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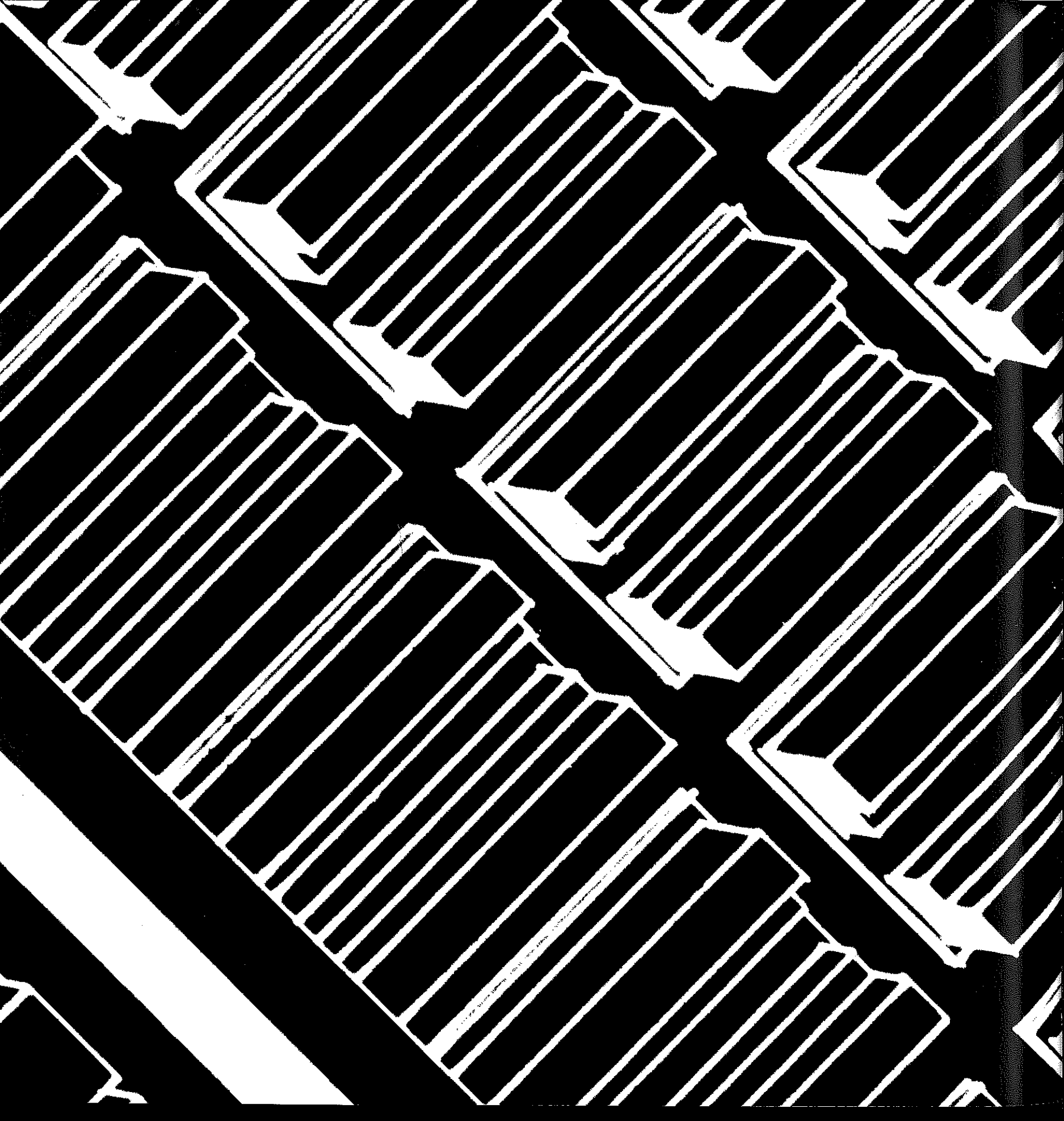
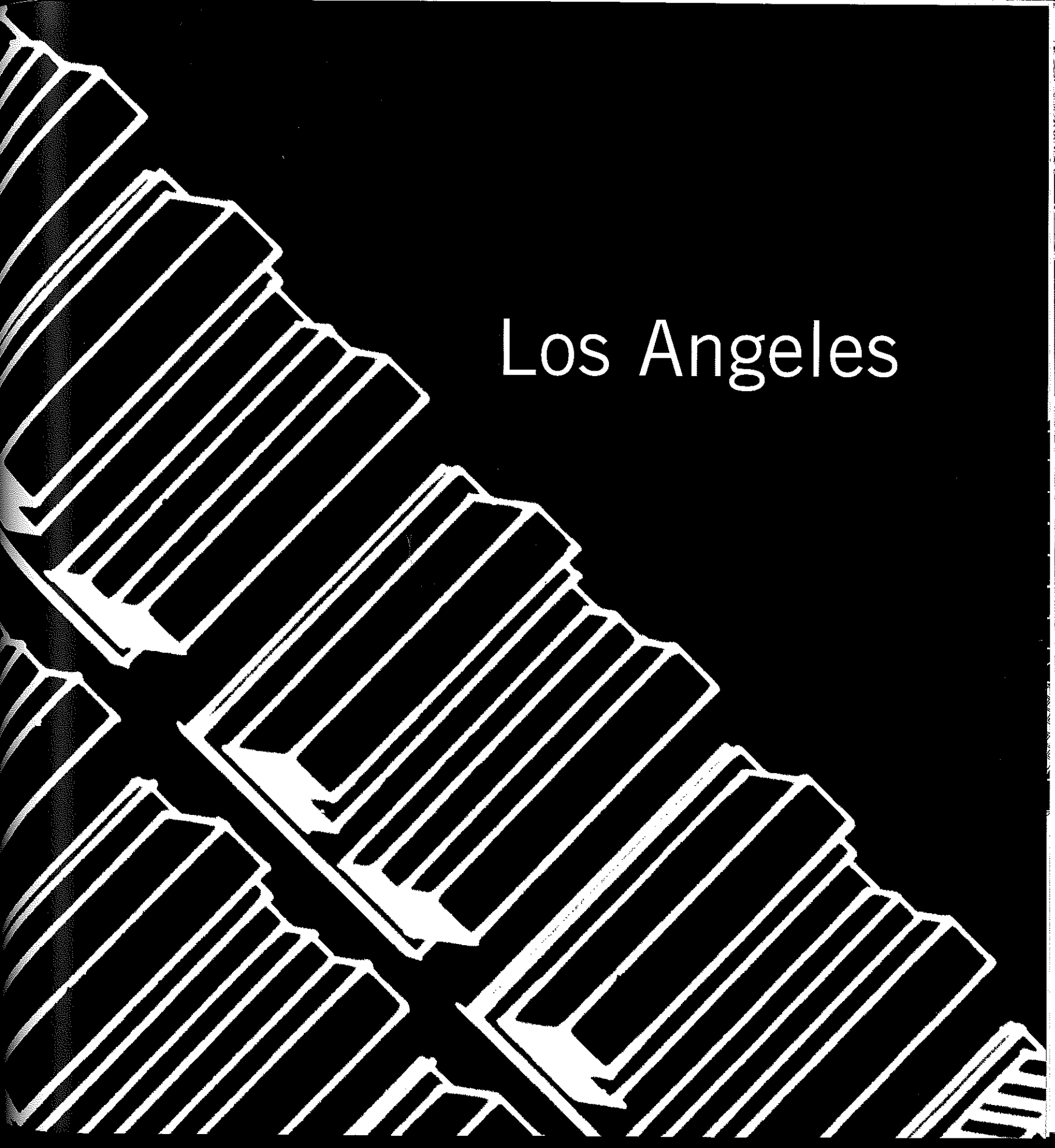
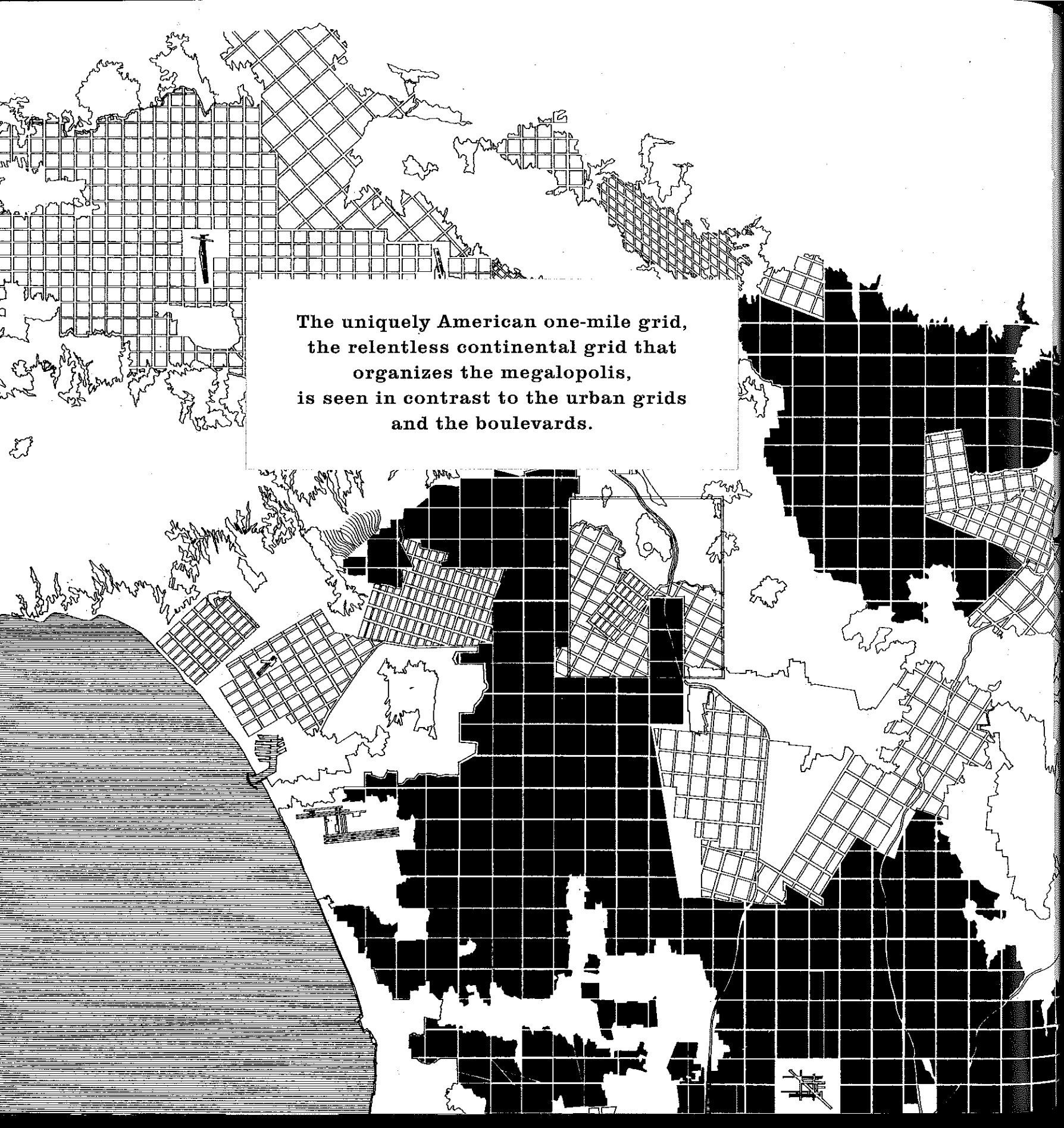
X-URBANISM: ARCHITECTURE AND THE AMERICAN CITY

Mario Gandelsonas




Los Angeles

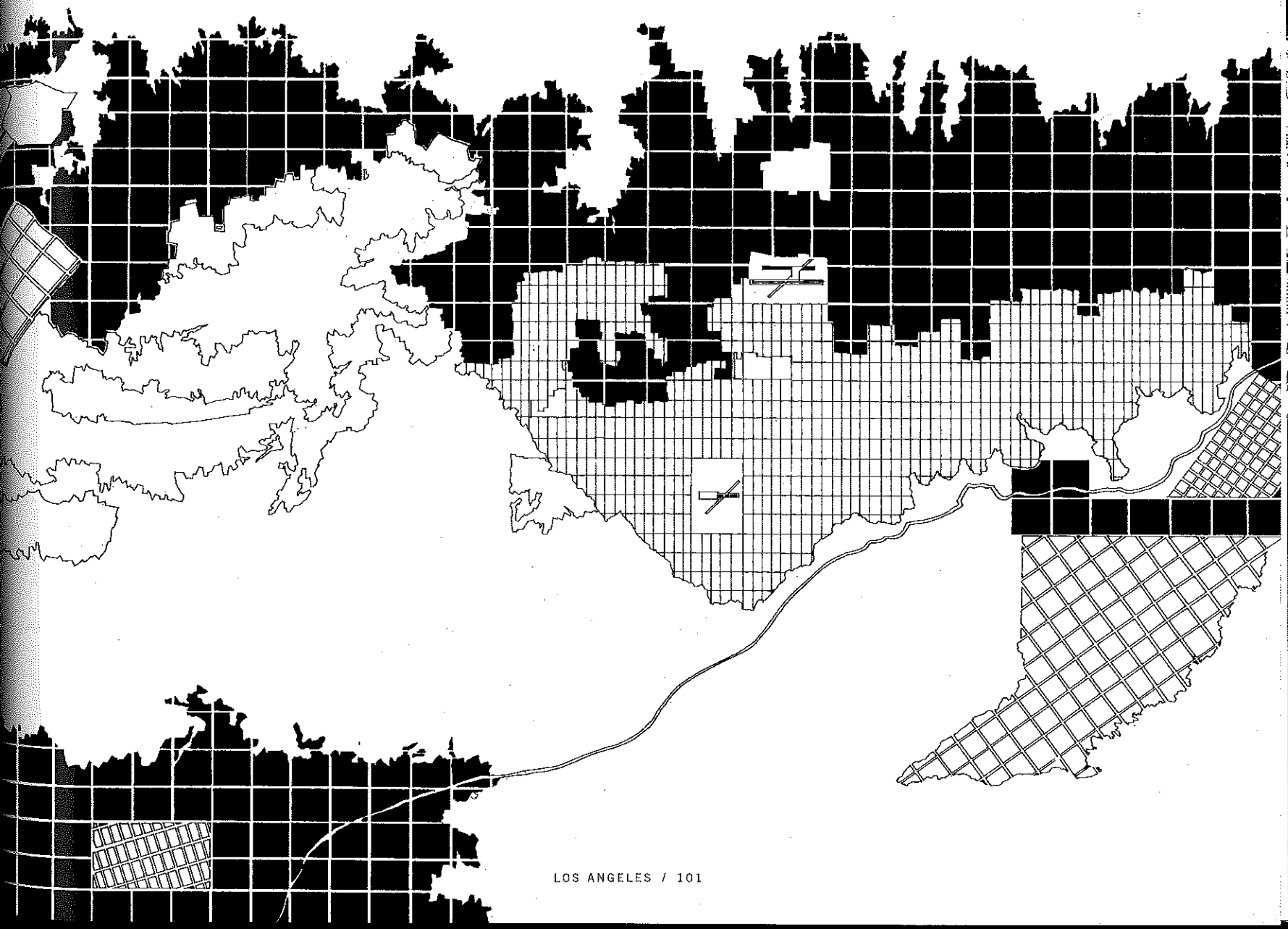


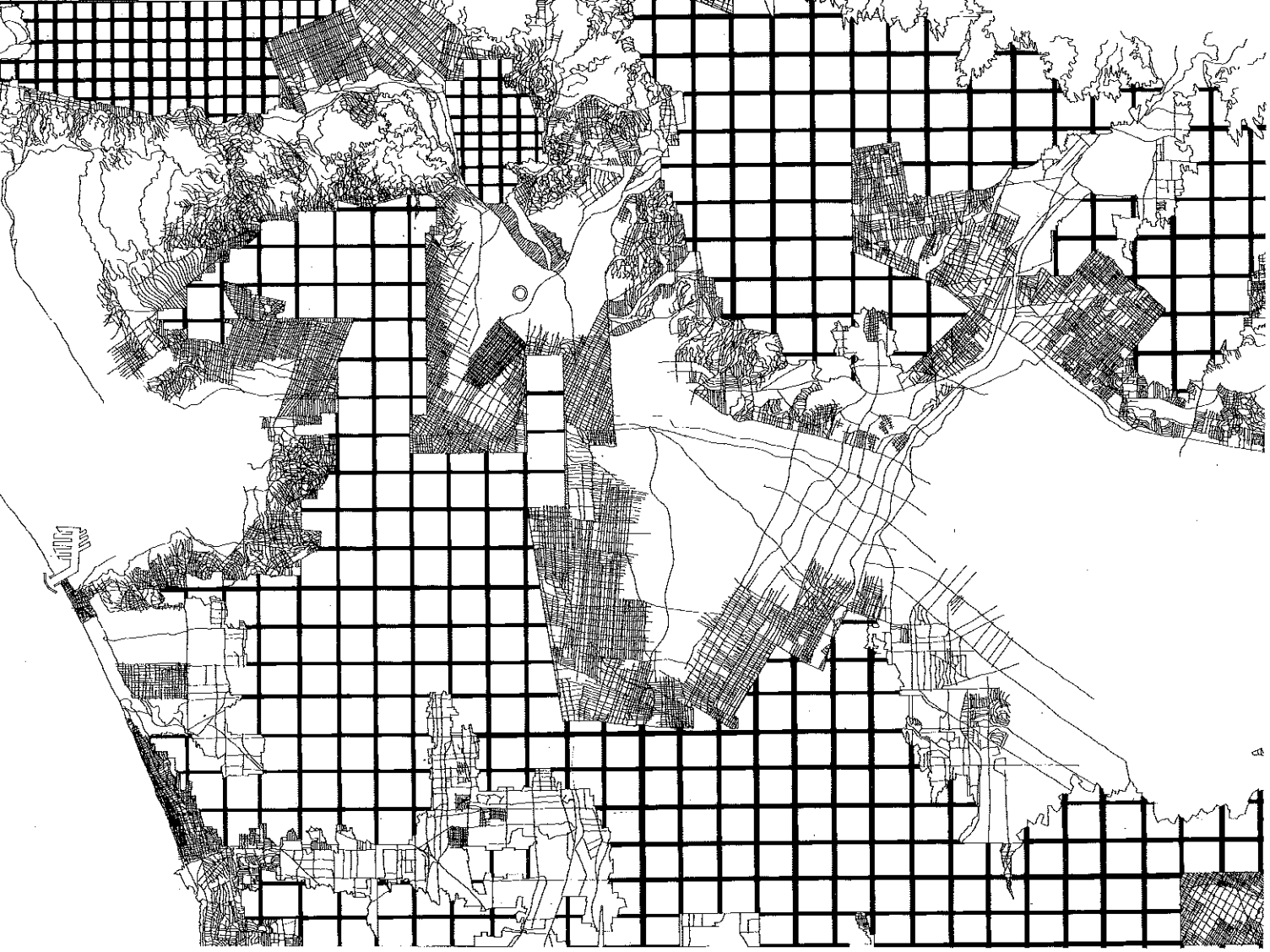
The uniquely American one-mile grid, the relentless continental grid that organizes the megalopolis, is seen in contrast to the urban grids and the boulevards.

PLAN 1:

THE TERRITORIAL GRID

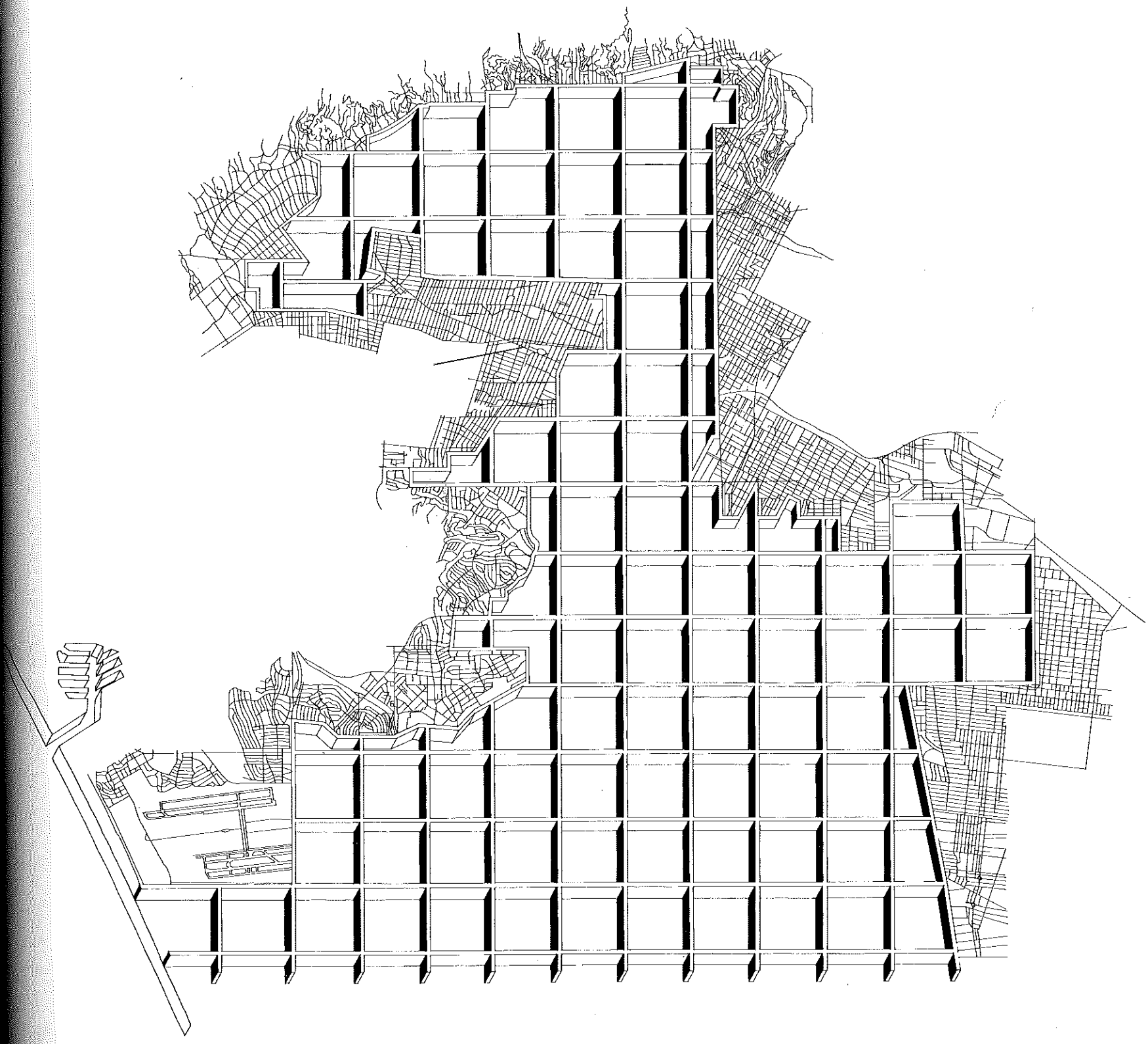
The perceived chaos of the Los Angeles plan obscures a complex system combining city grids as colossal city fabrics as objects (laid out at different angles) with the one-mile grid as background (acting as a "glue" between the different cities). The one-mile grid is interrupted by the hills appearing as topographic accidents of the horizontal plane: the gridded morphology, the historical pueblo grid, the city grids, the one-mile grid, and the hills (the nongridded morphology).

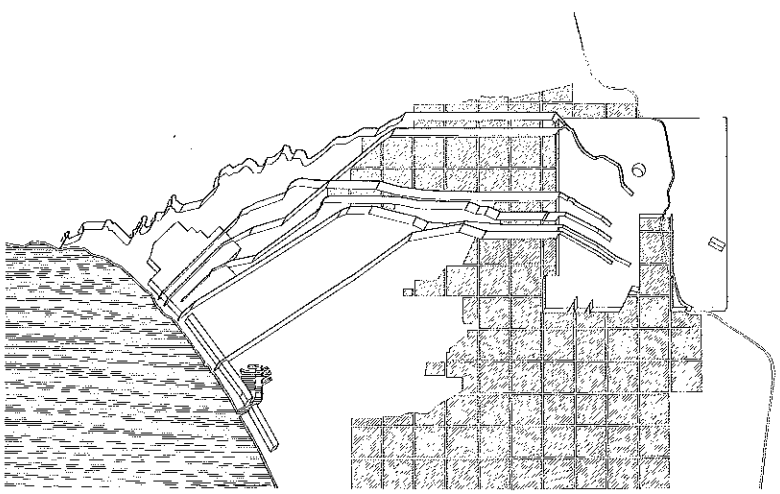


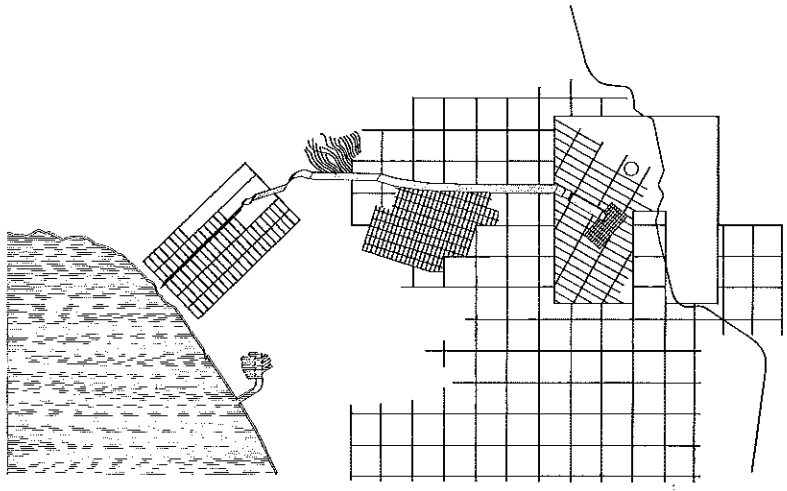


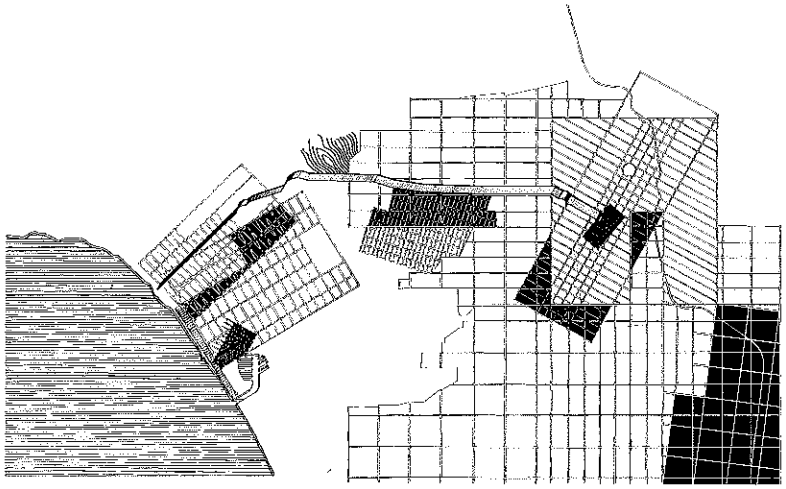
PLAN 2:
SANTA MONICA, BEVERLY HILLS, AND LOS ANGELES
A close-up view reestablishes the Los Angeles collage clarified by the previous drawing. The colossal scale of the one-mile grid, the hills, and the ocean as datum makes the Los Angeles plan understandable.

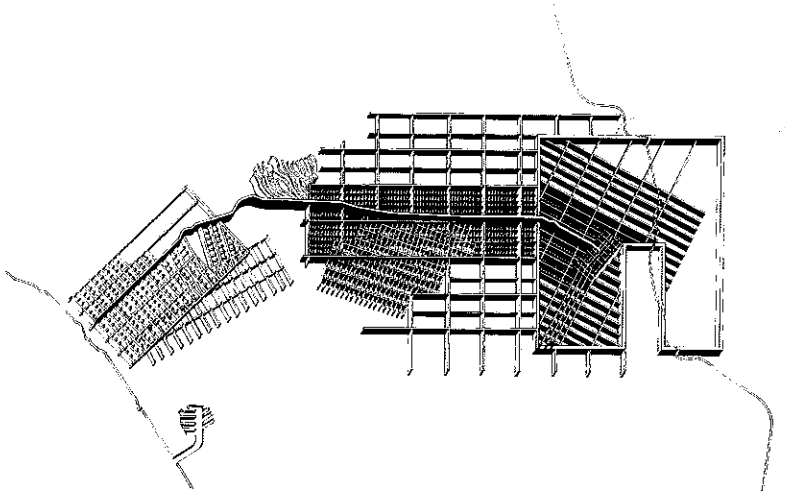
PLAN 3:
THE LOS ANGELES MEGACITY
This drawing presents the opposition between the one-mile grid and a complex morphology that condensates the historical (the gridded cities) and the geographical (the hills).











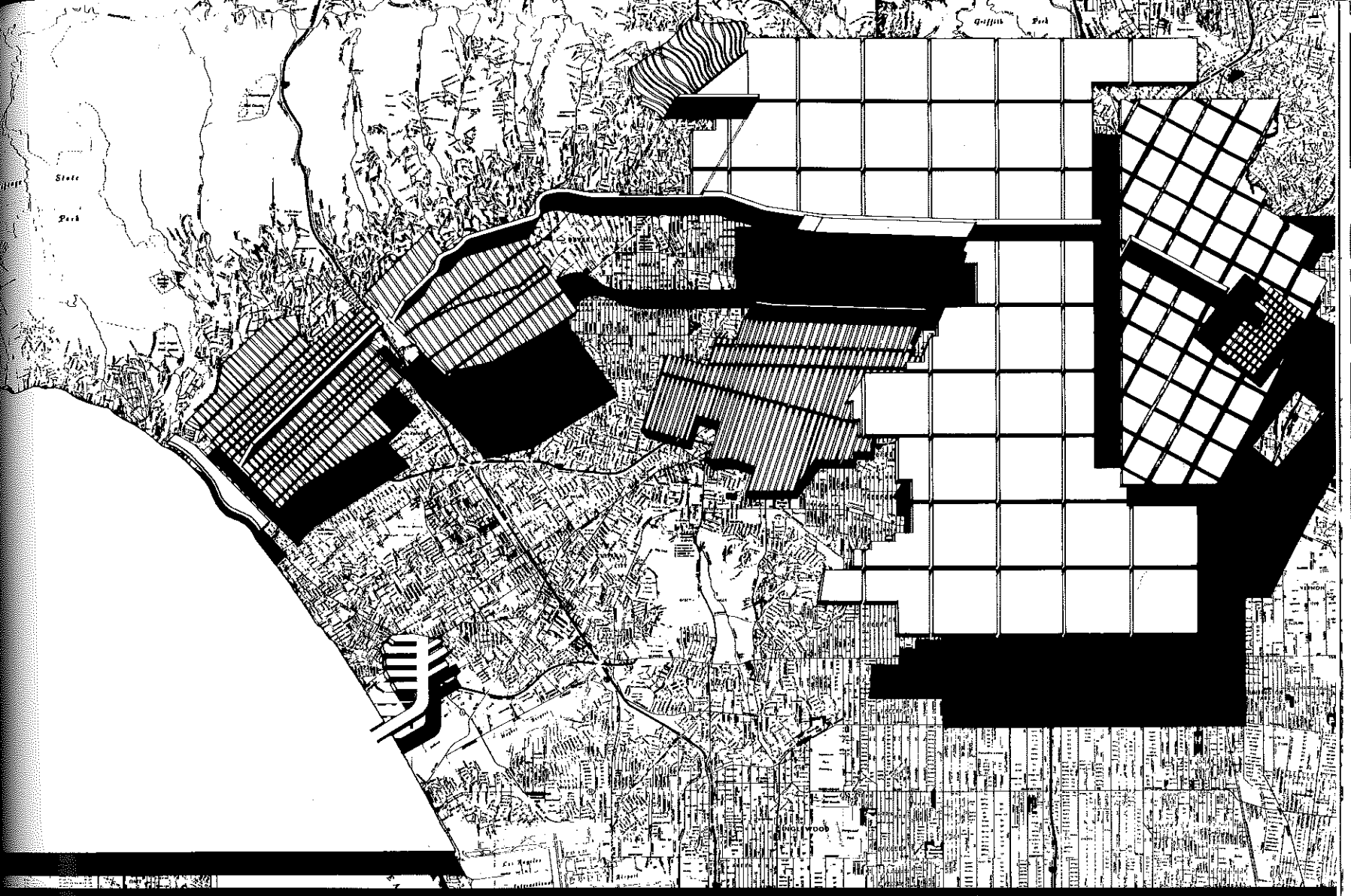
PLAN 4:
THE BOULEVARDS
The boulevards are the flows of energy that act as connectors between the different elements of the Los Angeles plan. They are shown as linear walls as if the flows had been channeled through the grids, both the explicit and the absent city grids.

PLAN 5:
GRID RELATIONSHIPS: WILSHIRE BOULEVARD AND THE CITY GRIDS
This is the first of a series of drawings representing Wilshire Boulevard. Different modes of relationship between the boulevard and the city grids are made explicit: bisecting or framing, acknowledging or ignoring, going across or stopping.

PLAN 6:
TWO-DIMENSIONAL GRID INTERSECTIONS
In the second Wilshire Boulevard drawing the grids engage in a play with adjacent grids. The overlappings should be seen as fictions that might have a certain explanatory role (i.e., the "reason" for certain irregularities in the behavior of the city grids and/or the boulevard's trajectory).

PLAN 7:
THREE-DIMENSIONAL GRID INTERSECTIONS
In the third Wilshire Boulevard drawing, the three-dimensional representation is presented.

PLAN 8: GRID PUZZLE
The fourth drawing represents Wilshire Boulevard with the different city grids as a puzzle "hovering" above the "real" plan of Los Angeles. The boulevard bisects or presents an edge for the different city plan(e)s.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Park
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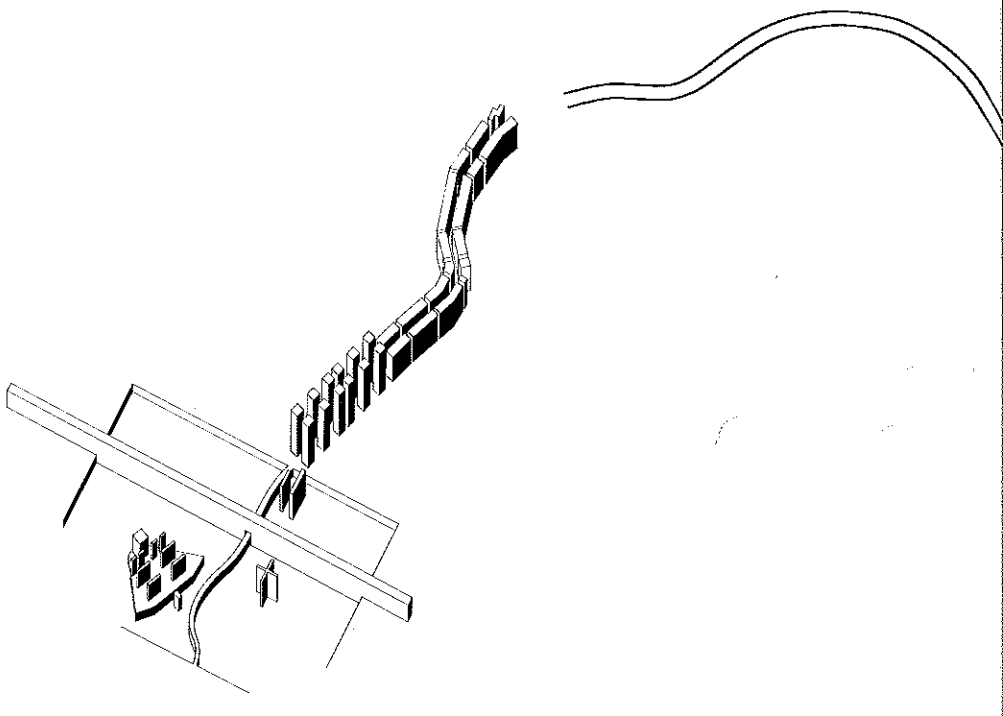
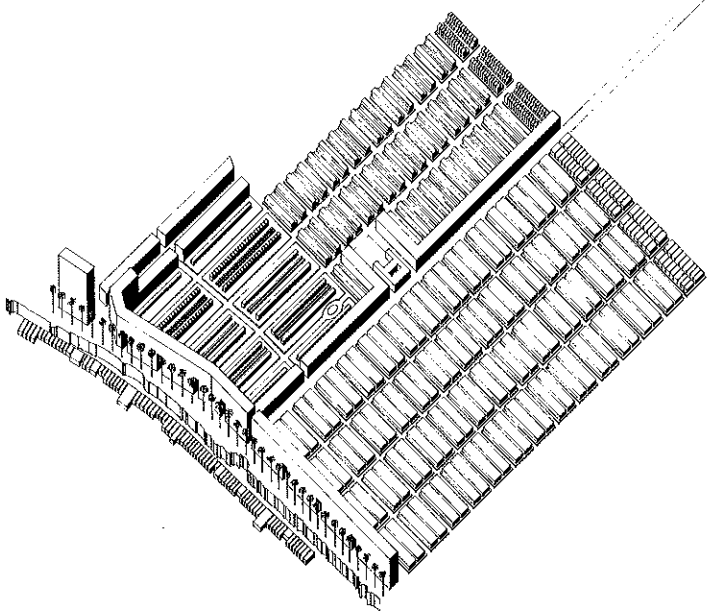
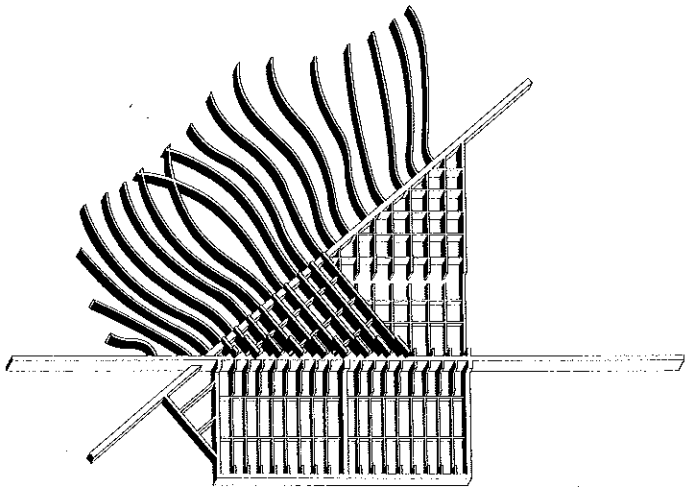
HOLLYWOOD

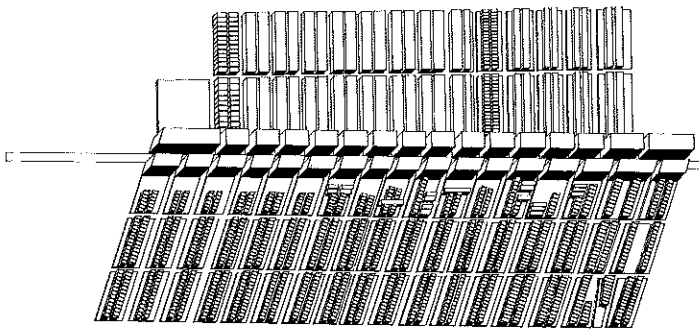


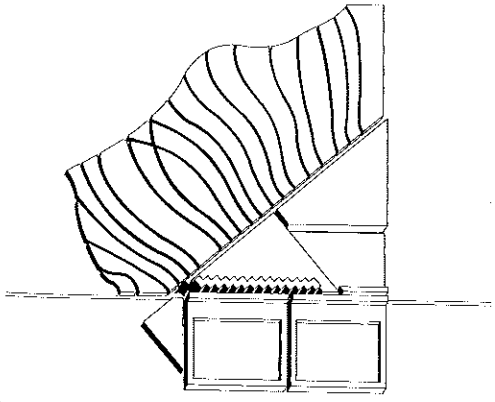


PLAN 9: TYPOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION
This is the first of a series of typological descriptions of the different urban landscapes along Wilshire Boulevard, one of the first high-rise corridors, a canyon as opposed to the traditional high-rise hill associated with Manhattan. Santa Monica is literally bisected by Wilshire Boulevard.

PLAN 10: CROSSING THE 405
The drawing represents two conditions. In the first, the freeway, a linear object, cuts across a field of objects bisected by Whilshire Boulevard represented as solid; in the second, Wilshire is defined by the walls of the high-rise corridor that start at that point.



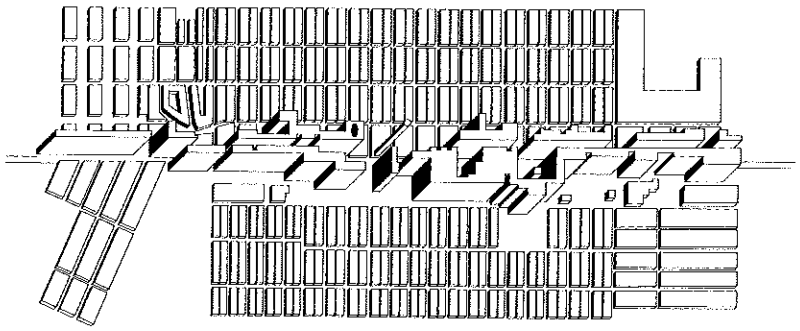


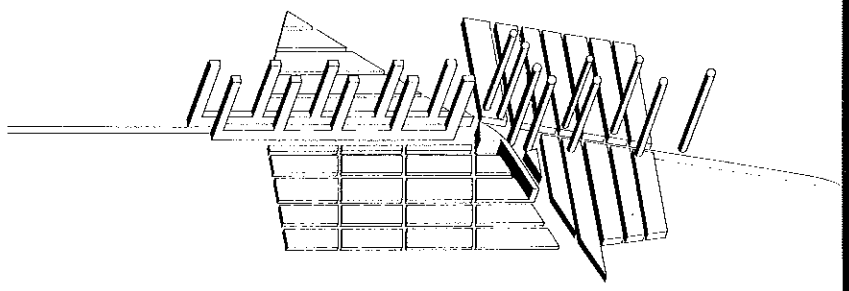


PLAN 11: BEVERLY HILLS (1)
Beverly Hills is one of the most extraordinary morphological structures in Los Angeles. The undulating streets provide a unique and distinctive treatment of the transition between the flat grid and the hills.

PLAN 12: BEVERLY HILLS (2)
From a typological point of view, Beverly Hills provides a second example of Wilshire not as a room but as an edge, not as a space but as boundary between districts, where every side of the street is different.

PLAN 13: THE HIGH-RISE WALL
The drawing shows "degree zero function" of the Wilshire Boulevard high-rise wall, the "walling" of adjacent low-rise districts characterized by a fabric made up of single-family houses.

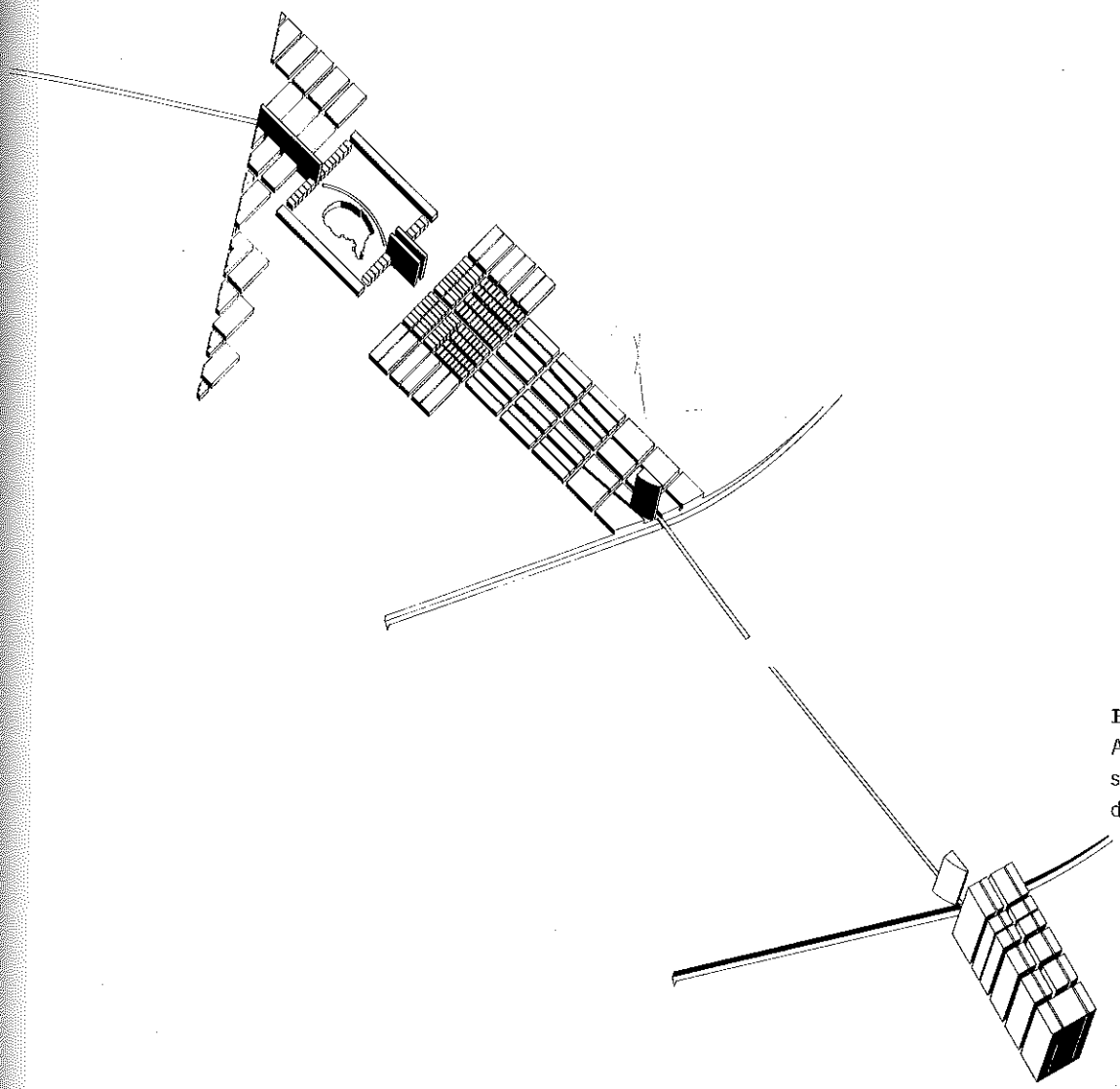




PLAN 14:
MORPHOLOGICAL/TYPOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS
A diptych of opposing directional grids and high-rise building types can be implied from the existing street pattern and buildings. Base-attached towers sit on the east-west biased grid while the floating towers sit on the north-south grid.

PLAN 15:
DEVELOPMENT
A new fabric develops as a result of the formation of the high-rise canyon. The need for parking erodes the first block behind the wall. The wall itself becomes more objectlike — a thick wall with a more formal front and sculptural recesses in the back — that is no longer embedded in the contiguous fabric.

PLAN 16: EISENHOWER PARK
This park is the point of departure of a sequence of building objects, urban spaces and low-rise fabric that act as a "pause" between the high-rise canyon (Wilshire Boulevard) and the high-rise hill (downtown Los Angeles)



PLAN 17: THE END
An object-building terminates the previous sequence and announces the beginning of the downtown "hill."