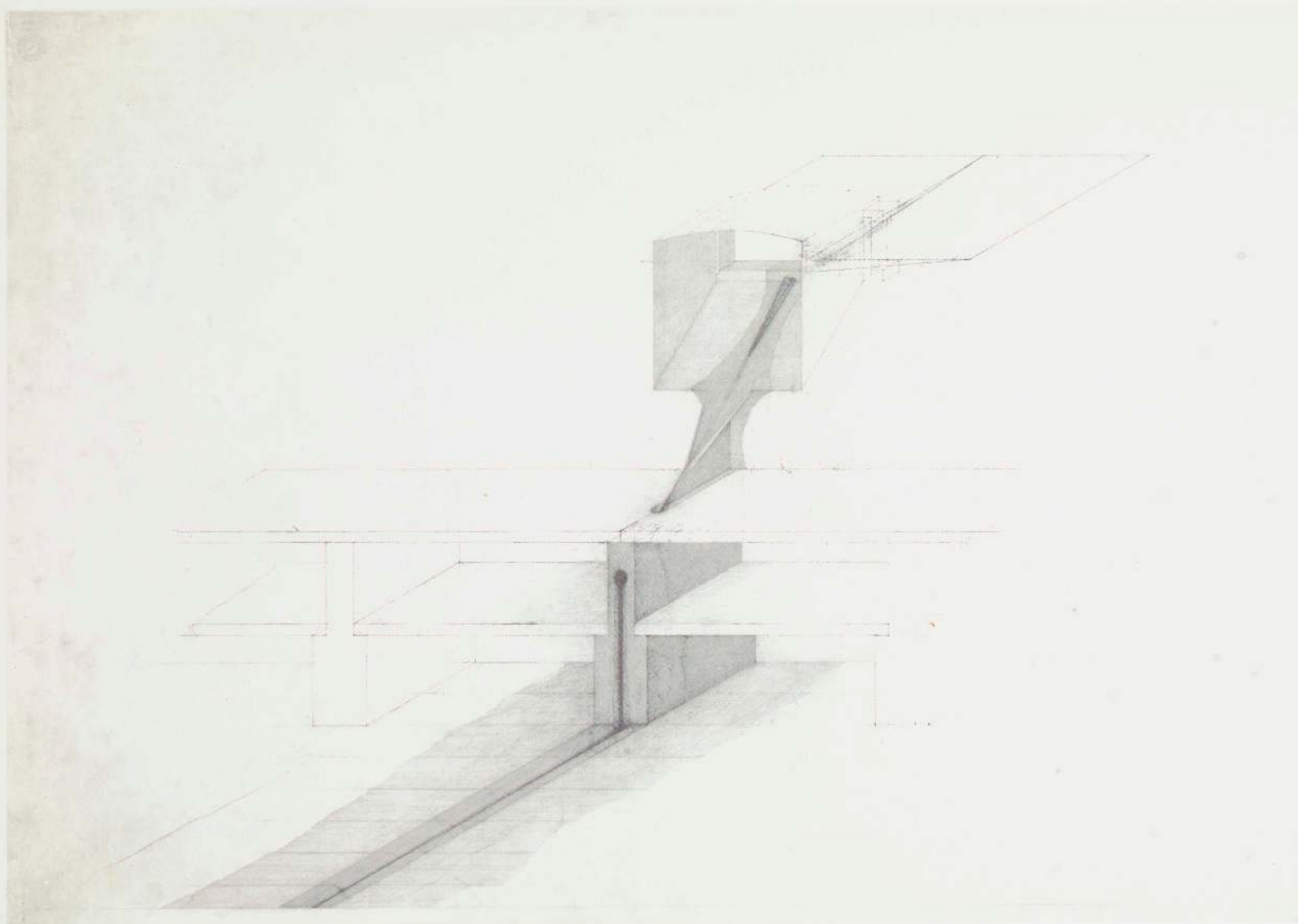
CHAPEL, 1963

Model

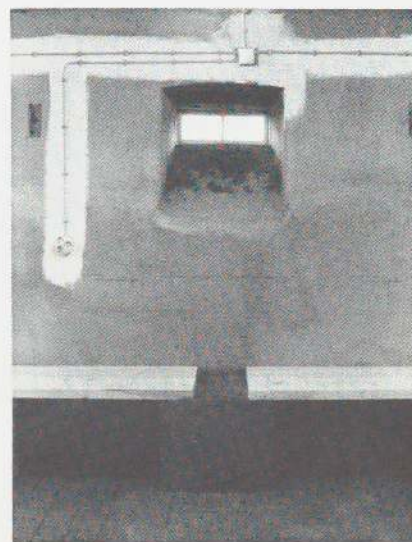




BENCH AND TABLE IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE, 1972



RAINTRAP FOR MY STUDIO, 1974
Guiding rain water through window and studio floor.



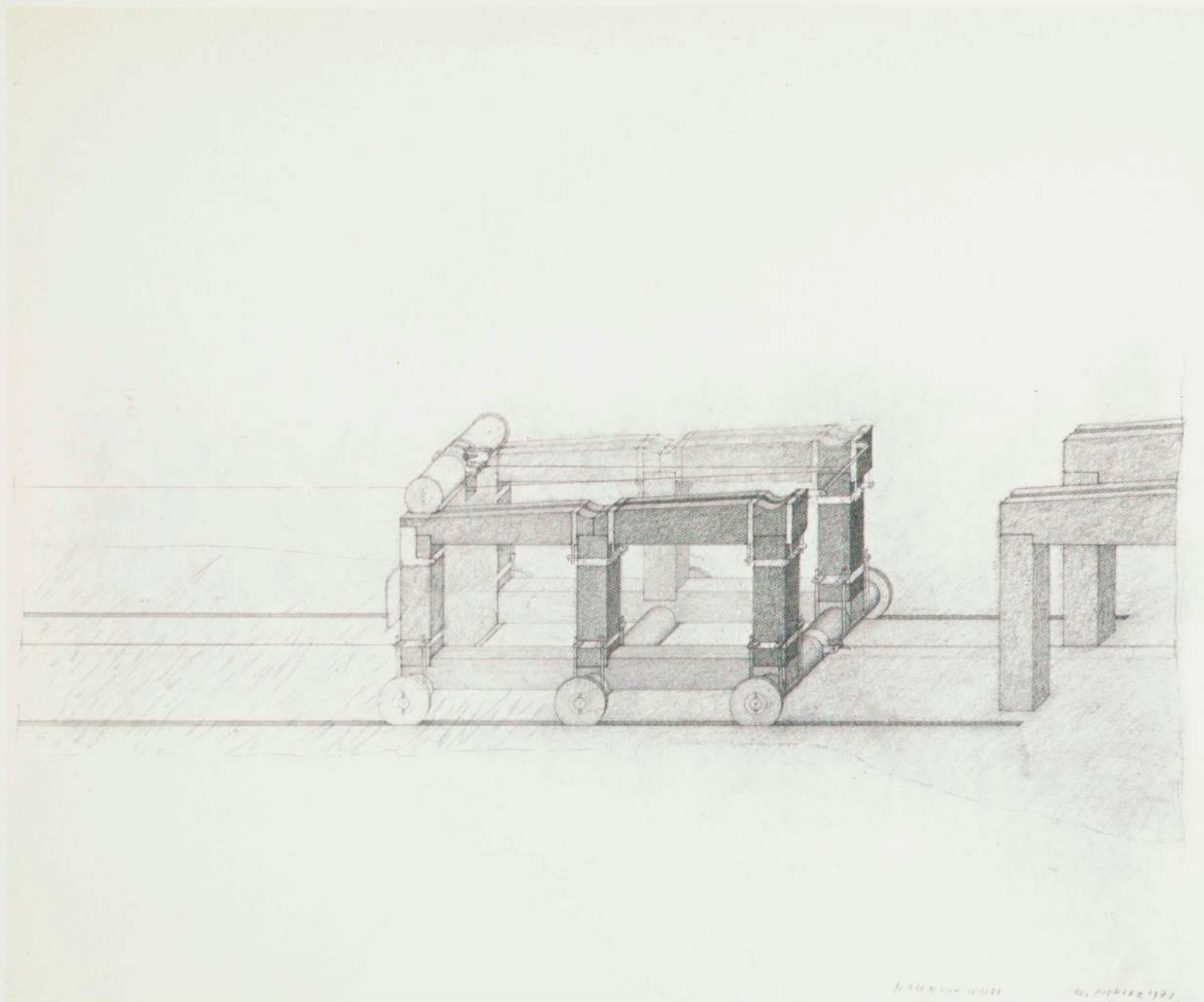
Studio window



OBSERVATORY IN ST. MARTIN, 1974

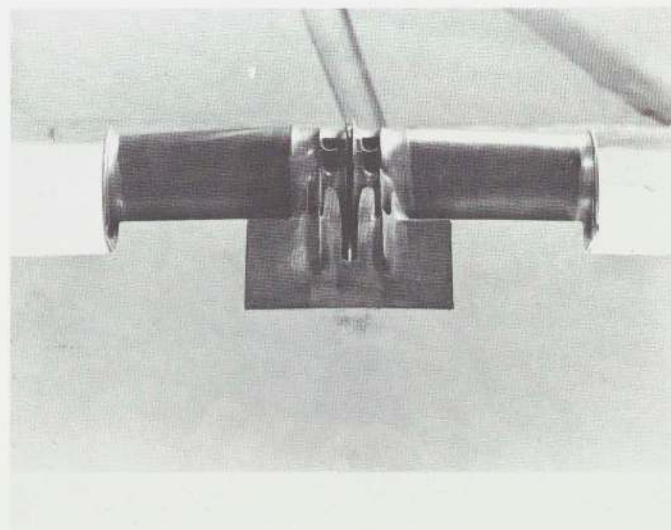


Site of construction



CAR ON RAILS, 1971

Center piece of car

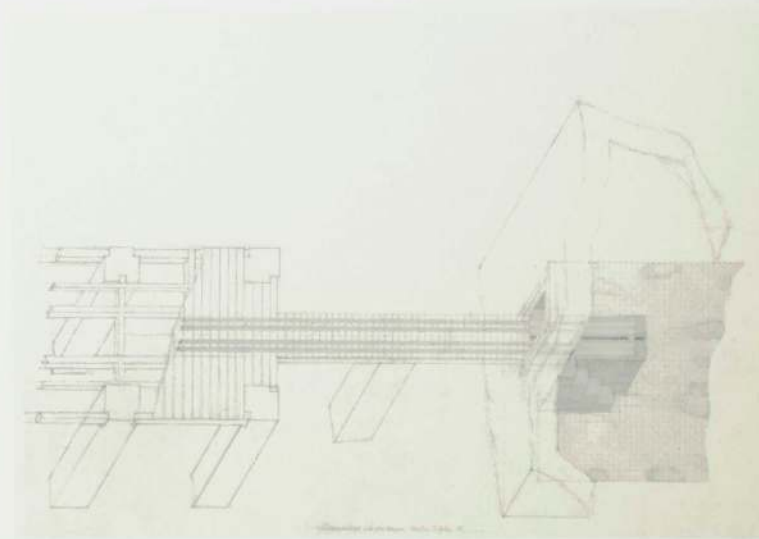
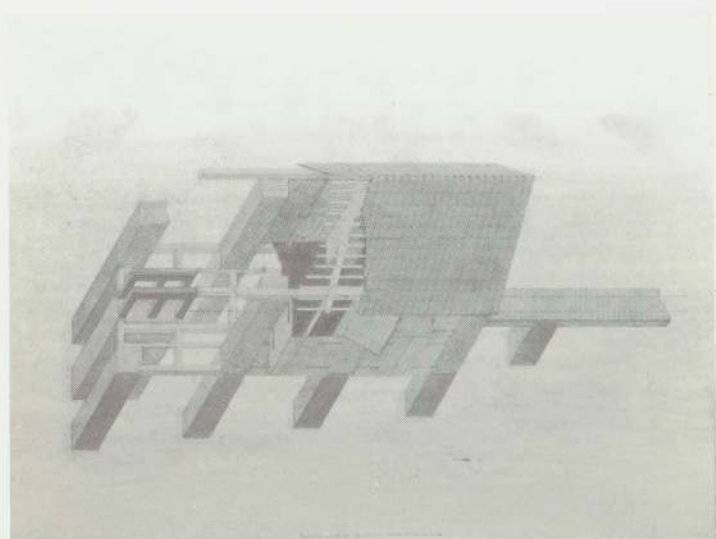
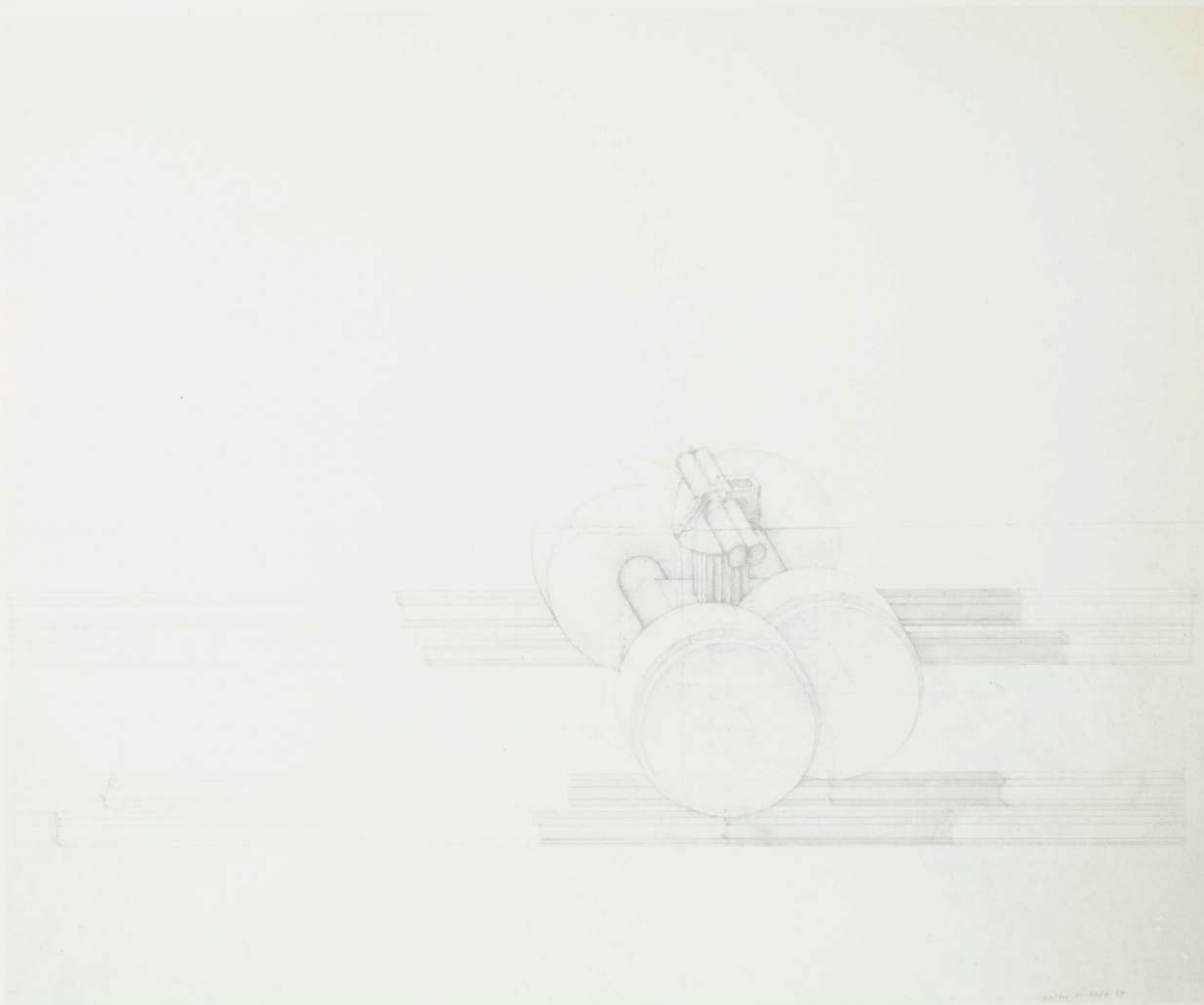


Right page:

SMALL CAR ON FOUR RAILS, 1974

BARN, 1975

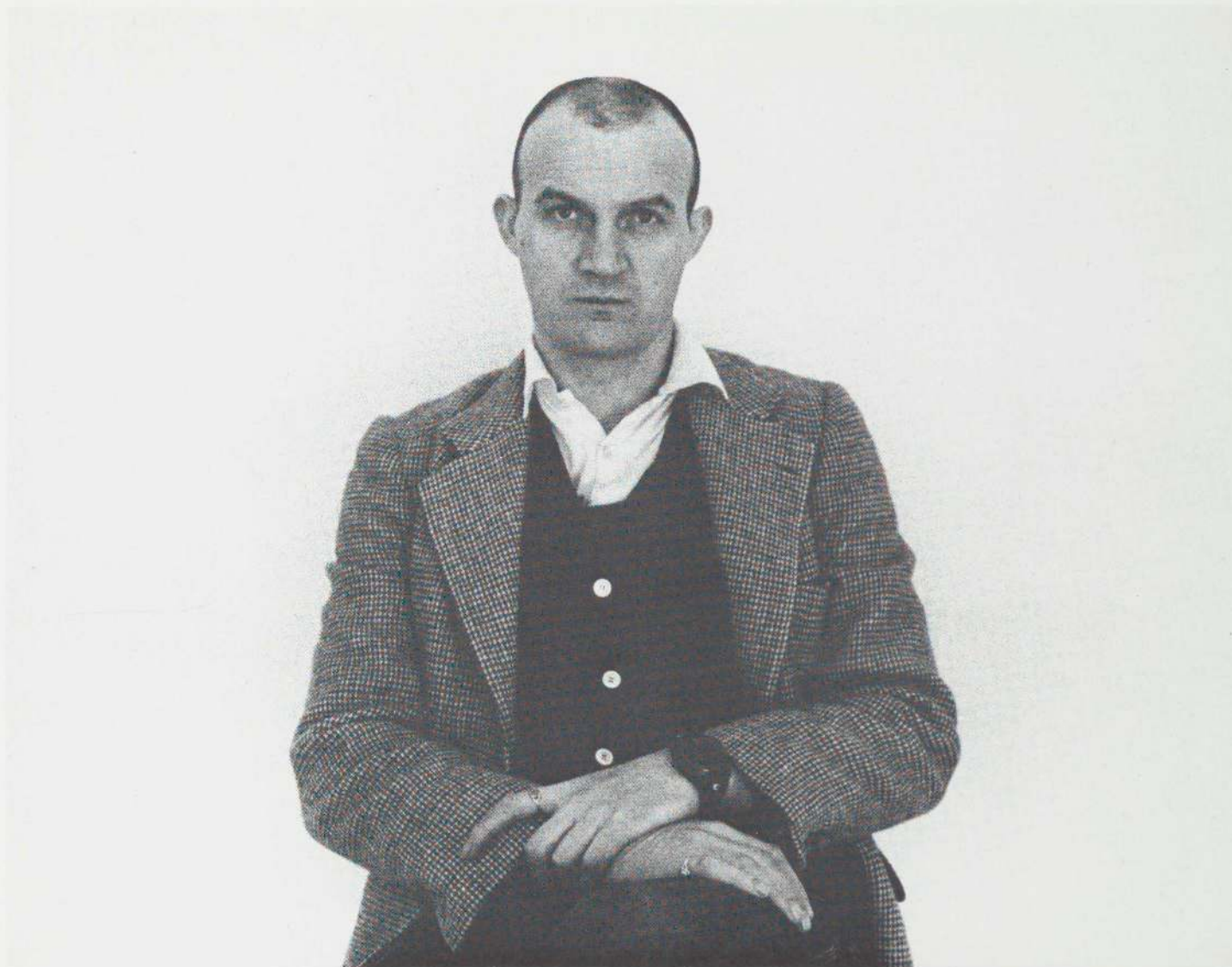
RAILS LEDING FROM BARN INTO STUDIO, 1975





AS AN OLD MAN, 1971

10
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WALTER PICHLER

Born october 1936 in Deutschnofen, Southern Tyrol. Studies at the Academy for Applied Art in Vienna.

1963 First Exhibition "ARCHITECTURE," Galerie nächst St. Stephan, Vienna (with H. Hollein). Visit to the United States and Mexico.

1967 Exhibition "PROTOTYPES," Galerie nächst St. Stephan, Vienna. Exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, New York (with R. Abraham and H. Hollein). "BIENNALE DE JEUNES," Paris.

1968 "DOCUMENTA IV," Kassel.

1969 Exhibition "14X14," Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf.

1971 Exhibition at the Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, Vienna

1972 Exhibition at the Kunsthalle, Hamburg, and Kunstverein, Kassel.

1973 Exhibition at the Galerie Buchholz, München, and at the Albertina, Vienna.

1974 Exhibition at the Galerie Grünangergasse 12, Vienna.

Fotos: Marina Faust

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