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Some Notes on Congruency

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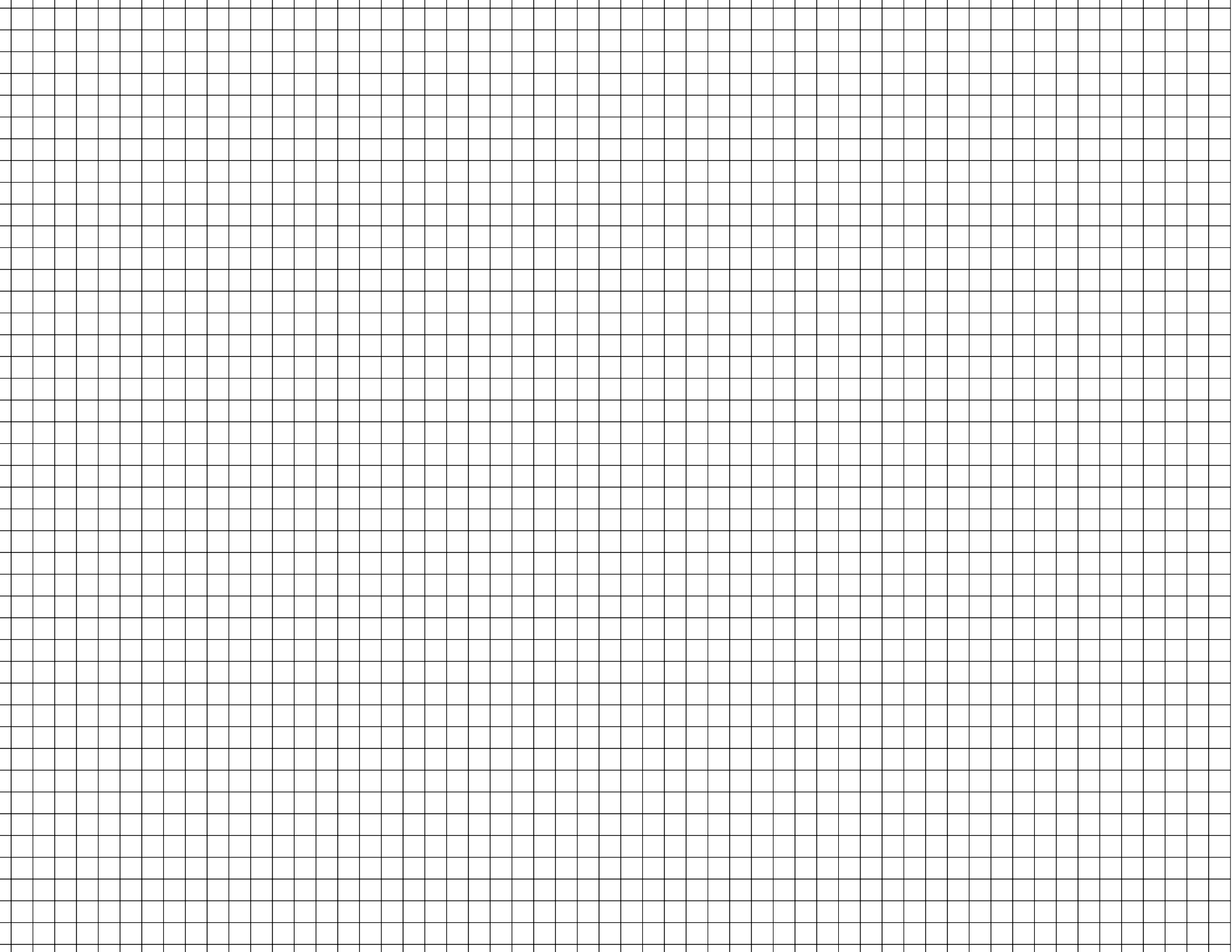
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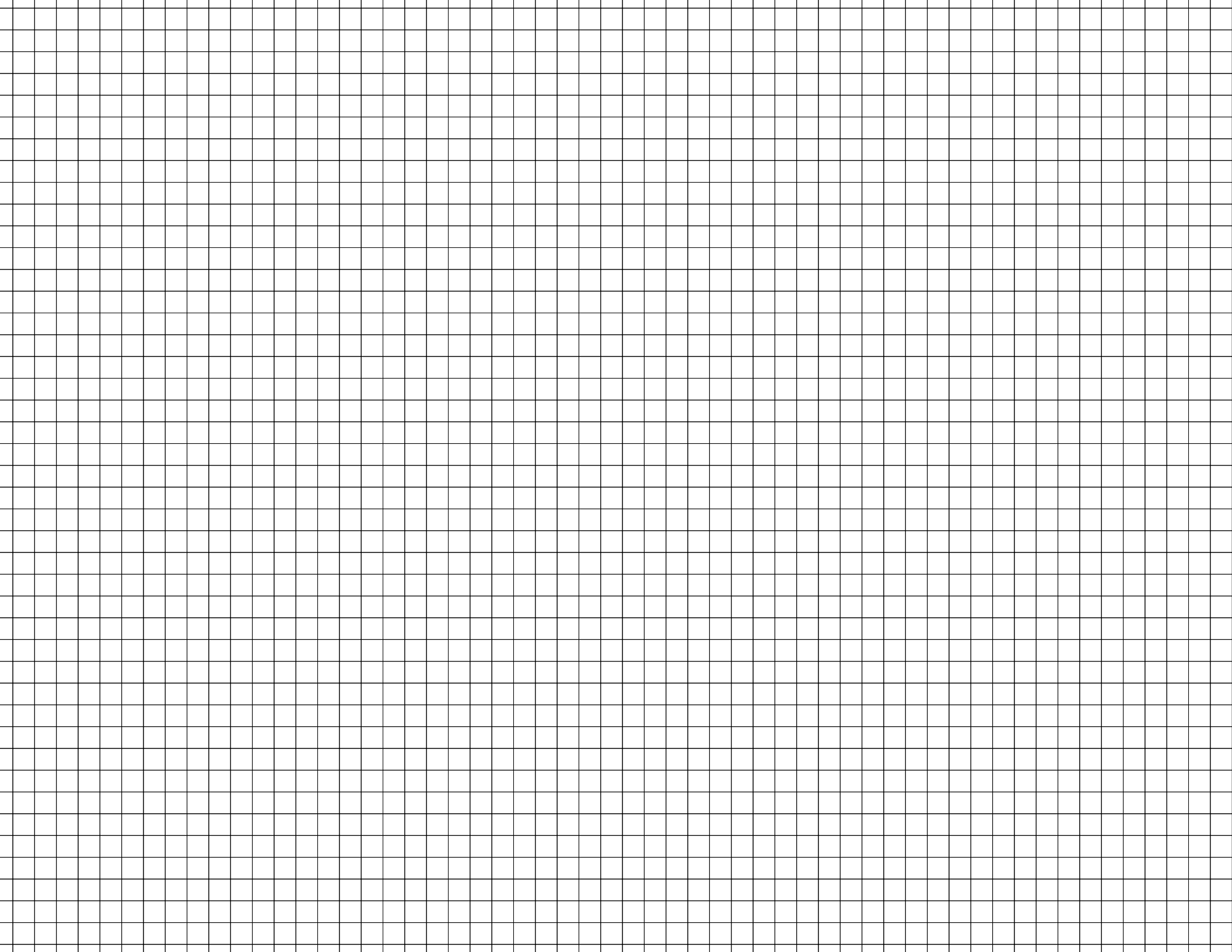
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some
notes
on
congruency



senior project
submitted to
division of the arts
of bard college
by
ryan russek
and aleon hudson ny
may 2020



for my parents
to help
& to
prepare

a c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s

This project would have been impossible without the tireless encouragement of my advisor Tim Davis, who took me on as an advisee when I was in dire need of guidance. His never ending enthusiasm is contagious. Even when I wasn't the best advisee, Tim was always there for me. Thank you Tim.

I'm grateful for the advice of my professors, especially Olga Toulomi for teaching me how to think spatially and Laura Steele for ensuring my photoshop literacy.

Thank you to my colleagues; Paloma Dooley for your warming encouragement, Celka Rice for your intelligent criticism, and Rachel Vera Steinberg for your welcoming art historical expertise.

Lastly, thank you to my friends. Gus Aronson for all the hours you've spent looking through my files, Cecilia Bell for your endless support, Elias Fokine for the

humor, Adam Game for making sure my glass was never dry, Evan John for being painfully honest, Isabella Norris for Las Vegas, Franklin Savulich for making sure I didn't fall off Kosciuszko Bridge, among other things, and Olivia Sherman for letting me crash at the most inconvenient times.

You are all wonderful.

f o r e w o r d

At the intersection of two state routes sits a traffic crossing complete with multiple traffic lights, four crosswalks, a few restaurants, and of course, a 24 hour gas station. There are sets of garbage cans, fire hydrants, and post boxes anchored into the concrete sidewalk. Rectangular signs inform passerby of the speed limit, number of miles to adjacent towns, reminders to yield to pedestrians and cyclists, as well as the notorious "No Turn on Red" command. An American flag floats 10 feet above the sidewalk from the corner of a nearby building. A bulletin board displays weathered information posters for missing pets, concerts, varying therapies, and a halloween parade from the previous year. Groomed dogwood trees and daffodils are neatly contained within rectangular soil beds along the sidewalk.

All components of the built environment fit neatly together

like little puzzle pieces, which is made convenient by the rectangular forms of the building materials. Things fit tightly together. Motorists closely follow traffic etiquette, coming to complete three-second stops, yielding to pedestrians from excessive distances, and respecting fellow drivers. Pedestrians follow this same standard of behavior. Jaywalking is a seldom occurrence. There is a positive feedback loop of orderliness between the inhabitants and the environment.

The cracks within the asphalt break the paradigm of propriety in their roundness and puzzling direction. Along street corners the cracks are most intricate, which industry experts worryingly refer to as "alligator cracks." Resulting from invisible forces like unstable asphalt mixture or an irregular subbase, these cracks take on a mysterious life of their own. One day they

will be repaired and paved over in little rectangular patches. But for now they shine in the sunlight, cracking further, and further.













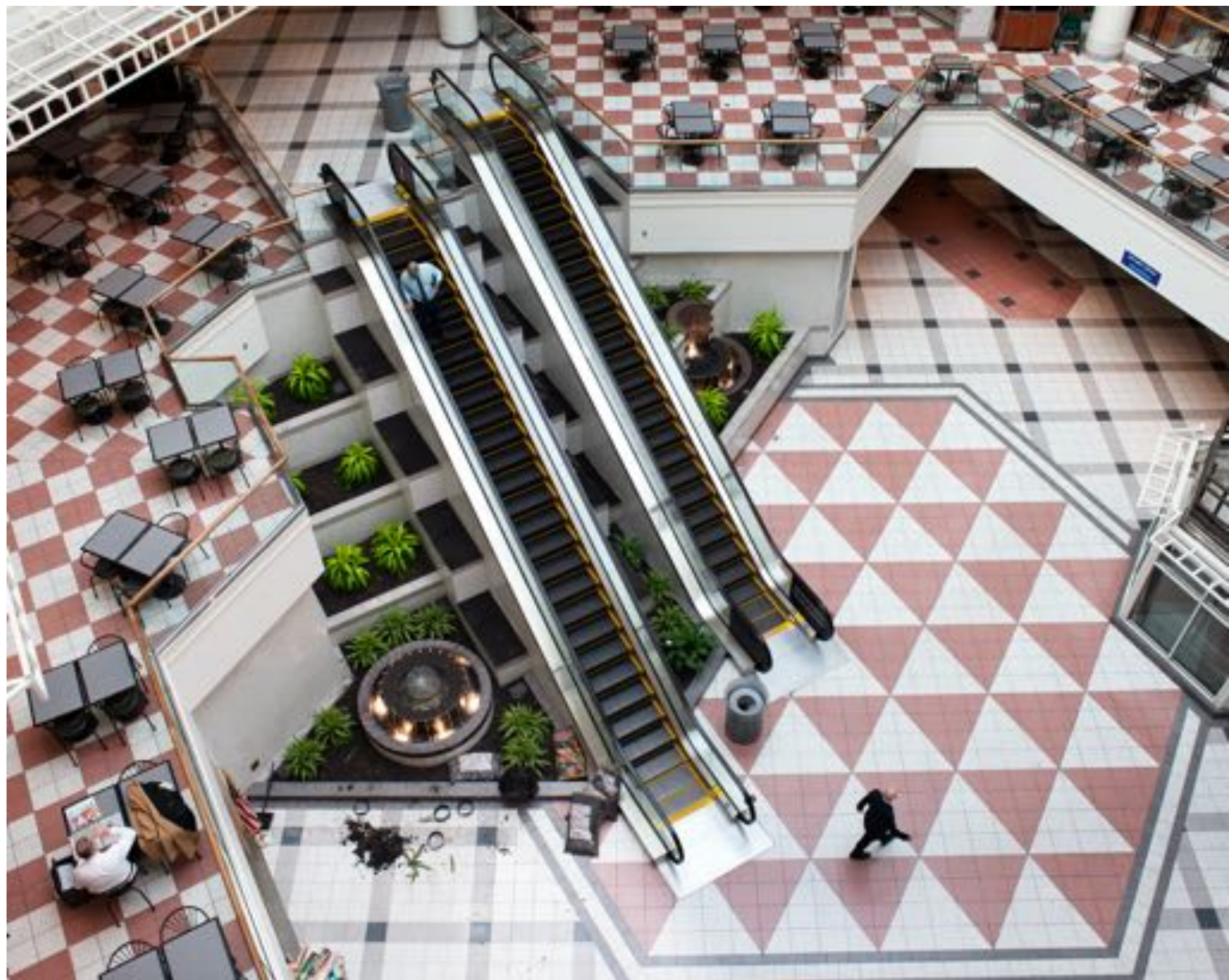






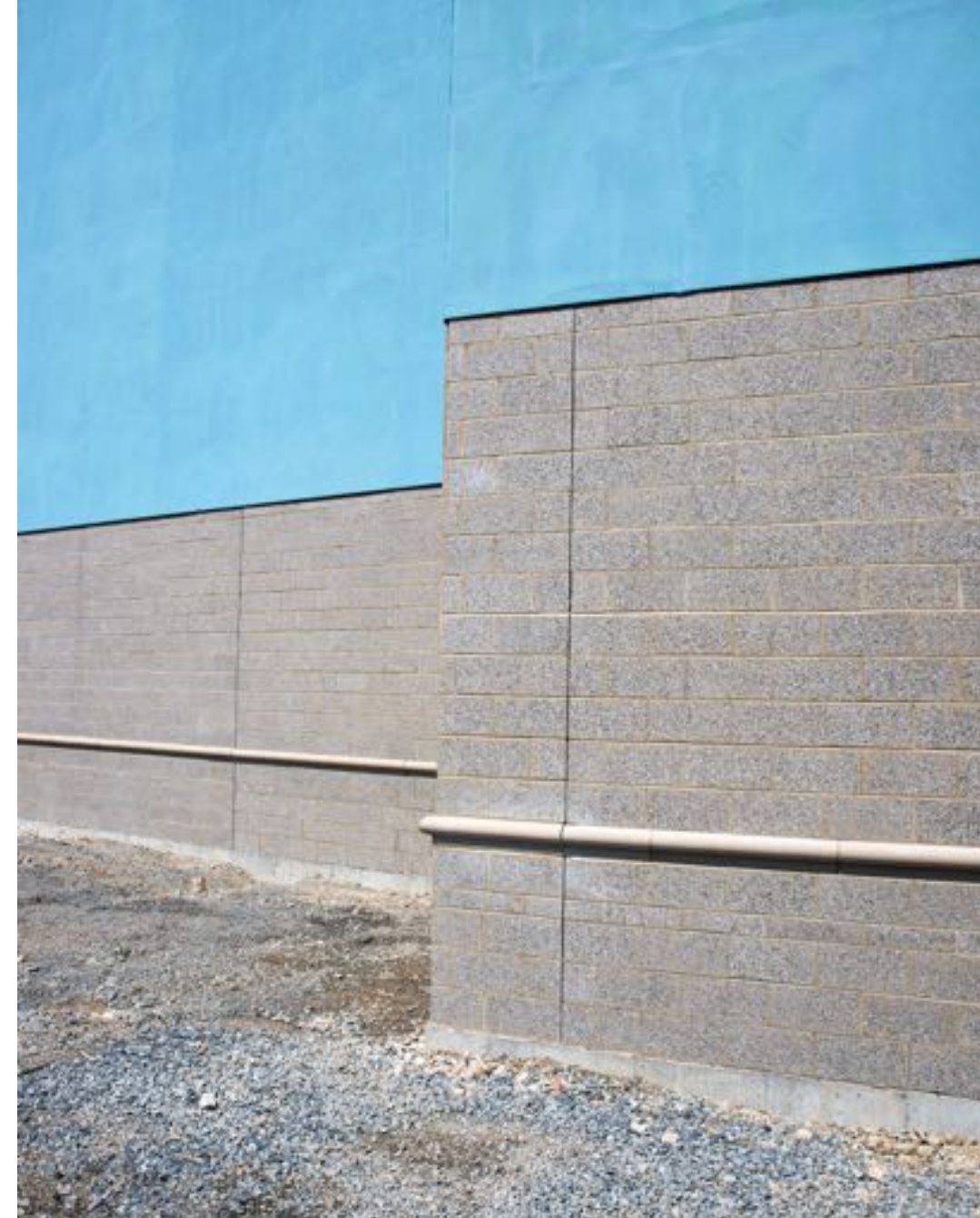


































a f t e r w o r d

Some Notes on Congruency is an examination of the seemingly arbitrary methods in which the built environment facilitates order among its inhabitants (eg., parking lot striping, roadway signs). Asphalt fissures observed at the main intersection in Red Hook, NY were used as a starting off point for making the photographs contained within this book. A lens with a focal length that closely resembles the range of human vision was used to communicate the experience of discovering fissures from my perspective as a pedestrian and motorist. I was most captivated by temporal, subtle fissures, such as the replanting of flower beds in a shopping mall before opening time (page 25). These discoveries most often occurred within public spaces, such as bridges, hallways, parking garages, roads, sidewalks and sites of critical infrastructure. In transforming three dimensional space into a two dimensional object, photogra-

phy provided me the opportunity to examine the complexities of the built environment that I once took for granted.

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