



PIERRE FAURE

corners











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**corners**

2011-2016

















































































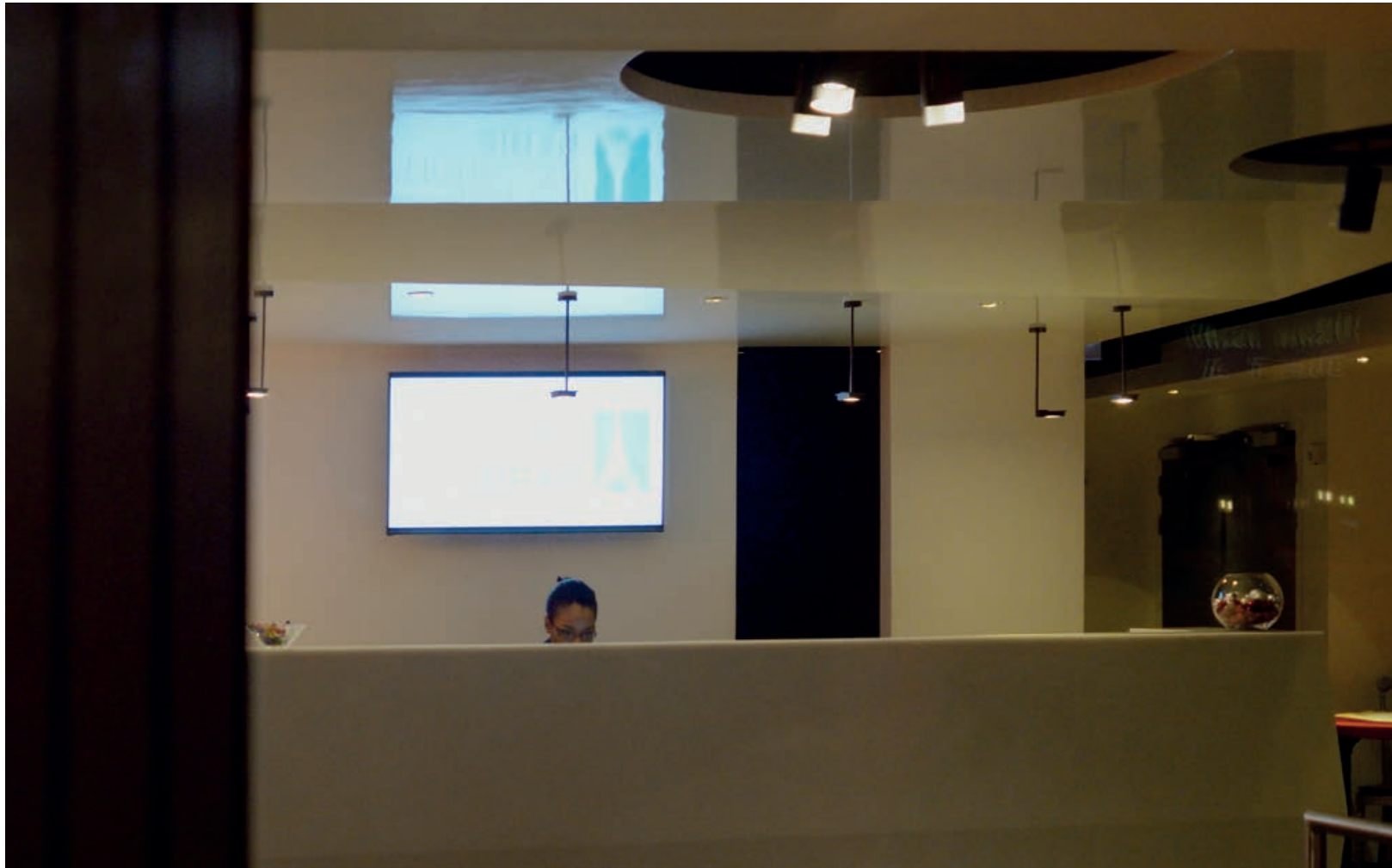




































































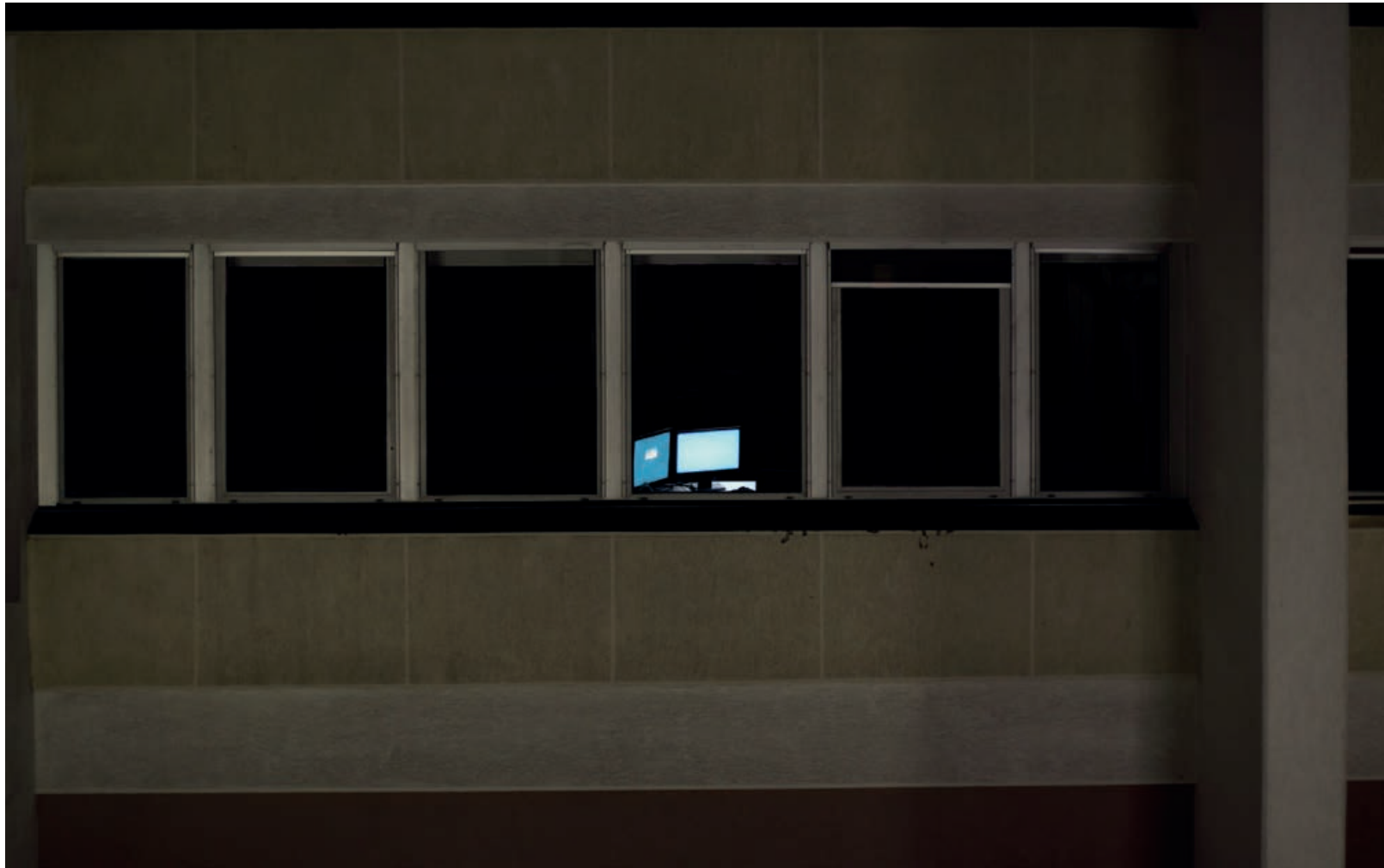






















































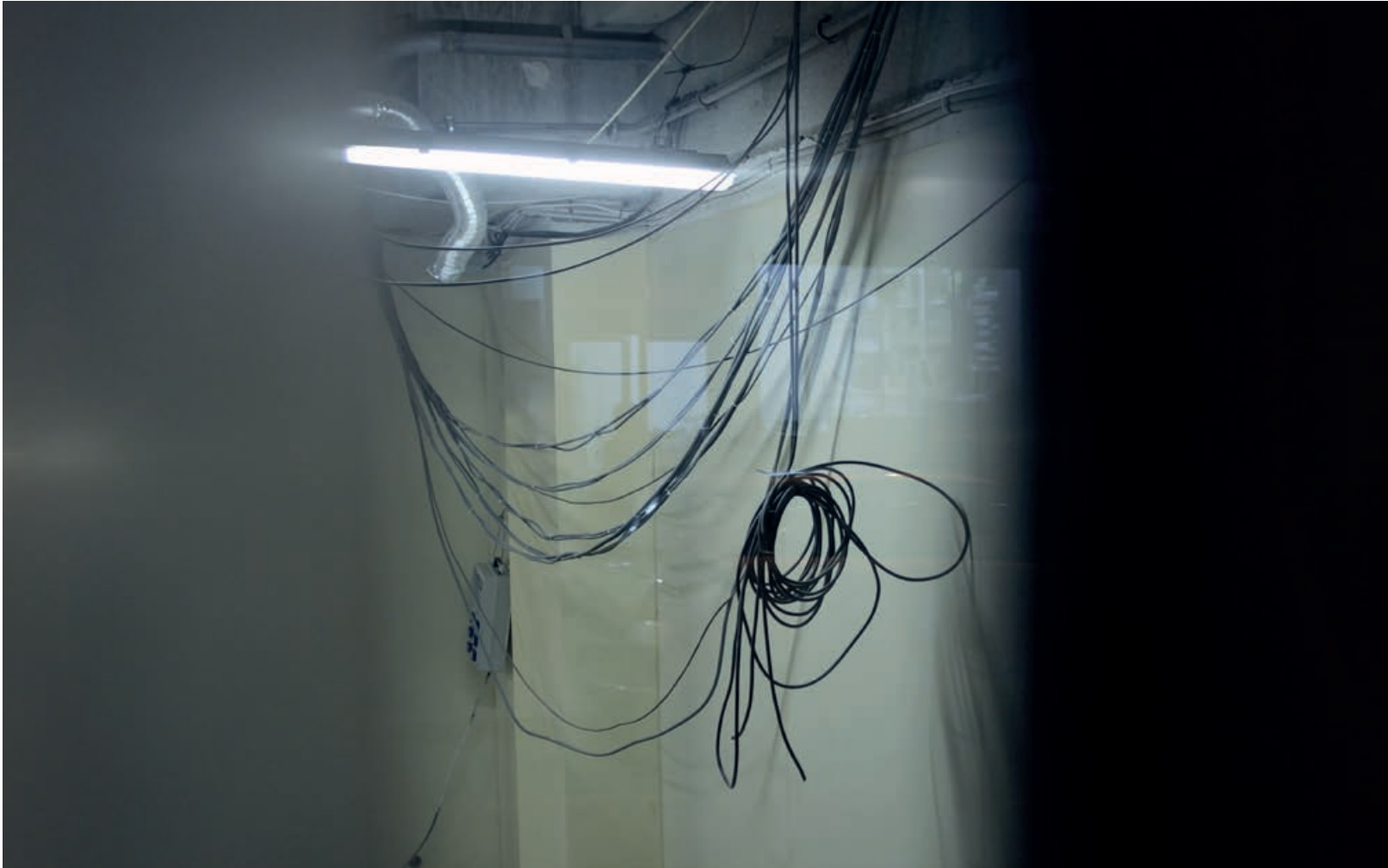
















































































































































# *What is framing anyway?*

Interview: Stanislas Amand



— *Most photographs show indoor scenes seen from public space. Scenes sometimes concealed by what aims to separate the sphere of the private and the public: windows, blinds, translucent films, etc. You said these elements are like membranes...*

— It's a metaphor I like to use. It is first of all a spatial transition between two environments, which at the same time connects them and separates them. The main characteristic is to form an inner space distinct from the environment, to divide the space. Glass, doors, gates, walls, locks, windows, blinds, etc. are constitutive elements of these artificial membranes. They are also traversed by circuits in constant connection with the surrounding world: water supply circuits, electrical circuits, telephone connections, etc. Through these photographs I am interested in conditions of visibility, it is just a part of a more varied arrangement.

— *There are different ways of being a voyeur. What is your 'mode of voyeurism'?*

— Most of the time I'm close, like a passerby who stops. Sometimes someone asks, "hey what are you doing?" Sometimes, when I've already left, someone is running after me in the street, "hey sir, wait!". I then explain what I do by showing the images. Most often, maybe I'm transparent or that does not really matter. I like to be fairly present in order to be seen and people look towards the camera. I did not make any interesting pictures when I had tried

to make some sort of preliminary agreement. I keep few photographs compared to the total catch, maybe one out of a hundred, maybe less. It becomes impossible to conduct such exploration by trying to make such an agreement, so I prefer to take the risk of a conflict.

Now, the actors are not necessarily centered, as in the cinema. I'm interested in the context first, and in a corner someone is doing something. It is a more distant approach, which does not prioritize things visually. Sometimes I photograph people almost without doing it on purpose, much like a Buster Keaton film. For example, in this shop under construction, the guy was outside unloading his car, he enters and goes to a corner... I think a certain lightness emerges from all this.

— *During this observation phase, you are not very serious?*

— I like it to become a game. I could not do much without messing around more or less. It is rather then, when I examine the images, that things become more serious: will I be able to extract something from these observations?

— *You did all the shots at the end of the day. I guess why, but I'd like you to say it.*

— In such conditions in daylight, the interiors become dark and many reflections make one perceive especially the space reflected by the window, as in a mirror. In the evening

of course, the visibility conditions change completely. One can take into account both the interior space and the elements that help to mask it.

— *Were you looking for certain types of places rather than others? For example, we do not see apartments...*

— Most of the time, the apartments located on the street side, on the level of the ground floor, are completely masked. These images are taken in late autumn and winter, at a time when one avoids living with open windows. So from the start, they were places of work or activities outside the dwellings that became interesting. The majority of pictures show such places and people at work.

— *I sometimes feel like a social critic, and then not...*

— Only sometimes, and rather by contrast than in a demonstrative way. When one observes many situations, some of them will eventually take on a critical dimension, others will not. And then, one can also envisage something other than interactions or social hierarchies, to focus on the physicality of the world and its appearances. It is to observe the disproportionate design of a reception desk for example, or the almost desolate character of a utilitarian environment. I find photography more interesting in this way.

— *We do not necessarily know which place is represented, and you do not give more indications with a caption, so we must be*

*careful what we look. For example, in the image of a meeting, at first glance I had not seen the man in a pink shirt, looking relaxed, his arms crossed behind his head, while the others appeared more frozen. It is a simple posture of the body, a “detail” which it would be unfortunate not to notice.*

— Yes, and also the position he occupies around the table. We do not know more, and I do not want to know more. At the same time, I would like the viewer to dig a little. Elements that fit in among others in a rather discreet way can become important. It is a way of de-dramatizing. Undoubtedly, one does not escape the dramatization, it is not all or nothing but a matter of form, distribution of the elements. Again, I adopt a certain lightness, I do not seek at all the sociological demonstrative image that some consider as an aesthetic ideal. There is no message or truth to deliver but a world to explore. Some images show places undergoing transformation or fragments of scaffolding, and it is a way of suggesting that the situations, the places, the interactions that I observe, are also forms that are constructed rather than definitive facts. Or that this work itself is like a construction site, an unfinished, temporary form.

These photographs are taken in Paris from one year to the next, but they present themselves as if it were a single journey, right? Do you feel that? It is not so much an objective datum, but a feeling, a feeling of continuity. Obviously the images make it possible to arrange neighborhoods that

do not depend on real space, and can form a subjective continuity. Then, the question refers to their content, what they show us and how these connections or neighborhoods present themselves.

— *These microcosms are all different from each other, but they belong to the same world, that seems obvious to me. Looking at this work, I feel that photography does not really sticks to its subject, that it does not really depend on its content. This comes, no doubt, as you said yourself, from the position of outsider that you adopt, because in this project you always sit next to or away from what you show. While the effects of distancing may be numerous, a certain discourse on photography always consists in talking about the subject, the content, and in a secondary way the effects that it provokes.*

— Everything happens as if one should always hear piano and not music. While we can not reduce music to its physical origin, that the aim of music is to make us hear something other than the piano. But a lot of people prefer to focus on the piano. The situation is paradoxical, because if the effects are clearly perceived by the viewer, they are at the same time difficult to grasp with the language. So I can understand this trend, although I do not really share it.

— *How are the neighborhoods or the links of the images in the layout, both through the proximity of a double page and the larger sequence of images?*

— As soon as one tries to analyze things a little, one comes across this distinction between form and content. I always try to keep the two together, so these neighborhoods depend as much on form as on content. The distance, the perspective, the way the actors fit into the field, and so on. But also of course the situation itself, the scene represented. It seemed to me important to consider that these scenes are independent of each other, and therefore they can be connected in a rather loose way. But it is also important to create contrasts, even shocks, between these different universes. Our experience of urban life is populated by such contrasts or shocks. The social and economic disintegration extends from all sides. But I can not use images of the homeless for my own account. So I am sorry if these contrasts are less violent than in our daily trips.

— *I find the frames often very balanced, precise. But what is framing anyway?*

— A priori this may seem very simple, just place the camera in front of something. But in my eyes it is far from being so simple. Before speaking of framing, let us try to grasp a little how conscious perception works: by making a very narrow selection of elements that are relevant in one situation or another, while the vast majority of the elements present in our environment is not treated as such. This is an elimination of irrelevant elements in the immediate future of an experience. This means that the brain selects the elements that are expected. Conscious attention leads

us to automatically define a very restricted field of relevance among the plurality of elements. Such a process leads very easily to focus on particular elements. An object, the attitude of someone... So we record, thinking that it can become interesting. But focusing on one particular element often proves insufficient. Perhaps a dominant element becomes interesting, but not the image as a whole. One could obviously find counter-examples, it is not a law. But it is possible to do otherwise, to record images in which there is nothing special, no particularly salient element or which would take more importance than the others. At a certain stage, you see only a field of coexistences, neighborhoods, interactions. You pay more attention to the field than to a particular element. The plurality of elements that make up our environment becomes more important. And it is often these images that become the most interesting. In a sense, when you hear “learn to see”, it means mostly unlearning to see. From time to time I prefer not to use the viewfinder or screen. Crop a visual field with little hierarchy teaches me to frame then in a more open way. A sensor does not have a nervous system. And then, instead of placing something in the middle of the field, I tend to place a vacuum, a rather neutral part, and let the space get organized around it. But it all depends on the situation.

— *It is therefore a question of figuring situations or phenomena that you do not expect?*

— Of course, fortunately! It’s rather inevitable during an exploration, right? At the same time I know how to seek, in the sense that the conditions of this exploration are well defined. Then, the concrete situations remain unpredictable. It is I believe this definite orientation and this broad indetermination that make things quite playful. Even though I sometimes look for something special, I mostly fall on something else I did not expect and it often turns out to be more interesting. It is a serendipity rather close to a prolonged search on the internet. But this involves spending time and energy.



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