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Author

Volkerding, Laura

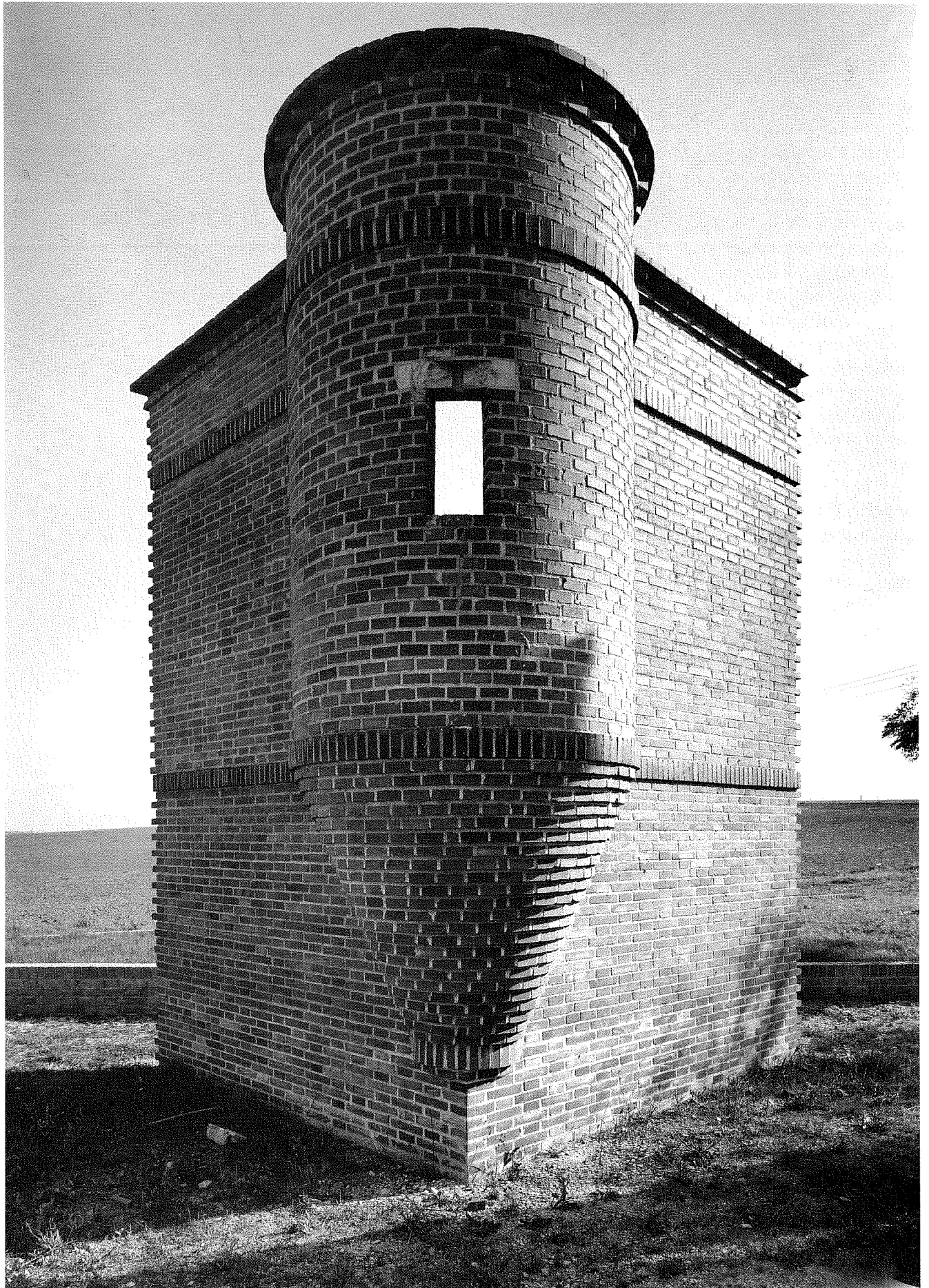
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SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

Laura Volkerding

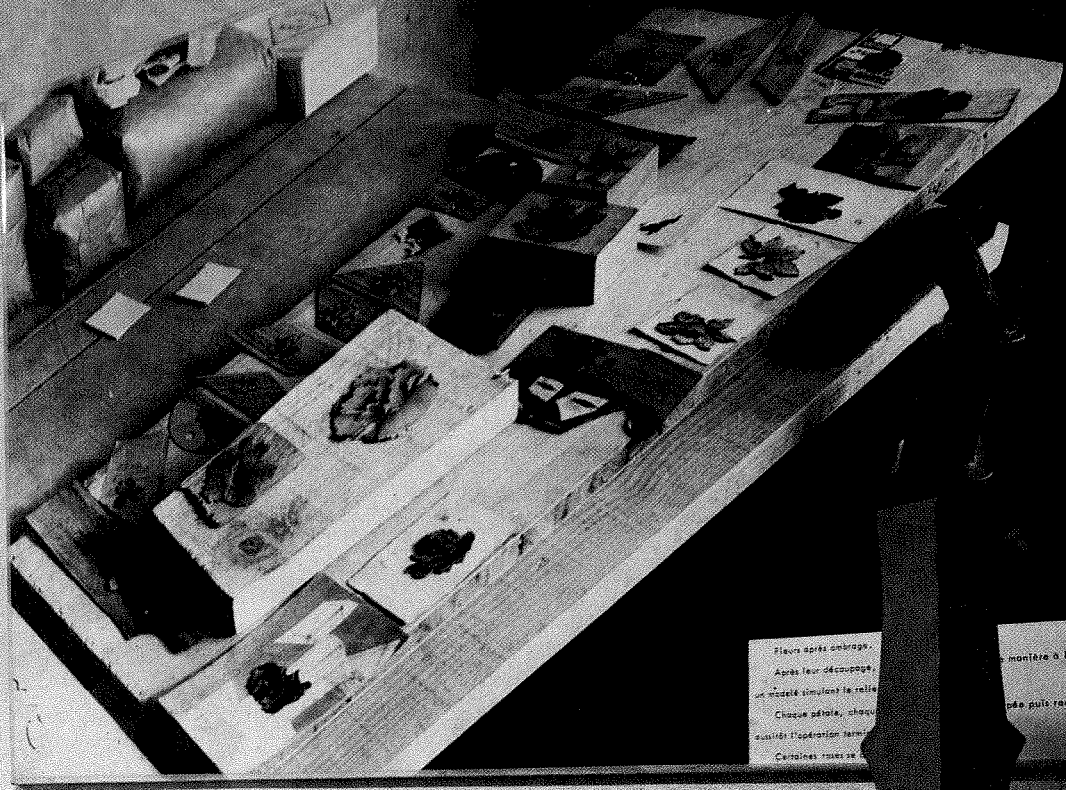


The photographs in this portfolio are concerned with how artisans are trained, the traditions and techniques particular to their trades and the resulting artifacts. *Compagnons*, as they are called, are the elite workers and master artisans of Europe. Their training is rooted in a deep tradition of passing on the secrets of the trades to new initiates. Their lineage can be traced to the ancient guilds, perhaps to the beginning of the history of buildings. Possibly at the heart of the *compagnons'* secrets is that they have come to understand that the working of materials is an esthetic endeavor.

The spirituality of things of lasting quality is suggested by an artisan's reverence for both his tools and materials. In the *in situ* compositions presented here, the work in process takes on an almost ritualized quality. The undercurrent of surrealism is the result of both the photographer's vision of reality and the factuality of objects and places described.

These photographs were made during 1989 and 1990 in the training houses of the *Compagnons du Devoir*, throughout France, and the European Center for the Training of Artisans for Restoration, at Isola di San Servelo, near Venice. The photographs were made with a 5 x 7 field camera. To retain their evocative force, they are presented without title, location, or descriptive captions.





Fleurs après débrage.
Après leur découpage,
un succès simulé se relie.
Chaque pétale, chaque
saut de l'opération ternit.
Certaines mes...

manière à leur apporter
pâle puis reconstituée



