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Weatherizing: 13178 Moran Street. Detached Garage. Detroit,  
2010.

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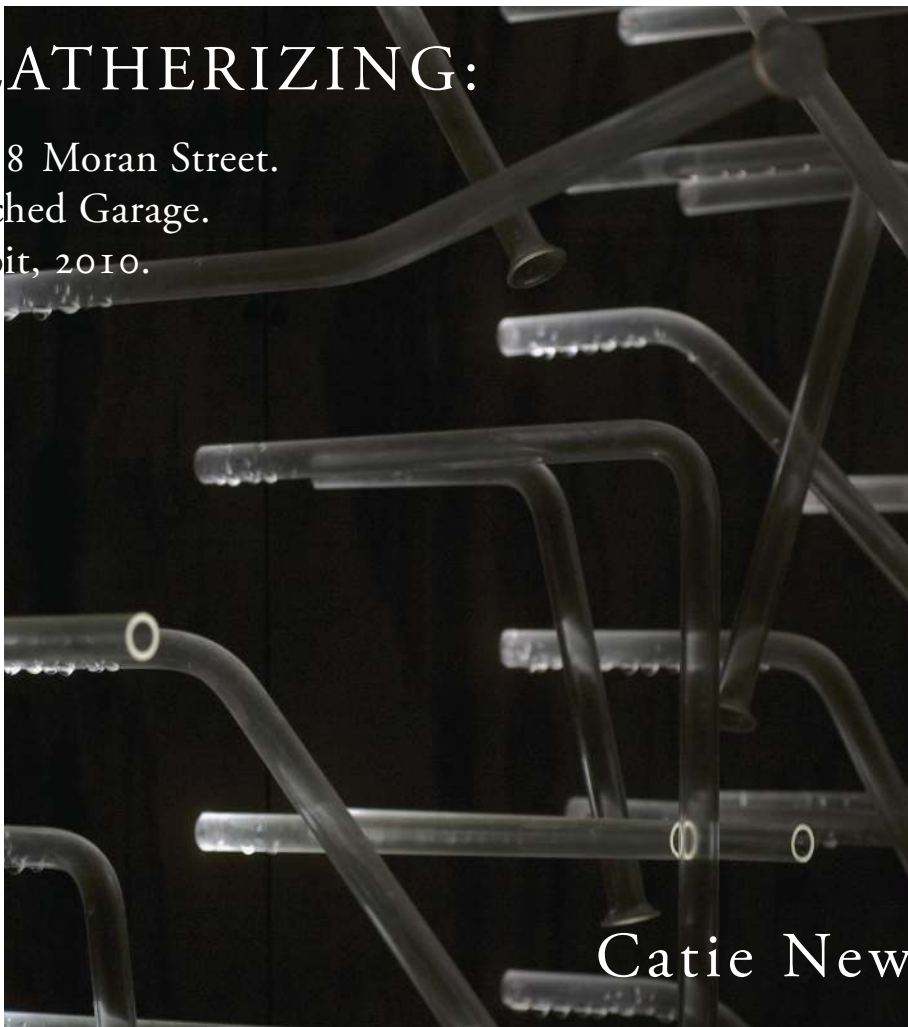
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# WEATHERIZING:

13178 Moran Street.  
Detached Garage.  
Detroit, 2010.



Catie Newell

## // DETROIT AS DARK VOLUMES

Captured volumes of darkness are prevalent enough in Detroit that they could be recognized as a distinct architectural typology. It is a specific darkness, one that exists in the coupling of boarded up spaces with the strained, missing, stolen, and neglected electrical infrastructure. Perfectly formed to the interior of a vast array of spaces, the darkness is held behind structures that were once fully operational homes and buildings, which now don an extra ad hoc skin cloaking conventional apertures. Dispersed widely throughout the physical urban setting, these foils to anticipated illumination are found both separately and in tandem, but should not be taken as an indicator of the status of a building's occupation nor its ownership.

Under normal circumstances, a boarded-up window is a temporary fix to an accident or the more probable break-in, with the wooden infill acting as a mere patch. However, the stories are more complex in Detroit. This seal has evolved out of tending to broken window panes, reacting to concerns over security or privacy, and in efforts to deter squatters or scappers. Such contentious circumstances prompt strategies that promote long term use. The detailing may include custom

screw heads, a sill lined with nails and glass shards, complicated interior bolting, or wood that has clearly weathered with time.

The darkened internal volumes are at home among a landscape of limited electrical services. The availability of electricity is dwindling at large with the extensive theft of copper wire and the city's reduction in provided service locations. Being off the grid is not necessarily by choice, while being connected is not necessarily carried out lawfully.

Between personal devices and the expected (taken for granted) artificial illumination, people have a tendency to seemingly emit light. Generally speaking, the more people in a location the more illumination. Detroit was built for more than double its current population. Physically extensive despite its countless vacancies, the relatively unlit urban massing constitutes a unique setting among the expectations of illumination in American cities.

*Weatherizing* is a response to this darkness in Detroit and a vehicle upon which to discuss these respective city circumstances. As a material study and electrical experimentation, its alteration of an abandoned stand-alone garage mutates and activates



the barrier between the enclosed atmospheres of the interior and the shifts of the greater surroundings on the exterior. Considered to be a replacement of the common flat-pane windows, *Weatherizing* uses the typical mediator of glass in an unusual configuration, evoking an altered understanding of the volume and its exchanges through the creation of a glowing atmosphere and in response to implications of security and containment within Detroit. The text that follows tells its story; and while doing so, it tells a story of Detroit at that precise moment in time.

## // IN TIME

Timing. As with anything that is so tangled to the exact conditions of its context, it all has to do with timing. The acquiring of a house was the collective brainchild of the 2009–2010 Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning Fellows at the University of Michigan. Celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> year, the 2009–2010 Fellowship brought five fellows to its faculty, an anomaly to the typical three. Socially, the selected candidates (Ellie Abrons, Meredith Miller, Thom Moran, Rosalyne Shieh,

and myself) formed an immediate pack, one that would soon be referred to as the 5Fellows. Drawn together at first by our similar ages and rookie status, the group was strengthened by intellectual dialogues filtered through our collective differences spawned from varied—even conflicting—backgrounds, schools, mentors, and research foci. Concurrently, times were tough. We all turned to academia for financial stability while simultaneously recognizing that to get anything built, you had to make it yourself. Across all of our interests and methods was a shared instinct “to make.”

Ann Arbor, home of the University of Michigan, provided little spark for a meaningful design setting suitable to a fellowship year. Roughly thirty miles to the east, Detroit, in its constantly awkward relationship to the more stable and affluent Ann Arbor, was a setting rich in issues capable of spanning the diverse interests of such an eclectic group of young designers.

In a fury of brainstorming and group decision making, we found ourselves peering in on projects happening in residential spaces in Detroit. Acquaintances of Rosalyne Shieh, Mitch Cope and Gina Reichert, introduced us to the foreclosed housing stock of Detroit through their work as Design 99. Their

practice of tending to their own neighborhood through creative work was both commendable and inspiring. When we visited their block and they casually indicated to us that the auction of foreclosed properties in Detroit was to occur the following week, we took the leap.

## // 500 for \$500

Appropriately, the 2009 auction was held in Detroit's Greektown Casino. It was to be the last of the auctions conducted in person. Now, taking cues from the world of online auctions, the purchasing of foreclosed properties from the Wayne County Foreclosure Auction is





an electronic and faceless event. But on October 12, 2009, a room capable of holding not more than 500 people was opened at 9:00 a.m. sharp and the identities of those in attendance were made public.

The auction book, with its canary yellow cover, was nearly two inches thick. All the properties that had not been acquired during the previous auction (when starting bids matched the amount of taxes owed back) were reset to an initial bid of \$500. Early research on available properties was only possible by scrolling through an online PDF, catching a glimpse of the plot on Google Earth, and driving around in person. Provided to each bidder in attendance, the enormous weight of the auction book made the daunting task of sifting through the available properties physically tangible. A few pages were dedicated to the auction's rules and regulations, and the rest—a long list with an average of 18 plots per page—was organized by neighborhood. The properties ranged from countless residential buildings to the abandoned Roosevelt Hotel, and even included an airport. The anticipated property taxes deterred us from simply buying up the abandoned airport on the spur of the moment, as if in some child-like dream. With some such properties falling into uninformed

hands, future auctions would institute a sliding scale to establish starting bids in hopes of preventing the thoughtless grabbing of land.

There was a gross disproportion between the number of people permitted into the space and the properties up for grabs. Mitch and Gina were denied entry. Having run to the bank to procure the mandatory \$500 cashier's check for each property they intended to bid on, their 9:15 a.m. arrival was already too late. It was a crime to the process that—cash in hand to buy a property—they were turned away because the room could only hold a limited population.

As the day continued forward, the weak numbers became increasingly apparent. Day one of the four-day event already had its long drags of no bidding. The auctioneer began interacting more with the audience, not reading every plot and instead asking if anyone was planning on bidding on anything on a page, or even within a neighborhood. As we waited, Thom Moran texted the other Fellows. Use of a phone within the room was a violation of auction floor rules, so he was kicked out. It was odd to be sitting in a room staring at land lot numbers in list format, uncertain of the quality of the spaces under review. However, the typology was an easy bet:

a single family home, detached garage, evidence of a squatter, all service infrastructure long since stolen, and a lack of demand. Thom's ejection provided us with the opportunity for a reconnaissance to see the houses in person. He confirmed what was expected, and at Mitch and Gina's suggestion he scouted out the houses that they were intending to purchase. With no competition—not even on the neighboring pages of the auction book—I purchased the house at 13178 Moran Street for \$500.

The paperwork consisted of a xeroxed half sheet that I signed with the name 5Fellows— an entity that did not legally exist. The address of this phantom owner was listed as my apartment in Ann Arbor, with hopes that this would not be tracked directly to me and thus squander any future first-time homeowner's incentives.

To appease requirements for University funding, I quickly tried to deed over the property. The paperwork was not immediately processed, and the property tax forms continued to try and find the 5Fellows. When I moved to Detroit my ties to the Ann Arbor address were gone, never having seen a confirmation of the change.

## // ON PAPER

Completion of the new deed and its almost immediate switch over to Design 99 required a visit to the Building Department. The service space was small, confusing, filled with anger, and I felt as if I was somehow missing a step. I could have been standing in the wrong line twice, and might as well have started grabbing up properties by changing deeds since there was little to no verification of previous ownership or current purchases. Future paperwork would assume I had never been there in the first place.

As a friend learned the hard way, one task I did not complete was to check if the house had been removed from the demolition list, an ongoing catalog of the properties the city slowly chisels away at. The document is usually paired with the foreclosure book, yet the lists are not cross-checked and any property purchased at auction could still be scheduled for demolition.

There was a definite disconnect between this process and the overly specific lingo-rich meetings we held with the University of Michigan lawyers. There seemed to be a strange balance between urgency and apathy. On paper, the actual physical status of each property and its respective home was left unknown and unexplored.









## // OBTAINING ELECTRICITY

With the only Michigan driver's license among the group, I was the clear choice to become the owner and contact for our electrical supply—an endeavor that we hoped to resolve in a matter of weeks and instead strung out over four months. It was a two-part ordeal: convince Detroit Edison to set up an account, and get an electrician to drop a line to the house.

Though never reprimanded, the previous owners of the house were stealing electricity. This put a red flag on the property, and so a young female wishing to legally pay for services seemed questionable. A background check, lots of paperwork, and many in-person efforts were required to get them to take my money. There were so many ways to steal from the electrical company, that opening a new

account seemed like a rather dubious act.

The electricians that dropped by the house to provide quotes for the actual work would unknowingly teach me lessons on how to steal electricity. Between their investigative efforts to find out what had previously been scrapped from our house, and their pointing out methods of how electricity was being stolen around the neighborhood, I gained a sense of how it all worked. Of course, that was also paired with numerous stories of random outages that they would discover were caused by a scrapper grabbing a live wire. In each case the evidence was an unbearable sight. From then on, every time I walked into the alley to use it as our temporary bathroom, I more than half expected to find a dead body grasping our new copper-filled line.

## // SIDE WINDOW

Unable to easily break in through the front door of our own house, we used a side window to access the space. An older air conditioning unit acted as the stairs and entry stoop for those of us too short to simply hoist ourselves into the window.

There was a tree in the middle of the house and a few items I have come to expect in abandoned spaces: random articles of clothing, a tire, empty cardboard boxes, scraps of building materials, and wrappers and cups from processed and fast foods.

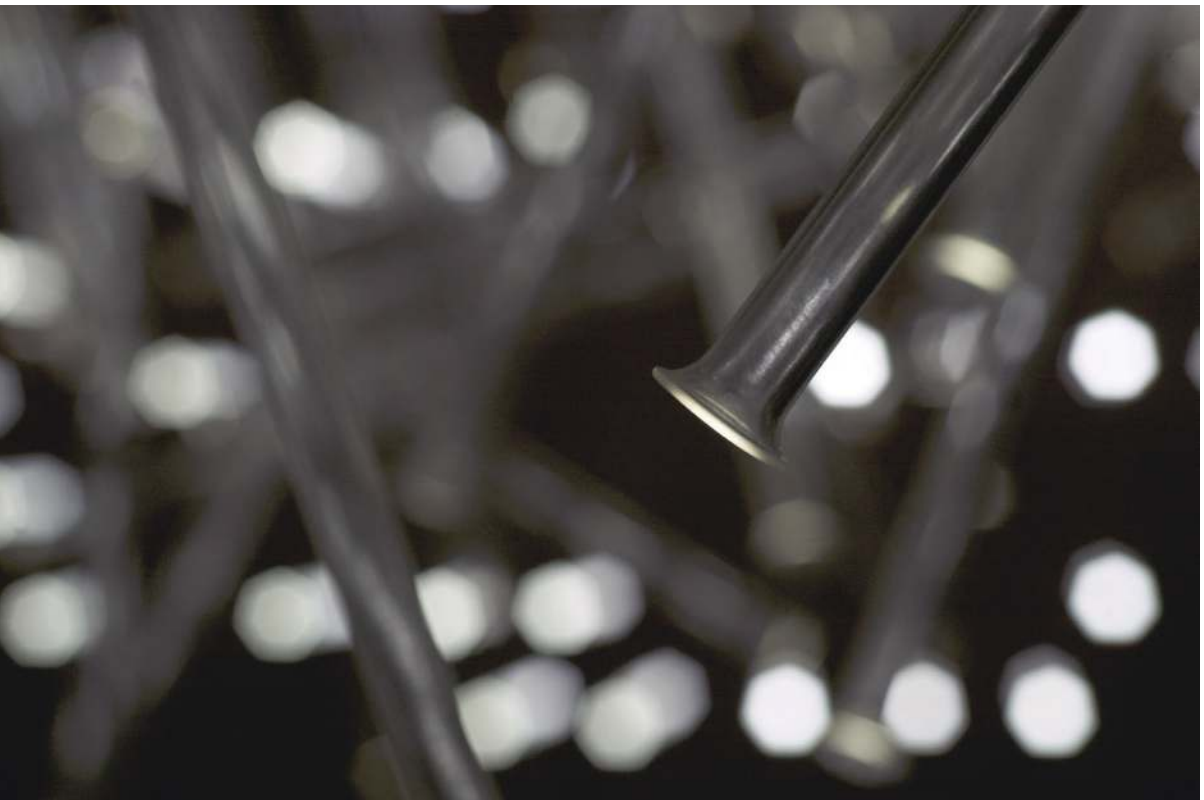
Our first action was to board up the windows. In other cities one would expect the counter response, but in Detroit, it is a sign of tending to a space. Fresh boards in a window indicate that someone is watching over the house, protecting it from intruders, and moving it forward in its occupation. It is the houses with empty windows that one can expect to have been long left by their actual owners.

We debated for a long time whether to get plexiglass or glass windows. The decision had to balance cost and the likelihood of possible break-ins. In the end we opted for plexiglass because of its resistance to breakage. Unfortunately, fabrication would

take much longer than expected, leaving the windows boarded up for quite some time.

## // NOHAM RESIDENTS

The house was in the neighborhood of NoHam, a nickname to be understood as “North of Hamtramck,” one of the two independent cities that float within the geographical boundaries of Detroit. Like Hamtramck, NoHam is richly diverse, with predominant Bangladeshi, Arab, and Polish ethnicities. Just as diverse as the human population, the housing stock is strikingly mixed, ranging from houses that are lived in and the occasional missing teeth, to houses abandoned entirely, arson damage, and properties that are being used creatively. We were deterred from staying on site after dark, both by our own comfort level and by the cautions of those around us. As numerous voices emanated from different mosques around the neighborhood, the call to prayer—always just before sundown—would beautifully cue us to pack up our tools. My time on site matched exactly with my father's. A resident of Metro Detroit, he was understandably concerned about his thirty-something daughter modifying a structure in a random neighborhood in Detroit. He didn't want me there



by myself, and I didn't want to stop the project. And just like that, my dad and I started to make installations together, with him as my right-hand man. His legitimate worries about Detroit, paired with his maker mind, made for an instant partner in crime.

## // IN THE DARK

At the time, my research in the field of architecture was speculating on a broad—yet raw—pursuit of the weather. Earlier interests centered on the ephemeral conditions of a site: fleeting and treacherous weather, the shifts between day and night, and the magic of precipitation as objects/textures falling from the

sky. These interests led me to question the stiff barricades and energy-fed artificial interiors that we build for ourselves.

The qualities of Detroit morphed my thinking and adjusted it to the greater stakes of the city. For starters, the gross depopulation proved key in understanding a housing stock that existed as a material reality but was in no demand. With no need to return them to normative use, its forms could be left undefined and contentious. These earlier observations were further inflected by concerns over barricading—from the weather as much as from human invaders—and by an observed prevalence of contained darkness and



occupation. These circumstances loosened the criteria by which the house's materials needed to perform. Neither a non-existent resident nor the neighborhood would gain anything from a simple wall. Somehow, to aggressively transform the barricade between the interior and the exterior felt permissible in Detroit. And at least subconsciously, I was looking for a beautiful way to do it.

## // FULLY SEALED

There was a moment of darkness for the entire house. The windows were all sealed with wood, and the plexiglass infills had not yet arrived. The boarding up process having been a relatively imprecise task, light slipped in through numerous cracks at the edges of the boards, providing small notes on the familiar layout of the house.

Sitting curiously within a dark residential space evokes both fear and calm; the darkness occludes our visual space, while expanding our imagined anxieties. The mind embraces the familiar surroundings without finding nor trusting their boundaries. In turn, the imagination uploads onto the thick darkness its creative, false, and cautious imagery. Because the darkness permits—even necessitates—a different reading, it allows for the emergence

of mystery and mistrust over constructed (built) certainty. It engenders a fantastical space.

On instinct, to begin piercing the envelope in a controlled manner, the simplest of holes were drilled right through the existing walls. The insertion of glass tubes—an alternative to the flat pane window and a portal for light, wind, human voices and air between the city and the house—transmitted a glow that would dominate all future steps. Held within the dark space, this object radiated. Like a giant optical fiber, the light it sourced from the beaming sunlight outside, radiated boldly. The intruding light leapt from the glass, grabbing onto the nearby walls and capturing a perceivable thickness in the air. It melded the vast expanse of the exterior atmosphere with the precious space we had bundled away from it.

## // MOVING TO THE GARAGE

As the other four started working in the house on projects driven by different spatial ambitions and intentions, their initial maneuvers allowed light to flood in, and the darkness was lost. So I moved to the detached garage. It was a simple volume, electrically disconnected and sized adequately for substantial



material and ephemeral work. Celebrating its darkness, alterations to the garage began with patching light leaks within its modestly constructed surfaces and with the more aggressive infill of a window. The obsession for a total removal of light became something of a madness; whereby I waged a war on the smallest of holes through which light was allowed to penetrate the volume.

With the old window removed and all of the light leaks plugged, the interior became intangible and the space seemingly fell away. Its dimensions were unperceivable, yet its presence was powerful. This full barricade removed a sense of time and any connection to the exterior surroundings. Though absent of light, the space felt dense.

It was not giving of clarity, yet not vacant of attributes. This was the darkness I had been seeking after.

## // TENDING TO THE SPACE

It was within this darkness that the glow of the hollow glass tube insertion could find not only a transmission surface, but also an intangible medium for dispersal. The quantity of tubes that were fabricated was determined by the surface area of the original (now removed) flat pane window. Nearly 1,000 half-inch diameter glass tubes could fit within its bounds. Extending out to lengths of up to three feet, the tubes operated to transform what was once just a surface window into a volume.



To provoke the most tension within the original space, the glass tubes were positioned by piercing through the most significant architectural features, where the building needed detailing, and where human occupation could be agitated: framing the door swing and the roof peak, tracing out previous windows, entangling with an adjacent tree. Their basic rhythm followed a nondescript diamond pattern carefully calculated to fall within the flat ridge of the vinyl siding that wrapped the exterior. The placement of each tube risked bringing too much light into the interior space, foiling the balance between the internal darkness and the inserted glow. Therefore, construction drawings were not used. Rather, the true architecture—the atmosphere of the volume—was explored and revealed through physical making.

The depths and bends of the glass tubes were collectively orchestrated to imply a more continuous volume, interrupted with anomalies. The attenuated space of the garage and its aggressive extensions through both sides of the wall developed a tension with the occupant, who was drawn to the light and yet fearful of the glass spikes. The work sparked conversations about the denial of occupation and the security of a space from intruders.

## // TIME OF DAY. TIME OF NIGHT

The cadence of the work fell in stride with the duration of daylight. As the sun set, the tubes would shift in color and brightness, casting the pink light of the sky over the interior surfaces of the garage. Nighttime brought back a completely darkened space, and the inability to work without artificial lighting. As the construction was conducted simultaneously on the interior and exterior of the space, it necessitated a pairing with the weather. Therefore, the work day commenced early to maximize daylight. As the construction continued, each additional tube added another registration of the Midwest atmosphere shifting in real time on both sides of—and within—the wall. The shadows cast by the glass tubes were a fortunate surprise. The sun shone directly over the house, sending shadows across the front and side elevations. On the brightest of days, the clear glass tubes were difficult to see, leaving the shadows as the only evidence of the project—like line drawings striking on the otherwise conventional vinyl siding. To create effects of illumination at all hours, the work was given a nocturnal life. Embedded into the walls was a system of LED lights, charged by solar panels on the roof. The system would collect energy by

day and then illuminate at night, after sunset. The resultant was a glow that, during the night, was both outward and inward. Fully off-the-grid, the space was being constantly illuminated—lit naturally or by its own registration of natural light.

## // FEAR OF VANDALISM

From its position in the detached garage, *Weatherizing* could not be seen from the street. However as circulation, in particular that of the pedestrian, is less formal in Detroit, what operates as public or access land does not necessarily coincide with the city zoning or layout. The urban typology of NoHam, like many other neighborhoods within the city, consists of a double throughway for cars. There is a public street at the front of each house, and a service alley providing access to each property's rear detached garage. Nowadays one would not dare drive a car down the back alley. Instead, this is more commonly used as a dumping ground, a pedestrian shortcut, and a corridor for electrical theft. How a local moves through the neighborhood deviates from the provided sidewalks and depends on the physical status and presumed occupation of any given house. Within such blurry territories, *Weatherizing* was far from hidden, and rather on

public view to those passing in the alley. Further, the attention we were giving to the house was undoubtedly noticeable to an otherwise quiet neighborhood. We were not in competition with other signs of construction and everything from our cars out front to the sounds of the tools made our presence obvious. This visibility, paired with the fragility of the glass and the presence of illumination implying an electrical connection, kept me in a state of constant worry about vandalism to the project. Interactions with passers-by ranged from unapproachable glances to asking how we were doing, while others still would stop by—their presence being impossible to decipher as either earnest curiosity or casing the place. Rarely did I leave all of the glass in place. From my vantage point, this was the most critical potential loss, while in reality the tubes had no value in the scrapping industry—just the thrill of breakage. Even I had the overwhelming urge to break all of the glass for that one beautiful moment of audible splendor. Clearly, breaking a window has its thrills. Yet, the prevalence of this occurrence in Detroit speaks to an innate mischievousness played out as power over space, as a substrate to express anger, and in a setting where you could get away with it.

## // TRUMAN AND BLADE

Blade would peer out of the backdoor. Happy to see us, but willing to defend and alert should we enter the backyard space. He wouldn't even bark, content to have company and clearly aware of property lines. We were strangers in so many ways, but he knew we were tending to the house. That seemed to be the ticket to his approval. His owner Truman was doing the same thing.

From what we assumed, Truman was our legitimate next door neighbor. He had been living there for over twenty years. His wife had long passed, though his age would indicate a spouse of a similar age would not have died simply from growing old. The story was never asked for. Truman kept to himself, though he was polite whenever any of us happened to be outside at the same time. His windows did not offer the same greeting. We learned from Truman the trick of boarding up openings from the inside and the strategy of well-placed nails to deter entry through a glassed aperture. Any intruder opting to not use the front door would painfully regret that decision.

It was not until after his eviction that any of us saw the inside of Truman's house. Towards the end of construction, an eviction crew suddenly came to remove

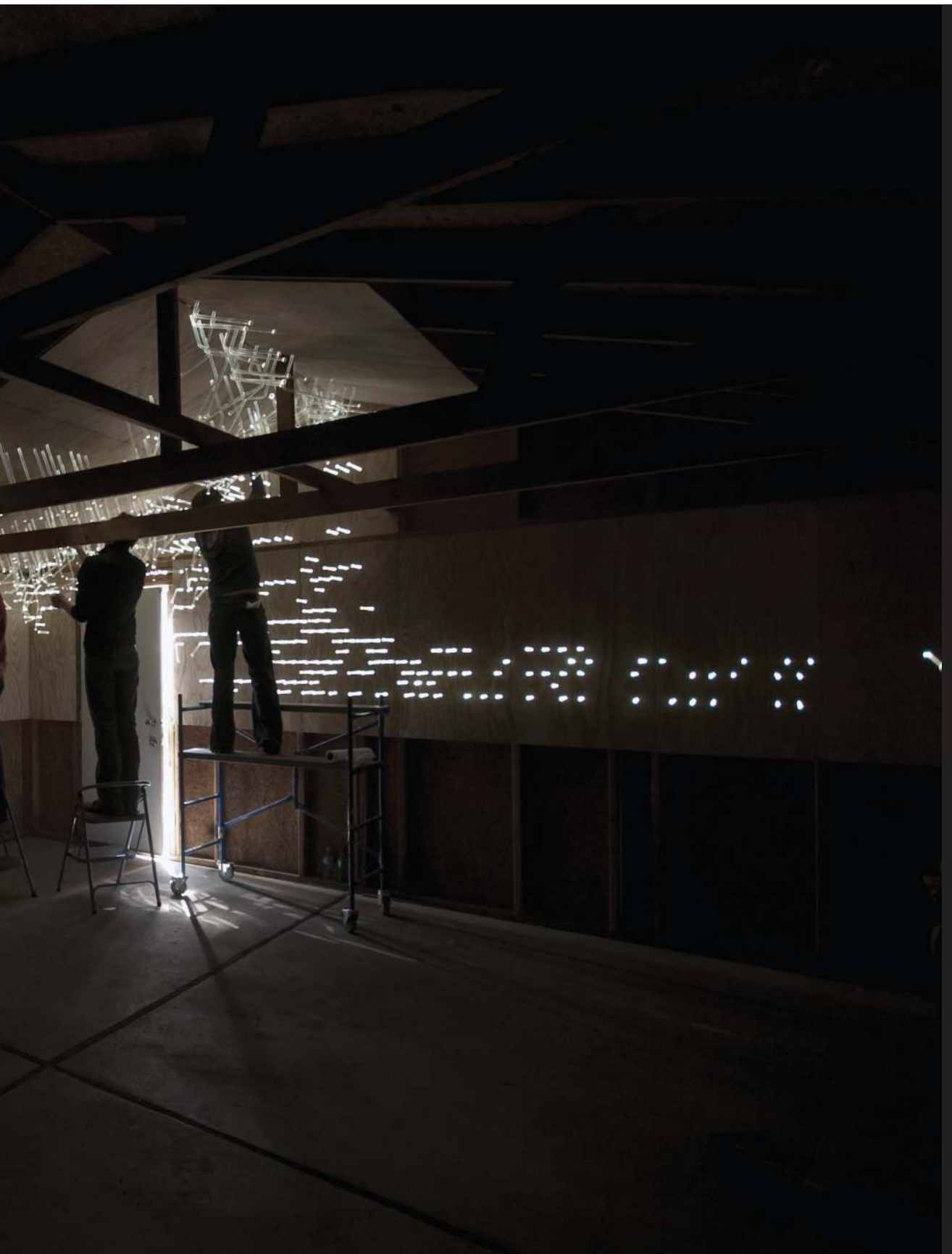
Truman. From what we could tell, he had received no warning. A van pulled up, and officers requested that he leave. Where he went is a mystery. And just as quickly, a team moved into the space, measuring the windows and promising a prompt return to board up the space. They left about as hurriedly as they had taken care of Truman. In their haste, having quickly changed the lock on the beaten front door, they left it open.

Truman was living amongst his things. His belongings were scattered on the floor, in places one foot deep. Other rooms offered a clear exposure to the aging carpet and traces of a past domestic life. The water was not running, the electricity was now understood as a jump from a neighbor, and there was no furniture. However, despite the contrast to a normative organization of domestic objects, the belongings seemed settled in their places. It was a sign of clinging on to things—sparse as objects but seemingly overfilled with memories.

The interior world I had imagined in Truman's home was in sharp contrast with this found reality. Suddenly, by comprehending the situation and by seeing his belongings, I had met a new Truman, and understood so much more about his strained domestic life.







At the scale of the neighborhood, there was nothing to be gained from evicting Truman. No one was seeking out a house. He was just another person on the list of those not paying their taxes. Yet he was tending to that house; causing no problems besides the theft of the electricity. It would have been better to leave it in his hands—Truman caring and occupying the house, and Blade out back. Both houses would suffer without Truman.

The work the eviction team had done to remove Truman from the house had also removed all of the protections from other intruders he had set up. The boarding up was subpar and within days the neighborhood kids started using the house as a hideout. At first they made attempts to go unnoticed, but that just as quickly became of little concern to them—and of big concern to us. The threat of invasion to our home now felt imminent.

The neighborhood kids soon moved in. This was predictable as, with the work nearly complete, our presence at the house had greatly diminished. During our last days we watched them watch us, sitting out front in their beat-up cars. High school age at best, their pass times were those of boredom: smoking, drugs and vandalism.

After approximately a week away from the house, I returned to find the door smashed in around the lock and a huge set of footprints on its outer surface. What I had feared most—the breakage of every piece of glass within reach—was only carried out on one or two components, and only a few were missing. The door suffered the most trauma, and surprisingly, with evidence of chip wrappers and Gatorade bottles, the space was being used. From then on I left the door unlocked.

## // WEATHER CHANGES

The interior of the space was mesmerizing. A powerful glow touched three faces of the garage, condensing around the entry door. Darkness continued to loom in the far reaches of the space, varying in its intensities according to the external weather. Shifts in light, the shadow of someone passing by, the whistle of the wind, and the touch of precipitation all changed the effect captured by each tube, and their cumulative effects. The bends and flares that detailed the ends of the tubes grabbed the adjoining atmospheres in all directions, registering their surroundings.

The winter had been mild. The work was carried out from mid-February through April. As we broke down a barrier to the

elements, we faced few bouts of precipitation. It wasn't until the project was entirely installed that its performance with rain and fog would be tested. When the fog rolled in, the glass tubes grabbed at the air permitting condensation on both the interior and the exterior. Water gathered along the lengths of the tubes creating a new delicate texture that dotted the light.

The space aroused a spread of emotions. The glow produced a calming effect while the penetrations of the glass tubes, which appeared as suspended and pointed towards the inhabitant, induced anxiety. On the exterior, the delightful array of light and shadow was paired with a defensible geometry

that provided both security and privacy to interior occupants. Each and every atmospheric and illumination shift over the day, over the seasons, and in the instance of a passerby, created a unique experience of the work and a registration true to that instant.

## // NEW ATMOSPHERE

In *Weatherizing*, the form of the window had become volumized and was attenuated by the tension with an otherwise darkened space. The result was a new atmosphere, formulated by the immaterial effects of both the captured interior darkness and the whimsical introduction of exterior light. The space of the



garage, which could previously be seen as an atmosphere of darkness—an artificial night—was burst into a connection with the mysterious and moody exterior. The focus was taken away from the architectural surface and shifted to the qualitative attributes of the spaces within and surrounding the volume. Reliant on the immediate sensual qualities of these atmospheres, the luminosity radiated by the tubes became an eerie registration of the seemingly intangible surrounds, and a foil to the once apathetic barrier.

## // ONCE RESIDENCE

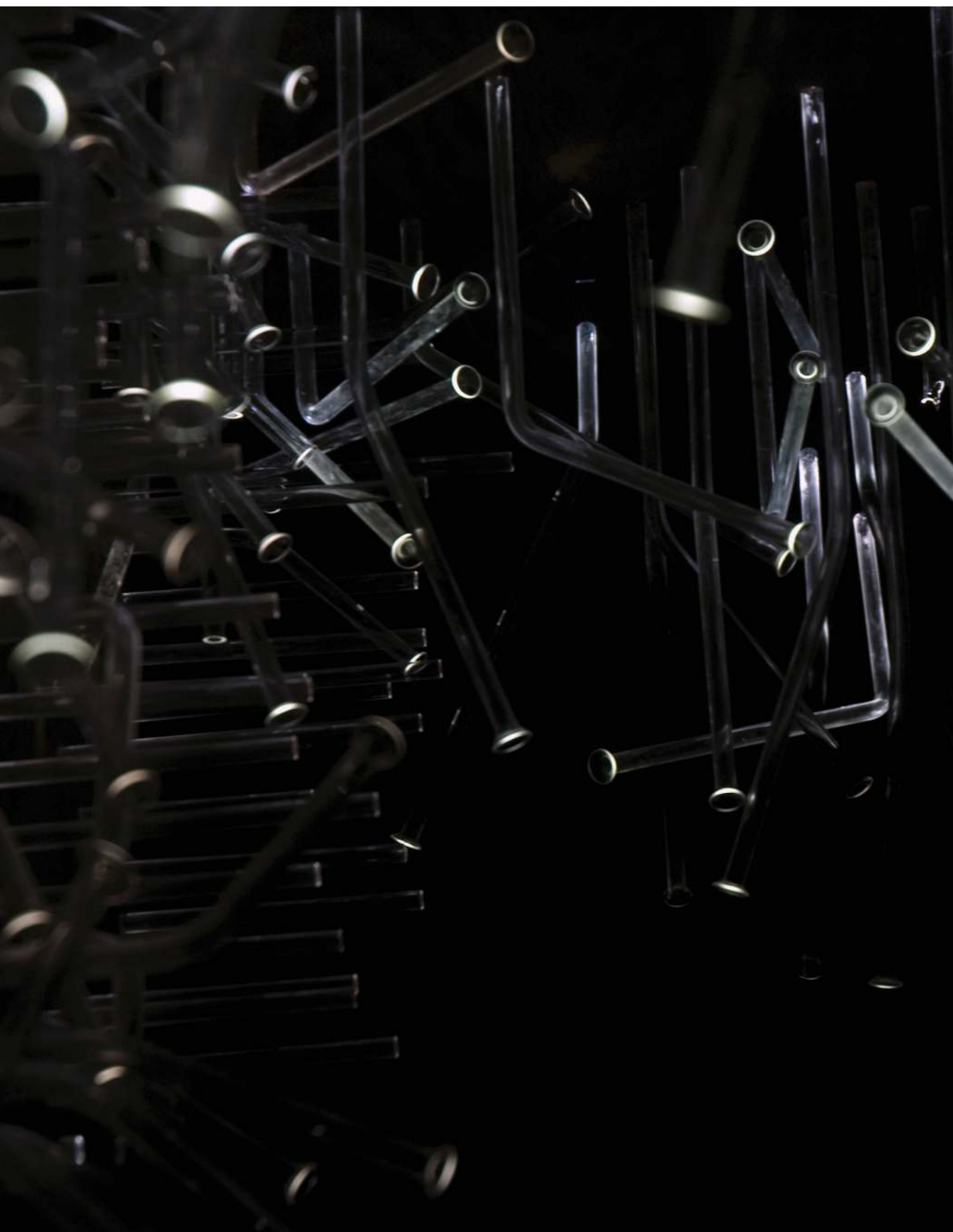
For me, in architecture, these sublime findings come with an urgency. They are the reflection of conditions much greater than the mere architectural object from which they emerge. The works resonate with a wider implication of their context spatially and with cultural, social, legal, and political undertones. They are a substrate onto which to inscribe, discuss, freeze and acknowledge these times—times so harsh as to leave a physical mark on the built environment.

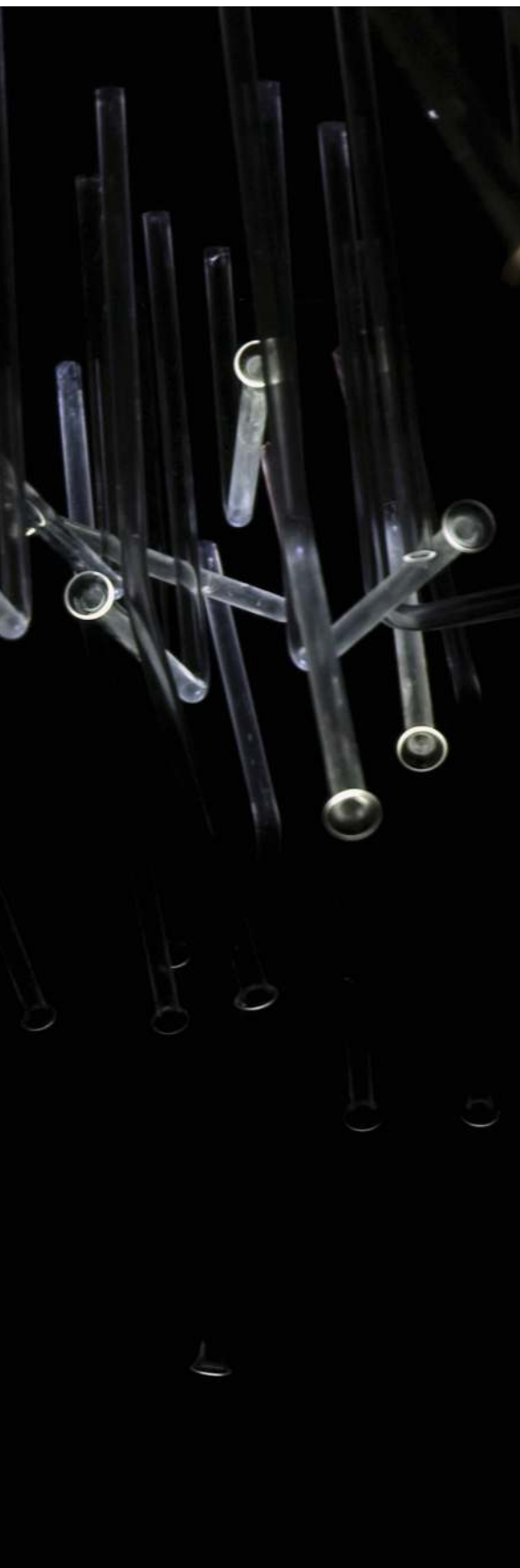
Across all of my built installation work, there is a vested interest in small but intense atmospheres resonating within their city

while also clearly remaining an anomaly. I actively pursue spaces that are undefined, seeing them for their potential physical and conceptual manipulation. *Weatherizing* is the first work of the Once Residence installation series. The Once Residence series is characterized by intricate installations that manipulate and respond to former domestic spaces as a means to simultaneously situate and obscure the present realities of ailing cities, while making compelling new environments that provoke or deny occupation. These projects are at their core not about their own existence or outcome, but are instead about the city that hosts them, and the potent cultural circumstances or contingencies that apply pressure to their immediate built surroundings at the time of their fabrication. Relying on foils, each installation attends to the emotional effects of pairing delicacy with aggression, light with darkness, transparency with opacity, the familiar with the unfamiliar. In all cases, the work formulates questions of occupation and a reflection on the current status and pulse of the city. It is an act of making in homage to very timely and current physical, legal, and cultural circumstances. The conditions of the city are far more interesting than









anything I could ever make up. The actualities of my spatial production collapse architectural interpretation with the city itself.

Seeking the sublime, I actively pair beauty to the horror of the condition of things. The works act as a beacon and voice for the realities they are built through. They do not offer a solution, but instead hope to incite action, providing a glimmer of what might be through the horror of what is. The outcome remains ambiguous in its morals and ethics; destructive in ways, and creative in others.

None of these projects would be possible, or interesting, under what one would call “normal” circumstances. Instead, they speak to the present conditions of the city—as a part and reflection of Detroit.