

2017-2018 Faculty Design

Longing
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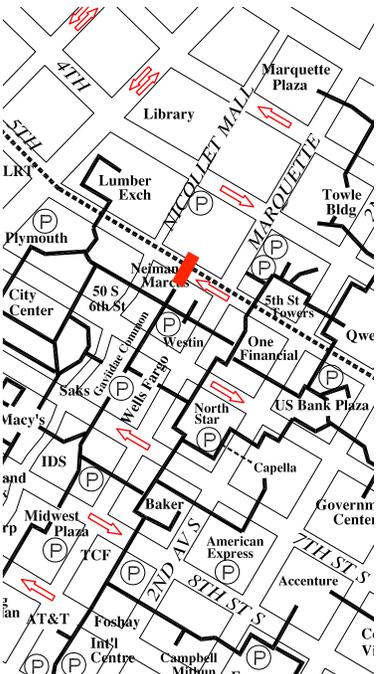
Longing is a site-specific installation exploring the perceptual overlaps in real and illusory space through structure as drawing. Both an emotional expression and a verbal play on lengthening, the work consists of two inward-facing mirrors suspended within an abandoned "skyway" pedestrian bridge. The infinite depth sways with the wind, and the space implied beyond bends into new forms.

LONGING

2017-2018 ACSA FACULTY DESIGN AWARD SUBMISSION



abandoned “skyway” pedestrian bridge

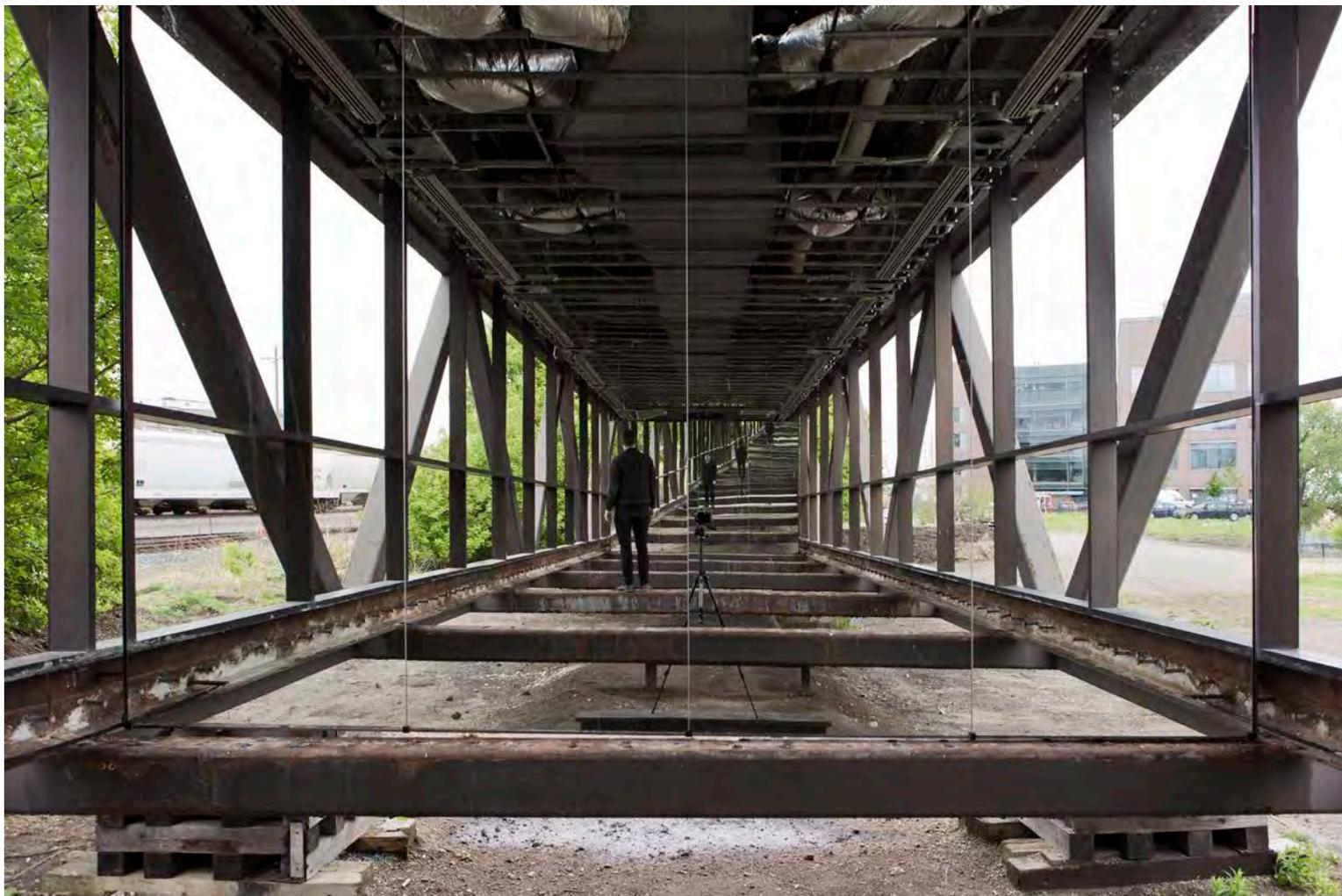


LONGING is a site-specific response to a dislocated condition.

The Minneapolis skyway system is a series of above-ground passageways connecting the second story of most downtown buildings, offering protection from the winter weather. One “skyway” pedestrian bridge within the 11-mile-long system was removed when the light rail transit line was built in 2005. Out of respect to the heroism of 1970s modernism, the skyway was purchased by a group of architects eager to repurpose the project. They relocated the infrastructural fragment to the edges of a Minneapolis rail yard, where it then sat unused for almost a decade.

The structure has a dual nature: it exists both as a hulking steel and concrete bridge to nowhere and as a ghosted memory of its prior system.

We aimed to link this fragment to a new network, recalling its conjoined past. Through a spatial expansion resulting from animate reflections, we reconnect the bridge to a new network of its own making.



LONGING

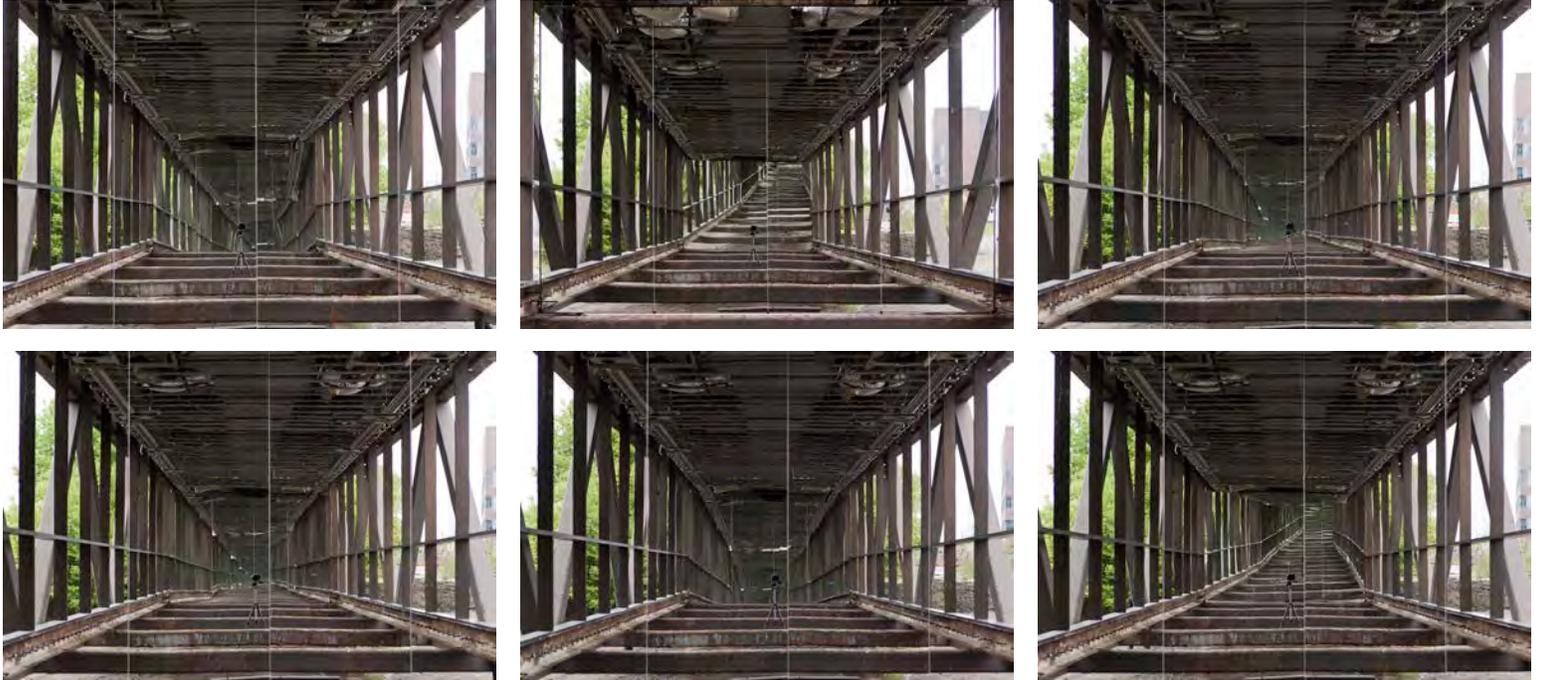
10 x 15 x 82 feet

steel, rubber, glass mirror, void

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Two inward-facing, moveable mirrors are suspended at either end of the skyway, creating a visually infinite environment that bridges toward distant horizons. The mirrors hang from a tensegrity supported gimbal - the virtual space flexes as the wind rotates the mirrors with a mere 35 pounds of pressure. The work's title is both an emotional expression and a verbal play on lengthening.

Some days are calm, with breezes inducing a gentle swaying of the vanishing point. Other moments are more violent, as the wind pushes forcefully and turns the entire sculpture into a grinding, lurching machine. The experience is visceral — you feel the wind on your face, hear the creaking of the moving joints, and see the floor and ceiling warp unpredictably as you occupy the animate reflections. There is little interior stability as the illusion of depth yearns for a homing ground. Infinity wanders longingly, and the space it implies bends into new forms.



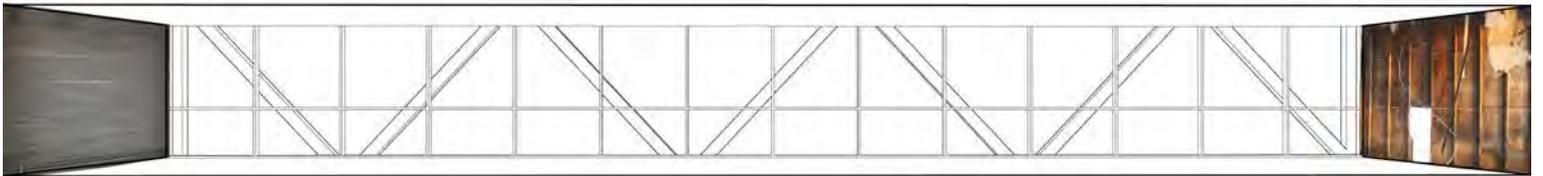
Video stills of wandering vanishing point and flexing infinite space







existing condition



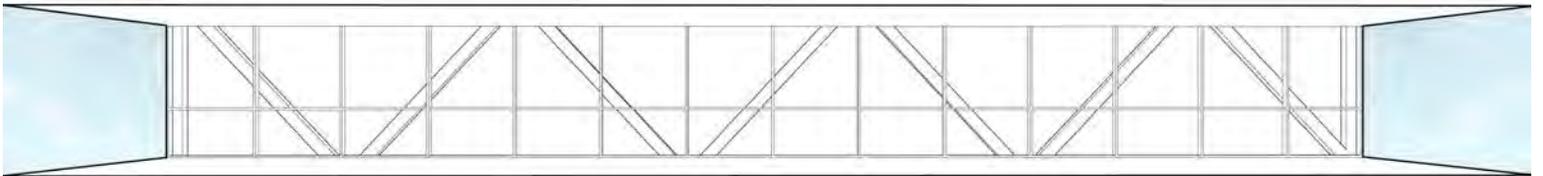
original end walls



The structure had been clipped from its previous network with all the interior guts (ceiling tiles, electrical wiring, carpeting, etc.) intact. These were removed in preparation for the installation.



proposed linear expansion



original end walls replaced by inward-facing mirrors



implied extension of interior space



We inserted glass mirrors in place of the existing end walls, thus creating a series of repeating reflections.

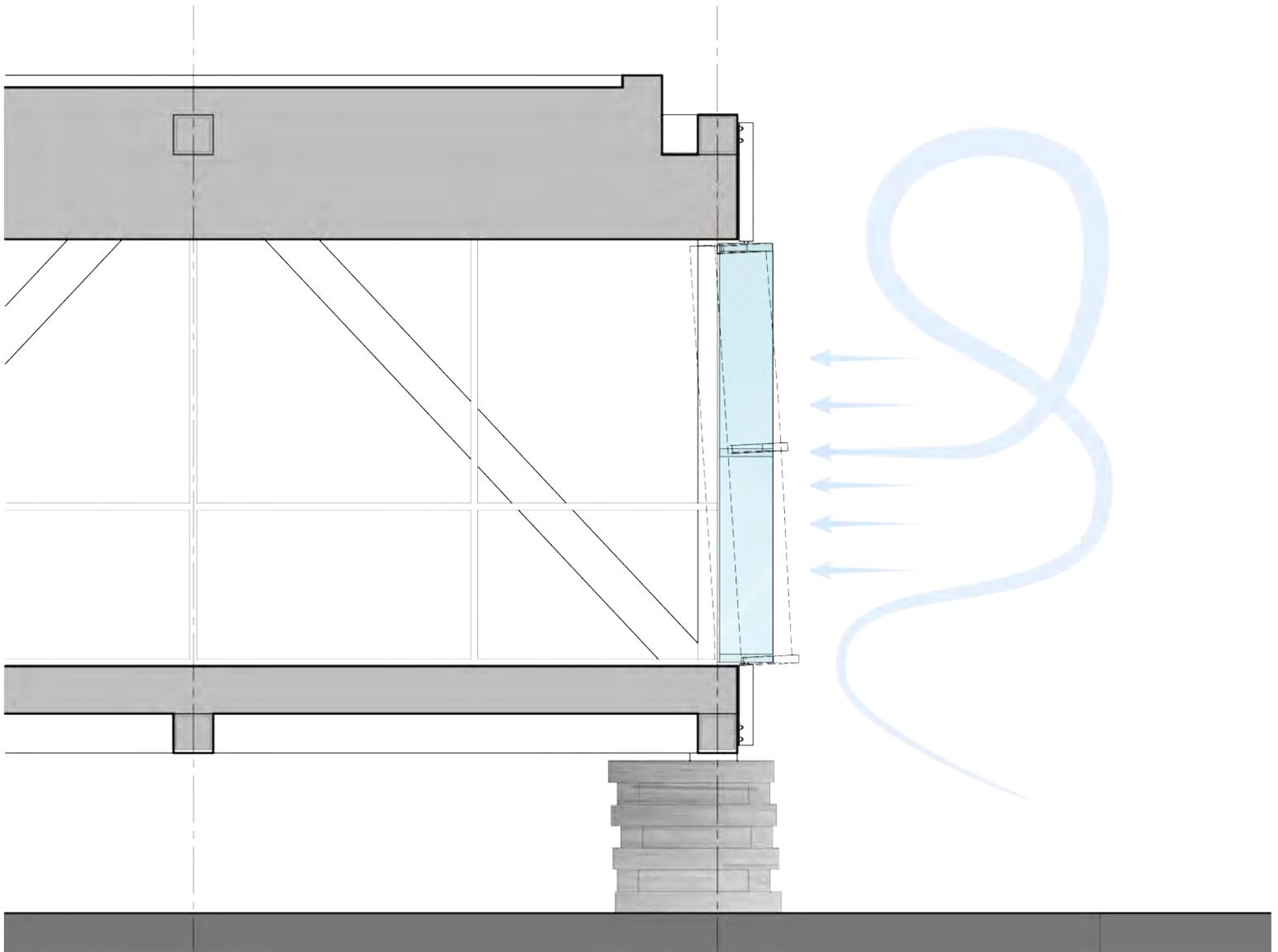
The mirror space has a chimeric presence, as its seriality mimics the repetition of neighboring train cars.



We wanted to express new formal arrangements within an illusory depth. This process is not new; we build off prior experiments in architecture, photography, and painting.

From top to bottom, left to right: San Satiro by Bramante (1482), Picture for Women by Jeff Wall (1979), Villa Maser with murals by Palladio with murals by Veronese (c. 1560).

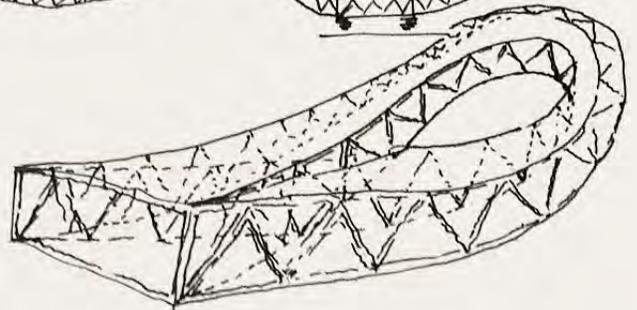
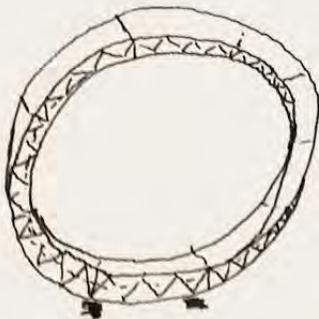
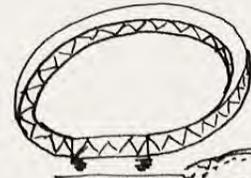
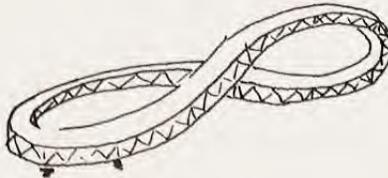
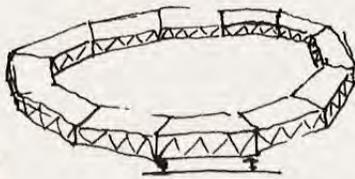
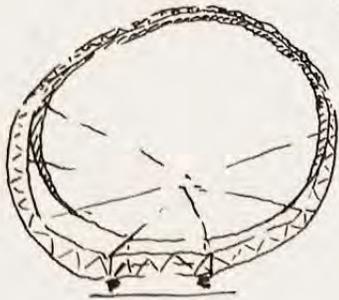
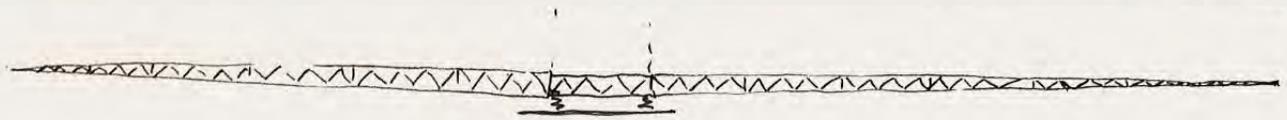
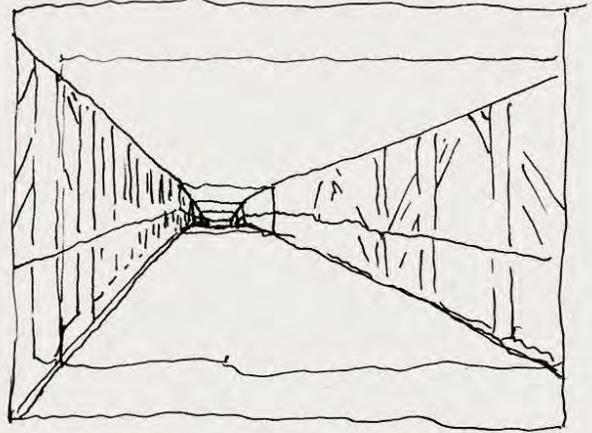
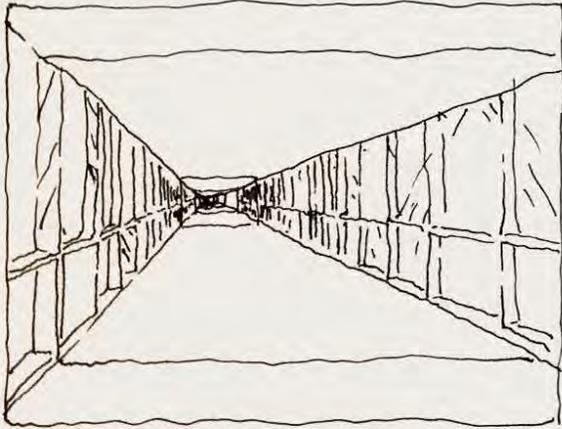
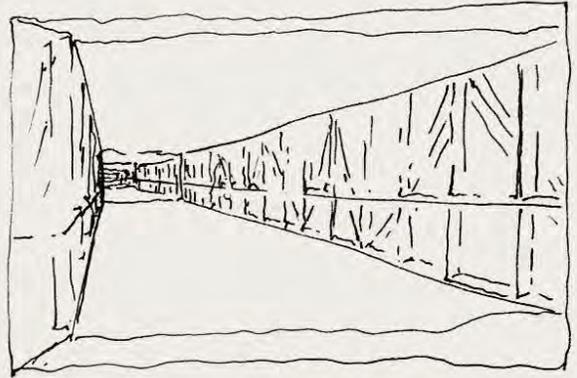
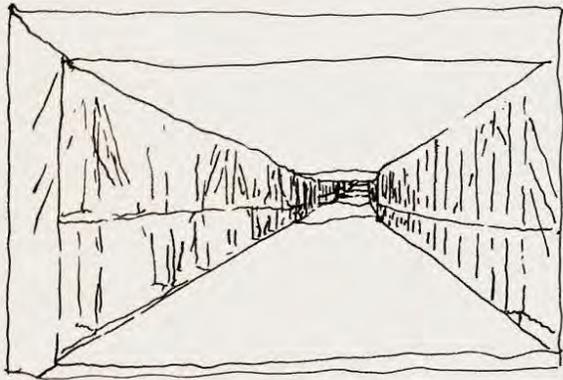




But unlike these static representations, our images move. We questioned: if the end walls are allowed to sway with the vicissitudes of the wind, what shapes might be implied?

As the vanishing point wanders, might you find yourself inside a torus, or Klein bottle, or some other impossible and constantly reforming shape? (see next page)

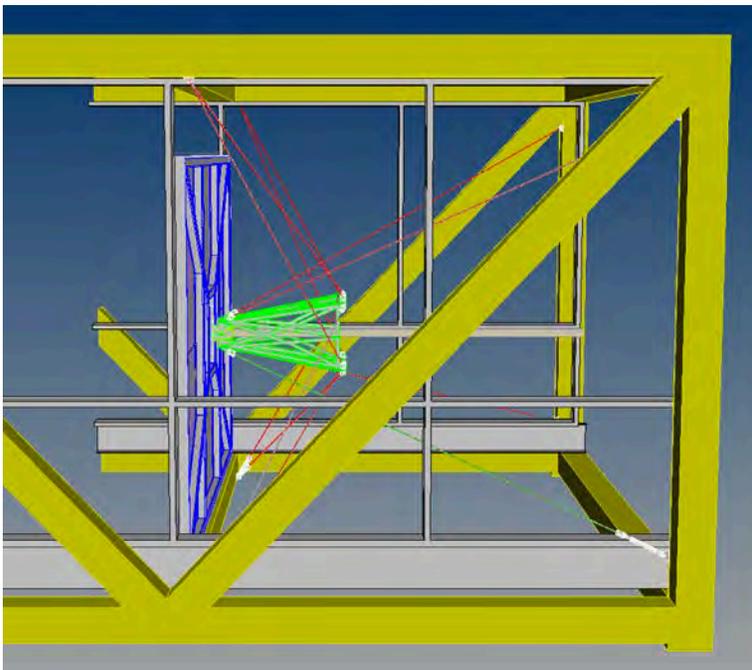
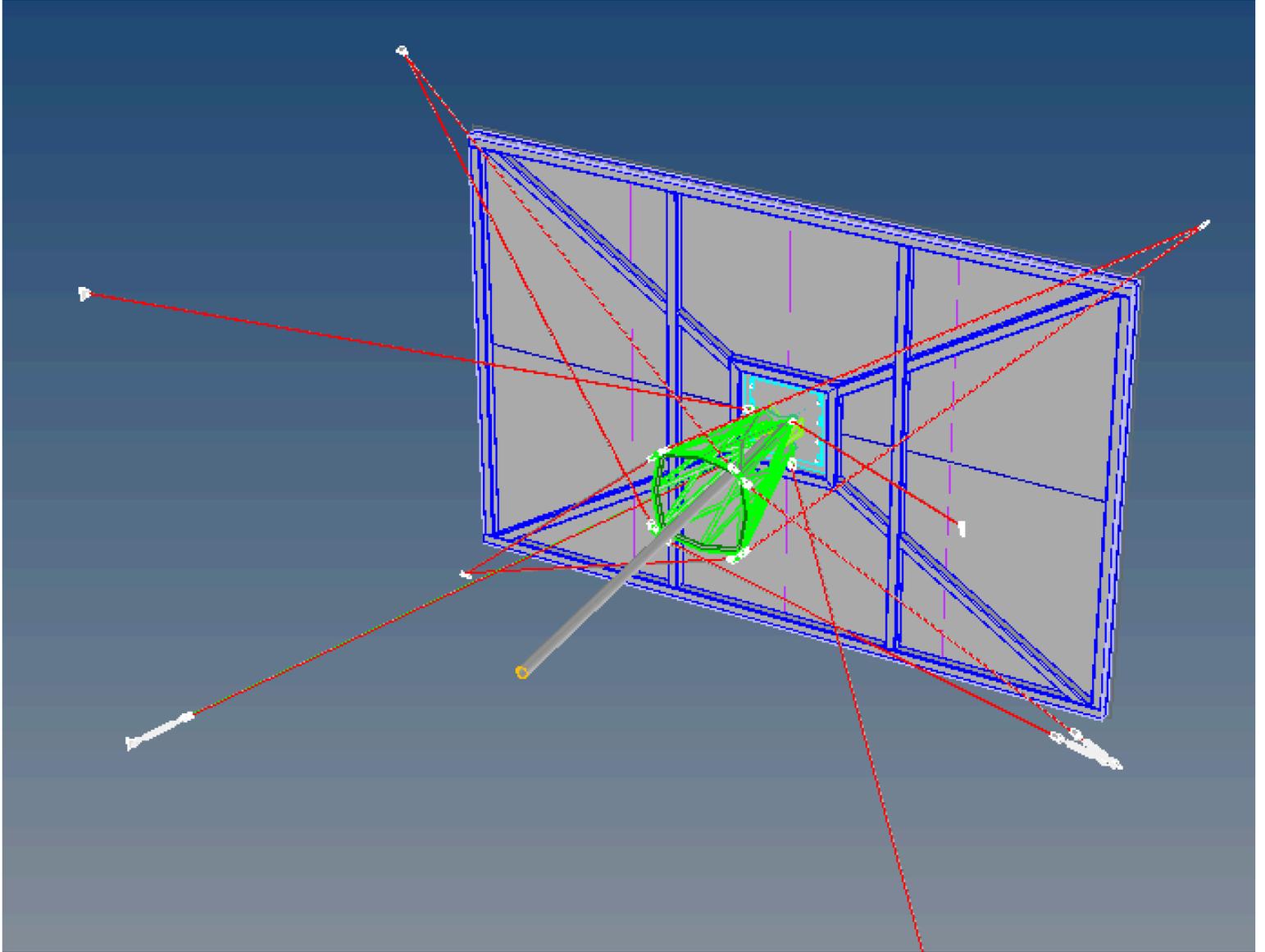






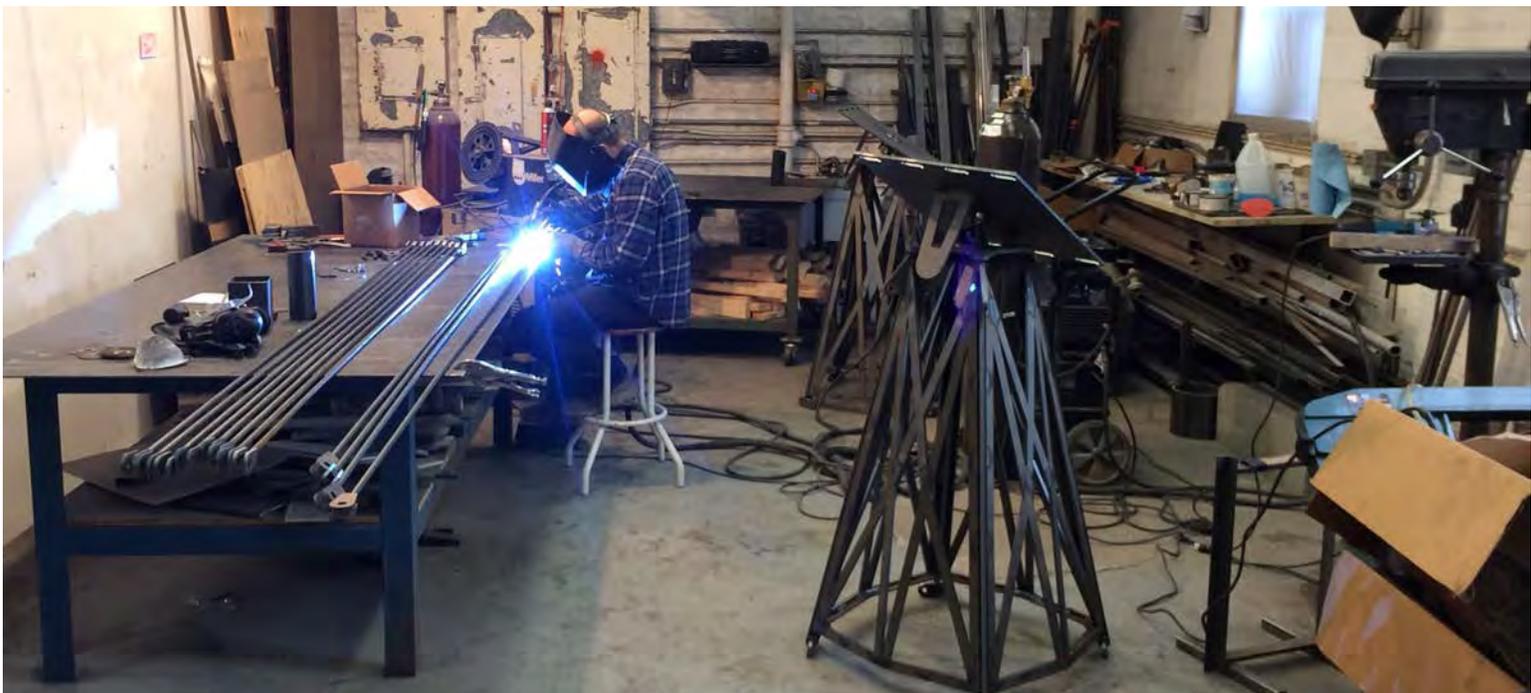
The potential for “structural drawing” is wholeheartedly expressed in the rear supporting armature. The 10' x 15' mirrors are suspended from a single u-joint (or gimbal) welded to a metal latticed basket. The metal rods of the tensgrity structure hold the basket still, while the mirrors move freely.





Much of the work was fabricated directly from a highly detailed digital model. This model was used for material size takeoffs as well as laser cutting of the metal basket.







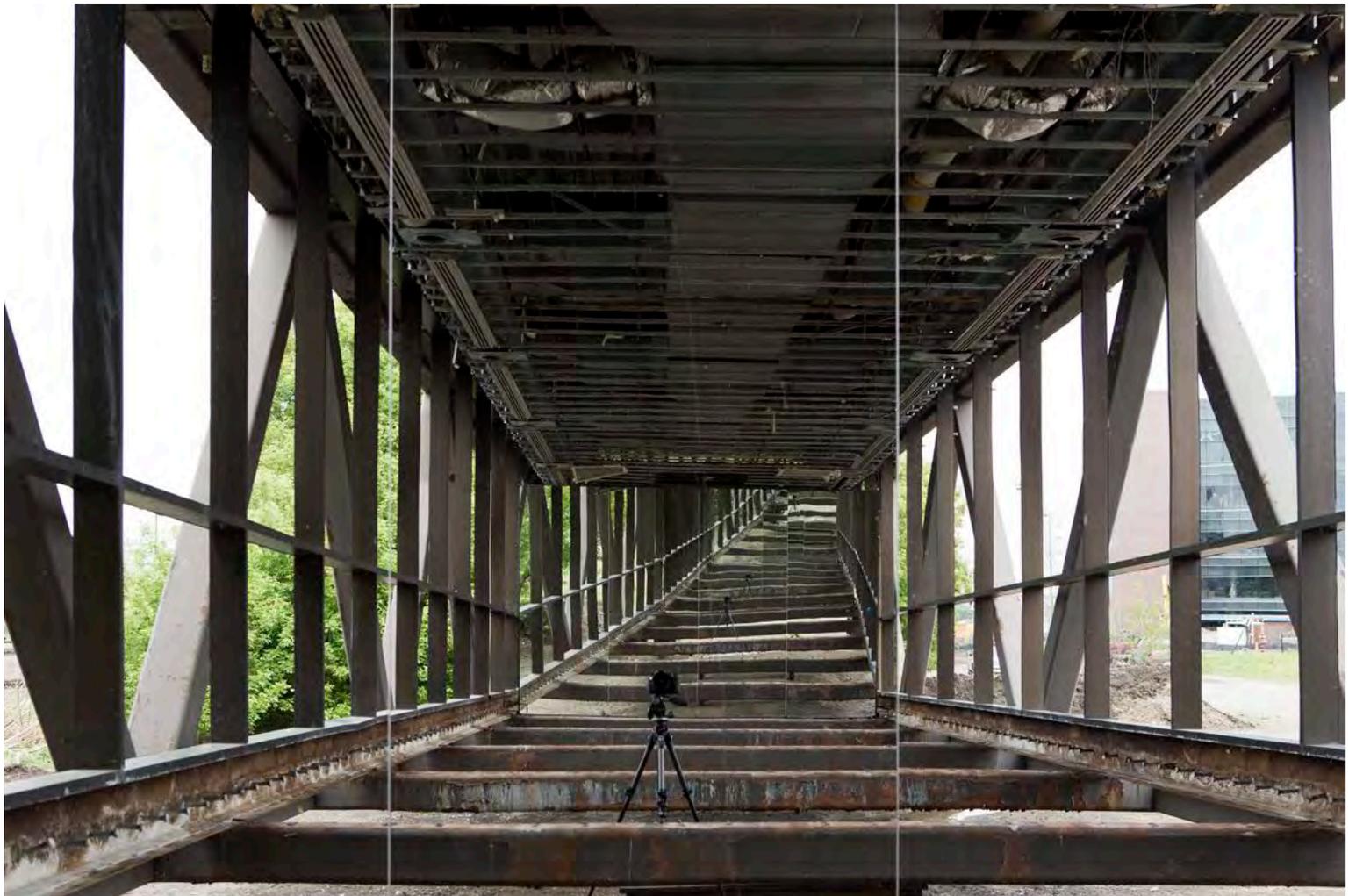




The installation had a found object quality, as it was open to the public at all times. Located on the fringe of the University of Minnesota campus, the site became a destination for adventurers and dreamers, folks who sought out the strange and unpredictable spatial experience arising from chance. The exhibition was up for six weeks, and then disappeared as mysteriously as it had come.







LONGING

10 × 15 × 82 feet

steel, rubber, glass mirror, void

Minneapolis, Minnesota