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GERMAINE KRULL

MÉTAL

LIBRAIRIE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS

A. CALAVAS, ÉDITEUR, 68, RUE LA FAYETTE, PARIS

L'activité industrielle de notre temps met sous nos yeux des spectacles auxquels ils sont encore inaccoutumés.

Leur nouveauté nous saisit et nous effraie à la manière des grands phénomènes de la nature. A leur tour, ils créent un état d'esprit auquel sacrifient parfois les peintres et les poètes.

Les villes d'Europe nous semblent vétustes et anachroniques. Les cités de la province avec leurs mails, leurs aimables fontaines, le kiosque à musique, prennent soudain une allure désuète, cependant que le lyrisme de notre temps parvient à s'inscrire en jets de ciments, en cathédrales d'acier. Or, nous assistons à ce fait paradoxal : les grandes entreprises servent à toutes les œuvres du progrès à l'exception de celles qui collaboreraient à l'amélioration de l'habitation humaine. Sauf pour quelques privilégiés, le gîte de nos contemporains est semblable à celui de nos ancêtres du temps de Richelieu et de Cromwell. Le peuple des villes succombe sous la poussée des combinaisons commerciales. Nous demandons des maisons, avec des fenêtres sur des jardins. Pour les hommes modernes, des logis modernes, où pénètrent largement le soleil et l'air pur. Ciment et acier en sont l'essentiel : ainsi, dix ans après la guerre, l'acier servira enfin une noble cause, ainsi l'acier sera peut-être réhabilité.

L'acier transforme nos paysages. Des forêts de pylones remplacent les arbres séculaires. Les hauts fourneaux se substituent aux collines.

De cet aspect nouveau du monde, voici quelques éléments fixés dans de belles photographies, représentatives d'un nouveau romantisme.

Germaine Krull est la Desbordes-Valmore de ce lyrisme et ses photographies sont des sonnets aux rimes aiguës et lumineuses. Quel orchidée que ce régulateur Farcot et quels insectes inquiétants ces roues d'échappements.

La surimpression donne un visage fantastique aux plus précis mécanismes et devant une fraiseuse, couverte d'huile boueuse, de débris morts et d'eau ruisselant, on pense à Dostoiewsky.

Dans le halo qui les entoure, les puissantes dynamos, silencieuses et tranquilles dans l'action, semblent rayonner en vibrations lumineuses, et quel appel de trompes lancent vers le ciel les cheminées, ces nouveaux Dieux-Termes de notre chemin. Les ponts pénètrent dans l'espace. Les trains brisent dans leur fracas la ligne d'horizon. Ils quittent le sol et, dans la progression fatale du progrès, glissent sur l'éther, entraînant les vivants émerveillés vers les gares astrales.

Le mouvement profond et doux des marteaux amollit les lingots comme des éléphants de plomb.

Et voici la Tour, clocher des ondes. Sa monstruosité incongrue a surpris et irrité. Maintenant, à trois cents mètres du sol, les amoureux y donnent des rendez-vous aux oiseaux. Et les poètes, du douanier Rousseau à Jean Cocteau, prétendent que, les beaux soirs de printemps, des fées jouent au tobogan sur ses élytres.

Il manquait à cette géante une chevelure d'étoile : on la lui a donnée. L'industrie inscrit tout au long le progrès lumineux sur son échine nocturne.

L'avion, l'ascenseur, la roue, qui entraînent quelques humains jusqu'au royaume des oiseaux, changent soudain jusqu'à notre naturel élément.

La Tour demeure le suprême symbole des temps nouveaux. En quittant New-York et ses palais couronnés de fumées, c'est la Tour Eiffel, balise aérienne, que Lindbergh visait, pour atteindre Paris au cœur sentimental du monde.

FLORENT FELS.

La Tour Eiffel, les grues et ponts transbordeurs d'Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Marseille et Saint-Malo m'ont fourni la matière d'un certain nombre des planches dont est formé cet album.

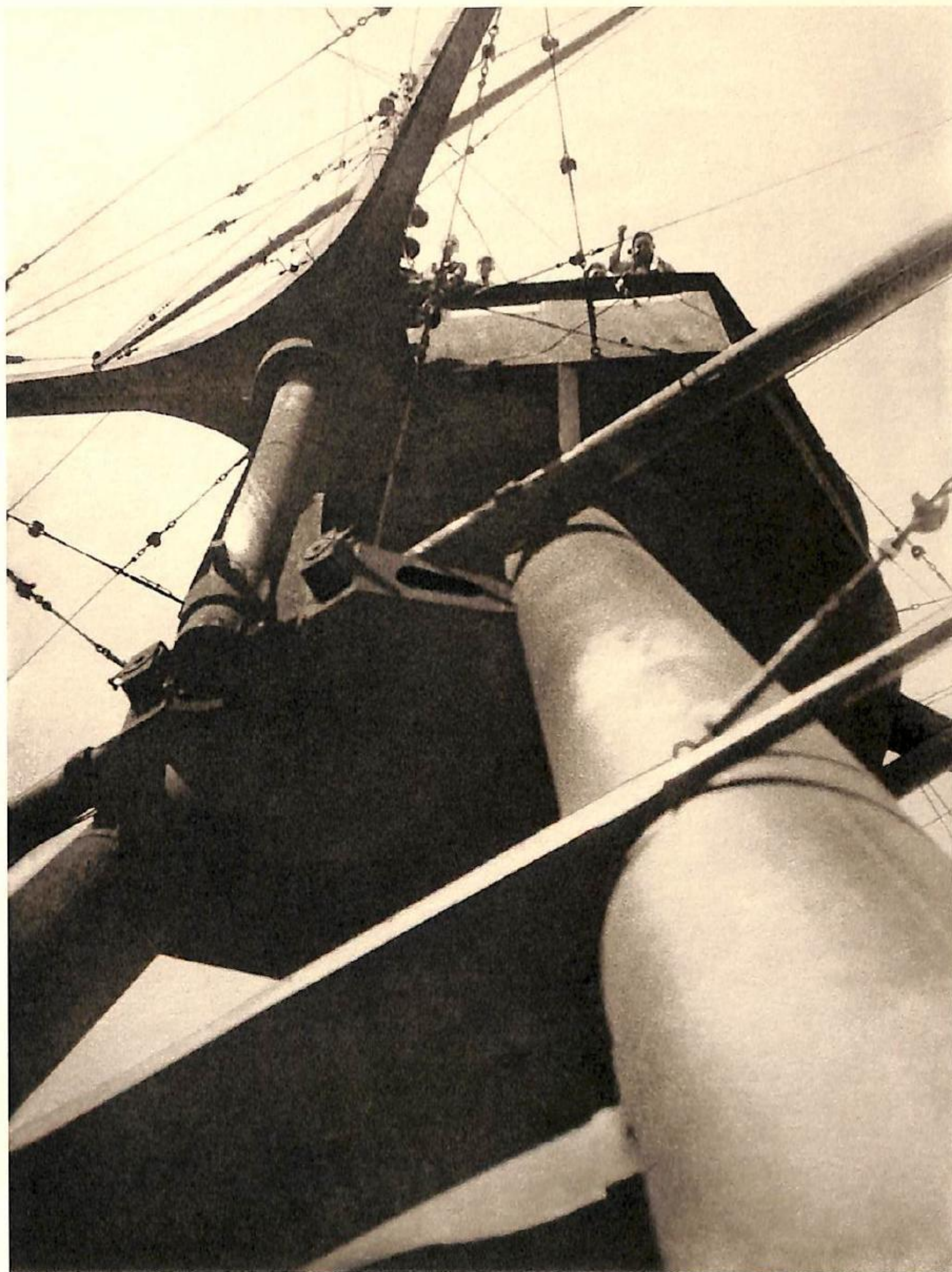
Je suis redevable des autres à l'extrême obligeance avec laquelle m'ont accueilli M. le Directeur du Conservatoire des Arts-et-Métiers dans son musée, M. le Directeur de la C. P. D. E. à la Centrale électrique de Saint-Ouen, M. André Citroën dans ses usines.

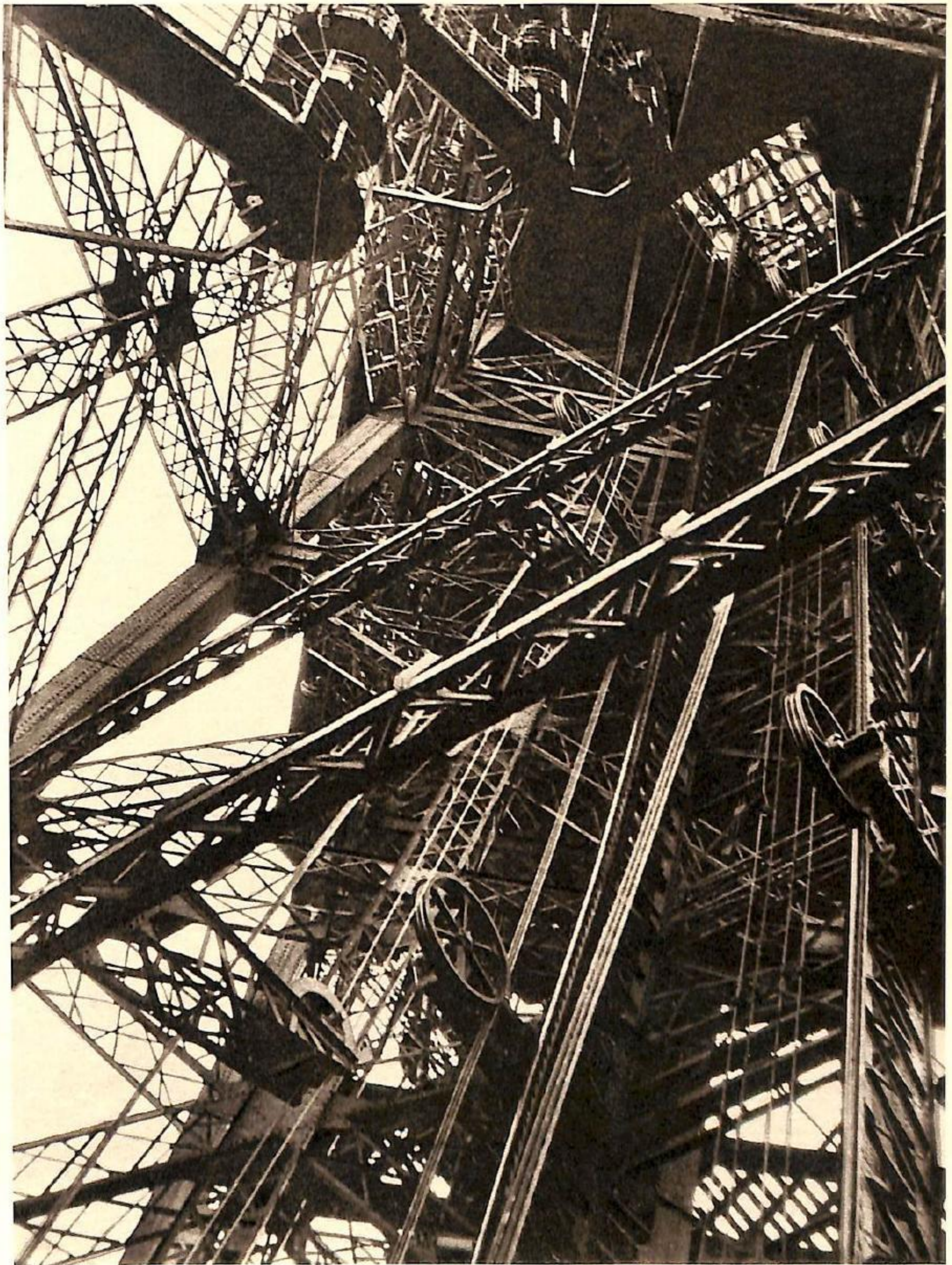
La couverture du livre est une composition de M. Tchimoukow.

GERMAINE KRULL.

MÉTAL



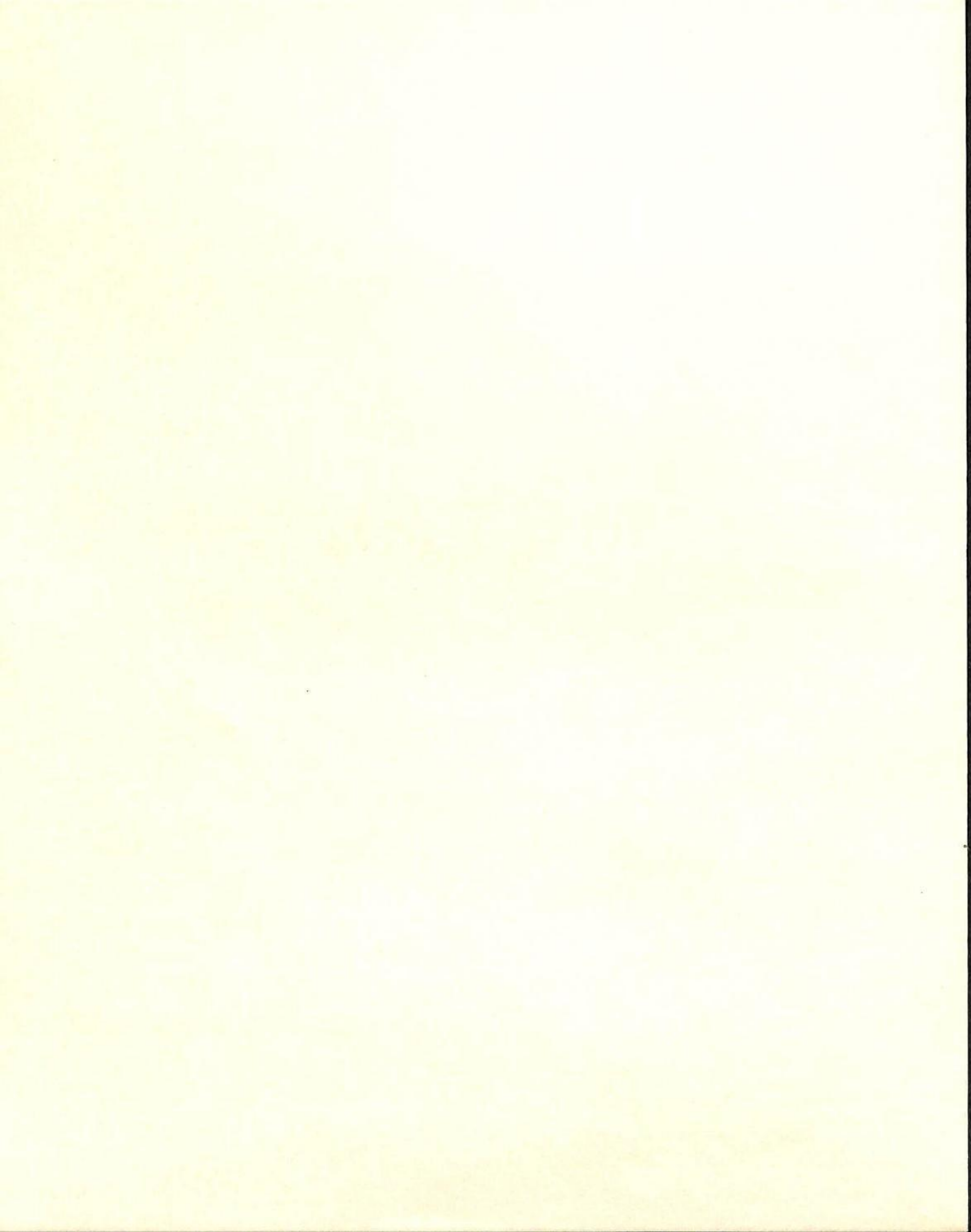


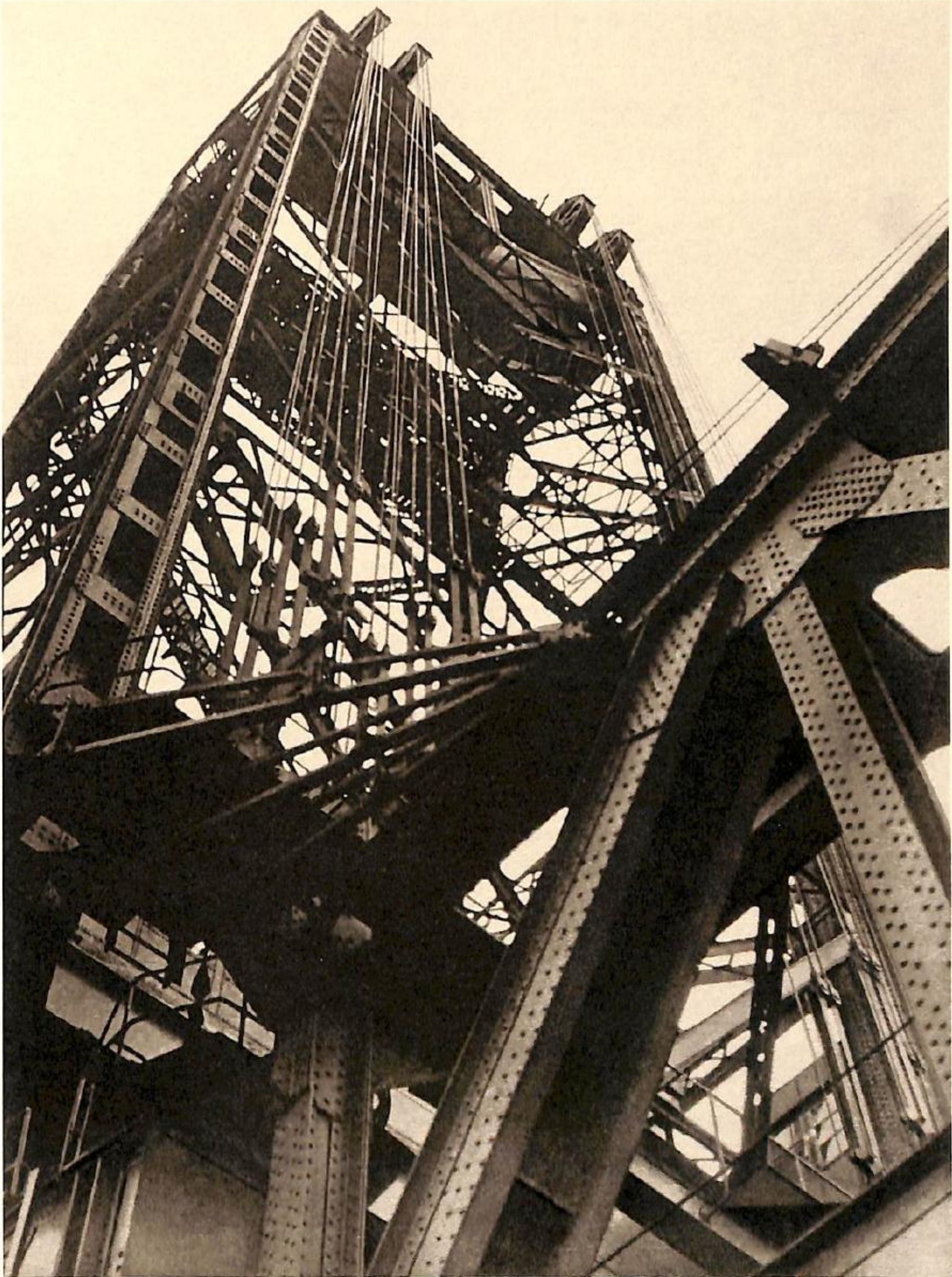


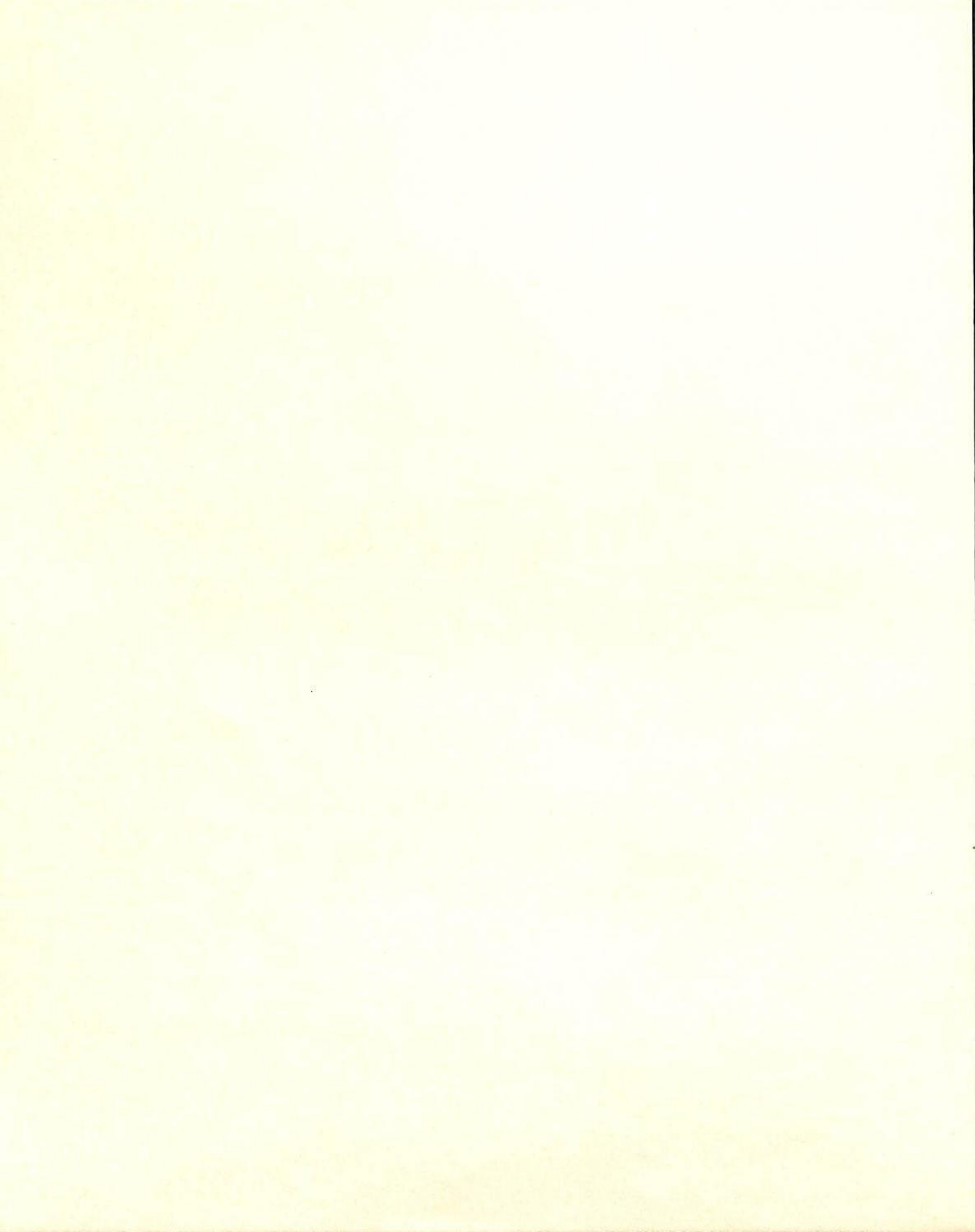




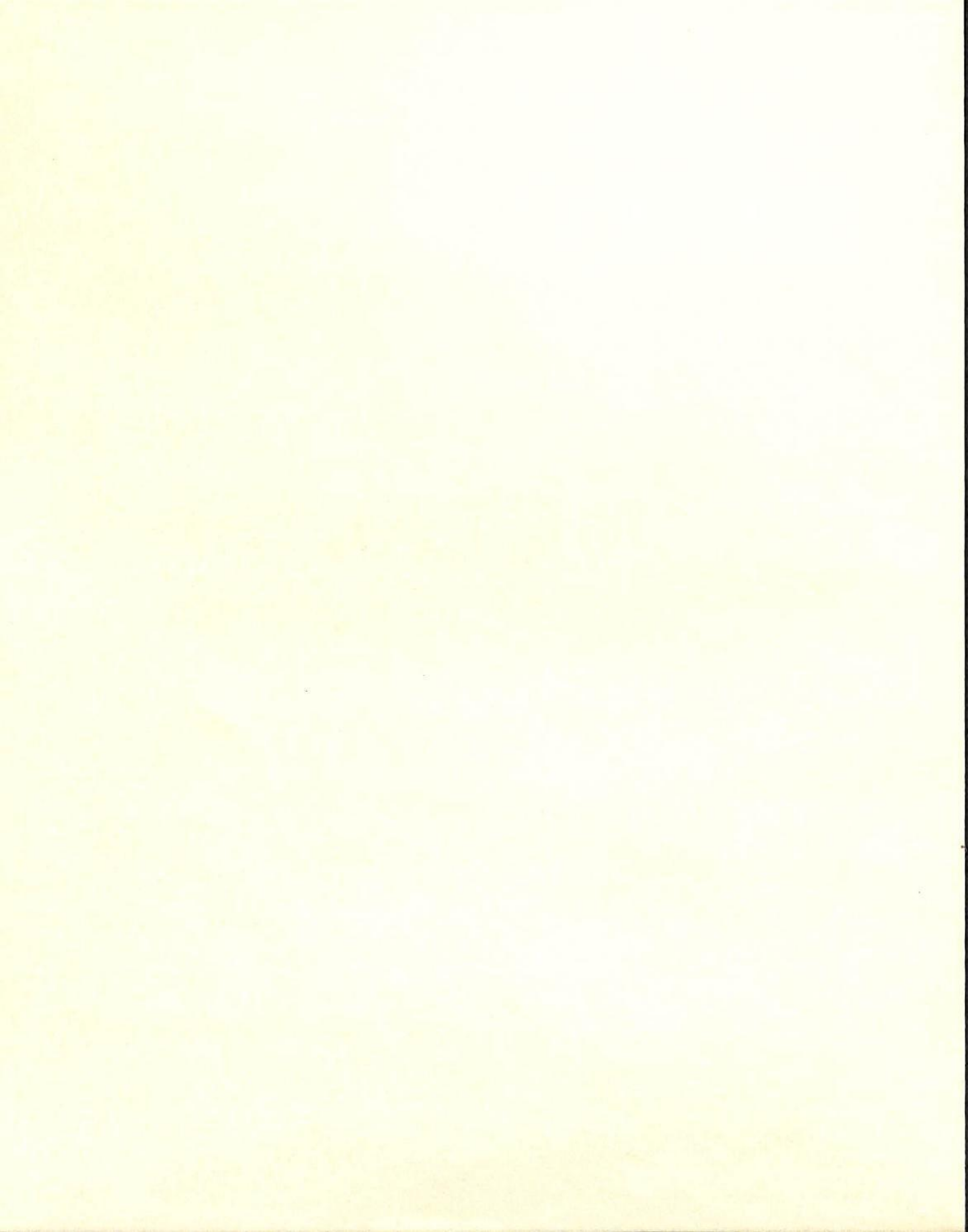


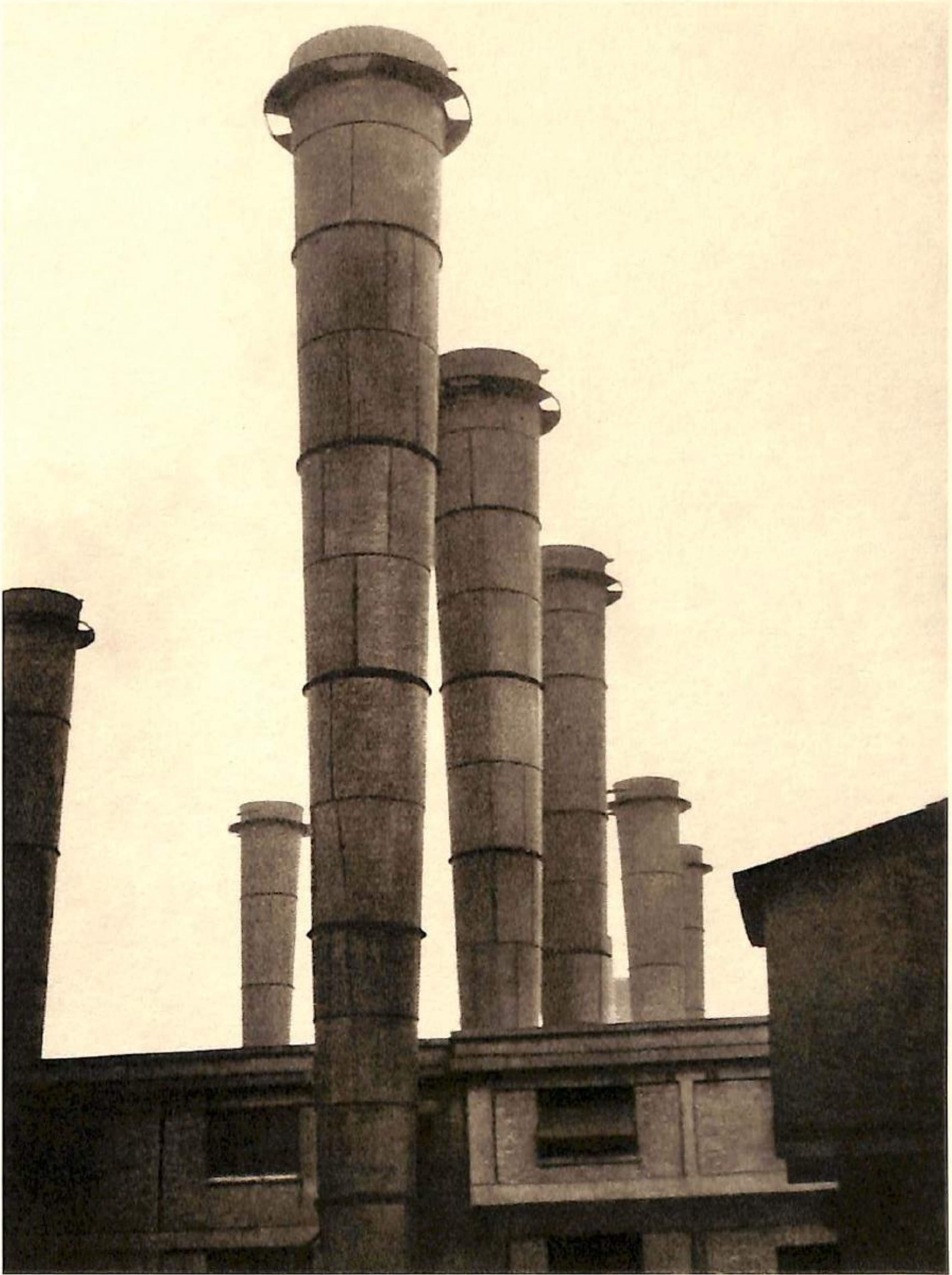


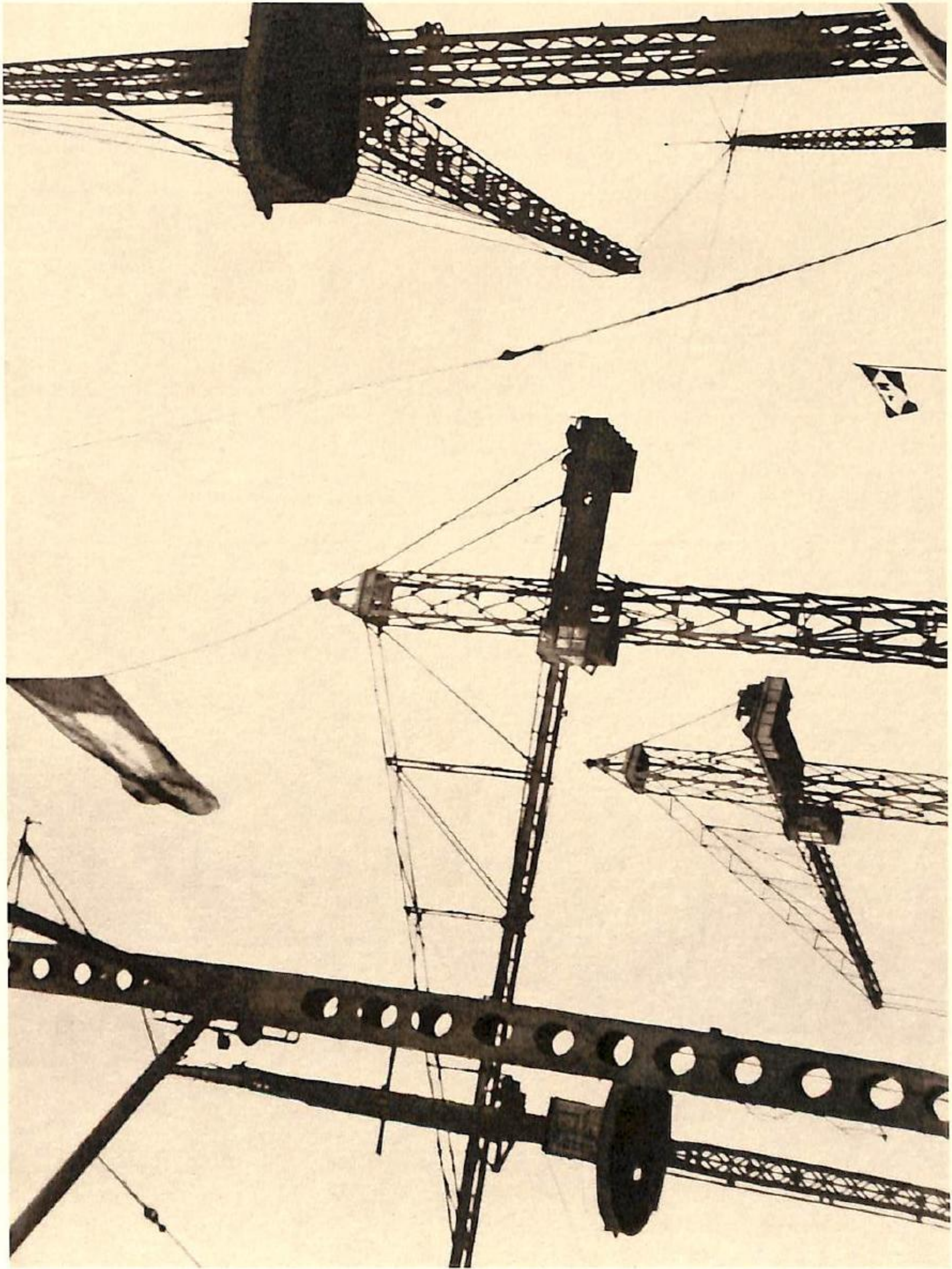




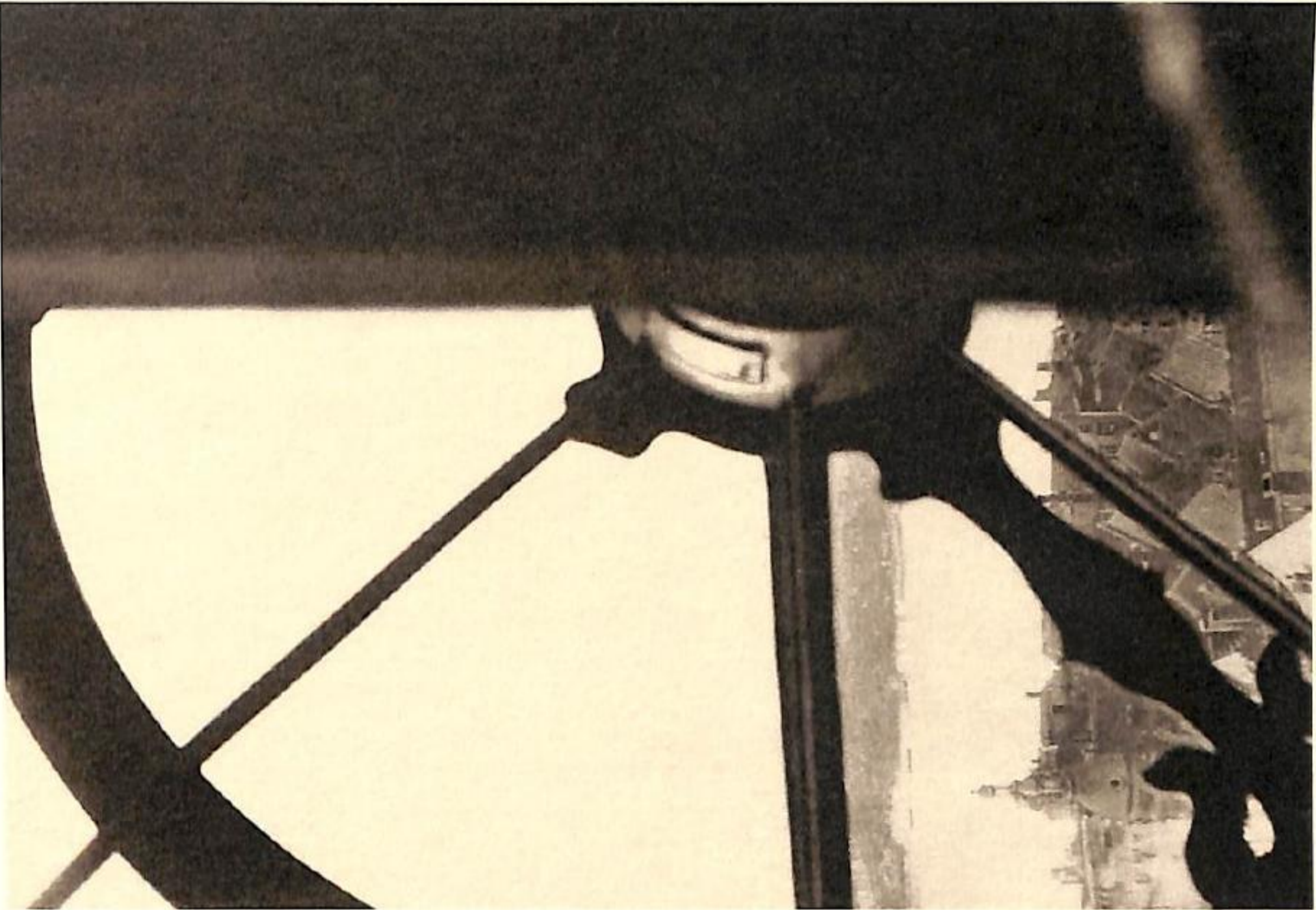


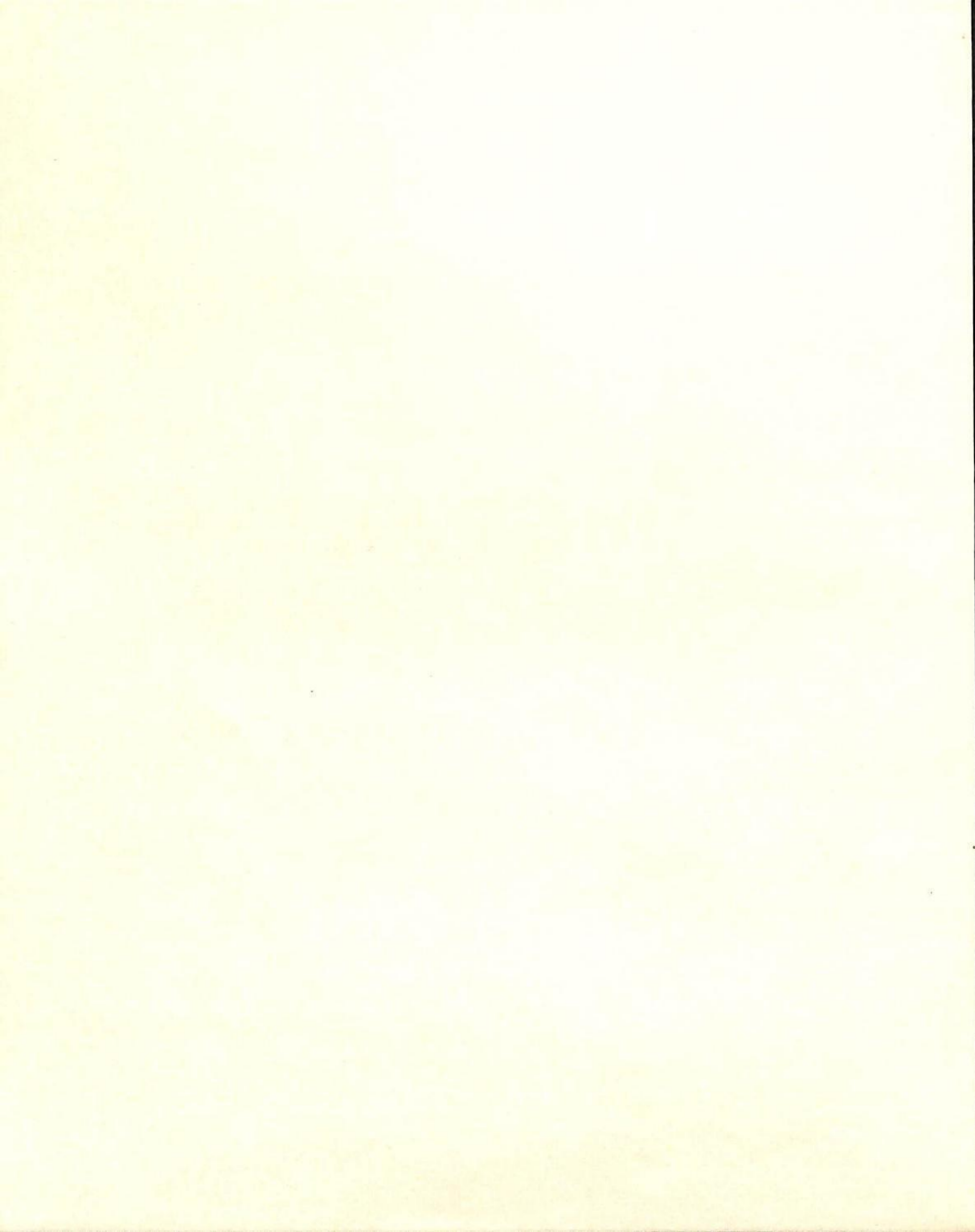


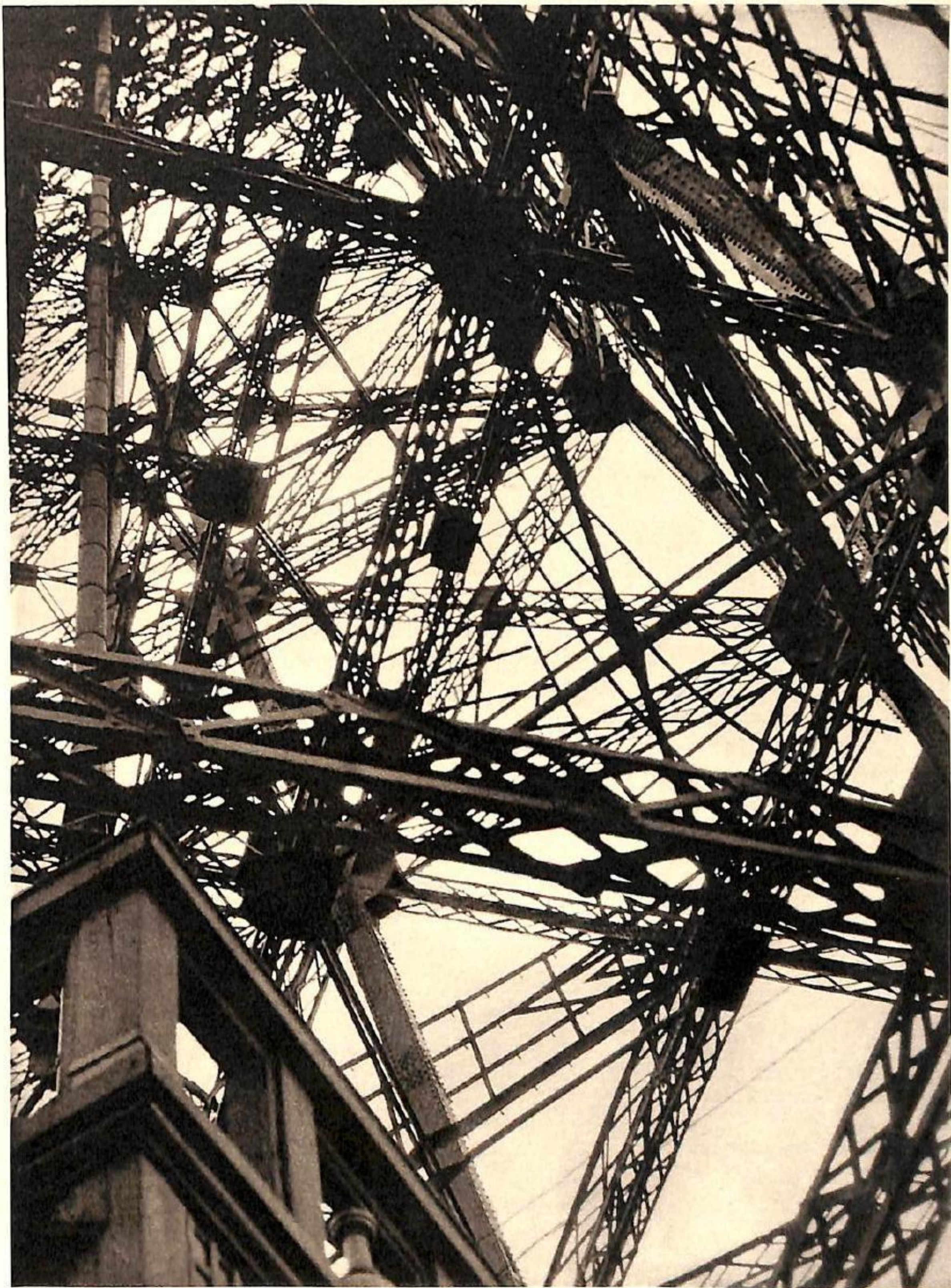


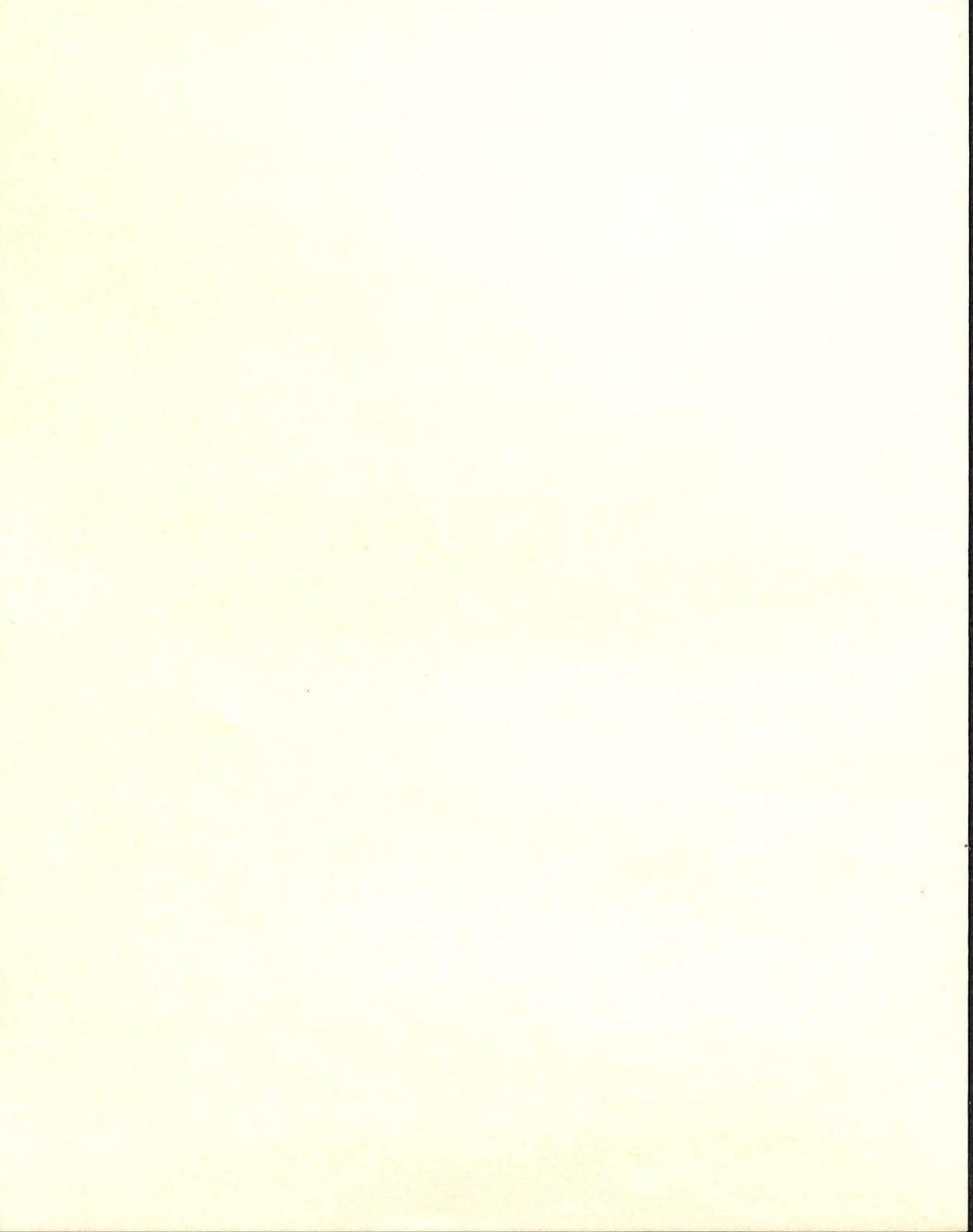


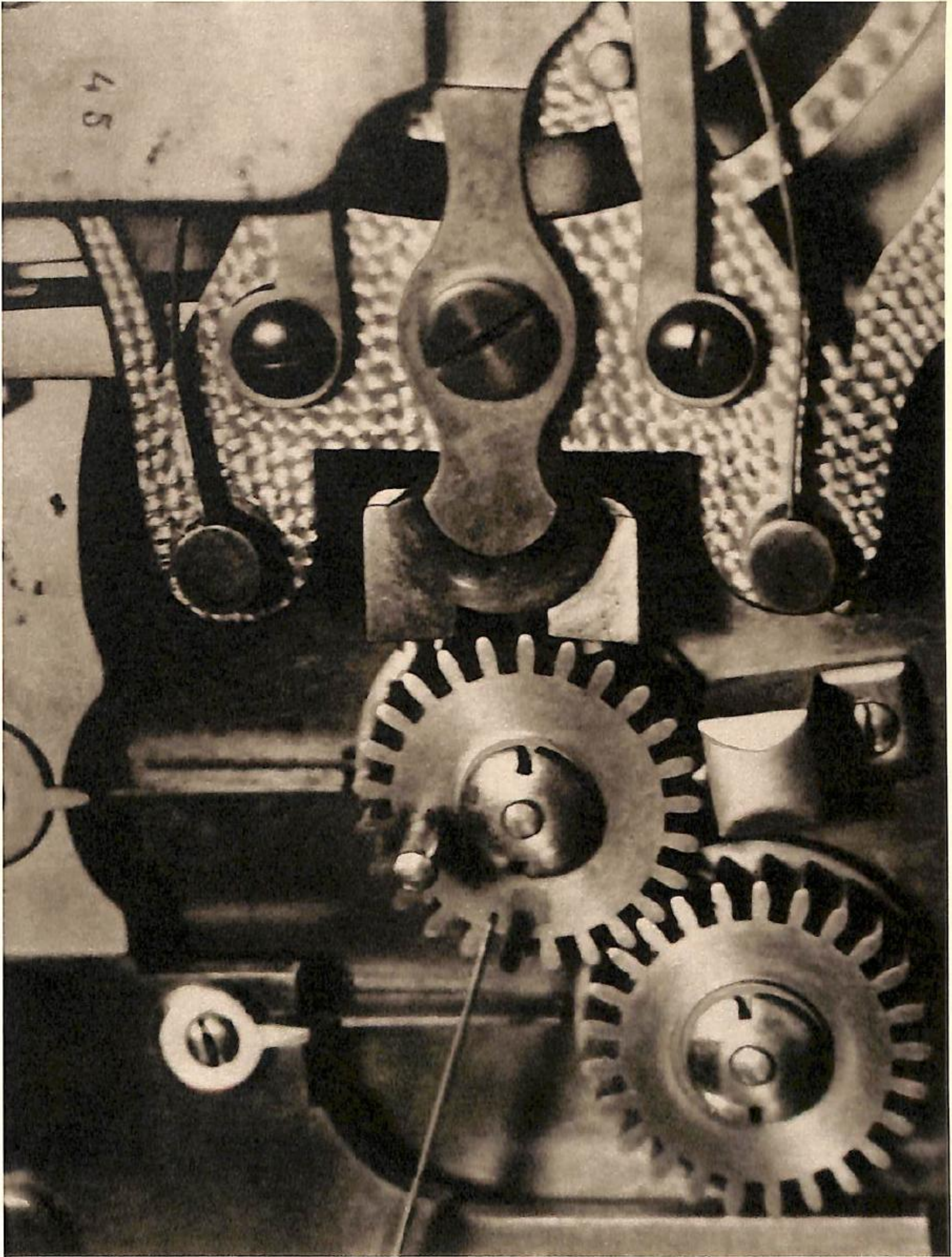




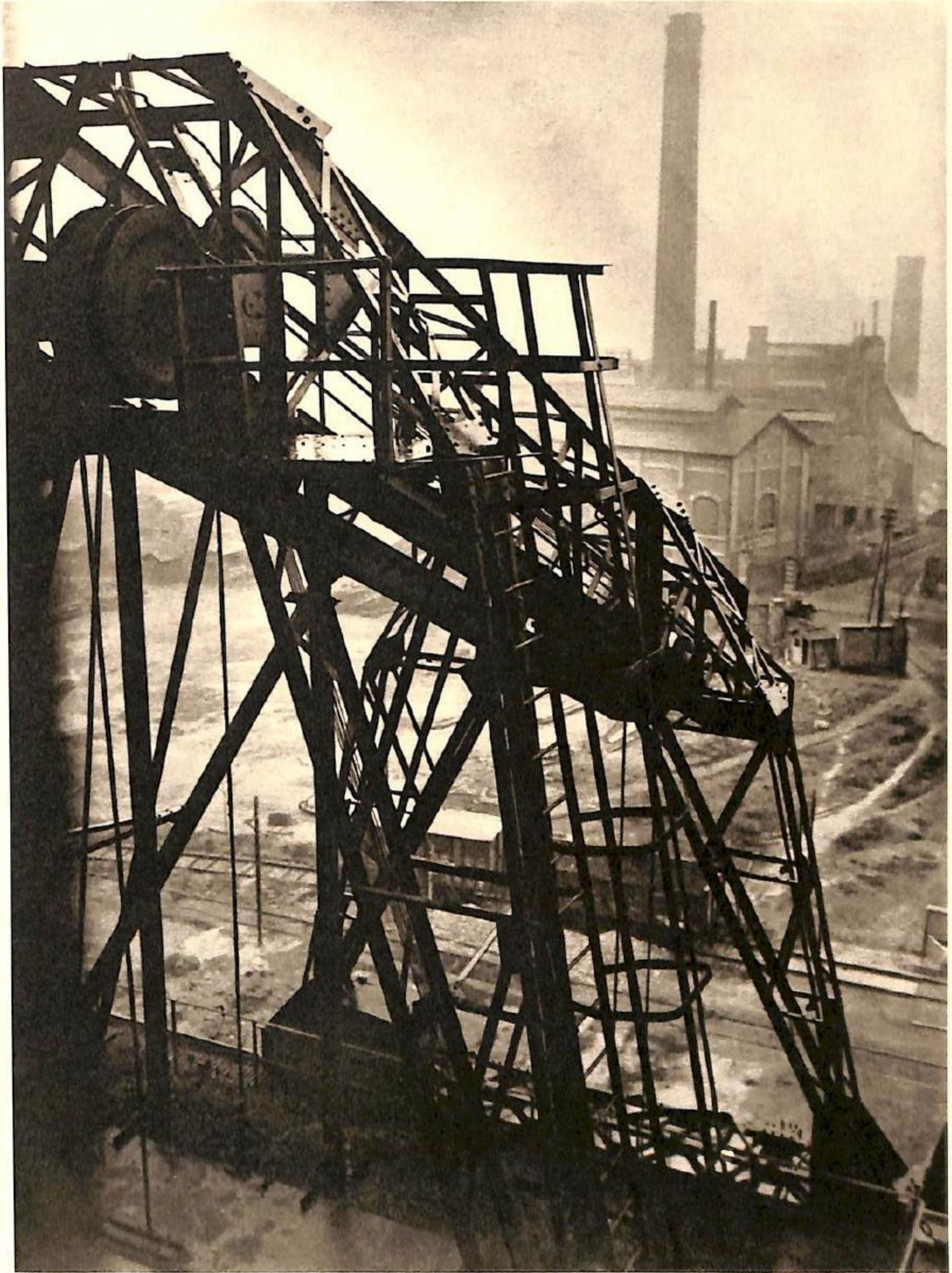


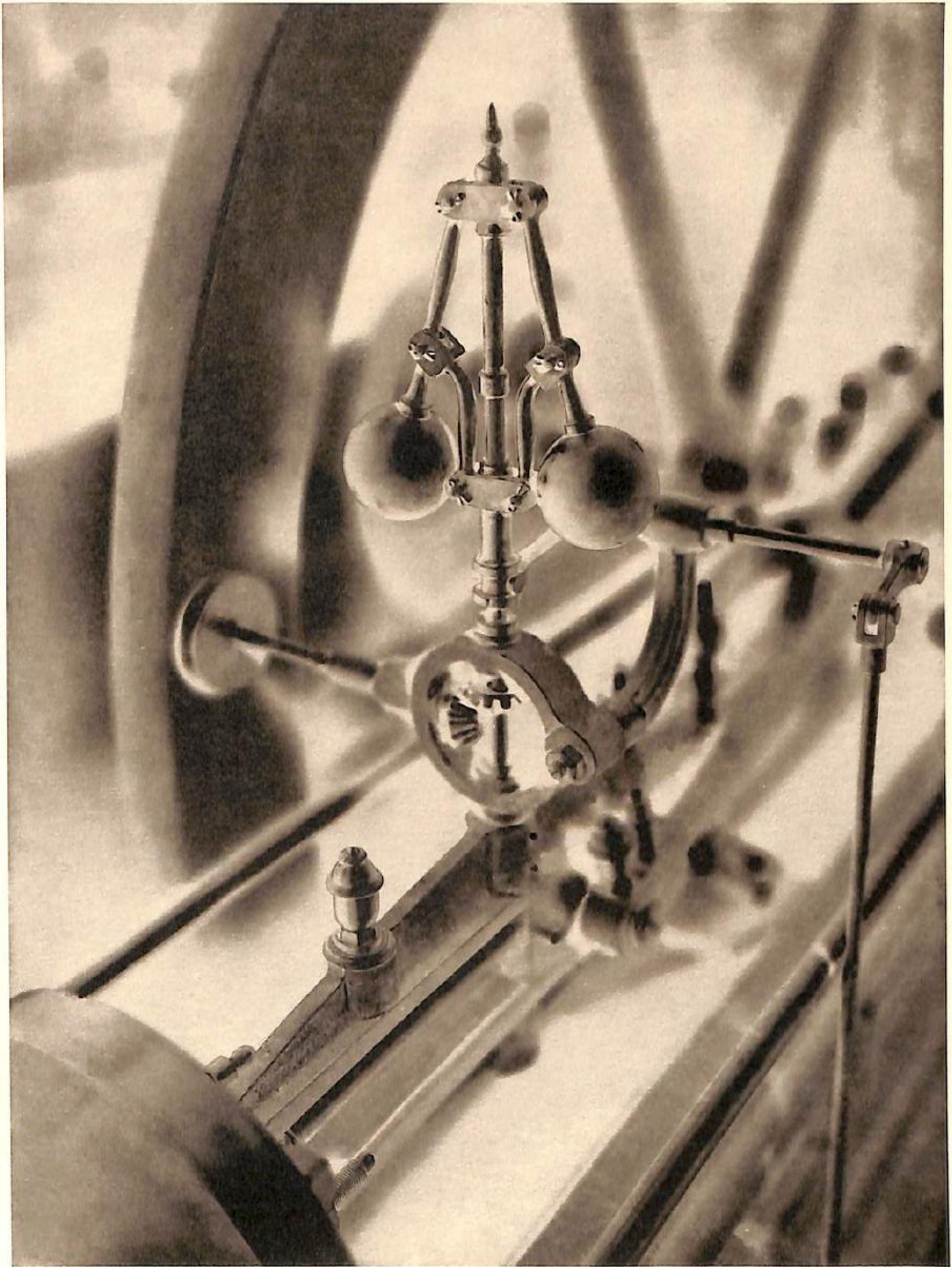




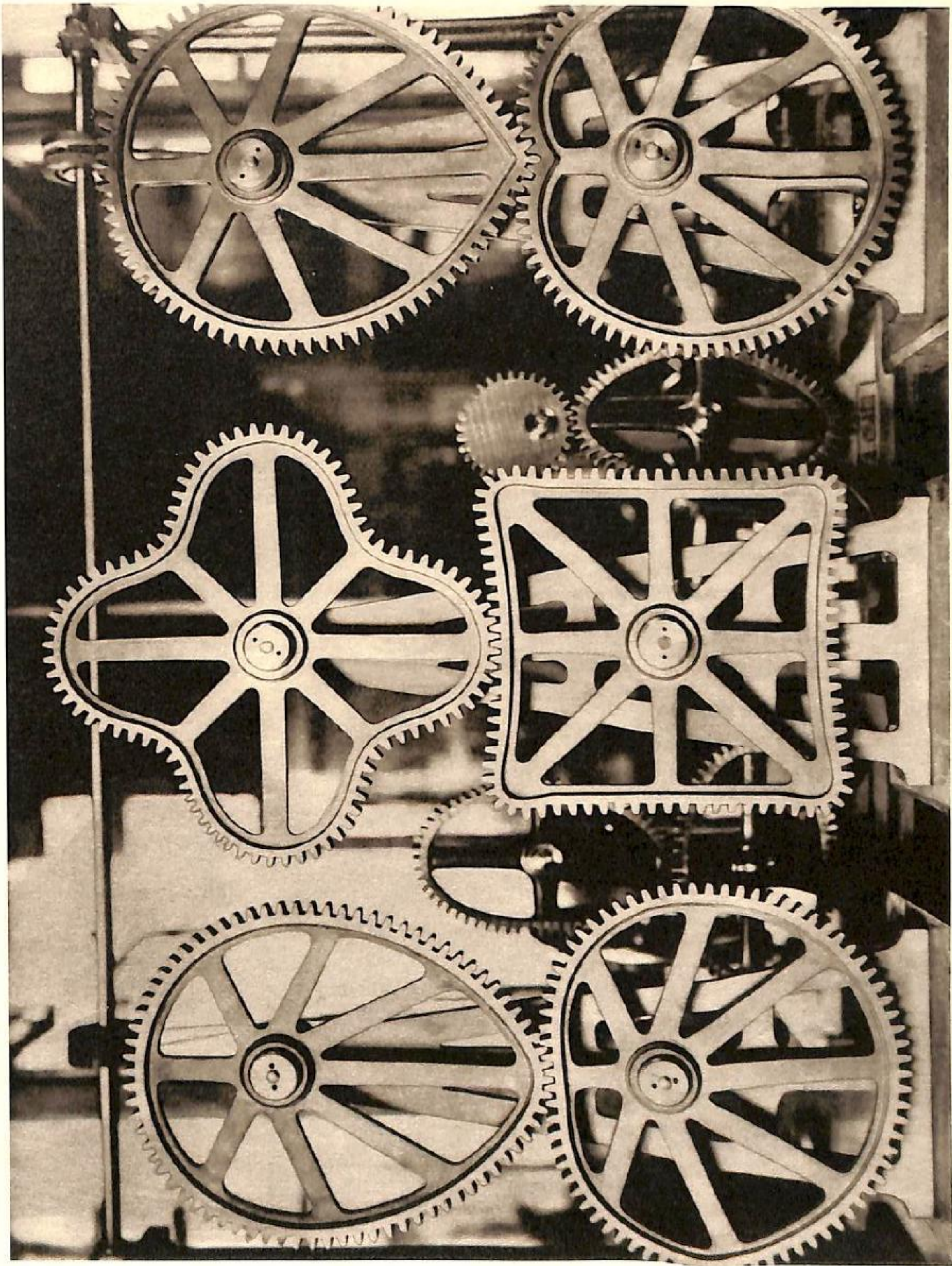


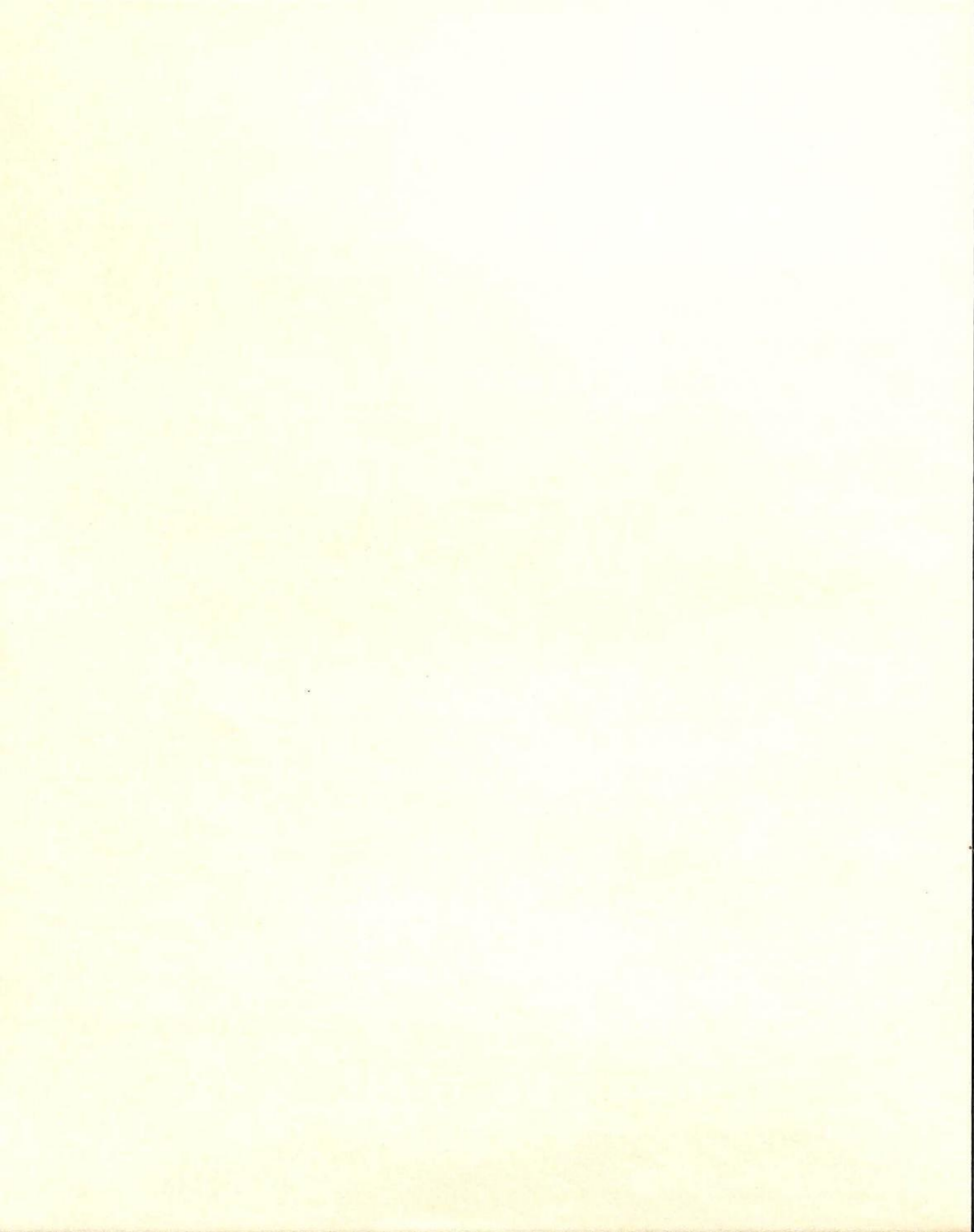


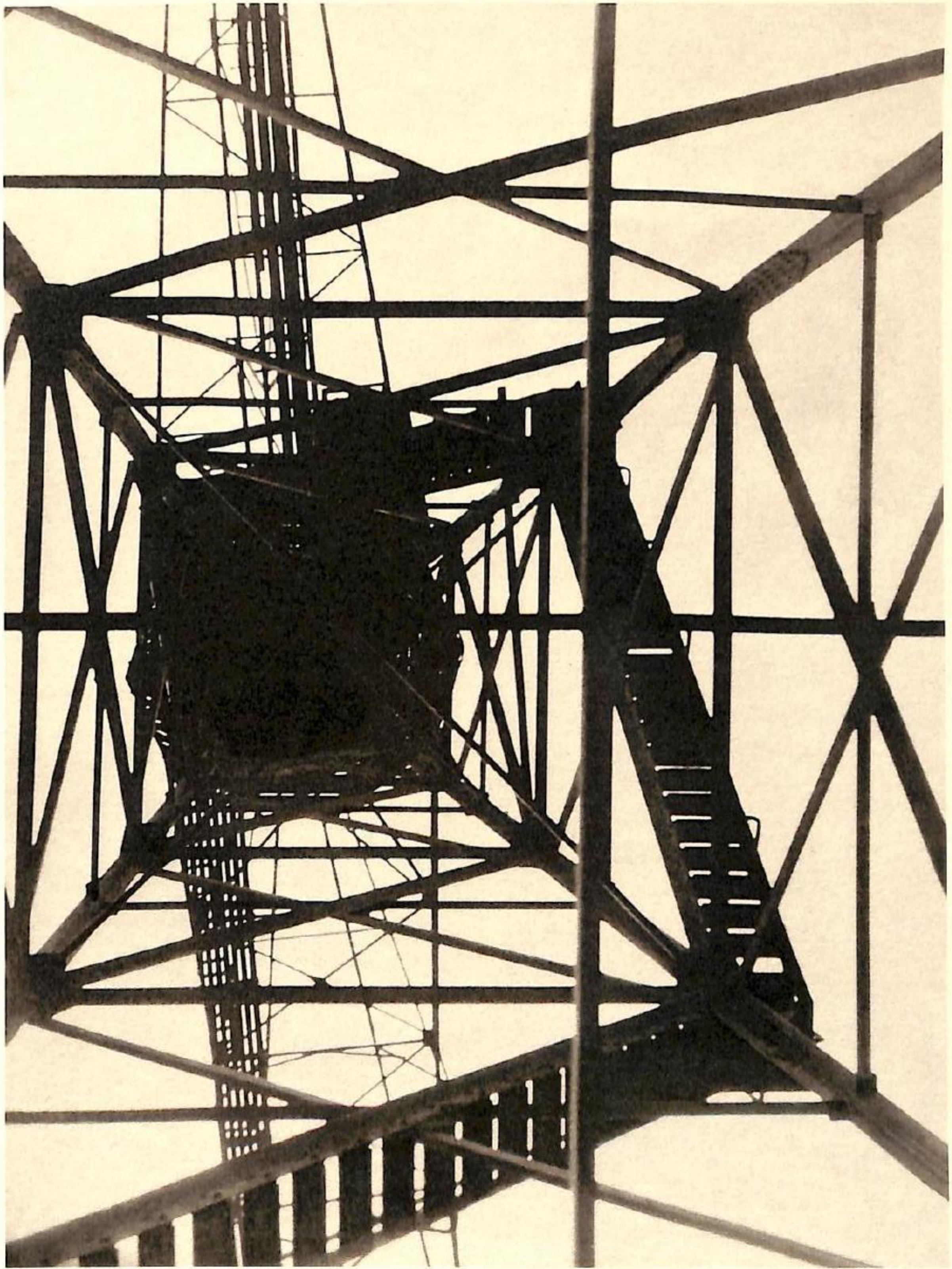


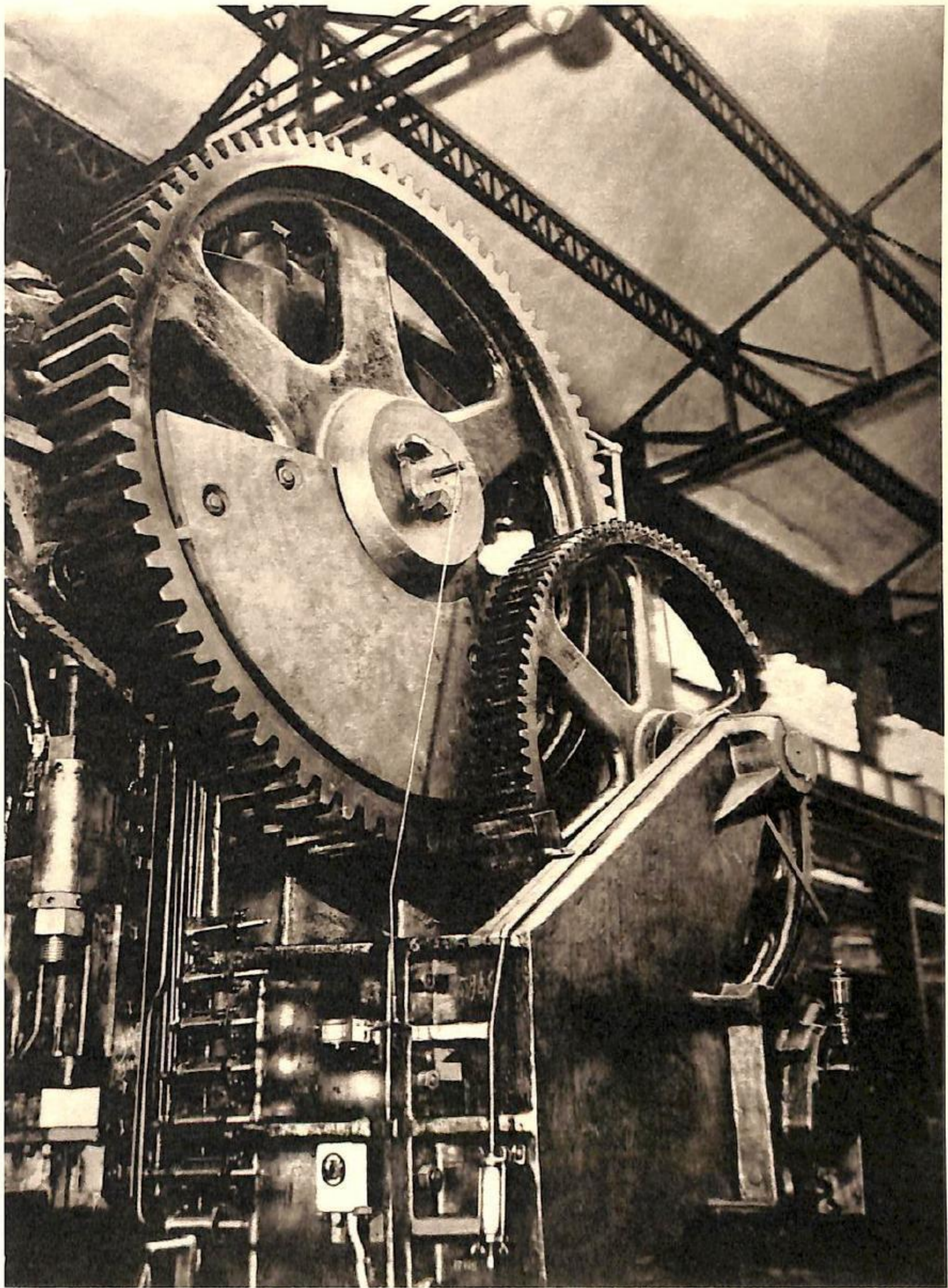




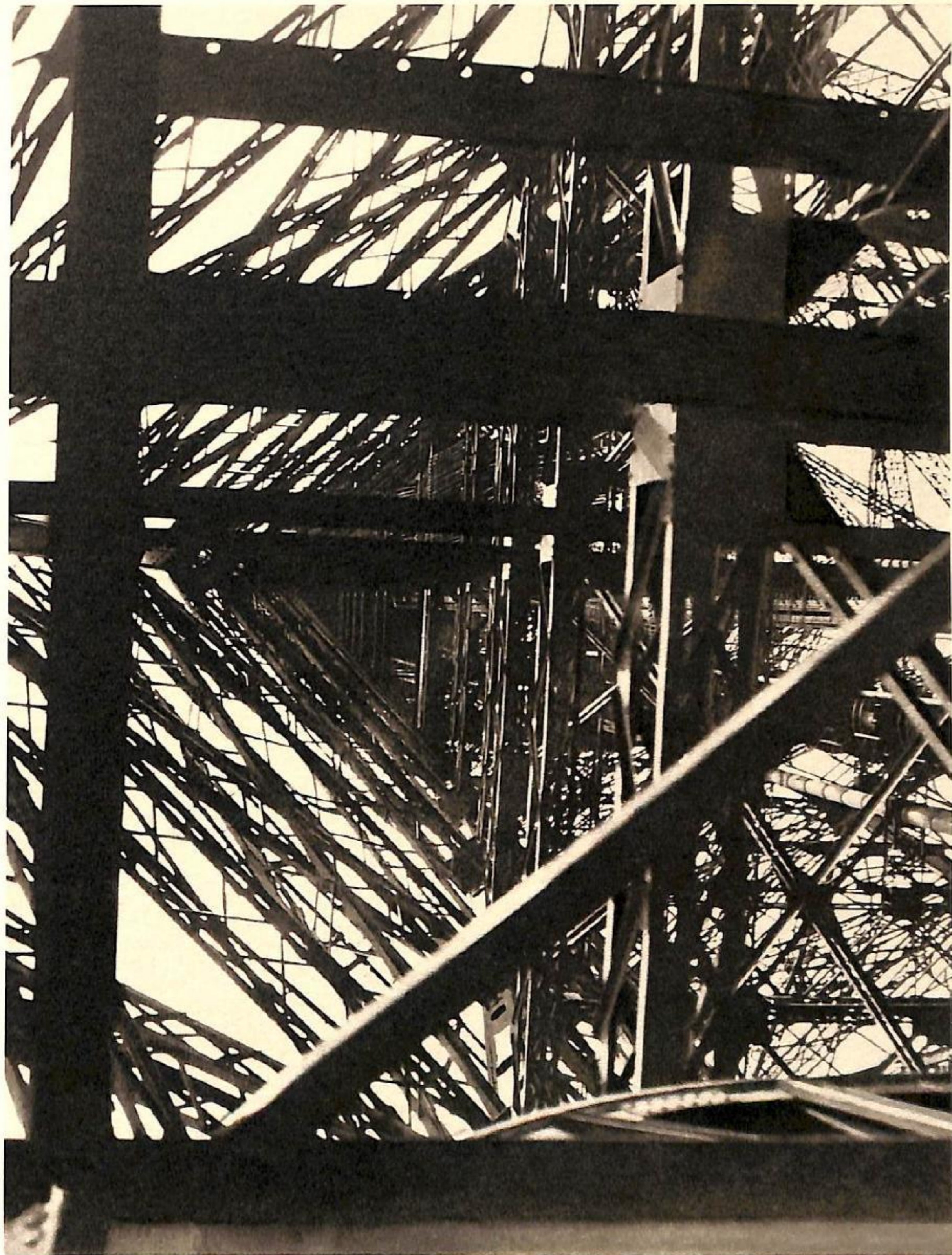


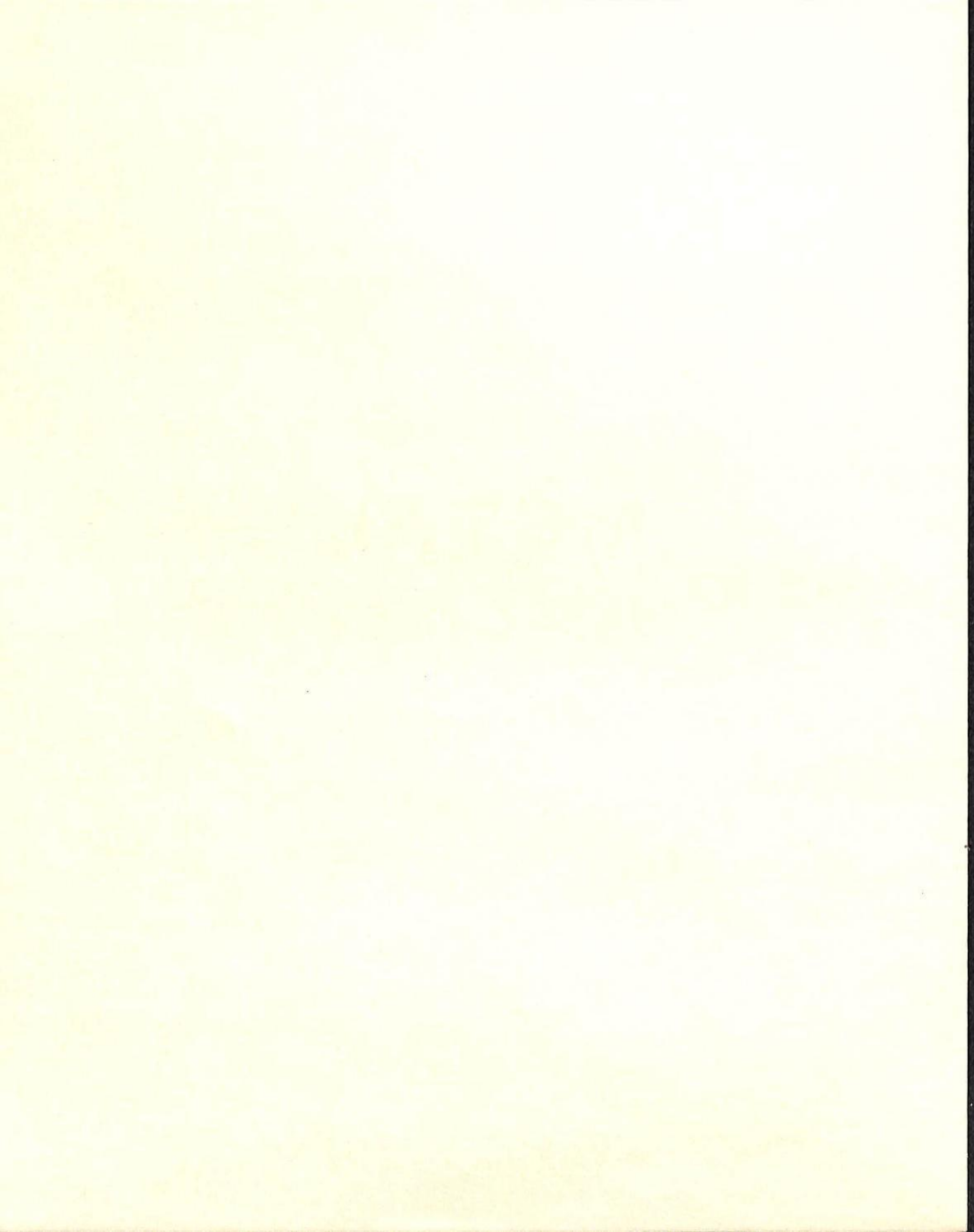


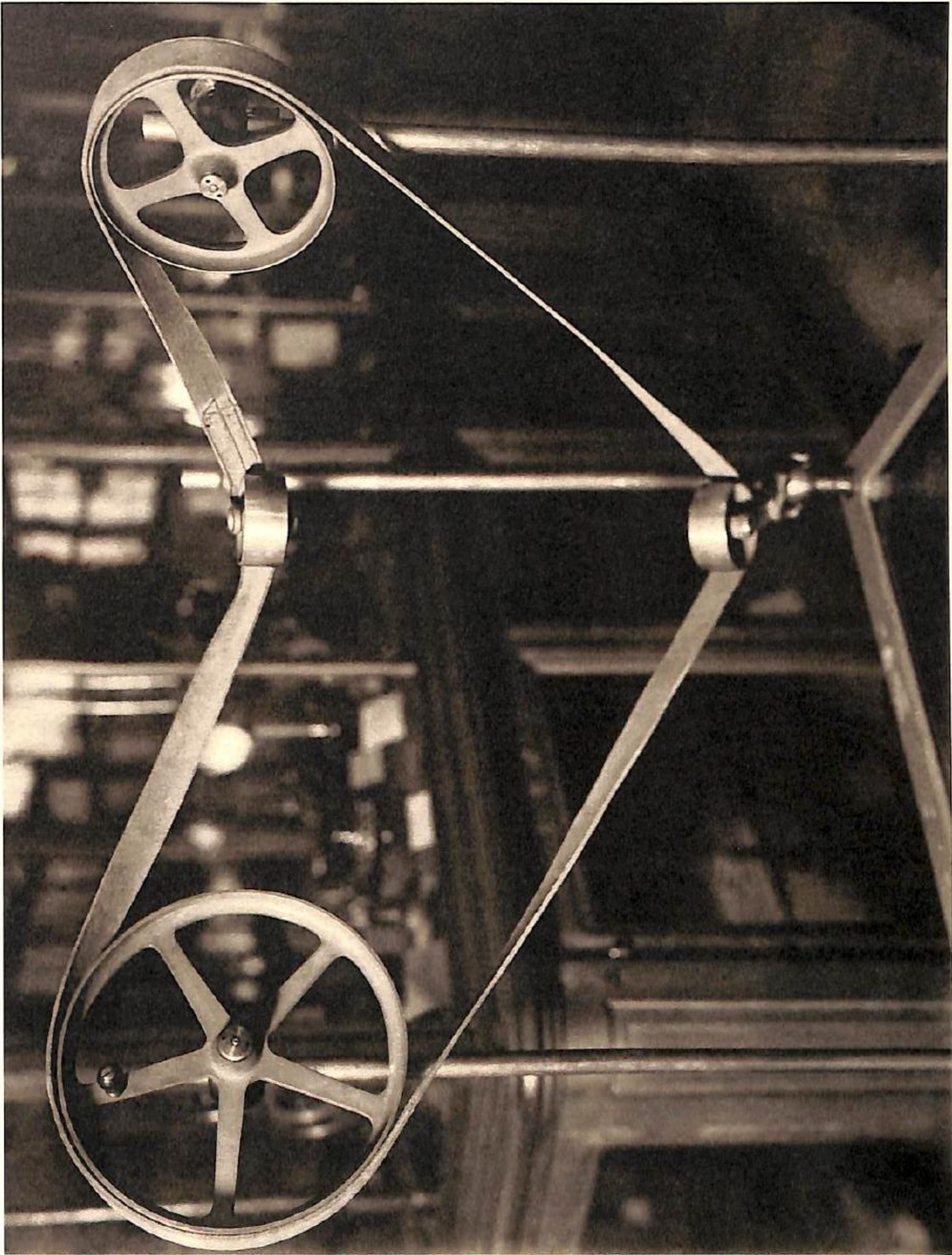




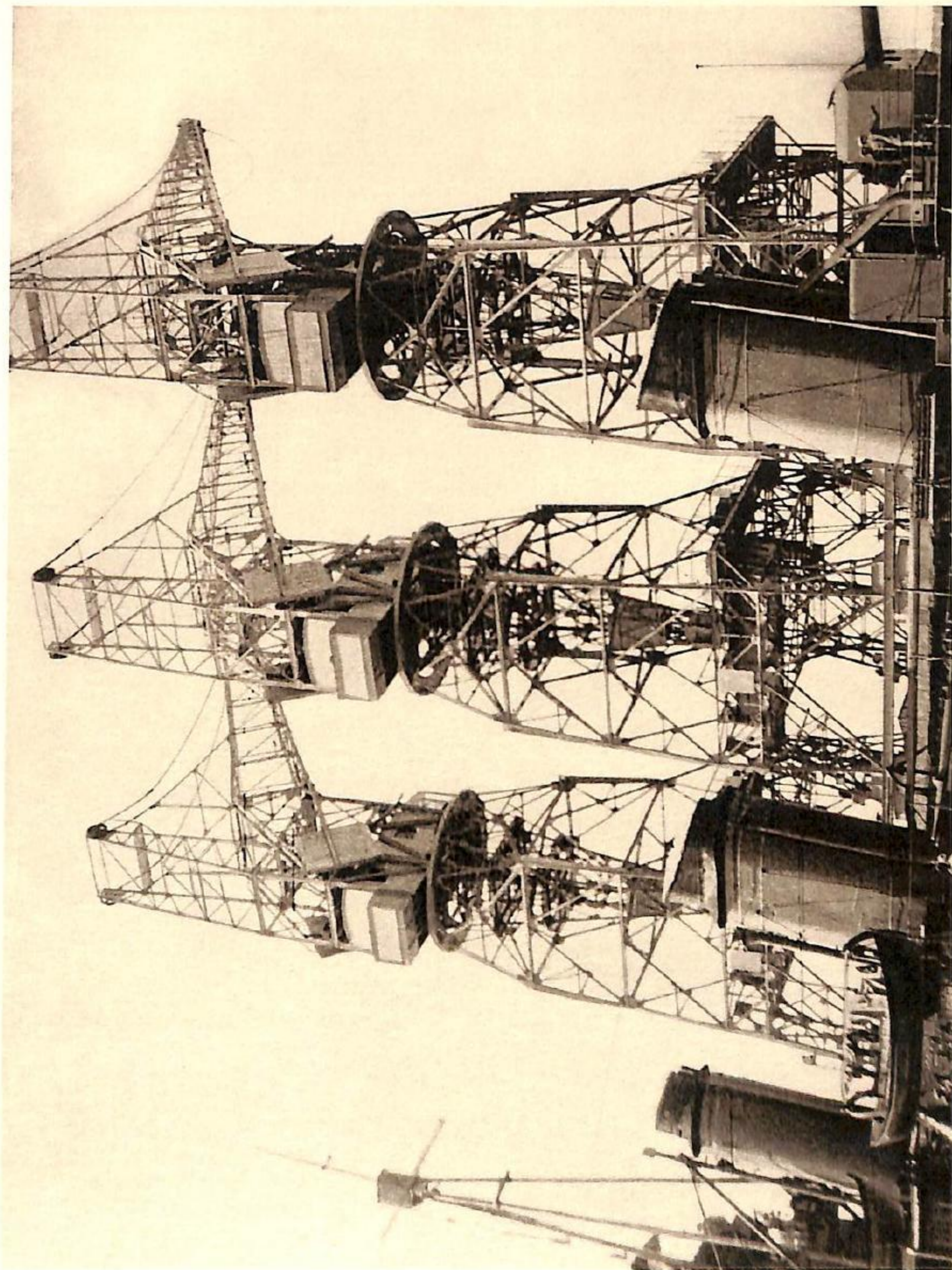




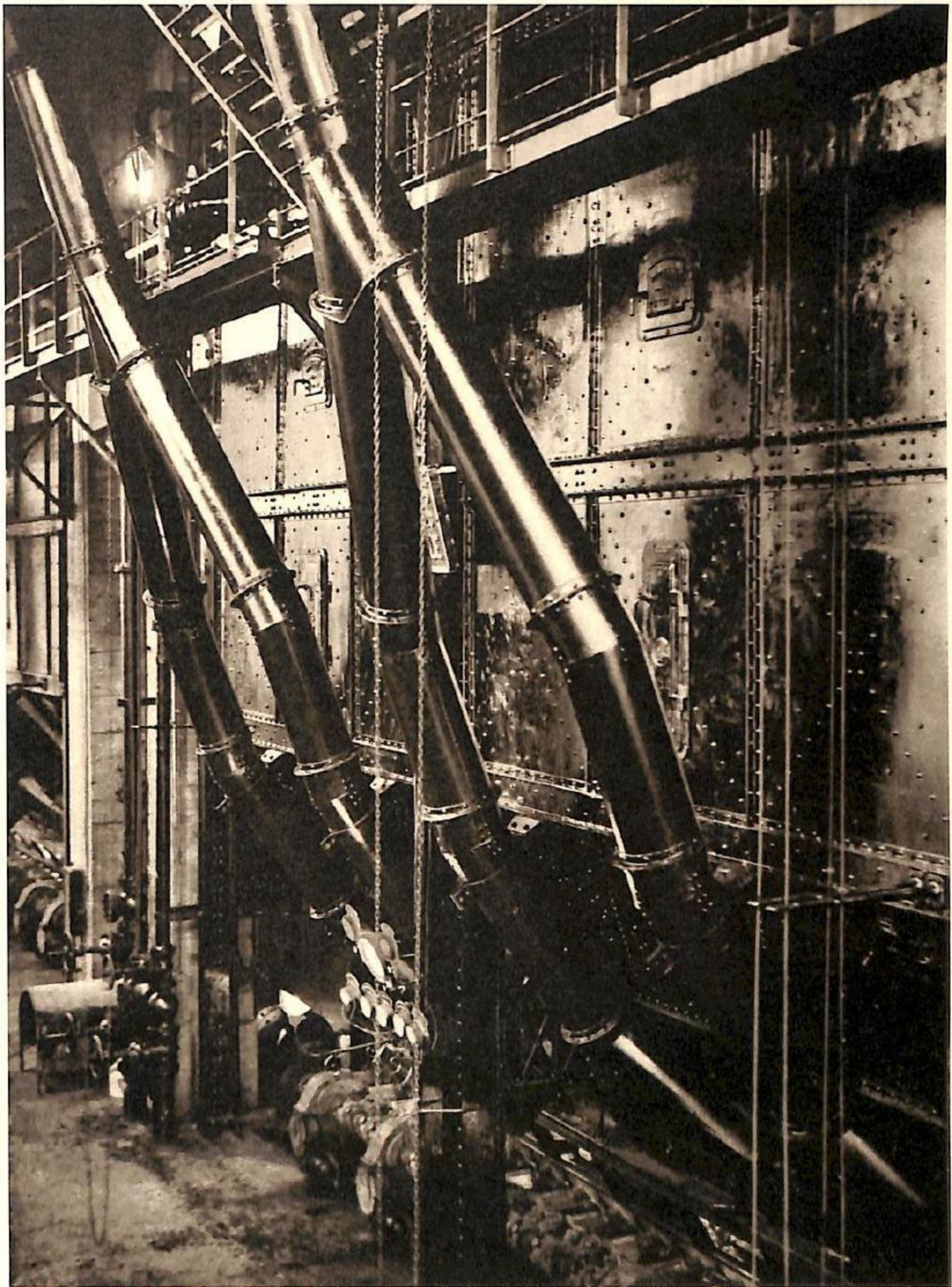


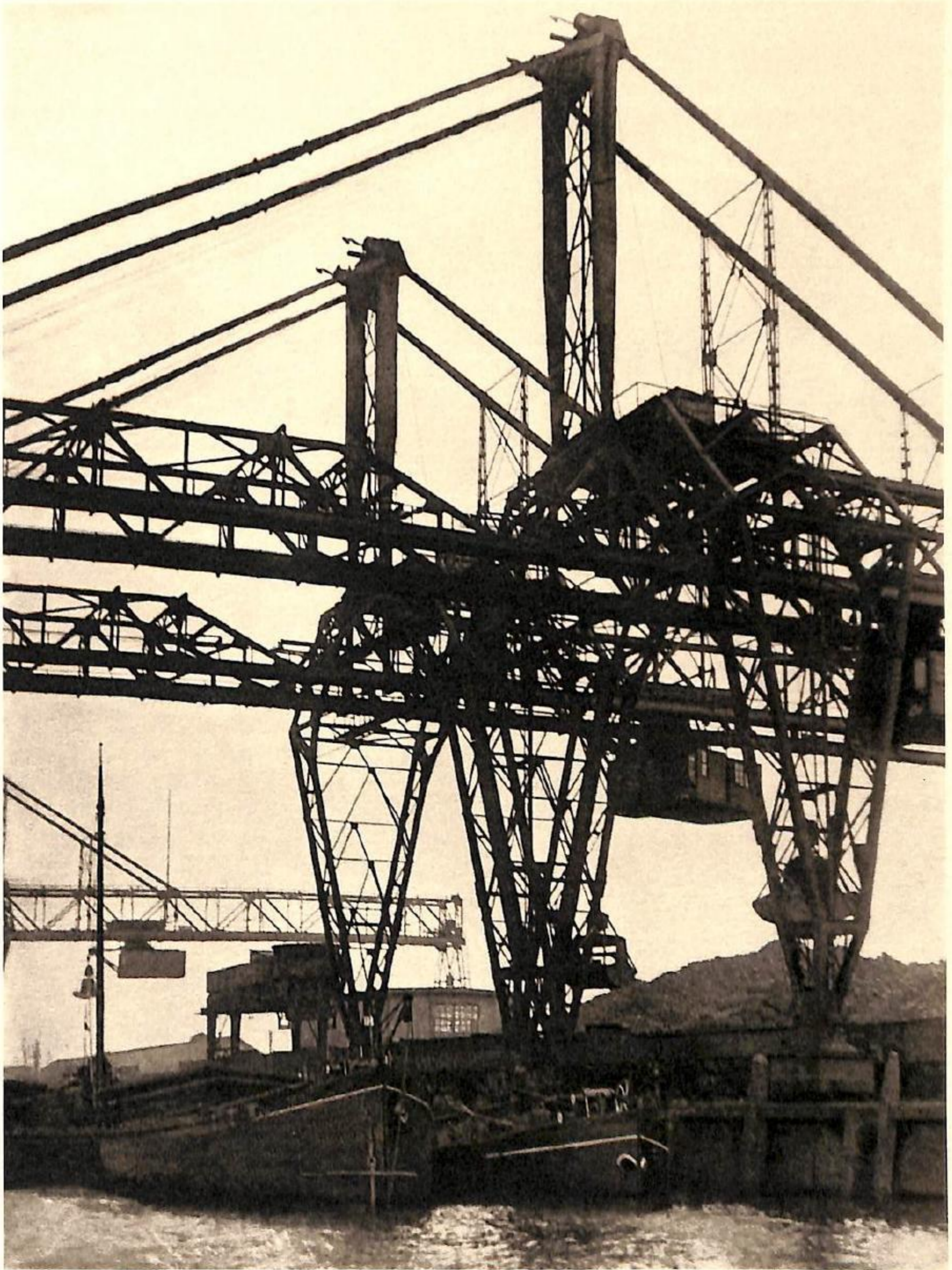


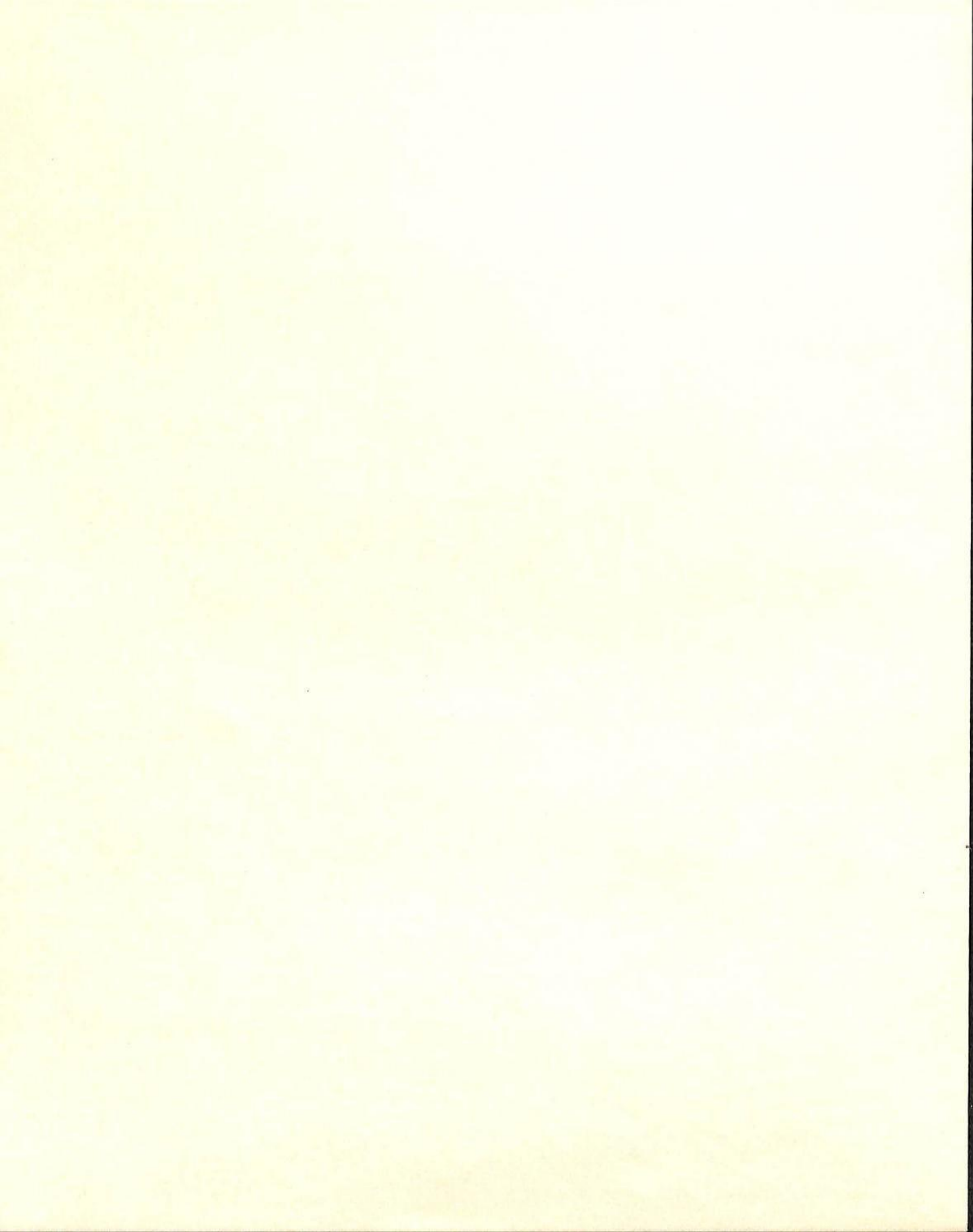


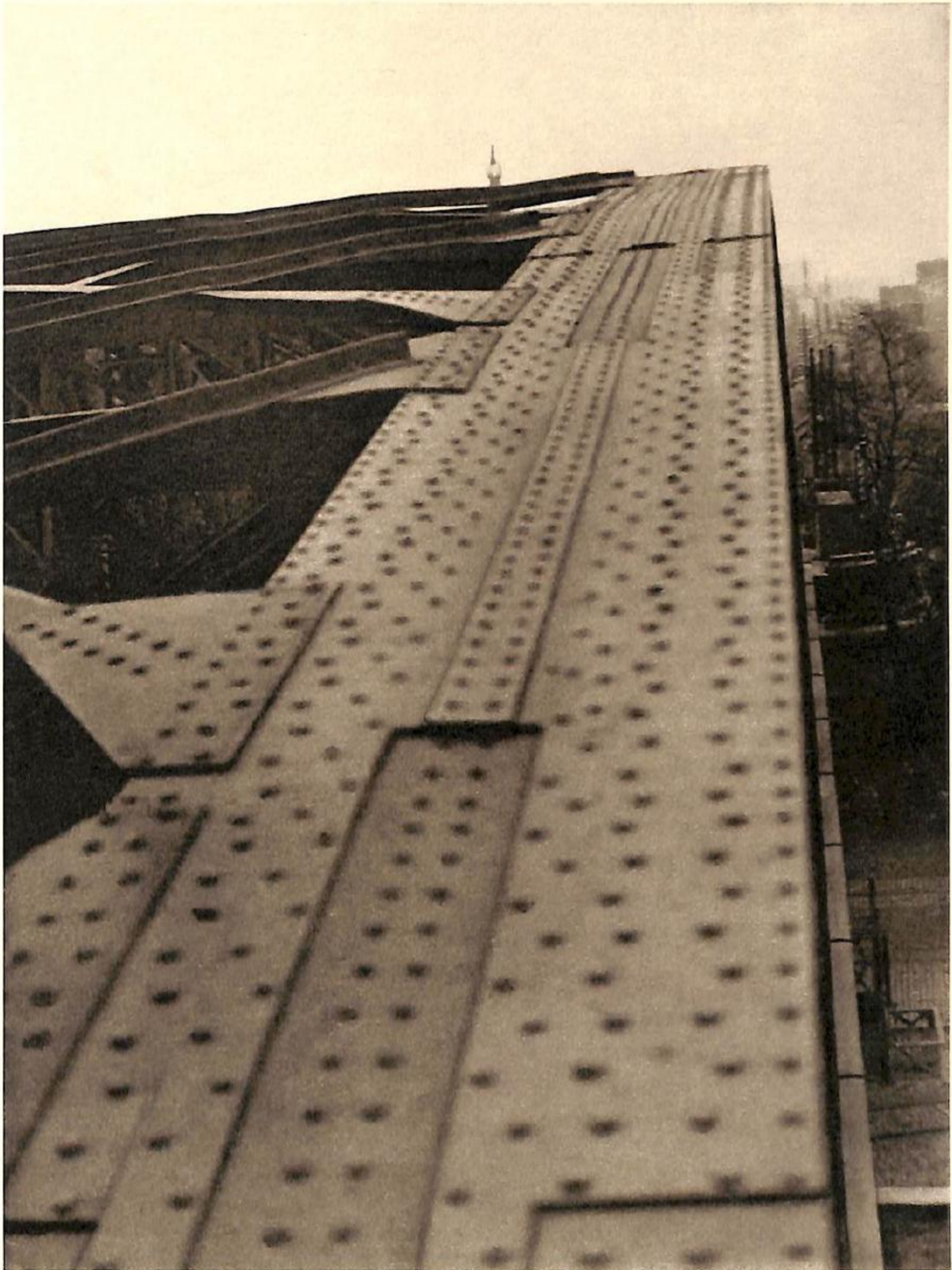


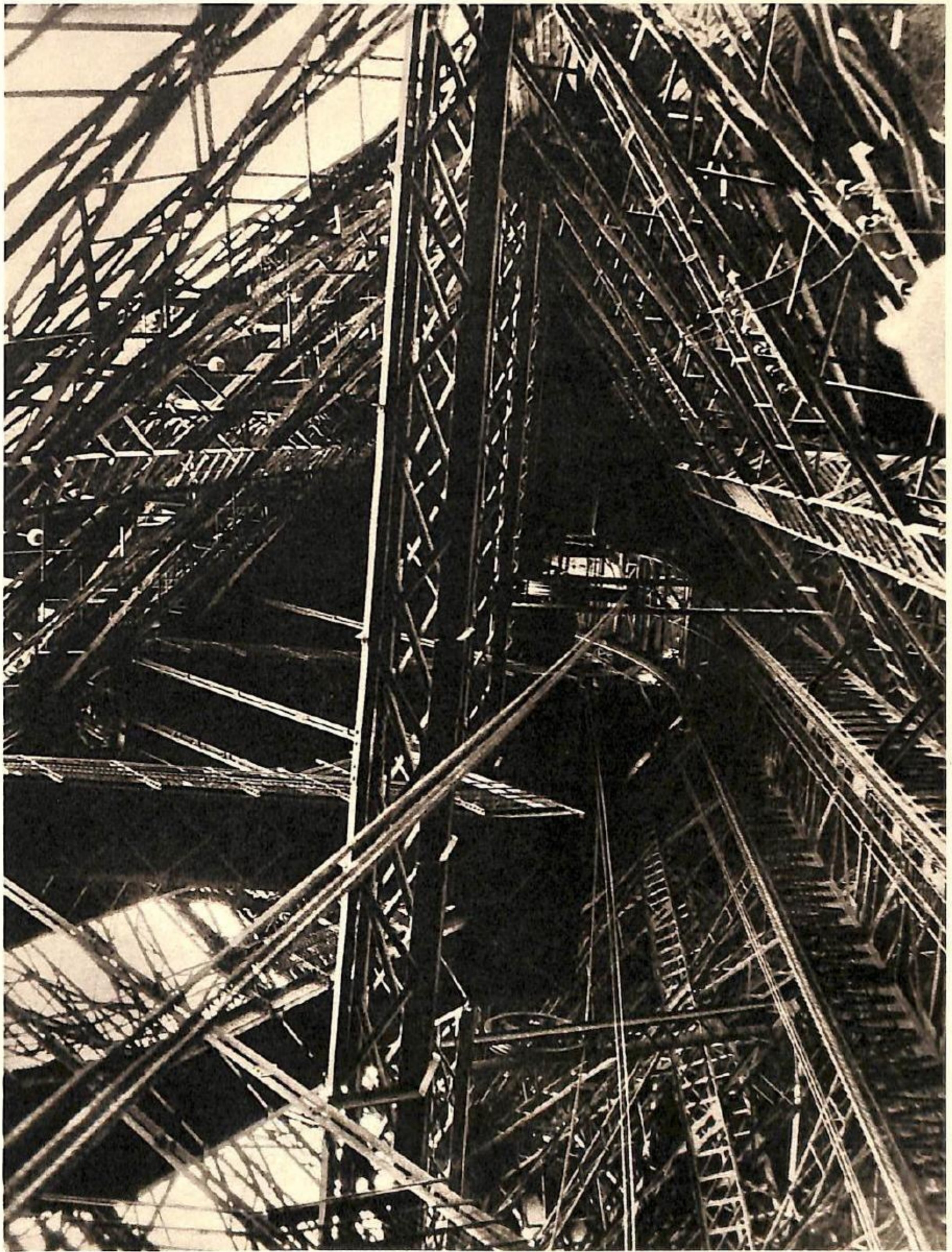


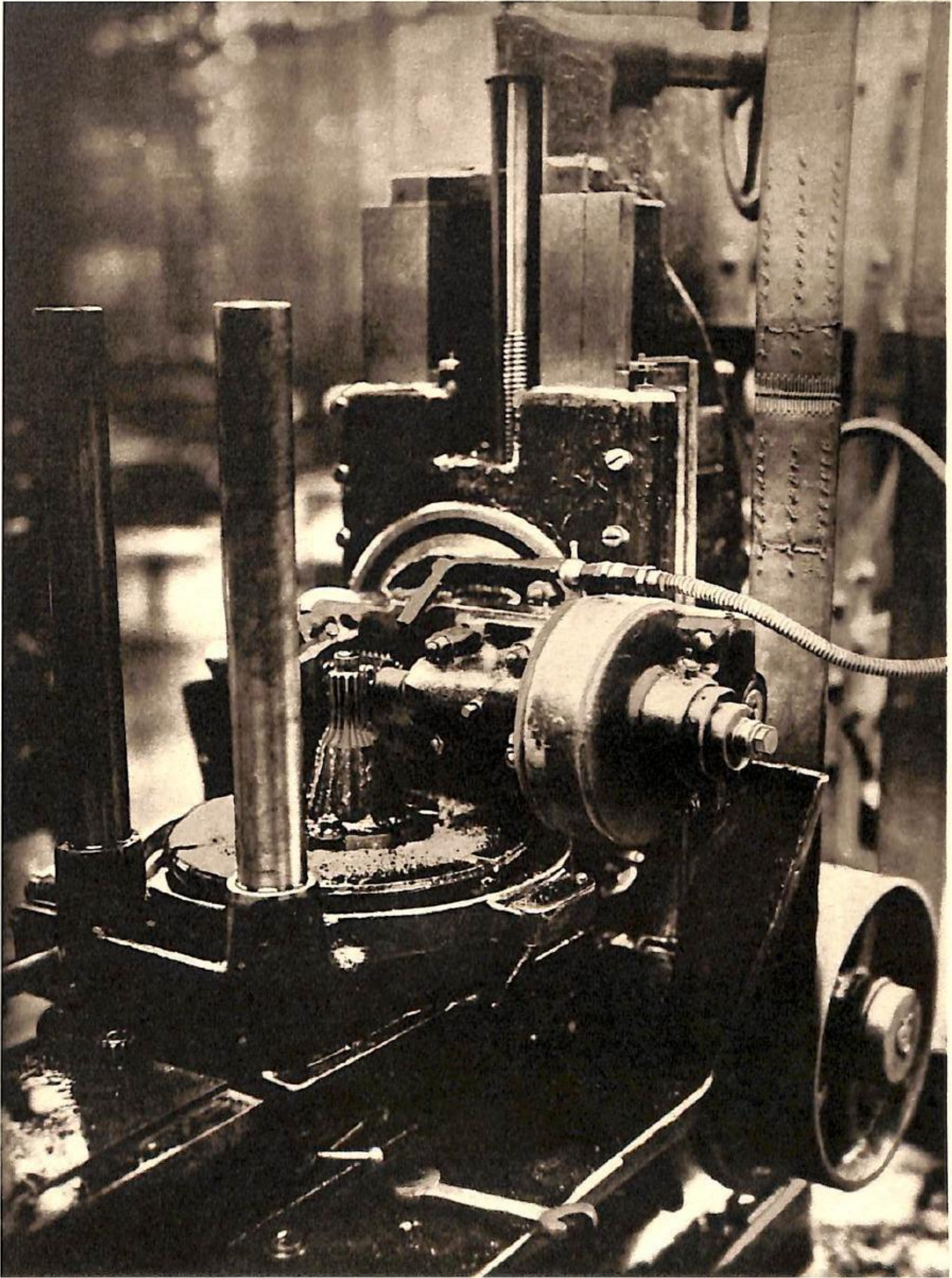


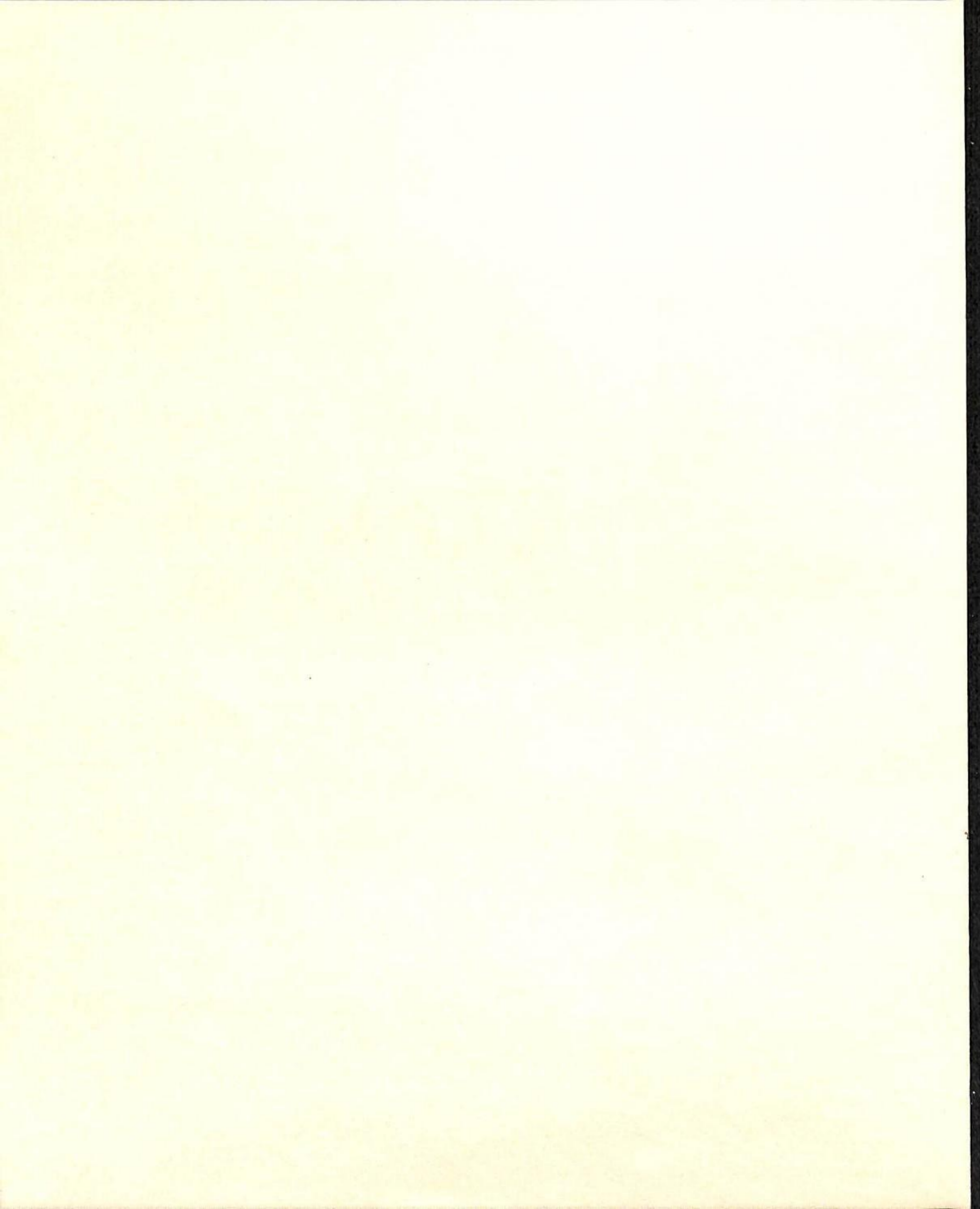




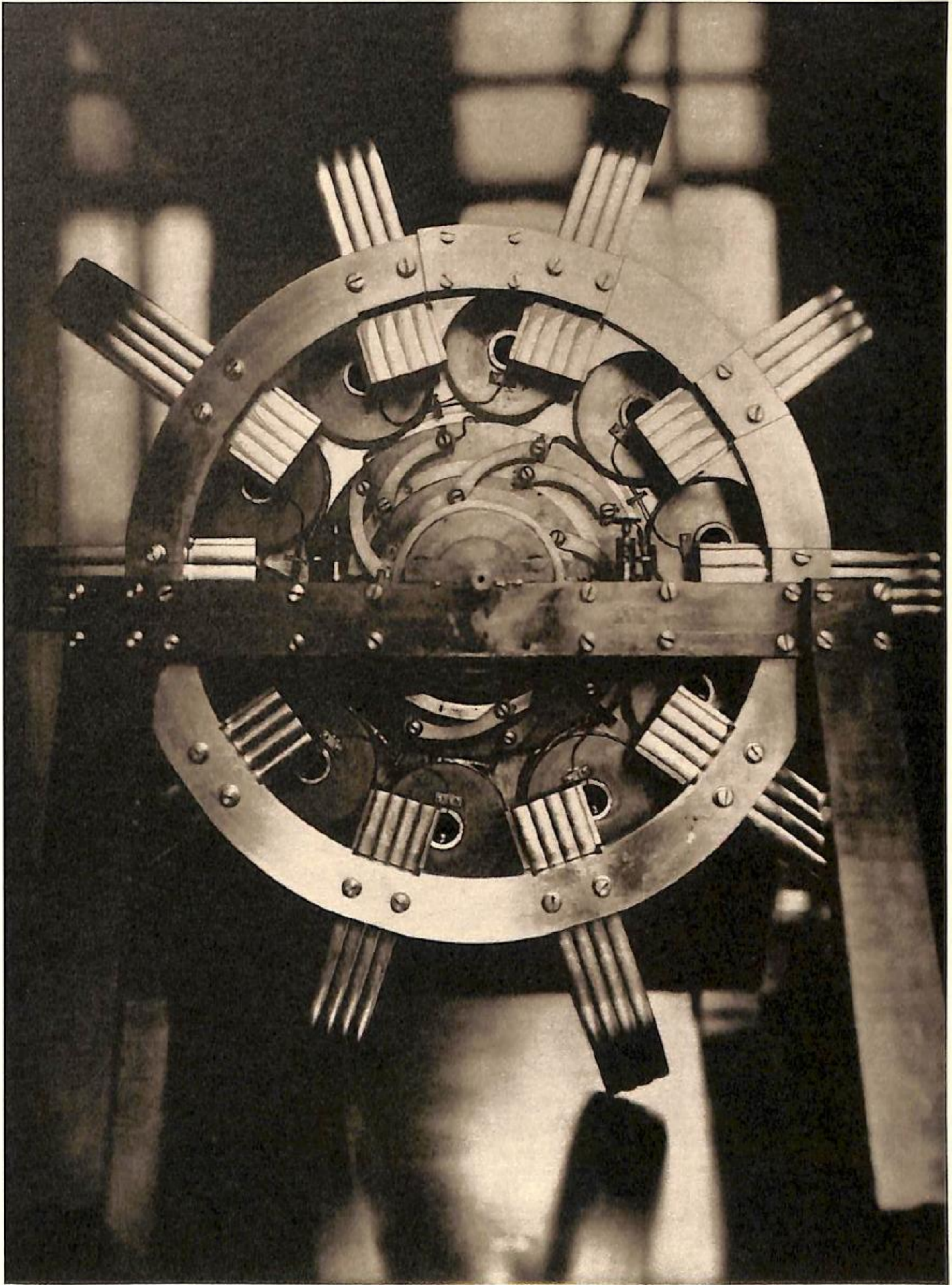






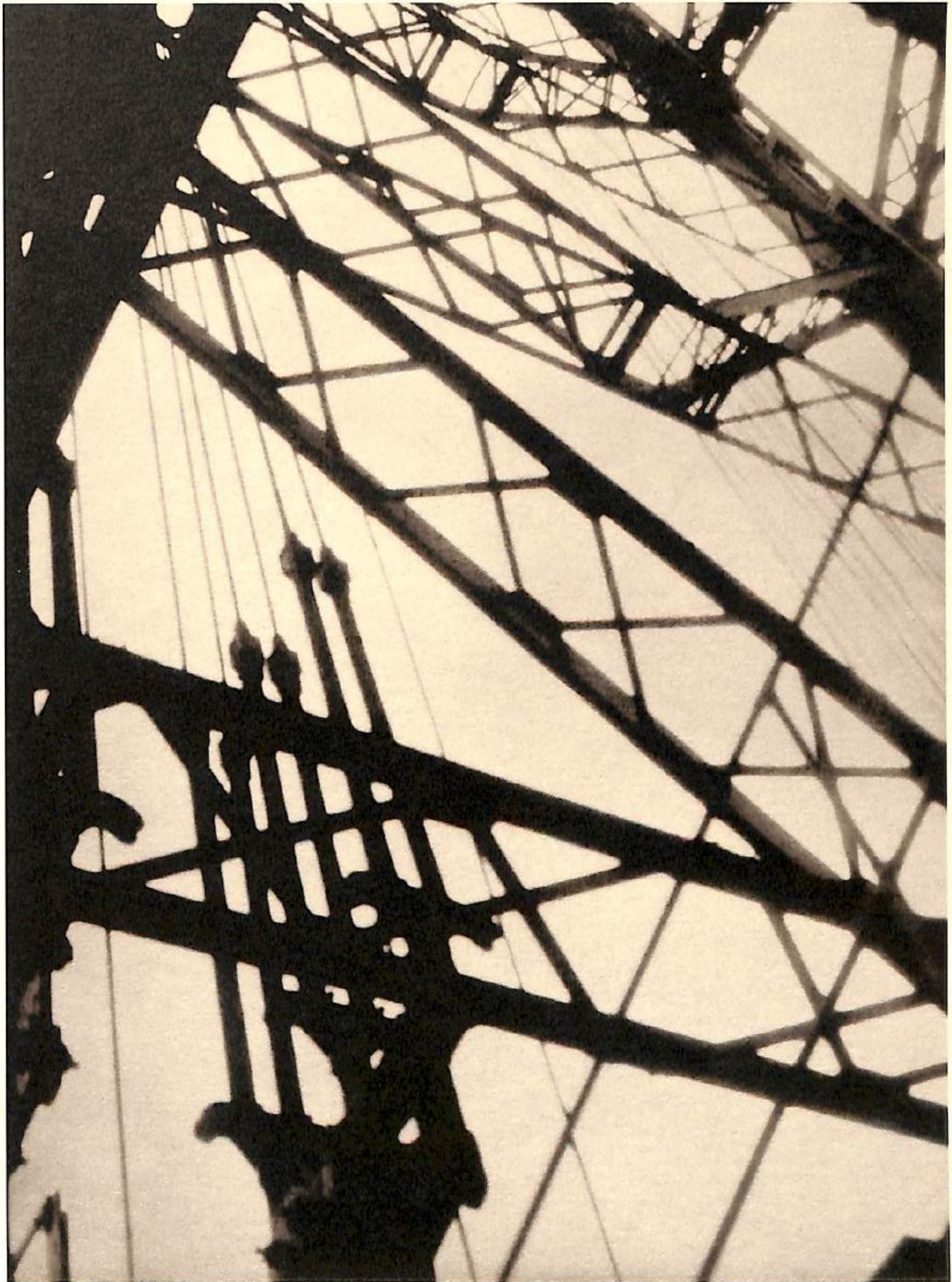




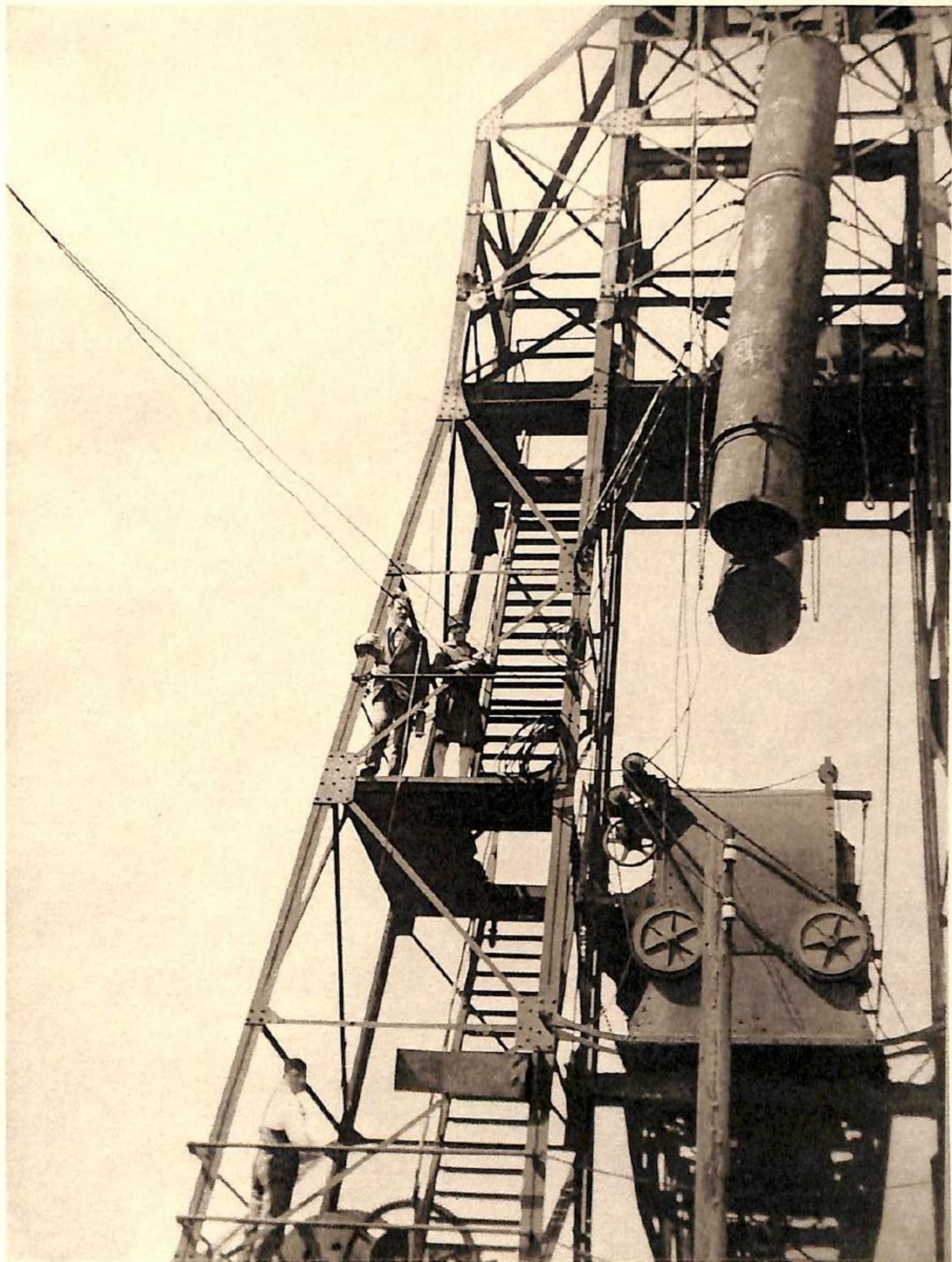


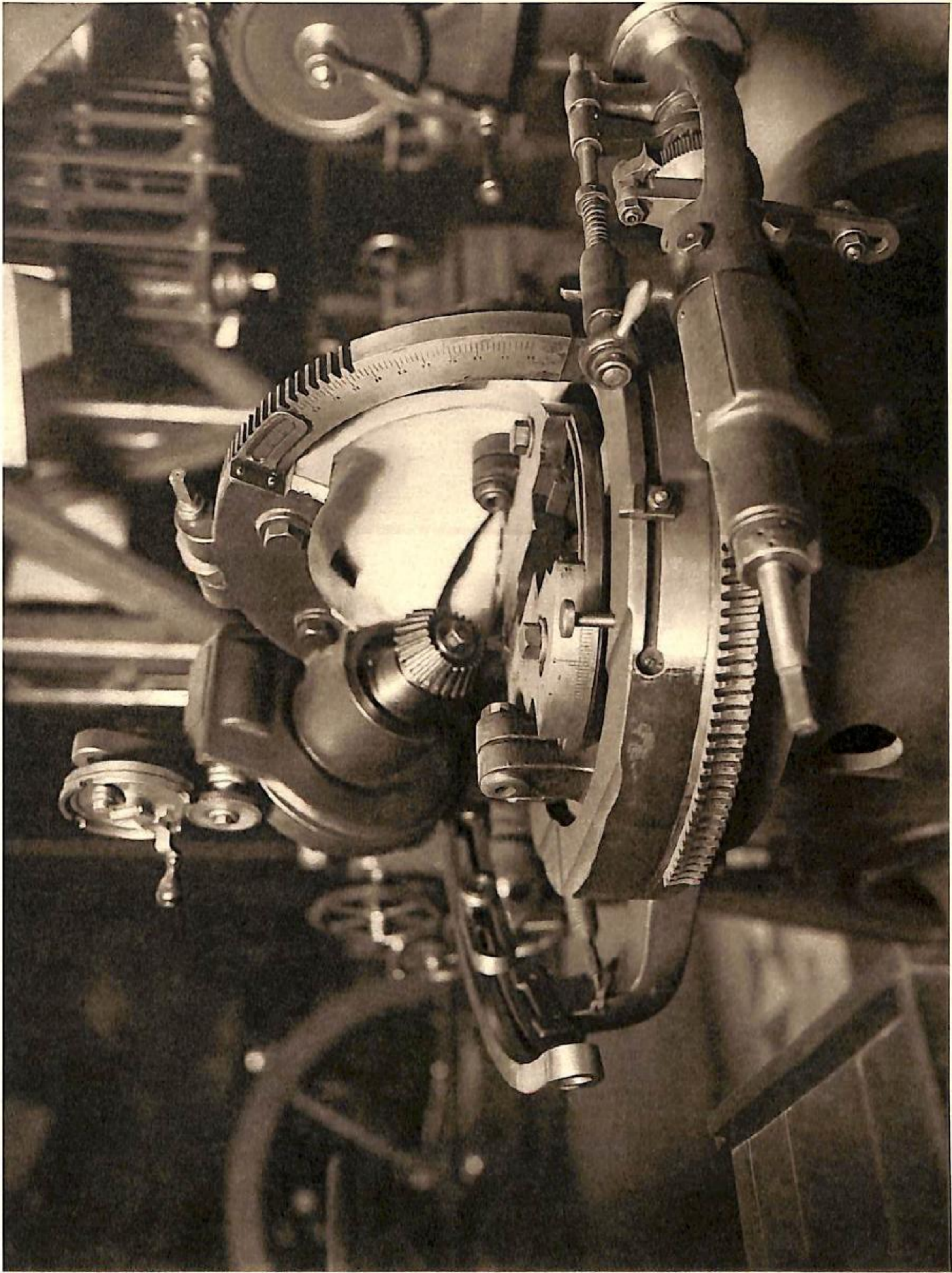






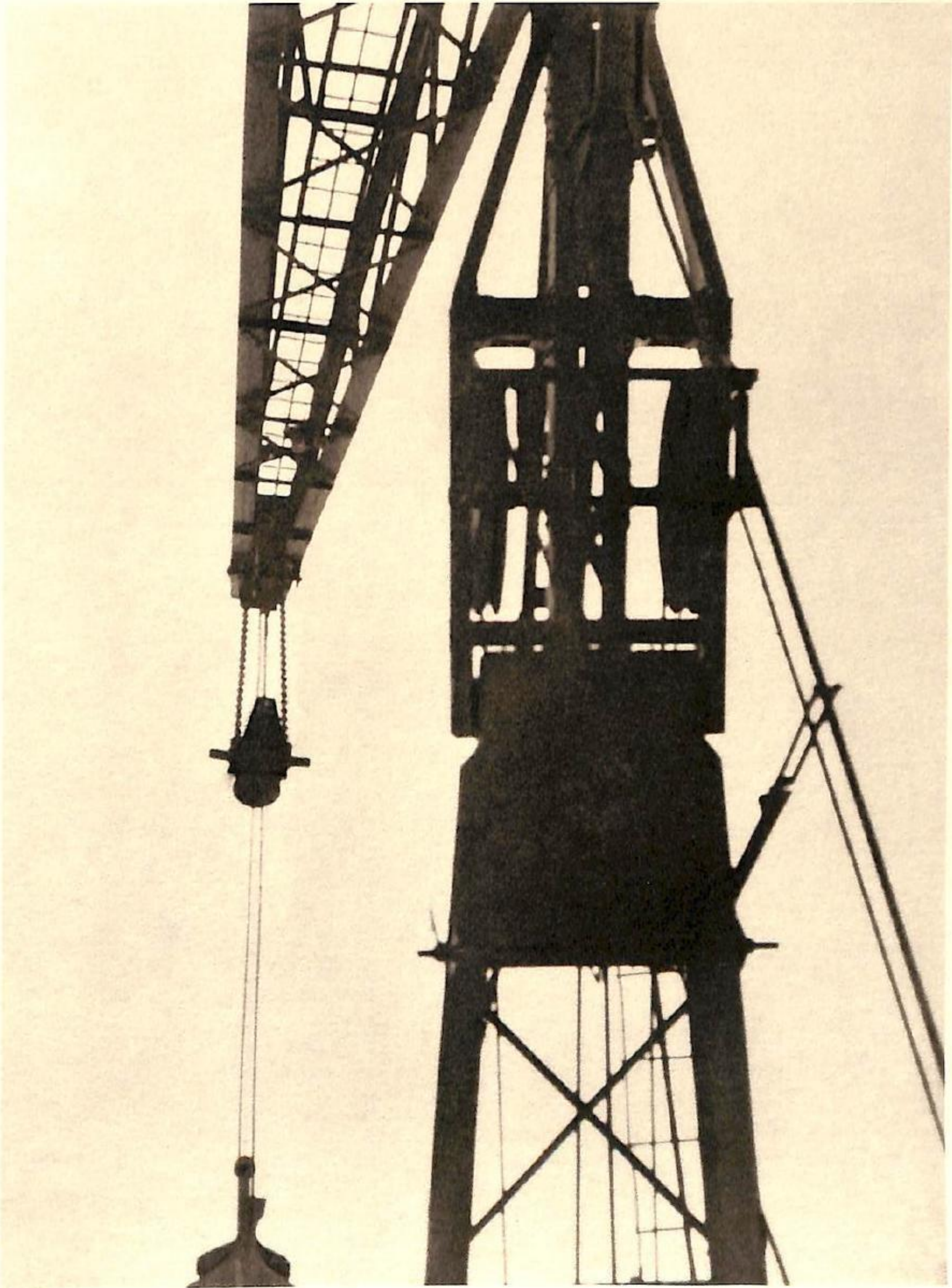




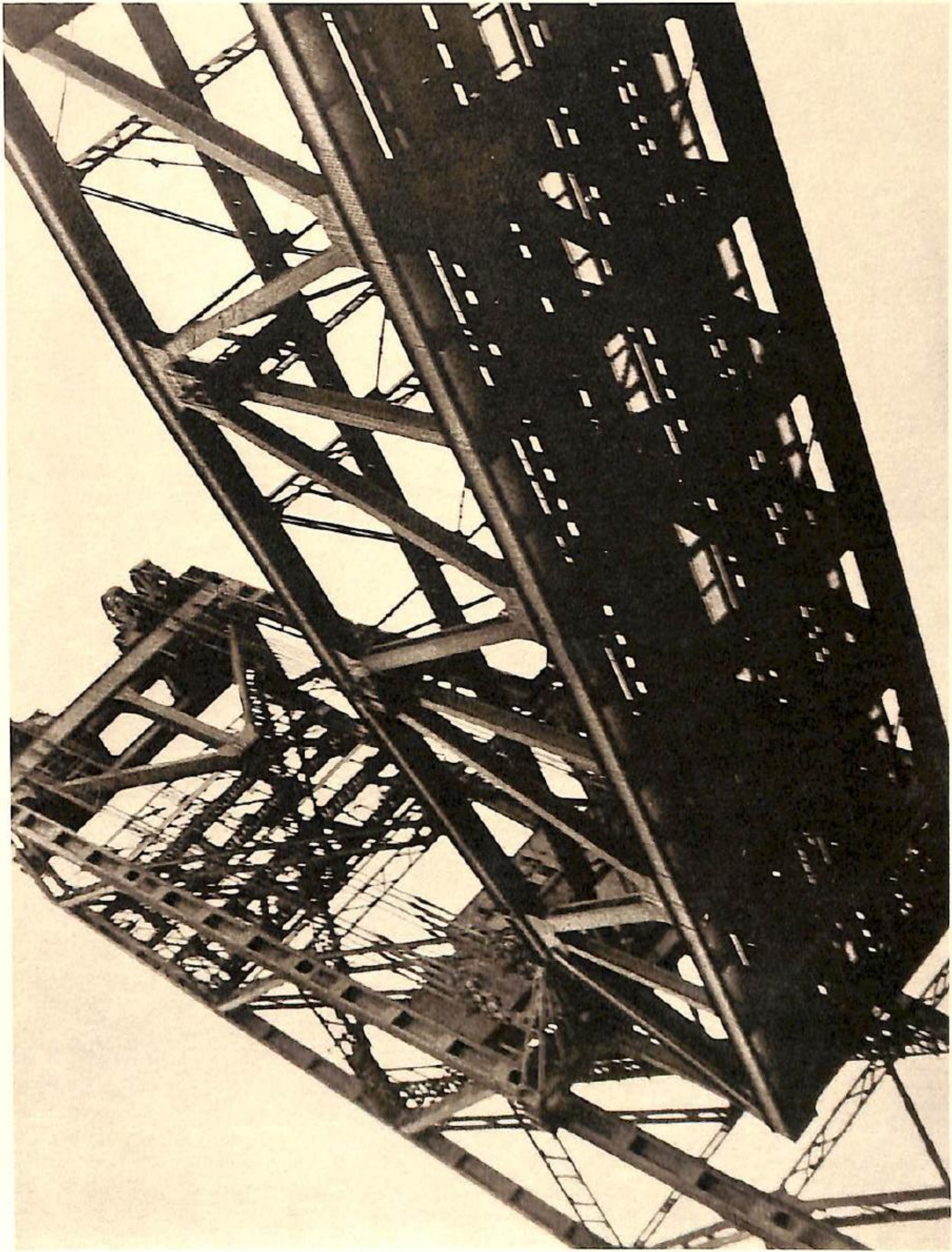


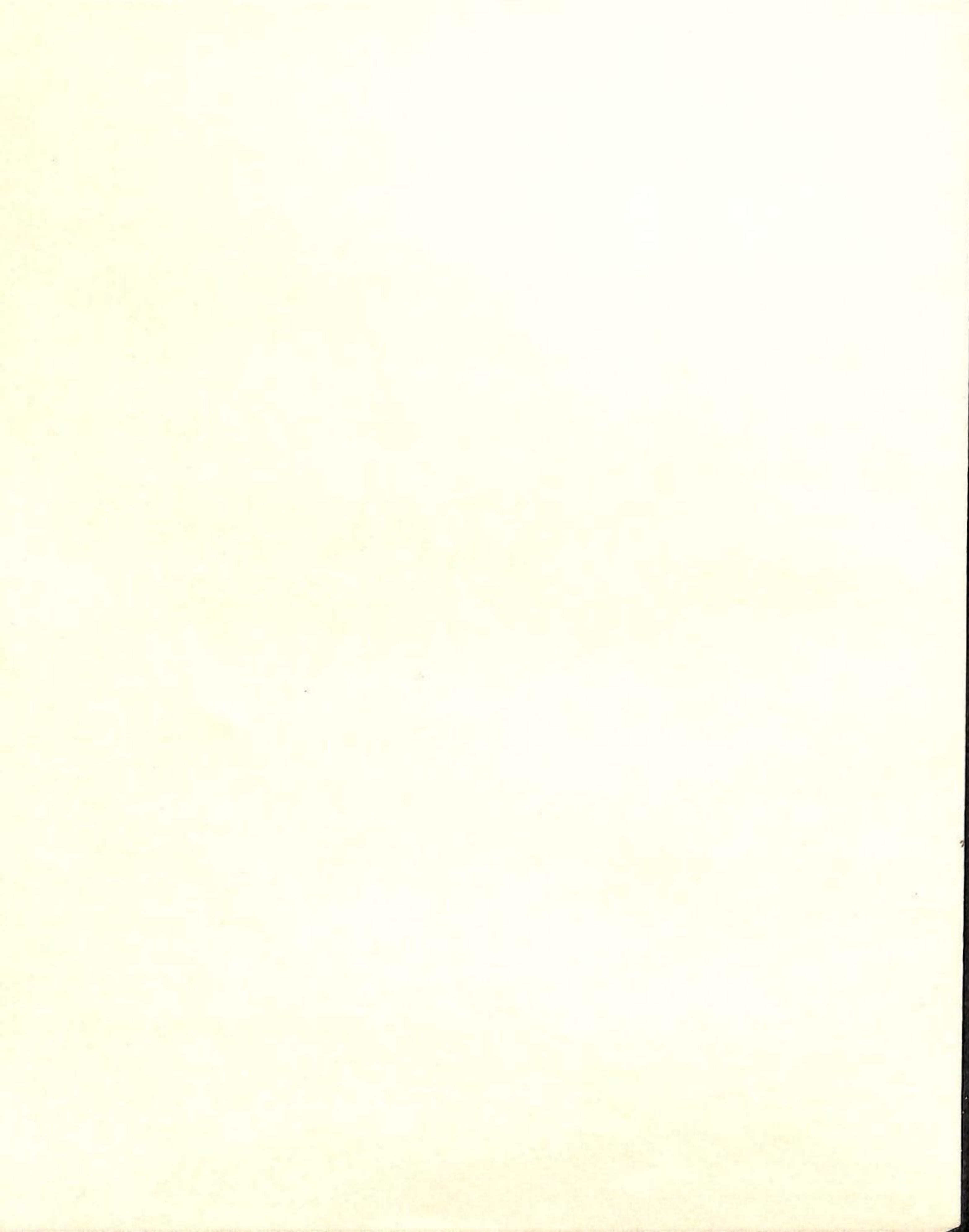


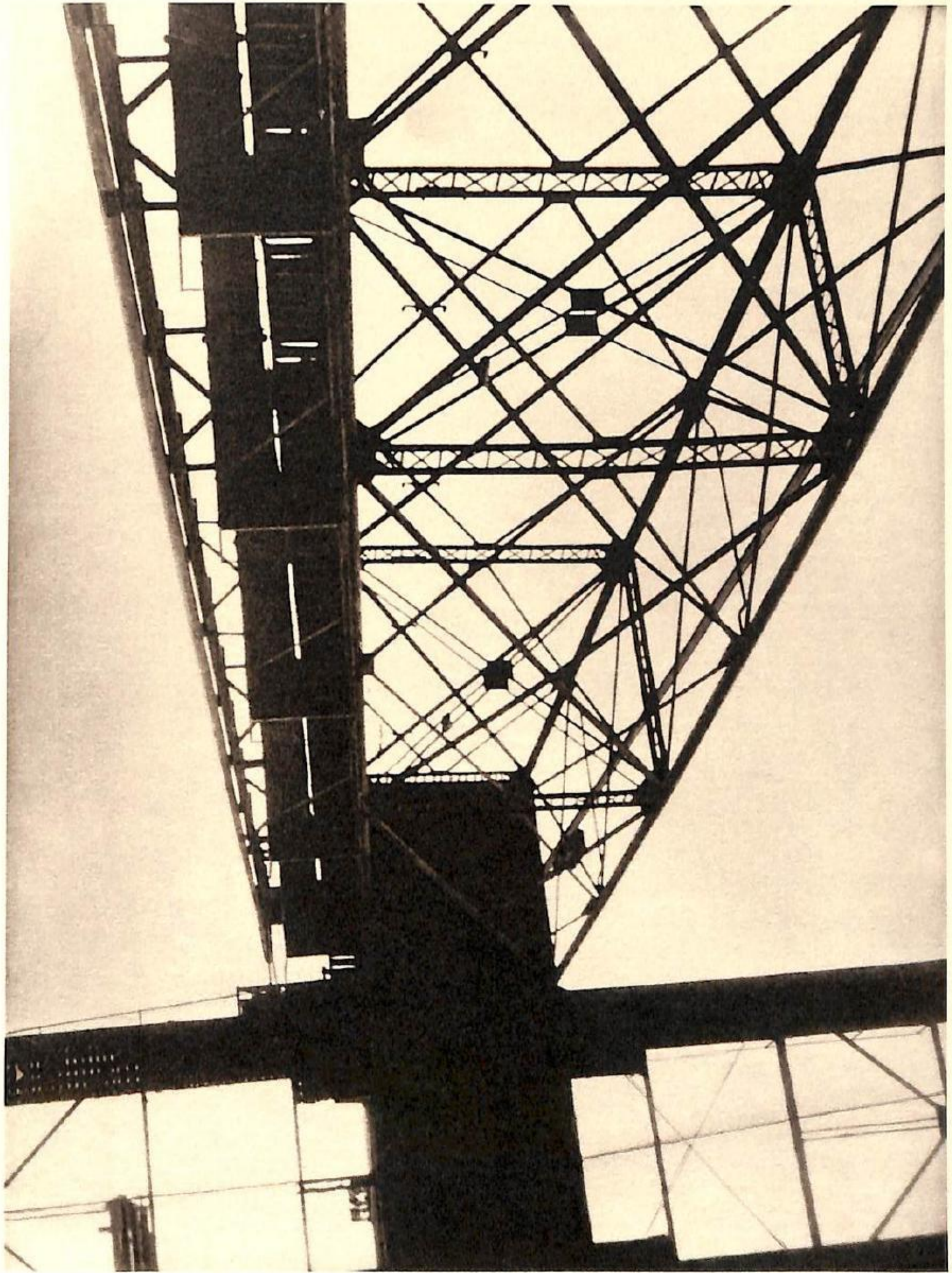


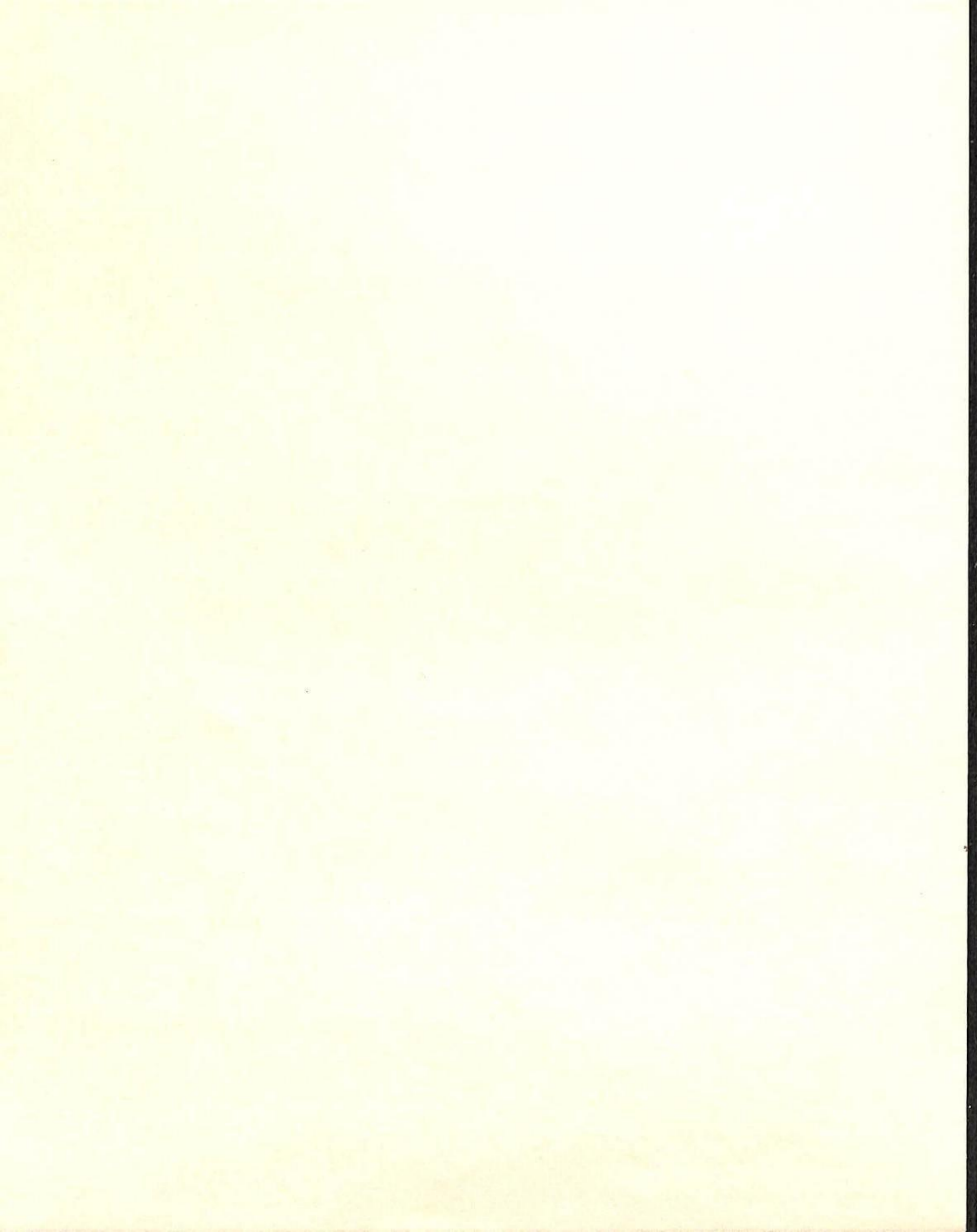


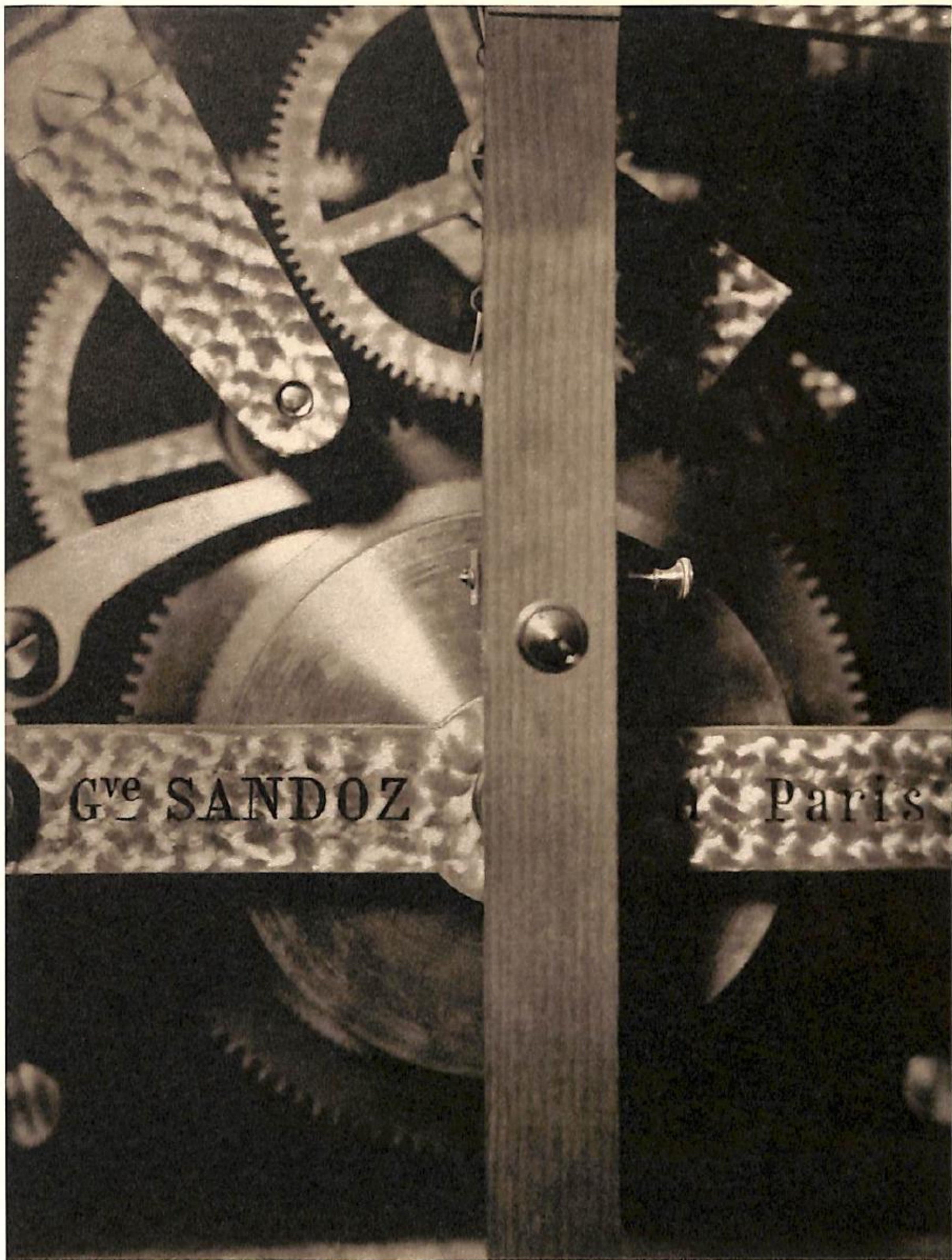








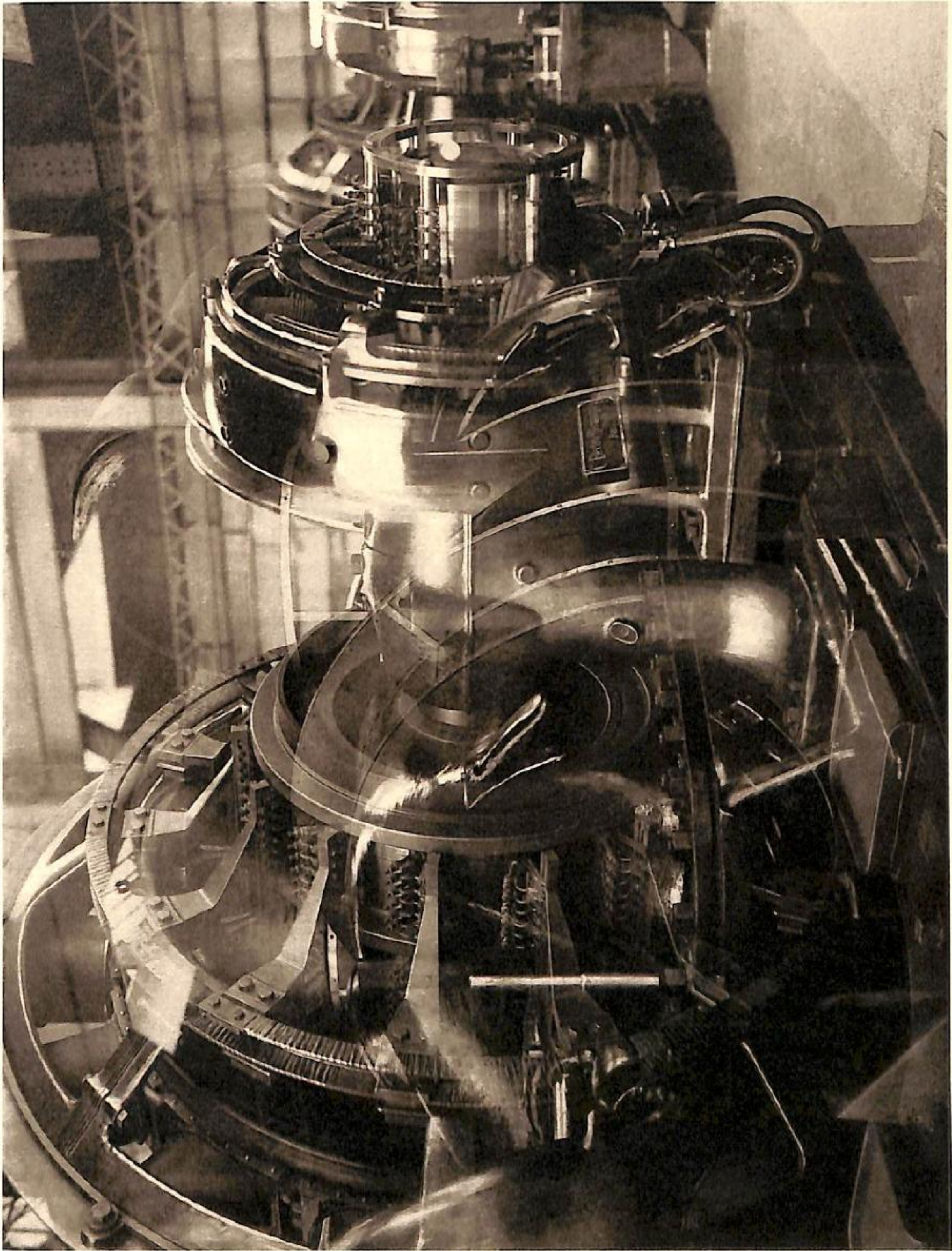


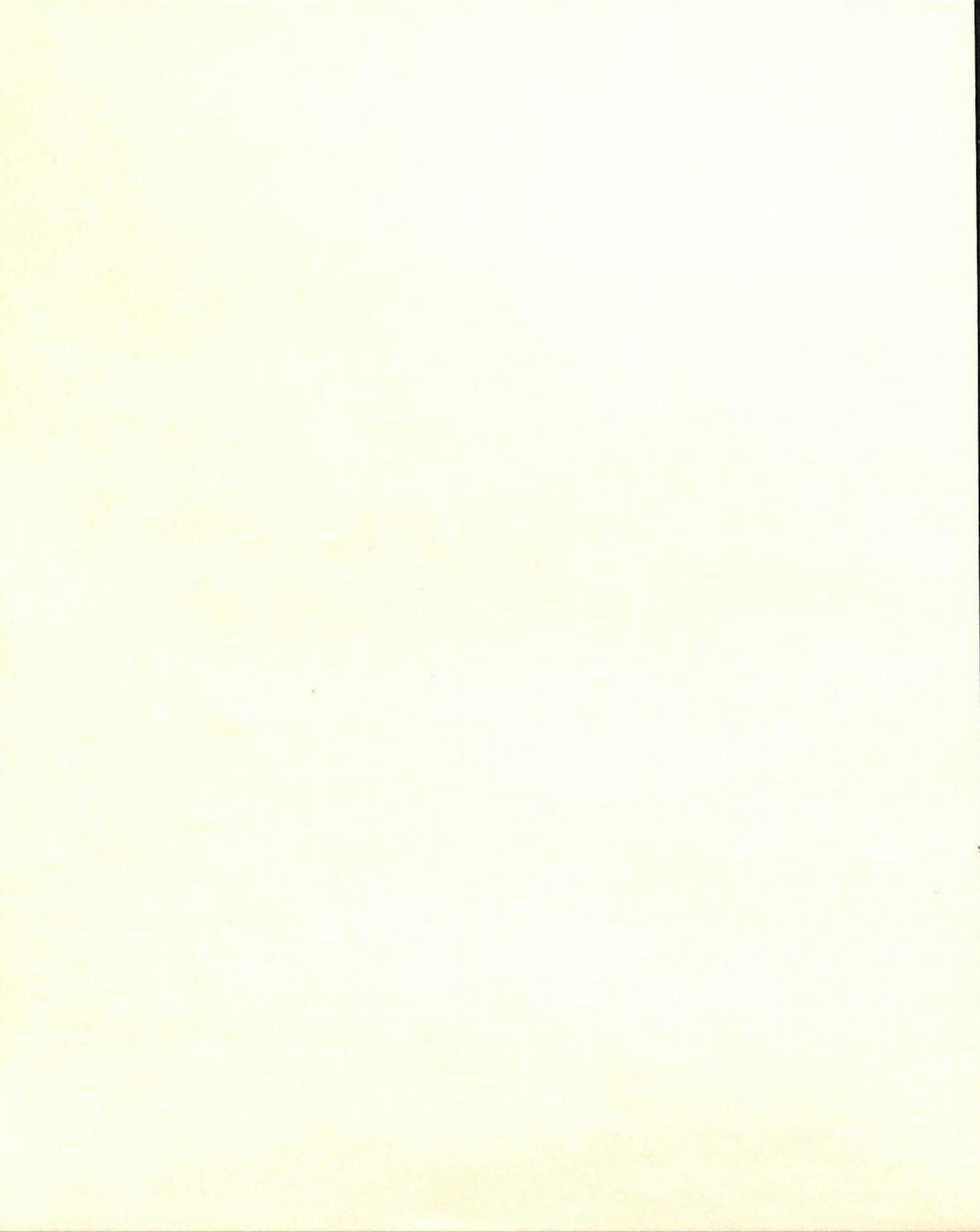


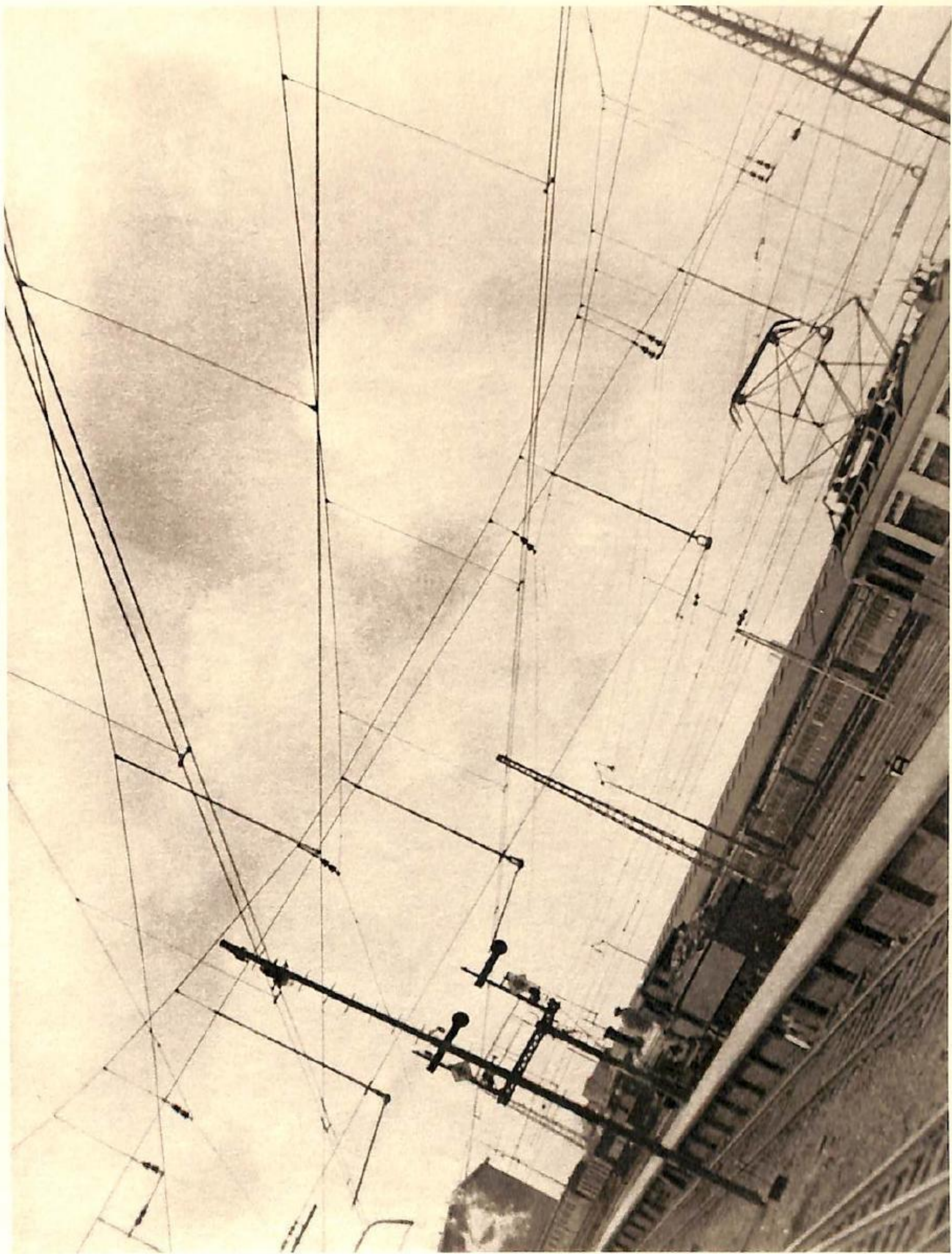




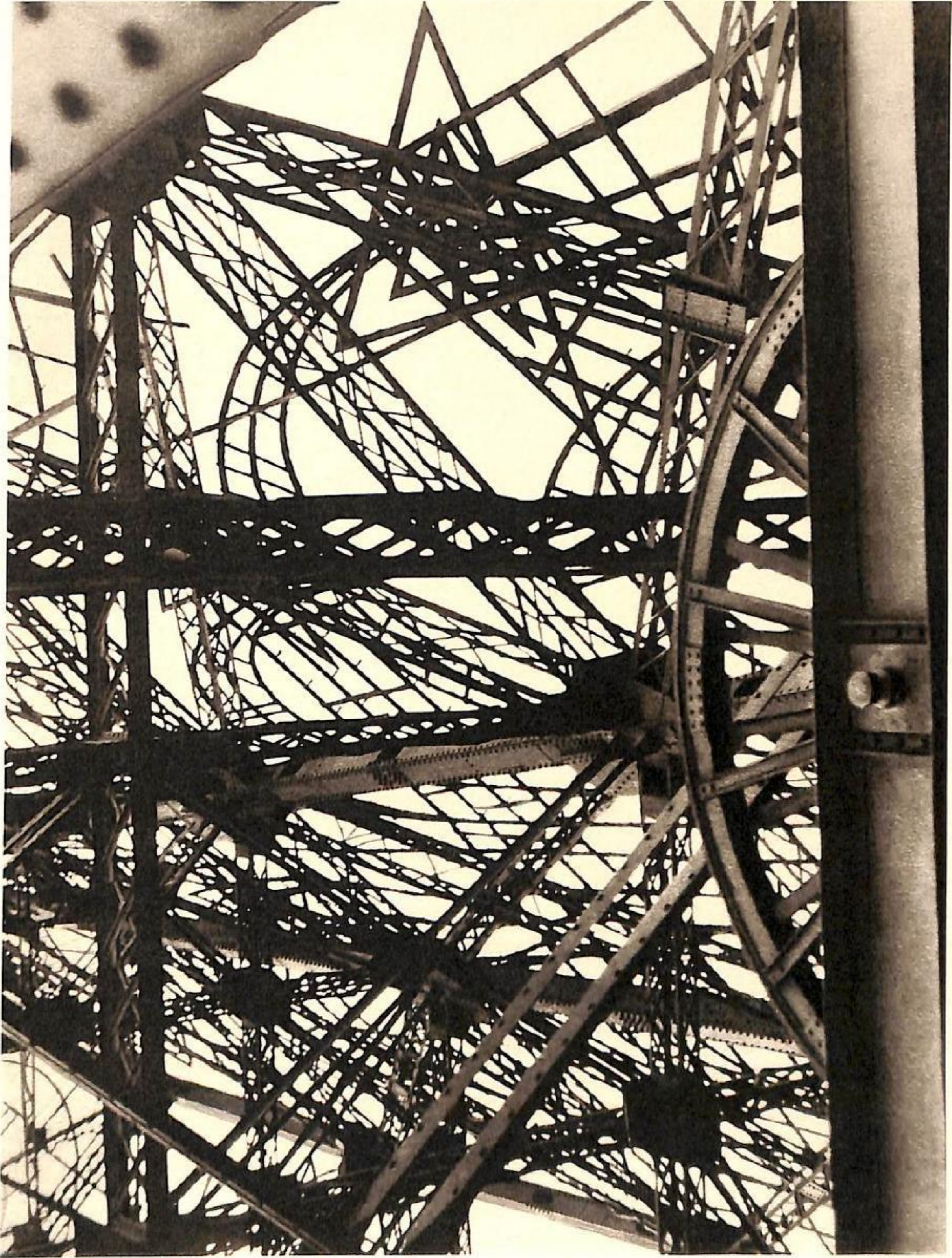


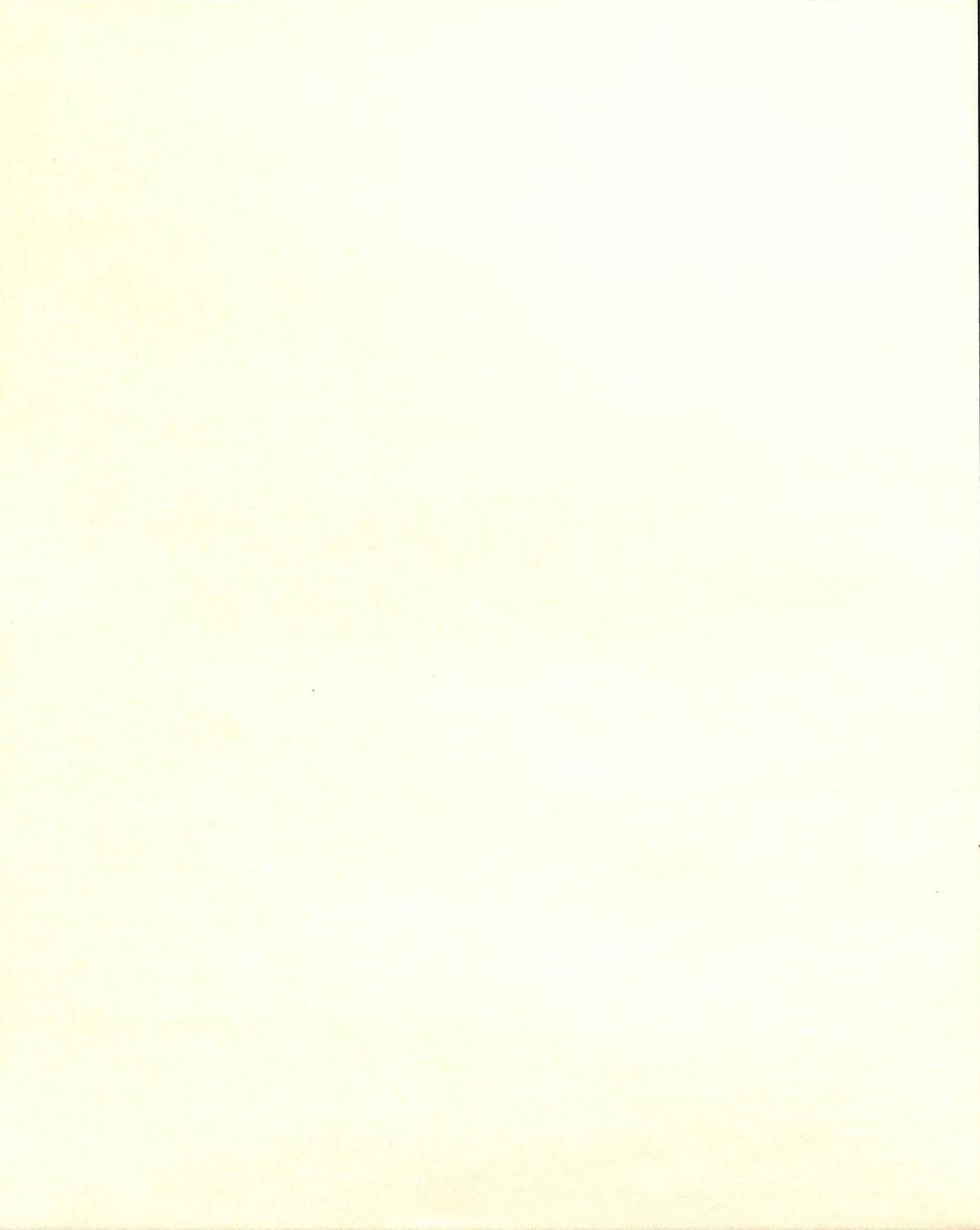


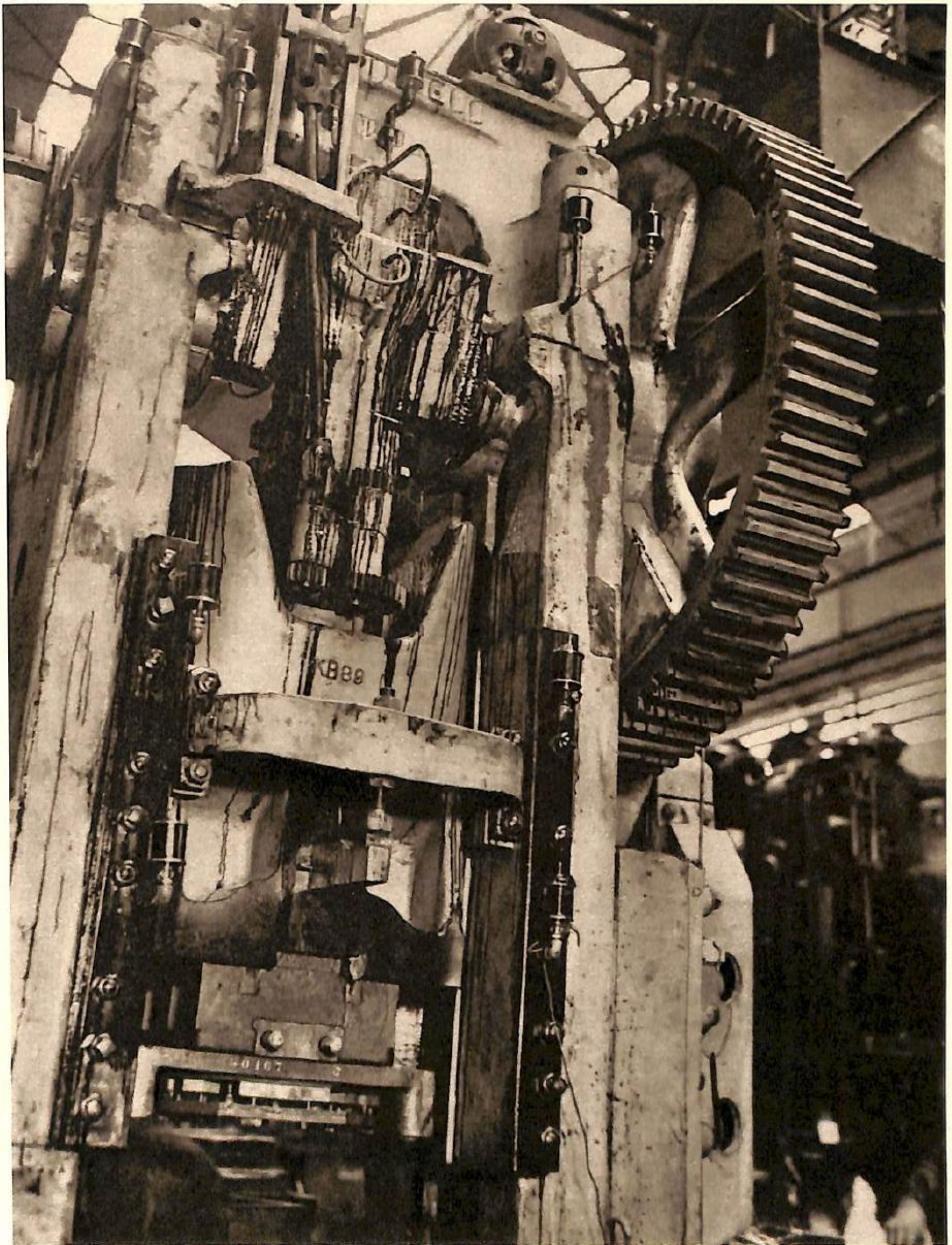




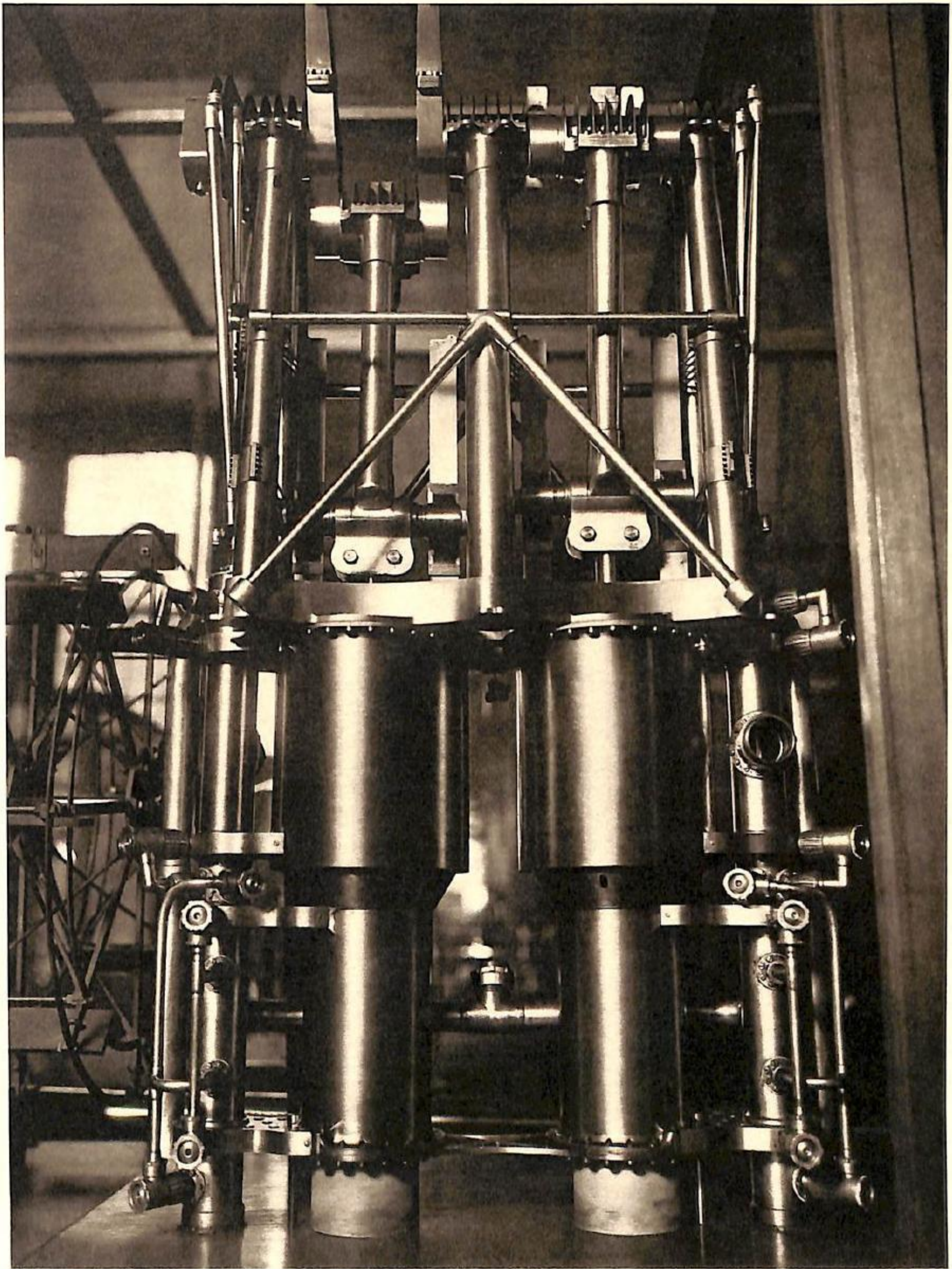
















GERMAINE KRULL
MÉTAL

NEUAUSGABE ALS MAPPENWERK VON ANN UND JÜRGEN WILDE · KÖLN 2003

On 30 May 1976 Germaine Krull granted us in a written agreement the exclusive rights for the new edition of her portfolio MÉTAL, which was originally published in 1928. It had already been a concern of ours at that time to republish this ground-breaking work of modern photography. In fact it seemed to us just as important for the history of photography as the famous picture series *Urformen der Kunst* (1928) by Karl Blossfeldt or *Anlitz der Zeit* (1929) by August Sander.

Germaine Krull, with whom we shared a longstanding friendship, was enthused by this idea. It also seems to have been a concern of hers that MÉTAL, which had fallen into relative obscurity, could by the means of a new publication be brought back into the public eye. In the many letters, which she wrote to us between 1974 and 1985, this came ever more to the fore.

We had the good fortune that during Krull's lifetime all the details regarding a new publication of METAL could be discussed with her. During a stay in Zürich in 1976 she wrote the foreword that is published here in this edition. Years of endeavour in trying to find publishers for this very important project unfortunately remained without success. In the south of Germany we finally found a printer specialising in photolithography that met our quality ideal. However, cooperation fell through due to the high printing costs.

Many years later it has now at last become possible for MÉTAL to be published again. In the small Belgian printers SALTO, who were commissioned by us in 2003 to reprint Blossfeldt's *Urformen der Kunst*, we found the ideal partner. Germaine Krull's hope for the re-publication of her most important photographic work has been realised at last. We take great pleasure in presenting her legendary portfolio which, in accordance with her wishes, surpasses in quality even that of the first edition.

Ann and Jürgen Wilde
Zülpich, November 2003

Preface to the new edition of MÉTAL

Since the reprinting of MÉTAL, after fifty years, has a certain importance for photography, it is necessary to explain to the reader of today in which phase photography was in 1926.

At that time photography was used to take wedding photographs, where the groups were well arranged according to strictly rules or to produce some full-length portraits where the Monsieur, obligatorily, had a hand laid on a chair or on a desk and the other hand generally in his waistcoat. The lady sat correctly on a chair, feet straight with either a book or a fan in the hand. The head was carefully kept in place by an iron collar hidden behind the person. For exteriors, one sometimes photographed houses or factories. All this had to be done with large wooden cameras, mounted on a tripod, and the negatives were on glassplates. Beside that amateurs tested their talents with some novelties, i.e. with small cameras whose smallest format was 9 x 12 cm, to take family snapshots. Photography was far from being an artistic profession, it did not even have its place in the art industry. It was simply a trade which had to work within strictly established rules. The new era, which started after 1914, had revolutionized art and also started to "attack" the art industry.

It is at time – between 1922 and 1926 – that I took the first photographs of IRON. Fascinated by the giants in the ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, I photographed as my eye saw it.

Cranes, corn elevators – all these machines had always existed, only nobody had neither the courage nor the taste or fascination to see them, to feel them and to represent them.

This, of course, relates only to photography, because there have always been paintings of landscapes, ports or boats.

I did not have a special intention or design when I took the Iron photographs. I wanted to show what I see, exactly as the eye sees it.

MÉTAL is a collection of photographs from that time. MÉTAL initiated a new visual era and opened the way for a new concept of photography.

MÉTAL was the starting point which allowed photography to become an artisanal trade and which made an artist of the photographer, because it was part of this new movement, of this new era which touched all of art.



Germaine Krull - Reklamewand, Advertising Wall,
Réclame MÉTAL, Paris 1926

Germaine Krull
Zürich, July 1976

Preface from Florent Fels to the first edition of MÉTAL

The industrial activity of our times spreads a spectacle before our eyes, to which they have not yet become accustomed. Its newness captures and frightens us like that of a large natural phenomenon. In turn it expresses an attitude of mind, to which painters and poets are among those who devote themselves.

Europe's cities appear to us as outdated and anachronistic. The provincial towns with their promenades, pleasant fountains and music pavillion suddenly become somewhat old fashioned, whilst the lyrism of our time succeeds in writing itself in concrete and steel cathedrals. Yet we are witness to the paradoxical fact, that the largest enterprises serve all forms of progress with exception of those who can contribute to an improvement in human dwellings. Except for a privileged few the accommodation of our contemporaries shows a similarity with that of our forebears at the time of Richelieu and Cromwell. The people of the cities succumb to the push of commercial practises. We demand houses with windows, which give a free view of the garden. Modern housing for modern people in which the sun and the fresh air find an unhindered inlet. Concrete and steel are their most important constituents: Ten years after the end of the war steel will at last serve a noble purpose, it will perhaps be rehabilitated.

Steel changes our landscape. Forests of masts replacing trees centuries old. Blast furnaces replacing hills.

From this new expression of the world some aspects have now been captured by beautiful photographs representative of a new romantism. Germaine Krull is the Marceline Desbordes-Valmore of this lyrism and her photographs are



Germaine Krull - Florent Fels, Paris 1927

sonnets of shining, piercing verse. Like an orchid is the driving force of Farcot and like frightening insects are the cogs.

Double exposure lends to the finest mechanisms a fantastic appearance and in considering a milling machine covered in muddy oil and detritus and from water dripping one thinks of Dostojevski. In the halo that surrounds them the powerful, noiseless and quietly working dynamos seem to radiate luminous vibrations, and whose chimneys ring out whose fanfare tones to the heavens, these new godly concepts laid out before us. The bridges penetrate into the space. The trains break the horizon with a deafening roar. They leave the ground and glide there on the ether into the inevitable advance of progress, dragging the living with wonder towards the astral stations.

The strong and soft movement of the hammer softens the ingots like lead elephants. And see the Eiffel Tower, now a bell tower of acoustic waves, its improper monstrosity has provided for surprise and confusion. Now lovers are treated there, three hundred metres above the ground, to a rendezvous with the birds. And the poets, from the old Douanier Rousseau to Jean Cocteau, claim that on beautiful spring evenings fairies ride tobogan on its wing.

This giant was missing a heavenly glow: One has been given to it. The luminous progress of industry is evident in every majestic metre of its height.

Aeroplane, elevator and wheel, with which some humans soar up to the kingdom of the birds, are suddenly transformed into elements of our nature.

The Tower is and remains the highest symbol of the modern age. As he left New York and its vapor crowned palaces it was the Eiffel Tower, this beacon of the air, which Lindbergh envisaged, in order to reach Paris in the sentimental heart of the world.

Florent Fels



The Eiffel Tower and the cranes and transporter bridges of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Marseille and Saint-Malo provided me with the material for a series of photographs from which this volume is compiled.

For the extraordinary courtesy with which the Director of the Conservatoire des Arts-et-Métiers in his museum and the director of C.P.D.E in the power station in Saint-Ouen and Andre Citroën in his factory received me, I would at this point like to thank them very deeply. For the cover design I thank Mr. Tchimoukow.

Germaine Krull

GERMAINE KRULL MÉTAL

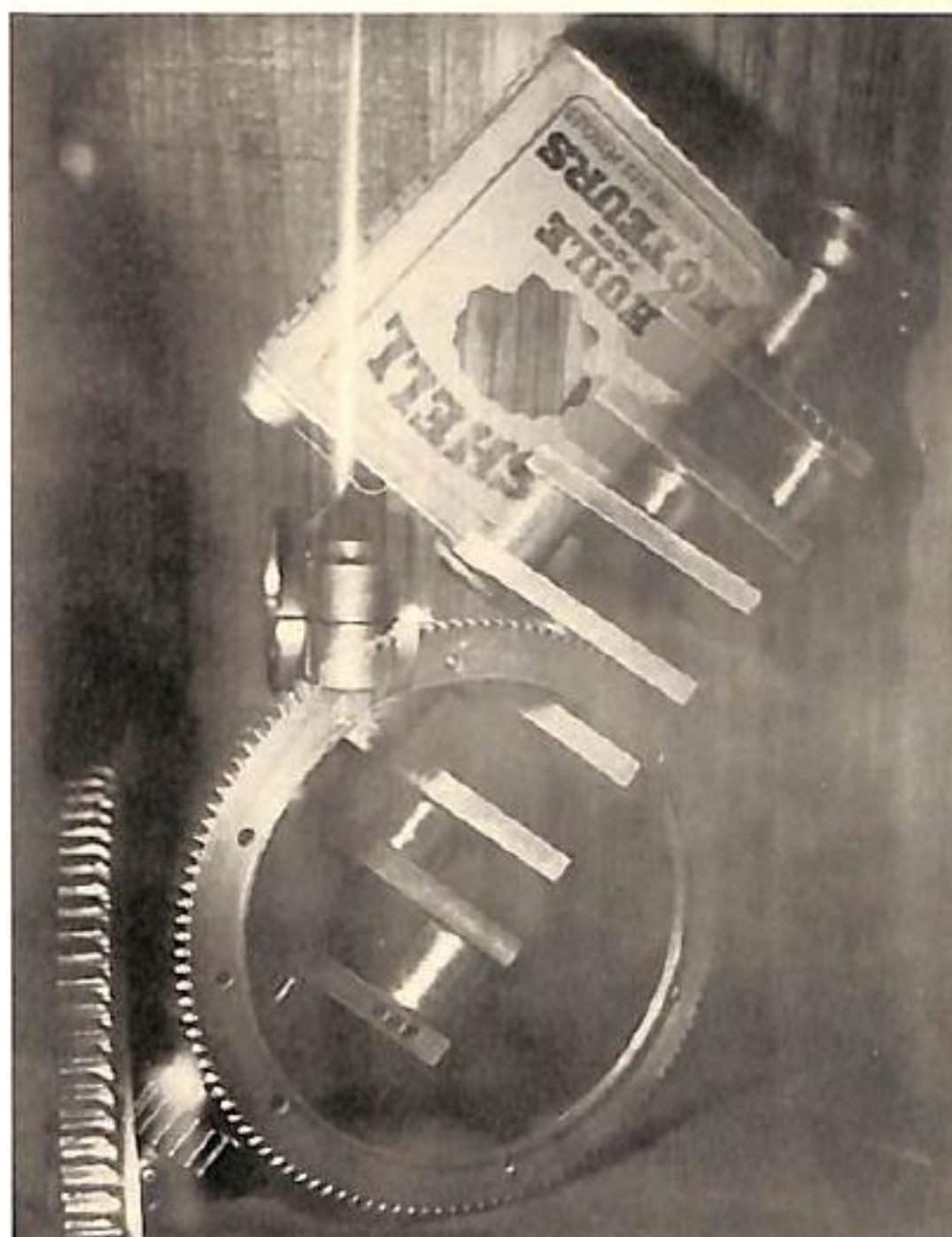
Titel der 64 Tafeln mit dem Jahr der Aufnahme · Titles of the 64 plates with the year of the photograph
Les titres des 64 tableaux et l'année de la photographie

- 1 Kriegsschiff im Hafen von Toulon, 1926
Warship in the port of Toulon, 1926
Vaisseau au port de Toulon, 1926
- 2 Tour Eiffel, Paris 1927
- 3 Electricité France, Paris 1925
- 4 Im Hafen von Amsterdam, 1924
In the port of Amsterdam, 1924
Au port d'Amsterdam, 1924
- 5 Pont Transbordeur, Marseille 1926
- 6 Eisenbahnhebebrücke, Rotterdam 1923/24
Railwayheavingbridge, Rotterdam 1923/24
Pont de levage pour le train, Rotterdam 1923/24
- 7 Technisches Museum, Paris 1925
Museum of Technology, Paris 1925
Musée de la Technique, Paris 1925
- 8 Electricité France, Paris 1925
- 9 Im Hafen von Amsterdam, 1924
- 10 Antwerpen, 1924
Anvers, 1924
- 11 Tour Eiffel, 1927
- 12 Technisches Museum, Paris 1926
- 13 Eisenbahnhebebrücke, Rotterdam 1923/24
- 14 Fabrik in Rotterdam, 1923
Factory in Rotterdam, 1923
Fabrique à Rotterdam, 1923
- 15 Electricité France, Paris 1925
- 16 Technisches Museum, Paris 1926
- 17 Im Hafen von Amsterdam, 1924
- 18 Autowerke Citroen, Paris 1926/27
Motor industry Citroen, Paris 1926/27
Fabrique automobile Citroen, Paris 1926/27
- 19 Tour Eiffel, Paris 1927
- 20 Technisches Museum, Paris 1926
- 21 Im Hafen von Toulon, 1926
In the port of Toulon, 1926
Au port de Toulon, 1926
- 22 Technisches Museum, Paris 1926
- 23 Electricité France, Paris 1925
- 24 Im Kohlehafen von Rotterdam, 1923
In the coal harbor of Rotterdam, 1923
Port de charbon à Rotterdam, 1923
- 25 Eisenbahnbrücke, Rotterdam 1923/24
Railwaybridge, Rotterdam 1923/24
Pont des chemins, Rotterdam 1923/24
- 26 Tour Eiffel, Paris 1927
- 27 Autowerke Citroen, Paris 1926/27
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- 29 Technisches Museum, Paris 1925
- 30 Im Hafen von Le Havre, 1926/27
In the port of Le Havre, 1926/27
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- 31 Eisenbahnbrücke, Rotterdam 1923/24
- 32 Eisenbahnhebebrücke, Rotterdam 1923/24
- 33 Tour Eiffel, Paris 1927
- 34 Im Hafen von Rotterdam, 1924
- 35 Autowerke Citroen, Paris 1927
- 36 Metro, Paris 1926
- 37 Tour Eiffel, Paris 1927
- 38 Im Hafen von Amsterdam, 1924
- 39 Autowerke Citroen, Paris 1926/27
- 40 Eisenbahnbrücke bei Rotterdam, 1924
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Die Titelfindung und Datierung der Aufnahmen des Werkes MÉTAL erfolgte in Zusammenarbeit mit Germaine Krull und den Herausgebern im Mai 1978.

The titles and dates of the photographs appearing in MÉTAL were determined by the editors in collaboration with Germaine Krull in May 1978.

Les titres et les dates des photographies publiées dans MÉTAL ont été déterminés par les éditeurs en collaboration avec Germaine Krull en mai 1978.



Germaine Krull - *Shell*, 1929

MÉTAL erscheint als Vorzugsausgabe mit dem von Germaine Krull signierten Originalfoto "Shell" in einer Auflage von 50 Exemplaren.

Collector's edition with the original photograph "Shell" signed by Germaine Krull, limited to 50 copies.

Edition pour des collectionneurs avec la photographie originale "Shell" signée par Germaine Krull limité à 50 exemplaires.

IMPRESSUM:

Erstausgabe, first edition, édition originale 1928:
Librairie des Arts Décoratifs A. Calavas, Editeur, Paris

Neuausgabe, new edition, édition nouvelle 2002/2003:
Ann und Jürgen Wilde, Köln/Zülpich

Drucker, printer, imprimeur: SALTO2, Belgien

Buchbinder, bookbinder, relieur: Geertsen, Niederlande

Papier, paper: Arcoprint Avorio 200 gsm

Drucktechnische Beratung, adviser for printing, conseiller à l'impression;
Layout des Beiheftes, layout of the brochure, graphisme de la brochure:
Heinrich Miess, Köln

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im Museum Folkwang Essen / Nachlass Germaine Krull.

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Neuausgabe in einer nummerierten Auflage von 1000 Exemplaren
New edition of 1000 numbered copies
Edition nouvelle de 1000 exemplaires numérotés

Exemplar Nr.: 302

